LANGUAGE LEARNING AS LEARNER GROWTH IS ALSO A QUESTION OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT[1]

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It is proposed that language learning can be designed to facilitate learner growth in terms of three types of knowledge: (1) self-concept, self-esteem and collaborative skills, (2) processes of learning, and (3) the learning task. Conscious work on these areas can facilitate the learner's becoming a responsible and competent learner and person. The present experiment is part of a three-year school development project at the Professional Practice School of the University of Tampere. The paper describes an experiment aiming to develop the learners' communication skills in English and Swedish by integrating language learning contents with co-operative activities designed to facilitate their self-esteem and collaborative skills. The findings suggest that enhancing self-esteem is a question of school development towards a colleagial school culture.

1.   LANGUAGE LEARNING AS LEARNER GROWTH

Language learning can be seen as learner development in three inter-related areas of knowledge, skills and awareness:

    (1)   **personal awareness**: self-concept, self-esteem and collaboration
    (2)   **metacognitive awareness**: knowledge of the learning process
    (3)   **task awareness**: knowledge of language and communication

Developing the learner's awareness on all of these aspects is suggested as a way of facilitating the learner to be a more competent person and language user. Learning along the lines suggested by experiential learning theory is proposed as a possible mode of learning, emphasizing the need to reconcile intuitive experiences of language and learning with various ways of conceptualizing them by reflective processes (cf. Kolb 1984; Kohonen 1987; 1992a, b; Kohonen et al. 1993; Salmon 1988).

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[1]This paper is based on a presentation given by Viljo Kohonen and Tarja Folland at the Council of Europe symposium held at Heinola in March 1993. The research and development project is discussed in more detail in Kohonen, Folland and Taivalsaari (1993) and Taivalsaari 1992.

The process of development throughout life can be considered as a process of becoming increasingly aware of one's personal identity. Language learning can be designed so as to support the development of the learner's holistic growth as a person. Central to the learner's personal growth are the notions of self-concept and self-esteem.

1.1. Self-concept. The term self-concept can be defined as the sum total of an individual's mental and physical characteristics. The development of self-concept begins in the family and continues on the basis of experiences gained in school and elsewhere outside the home. The young child learns that he is separate from the surrounding environment, having a unique identity, a body and a consciousness of his own. Such identity of oneself becomes more precise and accurate as a result of cognitive and physical development. As the school provides for the formal basic education extending over years, a great number of mental and physical characteristics are learned as a result of the learning experiences gained in school (cf. Taivalsaari 1992: 6; Lawrence 1988; Kohonen 1992b).

Self-concept can be seen as a hierarchical, multifaceted notion consisting of the academic and non-academic components. The academic component can be further sub-divided into subject-specific areas (such as self-concept related to being a language learner), while the non-academic component consists of social, emotional and physical parts and their sub-areas (Shavelson and Bolus 1982; Taivalsaari 1992: 11).

1.2. Self-esteem and self-worth. Self-esteem refers to how a person feels and thinks about himself. It is based on the appraisal of his past accomplishments, the evaluation of his present actions, and on the perceptions of his ability to attain the goals he has set for the future. It basically means a feeling of the individual's self-worth. How a person feels about himself affects how he lives his life. Positive self-esteem means appreciating one's own worth, qualities and abilities, and comparing oneself favourably with others.

Negative self-esteem means an opposite of those positive elements, feelings of worthlessness and lack of self-confidence. Self-esteem affects an individual's learning in a variety of ways: how he relates to others, what kinds of risks he takes, how he tolerates uncertainty and anxiety, and to what extent he feels able and willing to assume responsibility for his learning. A positive feeling of self-worth is a powerful intrinsic motivator in human life. (Taivalsaari 1992: 8; Elliott 1984: 285–306; White 1977: 3; Steffenhagen 1987: 25; Smelser 1989: 6.)

1.3. Self-direction and autonomy. Clearly differentiated personal awareness, self-concept and self-esteem are necessary for the development of self-directed, autonomous learning. Autonomy is essentially a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action (Little 1991) . It entails a significant measure of independence from external control and thus a willingness and ability to make up one's mind about what is right or wrong. It is basically an ethical concept that is part of the individual's moral growth. Being an autonomous person means respecting one's dignity as a moral person and valuing others by treating them with dignity. As the German philosopher Immanuel Kant put it in his requirement of the categorical imperative, we ought to treat people as ends in themselves, not as means to further our own goals. We ought to act in ways that respect the equal worth of human beings and regard them as having intrinsic worth. If we want to apply some moral principle to someone else, we ought to ask if we are willing that the same principle is applied to us in the same way. As the well-known "Golden Rule" of ethics puts it, we have a duty to accord others the same kind of treatment we expect them to accord us.

An essence in human dignity is the notion of moral agency: being morally aware of one's conduct and its effect on others, and feeling an obligation to maintain and enhance human dignity through ethically responsible conduct. Moral agency is a fundamental human right, and everyone ought to have the right to become a moral agent. We need to regard others as free and responsible moral agents and respect their freedom of choice, just as they ought to

treat us. We all have an equal value and the same basic rights. No one is entitled to act as though his happiness counts more than the happiness of others. If everyone has the right to as much freedom as everyone else, then freedom also limits freedom. Thus the most that can be justified ethically is equal freedom for everyone. Moral agents are educated in a community of equal freedom for all to do morally right things. This view, then, emphasizes the importance of community for the development of autonomy. (Cf. Vandenberg 1990; Strike and Soltis 1992.)

In the light of this discussion, autonomy cannot mean individualism and a neglect of the social context. Personal decisions are necessarily made with respect to social and moral norms and traditions. Autonomy thus includes the notion of interdependence, that is, being responsible for one's conduct in the social context. We need to be able to cooperate with others and solve conflicts in constructive ways, through negotiations and open, undominated discussions between equals. The development of autonomy is thus a matter of both personal, social and moral education. Cooperative learning, working responsibly together towards group goals, therefore provides important pedagogical ways of promoting learner autonomy (cf. Johnson et al. 1992; Kohonen 1992a).

1.4. Language learning and personal growth. The learner's self-esteem and his view of himself as a person and language learner are important characteristics that correlate with successful foreign language learning. Language learning requires persistent efforts, an ability and courage to cope with the unknown, to tolerate ambiguity and, in a sense, to appear childish and make a fool of oneself when making mistakes. A person with a reasonably balanced self-concept can cope with these demands better. This point is emphasized by Stern (1983: 380), who suggests that a person who is ready to accept with tolerance and patience the frustrations of ambiguity is in a better position to cope with them than a learner who feels frustrated in ambiguous situations.

Such tolerance is particularly necessary in the early stage of second or foreign language learning, which is bound to involve unpredictability and novelty because of the new linguistic system. New learnings and understandings are always potentially threatening. Learners with high self-esteem are less likely to feel threatened. Confident persons have the advantage of not fearing unfamiliar situations or rejection as much as those with high anxiety levels, and are therefore more likely to take risks and try new and unpredictable experiences. Cognitive factors are thus not the only ones that matter in second language learning. As Stern (1983: 386) points out, the affective component contributes at least as much as and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills represented by aptitude assessment.

2. THE TEAM PROJECT: GOALS OF THE PROJECT (1990–93)

In order to work towards the goal of a colleagial school culture and cooperative learning, the Professional Practice School of the University of Tampere launched of three-year project in 1990.[2] The project was aimed at developing student learning through school-based staff development. A central element in the work was increasing cooperation and colleagial support among the participating staff. About half of the staff (some 25 teachers) participated in the project actively. The project proceeded at two levels:

(1)   staff development through colleagial support, and
(2)   school learning in the different school subjects, aiming to increase collaboration between the teachers and thereby integration between the subjects.

At the staff development level, ways were examined to establish colleagial support groups among the teaching staff. Cooperative learning was also introduced in the teaching of student teachers, aiming to develop pre-service teacher education at the same time. Small group techniques were thus used in

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[2]The project was initiated by Viljo Kohonen in January 1990. He also functioned as the coordinator when the project was being discussed and planned in joint sessions during the spring term. Training was organized for the participating teachers by Viljo Kohonen and Tarja Folland, concentrating on the basics of cooperative learning and colleagial support. In the autumn term 1990 the responsibility for carrying out the project was shifted entirely to the school, with Viljo Kohonen becoming the project consultant.

theoretical studies as well as an important way of organizing learning. Student teachers were involved in the project by observing lessons and teaching some of the classes.

At the level of school learning, the project had a two-fold aim:

(1)   Supporting cooperative learning among learners while at the same time
        aiming to support their autonomy in learning, and
(2)   increasing integration between the subjects through thematic area projects
        designed and carried out by the learners themselves.

As regards foreign language learning, the project was carried out as part of the Council of Europe's project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" (1989–94) with special reference to the theme of "learning to learn" in foreign language learning. The emphasis in Tampere was placed on enhancing the learner's self-esteem, his responsibility as a group member and collaboration with others in the class community. The project is also part of the Nordic project on autonomous learning in foreign languages.

3.   ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM AND COLLABORATION: A PILOT EXPERIMENT

The present experiment was introduced in autumn term 1991. As the progress of the TEAM project had brought up the need for more training on responsible learner collaboration, the goal of the project was to pilot possible ways of facilitating learners' self-esteem and collaboration. At the initial stage it was decided to limit the experiment to two classrooms, including a small group of teachers. The project concentrated on English and Swedish, but also involved biology and mathematics. The participating staff consisted of a total of six teachers, with Viljo Kohonen as the project leader and Leena Taivalsaari as the researcher doing her graduate thesis on the topic of promoting self-esteem as part of language learning[3]. The piloting work was

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[3]During the autumn term of 1991, the following teachers participated in the project: Jaakko Mäki (English, substituting Riitta Tuukkanen), Sari Ylilammi (English, substituting Tarja Folland), Maria Tervaoja

aimed at finding ways of integrating subject matter (language) teaching with the contents and processes that are relevant for the development of self-esteem, using cooperative ways of organizing some of the classroom work. The participating teachers formed a team that decided to call itself "Team Esteem Group", thus indicating the idea that learner self-esteem education needs to be connected with staff esteem education, as pointed out by Reasoner and Dusa (1991).

3.1. Theoretical framework of self-esteem. In accordance with the theoretical framework suggested by Reasoner and Dusa (1991), an attempt was made to promote the learners' self-esteem in terms of the following five basic attitudes that were considered essential for self-esteem: (1) a sense of security, (2) a sense of belonging, (3) a sense of identity or self-concept, (4) a sense of purpose, and (5) a sense of personal competence. Each component has an effect on the others. If a person generally feels safe, he is likely to feel closer to the others, and getting support improves his identity. Further, a stronger self-concept allows him to meet new challenges and set higher goals, and having purpose in life helps him to become a more competent person. These five basic areas of self-esteem are discussed below in some more detail (cf. Taivalsaari 1992).

1. A sense of security is probably the most essential component of self-esteem. In his well-known need hierarchy, for example, Maslow (1968) points out that the lower order needs (physiological needs, safety and belonging) must first be satisfied before the needs of self-esteem and self-actualization can be met. In school the feeling of security means that the learners are comfortable enough to feel safe, take chances, explore new options and challenges, ask questions, risk failures, and feel that they can grow and learn.

(Taivalsaari 1992: 12–13; Borba 1989; Reasoner 1982: 11; Reasoner & Dusa 1991: 11–12; Reider 1988.)

In society the safety of its individuals is guaranteed by norms, rules and laws and their consistent enforcement. Without rules the society would not function at all. School also requires rules in order to function properly. People who work in school need to understand the role of the rules and how they limit individual freedom. They must know what they are expected to do and how they are expected to behave. When everyone follows rules, people can direct their energy to academic aims. Thus the quality of the learning environment has an important influence on learning outcomes. In general, learners learn best in an orderly environment where they are treated with respect and are expected to meet high expectations.

2. A sense of belonging is part of people's general want to belong, to be liked, accepted, valued, and cared for. Belonging in a group implies that an individual feels comfortable and accepted among the members. The first steps of social interaction are taken within the family, and later on peer interactions and group experiences become an important part of social growth and acceptance. In the school environment the need to be included often exceeds the academic goals. Learners are concerned with who are in their class and who sits next to whom. Similarities (age, sex, size, level of intelligence, physical maturity, interests, capabilities and family background) most often influence group formation. Even though learners need to feel that they are no different from others, they also need to maintain their own uniqueness. Acknowledging and accepting individual differences opens doors to positive peer relationships and enables the learners to learn social and communication skills that help their personal and social development as group members. (Taivalsaari 1992: 13–14; Borba 1989; Canfield 1986; Devencenzi & Pendergast 1988; Reasoner & Dusa 1991: 27–29.)

3. A sense of identity refers to all the qualities, beliefs and ideas which make a person feel that he is different from everyone else or that he belongs

to a particular group. It implies that a person has knowledge of his strengths as well as shortcomings. Identity develops over time as a result of personal experiences and feedback from significant people (parents, relatives, teachers, peers). Positive feedback generates positive feelings, while negative comments or no attention at all result in confusion, feelings of inadequateness, and doubts of one's identity (Taivalsaari 1992: 14–15; Reasoner & Dusa 1991: 19–21).

In adolescence especially, identity is connected with external factors, such as dependence on having the right things (clothing, records), being seen in the right places with the right people (social cliques), and behaving in the desired way. The image created for others becomes more important than what the person really is like. This can lead to false impressions and role playing with a fear that the real person might be found out. The importance of these three factors, personal experiences, feedback, and external factors, is stressed differently according to the developmental stages in a person's life. The identity of a teenager is likely to develop as a result of all of these factors, while adults, for example, might not care so much about others' reactions or the external factors (Taivalsaari 1992: 15; Reasoner & Dusa 1991: 21).

4. A sense of purpose refers to the feeling of having a definite aim in life, being determined to achieve it, and being willing to work hard in order to succeed. Before a person can reach the feeling of purpose and self-actualization, he must have a sufficient basis at the lower levels of motivation, as proposed by Maslow. Learners who have positive feelings about themselves are generally more motivated and participate actively in the class (Borba 1989, 273). Learners who feel confident and capable are willing to try and invest an extra effort in order to succeed, while the fear of failure can prevent them from making a serious effort. They are able to believe in their potential to accomplish specific tasks, achieve goals, solve problems, and take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. (Taivalsaari 1992: 15–16; Borba 1989; Reasoner & Dusa 1991: 33–35.)

Setting goals and having a sense of direction are likely to have a positive effect on self-esteem, and it also results in higher motivation and achievement. Consequently, an important task of school is to create conditions that support setting and achieving high personal goals and fostering motivation to maximize one's learning. A sense of purpose has a great effect on a person's self-esteem especially when he has personally set the goal and it concerns his own performance. He must understand what he wants to achieve, and the tasks must be challenging enough but still within reach (Taivalsaari 1992: 16; Borba 1989).

5. A sense of competence involves a feeling of success and accomplishment in things regarded as important or valuable (Borba 1989). A person with a strong competence is willing to take risks. He accepts mistakes as part of learning, shares opinions and ideas, and cherishes his accomplishments and achievements. A person with a low competence, on the other hand, tends to avoid risks, displays frustration and withdrawal from participation, fears failure, and discredits any achievements. Usually people are likely to be stronger in some areas and weaker in others, and their overall competence consists of the sum total of these feelings forms (Taivalsaari 1992: 16; Borba 1989; Kohonen 1987; 1992a, b; Brown 1987).

A sense of personal competence develops as a result of numerous challenging and successful experiences. Each success stimulates new efforts, while frequent failures often result in feelings of personal failure and inadequacy. Learners' attitudes about their abilities and expectations of success and failure are integrated to their school performance. When learners believe in their own competence and potential they are more likely to achieve success in almost any endeavour. (Cf. Taivalsaari 1992; Kohonen et al. 1993; Reasoner & Dusa 1991.)

3.2. Design of the project and data collection. The experiment was designed as a step-by-step process extending over the academic year 1991–92. The participating team divided the autumn term into five theme weeks

according to Reasoner and Dusa's ideas of the five basic elements of self-esteem. During these theme weeks each of the five elements of self-esteem was in turn consciously taught and practised in the two experimental classes in foreign languages (English and Swedish), biology, and mathematics lessons. A week before every theme the Team Esteem Group got together to plan the coming theme, to review the materials and activities available, and to discuss the theory of Reasoner and Dusa (1991). Later on these meetings were also used to reflect on the feelings and events from the previous theme weeks.

An important function of the group was also to provide mutual encouragement and support for the completion of the project. As in every school, the two experimental classes had some learners with problematic life situations, which showed in the classes as truant behavior. Once the teachers assume the role of a facilitator, allowing for emotional experiences and feelings to come up, some learners will seize the opportunity and misuse the freedom for negative behaviors.

The two classes got information of the coming theme week from their form teachers the previous Friday. At this point they were often asked open-ended questions about the coming theme in order to focus their thoughts on it and to find out what their attitudes about it were. For the autumn term 1991, the components of self-esteem were scheduled as follows (Taivalsaari 1992: 26):

| August | September | October | November | December |
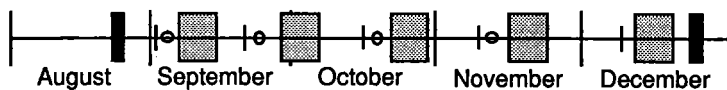
■ Preliminary and Final Testing | Team-Esteem Seminar

▤ Theme Week   o Introduction to a New Theme

Each theme was based on the existing curriculum and textbooks.[4] The additional activities (the self-esteem material) and the introductory handouts were modified to fit the Finnish context from the material designed by Michele and Craig Borba (1978; 1982), Michele Borba (1989), Jack Canfield and Harold Wells (1976), Jack Canfield (1986), Robert Reasoner (1982), Robert Reasoner and Gail Dusa (1991), and Earl White (1980).

The same themes were repeated during the spring term 1992 following a similar design. This was partly because it was realized that the development of self-esteem would extend over a long period of time, so one cannot expect any big changes after just one term's work. It was also decided to use the learners' group outputs from the autumn term as the input for further work during the spring term. This was done because they gave a good opportunity for the learners to repeat their learning cycle again, in accordance with the ideas of experiential learning whereby learning is seen as a cyclic process of deepening one's understanding of previously learned materials. This also made the work more personal for the groups, since they were elaborating on the ideas they had themselves expressed during the autumn term (for more details, see Kohonen et al. 1993).

As the learners had been practising pair work the previous year, a new combination, triad, was chosen as one of the working methods in this experiment. Reasons for the decision were as follows: in triads learners have more "brain capacity" available than in pairs, they can practise several social skills that become emphasized in larger groupings (negotiating, solving problems, or-

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[4]During the first theme week, learners made short groundrules for their classroom conduct during the English lessons. The next theme consisted of deciding on the names and mottos for each base group. The third theme contained a discussion of what learners thought they could do better (a) alone and (b) in small groups. They also described their groupmates using positive adjectives and designed a "commercial" about their own group. During the fourth theme week the groups negotiated a plan about how to spend a certain sum of money during a week's time. The final week contained an exercise of self-reflection whereby the groups gave themselves a "report card" about their social behaviour in the group, identifying their strengths and ways of improving as a group. These group productions were used as the inputs during the spring term 1992 for discussing further the same themes.

ganizing, communicating, and so on), and they have a chance to practise different roles (organizer, secretary, observer, checker, or encourager).

These groups were called **base groups** and their major purpose was to provide learners with a stable group membership, peer support, assistance in academic tasks, and a long-term commitment (the triads lasted the whole term). The base groups were activated especially during the experimental periods, while during the intervening weeks various learner combinations were used. The method of choosing the triads differed in the experimental classes. In Class 1 the form teacher chose the triads according to her background information about the learners, while in Class 2 they were drawn randomly by lot. In the spring term, however, more varying group combinations were used, partly because some of the base groups did not work well, partly because pair work seemed to be a more natural way of working in language classes.

Leena Taivalsaari acted as the observer in the experimental classes during the project in the autumn term 1991. She observed three to five lessons during the five experimental weeks in both of the experimental classes. The observation itself did not present any problems, because in the Professional Practice School the learners are used to being observed and having "outsiders" wander about the classroom.

In addition to the observation data, empirical data were also collected using a closed questionnaire on self-esteem designed by Leena Taivalsaari. It was administered on all occasions by Leena Taivalsaari.[5] The learners were asked

[5]The questionnaire contained a total of 50 statements inquiring into the learners' attitudes on the five areas of self-esteem, ten statements on each. The learners were asked to indicate their opinion on a five-point scale (1 ... 5) circling the number that best corresponded their attitude concerning the given item (e.g. "Failure during a class ... frightens me 1   2   3   4   5 ... does not worry me", item 8). The questionnaire was administered three times during the year, in September prior to the beginning of the project, in December 1991 after the first term, and in May 1992 after the second term. Leena Taivalsaari's graduate thesis contained the material of the autumn term's work. Therefore it was necessary to administer the questionnaire in December 1991 as well, even though the span of just four months was surely too short for any significant changes to take place in the learner attitudes. Leena Taivalsaari administered the questionnaires and scored the answers on all the testing

to write down their names (for identification), but they were assured that the questionnaire was confidential and their teachers would not see the answers. The purpose of the questionnaire was to see if there were any changes in learner attitudes during the year's work on facilitating their self-esteem and collaboration in the base groups. The hypothesis was that the experiment could enhance self-esteem, at least to some extent, as a result of the year's collaborative work.

Further data was provided by the learner products (posters, short essays etc). In addition, Viljo Kohonen made extensive field notes in all the planning meetings and discussions with the participating teachers. He also interviewed ten learners (five from each experimental class) in May 1992 in order to obtain information about their attitudes to the project at the end of the year's work. The experimenting teachers also submitted their personal reports in May 1992 reflecting on their work with the experimental classes.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

The findings of the experiment showed that a conscious enhancement of learners' self-esteem can be integrated in foreign language learning in comprehensive school. This is a matter of both the contents to be studied and the learning processes. Relevant materials are already available in textbooks to some extent, and additional tasks can be designed by the teachers. Such tasks are typically open-ended (e.g. making decisions in the class about the groundrules for classroom behaviour and justifying them) and thus allow learners to produce communicatively authentic language. The processes of completing such tasks must involve learners working together in small cooperative groups. A conscious, deliberate work on such contents and processes increases the learner's awareness of moral values in school.

To what extent self-esteem was actually enhanced due to the efforts in the present experiment remains an open question. On the one hand, there were clear signs of improved collaboration, which lessened competition and discipline problems to some extent. In the interviews some learners indicated that the classroom atmosphere had improved. In their personal reports in May 1992 the participating teachers also noted that the atmosphere in the classroom clearly got better during the year's work. The impression was confirmed by the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data.[6]

On the other hand, there were also some learners who felt bored about the group tasks and were even sabotaging the work of other learners. One reason is that the development of self-esteem and self-confidence is a complicated process that depends on a number of factors. Since early childhood, the relationship between the child and his parents has a profound basic influence on the child's feelings of security, self-acceptance and self-worth. In addition to the family history, another source of influence are the child's friends and other significant persons. The school similarly exercises a long-lasting influence, both in terms of the learning experiences and social relations with the peers. Compared to the influences of the early home background, however, the importance of the school for the learner's self-esteem is limited, and the school is only one component in the learner's life (cf. Scheinin 1990). It is thus understandable that the learner's attitudes, beliefs and social skills that have grown over the years cannot be changed easily by the educational efforts of some teachers alone. Both learners and teachers need time to change their attitudes and working habits. Perhaps there was too much haste to learn the subject matter and to learn to work together at the same time. The

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[6]Self-esteem scores were computed for each learner on the pre-testing (September 1991) and post-testing (May 1992) answers, and a gain score was computed for each by subtracting the former from the latter (i.e. gain score = post-testing score – pre-testing score). A comparison group of 8th-graders (N = 138) was obtained from four schools in the Tampere area who did not participate in the experiment, and the same questionnaires were administered to them at the same time. A comparison of the averages of the gain scores in the two groups showed a statistically significant difference in favour of the experimental groups on three of the self-esteem components: security, identity and purpose, as well as the combined total score. The result thus supported the hypothesis that the experiment had a positive effect on self-esteem in the experimental groups, as indicated by the learners.

partners kept changing too quickly, and reflection on the group's work could not be used in other subjects because new groupings were used in the different subjects.

An intriguing problem was posed by the learners' attitude to their own learning. It was present in their questionnaires, interviews and their classroom behaviour. A common attitude seemed to be that learning should take place without the learner having to make a big personal effort in order to learn. A number of learners seemed to think that they just sit in their groups and expect learning to happen, and if it did not happen, they could always blame the group, the subject, the tasks, or the teacher. A number of learners seemed to expect that it was the teacher's duty to teach the material to them by frontal instruction, and that their role was one of being a recipient of the instruction. In other words they expected learning to be an easy progress of getting the information in a digested way, rather than being involved in an active process of finding and organizing it for themselves. The participating teachers wondered how to help learners to realize the need for their own active role and responsibility for their learning. The big question is, how to help them to take increasing charge of their learning, how to help them to realize that it is up to everybody to bring their full contribution to the work at hand by being responsible for their own and the group's learning.

Education to enhance the learner's self-esteem can be seen as part of a more general concept of values education in school. This is an ethical question of the respect for the human dignity of all participants in the community. Values education is, in any case, an inherent part of any classroom work in any subject where teachers and learners meet each other. It should not be left as a program (or discipline) of its own, isolated from other subject contents and processes. Rather, it should be an essential part of any encounters between the learners and the school staff, both during the lessons and the breaks. It is a matter of creating and maintaining a collaborative culture in school by working towards a community of teachers and learners.

Developing responsible and autonomous learners is thus a matter that goes far beyond the traditional language teaching objectives, and the cognitive objectives of any subject. No single subject alone can do much to promote such a goal within the limited amount of curriculum time per week. It is a matter of the different subject teachers committing themselves to work together in order to improve the educational atmosphere of the whole school, working towards a collaborative school community. But values education should not be left to school alone. It should be a common concern of both the parents, teachers and administrators. In cases of severe personal problems the school's possibilities for intervention seem to be limited. The different stakeholders should pool their efforts together in order to support learner growth both in school and outside school.

The commitment of both learners and teachers to growth is an essential part of colleagial school culture. Involving learners to take charge of their own learning, as well as feeling responsible for the learning community, is a necessary condition for language learning as learner growth. Respect for the learner implies, however, that we should not impose autonomy, competition or cooperation on the learner. We should rather aim at creating a learning culture that supports the development of increasingly responsible learners. Maybe we could do better by opening as many doors to learning as possible and helping our learners to find their ways without losing sight of the importance of self-directed, autonomous learning.

The project also showed that we need piloting work and experiments to find our ways as teachers. But the improvement of education cannot be left to projects or experiments that come and go. It is a matter of innovative, holistic educational thinking becoming an essential part of everyday life in school. It is a matter of working towards a self-directed school that is willing and able to maintain a high quality of teaching and learning for the benefit of the whole community (cf. Kohonen et al. 1993).

5. DISCUSSION

On the whole the experiment gave a lot of useful information on how values education can be attached to foreign language teaching. To start such an enhancement project in school requires a great deal of teacher cooperation and colleagial support. This will develop the school organization into a more open and flexible working environment for both the teachers and the learners. Another important factor is that it takes a lot of time. Self-esteem is not like one of the school subjects. It cannot be left as a packaged programme, a short-term course, or a lecture, that learners can take to "learn" self-esteem. In order to produce permanent results in the affective domain, self-esteem enhancement should involve the whole institution, and every teacher needs to internalize it first, before he or she can guide the learners (cf. Beane 1991). This takes a great deal of reading, planning, administration, and reflection. The question is whether teachers are willing to invest so much of their time for the common good of the community.

If teachers want to enhance learners' self-esteem in school, their cooperation with each other must increase. They have to abandon their attitudes of an authoritarian leader and take the courage to come closer to the learners. When the learners are given more responsibility for their own work, they will gradually start producing better results (for example, those low achiever boys) and feel better about themselves. It seems very difficult for just a few teachers to cope with the teaching of the collaborative attitudes and skills and the subject contents at the same time. This clearly emphasizes the importance of teacher cooperation: We should have most, preferably all, of the teachers doing values education within a broad framework of shared values and goals among the teachers.

In order for the feelings of success, achievement and confidence to be a regular outcome of classroom interaction, values education should not be an experiment but an important part of everyday life in school. Learning is always a matter of taking risks and reaching out in order to grow. A person who is

afraid of taking risks is likely to miss important opportunities for learning. There is a great deal of wisdom in the old saying "nothing ventured, nothing gained". These ideas pose new challenges for teacher education as well. Teachers also need to be risk-takers in order to promote their own professional growth. They need to see themselves as ethical persons who are intrinsically motivated to become increasingly competent and critical professionals. Teacher education needs to be geared to educating such teachers and communities of learners.

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