

## Annual reports

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# Annual Reports

## A. Basic English Proficiency Project (English): 2010 Year-end Report

**Project Coordinators:** Paul Stone and Eric Setoguchi

**Committee members:** Kamsin Alexander, Keith Barrs, Rochelle King, Tara McIlroy, Jennie Roloff

### Introduction

Kanda University's Freshman English is an integrated skills course, designed to improve students' writing, reading, speaking and listening proficiency through a communicative approach to language learning. It also aims to encourage students to develop an autonomous approach toward English study. Through continuous curriculum research and development, the Basic English Proficiency Project oversees the maintenance, improvement and implementation of said course. Often research is concerned with increasing the effectiveness of curriculum materials, pedagogical practices, learning strategies, assessment or some combination of all four. A brief summary of the past year's research conducted by the committee follows below.

### Research Projects

#### Maintaining and Developing Group Cohesiveness Through CMC

#### Technologies

*Keith Barrs*

When trying to foster a motivating classroom environment, the teacher will often

spend a large amount of time on the issue of group dynamics; especially on the development of a 'cohesive' class. However, institutional constraints put on group contact time, in the form of vacation and holiday periods, often negatively impair this important development of the group.

Computer mediated communication (CMC) technologies can be a remedy to this problem in that they offer a way to decrease the distance between learners in vacation periods and thereby increase the opportunity for contact and interaction. My research will be into the effectiveness of CMC technologies, such as Moodle, in maintaining and developing group cohesiveness between semesters.

The results of this action research project will be useful in adding to the body of literature on how best to select, set-up and administer CMC technologies for the purpose of maintaining and developing learner-group cohesiveness.

### **Investigating Perceptions of FE Learning Objectives**

*Rochelle King*

This study will administer a student test to two classes from each tier in Freshman English testing their understanding of Freshman English objectives. The test will select 10-15 different lesson objectives from the Freshman English curriculum and ask students to translate them from English into Japanese. Since the focus of this study is to see if students understand the language of objectives, objectives that focus on different types of language, for example objectives which use words such as *investigate*, *summarize*, *analyze*, and *observe*, will be used. This test will provide insights into the level of comprehension students have of the language used to write Freshman English learning objectives, and indicate if students' use of the learning objectives is influenced by their linguistic understanding of the objectives

or not.

### **What happens when teachers investigate vocabulary learning in FE vocabulary lessons?**

*Tara McIlroy and Jennie Roloff*

Building on the vocabulary lesson development undertaken in previous years, Tara and Jennie have been trialing new vocabulary lessons with a view to improving the Freshman English teaching materials. The vocabulary lessons were developed for the Relationship and Environment units and their effectiveness was assessed collaboratively by Tara and Jennie. The research also aimed to discover what learning actually occurs as a result of Freshman English vocabulary lessons, as well as gaining insights into students' and teachers' beliefs regarding the lessons and the explicit teaching of vocabulary more generally. The participants in the study were two classes of Freshman English students, Freshman English teachers and the researchers themselves.

The vocabulary lessons for the Relationship and Environment units were analyzed for difficulty and adapted in 2009 after the BEPP English research committee's meeting with Paul Nation on the topic of vocabulary learning. The trialing of the new lessons then began in 2010 and vocabulary tests were developed to assess their effectiveness. The analysis of the test results was relatively inconclusive, with most sections of the vocabulary test showing no significant improvements regarding the effects of the new materials when compared to the old materials. There is some evidence, however, to show that both lessons may have successfully increased shallow understanding of the vocabulary, which is the easiest of the 4 levels of vocabulary understanding included in the test. More

promisingly, feedback and observations from Freshman English teachers suggests that the materials increased interaction among students and that they appeared more engaged than with previous years' vocabulary materials. Further research into these materials is needed to fully understand how to make them more effective.

### **Promoting L2 development in a task-based EFL course in Japan**

*Eric Setoguchi*

This study, in progress, will investigate the effect on language development of multiple approaches to task-based instruction in the Freshman English course. Of special interest is developing the academic language proficiency of learners to engage in classroom discussions similar to those they will encounter in coursework at KUIS and in study abroad programs.

A series of pedagogic tasks based on real-world language situations in the academic domain were piloted. One of these, the “inquiry task”, requires learners to utilize discourse strategies common to classroom discussions. Language performance at the inquiry task for 3 groups of learners will be tracked across a 15-week semester of instruction, in which the inquiry task will be introduced and revisited in multiple class sessions. Task performance will be evaluated at multiple times during the semester, and teacher and learner reactions will be surveyed.

### **Analyzing on-task student-student interaction patterns from a cultural perspective**

*Paul Stone*

Developing previous work exploring how students' interpersonal relationships

affect teacher-student interaction and the subsequent language learning that occurs within the classroom, Paul Stone has been conducting discourse analysis of student-student on-task communication. The analysis hopes to provide insights that will lead to a better understanding of the ways in which students engage with each other while completing tasks, with a view to improving instructional language used on classroom handouts as well as more general pedagogical practice.

As Freshman English is founded on the principle that a high density of interpersonal communication between students is desirable in the foreign language classroom, it makes sense to explore this communication and the interpersonal relationships that it fosters. To this end, using classroom observations, recordings and seating maps of the social space the researcher's classroom has been mapped. Mp3 recordings of students performing tasks have then been made which will provide the texts to be analyzed.

To understand the ways in which L2 learners make meanings in the classroom, it is important to understand how sociocultural meanings are linked to social identities. Learners are involved in a struggle to create meaning at the intersection between their own language and culture, and that of the target language and culture. In the foreign language classroom, taken-for-granted, common sense notions about the world, inculcated in the native culture, are challenged by the target culture. Because of this, an analysis of the wider cultural and societal context will be central to this analysis of classroom interaction. Initial findings suggest that contrasting ideas concerning the nature of language impact upon student's classroom practice and their subsequent assessment and that a better understanding of the preconceived notions that the various participants' bring with them will be of benefit to pedagogical practice. Over the coming months, the

researcher aims to trial new versions of lessons where task-types and assessment have been modified to better allow for alternate interaction patterns from students. A longer term aim is to develop materials that may form part of a re-orientation series of lessons that has previously been suggested.

### **Inter-departmental Collaborations**

BEPP is in the process of collaborating with the Intercultural Communication and CALL research projects in order to adapt and create resources and materials that will complement the various Freshman English units and the overall aims of the Freshman English curriculum. These materials will include an increased focus on and integration of technology and technological support for students and teachers in the curriculum and projects developing students' research and presentation skills. A series of 'how to' lessons have been proposed, with the intention equipping students with the skills that they will need to be successful in sophomore classes. Further research will be necessary to identify which skills would be of the most benefit to students and how to incorporate these lessons into the Freshman English curriculum. Also, with the recent upgrade from Minidisks to iPods now complete, BEPP is considering ways of improving the listening lessons and how to make the best use of this new technology. Again, further research will be necessary before these changes can take place, but one possibility appears to be using podcasts.

The SALC team and BEPP English have been looking for ways to (1) improve the SALC and ELI Lounge orientations, which take place at the beginning of the first term, and (2) to better promote the SALC within the Freshman English curriculum throughout the semester. Through consultation with FE teachers

about the current system and drawing on feedback from LAs, Jo Mynard, Jennie Roloff, Katherine Thornton and Junko Noguchi have been working on a proposal to address these two areas. Suggested outcomes include: an expanded SALC orientation that incorporates the ELI lounge and a more in-depth orientation to the First Steps Module, an expanded Independent Study activity, time allocated within the course for module support, and the development of SALC-related “transition” lessons to provide follow-up orientation sessions for SALC sections and encourage SALC usage by freshman in between the curriculum’s themed units.

### **B. The Basic English Proficiency Project:**

#### **Department of International Communication – BEPP (IC)**

**Project Coordinators:** Dwayne Cover, Rob Hirschel

**Committee members:** Kristjan Bondesson, Stephanie Farrell, Brian Shoen, Jennifer Yphantides, Andrew Schouten, Jennifer Gordon

#### **Introduction**

For the 2010-11 academic year, BEPP IC welcomed two new committee members, Andrew Schouten and Jennifer Gordon. In the interests of continuing to create a strong, well-balanced curriculum for our department, materials development focused primarily on our two core courses, English for International Communication 1 (EIC1) and English for International Communication 2 (EIC2), along with additions to the freshman-level reading course. In terms of research,

the committee undertook six studies relevant to diverse areas of the IC department's English courses, from the first year classes through to the senior level classes (EIC3s).

### **Materials Development**

*First-year courses – Stephanie Farrell, Jennifer Gordon, Rob Hirschel, Jennifer Yphantides*

Jennifer Gordon and Stephanie Farrell focused on materials design for the Cultures of Japan Unit for EIC1. They worked together to enhance and update the unit, with the aims of stimulating critical thinking skills and exploring various perspectives of Japanese cultures among students. They added authentic materials such as articles that look at the lives of various well-known Japanese and recent newspaper articles on the topic of immigration. Much consideration was put into developing tasks that allow issues to be discussed in an ethical manner that promotes respect for the differing values of individuals in the classroom.

Rob Hirschel worked on several materials development projects for freshmen level courses throughout the year. He (along with CALL committee member Erik Fritz) created vocabulary notebook exercises and quizzes for three of the four units in the spring semester of EIC1. The materials were trialed with one class and are now available for teachers to use in the future. Rob also worked with Erik to simplify the Sounds of English unit project. The two selected films and scenes for shadowing activities and transcribed the scripts. The intent was for students to focus on activities related to pronunciation rather than spending numerous hours searching for the right scene in the right film, with the additional responsibility of

transcribing the dialogue. Rob also worked collaboratively with Jennifer G. and Stephanie in revising the Cultures of Japan unit, as outlined above.

As one of our more experienced reading instructors, Jennifer Yphantides contributed to materials renewal for the IC Freshmen Reading course. She developed lessons which helped to introduce students to the differences between Intensive and Extensive Reading. In addition, she is involved in ongoing collaborative work with students to develop reading strategy lessons.

*Second-year courses – Kristjan Bondesson, Dwayne Cover, Andrew Schouten, Brian Shoen*

The IC department has two second-year courses, EIC2 and Media English. Although both classes aim to develop all four language skill areas, EIC2 is considered the core course and receives the majority of attention for curriculum development from committee members.

During first semester, lessons were developed for two units in the EIC2 curriculum: the Religion unit and the Cross-cultural Conflict unit. For the Religion unit, Dwayne Cover and Brian Shoen worked collaboratively on an innovative new lesson entitled World Religions in Images. The primary aim was to offer an alternative form of content delivery to complement the text and video-based lessons that were already part of the curriculum. Development of this lesson involved researching and selecting photos from the Internet to represent both stereotypical and non-stereotypical images of five main world religions. An accompanying worksheet was created which took students through different stages of observation, guessing, description, discussion, categorization, and the

critical analysis of stereotypes. A vocabulary component was also included and a brief set of teacher's notes was written to aid in delivery. The lesson was then trialed by EIC2 teachers and received very positive feedback.

Kristjan Bondesson and Andrew Schouten undertook the responsibility of creating additional materials for the Cross-cultural Conflict unit. They developed lessons focused on Apartheid in South Africa, to go alongside existing materials that addressed conflicts in Northern Ireland and Darfur. The new materials were designed to introduce students to the Apartheid system and to give them an idea of some of the lingering effects of the system that are still evident today. The primary goal was for students to be able to explain the history of Apartheid in the country using several target language structures highlighted throughout the lessons.

In the second semester, Kristjan, Andrew, Dwayne, and Brian combined their efforts to continue the development of the year-end project for EIC2 - the model UN. This particular project has been included in the curriculum for only two years and is still evolving. Through end-of-unit feedback forms, teachers had demonstrated enthusiasm towards the activity, but had indicated a need for more scaffolding and direction. The BEPP IC committee was responsible for meeting this demand.

Kristjan worked with a group of second-year students on identifying language skills that would be useful for the Model UN debate component – a task for which students must research one country and be prepared to argue for that country's

position relevant to a chosen issue. The intent was for students to select statements which they considered to be useful and then to utilize the language during the Model UN exercise. Andrew was given the responsibility of identifying appropriate countries from which the students could choose and conducting preliminary research to identify useful sources for Model UN preparation. Dwayne updated existing worksheets and added additional scaffolding to ensure that EIC2 students were presented with clear goals during the preparation lessons. Brian created detailed teacher's notes to guide current (and future) instructors with this complex project. It is hoped that the Model UN will continue as a critical part of the EIC2 curriculum in tying together all of the skills, language-related and non-language related (e.g., research skills, public speaking skills, collaboration, time management, etc.), that the students have developed throughout the course of the year.

### **Research projects**

In 2010-11, the BEPP IC committee continued its evolution from being predominantly a materials creation group to striking greater balance between development and research. Committee members selected various areas of the IC curriculum which they felt would benefit from closer investigation and undertook either individual or partnered projects. Six curriculum-focused studies were the result.

#### ***a) Exploratory practice***

Kristjan carried out an Exploratory Practice with a group of second year IC students. The motivation behind the study was to explore what textual features the students selected to recognize coherence in readings. The findings suggested that

students used nominal cohesive devices and temporal adverbs, but did so less with temporal cohesion of verbs.

### ***b) Vocabulary retention***

Rob (and Erik Fritz) embarked upon a study of long-term vocabulary retention across three different groups of EIC1 students. All three groups implicitly encountered the same 36 targeted lexical items in their regular course materials. The control group received no further lexical instruction. The vocabulary notebook group completed additional paper-based vocabulary logs, worksheet exercises, and quizzes for each of the targeted vocabulary items. The CALL treatment group also encountered further instruction in the form of an online vocabulary recycling program described in Miles and Kwon (2008). Pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests were administered to assess long-term gains in vocabulary retention. Initial results showed that both treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group on both post-tests and delayed-post-tests. There was no statistically significant difference between the vocabulary notebook group and CALL instruction group on the post-tests. On the delayed post-tests, however, the attrition was less severe (a statistically significant difference) for the CALL group than for the vocabulary notebook group. The results appear to indicate that for long-term retention, this computer-based program of in-depth instruction coupled with systematic vocabulary recycling may be an effective means of teaching vocabulary.

***c) Languaging in extensive reading***

Jennifer Y. and Andrew worked on a project related to languaging in extensive reading. Languaging is the process through which students verbalize their thoughts about a particular text while reading, and attempt to make sense of the text by paraphrasing, making inferences, making connections to background knowledge, and using various other techniques. The study found that through languaging, both students' enjoyment and comprehension increased while doing an extensive reading task.

***d) Reformulations, noticing and negotiation***

Jennifer Yphantides' also conducted a second project which was carried out individually. It involved looking at the use of written reformulations to prompt noticing and negotiation.

***e) Exploration of EIC3 curriculum***

Brian undertook an investigation, primarily descriptive in nature, of the extant assessment practices currently being utilized in EIC3 courses. The concern was that, due to the general independence of EIC3 instructors with regard to course content and the absence of a department-wide, prescribed set of assessment practices, extremely divergent methods and forms of student assessment could be in use. Thus, a survey and comprehensive analysis of assessment practices was seen as both a source for new ideas and for the potential development of an EIC3-wide set of general assessment guidelines or, at minimum, suggestions. The first semester involved construction of an open-ended, qualitative interview protocol

and delivery of said protocol to a small selection of EIC3 teachers. The second semester involved analysis of the interview data and the development of a short questionnaire delivered to all teachers of senior-level IC courses.

#### ***f) Speaking journals study***

Dwayne conducted a study into the use of speaking journals (SJs) by EIC1 and EIC2 instructors. SJs were originally inserted as part of the curriculum for both core courses to encourage students to practice their language skills outside of the classroom. Initially, one form of SJ was used by all teachers; however, over the past 4 to 5 years, significant changes were made by individual instructors to the format, frequency, practice and overall goals. The current study was intended to gather data through 1) interviews with EIC1 and EIC2 instructors, 2) document analysis of different forms of SJs, and 3) focus groups with EIC1 and EIC2 students to compile a best practices guide for SJs moving forward. Another residual benefit from the project was the understanding that many of the activities and assignments in the IC courses allow a great deal of leeway for interpretation by individual instructors. Thus, a collection of best practices and increased opportunities for teachers to share ideas, both within the IC and with the broader ELI, may be recommended.

#### ***g) Cultures of Japan unit and issues surrounding identity***

Jenn G and Stephanie have been interested in how issues of identity affect learner and teacher experience in the classroom. This issue is particularly appropriate for the EIC1 Cultures of Japan Unit in which students are asked to critically consider the definitions and meaning of being *Japanese or non-Japanese*. As part of their

research, Jenn and Stephanie reviewed instructor feedback from last year and held follow-up interviews with instructors. Their development of Cultures of Japan unit materials was further informed by recent literature on language learner and teacher identity and by Jenn's independent research into issues surrounding learner and teacher identity.

### **Looking Ahead**

For the BEPP IC committee, curriculum development goals may significantly expand in the coming year and beyond. The committee now has eight members and may be able to focus beyond the core courses (EIC1 and EIC2). Student and teacher feedback has indicated that the Reading and Writing courses, at the first-year level, and the Media English course, at the second-year level, could all benefit from an injection of new materials. The BEPP IC committee is in an excellent position to address this need given the number of experienced instructors and their familiarity with the curriculum in these classes.

In terms of research, the committee will most likely continue undertaking curriculum-focused projects that allow investigation and identification of methods and tasks that provide the best opportunities for IC learners to achieve their language learning goals.

### **Reference:**

Miles, S. & Kwon, C. (2008). Benefits of using CALL vocabulary programs to provide systematic word recycling. *English Teaching*, 63, 199-216.

## **C. The Basic English Proficiency Project: Department of Languages and Culture (BEPP-ILC)**

**Project Coordinators:** Ashley Moore

**Committee members:** Simon Cooke, Trang Nguyen, Glichelle Pereyra, Adam Slobodniuk, Kentoku Yamamoto

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report documents the work of the BEPP ILC committee during the 2010-2011 academic year and begins by reporting new developments within the committee, moving on to the work carried out under the materials development remit and finally presenting the ongoing research projects being conducted by various committee members.

This year saw the welcome addition of Glichelle Pereyra to the BEPP ILC research committee. It also saw the start of a large-scale audit and development of the various skills and tasks that make up the core courses within the ILC department (Freshman English, Sophomore English and Media English). This large undertaking was considered necessary in order to;

- establish the learning goals for the core courses and ensure that these goals are in line with those expected by the various stakeholders (students, teachers, the university itself and prospective employers)
- help to ensure that students completing each of the core courses did so with an agreed set of core competencies
- ensure that the core courses were compatible and that skills were being

built upon as students progressed

- develop a robust framework that would improve the institutional memory of the department
- provide stability to the courses whilst encouraging on-going development of the materials and goals.

During the first semester the materials development teams were asked to conduct a comprehensive audit of their respective core courses in terms of the skills and tasks that were currently included in the materials. These were then categorized and consolidated before being translated into basic competencies and entered onto a single spreadsheet using the ILC Gmail account. The materials development teams are currently editing the skill competency statements to ensure that they are;

- conceptualized in such a way that they can be demonstrated by students and assessed objectively
- transparent and easily understandable for future ILC committee members with no experience of the core courses
- coherent between semesters and the core courses themselves so that we can be sure that students are being pushed to gradually develop as they progress through the first two years within the ILC.

The resultant framework of skill competencies will be fairly robust whilst being adaptable enough to meet the future needs of the department. As further research is conducted, it is expected that the skill competencies will gradually evolve. The task framework is expected to change more frequently as successive BEPP-ILC committees continue to work on materials and tasks that better facilitate the realization of the skill competencies. Both of these documents are expected to be

updated annually in order for the core courses to remain cohesive.

The next steps in this macro-development of the core courses are to;

1. reassess whether the materials are effective in terms of meeting the skill competencies and redevelop them where necessary
2. continue to develop assessment tools that can help students to assess whether they are meeting the basic competencies and aid in teachers to assess their progress
3. use student performances and the assessment tools to clearly define what the various standards of achievement would look like in real terms (e.g. What does an A+ presentation look like? What characterizes a C-standard journal entry?).

## **MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT**

*Freshman English – Ashley Moore, Trang Nguyen*

Materials development work on the Freshman English course this year has comprised of two main drives; 1) the addition of a set of coherent tasks adapted for each of the content units that allow students to track their development in specific skills over the course of two semesters and 2) consolidation and further development of the Global Issues unit that was initially developed and trialed last year by Nguyen.

1) A series of repeated tasks have been developed and integrated throughout the Freshman English units in order to allow students to systematically develop and reflect on their progress in terms of their linguistic and communicative abilities.

At the beginning of each unit there is an introductory lesson based on songs and images relevant to the theme of the unit. These lessons are designed to encourage students to orientate themselves to the theme in general, generate critical discussion and increase comprehension and productive skills, promote cultural awareness and generate critical discussion. The descriptive tasks in which students must describe images and discuss ideas the ideas that emerge also scaffold the students' increased complexity in terms of descriptive use of English and the anticipated gains can be assessed through the oral component of the KACE test (the assessment test being developed by the KAP research committee specifically for the ILC English department).

The development of formal discussion lessons is underway in which students are given a prompt connected to the unit theme and asked to discuss it in small groups (intended to match the group discussion section of the KACE test). During the discussion they are observed by a partner who notes down occurrences of various communicative and linguistic proficiencies and errors using a scaffolded peer evaluation sheet. During the course, students keep a record of their performances in these tasks in order to track their progress and identify areas that need work.

Each unit now contains a mini-presentation that requires students to work collaboratively on a short presentation (linked to the unit themes), practice the presentation and then record it. Students are then given a week to transcribe their language and these transcriptions are then analyzed and edited in class. The students keep a record of their performance in terms of certain key indicators and track their development over the course of the year.

Lastly, work was instigated and continues in the development of a series of lessons that ask students to describe and interpret a number of graphs, tables or infographics that are again linked to the unit themes. These tasks are designed to encourage the precise use of English within a communicative task through the use of cognitively demanding input. As with the descriptive tasks noted above, the anticipated gains can be assessed through the oral component of the KACE test.

2) *The Introduction to World Issues* unit that was introduced as part of the Freshman English curriculum last year has been revised and renamed the *Global Issues* unit. Founded upon a 'global education' approach to language teaching, the *Global Issues* unit is designed to cultivate an attitude of respect for diversity and encourage students to reflect on their own position in the world, while envisioning their own active participation in the local community to help solve larger global problems. The unit aims to enable students to effectively acquire English-language communication skills while broadening their knowledge and awareness of the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental issues facing our world. The unit draws on the presentation skills that students have developed throughout the year and culminates with students choosing a topic of interest, undertaking individual research and making a presentation to the class on their subject of choice. This final individual presentation is seen as a chance for students to ultimately assess their progress during the first year of English studies within the ILC. The first *Orientation* unit asks them to prepare and give an individual presentation whilst the rest of the units preceding *Global Issues* allow students to present in groups as a scaffolding method. The *Global Issues* unit also serves as a bridge to the second year core courses in terms of content as it asks students to extend

beyond their immediate context and start to relate their lives to larger global issues. This kind of content forms the basis for the Media and Sophomore English courses.

*Sophomore English – Adam Slobodniuk, Kentoku Yamamoto.*

In the past year there has been a fundamental shift in philosophy regarding the ILC sophomore English (SE) curriculum and the direction in which it should head. Since the course is coupled with Media English, which focuses more specifically on reading and writing, it was decided that the SE course should focus more on listening and speaking. This being said, reading and writing wouldn't be neglected in the new curriculum, rather these skills would provide a supportive role in the speaking and listening focused activities.

In addition, the new in-house KACE test has just been developed to assess ILC students' English proficiency. As this test was developed with the goals and activities of the ILC English curricula in mind, its assessment procedures are complementary to the ILC objectives. To address one of the main objectives of the SE curriculum, which is to improve students' English conversation skills, a Conversation Skills Unit was developed for the beginning of the first semester. The new unit includes activities and tasks that raise awareness and provide practice in the conversational skills of asking for help, turn-taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, asking for clarification, agreeing and disagreeing, directing and extending conversation, relating ideas, and extending ideas and opinions. These exercises are initially used as stand-alone activities but are later revisited and incorporated into the content lessons throughout the rest of the course.

Furthermore, the content lessons have been modified from the previous year to provide a more in-depth exploration of the topical units of identity, community, and culture. In addition, a new unit based on language was also developed to make the course better-rounded to address the topics that are central to understanding intercultural issues for students in the ILC department. The structure of the new curriculum is such that each unit shares the same timeline and assessment procedure allowing students to set and achieve clear learning goals. The assessment procedure for each unit involves a roundtable discussion that is identical in structure to the KACE Speaking Test but requires more critical and in-depth analysis of the unit's topics in the discussion. Also, the roundtable discussions provide feedback to student performance that can be used to identify specific areas for improvement in their speaking performance. Furthermore, transcription tasks of student discussions have been developed and incorporated in each unit to enable students to monitor their development while helping them to achieve their learning objectives.

It is envisaged that with the changes to the SE curriculum and materials, students will not only have a more balanced language learning experience but their language exit level will also be greater than in the past.

*Media English – Simon Cooke, Glichelle Pereyra*

During the 2009-2010 semester, consolidation of the pre-existing first semester materials and the creation of a media literacy component for the second semester of the Media English course was carried out (as detailed in the 2009-2010 BEPP-ILC annual report). The materials that were developed have since been

implemented by a number of teachers from a variety of media courses outside of the ILC. In October 2010, Ashley Moore and Simon Cooke presented on the materials development process and the variety of scaffolding procedures in place for the course and showed examples of student work at the Asian Conference on Media & Mass Communication conference in Osaka. The presentation was well attended and received.

The current academic year has been spent collecting feedback from both students and teachers of the Media English course. As with last year, the feedback will be analyzed and used to implement improvements and adjustments to the materials where necessary. Changes resulting from feedback last year included the replacement of one of the sections in the year-end project and various syntactical changes to aid in student comprehension. Future work will focus on further consolidating and revising the lessons and resources to keep the materials and references up-to-date.

In order to get a better understanding of the standard of work which might be expected of the students following the course, Ashley Moore approached a number of native English speaking foreign exchange students at KUIS and asked them to complete several of the curriculum worksheets and essays. These near-peer role-model materials are being used to assist students in their writing structure and give insight into an alternative viewpoint on these topics. The results of this materials development process were presented at JALT 2010 in November 2010.

*SOGO: Life Stories in Autobiography – Trang Nguyen*

Life Stories in Autobiography is a course that was introduced to the ILC and English departments during this academic year. Designed to develop students' English language communication skills, the course offers participants an introduction to culturally diverse autobiographies that explore a variety of themes relevant to participants' lives and interests, such as: ancestry, childhood, identity, love, family, travel, work and community. In reading these autobiographies, students are also guided to discover their own voices, tell their own stories and write about their own experiences. Alongside the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking that are accentuated throughout the course, voice is also explored both as a concept and as a practice within the classroom. Students write multiple drafts of their life experiences, receive ongoing feedback from peers and the teacher, and participate in evaluating their own and others' writings. Collaborative learning is the guiding approach of the course and informs the classroom process, including dialogue and experiential learning that arises between teacher and students; between each student and their partners and small groups; and within the classroom community as a whole. Students develop and demonstrate their creativity, communicative abilities and analytical skills through group discussions, oral presentations, class leadership, as well as in the writing of personal experience. Students complete the course having developed their own mini-autobiography. Central to the course is also a weekly journal that both students and teacher write and maintain as part of the learning process.

## RESEARCH

### *Taking notice: The development of communicative strategies – Simon Cooke*

In the second semester of the 2009-2010 academic year, Cooke completed his research into student employment of communicative strategies. The research examined whether transcription and reflection on oral output could aid in communicative strategies uptake and use in subsequent oral performance. The research has been written up and has been submitted for review. The findings were presented at the CLaSIC international conference in Singapore in December 2010.

### *BEPP-ILC Research Meta-Project – Ben Fenton Smith, Ashley Moore*

This project sought to better understand the processes through which incoming committee members orientate themselves to the project committee and establish research projects in order to develop a flexible system which could be used in other research project groups. Further to last year's RILS report, a coding system was finalized and the data were analyzed. The results informed the orientation that was given to the incoming committee member this year and will be written up and submitted to the *Studies in Linguistics and Language Teaching* journal in the near future in order to guide decisions made by future project coordinators.

### *A Framework for Student/ Teacher Interaction and Conversation Journals – Ashley Moore*

Conversation journals and surveys are key components of the Freshman and Sophomore English courses within the ILC and indeed other departments. However, as these activities are incorporated into a growing number of courses, additional stresses are being placed on the existing resources and opportunities

for students to communicate with ELI teachers and advisors outside of the classroom or advising spaces. The nature and cultural appropriateness of some of the interaction has also been questioned by ELI members. It became clear that a set of guidelines for both students and teachers was necessary in order to establish a framework for students completing conversation journals in order to ensure that current resources are not over-burdened and that pragmatic needs are being met.

To this end, Moore surveyed teachers who were using conversation journals in their classes, before holding an informal focus-group in which the issues were discussed and some consensus was found. The data from both the survey and the focus group were then considered in light of the institutional framework and a set of guidelines was drafted and edited. These guidelines were then circulated around the ELI and will also be used in future orientation programs for incoming ELI teachers.

*Reflective Practice in Language Learning and Teaching – Trang Nguyen*

The project seeks to examine the role student journals have in facilitating reflective thought and written expression in language learning, and the ways in which student journals contribute to the process of language teaching and learning. Building on the foundation of the work previously completed, the present phase of the project incorporates ongoing teacher reflection and the use and analysis of twenty-four new *Freshman English Journals* in addition to the forty-six journals from the previous year. This research initiative will potentially offer new ways to conceptualise the notion and practice of ‘reflection’ and ‘reflective

teaching and learning' that may have wider implications for the field of Applied Linguistics.

*Becoming Multilingual: Identity & Language Learning – Glichelle Pereyra*

Glichelle Pereyra's research aims to explore the effect that learning two foreign languages at the same time has on the construction and reconstruction of student identities. ILC students at Kanda University of International Studies form a unique demographic in Japan. They are double language majors who are learning English alongside Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese or Portuguese.

Arguably, when speaking about creating identities in the students' regional languages, the same theory regarding English would pertain as most EFL learners are also negotiating identities in a language that is often quite different from their own native tongue. The major consideration, however, is the differential in power of English worldwide in contrast to the other regional languages being learned, which clearly don't have the same global power.

The study will investigate the following questions:

1. What is the student's investment to learn each of the target languages? Has this changed since they started university? If so, how?
2. Are they more invested in learning one language over the other? If so, why?
3. To what extent do their English and regional language identities affect each other as well as their other identities at the present and over time?

This research study will follow the 2010 ILC freshman classes at the end of their

first semester until their fourth semester at Kanda (roughly a year and a half). A short online questionnaire has been conducted at the end of the students' first semester, and analysis has already begun. This analysis will guide decisions related to further data collection throughout the study.

*Language Laboratory Research – Adam Slobodniuk*

Considerable data were collected both prior to students taking the ILC Language Lab course and upon completion of it. After analysis of these data there were two sustained weaknesses identified, the first being in production of /ʃ/ (sh). While capable of producing /ʃ/ well and regularly in exercises focused on its production many students would revert to /s/ when focus was shifted to other sound production. While there was improvement in production post course completion when compared to initial performance, student production of this sound, in regular speech in particular, remained problematic. The second issue identifiable from the data analysis was in students' receptive skills. Post course completion data show that students continue to have difficulty differentiating between /v/ and /b/ with little improvement on the initial results post course completion. As a result of these findings the teaching materials and methods have been modified to target the identified deficiencies and improve students' post course listening skill and pronunciation performance in these areas.

*Student perceptions: How do I learn best? – Kentoku Yamamoto*

This study investigates ILC sophomore students' perceptions about how they feel they learn English most efficiently. Q-methodology, a qualitative research method with quantitative features based on factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2005), was

used to analyze participant responses and create four “learning profiles” of the participants. These learning profiles indicate the different trends and patterns of the participants’ own perceived learning preferences.

#### Learning Profile 1: Comfortable Learners

Learners with this profile are individual learners who can self-initiate study and do not procrastinate. They enjoy learning new things and prefer to learn by taking notes and reading on their own. They also learn words by using them, but they generally do not need to repeat tasks to learn from them. Furthermore, these learners prefer tasks that aren’t too challenging and would rather learn within their comfort zones.

#### Learning Profile 2: Socially Motivated Learners

Learners with this profile enjoy working with others and are more motivated to work when working with others. They also enjoy learning new things, researching, and studying as long as the topic is interesting to them. These learners also prefer to have things explained to them as opposed to figuring things out themselves.

#### Learning Profile 3: Solitary Autonomous Learners

Learners with this profile prefer to work and study on their own. They are autonomous learners who do not need extrinsic prompts, such as deadlines, to get them to study. They enjoy learning new things and learn for the sake of learning. Although they like to figure things out on their own, they also readily accept teacher explanations to help them understand something.

#### Learning Profile 4: Group Learners

While similar to Socially Motivated Learners, learners with this profile depend on the help of their classmates and they do not prefer to figure things out alone. However, they will push themselves to improve when faced with difficult tasks and also benefit from their own reflections of their performances.

The learning profiles discovered through this research project can be used to help guide and fine tune ILC course curricula and materials to better address the preferences of its students and promote student motivation.

#### References

Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2005). Doing Q methodology: theory, method and interpretation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 2*, 67-91.

## D. The Self Access Centre Learning Project (SALC)

**Project Coordinators:** Brian Morrison

**Committee members:** Atsumi Yamaguchi, Diego Navarro, Katherine Thornton, Keiko Takahashi, Jared Baierschmidt, Jo Mynard, Junko Baierschmidt, Matthew Kershaw, Satoko Kato, Tanya McCarthy, Yuki Hasegawa, Yuko Momata

### Introduction

The SALC research group has continued to build on previous project success in both project areas of research and materials development. This year has seen an increase in the number of working groups forming for greater project collaboration. This collaborative environment has extended beyond the confines of the SALC project to include members of other groups for consultation and for cross-project research and materials development.

### Research

The 2010-11 academic year has seen the largest number of research projects undertaken. The research ranges from aspects of learning advising and self access curriculum to matters of identity, learner development and attitudes.

A general overview of each project is presented below.

1. *Identity (re)formations of foreign language learners at the Self-Access Learning Center in Japan*  
*Atsumi Yamaguchi*

This study investigated the Self-Access Language Center's (SALC) impact on students' identity reformation at Kanda University of International Studies in relation to their English language study and their desire toward English in Japan. Whereas some studies shed light on second/ foreign language learners' and immigrants' struggles to negotiate their identities, none have explored whether or how foreign language learners experience "identity slippage" (Armour, 2000; 2001) in this kind of institutionalized English-spoken environment in Japan. This study focuses on KUIS students' positionalities exploring their "identity slippage". The overall goal of this study is to better understand discourses surrounding the learners at the SALC and expand the scope to larger discourses of desire toward English.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with four female students were conducted in the first semester of 2010. The interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes, were conducted twice with each student. The participants were students who often came to the SALC and had no extensive residential experience in English-speaking countries.

After the interviews, the themes of their interviews were elicited. According to the analysis undertaken to date, the themes turned out to be diverse for each participant. In fact, the interview data hinted at a diversity of desires for learning English and different degrees of *identity slippage*. Further analysis will be carried out and a full description of findings presented at the end of semester.

2. *Learning Advisors perceptions of the challenges of language counselling sessions*

*Brian Morrison & Diego Navarro*

This study set out to investigate how learning advisors (LAs) perceived their performance in face-to-face advising sessions. This was done through an analysis of the written comments they made as part of their professional development obligations. Informed consent was requested from all LAs past and present and documents from fourteen people were examined through the framework of Kelly's (1996) counselling skills. Comments from each document were isolated to evidence the use of these skills and how effective each LA felt these had been applied and to look for consistency of experience.

This investigation provided an insight into the perception advisors have of their advising sessions and the common areas they focus on using Kelly's skills as categories for analysis. Despite the diverse teaching experience LAs had before coming to KUIS it became apparent through this investigation that goal-setting, guiding, questioning and attending are perceived as particularly important and requiring attention. The findings also suggest that Kelly's skills require modification with the addition of negotiation of meaning, a skill implemented to provide clarification and focus.

3. *Exploring practical face-to-face advising strategies through Kelly's skills*

*Brian Morrison & Diego Navarro*

This research followed on from the above investigation of 14 learning advisors' perceptions of their performance in language advising sessions. It aimed to look

at the skills successfully applied by LAs to avoid problems during advising sessions, and the repair strategies implemented when issues do occur during face-to face advising. The outcome of this project consists of practical suggestions for strategies that LAs could use during advising sessions.

After examining the professional development observations of the 14 LAs participating in this study and their perceptions of the advising sessions, skills were identifying that were used with varying degrees of success. This research looks both how skills were deployed effectively or used to repair problems which had occurred and also takes from other disciplines where advising is a common discourse, such as in the health profession. A preliminary list of strategies for advisors to draw upon during advising sessions is being developed from this investigation and should be ready by the end of semester 2 when the analysis process is due for completion.

The list of strategies are meant as suggestions to ease the interactions and develop the LA-learner narrative rather than a list of targets to reach. The purpose is to offer preparation for effectual ways in which previously identified challenges can be avoided or managed more effectively. Future research may be undertaken to look at the practicalities of implementing these strategies with a view to refining and further developing these.

4. *Investigating the ubiquity of Kelly's counselling skills in written advising*  
*Brian Morrison & Diego Navarro*

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- Are Kelly's counseling skills appropriate for written advising?
- What is the balance of Kelly's skills within FSM?
- What language is used to realize Kelly's skills?

This research is designed to inform LAs of the balance of Kelly's skills used within FSM packs and the language used to activate these skills e.g. to guide, are imperatives or questions favoured? Do questions tend to be direct or indirect? The resulting breakdown into these categories will provide the framework for possible further investigation into writer intent and reader interpretation.

The research is being conducted using discourse analysis of LAs' comments from 40 FSM packs from semester 1 of 2010 – 2011. At the end of semester 1, five modules were collected and photocopied from all LAs. The process of transcribing and categorized these skills has started and is due to be finished by the end of semester 2.

##### 5. *Examining advising uptake*

*Katherine Thornton.*

A number of projects over recent years have looked to investigate the use and uptake of the advising service. Katherine Thornton (2010) looked at learners' perceptions of the advising service, and Tanya McCarthy (2010) attached herself to a freshman class to examine the effects of closer advisor contact with students on the rate of session uptake. This project was designed to see what kinds of contact or promotion encourages learner uptake of advising sessions. Taking data from the aforementioned questionnaire on perceptions of the advising service, the

following hypotheses were formed as to what may encourage students to visit advisors:

- Having a regular advisor attached to a class
- Having advisors visit classes to give more information about the advising service
- Providing students with a handout that they could bring to an advisor
- Offering a Japanese advising service

In Semester 1, Katherine Thornton attached herself to one of her First Steps Module Freshman classes and Katherine Thornton, Junko Noguchi and Keiko Takahashi made 6 class visits to CSK and English department classes to promote the advising service. The CSK classes were offered advising in Japanese.

A simple questionnaire was designed to investigate the reasons behind learner visits to the Learning Help Desk or Advising reservations. Advisors were asked to give this out to non-module students who came for advising sessions at the Learning Help Desk or through reservations.

As the data collection for this research is ongoing, no findings have yet been confirmed. At the end of the semester, an audit will be carried out to see if any visits to the advising service were from students belonging to the freshman classes which were visited in Semester 1, and the results of the questionnaire will be analysed.

6. *Students' perceptions on advising in self-directed study*

*Keiko Takahashi*

The Learning How to Learn Module (LHLM) is offered to all KUIS freshmen students in their second semester and is open to those who have completed the First Steps Module. During this module, learners receive guidance and support on their learning plans and the implementation of these through weekly written feedback and three compulsory one-by-one advising sessions. These sessions occur at the beginning after submitting their learning plan, in the middle after submitting their 5th diary, and at the end after submitting their final diary.

LHLM has been available since the second semester of 2004, however, no research has been done on how LHLM takers perceive advising sessions and their expectations toward these. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of advising on LHLM by comparing their perceptions before and after experiencing the sessions. This research aims to find answers to the following questions:

- What do the students think advising is about before they actually experience it?
- What do the students expect to gain from advising?
- How did they feel about advising after they experience it?
- Are there changes between the students' expectations of advising and their perceptions for advising?

Of the nineteen LHLM takers offered an opportunity to participate in the research, only four agreed to participate. The first data, their perceptions and expectations toward advising session, were collected through a questionnaire with open-ended

and closed-ended questions at the beginning of semester 2. However, one of the participants decided not to continue LHLM due to an increasing study workload.

The second data collection will be conducted mid-semester after the second advising session. The research tool is a questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questions, which seeks to uncover perceptions of advising and the changes between students' expectations and perceptions of this. Individual follow-up interviews will be conducted if necessary. Data analysis will begin after the second data collection. It is hoped that this case study of three freshmen learners will shed light on students' perceptions and expectations of advising, which also will inform both SALC–learner communication and advising sessions for LHLM.

7. *Effects of vocabulary journals on learner autonomy and quiz performance*

*Jared Baierschmidt*

Exploratory research conducted last year on the effects of vocabulary journals on learner autonomy showed that vocabulary journals seemed to encourage learner autonomy. This year's research is attempting to duplicate the results of last year's study. In addition, it is investigating whether there is a correlation between using the vocabulary journals and increased performance on vocabulary quizzes.

The research was composed of a control group and an experimental group. The control group class was conducted in the standard Media English format: new vocabulary words for each unit were assigned by the teacher in the form of a word list. Control group participants also had the opportunity to practice using the new words in an optional vocabulary exercise that accompanied each unit. A quiz that

tested productive use of the words was administered every two units to assess students' progress in acquiring the words.

Participants in the experimental group, in addition to receiving the word list for each unit, were also instructed in how to keep a vocabulary journal and how to effectively record vocabulary in the journal. Experimental group participants were introduced to and practiced the keyword method, semantic mapping, circumlocution, finding synonyms and antonyms, and recording collocations. After being introduced to each technique, experimental group participants were required to use the technique for all of the vocabulary words being studied in that particular unit. The journals were periodically checked to ensure the students were using the techniques correctly. Participants were also asked to reflect on their use of these techniques and record whether they found them helpful or not. Once experimental group participants had gone through this cycle of being introduced to the technique, practicing it, and reflecting on it, they had the choice as to whether to use the technique or not to record future vocabulary. Just as with the control group, experimental group participants were given vocabulary quizzes every two units, identical to the ones the control group took.

The journals have been collected and are being analyzed for evidence of autonomous learning behaviors, such as including words from sources other than the Media English word lists and the frequency of use of the various recording techniques taught in class. Additionally, quiz scores from both the control group and experimental group are being compared to see if keeping vocabulary journals had any measurable effect on quiz performance.

8. *Investigating criteria used to grade to First Steps Modules: Units 1-7*

*Junko Baiersmidt*

While the First Steps Module (FSM) is a voluntary module, freshmen can receive up to 10 points towards their English class in recognition of the time and effort given to this self-study course. However, although grading criteria exist for the FSM, little research has been done to understand how scores are actually awarded by learning advisors. The current grading criteria are divided into three categories, Reflections, First Step Activities and Learning Plan. Each category has a possible grade of 0–5, and the weighting is uneven. This research therefore aims to investigate what aspects of students' work in the module units are assessed and how these contribute to the final grade. The two categories this research is focusing on are Reflections and First Step Activities.

Think aloud protocol was carried out with eight LAs talking through their grading process as they gave final grades on the Reflections and First Steps Activities to three of their students at the end of semester 1. The recordings were collected at the end of first semester. The final comments in five grading sheets written for learners by each LA are also being analyzed to see if there are any other criteria that were not mentioned in recordings. The data is being analyzed and the analysis and preliminary results are expected at the end of second semester.

9. *Investigating criteria used to grade to First Steps Modules: Learning Plans*

*Junko Baiersmidt*

Due to the nature of grading categories for FSM, a further investigation has been designed to compliment the research above. This study has been separated from

the research above due to the time constraints of participants and the different focus of the criteria. While the above study looked at learner comments, answers and reflections in units 1-7, this study looks at the Learning Plan which, when done well, requires learners to draw from all 7 units and feedback from learning advisors to produce an 8-week Learning Plan. This research therefore aims to investigate what aspects of students' work in the Learning Plan are assessed and how these contribute to the final grade.

Data collection will be centred around think aloud protocol and written feedback sheets. The participants will be the same eight LAs talking through the grading process as they grade the Learning Plan to three of their students at the end of semester 2. This data will be collected in December 2010 / January 2011 and analysis is planned for the following year. A follow up project designed to amalgamate the findings in combination with a questionnaire is planned to investigate the criteria LAs perceive they use.

#### 10. *Listening Tasks for Self Access Learning*

*Matthew Kershaw*

This is an ongoing project to determine the type of tasks which are most appropriate for self-access authentic listening materials. The research has a number of aims, including:

- Investigating how students use listening materials available in the SALC
- What skills they incorporate when listening
- How (or if) they utilize accompanying task material
- What kind of tasks and exercises are most appropriate

The data that arises from the study will provide information on the actual learning outcomes of the listening learning materials in the SALC, and also how students approach listening tasks and what kind of tasks may be most beneficial to students. The information gathered will be used to inform future material development for the many listening sources in the SALC.

The data for the study is being collected in the form of surveys and interviews for students who are using the listening materials in the SALC, and also from 3rd and 4th year EISO students who have been taking a listening course. One data collection occurred mid-November and another is planned at the end of this semester. In total, there will be 35-40 surveys and 5-10 interviews. The report will be ready for dissemination in April 2011.

11. *Professional Development for Learning Advisors: Facilitating the self-reflection process through reflective dialogues*

*Satako Kato*

This research extends the previous study by Kato & Sugawara (2007) focusing on the advising tool, Wheel of Language Learning (WLL), which helps learners to reflect on their language learning. The WLL was created to 1) give visual support to learners, 2) help learners see the links between the areas, and 3) encourage learners to initiate the conversation in advising sessions. The WLL consists of six areas of self-directed study: goal-setting, materials selection, time-management, evaluation, learning strategies, and motivation. The study by Kato & Sugawara showed that the WLL had a positive influence on learners' reflection process and the potential to encourage learners to take action based on their reflective process.

The results showed, in general, that sessions between the student and the Learning Advisor (LA) became much livelier and longer when the WLL was used. In 2007, the first workshop was held to inform LAs of the concepts of WLL, and since then, the WLL has been used in the SALC modules by the majority of LAs.

In this research, the tool was used to help LAs reflect on advising sessions through reflective dialogues. Similar to the WLL, the new advising tool, the Wheel of Reflection, consists of six areas: advisor talk; questioning skills; listening skills; student talk; advice related to students' module work; and student satisfaction.

The aim of this research was to discover:

- whether the tool helped LAs' reflective process for advising sessions.
- whether the reflective dialogue had an influence on LAs' perception of their current and future advising practice.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with two new LAs who had never used the tool before and three experienced LAs who are familiar with the tool. The reflective dialogues were conducted one-to-one and audio recorded. The data will be analyzed after conducting the second interviews with the above LAs at the end of this semester. Results so far have shown that the reflective dialogues between LAs seem to provide an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness and professionalism of advising. It has also helped LAs to become more aware of how they interact with learners. Further research will be undertaken to identify how the advising tool and reflective dialogues can be effectively used and implemented in the LA training program.

## 12. *SALC Learning Course and the new Business English Module*

*Tanya McCarthy*

The SALC Learning Course, a classroom-based course, was held in the first semester for ILC students as an alternative to the First Steps Module (FSM) course. The activities in the FSM were used to structure the first 6 weeks of the course. They were adapted to fit the classroom environment, which encouraged more discussion and shared reflections. In the final 6 weeks of the class, students were asked to apply the study skills they had learned to their independent study. At the end of the semester, a questionnaire was given to students to get feedback on the class in areas such as amount of homework, level of difficulty and feelings about independent study. The questionnaire was translated and put on [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Results were shared with the team.

Unfortunately, the class was cancelled in the second semester; therefore, the intended update of teaching materials based on feedback and reapplication of the questionnaire as part of a continuation of the research has been postponed until the first semester of the next academic year. Results of feedback from both these first semesters will be compared.

The second semester research has therefore been refocused on the new Business Module, a self-access course, offered to students in the IC department (see SALC project materials development, below). A pilot study was conducted with 5 students over 4 weeks, and students were asked to give feedback on the module. A short questionnaire was used to collect feedback data on the new course. Results of the questionnaire will be used to help inform decisions about how and if the

Business module should be carried out in the first semester, 2011.

13. *Returnee students at KUIS and their use and expectations of the SALC*  
*Yuki Hasegawa*

The research questions were set as follows:

- How does KUIS cater for returnee students?
- Are the returnee students using the SALC? If yes, what do they usually do in the SALC?
- What does the returnee students expect from the SALC?

In the first semester, an interview was conducted with Mr. Matsushita from the Student Affairs Office to enquire about the current situation of the returnee students in KUIS. He was able to provide answer to my first research question along with a short history of English education at KUIS. As it was not possible for the Department of Entrance Exams to find out data regarding returnee students, enquiries were undertaken with teachers of higher tier Sophomore English classes for information about returnee students in their classes.

A questionnaire was made and sent to the returnee students as a pilot. Their answers were compiled on Survey Monkey. However, since the response rate was very low, SALC student staff members who lived overseas for more than a year were also asked to check the suitability of the question wording. The students did not seem to have any trouble with answering the questionnaire, so it has been concluded that the tool has the potential to be used with the target group.

After discussing the problematic response rate with some of the teachers, it was found that there was a range of students who did not fit in the category of returnees, yet were highly proficient in English. These students include students with at least one parent from an English-speaking country, students who were educated through an English-medium in international schools, or students who showed high proficiency in English without any obvious environmental advantage. This finding led to the decision to expand the research beyond returnee students to include all students who are proficient in English. The questionnaire will be remade and given to all freshman students in the high tier Freshman English classes as a paper-based questionnaire, which will later be compiled on Survey Monkey for analysis. Data collection and analysis is anticipated to be completed by the end of this semester. The results and findings will be used as the basis for further study of this target group in the following academic year.

### **Materials Development**

SRG members have been actively producing, piloting and modifying a range of materials and resources this academic year. The majority of materials have been designed to be used in the SALC but there is an increasing number of projects to cater for learners who would like to integrate technology into their language learning. As with previous years, materials have been designed for self-access learning; however, following feedback from the SALC student group, this year's material has also been devised to promote SALC use and raise awareness of the areas and resources within the SALC.

1. *SALC Modules*

*Atsumi Yamaguchi, Brian Morrison, Diego Navarro, Katherine Thornton, Keiko Takahashi, Jo Mynard, Junko Baierschmidt, Satoko Kato, Tanya McCarthy, Yuki Hasegawa*

Review and modification of First Steps, Learning How to Learn and Sophomore modules has continued to involve all Learning Advisors in the SALC project. This academic year, there has been a move to consider consistency of terms and to reduce the quantity while retaining the quality of the modules.

Preparing for your Future modules were designed and piloted last academic year. This has resulted in three versions of this module, one for each of the three main external exams: TOEIC, TOEFL and IELTS. This module was launched in semester 1 2010-2011 and the diagnostic test at the centre of each pack is informing other diagnostic tools, which are currently at the developmental stage.

2. *Effective use of magazines for the practice center*

*Atsumi Yamaguchi*

Many KUIS students seem to be highly motivated to improve their speaking ability. The aim to this project is to develop a set of speaking materials with which can help students to engage in speaking practice around specific topics in order to build background knowledge and confidence. The materials will revolve around the magazine resources currently available in the SALC. These are full of up-to-date articles about culture, international news, sports etc. along with accompanying audio CDs and pictures, thus catering for a variety of learning styles as well as a diversity of interests. By developing materials which will involve these resources,

the aim is to provide relevant prompts and ideas as a platform for speaking activities.

In order to understand their needs and current situations, a need analysis was conducted with six students and thirteen instructors during the first semester. The students were randomly chosen regardless of their grades as long as they had used the practice centre before. All instructors who contributed to the needs analysis worked at the practice center throughout the first semester. Based on these results of needs analysis as well as the limitation in relation to copyright issues (in the SALC, copyright is more strictly regulated than in classrooms), a poster which utilizes a number of bilingual magazines in the SALC as input resource will be developed. Students will be able to choose comfortable or challenging topics depending on their wants, interests and needs. The poster will demonstrate the procedure of how to utilize a magazine article. In addition, a worksheet in which students can write their target vocabulary and grammar as well as their reflections on the session will be developed as a sub-material.

### 3. *SALC Learning Course, Course Materials*

*Brian Morrison & Tanya McCarthy*

In 2009–10, the SALC was given approval for a credit-bearing course to be available to ILC students as a study option. During the second semester discussions between the ILC director and the SALC director resulted in course aims and objectives which approximated to the aims and objectives of the Freshman modules of FSM and LHL. However, the materials for the course needed to be adapted from their current format to be appropriate for classroom

use. The objective was therefore to develop materials with accompanying lesson plans which could be used in future classes.

Materials were modified from module ideas and class activities were developed throughout semester 1. As an ongoing process, notes were taken after material and activity use to reflect on the success of these. This will allow for more informed course design and implementation during subsequent classes. The course covered the following areas:

- WIN analysis and goal setting
- Learning activities
- Time management
- Selecting resources
- SURE Model
- Learning Plan development
- Implementation of the learning plan

Following feedback from the end of term questionnaire, changes were made when appropriate to the class materials.

#### 4. *Videocasts*

*Brian Morrison & Matthew Kershaw*

It has been acknowledged by the SALC team and raised by the SSC that a lot of students are unaware of the variety of materials in the SALC as well as the various ways they can be used, in other words learners do not always know which resources are available and options for using these resources to improve specific

skills. There is therefore a need to bridge this gap in a way which is accessible and easy to use; a need to both inform and disseminate information on resources and strategies.

With the popularity of mobile devices such as iPods, iPhones and iTouch as well as the newly launched SALC website for learners, it seems as if these could be appropriate platforms to inform and disseminate. Rather than only develop more worksheets and posters, the medium of videocasts is being explored to see if this medium is effective for certain students. The initial objective is therefore to develop videocasts in MP4 format for use on the SALC website and for podcast downloads.

The first videocast was scripted to provide 10 strategies for developing listening skills using materials and resources available in the SALC. The scripts were written and the video shot in semester 1. In semester 2, the first edit was done and music added. The final cut will be completed mid-December and available early 2011. Consultation with the SSC will then follow to consider how to approach the next videocast. The current proposal is to produce four videocasts, one for each skill. The anticipated date for all four is the end of semester 1, 2011-12.

#### 5. *Self-study speaking packs for IELTS*

*Brian Morrison*

Following on from the IELTS speaking packs written last year, three more have been added with exam rubric and task cards. This brings the total number of speaking packs to six covering a range of 18 topics. All speaking packs are on the

shelves and available.

6. *SALC Student Committee*

*Diego Navarro*

Work with the SALC student committee continues to progress smoothly with the LA conduit liaising between administration and the SRG. The SSC meets weekly to discuss various SALC promotional events as well as to come up with new ideas to help with the promotion of different SALC resources and materials. The committee has also been involved with the piloting and development of different materials which members of the SRG intend to make available in the near future. In addition to this work in materials and event promotion and development, the SSC has agreed to assist an ELI teacher in conducting a survey of KUIS students to gather information about the SALC (various perceptions of the SALC; how the SALC can be improved; etc.). This past semester the SSC has put on two events: the Summer party and the Halloween party which were extremely successful with hundreds of students coming in to the SALC; they have also completed a summer DVD recommendation section and are now currently updating to a winter DVD section.

7. *Be a Successful Independent Learner (BASIL) pack material development*

*Diego Navarro & Katherine Thornton*

When the SALC first opened, a set of materials was developed to accompany advising sessions. It was called BASIL – Be a Successful Independent Learner, and consisted of a basic needs analysis and a learning plan. The pack was rarely used however, and has not been updated along with other module and advising

materials in the SALC.

This revisiting of the BASIL project was designed to update the materials to reflect current practice among advisors, and was influenced by advisors' experiences advising in modules and through using similar materials in classroom based courses run by the SALC.

The following principles for BASIL were identified:

*Flexibility Students should be free to determine the level and depth of support from advisors and materials (eg. Different forms of interaction with advisors and different styles of learning plans/logs)*

*Clarity technical terms were to be avoided or simplified and procedures made clear through labeled stages*

*Promotion of metacognitive skills for Planning, Implementing, Monitoring, Evaluating independent learning*

It was decided that the BASIL pack should contain both core and optional activities. It is hoped that the final BASIL set will include four stages containing:

Planning:

WIN (wants interests needs) Analysis & Goal Setting (core)

Diagnostics (core)

Specific Diagnostic activities for each skill area (optional)

Learning Plans (optional)

Implementing:

- Learning Logs (optional)
- Strategy self-assessment sheets (optional)
- Strategy advice sheets (optional)
- Advising Records (optional)
- Time management activities (optional)
- SUR activity (optional)

Monitoring:

- Formats for regular reflection and modification (optional)

Evaluating:

- Worksheets evaluating your progress in language proficiency
- Worksheets for evaluating your progress as a self-directed language learner

Project progress

Various parts of the core and optional BASIL forms have been created and are at different stages of development. Most of the material has been piloted with students from an EISO class looking to develop self-directed learning skills.

The next step involves:

- Soliciting feedback from advisors
- Modifying materials to reflect the flexibility which BASIL requires (two types of materials: *structured and less structured*)
- Further piloting for clarity and accessibility.

The final components will be placed in the Learn How to Learn area of the SALC,

where they can be freely accessed by learners. Core packs will be made available in the advising rooms and at the Help Desk. It is hoped that the pack can be further revised or added to, informed by learners' and advisors' experiences.

8. *Vocabulary Journal Worksheets*

*Jared Baierschmidt*

Vocabulary journals have been shown to be an effective tool for getting learners to take charge of their own language learning. However, many learners record only information such as the definition and pronunciation of a word. While this information is obviously critical to learning the word, other techniques for recording words in vocabulary journals exist that can help learners both remember the words and use them correctly. Six vocabulary journal worksheets providing examples of five recording techniques are in development. These are designed to present a variety of options to learners when keeping a vocabulary journal by supplying alternative recording techniques such as the keyword method and semantic mapping, and by informing them about other information they can record about new words such as synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. These are all being piloted with classes of students and will be available in the SALC from the beginning of semester 1, 2011-12.

9. *SALC Website <http://eliscalc.org>*

*Jo Mynard*

Based on research conducted over the past two years and ongoing input from colleagues, the SALC student website has obtained its own domain and gradually increased in scope. Some of its functions are:

- to provide access to the online reservation system for Multi-Purpose Rooms, Speaking Booths and Learning Advisors
- to enable students to register for SALC workshops
- to enable students to register for SALC modules
- to inform students of events, facilities and services in the SALC
- to archive details of events
- to provide links to online resources
- to provide access to writing support services
- to provide access to digital copies of the SALC newsletter

The research and development is ongoing.

#### 10 *Writing resources for students*

*Jo Mynard*

Following on from research conducted into writing services over the past two years, the following has been achieved this year by the working group:

- The Writing Centre cards have been updated
- The Writing reservation system is completely online
- The SALC Online Forums for writing on Moodle have been promoted.
- The Online Writing Centre (OWC) was fully launched and has become as popular as the physical Writing Centre this year.

Members of the group are Jo Mynard, Phil Murphy, Rachael Reugg and Dirk McKenzie. Research continues.

11. *Studies in Self-Access learning Journal* (SiSAL Journal

<http://sisaljournal.org>)

*Jo Mynard*

(/si:sæl/) SiSAL Journal was launched in June 2010 and is a peer-reviewed, quarterly publication for those interested in the field of self-access language learning. The articles reflect the ongoing contributions to the field and are aimed at international researchers and practitioners. The scope of the journal incorporates self-access learning and skills support centres which aim to promote learner autonomy.

Editorial team members are: Jo Mynard (editor), Kentoku Yamamoto (Associate Editor), Diego Navarro, Katherine Thornton, Nathan Johnson and Jon Rowberry. The journal has a list of international advisors and reviewers.

Each issue so far has contained articles by current or former ELI members.

12. *Listening Top 10 pamphlet*

*Junko Baierschmidt*

The SALC has an array of pamphlets offering ideas for activities and resources to SALC users. Student requests and a gap in the available pamphlets led to the development of a Listening Top 10 handout. This includes 10 recommended materials for listening was created in semester 1 and is now available in the SALC.

13. *Websites for pronunciation practice*

*Junko Baierschmidt*

In order to provide students with a greater choice of pronunciation practice, internet searches are being undertaken to identify potential resources. Once identified, these will be added to the SALC website. The target is five interactive pronunciation websites by the end of semester 2. To date, the two following websites have been added to the ELI/SALC official website (<http://elisalc.org/category/practice-activities/pronunciation/>)

- English Central (<http://www.englishcentral.com/>)
- Type phonetic symbols (<http://ipa.typeit.org/>)

14. *Movie Journals*

*Junko Baierschmidt*

Movie journals are a set of three different worksheets each of which is designed to help students self-directed learn through movies. They include activities that students can do to learn vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation while watching a movie with guidelines for use and space for target language record keeping in order for some systematizing of and reflection on learning. It is anticipated that such worksheets will encourage students to use movies more effectively for learning English systematically.

There are many students at KUIS who watch movies and the SALC resources and facilities for movies are popular. Many students have stated that they started to learn English because they wanted to be able to understand what the characters are saying in the movies. Of these learners, one goal is to be able to understand

the movie without subtitles. However, many students just watch movies just for fun, perhaps because they are unsure of how to use this resource for effective learning. While there is nothing wrong with watching a movie for fun, providing tools to develop language learning skills can combine learning with entertainment.

Drafts of the worksheets have been made. Vocabulary worksheets will be trialed in a freshman English class and revised by the end of semester according to the students' feedback. Grammar worksheets and pronunciation worksheets will be trialed by 5 students from the same class with an anticipated modification by the end of semester.

15. *SALC Newsletter*

*Keiko Takahashi*

The SALC Newsletter has been published since 2001 for the purpose of promoting the SALC. For the first issue in the academic year 2010-11, the new editing team consists of an ELI teacher, a SALC Assistant Manager and a Learning Advisor. The team decided to focus content on those working both in the SALC and the ELI communities as well as activities within these communities.

The contents of the newsletter include the following features for each issue: *World Travels*, *Recommendation*, *Top 5*, *My Learning Strategies*, *People in the SALC*, and *SALC English*. *World Travels* is based on an interview with an ELI teacher about their travel experiences. The audio files and/or or video of the complete interviews are available in the SALC. New SALC materials are introduced in the *Recommendation* section. Occasionally, a list of top five popular SALC materials is presented in *Top 5*. The Learning Advisors are introduced both in *My Learning*

*Strategies and People in the SALC. SALC English* contains tips for English language use in the SALC.

Two issues were published in July and November, 2010. Two more issue will be published in January and April in 2011. Archives are kept by the SALC Assistant Manager.

Members of the group are Keiko Takahashi, Nathan Johnson and Tomoko Hoshi

16. *Interview Lessons: Teachers as Students*

*Matthew Kershaw & Diego Navarro*

A series of lessons has been developed based on interviews with KUIS teachers in order to offer students another interesting and motivational way to study independently in the SALC. The four interviews focus on the experiences each teacher has had learning foreign languages. The interviews were filmed in a production studio and edited using iMovies. Each interview focused on the following four topics: 1) what languages the teachers have studied, 2) how and where they studied those languages, 3) an anecdote where they have experienced misunderstanding or miscommunication in a foreign language, 4) advice for KUIS students about studying languages.

The worksheets that accompany the videos are designed to offer the students the opportunity to utilize the lessons for any of the main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students are made aware that they can do as many or as few of the exercises as they like, and are encouraged to think about which areas

and skills they need to improve on and carry out the appropriate tasks.

Each lesson includes a transcript of the interview and in addition to the general exercises there are also more analytical activities which aim to raise awareness of pronunciation, grammar and discourse features in natural spoken English.

The interviews and lessons will be available individually on the SALC computers and the SALC website, and a DVD containing all four interviews will also be available. The first lesson has been completed and is being piloted, the second is progressing as anticipated and will be released by the end of this semester, the third in April 2011 and the fourth in May 2011.

17. *Self-evaluation worksheet for speaking skill*

*Satoko Kato & Yuki Hasegawa*

This workbook introduces a step-by-step procedure of self-evaluation for speaking skills that students can easily use. It's a 5-page workbook which breaks down the speaking skills into 5 sections: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and accuracy. Students are asked to 1) decide what type of speaking skills they want to work on; 2) come up with a topic they want to talk about; 3) record a conversation for 3 to 5 minutes with a teacher/LA/friend, or by themselves; and 4) listen to the recording and give a score to each section, ranging from 1 to 5. It is a very basic strategy that can be applied to any proficiency level student. It can also be used as a pre-advising session activity to make the session more effective.

As a pilot, this worksheet was given to my Learning How to Learn Module students.

The students were asked to use the worksheet to check their level of speaking proficiency before starting their study with the module. It is planned that students will use the worksheet again to check their level at the end of the module as an evaluation of their improvement. This material will be displayed at the SALC Oral Communication section by the end of this semester.

18. *Materials for the new Business English Module*

*Tanya McCarthy*

In semester 2, a new self-access Business module was introduced and offered to business students. This module is voluntary and linked to language learning for business communication. A new module pack has been created for this self-access course and is currently being piloted with 5 students. Feedback will inform changes to this module and a revised module will be available for the academic year 2011-12.

19. *Learning with Comics materials*

*Yuki Hasegawa*

Three materials are being created which students can use to enhance their English learning using comics. They are as follows: 1) how to create a vocabulary notebook, 2) how to create a grammar notebook, 3) speaking/writing prompt cards. For both material 1) and 2), examples are created for the students to follow.

With the first material, students will 1) copy and paste a picture from a comic which contains an unknown word, 2) look up a dictionary for information such as pronunciation, frequency, synonyms, and collocations, and 3) make their own

sentences using the new word and also add any sentences if they hear or see the word being used elsewhere. Suggestions of dictionaries to use are also noted on the example. The suggested dictionaries are Collin's Cobuild Learners' Dictionary to search for frequency and Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English to search for words that collocates.

With the second material, students will 1) decide on a grammar point that they would like to study and make notes using any source of their choice, 2) copy and paste a picture from a comic which contains their target grammar point as they read, and 3) make their own sentences using the target grammar point and also add any sentences if they hear or see the target grammar point being used elsewhere.

With the final material, there are 31 series of questions related to comics which students can use them as speaking or writing prompts. The questions are general and do not require students to have prior knowledge on any particular comic. For example, "Recommend your favorite comic to your friend", "If you can have any one of the character in any comic to be your friend, who would you choose? Why?", or "Why do you think Japanese comics are popular in other countries?".

All the materials were piloted in the SALC workshop on November 10th, 2010. It was generally well received by the students and they seemed to especially enjoy using the third material. The materials will be redesigned by the Production Designers, display will be discussed with the Assistant Managers, and the materials should be available for students from January 2011.

## **The Future**

The SALC research group has grown in size and scope as the SALC has developed and matured. Innovative projects have built on and evolved from the work undertaken by previous members. Many of the SALC research group are currently writing articles and preparing to present their work at national and international conferences. These activities, a forthcoming book on advising, the SiSAL Journal and the KUIS SALC autonomy conference planned for 2011 will provide increased opportunities for SALC research group members to make the most of greater interest in the SALC at KUIS.

## **E. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Project Annual Report**

**Project coordinator:** Dirk MacKenzie

**Committee members:** Jason Ropitini, Joachim Castellano, Joe Geluso, Lara Promnitz-Hayashi, Thomas Lockley

### **Introduction**

The role of the CALL project is to study, enhance and facilitate the use of technology in the various KUIS English curricula. CALL committee members thus divide their time between research, materials development and technology support. Our major focus has been Moodle, our course-management system, but this year CALL members incorporated a variety of other dimensions of technology in language learning in their work.

This was our 10th year. We continued the CALL-representative system that was launched last year, sharing tech support duties among the group and building stronger connections with the other research projects as we collaborated on various materials development projects. Representatives were assigned as follows:

BEPP English: Lara Promnitz-Hayashi

BEPP IC: Joe Geluso

BEPP ILC: Joachim Castellano

Basic Skills: Jason Ropitini

Advanced Skills: Jason Ropitini

SALC: Thomas Lockley

KEPT, ELI management and KUIS faculty: Dirk MacKenzie

## Research

CALL members conducted a variety of research projects this year, many of them collaborative in nature. **Lara Promnitz-Hayashi** and **Thomas Lockley** conducted a questionnaire to investigate freshman students' current and past competence with technology, with a particular focus on computer usage. Due to the large amount of data collected, it was decided to look in detail at certain aspects, with the aim of forming a holistic picture of the situation.

Lara Promnitz-Hayashi used the questionnaire data from two English department Freshman English classes with the aim of looking at students' technological background prior to entering KUIS and their use of technology at KUIS. What students like and dislike doing on computers in the classroom was also

investigated. Follow up interviews with ten students from each class were conducted where students discussed their computer use in class, what types of activities they enjoy and what activities they would like to have incorporated more into their classes. These findings will be presented at GloCALL in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia in December with the aim of a paper being submitted for publication.

Thomas Lockley used the data about pre-university technology usage to compose a paper entitled “Japanese students’ experience of ICT and other technology prior to university, a survey”. The aim was to inform teachers, learning advisors and universities how best to manage curricula and use of ICT in class. The paper looks into actual reported technology experience and compares it with observed problems experienced by teachers of freshman students. It concludes that students often appear to be less experienced than they actually are, a variety of factors may account for this, and it is hoped to look at these in more detail during the next academic year.

**Jason Ropitini** and **Dirk MacKenzie** looked at patterns of interaction and aspects of learner autonomy (especially decision making) in a series of BLS lessons in their respective Freshman English classes. Their data collection involved questionnaire data, audio and video recording of each group of students, and video screen capture on each laptop to capture large-scale and small-scale patterns of interaction simultaneously. In addition, key-logging software was employed to capture all keystrokes entered on laptop keyboards. The two video sources were edited together and synced with the audio recording, and the keystrokes were added as subtitles, producing a video document of each group’s

activity. The videos will be used for think-aloud protocols with groups to reveal factors influencing their interaction and decision making. Dirk MacKenzie is scheduled to present preliminary findings at GloCALL 2010 in December.

**Joachim Castellano** and **Adam Slobodnuik** conducted a study evaluating Joachim Castellano's Mac and Media Production workshops from the spring semester 2010. The research, which looked at the particular technology training needs and preferences of the ELI, dictated the redeployment of the workshops in the fall semester. Adam Slobodnuik led the research portion of this study, interviewing participants and conducting surveys. After analyzing data from the fall, Castellano and Slobodnuik have made several modifications to the workshop program. The bi-monthly workshops are now offered twice a day to accommodate more members of the ELI. An ELI wide survey determined the selection of topics. Finally ELI members can now formally schedule individual consultations for tech support, as Joachim has published his schedule online. The results of this study will be presented at JALT 2010 in Nagoya, in a paper entitled "Innovate Confidently: Tech Support 2.0".

**Joe Geluso** has been examining the interface of grammatical language and natural language. He is investigating whether or not the use of Google-based internet searches can help students to use language which a native speaker of English would perceive as being more "natural". Joe is testing the hypothesis that phrases which appear more frequently on the web (i.e., generate more results in Google searches) will be perceived by native speakers of English as being more natural. Students in Joe's writing class have been instructed to perform Google

searches on phrases they suspect are unnatural or ungrammatical. The students are to record the number of results such phrases generate when searched within quotation marks, tweak the phrase, search again, record the number of results again, and so on. The version of the phrase that generated the most results is the version that they are to use in their writing. 294 sentences have been collected over the course of first semester, and according to Joe 93% of these phrases have improved or demonstrated no change. Once data from the second semester has been collected, Joe plans to enlist the help of other teachers to rate the naturalness of the pre- versus post-Google sentences on a semantic variation scale. The research aims to shed light on whether or not there is a correlation between the number of results generated by Google and perceptions of naturalness among English teachers.

## **Materials development**

### ***Spring semester***

The following materials were produced in the spring semester, many of them in collaboration with other research projects:

- Customized Excel workbook tracking Basic Reading semester 2 credit accumulation (Jason Ropitini)
- Student manual for using voice recorders (Joachim Castellano)
- Annotated Moodle screenshot (Joe Geluso and Dirk MacKenzie)
- Student manual for creating a Moodle account (Lara Promnitz-Hayashi)
- Simple guide (for students) to getting started with computers in your writing class (Thomas Lockley)

Wherever appropriate, these materials were uploaded to the CALL blog

(<http://kandacall.wordpress.com/>).

### ***Fall semester: CALL competencies project***

In the fall semester we focused on CALL competencies—an area that had generated interest in our spring semester reading discussions. We decided on three-stage approach:

1. Compile an exhaustive list of CALL competencies in consultation with ELI members and KUIS students.
2. Organize those competencies into a framework and publish it online.
3. Compile self-access materials that target those competencies.

This way, students (and teachers) can self-access materials for self-study and teachers can adapt them for classroom use. We started with a list of competencies published by former IRP coordinator Michael Fitzgerald in the RILS&LE journal (2005). We are at stage one at the time of writing.

### **Technology support**

CALL members led two orientation sessions this year: a BLS orientation and a Moodle orientation for new ELI teachers.

CALL representatives provided technology support to their assigned project members over the year, helping them get set up with new Moodle courses, troubleshooting student enrollment glitches, etc.

### **Looking ahead**

There is interest in the ELI in the MoodleReader module presented by Thomas Robb at KUIS in October. Also, Phil Murphy and Dirk MacKenzie, in consultation with the CALL group and various other stakeholders, are working on a comprehensive teacher survey regarding technology at KUIS that is aimed at improving access to technology across campus for everyone—an increasingly important issue for ELLers.

### **References**

Fitzgerald, M. (2005). Learning and teaching with technology through a project-based course. *Studies in Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 16. 23-35.

## **F. The Kanda Assessment Project (KAP)**

**Project coordinators:** Dennis Koyama (KACE / KEPT) and Erik Fritz (Classroom Assessment)

**Committee Members:** Angela Sun, Chris Kowalchuk, Damian Rivers, Donald Patterson, Emily Ryan, Nathan Johnson, Yuko Sugiyama, and Gary Ockey (Assistant Director of the ELI: Assessment)

### **INTRODUCTION**

This year the Kanda English Placement Test (KEPT) committee changed its name to the Kanda Assessment Project (KAP) committee. This change was made to better reflect the new directions of assessment in the ELI. This change in

name was accompanied with a change in committee makeup, specifically, the development of two subcommittees: the testing committee and the classroom assessment committee. This subcommittee structure is used to control for differing purposes and foci. The KAP team works together throughout the year on a variety of issues, but they each maintain a research agenda separately.

The classroom assessment committee spent most of its time and energy on developing new rubrics for assessing presentations, and they will give workshops and presentations throughout the year based on their research. The testing committee on the other hand, spent much of its efforts and resources creating the new integrated skills test for the ILC curriculum (The Kanda Assessment of Communicative English, or KACE), and maintaining forward progress and improvements on the KEPT test for the English department. The testing committee will present at JALT 2010 on the new ILC KACE test as an example of integrated skills testing.

## **COMMITTEE RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### **Classroom Assessment**

The classroom assessment group is made up of three members: Erik Fritz, Emily Ryan and Donald Patterson. During the first semester the three members researched about rubric design and implementation. The three members worked collaboratively to create rubrics for their classes. The insights gained and challenges faced when designing rubrics for a variety of assignments will be discussed in a professional workshop. In addition, Emily Ryan will be presenting with Erik Fritz at JALT Nagoya on the topic of “assessing presentations.” The

presentation will highlight the process of collaboratively designing rubrics for presentations with both teachers and students. Currently all three members are in the process of developing a research proposal to be carried out the following year.

In addition, suggestions on amending the writing rubric for the KEPT academic writing section were proposed by Erik Fritz, Rachael Ruegg and Yuko Sugiyama.

### **Testing Committee**

This year's test will be conducted by department. The English department will take the KEPT, which has a warm-up speaking activity, a group oral exam, and an academic writing component. The ILC will take a new integrated skills test designed to better align with the curriculum and with significant input from the ILC faculty leader (Dr. Bruce Horton), the ILC coordinator (Ashley Moore) and much needed support and contributions from the ILC committee members (Adam Slobodniuk, Glichelle Pereyra, Kentoku Yamamoto, Simon Cooke, and Trang Nguyen). This year's integrated skills test will be video mediated, and Joachim Castellano completed all of the editing. The work completed this year was very much a collaborative effort, and is hopefully a sign of the way forward in Kanda's future test development efforts.

In addition to the new test format, new bubble cards were developed with input from ELI instructors. The new bubble cards are expected to maximize time in the group oral test. The new cards accommodate for two sets of ratings to be given to one student, so each student can receive one set of ratings for completing a description task, and another set of ratings for their language ability and

participation in the group oral discussion.

### **The KEPT (The English department's group oral and academic writing test)**

Preparing KEPT administration required:

- a) Creating a new speaking task as a warm up for English department students who are taking the group oral.
- b) Amending and adapting speaking prompts
- c) Creating new writing prompts
- d) Changing/piloting revisions to the writing bands

### **The KACE (The ILC curriculum's new integrated skills test)**

Preparing the KACE administration required:

The KACE Listening team (Angela Sun, Yuko Sugiyama) completed the following:

- 1) A Reviewed ILC curriculum
  - a) Goals/objectives
  - b) Classroom tasks
  - c) Old KEPT-prep activities on the server
- 2) Critiqued old tests (Mexico 2006 and Argentina 2010)
  - a) Watched videos for a meta perspective of:
    - i) Context
    - ii) Lexical difficulty
    - iii) Nonverbals
  - b) Analyzed questions and options for:
    - i) Question type (global/local)

- ii) Talled question types and word usage (i.e., word lists for frequency breakdowns)
- 3) Wrote scripts for listening passages (based on pilot done before summer break)
  - a) Wrote 4 character-passages
    - i) Realistic situations, casual dialogue
  - b) Wrote 2 anchor items
    - i) One anchor is an “academic presentation”, another is a “monologue”
- 4) Developed items
  - a) Wrote multiple choice (MC) items
  - b) Brainstormed new productive task (may–or may not–be used in the future pending piloting and ILC departmental needs)
- 5) Filmed video (with Joachim Castellano)
  - a) Selected actors
  - b) Distributed and discussed script with actors, revised w/actors’ input
  - c) Filmed video for editing
- 6) Revised items
  - a) Viewed video
  - b) Adjusted items
  - c) Discussed items with ILC coordinator (Ashley Moore)
- 7) Piloted video and items (with Hiroshima and Kumamoto)
  - a) Redesigned booklet according to pilot data

The KACE Literacy team (Chris Kowalchuk and Nathan Johnson) completed the following:

- 1) Contributed input, insights, to the development of new productive items
- 2) Met testing coordinator and ILC coordinator for brainstorming, consultation, and clarification regarding the objectives for the Literacy Section in light of ILC curriculum needs.
- 3) Met with Assistant Director (Gary Ockey) for consultation with passage and item development.
- 4) Coordinated with the KACE listening team to synchronize narrative consistency throughout integrated sections of the new KACE test.
- 5) Completed passages for the KACE Literacy section.
- 6) Completed items for KACE Literacy section.
- 7) Helped with filming for listening section prompts.
- 8) Designed and formatted Literacy section pilot booklet.

Leading up to the January and March administrations of the test, norming sessions were carried out for both the writing scales and the speaking scales. This was also done to accommodate for new sections of the KEPT group oral, and to accommodate raters who are working with the new ILC KACE test. Norming sessions are necessary elements to a testing program as they have been shown to improve the validity and reliability of the scores.

As a team, the testing committee decided to present much of the work outlined above. With the idea that Kanda puts theory into practice on a daily basis, the title “Testing in Practice: An Integrated Skills Approach” seemed fitting for presentation at JALT 2010 in Nagoya.

This presentation discussed the recent attention to a dynamic approach of language assessment called integrated skills testing. A major benefit of the integrated skills approach is that it allows for the assessment of language use in real world conditions. This means that an examinee will be required to comprehend input then create an appropriate response, rather than assessing language areas in isolation. This integrative approach employs some combination of language skill areas (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, and listening) to construct a response. This method is often seen as a more authentic form of assessment as language is rarely used in isolated skill sets.

Specifically, the presentation noted the changes made and tasks under development towards the incorporation of integrated skills assessment at Kanda. One example of this change is the email task. The integration of a written response (a hand written response) requires students to read an email, comprehend it, and then appropriately construct a response. This was incorporated in the KACE to better reflect tasks done in the classroom. This integrated skills approach is also seen in the group oral where the ILC curriculum requested the incorporation of data interpretation through graph and picture explanations, which were all added to the general task of a group discussion. Making KACE an integrated test allows the students to respond in a format that is not only more realistic but also more informative in the score reporting. One purpose of the testing format changes is to allow for score reporting that provides more specific data and information to the stakeholders, which naturally includes the students.

Ongoing discussions with the ILC curriculum center on gathering information and

feedback surrounding the form and content of the KACE. Indeed, improvements to test design and score use are key in all discussions about the KACE.

## **G. Basic Skills Research Project**

### **Annual Report**

**Project Coordinators:** Craig Langdon

**Committee members:** Karen Hoshino, Richard O'Loughlin, Jaclyn Pitts, Troy Rubesch, Michael Shanley, Shelley Wright.

#### **A. Basic Reading**

##### **First Semester**

The Basic Skills committee continued to develop the Basic Reading curriculum during the first semester. Of particular concern to the committee was the balance of the question types across the episodes. Previous research had indicated that there was not an appropriate mix of question types throughout the episodes. Committee members began to rectify this by making changes to the comprehension questions while paying close attention to the original aims of the programme as detailed by Professor Frank Johnson, the author and creator of the Basic Reading course at Kanda University of International Studies.

The committee also worked on the addition of preview/review exercises for all of the episodes in the first semester and gathered feedback from teachers as to the effectiveness or value of the exercises. PowerPoint answer keys for the first semester were developed by Craig Langdon and made available for all teachers .

Furthermore the committee worked on updating the exercises in each episode based on feedback from teachers and committee members. The committee made decisions on the final changes to the material collectively and significant improvements were made.

In the first semester the committee met with Professor Chris Candlin in his role as consultant to the ELI to get feedback on research and curriculum development. Professor Frank Johnson was also able to provide valuable input during his visit to the ELI in the second semester. The coordinator of the Basic Skills Committee met with Professor Candlin in the second semester to get feedback on the progress of the committee's research to date.

### **Second Semester**

The second semester of Basic Reading saw the addition of an sophisticated Excel spreadsheet for the dual purpose of assisting teachers in recording student activities and for the committee to gain insight into which activities are being used and conversely, which are not. This spreadsheet will provide valuable data enabling decisions about material development to be made according to the statistical evidence obtained by the end of the second semester.

This spreadsheet was developed by Jason Ropitini in his role as the CALL committee liaison. After feedback from the committee in the previous year, it has been modified and made available for all Basic Reading teachers this year.

Vocabulary tests developed by Craig Langdon were made available to all teachers

on the Basic Reading program. These vocabulary tests are still in a process of development but it is hoped that they will provide the committee with evidence of the vocabulary acquisition of KUIS students.

### **Committee Members**

Troy Rubesch, Richard O'Loughlin and Craig Langdon looked at the benefits of introducing an extensive reading program to the Basic Reading curriculum. Their plan is to increase the amount of input for students through the implementation of such a program. In the first semester, they met weekly to conduct an investigation of the literature on comparable extensive reading programs. They then developed appropriate materials and activities which were trialled in the second semester. They are currently gathering data from students through reading logs in which students record their daily extensive reading activities and through records of regular "accountability activities" in which students share their knowledge and opinions about the books they read with their peers. The committee members' research to date has focused on the most efficient and effective way to put an extensive reading program into practice given (1) the abilities, needs and interests of 1st year students, (2) the resources available in the SALC, (3) the support offered by learning advisors, and (4) the necessity of incorporating a degree of flexibility into the program which has to accommodate a variety of teaching and learning styles, values, and beliefs about reading pedagogy and the nature of language learning. The researchers hope to use the results of this research to implement the extensive reading program into the Basic Reading curriculum from 2011.

Jaclyn Pitts is developing a questionnaire which seeks to explore the reading

habits of first-year students in the English Department. Of particular interest are the reading habits of students outside the academic environment. She hopes to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' reading habits in terms of blogs, manga and other non-traditional formats. It is her belief that materials development in the Basic Reading program should focus on material which has high levels of L1 reading motivation for students. This level of motivation may in turn result in transfer to motivation levels for reading in students' L2. Her research also investigates students' reading habits in different modes of reading. This research, therefore, investigates the possibility of incorporating reading material on to portable devices, such as a smartphone (i.e. the Samsung Galaxy), and how this would integrate with students' current reading habits.

Michael Shanley is examining the role of multi-word units in the vocabulary studies of students in their first year in the English department at KUIS. He is currently investigating the acquisition of lexical phrases and how learners might best study these language items. His work began with a definition of 'multi-word unit' and continued by identifying important lexical items for students to learn. Lecturers who work in the ELI come from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds and Michael has used this as a valuable asset in his research. By asking a number of different lecturers, he formed an idea of which lexical phrases would be most appropriate to teach students seeking to operate within a 'worldwide network of communication' (ELI Handbook, 2009). His research investigates the most effective method for teaching these lexical phrases to KUIS students and how this might be incorporated into the current curriculum.

Craig Langdon presented on his research on the inclusion of appropriate vocabulary in the Basic Reading programme at ASIA TEFL 2010. His presentation focused on the continuing development of the lexical items contained in the Basic Reading course and how these items are being changed based on current beliefs about language learning.

### **Aims for 2010/11**

The committee intends to continue to assess the value of the preview/review exercises from the first semester and develop them accordingly. It is hoped that these exercises will enable teachers to establish an effective learning environment, engage readers with the text and support the skills needed to help readers identify main ideas (Grabe, 2009). The first semester episodes will also be evaluated and adapted accordingly. The committee plans to develop the material available in the second semester based on data gathered this year. Material which has not been frequently selected by students will be assessed and potentially replicated. Material not selected will be assessed and the committee will decide whether the material needs to be either adapted or replaced entirely. Data will also be gathered on the time taken by students to complete activities.

### **B. Basic Writing**

The committee has started building a folder of exemplars of student work for both incoming teachers and current teachers in order to gain a better understanding of the expected standard of work for students throughout the year and across different tiers. It is hoped that by gathering these sample essays and paragraphs and grouping them according to unit and tier that teachers will be better able to

gauge the appropriateness of material and develop supplementary material to scaffold units for those students in the lower tiers or to challenge those students in the higher tiers.

One critical issue which has arisen is the nature of the audience for the paragraphs and essays which students produce throughout the year. Committee members have begun to look at a variety of methods to build a sense of community and create more accountability on the part of the students in the classroom.

Committee members have added a variety of communicative activities to the Basic Writing units including warm-up activities and discussion activities. The teachers guide has also been improved to include advice on how to encourage students to communicate about the writing process as well as their final product.

### **Committee Members**

Shelley Wright is focusing on the role of audience in Basic Writing classes. Encouraged by the talk given to the ELI during the first semester by Professor Paul Matsuda entitled 'Teaching writing to Japanese Learners of English' in which he discussed ways to make writing assignments engaging for students and teachers, she investigated the effect of making individual student work accessible for the entire class rather than just the teacher. Her hypothesis is that by re-imagining the typically negative concept of peer pressure, a term which usually has negative connotations, in a positive manner, her students will be motivated not only to improve the quality of their work, but also to submit their essays in a timely manner knowing that their classmates will be reading them. Her goal is to

show that material within the Basic Writing curriculum can meet the objectives required while also encouraging communication and interaction between students. Shelley Wright and Craig Langdon presented on this topic at JALT 2010.

Karen Hoshino has been researching the effect of blogging on the collegiality of a Basic Writing class. She has been using a blog as part of her curriculum and has found encouraging results in terms of interaction between students. She believes that a class blog will also assist students in developing necessary technology skills. Her research is qualitative in nature and she aims to explore the nature of the interactions on the blog between students as well as between the teacher and the students. It is her hypothesis that the use of blogs which stimulate discussion amongst students about their writing will foster a greater sense of collegiality and collaborative learning in writing classes. To date she has noted that students seem to be processing the material on the blog more deeply than in face to face interactions. For example, students commented on their classmates' essays in a positive and encouraging manner and now pay attention to both personal information in the essays as well as writing skills and the content of the essay.

Jaclyn Pitts is seeking to investigate peer feedback in the Basic Writing course. Her main goal in this research is to explore the value students at KUIS place on peer feedback and how their confidence in giving feedback might affect the quality and quantity of the feedback given. In the early stages of her project, she is currently reviewing appropriate and relevant literature on the subject.

### **Aims for 2010/11**

The committee aims to continue to develop the material in order to facilitate more communication between students throughout the writing process. It is intended for students to discuss both **what** they are writing as well as **how** they are writing. It is important in the classroom to emphasize both the social nature of writing as well as more cognitively oriented aspects. The current material pays close attention to the need to develop students 'metacognitive awareness of their processes, that is, their ability to reflect on the strategies they use to write' (Hyland, 2003) but would be improved by an additional focus on the communication of ideas while developing writing across different drafts. For that purpose, the committee plans to develop material which carefully balances the need for students to be introduced to new concepts in the Basic Writing classes (i.e. thesis statements) while ensuring that they discuss the chosen topic they are writing about.

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## H. The Advanced Skills Committee – 2010 Year-End Report

**Project Coordinator:** Rachael Ruegg

**Committee members:** Siwon Park, Masaki Kobayashi, Asa Brinham, Daniel Jenks, Luke Rowland, Matthew Finlayson

### INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Skills research committee oversees materials development and research for two of the second-year courses in the English department: Advanced Reading (AR) and Advanced Writing (AW). This year, the materials which were already on the server were edited and organized in addition to creating a substantial number of new materials for both AR and AW. Furthermore, a second textbook was selected for AW, *Basic Steps to Writing Research Papers*.

### ADVANCED READING (AR)

#### Curriculum Development

- **Course objectives** – The objectives for the AR course have been revised based on discussions within the group.
- **Quizzes** – A number of quizzes have been developed for use with the *Academic Encounters* textbook in the Intensive component of Advanced Reading. The quizzes use a wide range of different question types including: cloze, multiple choice, matching and open-ended questions. The quizzes are designed to test not only comprehension of vocabulary but also of the book's content. Materials (an activity handout and a student information sheet) were also developed for

the creation of student-generated quizzes.

- **Textbook support**– A number of materials have been produced to supplement the Intensive Reading textbook, *Academic Encounters*. These include text-based class activities which can be used (or at least adapted for use) with any chapter of the book or with other reading texts such as; review presentations, pair reading guides and reading group activities. A number of supplementary texts have been collected (mostly news articles) relating to the topics covered in *Academic Encounters*. Along with these supplementary activities there are discussion and presentation tasks.
  
- **Reading discussion**– Several materials have been developed to facilitate discussion amongst students about reading. They include an introduction to language and model questions to use when talking about books, a “Recommendabook” discussion activity, and a selection of different ways in which students can present and exchange ideas about books they have read independently.
  
- **Reading circles** – This year, some teachers have introduced reading circles into the Extensive Reading component of AR. An information sheet has been developed which introduces students to reading circles. It is available on the shared server.
  
- **Other**– Supplementary materials have been developed for use with Harry Potter, Misery, and E.T. In addition to this, a group poster presentation

activity, several warm-up activities, lesson reflection sheets and student produced materials, including book advertisements, book swap question sheets and an audiobook production project have been developed and added to the shared server.

## **Research**

### The effects of text selection on learner attitudes towards extensive reading

Asa Brinham and Daniel Jenks examined the effects of text selection on learner attitudes towards extensive reading. While a variety of methods of selecting reading material for extensive reading are available, and while there is some debate as to whether students or teachers are in the best position to judge the suitability of texts, there has been less discussion concerning the process of how (given the chance) learners go about choosing their extensive reading texts. The intention of this study was to look into how students are choosing their books for the extensive reading component of the Advanced Reading course. Specifically, the aim was to investigate how students' methods of selection affect their attitudes towards or perceptions of extensive reading. What effect do different methods have on learner attitudes towards the specific materials read; and the value of extensive reading in general? Subsequently, is it possible to recommend one method of text selection that facilitates the goal of encouraging the enjoyment of reading more than others?

After a review of the literature, an initial open questionnaire was administered on Moodle, asking students how they choose their books for Extensive Reading. Based on the findings from the first questionnaire, a follow-up multiple choice

survey was carried out. Data from both of these was then used to categorize questions for an on-line survey which was conducted 3 times during the first semester and twice during the second semester. Three Advanced Reading Classes participated.

Preliminary findings indicate that students generally attempt to exercise their own judgment when choosing books, basing their choices on factors such as whether the book's topic or genre interests them, and whether the level of the book seems appropriate to them. The importance of superficial factors like the book's cover picture decreased over the semester, perhaps reflecting the effectiveness of classroom activities designed to promote more thoughtful selection of reading material. It was also observed that students reported enjoying their books more when selections were based on non-superficial factors, and that the same students perceived greater benefits in Extensive Reading as a regular practice for increasing their English reading ability.

This project was reported at the Fukuoka JALT chapter's annual conference.

#### Reading circles and the KUIS Advanced Reading Learning Objectives

This year Luke Rowland and Matthew Finlayson looked at reading circles in their Advanced Reading classes. Reading circles (RC) require students to read the same short story from a graded reader collection. They then discuss the stories in groups of five. Most importantly, the students each have a separate role to fulfill during the discussion with very distinct responsibilities. Overall, the reading circles have proved immensely popular with students.

The success of RCs in their classes basically demanded attention and they continue to be interested in what makes them work so well. At first, they intuitively felt that it was the roles that were scaffolding students' efforts during both their reading and their discussion. Thus, the initial exploratory investigation looked into how our students understand the roles. Furthermore, rather than just carry out third party research on our students, it was considered that it would be beneficial for the students to actually get involved in the research and to ask each other about how they comprehend the roles and how they perform the roles. It was considered that this would benefit the students because they would naturally deepen their understanding of the roles through investigating and discussing them and this would, in all likelihood, lead to improved performance in the RCs in the future.

Although the initial study was never intended to be definitive in its findings, it generally confirmed our idea that the roles are important and useful to the students. Additionally, the data that the students produced supported the idea that they would also benefit from carrying out research. These initial findings were recently presented at the JALT Extensive Reading Seminar 2010 in Hokkaido as well as at the JALT Hokkaido 2010 conference.

Having carried out this initial exploration of RCs, Luke and Matthew would now like to look at which specific KUIS Advanced Reading learning objectives the reading circles support. We know that they are generally beneficial in increasing students' enjoyment of reading and that they likely support the development of our students' reading fluency and vocabulary learning, but Luke and Matthew believe that it would be of value to Advanced Skills coordinators, teachers and students to

understand exactly which aspects of the curriculum RCs are addressing.

#### Textbook circles: New roles for teachers and learners

This year, Luke Rowland and Keith Barrs looked at how textbooks are used for the intensive reading component of Advanced Reading at KUIS. Considering that textbooks are a common resource for both language teachers and learners, it is unfortunate that they are more often endured than enjoyed by either party. It would seem that there are numerous reasons for this but Luke and Keith have focussed on the current lack of ownership students have over their textbooks in the classroom (despite them being the actual owners of the books!). One way of addressing the disconnect between learners and their textbooks is to encourage students to engage in meaningful communicative interaction with both the book and other students. For this to happen, teachers need to reposition themselves so that they are not constantly standing between the textbook and the learner. By setting up small groups and assigning roles with distinct responsibilities to the students, teachers can perhaps create a less directive, more facilitative role for themselves. This research is investigating whether students' use of roles whilst doing textbook work enhances their experience of learning in the classroom. This research is ongoing.

### **ADVANCED WRITING (AW)**

#### **Curriculum Development**

- **Course objectives** – The objectives for the AW course have been revised based on discussions within the group.

- **Writing activities**– A student information sheet was developed to introduce students to Moodle forums. A speed writing activity was developed as well as a reflection activity for repeating students. Additional supplementary materials were created, aimed mostly at lower level classes, focusing on vocabulary and grammar practice.
- **Units**– This year, new units were used for argumentative essays, compare and contrast, and critical essays. Members of the Advanced Skills group collected feedback on these units from AW teachers and have revised them. In addition, a unit for the cause and effect essay was created and used this year.

## Research

### The effects of extensive writing

This year, Rachael Ruegg and Asa Brinham have been examining the effects of extensive writing in the Advanced Writing Course. While most university students do most of their writing using computers, the major English language testing bodies require learners to take writing tests by hand. Without practicing writing by hand, students may not be able to write very quickly or indeed very much. The aim of the study, therefore, was to investigate whether ‘free writing’ or ‘extensive writing’ by hand over the course of two semesters enabled students to write more fluently. Specifically, would ‘free writing’ by hand enable students to write more during writing tests?

The participants in this study were two second year top tier Advanced Writing

classes. Both of these classes were taught by the same teacher. One class was the control group while the other was the treatment group. The control group carried out the usual curriculum for the second year writing class and did not practice extensive writing. The treatment group practiced extensive writing for 10 minutes, eighteen times over the period of one academic year. Students were given a blank piece of paper and instructed to write about anything they liked. They were told not to use a dictionary, not to be concerned about grammar, spelling and punctuation and not to stop writing until the ten minutes was up.

The results will be measured by comparing students' KEPT writing test scores in addition to counting the number of words that the students in the treatment group write in their KEPT test essays and comparing the word count with their previous KEPT test essays to determine the growth in fluency. A survey will also be administered to find out if free writing affects students' opinions about the writing curriculum.