



Content of paper

- Background - the ALMS Project
- Research – the role of reflection in language learning
- Kaleidoscope – web-based reflection tool
- Kaleidoscope Profiles – students' texts
- Student reactions to Kaleidoscope



■ Helsinki University, Finland

Kaleidoscope, an interactive electronic tool for reflection on language learning

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- IATEFL, April 2007, Aberdeen

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The aims of the ALMS programme

- Learners' active engagement in the learning process
 - consider the needs
 - set the objectives
 - select the methods
 - plan and execute
 - reflect on the process, evaluate learning and act upon results

- To create an environment that fosters social autonomy

- To provide a framework of support



ALMS

Autonomous Language Learning Modules at Helsinki University Language Centre, Finland

NEWS & INFORMATION



ENGLISH VIA
THE INTERNET

WHAT IS ALMS?



ALMS LEARNER
SUPPORT MATERIAL



LEARNING TO LEARN
WITH KALEIDOSCOPE



Collaborative action research

Results of research on the role of autobiography and reflection in fostering learning:

- Experiential and subjective knowledge of ourselves can be a source of insight into planning and evaluating learning. (NB Leena Karlsson's IATEFL paper 20.4 at 16.40)
- Reflection is a process that changes and develops in the act of doing it
- Thinking about and writing a language learning history can make learners aware of their background - its complexity and influence on their learning

Results led to work on the online reflection tool, KALEIDOSCOPE



kaleidoscope

Every **language learner** is a unique blend of personal characteristics and background factors which affects the experience of learning.

The characteristics and background factors are not stable, but like the pattern in a **KALEIDOSCOPE** they change with time and context.

Have you ever thought about yourself as a language learner? How do you feel about your skills? What do you need languages for? Do you really want to learn more? How does your personality affect the way you learn? What kind of experiences of learning languages have you had so far?

Reflecting on these questions will help you to plan and decide how you want to proceed with your language studies. **KALEIDOSCOPE** is here to help you with this reflection. On the following pages, you will see and hear students talking about themselves.

We also hope that you will spend a few minutes telling us what you think about **KALEIDOSCOPE**. On your Profile page there is a space for you to write your comments.

Please come and join in the Kaleidoscope dialogue!

The changing colours in our **Kaleidoscope figure** represent the changing factors that affect language learning. Clicking on the words below will take you on a journey of personal discovery. You will learn more about language learning itself, and you will be able to create your own **Kaleidoscope Profile**.

- **NEEDS**
- **CURRENT SKILLS**
- **MOTIVATION**
- **PERSONALITY**
- **LEARNING BACKGROUND**



LANGUAGE LEARNING IMPLIES

CHANGE

AWARENESS-RAISING

UNCERTAINTIES AND COMPLEXITIES

KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING

BELIEFS AND LIFE HISTORIES

CRITICAL REFLECTION

EXPERIENCE OLD AND NEW

GOALS AND INTENTIONS

INTERACTION AND PARTICIPATION

MEANING-MAKING



kaleidoscope

INTRO

NEEDS

CURRENT SKILLS

MOTIVATION

PERSONALITY

LEARNING HISTORY

YOUR PROFILE



MOTIVATION

Motivation has been defined as the urge to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts. The more motivated you are, the more you are likely to be actively involved in your learning and to take a positive attitude.

Motivation is not one single entity and many factors are involved. The applied linguists Oxford & Shearin have picked out six factors that have an influence on motivation in language learning: attitudes, beliefs, goals, involvement, environmental support and personal attributes.

[Click here to join the dialogue and start your own reflection process](#)



kaleidoscope

INTRO **NEEDS** CURRENT SKILLS MOTIVATION PERSONALITY LEARNING HISTORY YOUR PROFILE

I'm only studying languages because I have to

I've never been a good language learner

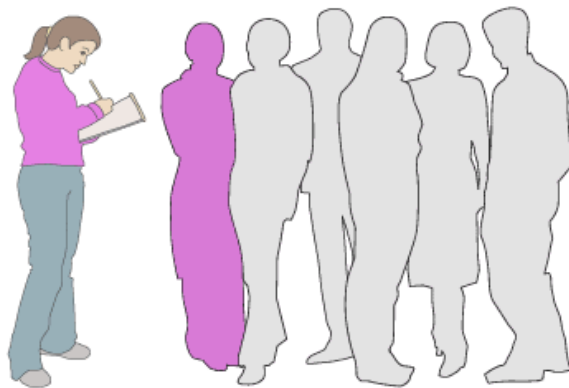
I like to get to know people from other countries

I haven't time

Being good at languages is one way to be sure of getting a good job

I won't need languages in my future job

I love to travel and meet people



- You are not motivated to learn because of your beliefs about yourself as a learner. Where do these beliefs come from? Could it be that you have depended too much on external judgments of your skills? Or that in a different learning context you might be more successful? Try to look at your beliefs and understand where they come from. A fresh start or a new way of learning might have altogether different results.

YOUR MOTIVATION

Write about your own motivation after following the dialogues above. Click on YOUR PROFILE to read all you have written.

ALWAYS save the text after writing

Save to your profile

Clear



Suomeksi

In English

In English with sound

Kaleidoscope

[INTRO](#)

[NEEDS](#)

[CURRENT SKILLS](#)

[MOTIVATION](#)

[PERSONALITY](#)

[LEARNING HISTORY](#)

[YOUR PROFILE](#)

Here is the profile that you have written. If you still want to change something you have written, you can use the links above to go back to the place in question.

If you give an email address and send us your profile, you will receive a response.

NEEDS

CURRENT SKILLS

MOTIVATION

PERSONALITY



Kaleidoscope profiles

- **Paula:** *I think that I'm both theorist and reflector. I worry a lot about making mistakes and I want to have everything clear in my head before I speak. I also compare myself with others and I think that they are much better than I. I must also understand the grammar before I start to use the language.*
- **Pauliina:** *I discovered that I am 'fit to learn'. I also noticed that the biggest problem in my learning is that I think too much about what other people think of my grammar skills and my pronunciation. Anyway the most important things is your own development and not competing with others.*
- **Meri:** *Reflection on language learning is useful because in that way you can get to know your own resources and what kind of learner you are. By self-evaluation you can also notice your own internal barriers to learning. It's important to understand these because only by discovering these barriers and especially attitudes can you try to change it/them. (translated from the original Finnish)*
- **Pia:** *I haven't got very good memories from languages classes at school. I felt that the teacher put me to the category which was called 'not very bad but quite hopeless'. I never thought of myself as a language learner at school*



Feedback on Kaleidoscope (Jan/Feb 2006)

- **Minttu:** *This was fun, the program was easy to follow and it as really useful to really stop and think my goals and needs. I have a really good feeling about this course I like the fact that I can concenrate on fw things that I think are my week points. I'll com back to this Kaleidoscope after the course and re-think my skills.*
- **Riina:** *Kaleidoscope has helped me to understand what kind of language learner I am, becauce I've never thought on these questions. Really good webpages!*
- **Jaakko:** *It was good for me to sit down and think about my skills. It also became clearer to me what I want from myself during this course.*
- **Joonna:** *It helped to see a bit of my language history and backgrounds. I'm not sure what is going to be a real benefit of this. We'll see. Kaleidoscope it self was a little complex, visually I mean.*



- For further information about ALMS, see <http://www.helsinki.fi/kksc/alms/>
Or
System, Volume 35, Issue 1, Pages 1-118 (March 2007)
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/0346251X>

- For more examples of ALMS learner histories (Kaleidoscope and free-form) see the *narrativas* on Vera Menezes website for the AMFALE project
<http://www.veramenezes.com/amfale.htm>

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