

# Message from the SIG Coordinator

Dear reader, dear colleague,

First of all, let me say how great it was to be together with those of you who had the chance to take part in our events in Harrogate, presenters as well as participants. Thank you for making the days the success they were! Our Open Forum at the end of the LA SIG Day attracted more than 40 people. After a glass of wine/juice—kindly sponsored by Clarity and Authentik—participants discussed in groups future steps in the development of the LA field. The following ideas were mentioned.



## Increase contacts:

- Introduce LA in all SIG areas
- Approach associations from around the world
- Contact The British Council for potential support for speakers to work with teachers around the world
- Send LA speakers to events all over the world

## Intensify research:

- Develop/promote awareness of more rigorous approaches to researching LA, and thus provide evidence that is more likely to be listened to

## Obstacles to promoting LA:

- Don't always preach to the converted—tell stories of failure too
- Look at teacher resistance to LA, consider parental perceptions and cultural constraints
- The term Learner Autonomy may be off-putting to practising teachers who may be turned off by theory
- Talk about practical solutions, tell teacher stories, share photos of classroom practice,

let people know that teachers are already doing some of it

I think that everybody present will agree with me that we left Harrogate with a feeling of solidarity and renewed hope for the future development of learner autonomy.

Last but not least, a new committee was elected at our committee meeting following our pre-conference event. There are no new members, but some of the tasks to be undertaken are now in different hands (for more details, see the back outside cover of this issue of *Independence*).

Back home, we are already in the middle of planning our next pre-conference event in Brighton in 2011. Although we received very good feedback in Harrogate, there was also a wish from the participants to make the event even more interactive and practitioner-oriented. Due to this, and taking into account the ideas put forward at the Open Forum, the committee and the organizers of the PCE have decided on the following title:

***Developing learner autonomy—Success stories, constraints, and the role of practitioner research***

For more information about the contents and the structure of the day, have a look at the announcement on the back inside cover of this issue of *Independence* as well as on our website, [www.learnerautonomy.org](http://www.learnerautonomy.org), where you will also find an updated list of future events. Looking forward to seeing many of you there. Until then, I wish you all a good and relaxing summer.

**Leni Dam**  
**LASIG coordinator**