

## RICHARD PEMBERTON: HIS WORLD OF WORK AND SERVICE

Andy Barfield

Richard Pemberton died peacefully at home in Nottingham in the early hours of January 19th, 2012, just a few months after taking part in the Realizing Autonomy Conference, and barely 18 months after he had learned that he had metastatic prostate cancer that had spread to his spine.

Richard was Associate Professor in TESOL in the School of Education at Nottingham University. He taught at Nottingham from January 2006, after nearly 15 years at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, where he had been responsible for setting up and coordinating the Self-Access Centre, and integrating self-access language learning into the first-year course that he coordinated. Before that, he taught ESL for eight years at secondary level in the UK and Zimbabwe and tertiary level in Papua New Guinea (University of Technology) and did one year of Voluntary Service Overseas in Lesotho between school and university.

At Nottingham, Richard was Course Director for the MA in English Language Teacher Development teaching a wide range of modules for the MA ELT/ELTD courses. He also supervised the PhD research of a large number of students. With Paul Meara as his supervisor, Richard had done his own doctoral research on the spoken word recognition of Hong Kong students (Pemberton, 2004b). His own main research interests were to do with L2 vocabulary acquisition, L2 listening, learner autonomy, self-access/self-directed language learning, educational action research (changing one's own practice and evaluating the process), and technology-assisted language learning (especially involving video or mobile devices). These wide-ranging interests were mirrored in the wealth of activities that he undertook at Nottingham. He coordinated the Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy Group's Language Learning Research Seminars, which were held on a monthly basis in the School of Education and aimed to give research students, faculty members and colleagues from other universities an opportunity to report progress, present findings, and raise problems in an informal and supportive atmosphere. Richard also initiated with Jane Evison TESOL Talk from Nottingham, a series of podcast discussions between Richard and Jane (<http://portal.lsri.nottingham.ac.uk/SiteDirectory/TTfN/default.aspx>) on different TESOL topics intended to engage graduate students and teachers on issues related to TESOL pedagogy and research. TESOL Talk from Nottingham brought together several interests of Richard's: his collaborative style of working, his devotion to using technology in innovative ways, and his concern for helping students and teachers develop new understandings of the world.

Richard similarly contributed to the learner autonomy field in many different grassroots ways. He had a profound effect on the whole field, particularly as he was responsible for co-

organizing two landmark conferences: the 1994 Taking Control conference in Hong Kong and the 2004 Maintaining Control conference in Hong Kong, co-editing the proceedings for both conferences. In Hong Kong, Richard was also an active member of HASALD (Hong Kong Association of Self-Access Learning and Development), and contributed regularly to HASALD's online newsletter (<http://www.cityu.edu.hk/elc/HASALD/>). Richard served as convenor of the AILA Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy from 2002 to 2005 (<http://ailarenla.org/>) and was a plenary speaker at the Inaugural Independent Learning Association Conference in 2003 in Melbourne, Australia. In the UK, Richard helped organize SWAN (Sheffield, Warwick and Nottingham University) one-day conferences on learner autonomy, and from 2008 to 2010 he was also an active committee member of the IATEFL Learner Autonomy SIG (<http://learnerautonomy.org/>). Richard also took part in the Nordic Workshops on Developing Autonomous Learning for many years. More recently, Richard was active in The British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), serving on its executive committee and working, as usual, behind the scenes for his colleagues. Shortly after Richard's death, and in tribute to Richard's work, BAAL created a new annual award, The Richard Pemberton Prize, for the best student presentation at a BAAL conference.

Specifically in connection with JALT and the Learner Development SIG, Richard was an invited speaker of the SIG at JALT2002 and astute contributor to *Autonomy You Ask!* (2003). He also provided feedback and review comments for *Realizing Autonomy* (2012) and kept in regular contact with members of the SIG. Richard was a familiar face to a great many people in the SIG, much loved for his good humour and sense of fun at different conferences and events where people would meet him. Some fond memories of Richard include:

*Stacey Vye: Richard was so observant, caring, and damn funny! Because he could see things in people that maybe others couldn't? Well, he'd helped steer you where you needed to be and was very supportive about that development for the whole team. To Richard:*

*If this world represents*

*one drop of dew*

*then the radiant drop*

*presents itself*

*because of you*

*Never forget your impact, Richard.*

**Steve Brown:** *I am in shock. But I consider myself honoured and privileged to have known Richard as a friend and colleague ... A man who was an inspiration and support to many, but who never had a bad word to say about any.*

**Kay Irie:** *Although I never met him in person, I am grateful I had the opportunity to get to know him via emails and work for the Realizing Autonomy conference. His presence and contribution were an integral part of the conference and, of course, of the field.*

**Jackie Suginaga:** *Richard is in my thoughts and prayers.*

**Greg Rouault:** *Maybe one of the SIG's scholarships or travel grants could be named in Richard's honor and bestowed on a candidate who best displays the way in which Richard lived his life, creating with the award a perpetual link between reflections on who and how he was.*

**Bill Mboutsiadis:** *After you mentioned him to me two weeks ago and the great work you've done together, I started reading more of his work and writing about it for my Autonomy class. He is truly an inspiring scholar and educator. I'm honored to be around those who knew him as a scholar, educator and good friend.*

**Steve Paydon:** *I second Bill's sentiments. I didn't know Richard at all, but I am very moved by the respect you all show for him.*

**Robert Moreau:** *I didn't get a chance to meet Richard, but I remember his keynote contribution to the realizing Autonomy Conference. Reading the words to the introduction to that address again, it is easy to see how much he was a friend to the LD SIG and how important his contribution was to what we all work towards in our classes. My thoughts and prayers go out to his spirit and his family.*

**Alison Stewart:** *I met Richard at a number of conferences around the world, then had the privilege to work with him in planning a plenary talk that he gave in October in Nagoya, Japan. Particular memories: a dinner in Hong Kong, gales of laughter coming from the next table where Richard was sitting, much to the envy and curiosity of everyone on my table; walking back from a pub in Swansea, appreciating Richard's kindness and warmth as we talked; skyping about the plenary, admiring Richard's commitment and devotion of his precious time to the event; inspiration from his blog and from the haiku he loved. My deepest sympathies to Richard's family, friends and colleagues.*

**Rich Silver:** *I'm very sorry to hear the news and my feelings echo those of others.*

**Masuko Miyahara:** *I never had the pleasure to meet Richard personally, but I have read some of his work which were a great inspiration for me. Come to think of it now,*

*one of Richard's articles that I read almost a decade ago was how I got interested in the idea of autonomy! My deepest condolences to his family and friends.*

### **Richard Pemberton's Major Publications**

- Pemberton, R., & Cooker, L. (2012). Self-directed learning: Concepts, practice and a novel research methodology. In S. Mercer, S. Ryan, & M. Williams (Eds.), *Psychology for language learning: Insights from theory, research and practice* (pp. 305-27). Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pemberton, R., & Nix, M. (2012). Practices of critical thinking, criticality and learner autonomy. In K. Irie & A. Stewart (Eds.), *Learning Learning, 19(2)*, Special Issue: Proceedings of JALT LD SIG Realizing Autonomy Conference, 79-94.
- Pemberton, R., Toogood, S., & Barfield, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Pemberton, R., Toogood, S., & Barfield, A. (2009). Maintaining control: An introduction. In R. Pemberton, S. Toogood, & A. Barfield (Eds.), *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning* (pp. 3-10). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Pemberton, R., (2009). Acting on a hunch: Can L1 reading instruction affect L2 listening ability? In T. Fitzpatrick & A. Barfield (Eds.), *Lexical processing in second language learners* (pp. 141-153). Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters.
- Toogood, S., & Pemberton, R. (2007). Support structures for self-access learning. In A. Barfield & S. H. Brown (Eds.), *Reconstructing autonomy in language education: Inquiry and innovation*. (pp. 180-195). Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave.
- Toogood, S., & R. Pemberton (2006). Scaffolding for self-access learning and the Focused-Transfer-General Practice Model. In T. Lamb & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Supporting independent language learning: Issues and interventions* (pp. 171-202). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Pemberton, R., Noakes, N., & Lee, J. (2005). *Through other eyes: Job interviews in English*. Retrieved July 1, 2012 from <http://lc.ust.hk/TOE>
- Toogood, S., Pemberton, R., Ho, S., & Chan, R. (2005). *Virtual English Language Adviser (VELA)*. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Retrieved from <http://vela.ust.hk/>
- Pemberton, R. (2004). *Spoken word recognition in a second language: An investigation of the ability of Hong Kong learners to recognise the most frequent words of English when listening to news broadcasts*. Hong Kong: Language Centre, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.
- Pemberton, R., Carmichael, S., & Lam, M. (2004). Developing learner motivation through curriculum innovation. In O. Kwo, T. Moore, & J. Jones (Eds.), *Developing learning environments: Creativity, motivation and collaboration in higher education*. (pp. 105-136). Hong Kong University: Hong Kong University Press.
- Pemberton, R. (2004). [Review of the book *Teaching and researching listening* by M. Rost]. *System*, 32(1), 125-128.

- Pemberton, R. (2003). Learning and remembering vocabulary: A case study in spaced repetition. In L. Miyares, C. Moreno, & M. Silva (Eds.), *Actas do VIII Simposio Internacional de Comunicación Social*, Volume 1 (pp. 251-254). Santiago de Cuba: Centro de Lingüística Aplicada.
- Nix, M., & Pemberton, R. (2002). Grading, evaluation and autonomy. *Learning Learning*, 9(2), 20-27.
- Toogood, S., & Pemberton, R. (2002). Integrating self-directed learning into the curriculum: A case study. In P. Benson & S. Toogood (Eds.), *Learner autonomy 7: Challenges to research and practice* (pp. 65-84). Dublin: Authentik.
- Pemberton, R., & Lee, J. (2002). Looking at others to see yourself: Promoting reflection through video materials. In A. Jyu & M. Megan (Eds.), *Reflecting teaching: Reflection and innovation in language teaching and learning* (pp. 189-206). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Press.
- Pemberton, R., & Toogood, S. (2001). Expectations and assumptions in a self-directed language-learning programme. In M. Mozzon-McPherson & R. Vismans (Eds.), *Beyond language teaching: Towards language advising* (pp. 66-83). London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.
- Pemberton, R., Toogood, S., Ho, S., & Lam, J. (2001). Approaches to advising for self-directed language learning. In L. Dam (Ed.), *AILA Review 15. Learner autonomy: New insights* (pp. 16-25). Huddersfield, UK: Catchline. Retrieved July 1, 2012 from <http://www.aila.info/download/publications/review/AILA15.pdf>
- Pemberton, R., Toogood, S., Ho, S., & Lam, J., (2001). Enhancing the quality of adviser support for self-directed language learning. In D. Kember, S. Candlin, & L. Yan (Eds.), *Case studies of improving teaching and learning from the Action Learning Project Volume 2* (pp. 143-160). Hong Kong Polytechnic University: Action Learning Project.
- Pemberton, R., & Kasten, K. (1996). Language learning in language exchange partnerships: an exploratory study. In R. Berry, B. Asker, K. Hyland, & M. Lam (Eds.), *Language analysis, description and pedagogy* (pp. 218-234). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.
- Pemberton, R., Ho, S., Lam, J., & Toogood, S. (1999). Developing a self-directed language-learning programme for postgraduate students (pp. 1-24). In B. Morrison (Ed.), *Experiments and evaluation in self-access language learning*. Hong Kong: HASALD.
- Pemberton, R., Li, E., Or, W., & Pierson, H. (Eds.). (1996). *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Pemberton, R., & Tsang, E. (Eds.). (1993). *Studies in lexis*. Hong Kong: Language Centre, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

**To cite this article:** Barfield, A. (2012). Richard Pemberton: His world of work and service. In K. Irie & A. Stewart (Eds.), Proceedings of the JALT Learner Development SIG Realizing Autonomy Conference, [Special issue] *Learning Learning*, 19(2), 95-99. Retrieved from <http://ld-sig.org/LL/19two/tp-work.pdf>