# Annual Reports

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## A. The Advanced Skills Project

**Project Coordinator:**    Daniel Jenks

**Committee Members:**    Asa Brinham, Matthew Finlayson, Masaki Kobayashi, Tara McIlroy, Siwon Park, Andrew Redgrave, Luke Rowland

### INTRODUCTION

The Advanced Skills research group continues to oversee materials development and research relating to Kanda's Advanced Writing (AW) and Advanced Reading (AR) courses for sophomore students in the English department. In addition to updating and supplementing the existing materials for both courses, efforts have been made this year to provide more guidance for incoming teachers by packaging and presenting the materials more clearly, and producing an overall guide to the aims of the courses and what can be achieved in each over the course of a year. Materials have also been evaluated with reference to the course goals that were formalized during the previous year.

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

#### Advanced Reading

- Course objectives – during the 2010 year, the group discussed aims for the AR course, and decided that materials and teaching should focus on encouraging confidence in reading, critical reflection on reading, vocabulary development

through reading, enjoyment of reading, and use of reading skills and strategies. The desire to more effectively fulfill these aims prompted the development of new materials this year.

- <u>Intensive skills lessons</u> – in an attempt to promote consistency between teachers, and to encourage a focus on training students in reading skills and strategies, three members of the group have produced a set of lesson plans for Intensive Reading. Each of these lesson plans introduces a single skill, and provides opportunities for practicing this skill using the teacher's choice of texts (which might include chapters from the currently-employed Academic Encounters textbook, material from other textbooks, news articles, or anything that the students themselves select to read). It is hoped that teachers will be able to repeat these lesson plans with different texts throughout a single academic year, cycling through the different skills to reinforce their use.

- <u>Textbook support</u> – in addition to the above-mentioned lesson plans, supplementary texts have been collected for many of the chapters in the Academic Encounters textbook, which some teachers have suggested is fairly narrow in focus. These additional texts consist mostly of news articles on topics related to those in the textbook, and are intended to provide additional opportunities for development of relevant vocabulary and reading strategy practice.

- <u>Extensive reading materials</u> – a large volume of materials have been amassed from previous and existing teachers of extensive reading. While these materials have until now been available to all teachers online, it was decided that they could be organized and presented more effectively. For this reason, a document has been produced in which suggestions are made as to which

materials might be used each week, and how these might be combined and contribute to achieving the course objectives. This document is expected to act as a guide to new teachers when planning what they hope to accomplish during a semester.

**Advanced Writing**

- <u>Course objectives</u> – it has been established that students taking the AW course should be expected to gain and demonstrate knowledge of writing **processes, critical thinking,** writing **conventions**, and evaluation of written work. These aims are believed to encapsulate the necessary considerations in producing a piece of written work such as an academic essay.

- <u>Feedback on existing materials</u> – previous and continuing writing teachers have been consulted regarding their usage of the existing materials for the AW course, which expose students to a range of essay types. While the response was generally positive, and most teachers felt that the materials were sufficient in quantity and quality, some expressed concerns about the level of difficulty in some of the activities. This has been addressed by producing alternative versions of the handouts, in which some sentences are simplified, and some vocabulary is made less challenging. Extra sample essays have also been added for each essay type.

- <u>AW Moodle page for teachers</u> – in order to provide a more stable (yet adaptable) source for materials and advice for AW teachers, and to provide an avenue for communication between these teachers and the Advanced Skills group, a Moodle page was set up to which all AW teachers were given access. This page provides download links for all AW teaching materials, course

handbooks and other relevant documents related to administration of the course, and a forum in which teachers can leave feedback or ask questions. The page can be updated whenever the course materials are changed, and allows the materials to be presented in a more ordered fashion than the previous KUIS server folders.

- Course FAQ – to enable new teachers to more easily understand the goals, materials, and requirements of the AW course, a "frequently-asked questions"-style list of potential issues was compiled, and added to the course's Moodle page. This aims to provide teachers with answers to any queries or problems that are not already addressed elsewhere in the course handbook and teacher notes, including an overview of the curriculum and its learning objectives, associated technological competences, and assessment guidelines. Existing teachers were asked to contribute, by submitting any problems that they had encountered themselves, or questions that they had struggled to find answers to. It is hoped that this resource will facilitate a smoother transition between outgoing and incoming teachers.

**Future goals**

Based on feedback from teachers and students, discussions between members during group meetings, and input from consultants and visiting lecturers such as Professor Christopher Candlin and Marcos Benevides, a number of potential directions for future curriculum development have been identified.

- Establish links between reading and writing – it would be beneficial for the AW course to have clearer connections with the AR course, so that students are able to utilize the skills learned in one course whilst working in the other. This might

also give a greater sense of context to the reading and writing that students are asked to do during the course, and give such tasks a genuine purpose that is not always present when reading and writing are performed in isolation.

- <u>Strengthen the links between Basic Skills courses and Advanced Skills courses</u> – it is clearly desirable for sophomore courses to build on and reinforce the skills and knowledge that students have already acquired during their freshman year. Developments in both the Basic and Advanced curricula may have resulted in less cohesion between the two.

- <u>Widen the scope of materials</u> – the idea that reading and writing go far beyond textbooks and essays has arisen many times during the group's discussions. It has been decided that our materials should reflect a greater variety of texts, and allow students exposure (both receptive and productive) to a greater variety of genres, styles, tones, and stances.

**RESEARCH**

<u>Student perspectives on inter-class activities</u>

Matthew Finlayson and Luke Rowland have spent the year working on a project in which they examine student perspectives on a broad range of inter-class activities. This has primarily involved combining reading classes and writing classes and collecting feedback from students in which they reflect on their experiences of the combined classes.

Preliminary analysis of the data collected so far has revealed themes that centre on the positive and negative effects of pressure in classrooms, in addition to student awareness of and reaction to their classmates' varying language levels. A presentation describing these initial findings was made at the JALT Hokkaido 2011

conference in Sapporo. The investigation is ongoing, and may be continued next year with a greater number of participating classes.

Reading easy books for fluency development

    This year, Tara McIlroy looked at the feasibility of encouraging students to read more in their extensive reading classes by focusing on reading easy books for fluency and teacher-guidance on level-selection. In the extensive reading component of the Advanced Reading course students can self-select books from the SALC which are arranged by genres e.g. comedy, science fiction etc. The books are not arranged by level however, and this encourages the selection of book through genre and also encourages browsing of books by title.  Since the level of book is not arranged clearly on the shelf students tend to choose books of varying levels throughout the semester. This can become problematic for students if they attempt to struggle through books which are difficult for them. This can lead to disengagement and lower motivation, or lack of success for students aiming to reach reading goals for the semester. One solution to this problem is some degree of teacher guidance in the selection of book level. The notion of selection through level, supported by the monitoring of running words read is one way that the teacher can encourage learners to notice the level and amount of reading they are doing throughout a semester. By monitoring reading logs submitted to Moodle and encouraging students to read easy books at the beginning of the semester before progressing, the dual aims of retaining motivation and monitoring reading engagement can be met. This project was well-received by students, although it does infringe on the self-selection principle (Bamford and Day, 2004) on which the Extensive Reading component of the Advanced Reading course is based.

The results of this reading project were presented at the Extensive Reading World Congress in Kyoto in September.


Methods of Assessment in Extensive Reading and their Effect

Daniel Jenks has been exploring the various methods by which teachers of AR at KUIS currently record and assess the quantity of extensive reading done by their students. Although it has been claimed that L2 reading should be "its own reward" (Bamford and Day, 2004), pressure exists to account for the time, effort and expense required in implementing the extensive reading component in a university-level reading course. Accordingly, students generally receive grades based on the amount of reading that they do. Evidence suggests that student motivation to read may be influenced by grade pressure (Mori, 1999 & 2004), making it desirable to avoid "endanger[ing] the nature of ER as an enjoyable activity" (Fenton-Smith, 2011) with demotivating assessment tasks.

Prompted by the above concerns, this project was an attempt to explore and describe the variety of methods being used by AR teachers at KUIS to record and reward the quantity of extensive reading carried out by their students. These methods include from paper-based reading logs, written book reports, face-to-face interviews, and computer-based quizzes. It was determined that different methods of assessment placed different levels of burden on students, that some methods resulted in students reporting less reading than they had actually done, and that the choice of assessment method had an effect on students' awareness of their own progress (and, by extension, motivation).

The early stages of this project were reported at the JALT Hokkaido 2011 conference in Sapporo. With data collected in the latter part of the year, the results are

to be presented to AR teachers in the coming year, in the hope that this will assist them in preparing their assessment procedures.

<u>Student Perceptions about tasks in the Advanced Writing Curriculum</u>

Andrew Redgrave has been conducting research into how students perceive and respond to the writing tasks that are currently prescribed by the AW curriculum.  By introducing a selection of more communicative tasks into his classes, he is attempting to contrast the often formulaic and abstract nature of essay   writing with writing for communicative purposes.  He has set up an email exchange program with Italian EFL students from the University of Calabria and is  arranging writing tasks which emphasize the written communication of cultural differences and shared experience of tertiary students across cultures. Student perceptions about these tasks and how they might compare to the essay-focused tasks currently used in the Advanced Writing Curriculum have been collected through discussion in mini-focus groups.  Having shared the results of this project with the Advanced Skills Research Group, it is hoped that more communicative forms of writing may be considered for inclusion in the AW curriculum in the future.

<u>The Effects of Text Selection on Learner Attitudes Toward Extensive Reading: Part II</u>

Asa Brinham continued in the examination of the effects of text selection on learner attitudes towards extensive reading. Bamford and Day (2004) highlight the wide variety of methods used in the extensive reading selection process, and although there is no little controversy surrounding the question of whether stu-

dents or teachers or a combination of the two are better equipped to evaluate the suitability of texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2002), there has been far less debate with regard to the manner in which learners go about the task of selecting which extensive reading texts they wish to read. The intention of the study was to develop a better understanding for the benefit of the Advanced Skills Research Group and Advanced Reading teachers of what criteria students use when choosing their books for the extensive reading component of the Advanced Reading course. Explicitly, the aim was to ascertain how students' methods of selection affect their attitudes towards or perceptions of extensive reading. What effect do different text selection methods have on learner attitudes towards the specific materials ingested and for that matter, the value of extensive reading in general? Consequently, is it feasible to advocate one type of text selection that facilitates the goal of encouraging the enjoyment of reading over other types?

Analysis of the results obtained from on-line surveys which asked students (from multiple Advanced Reading classes) about the influences and factors which contribute to the decision making process when choosing books revealed that students demonstrate a great deal of autonomy when choosing books, basing their selections on issues such as the graded reader's subject matter or genre, and level of the book. Factors such as the book's cover design and prior knowledge of the book or film version of the book also played a role. The importance of mood in book selection was also mentioned by a few students, as mentioned in the work of Sheldrick Ross (1999).

To further investigate the motivational factors and influences involved in reader selection, several students from two Advanced Reading classes have been taking part in the next part of the study: thought-vocalization-shadowing-extensive

reader selection. This research activity involves a pair of students visiting the extensive reader section of the SALC. One student (the Selector) is there to attempt to choose a graded reader while vocalizing his or her thought processes and feelings. The second student (the Shadow) is there to record (using a notebook or digital recorder) the thoughts and feelings of the Selector and occasionally prompt him or her with questions such as:

- "What are you thinking now?"
- "How are you feeling?"
- "Why did you pick that one up?"

Initial results suggest that the thought-vocalization-shadowing-extensive reader selection process is an effective method of determining the processes, factors and influences that contribute to the selection of graded readers by students at KUIS and thus may shed light on learner attitudes toward extensive reading.

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## B. The Basic Skills Project

**Project Coordinator:**    Richard O'Loughlin
**Committee Members:**    Michael Shanley, Shelley Wright and James Owens

This year, the members of the Basic Skills Project have been working collaboratively through the process of developing a new curriculum for the Basic Reading course, using Nation and Macalister's (2010) model of language curriculum design as a guide. We are following a 'waterfall' model of design (pp. 142-44) and working through, in order, each of the eight steps as outlined by the authors.

These steps are:
1. Environment Analysis
2. Needs Analysis
3. Principles
4. Goals
5. Content and Sequencing
6. Format and Presentation
7. Monitoring and Assessment
8. Evaluation

Early in the year, members of the committee met with Dr. Francis Johnson, the designer of the original Basic Reading program, in order to discuss how best to move through this design process. The committee also spoke with Dr. Chris Candlin, in his role as external curriculum consultant, and received further guidance and practical advice on how to proceed. After these initial discussions, the first step the committee worked through was the *Environment Analysis*. This stage involves identifying the learner, teacher and situational constraints that will have the strongest effects on our curriculum design decisions. This stage is necessary in order to ensure that the new curriculum will be suitable, practical, and realistic, for the KUIS context. After identifying a number of both positive, and negative, constraints we decided upon the five which we believe will most affect the curriculum and ranked them in order of importance.

1. Autonomy is strongly encouraged at this university.
2. The course will be run many times in the future and needs to be sustainable.
3. Class time is limited to 90 minutes per week.
4. Learners have a range of different interests, however all are interested in the English language speaking world and its culture.
5. Learners have a range of proficiency levels and a range of vocabulary levels.

Available research on each of these constraints will be investigated by the committee prior to Step 4 in the waterfall model and then considered throughout each of the remaining steps.

The second step, which we are working through now, is the *Needs Analysis*, in which we aim to identify the lacks, needs and wants of the students. This stage

started to take shape through further group discussions with Dr. Johnson, as well as individual conversations with Dr. Candlin, Dr. John Macalister, and Dr. Neil Johnson. The construction of the NA questionnaire has been guided by the principles outlined in Dornyei's (2010) book on questionnaire design, and the content determined through group discussions regarding the different variables to consider in a NA (Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009, p. 140). After further group discussion, project members Michael Shanley and James Owens have adapted the sample questionnaire in Hedgcock and Ferris (2009, pp. 152-4) to suit our teaching context. At the time of writing, our aim is to pilot the questionnaire in early December 2011, and, after modifications are made, administer the questionnaire to all students taking this year's Basic Reading course.

**Presentations**

The project members presented at the JALT 2011 national conference in Tokyo, with a poster entitled "The Basic Reading Curriculum: Process and Design", in which we shared the curriculum design model, and collaborative process, thus far.

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## C. The Basic English Proficiency Project (English)

**Project Coordinator:**   Paul Stone and Rochelle King
**Committee Members:**   Erin Hughes, Jennie Roloff, Alexander Selman, Alexander Worth

### 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.

### Group Project

BEPP has been working towards its target of developing learning objectives for the Freshman English curriculum. Our activities this year have focused on defining the principles and beliefs about classroom practice that should underpin curriculum/materials development in the Freshman English context. This has involved a thorough reading and discussion of relevant literature, focusing on in-house articles published by previous BEPP groups and stakeholders as well

as key articles from the BEPP folder and current ELT literature.

As a result of this reading and discussion we have outlined three major principles which we are currently using to guide the redevelopment of the Freshman English curriculum, beginning with the creation of a new 'model' unit and explicit course objectives over the coming weeks. The principles can be summarized by the AIM acronym:

## Awareness

This is a key, foundational concept of the Freshman English program and involves learners gaining self-regulation and control over the target language through developing awareness of themselves as learners. It follows that there will be opportunity for independent work and learner choice, primarily in the project phase of the units, for learners to reflect on their interests, strengths and weaknesses as language learners, and pursue further study as is deemed necessary, useful and appropriate.

## Interaction

Promotion of different types of interaction with the semiotic resources of the target culture(s) is a crucial aspect of Freshman English. This is important in creating and maintaining the strong affective and interpersonal strengths of the program, as students generally like interacting with their classmates in multiple ways. We also recognize that open unstructured conversational type activities, without pedagogical intervention or purposeful outcome, can become boring, repetitive and unproductive. Particularly for learners at the lower tier, more structured and scaffolded tasks are important. It is also important that learners

experience a variety of discourse roles.

**Multiliteracy**

A focus on multiliteracy includes, among other things, the development of digital literacy skills. Negotiating Moodle, as well as also online sites such as wikis or blogs that are readily woven into Moodle, is a useful and "real world" literacy that all our learners should feel comfortable with by graduation. Multimodality and the ways in which language use is becoming increasingly tied to the non-linear visual semiotics is an avenue for further development across the program.

Awareness is building in Applied Linguistics research that communicative competence, which is often misinterpreted to mean face-to-face conversational competence, is a flawed goal of second language education. A symbolic or discourse level competence places production and analysis of authentic written text onto an equal footing with the spoken modality. Currently in Freshman English learners interact with a wide variety of texts for a very surface level exchange of opinions and personal views. The texts themselves are generally not analyzed for their cultural significance and the language use within the texts is mostly ignored, other than for the purpose of providing a theme for discussion. A greater focus on symbolic or discourse competence is important in the development of the reading of the world and a global outlook, as well as critical thinking skills.

**Operational Features of BEPP**

The pedagogical task is the basic unit of organization for the curriculum. These are organized thematically and culminate in open, unstructured project tasks.

Tasks should be used in a systematic and pedagogically sound manner in and across units and therefore throughout the curriculum providing focus on complexity, fluency and accuracy.

Freshman English provides functional and linguistic support for learners, through explicit instruction and corpus informed materials, in order for learners to develop the discourse competencies that we target. The role of the instructor in Freshman English is important. There are times when the instructor needs to introduce, model, and explain new and problematic language forms, including explicit attention to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and discourse strategies. At other times the instructor's role will be to facilitate learning tasks, be an advisor for independent learning matters, and also act as a learning resource and mentor.

**Individual Research Projects**

BEPP members are also in the process of conducting individual research projects. Rochelle King and Jennie Roloff are investigating the perceptions of autonomy on multiple levels within the BEPP English program. They plan to identify the definitions of learner autonomy used in the TESOL field; explore how the Kanda management team views the role of learner autonomy in the classroom; and interview BEPP English teachers to learn more about their attitudes towards autonomous learning and how they believe they are promoting it in the classroom. The responses and viewpoints collected will be compared against the literature to see what disconnections exist between theory and practice of learner autonomy in the classrooms of BEPP English.

Erin Hughes is working with the CALL group to investigate how iPads may be used effectively in Freshman English classes. The study will describe the

integration of iPads in several learning tasks in the Freshman English curriculum, analyzing the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing iPads while also gauging the opinions of participating students. In particular, the focus will be on the use of iPads as a presentation tool, a digital handout, a media playback device, and to facilitate the transcription tasks that form a part of the existing Freshman English curriculum.

Alexander Worth is proposing to study how autonomy may be negotiated with students through structured Dogme-style lessons. Dogme ELT is a new approach in the language teaching profession and, as such, has been the recipient of little research into its practical application. This project will investigate the suitability of a Dogme-based approach in a Japanese University from the perspective of those professionals currently engaged in teaching the target Freshman English programme and to derive suggestions as to the feasibility of the approach in this context.

Alexander Selman will examine the strategies used by Freshman English students to orally report speech and thought. Such reporting is an extremely valuable communicative tool as it allows speakers to project other people, times and places into their interactions. Rather than forming a model from native-speaker strategies, which are appropriate to a monolingual and monocultural context, the students' own strategies will be examined to investigate how they can be optimized and extended for intercultural communication.

Paul Stone will perform a multimodal discourse analysis of on-task talk to investigate how learners negotiate task-instructions while managing classroom interaction together. The study will focus on the ways in which the intersubjective performance of multiple participant identities impacts upon pedagogic goals. It is

hoped that the findings of the study will inform the ways in which tasks on the Freshman English course are structured in the future.

## D. The Basic English Proficiency Project (International Communication)

**Project Coordinator:** Erik Fritz, Joe Geluso
**Committee Members:** Andy Schouten, Danielle Fischer, Donald Patterson, Jennifer Gordon, Kristjan Bondesson, Lucius Von Joo, Stuart Benson

### Introduction

The BEPP IC group welcomed six new members this year. In recent years English for International Communication I (EIC1) and English for International Communication II (EIC2) have received the majority of focus. This year the group stepped back to gain a more holistic, macro-view of all the core courses within IC Department in the English Language Institute: EIC1, EIC2, Reading, Writing, and Media English. Ultimately, it was decided to focus on the freshman courses this year (i.e., EIC1, Reading, and Writing). Additionally, a variety of research projects were undertaken.

### Materials Development

At the beginning of the year the BEPP IC group started a process, which will continue to be carried out over the next few years, of reevaluating curricular goals and course objectives, with the intention of making a stronger and more integrated curriculum. A two- semester plan was outlined for the 2011-2012

academic year that entailed, in the first semester, examining the teaching and learning environments (i.e, resources and constraints) of teachers and students. In addition, the group reevaluated a student needs analysis previously conducted by the BEPP IC group and further discussed student employment opportunities post KUIS. Lastly, the group conducted a course audit, providing an overview of what general skills and activities are currently being implemented in each of the five core courses. The audit was revised, edited and submitted to the IC Department chairperson at the end of the first semester.

Over the summer holiday, the coordinators reviewed all the materials generated from the first semester's review, including the needs and environment analyses and course audit. Meetings were conducted with the director of curriculum planning to discuss areas that needed more focus. It was determined that the initial focus would be on the freshman year courses: EIC1, Reading and Writing, and that the second year courses would start to be streamlined in upcoming years.

At the outset of the second semester the group divided into three subgroups, one for each of the freshman year courses. The groups, directed  by one or both coordinators, were tasked with discussing and formulating the principles and goals of their assigned course. The members of said groups had either previously or were currently teaching the courses to which they were assigned. A possible framework that included a list of minimum competencies (cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural) and assessment practices was formulated. The group met as whole to discuss the underlying principles of the courses, the feasibility of the goals set

forth and ways in which students' progress to achieve those goals could be assessed .

An example of materials development that came from this process is in the EIC1 course, where it was determined that there was not enough focus on either teaching or assessing discussion skills. Discussion skills activities were created and distributed to the freshman EIC1 teachers, and a course-wide assessment was implemented to measure students' progress on speaking and discussion skills.

Next year, the group will continue to reevaluate, refine, and create new materials, whilst making closer links between the courses.

**Research projects**

This year the members of the BEPP IC engaged in an array of curriculum-oriented research projects. Kristjan started a pilot study designed according to the principles of action research to examine the effectiveness of a pedagogical intervention based on a sheltered approach to content based instruction. Lucius worked on a benefits analysis of pre-recorded presentations in comparison with live presentations. Stuart conducted a detailed assessment of the vocabulary load in EIC1 with regard to frequency and repetition on the Academic Word List. Andy looked into the congruency between Media English goals and actual outcomes. Donald engaged in a preliminary study that investigates the effect of task repetition and feedback on the performance of small-group presentations. Erik revised and concluded a vocabulary study comparing different vocabulary learning techniques in EIC1. Finally, Dani investigated the amount and nature of

materials on pragmatics in the EIC1 curriculum and conducted an evaluation of their efficacy.

This year also saw the beginning of some research projects that will not take full form until the coming academic year. In particular, Joe, Jennifer, Danielle, Stuart and Lucius began conceptualizing a project that aims to investigate the processes and effectiveness of different methods of teaching conversations skills and strategies. This research will be based primarily in the EIC1 course, but members of the research team are also considering assessing the employment of conversation skills and strategies in the reading course as well. In other words, the research will focus on whether or not the conversation skills taught in EIC1 emerge in the small-group reading journal discussions.

## E. The Basic English Proficiency Project
### (International Languages and Culture)

**Project Coordinator:**    Ashley Moore, Simon Cooke
**Committee Members:**  Glichelle Pereyra, Carol Begg, Eric Hall, Jake Breaux

### INTRODUCTION

This report documents the work of the BEPP ILC committee during the 2011-2012 academic year. It 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 the committee members.

This year saw the welcome addition of 3 new members to the BEPP ILC research committee – Jake Breaux, Carol Begg and Eric Hall. It also saw a leap forward in the development of the ongoing project to create an integrated audit of the various skills and tasks that make up the core courses within the ILC department (Freshman English, Sophomore English and Media English).

As was noted in the previous year's committee report, during the 2009-2010 academic year the ILC completed a thorough audit of the skills that were taught in the existing core courses. These skills were then revised and sequenced throughout the core courses to ensure that students in their first and second year were challenged to gradually improve their proficiency. Initially then, the task for the 2010-2011 academic year was to complete the final edits of this skills and tasks taxonomy and find ways to ensure that this continually evolving document becomes embedded in the ILC department. However, through consultation with Neil Johnson, it became apparent merely mapping out the linguistic and metacognitive competencies in effect ignored the complex set of sociolinguistic competencies that foreign language students need to acquire in order to be truly literate in another language. To this end, a framework that could effectively map out these complex competencies was developed and Moore and Cooke then set about adapting and editing the existing skills and tasks taxonomy within this new framework. The first draft of the revised literacy-focused framework has been given to committee members for feedback and will finally be revised and embedded within the core structure of the ILC English department course before the end of the academic year.

The ILC department continues to be in close contact with members of the KAP group in creating materials for the KACE test which was originally developed with the goals and activities of the ILC English curricula in mind. This year has seen even more responsibility afforded the ILC research group which has been tasked with creating their own ideas for the pictures and graphs used in the test to assess ILC student's English proficiency.

**MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT**

Freshman English – Ashley Moore, Jake Breaux, (Glichelle Pereyra, Carol Begg)
In light of the newly created learning outcomes for the Freshman English course, materials development work has centered on ensuring the provision of materials that meet these outcomes. To this aim, new email lessons have begun to be developed for each of the units. Through consultation with the rest of the research group and a survey of the current literature pertaining to email writing for second language users, a sub-set of the email skills most pertinent to ILC students was created. These included understanding the basic conventions of email English and knowing how various discourse functions (inquiring, negotiating projects, approaching people for professional collaboration, emailing teachers, etc.) manifest themselves linguistically and pragmatically in email. Lessons were developed and trialed to scaffold students towards meeting these competencies.
A new introductory lesson for the ILC Freshman English reading program was created, designed to assist students in understanding the objectives of the reading component including encouraging them to think critically about literary texts and to transform such discourse into other modal forms such as an oral summary or role play.

New speaking prompts were created for the fish-bowl discussion lessons in each unit. These activities are designed to improve students' discussion skills and encourage them to critically reflect on their own output in terms of their pronunciation and fluency.

As with previous years, the course materials continue to be edited and redesigned where appropriate. This process has been further streamlined this year with the development of a more coherent feedback process through which teachers can quickly and clearly identify any problematic areas in the course and raise any suggestions for improvement.

Sophomore English – Carol Begg, Eric Hall, Simon Cooke

Both the creation of the aforementioned ILC curriculum framework document and the introduction of 2 new teachers, Eric Hall and Carol Begg, have helped to give the Sophomore English curriculum and its materials a much needed boost in quality and focus during this academic year. Previously, the compulsory English courses for second year ILC students were given disparate goals to guide materials development. Specifically, the Sophomore English course was assigned to create materials to improve speaking and listening skills and the Media English course reading and writing skills. In associating the second year courses to the new framework, it was decided to treat both courses with an approach which would include writing, reading and analysis of different text types. These were to be added not at the expense of speaking, but rather as the basis for discussion and content for some aspects of spoken interaction. This approach has led to a revision of much of the materials used in semester 1 and the creation of largely new materials for the second semester.

While the first semester still deals with identity, community and culture, the second semester delves deeper into social anthropology by examining a number of social constructs, namely language, religion, worldview, national and international issues. Transcription tasks and activities highlighting the employment of communicative strategies in discourse continue to be used. The resulting lessons have seen the students engaging with and creating emotive writing and discussions that continue to impress in their expressiveness and candour. Weekly meetings of the Sophomore English teachers allows the sharing of feedback soon after each lesson. The teachers aim to refine the lessons of both semesters over the winter break, taking the feedback of these meetings and the developing ILC framework into consideration.

Media English – Glichelle Pereyra, Simon Cooke

The robust nature of the Media English curriculum, first created by Ashley Moore and Simon Cooke in the 2009-2010 academic year and which introduced the concept of media literacy, has meant that the core elements of the curriculum are still consistent with the changes in the ILC framework document and remain largely unchanged. However, now in its third year of use, the materials for the course, while informed by the core concepts, continue to be updated to better relate to a constantly evolving multimedia landscape. Changes to the curriculum reflecting these shifts include classes examining the perception of and the nature of social media portals in the dissemination of news and opinion.

**RESEARCH**

Simon Cooke

Autonomy and Learner Achievement

Previous, elementary research results among a class of ILC Sophomore students revealed that those students who did more study outside of the classroom were typically achieving higher end-of-year grades than students who were doing less autonomous study. This project aims to carry out a more robust analysis, examining the types of autonomous study being carried out by ILC Sophomore English students and seeing what (if any) correlations can be drawn between the types of study being undertaken and subsequent grade improvements over the course of a year. It is believed that the research will be of great help to future ILC students as the results may be used to suggest effective models that they might chose to follow. Other cursory research has suggested that few of the ILC Sophomore English students visit the SALC. I believe my research will help inform the SALC of resources that students are using outside of the university and offer ideas on ways in which to entice more ILC students to make use of its resources.

Carol Begg

ILC learners' Attitudes Towards the L2

Summary: This study is concerned with learner perception of their second and third languages in terms of identity, motivation and the L2 and L3 self. The impact of study abroad on learner motivation is a particular focus. Learner attitudes will be tracked through online questionnaire surveys.

Glichelle Pereyra and Jake Breaux

Examining Student Investment in Learning their Target Languages

Summary: This project is concerned with identity and language learning in the ILC department by examining learner investment in relation to cultural capital and global power relations.

Eric Hall

Under Development

## F. The Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Project

**Project Coordinator:** Joachim Castellano

**Committee Members:** Keith Barrs, Jared Baierschmidt, Marnie Brown, Thomas Lockley, Jason Ropitini, Raswan Sockol

### Introduction

CALL's mission is to facilitate, coordinate and enhance the use of technology in the KUIS English language curricula, as well as conduct research into the ways in which technology can improve current teaching practices. All forms of technology have a place in the CALL spectrum – its overarching purpose is to ensure that both teachers and students have maximum support and ongoing assistance in their use of technology and to provide ideas to promote the purposeful use of technology in curricula.

At the beginning of the year, the committee refocused on fulfilling our core

mission with both our own research pursuits and our committee's various activities. CALL prioritizes the purposeful, principled use of technology for language learning. Our research focuses on how technology can enhance pedagogy, and not how curricula could be developed around a particular tool. We stand firm against using technology for technology's sake. Our research for this academic year investigates how technological tools might or might not enhance language learning at KUIS.

This year the Kanda CALL blog (http://kandacall.wordpress.com) has been emphasized to advance many aspects of CALL's mission at the ELI. Committee research is discussed openly online, spurring discussion within KUIS and the global CALL community at large. In order to inform ELI lecturers of the latest technology-based teaching trends, members create blog posts on support materials, lesson ideas, tips, and other helpful news.

CALL continues to offer personal technology support to lecturers at the ELI. This now occurs both formally, through a series of 8 CALL workshops, and informally through the CALL-representative system. The CALL workshops were designed based on a needs analysis survey administered to ELI lecturers. The CALL representatives for the 2011-12 academic year are:

BEPP English: Keith Barrs
BEPP IC: Raswan Sockol
Basic Skills: Jason Ropitini
SALC: Thomas Lockley

KEPT: Marnie Brown

CSK/Media English: Jared Baierschmidt

ILC, Advanced Skills, ELI management and KUIS faculty: Joachim Castellano

## CALL WORKSHOPS

1. Mac and Video Converting Workshop (Joachim Castellano) 5/23/2011
2. iMovie Workshop (Joachim Castellano) 6/6/2011
3. Class Activities with Videos and Photos (Keith Barrs) 6/20/2011
4. Social Networking for Teachers and Students (Keith Barrs) 7/4/2011
5. Wordpress Blogs (Joachim Castellano) 11/14/2011
6. Working with Digital Video Files (Joachim Castellano) 11/28/2011
7. Student background and successful ICT incorporation (Thomas Lockley) 12/7/2011
8. Webtools Workshop (Keith Barrs) 12/19/2011

## MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Keith Barrs – conducted 3 CALL workshops on web video, social networking, and useful webtools.

Jared Baierschmidt – translated Moodle documents in Japanese for ELI staff.

Marnie Brown – created posts on best iPad apps for language learning.

Thomas Lockley – created Moodle sign-up instructions for students and will conduct a workshop on student ICT use: best practices.

Jason Ropitini – created Moodle pages for BEPP English.

Raswan Sockol – created laminated fool-proof directions on how to use Building 1 BLS equipment.

**RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Researcher: Jared Baierschmidt

Approval date: July 11, 2011

Data collection:

Survey piloted July 2011

Anonymous, optional survey to be administered during the last two weeks of classes of the Spring 2011 semester

Survey data analyzed by the end of August 2011

Summary:

This research will investigate Kanda student attitudes towards using digital games for language learning, as well as gather background information about the students' use of digital games for both recreational and educational purposes. Background: As part of my RILS project, I will be setting up a digital game language learning lab here at Kanda. This survey, though not officially part of the RILS project, will aid me in setting up the game lab. I hope to learn from this study how students feel about using digital games for learning as well as how comfortable they are with current video game technology. Funding via a RILS grant.

Researcher: Keith Barrs

Approval date: July 7th, 2011

Data collection date: Summer 2011

Summary:

Where L2 interactional opportunities outside of the classroom are restricted by the

L1 environment, students can be made aware of the value in examining the linguistic landscape around them. They can be guided to record instances of English use outside of the classroom, and to bring these recordings into class for group analysis and discussion. Attention can be focused on semantic, phonological, morphological and syntactic similarities and differences between the words in their L1 and English, potentially assisting students in their vocabulary development. This exploratory research project will investigate the possibility of using digital photography to encourage students (N= 23) to interact with the linguistic landscape around them. They will be asked to photograph instances of English written in the katakana script in Japanese society, which they find during the seven-week summer vacation, and to upload the photos to an online photo-sharing website (Flickr). The data collected through the photographs will be used in two complementary ways: (1) to explore the viability of this activity as a useful pedagogical practice for students, and (2) to analyse the quantity and the morphological and semantic features of the vocabulary, such as blending, semantic shifting, back-formation etc (this will be done using established analysis frameworks such as Uchida, 2001). If students are able to interact with the Japanese environment, to autonomously find words which are found to be suitable to help in the learning of English, then this can be considered a valuable pedagogical activity, especially in EFL contexts. In this way it can contribute to the calls for a reconceptualisation of the linguistic value of English words and phrases in the Japanese language (Daulton, 2008; Ringbom, 2007).

Researcher: Marnie Brown

Summary:

The study will investigate students' experiences and their development of English digital literacy skills by observing the students using a form of digital technology; the iPad 2 tablet, to locate, evaluate, use, and create information in English for English video production tasks.

Data collection: Semester 2 in the researcher's classes

Researchers: Joachim Castellano, Marnie Brown, Erin Hughes, Alexander Worth

Summary:

This project will explore case studies of iPads used in a Freshman English curriculum at a Japanese university. It will describe the integration of the iPad into an existing curriculum as a: presentation tool (Worth), digital handout and Internet browser (Castellano), transcription activity (Hughes), and media playback device (Brown). Beatty (2010) describes constructivism as problem-based learning, in which learning draws upon students' previous experiences and the synthesis of new ideas. Using a constructivist approach, the researchers will investigate how the iPad can be used to facilitate the process by which students learn as well as the products they produce through these activities. Students views on using the iPad in class will be gauged. The research will also report on any new learning opportunities discovered by the teachers or students while (if any) operating the iPad.

Data collection details:

Data collection will commence Fall semester 2011. The project is being funded by BEPP-English and CALL.

Researcher: Thomas Lockley

Summary:

This research will report on a survey conducted into students' experience of technology use at a Japanese university and their technology desires for EFL lessons. It forms part of a wider research project being conducted by the CALL research committee at Kanda University of International Studies and it is hoped that it will contribute to curriculum renovation and CALL normalisation at the institution concerned and further afield. The research questions shall be: 1. What technology is being used in classes at the university concerned? 2. Does this meet student desire?

Data collection:

Data was collected in the last academic year

Researchers: Jason Ropitini (with Craig Langdon, Jake Breaux)

Summary:

In 2011, the researchers intend to investigate the degree to which technology used in the BLS environment enhances the learning experience. As interaction within the classroom is inherently a social activity, they intend to use activity theory (AT)

as a means of framing the study and of analyzing the efficacy of BLS-located interactions in facilitating learner- transition to a more competent level of using English as a communicative tool.

Data collection details:

Classroom-based observations and examination of documents.

Researcher: Raswan Sockol

Data collection date:

- Pilot study to be conducted the final 6 weeks of spring semester 2011 (as part of the researcher's class activity and homework)
- Control and experimental groups starting fall semester, running for 15 weeks

Summary:

Most researchers feel that second language learners are unable to achieve native, or native- like, phonological production once the Critical Period has passed. I contend that visual instruction, which illustrates point and manner of articulation by using visual aids/computer animations, will be of greater benefit to EFL learners than a traditional behavioral (ie. listen and repeat) approach. This method of instruction will provide learners with the meta- awareness to conceptualize the mechanics behind sound production, thereby improving their productive skills.

Prior studies have proven this hypothesis to be true and effective in an ESL environment, and I posit that the same holds true for second language learners in a non-immersion, EFL, environment. With additional resources for autonomous

learning and an understanding of the mechanics of sound reproduction, students have a greater chance to reach native-like production abilities. My paper will address completed, as well as ongoing, research into the area of computer-based instruction, and show that it allows EFL learners to achieve more accurate phonological reproduction than a traditional behavioral approach.

Data collection methods:

- Students will watch animated examples of sound production, study stills of point and manner of articulation, and make recordings of word lists every week
- The initial data collection of 10 recorded lists of /l/ and /r/ minimal pairs will last 1 semester, though it is possible to expand this project into a 3 to 4 year study (continuing on to other minimal pairs, sentence level phonological production, student views on non-native production, etc.)

## G. The Chinese Spanish Korean (CSK) Project

**Project Coordinator:**    Lara Promnitz-Hayashi
**Committee Members:**    Karen Hoshino, Jaclyn Pitts

The CSK (English for Chinese, Spanish and Korean majors) Research committee is a new committee from April, 2011. The committee consists of Lara Promnitz-Hayashi, Karen Hoshino and Jaclyn Pitts.

CSK consists of Freshman English, Sophomore English and Advanced English and all three subjects are compulsory for Chinese, Spanish and Korean majors.

They have two lessons a week. Speaking and Listening with a native English speaker teacher and Reading and Writing with a Japanese teacher.

The basic objectives for each course are:

*Freshman English-* Acquire basic proficiency in English for practical communication.

*Sophomore English-* Based on the English proficiency acquired in Freshman English, students further improve their reading, listening, and speaking skills for practical purposes.

*Advanced English-* Based on the proficiency acquired in Freshman and Sophomore English, students further improve all four skills, while placing emphasis on business English.

The 2011 academic year has focused on materials development and the beginnings of curriculum design as there has been no curriculum for teachers. Until now, previous teachers have uploaded their own materials to the Shared Folder and there was no organization. The committee decided to organize the folder and as it is a large task the committee decided to begin with Freshman English. It was decided that it would be easier to establish unit folders in order to make it easier for teachers to access materials and give a variety of topics for teachers.

**RESEARCH MATTERS:**

As the committee is new and all members had continuing research from 2010, they have been completing these projects before starting new CSK research in 2012.

Lara Promnitz-Hayashi

To investigate students' perceptions and misconceptions of Australian English and culture.

"Both British and American and English are, of course, the main competitors in the linguistic market-place, but Australian English is securing a foothold" (Burridge & Mulder, 1998). However, the extent to which this is occurring in Japan is questionable. Japanese university students have typically studied English for three years in junior high school and three years in senior high school, with some also studying it in elementary school. Yet, if you asked students what variety of English they were taught, they would in all probability answer American English, possibly British English. It would be most unlikely that students would answer Australian English, even though Australia has become a popular destination for school trips, study exchanges and even sister city affiliations.

This study focused on an elective subject on Australia for third and fourth year students in two different departments at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan. In addition to studying about the history and foundations of Australia, geography, tourism, news, music and haunted places in Australia, the course placed added emphasis on Australian culture, Australian English and even Kriol.

*Methodology*

This research drew on multiple sources of data – surveys, interviews and examples of students' classwork.

Karen Hoshino

*Introduction/Rationale*

This study examined the effect of blogging on the collegiality of two Basic Writing classes. Karen experimented with using a blog for the first time as part of the curriculum in Basic Writing. She was inspired by Paul Matsuda's presentation "Teaching writing to Japanese writers of English" (Matsuda, P., personal communication, June 1, 2010) concerning creating a more authentic context and purpose for writing beyond students simply writing essays for their instructors. In her preliminary observations, she found that blogging seems to provide students with not only opportunities for more authentic communication (Brooks, Nicols and Priebe, 2004; Mynard, 2007) but also the opportunity to build rapport among classmates and foster a more collaborative learning environment (Senior 2010). For example, when she asked her Basic Writing students to post their final essays to the class blog, she noticed that many students commented on each others' essays in a deeply supportive and encouraging manner.

*Research Methodology*

Karen conducted this research in her two middle tier Basic Writing classes (approximately 60 students) and examined the students' blog posts and comments for common themes and patterns which may suggest rapport-building and collaborative learning among students. She surveyed the students about whether or not they perceived that blogging was useful for giving each other feedback on their writing and helping them to get to know their classmates better. Using the results from this study, Karen hopes to suggest alternative activities to complement the Basic Writing curriculum in terms of creating a more authentic,

supportive and collaborative learning environment.

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Jaclyn Pitts

*Overview*

Jaclyn is preparing a new research project to be carried out in her basic writing classes next year. After reevaluating her previous peer revision research plan, she has decided to take the study in a different direction and focus on quality of peer revision and student uptake rather than student opinions on and likes/dislikes about peer revision. In order to prepare, Jaclyn is currently working on developing a scale that will be used to rate the quality and quantity of the feedback that students give each other in their peer revision sessions. She will then use the scale to examine how well beginning writers are able to find and improve issues with content and organization in their writing when given appropriate feedback.

**THE FUTURE**

As English is a compulsory subject for three years for CSK students, objectives and curriculum and materials design will continue to be the main focus for the committee.

## H. The Kanda Assessment Project (KAP)

**Project Coordinator:** Dennis Koyama and Yuko Sugiyama

**Committee Members:** Allan Nicholas, Angela Sun, Chris Kowalchuk, Eric Setoguchi, Nathan Johnson, Tamatha Roman

**External Consultant:** Gary Ockey, Ph.D.

**INTRODUCTION**

This year the Kanda Assessment Project (KAP) committee was mainly involved in two major projects: the creation of the The Kanda Assessment of Communicative English (or, KACE)/KEPT Introduction & Discussion Skills DVD and the development of the KACE test for the ILC department. The former project was intended to create a video that introduces the KACE/KEPT Oral Section and what discussions skills are expected from the students. The latter project is a continuation from last year, creating a new version of the integrated skills test for the ILC curriculum. In addition to the ILC and the English department, the first year students of the Chinese, Spanish and Korean Department (CSK) will participate in taking the KACE Oral Section this January. All three departments are scheduled to have incoming freshman for each department take the 2012 March administration of the KACE/KEPT tests.

Administratively, the KAP team has focused the efforts of its committee members' creative development skills according to particular sections of the test. To do so, the KAP committee divided into two teams: one team focused on the Listening section while the other team worked on the Literacy Section (Reading, Email and Summary writing).

Professionally, this year, members of the KAP committee have presented at three conferences: Language Testing Research Colloquium 2011 on a research related to the Listening Section,  JALT Hokkaido 2011 regarding the Email and Summary Writing Task of the KACE test, and The Japan Language Testing Association 2011 (Osaka) regarding research on the familiarity facet of the group oral discussion task.

## COMMITTEE RESEARCH PROJECTS
### KACE/KEPT Introduction & Discussion Skills DVD
Due to the effects of the March 11 earthquake, the KACE/KEPT test was not administered for the incoming freshman students. As a result of this unique situation, the coordinators decided that students would need an introduction to the test in order to reduce common mistakes made by test takers, and to abate examinee stress about a test they have not yet taken. Spurred by a request from teachers, who raised the question whether or not if there were any materials available to show what a group discussion is and how students should interact with one another, the KAP committee decided to work together with the coordinators of the BEPP English (Paul Stone and Rochelle King), BEPP IC (Joe Geluso and Erik Fritz), BEPP ILC (Ashley Moore and Simon Cooke) and CALL (Joachim

Castellano) to create a DVD containing such the requested information.

Creating the DVD required:

a) Meeting with all coordinators involved to brainstorm ideas and to identify which discussion skills needed

b) Creating scripts

c) Recruiting students to be in the videos

d) Filming and editing of the DVD

**Test Development**

This year's test will be conducted by department. The English department will take the KACE oral assessment, which has a warm-up speaking activity, followed by a group oral exam, and the KEPT academic writing component. The ILC will take the KACE Multiple choice listening, reading, and writing integrated skills test designed to better align with the curriculum and with significant input from the ILC faculty leader (Dr. Bruce Horton), the ILC coordinators (Ashley Moore and Simon Cooke) and much needed support and contributions from the ILC committee members (Carol Begg, Eric Hall, Glichelle Pereyra, and Jacob Breaux). Additionally, in collaboration with the CSK Faculty coordinator (Dr. Masaru Kanetani) and CSK ELI coordinator (Lara Promnitz-Hayashi), it was decided that the first year students of the CSK department will participate in taking the KACE Oral Section. The Picture and Graph task was developed this year by the ILC committee, and with the support of the BEPP English committee and KAP, SALC production designers are currently in the process of hand drawing the pictures to be used in this year's KACE group oral. The decision to have the pictures for the

picture and graph activity hand drawn was made to help create pictures that have equal amounts of salient points. This decision has also given the added benefits of having specific criterion added to the pictures and a significant reduction in the cost of creating this task.

This year's integrated skills test will be video mediated, and staff members of the Media Educational Center (MEC) were involved with the filming of the listening test and completed all of the editing. The MEC staff also completed the pilot DVDs and are working on the writing prompt DVDs for the KEPT writing component. 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.

**The KACE/KEPT Oral Section (Group Oral task and Picture & Graph task)**

Preparing the Oral Section required:

a) Creating a new version of the Picture & Graph task in collaboration with the ILC Research Committee (Ashley Moore, Simon Cooke, Carol Begg, Eric Hall, Glichelle Pereyra, and Jacob Breaux), the BEPP English coordinators (Paul Stone and Rochelle King), and SALC production designers (Noriko Takasago and Yuko Monden)

b) Amending and adapting speaking prompts for the Group Oral

**The KEPT Academic Writing Section (Timed Essay Task)**

a) Creating new writing prompts in collaboration with the Basic Skills committee lead by Richard O'Loughlin and the Advanced Skills committee lead by Daniel Jenks

b) 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, Nathan Johnson) 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 2011)
    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) Tallied 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 6 character-passages
        i) Realistic situations, casual dialogue
        ii) Fixed piloted test items with helpful feedback from Dr. Gary Ockey
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 MEC video staff)

    a) Selected actors

    b) Distributed and discussed script with actors, revised w/actors' input

    c) Filmed video for editing

6) Revised items with feedback from Dr. Gary Ockey

    a) Viewed video

    b) Adjusted items

    c) Discussed items with ILC coordinator (Ashley Moore)

The KACE Literacy team (Allan Nicholas, Chris Kowalchuk, Eric Setoguchi and Tamatha Roman) completed the following:

1) Contributed input, insights, to the development of new productive items (Email & Summary Task)

2) Met testing coordinator and ILC coordinators for brainstorming, consultation, and clarification regarding the objectives for the Literacy Section in light of ILC curriculum needs.

3) Met with Dr. 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) Designed and formatted Literacy section pilot booklet.

8) Piloted the Literacy section with the help of CSK and IC Freshman teachers

9) Revised the literacy section based on the pilot data analysis

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 committee we had three presentations regarding the KACE, and one site-based research project that was externally funded by the Educational Testing Services. Continuing the development of the KEPT and KACE tests is a primary goal of the KAP committee, and doing this with a focus on the curriculums that are served by these tests is of paramount importance to the committees involved. The following research presentations are some examples of these efforts to improve the KEPT and KACE tests.

**Academic Presentations**

In June, Dennis Koyama, Angela Sun, and Gary Ockey presented at the 2011 Language Testing Research Colloquium in Michigan. They presented on the effects of presenting question stems with options, questions only, or nothing on

multiple-choice listening comprehension tests. This presentation was born of the fact that multiple-choice (MC) formats have been a popular technique for assessing listening comprehension for decades, but little research is available to specifically guide how MC formats should be put into practice. Some researchers have argued that to have a purpose for listening, test takers must be provided with the questions prior to listening to the input to be assessed (Buck, 1995; Sherman, 1997) while others argue that allowing test takers to preview the questions and answer options may decrease the authenticity of the task by changing the way test takers process the input (Hughes, 2003). For instance, when test takers are allowed to preview questions and answer options, research suggests a lexical matching strategy in which test takers, particularly less proficient ones, listen for key words they see in the answer options rather than for general comprehension (Yanagawa & Green, 2008).

In this study, stratified random sampling techniques were employed in which an equal number of more and less proficient Japanese university level English learners (N = 206) was assigned to take one of three test formats. The formats included: preview of question stems and answer options, preview of question stems only, and no preview. The test included two item types (K = 41 for each format) which were distinguished by whether or not they were designed to include key words from the input in one or more of the distracters. The researchers report relative item difficulty and reliability of the three formats, along with the results of a one-parameter IRT model that evaluates the functioning of items across test formats. The effects of test format on the item types and proficiency levels will be discussed in relation to the listening construct.

In September, Yuko Sugiyama and Tamatha Roman presented at the JALT Hokkaido Chapter conference on the KACE Literacy Section, specifically on the Email and Summary Writing Task. This presentation provided an overview of the two tasks, including why they were selected, the matter in which they are administered and how they are rated. It was also demonstrated how these tasks were linked with the tasks students learn in their English courses.

In October, Dennis Koyama and Eric Setoguchi presented at the 2011 Japan Language Testing Association conference in Osaka. Continuing with the long history of investigations into the group oral given at KUIS, this presentation was about stakeholder input and test design, with a focus on the effect of group member familiarity on test scores in a group oral discussion test.

This presentation described a case study which incorporated the desires of KUIS students to change the procedures of a group oral discussion test to have their group oral sessions with their classmates. To most systematically investigate this desire, steps were taken to determine if the desire for change was widespread among students and if the suggested changes were feasible. A study was then designed to determine the extent to which the proposed changes would compromise the validity of the group oral assessment process. Specifically, the procedures for the group oral assessment were altered to investigate the effect of interlocutor familiarity (i.e., testing with classmates versus testing with students from another class). To do this, students were randomly assigned to class-familiar (n = 146) and class-unfamiliar (n = 159) groups to identify to what extent, if at all, group familiarity affected test takers' scores in the four assessed categories:

pronunciation, fluency, lexis and grammar, and communication skills. For the two groups, no statistically significant difference in scores was found, and score reliability estimates were similar. Based on these findings, recommendations for using stakeholder input in the assessment design process were made.

**Externally Funded Research Project**

The external consultant, Dr. Gary Ockey, and three KAP members, Dennis Koyama, Eric Setoguchi, and Angela Sun, were awarded a TOEFL® COE 2011 Research Program grant for $60,239 U.S. dollars. The title of their study is, "Validity of the TOEFL iBT speaking section for Japanese university students".

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which performance on the TOEFL iBT speaking section is associated with indicators of Japanese university students' abilities to orally communicate in an academic English environment. To achieve this goal, the TOEFL iBT speaking scores of approximately 225 Kanda students, majoring in English, will be compared to performances on three academic oral ability tasks. The tasks include a group oral discussion, a graph and picture description, and an academic oral presentation, all of which are representative of speaking tasks commonly required in ESL/EFL courses designed to prepare students for higher education contexts and in higher education contexts themselves. Strong arguments can be made for the validity of the tasks for the target population of Japanese TOEFL iBT test takers. ETS certified raters will evaluate the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT, and Kanda University of International Studies trained raters will judge performances on the three criterion tasks.

Pearson product-moment correlations between scores on the speaking section of TOEFL iBT and performance on the three criterion measures will be conducted. Multivariate regression techniques will be used to determine the degree to which performance on each of the criterion measures could be predicted by scores on the TOEFL iBT speaking section. In addition to providing backing for a TOEFL iBT speaking section validity argument, the findings should increase understanding of the similarities and differences of the language abilities measured by each of the oral ability tasks.

## I. The Media English Project

**Project Coordinator:**    Matthew Kershaw
**Committee Members:**    Troy Rubesch

### Introduction

Media English is a new research committee for the 2011-2012 academic year set up to oversee material development and research for the sophomore Media English classes in the English Department. There are 10 Media English teachers this year covering the 17 classes that make up the second-year in the English Department. Although there are shared guidelines and suggestions for the course, the Media English teachers generally have complete freedom to choose how to teach their classes. The initial focus of the group was therefore to see how the different teachers are actually teaching the course, and to develop materials and make them available to share between teachers.

**Material Development**

Compared to other courses in the ELI there has been very little collaboration and communication between the Media English teachers in the English Department. Designing a syllabus is a rewarding and useful experience but it is also time consuming. Individual teachers devote a lot of time to developing material which is not seen or used by other teachers, and which due to the nature of the course might only be used once. In an effort to foster more collaboration between teachers, the committee members have therefore uploaded materials to a shared Media English folder and encouraged teachers to do likewise. The materials on the shared folder now include the following:

- Relevant articles – Links to, or PDFs of, journal articles related to Media English.
- Websites – Useful websites for Media English resources.
- SALC Resources – Information on all the materials in the Media English section of the SALC.
- Quizzes & Journals – Examples of teacher's news quizzes and also various news journals that teachers use in their class or for homework.
- Media Literacy – Material based on deconstructing newspapers and magazines.
- Lesson Material – Units of themed lessons (including lesson plans) such as Tourism, Education, and Eccentric Japan, which can be used by any of the Media English teachers. Also, a series of one off lessons again available for any teacher if required.

**Course Goals**

One of the aims for this semester was to revise the course objectives based on feedback from the teachers. To facilitate this, Troy has been collecting syllabus and course outlines from both current and former English Department Media English teachers in order to extrapolate any shared ideas in the aims and objectives of the teacher's courses. These shared goals will be used as the basis of developing a new set of course goals and objectives. The revisions will make it clearer to teachers what the expectations are for the Media English course while still allowing them the freedom to design their own materials and syllabus in a way in which the objectives can be met by the students.

**Looking ahead**

The committee will hold a year end meeting for all the Media English teachers where we will review the materials added to the shared folder, discuss the new course objectives, and plan for the April orientation with new incoming teachers. We will also survey teachers about further developments and directions the course can take, such as the prospect of making a set Media English syllabus for all teachers or continuing in the current format of teachers being responsible for their own course and having access to material in the shared folder if and when they require it.

Once this year's objectives have been met the focus of the committee can turn more towards research. We are already in discussions about researching whether a new process, visual-syntactic text formatting, can enhance reading comprehension and speed. Furthermore, the processes we have set in motion this

academic year will lead to individual and group research projects in addition to informing the future direction of the Media English course.

## J. The Self-Access Learning Centre Project

**Project Coordinators:** Brian Morrison, Katherine Thornton

**Committee Members:** Atsumi Yamaguchi, Diego Navarro, Elizabeth Lammons, Keiko Takahashi, Jo Mynard, Tanya McCarthy, Yuki Hasegawa, Yuko Momata

**Introduction**

The SALC research group has continued to build on previous successes in research and on-going materials development projects, such as newsletters and module updates. In addition, this year Katherine Thornton was appointed academic coordinator and has led an extensive SRG curriculum project to systematically assess, modify and develop SALC-related courses. In order to allow all members of the SRG to contribute to the curriculum project, a decision was made this academic year to restrict SRG membership to learning advisors and SALC assistant managers. The curriculum project has resulted in more group discussions around curriculum issues, collaborative projects and greater individual involvement. Working groups have been instrumental in this project and more detail will be given in the SALC Curriculum Development Project section below.

**Research**

The 2011-12 academic year has seen a slight reduction in the number of SRG members due to the restriction outlined above. The number of research projects undertaken has fallen accordingly and the majority of these are individual projects with SRG members pursuing their own SALC-related research interests. The research this year ranges from student-selected resources to an analysis of the written advisor responses to students' reflections in the First Steps Module.

A general overview of each project is presented below.

1. *Hinted components of learner autonomy evidenced in learners' reflective reports on Learning How to Learn Module*
   *Atsumi Yamaguchi*

This study investigated reflective reports of ten advisees who had completed the Learning How to Learn Module (LHL) in Fall 2010. LHL launched at the same time as the establishment of the SALC in order to provide learners with ways to develop learner autonomy through better engagement in written and face-to-face learning advisory services. However, whether this module is successfully serving the expected role has been under-researched. Thus, through investigation of ten reflective reports in which LHL takers reflected on their self-directed learning throughout a semester, the researcher interrogated whether/ to what extent LHL is serving the role for learners to enhance learner autonomy.

In doing so, the researcher conducted content analysis on the ten reflective reports, asking what was mentioned in the reports on the grounds that the

reported contents might be what the learners felt had been most impacted. Through the analysis, it was evidenced that all of them had positive experiences in LHL. For instance, one learner mentioned the positive effect of the pressure LHL provides. Participants appreciated the balance between the pressure resulting from weekly logs as well as having a learning advisor, and the open choices of the learning content and resources. Secondly, what was significant was that all the learners wrote deep reflections in the reports. For instance, most of the learners precisely described their learning processes with statements of their strengths and weaknesses; some even provided solutions for weakness. These might evidence that the learners developed their reflective skills to a large extent. Thirdly, their reports had statements to commit to continuous development as language learners. Some reported that the experiences engaging in LHL and successfully completing it offered them confidence to direct their own self-directed language learning in the future.

Furthermore, there is some evidence in the reports to answer which cognitive and metacognitive skills most impacted on the learners. However, analysis of this would require further investigation.

2. *An analysis of the learning behavior change in ILC SALC LC 1 students when implementing a learning plan*
   *Brian Morrison*

This research investigated the following questions:

- How did the SALC LC students' out-of-class activities change over the 6-week implementation stage of the course?

- Did the activities become more relevant to their goals?

The research was conducted by analyzing 20 learning journals using the SURE model as a framework for categorization. The data from each week's work was input into a spreadsheet to allow analysis of each student's progression. The spreadsheet was then color-coded to show whether the activity and resource was relevant to the student-selected goals (red = no; yellow = perhaps but insufficient data; green = yes).

This investigation provided an insight into the way students' self-directed learning behavior varied over a six-week period. In spite of the majority of students allocating the vast majority of their time to studying and reviewing at the beginning of the self-directed phase of the course, by the end of the course there was a definite re-balancing of SURE in the majority of students' learning behaviours so that activities involving skill use were relevant and focused on the students' skills objectives. The findings suggest that the SALC LC is successfully raising participants' awareness of the need to go beyond study activities and to change self-directed learning behavior so that it is more relevant to language aims and objectives.

3. *An analysis of the student-led use of technology for language learning in ILC SALC LC*

   *Brian Morrison*

This research investigated the following questions:

What digital technology was used by SALC LC 2 students to pursue their language

learning goals in English and in their regional languages?

- How did they evaluate the technology?
- When technology is used, how is it blended with non-technological resources? E.g. non-tech for *study*, tech for *use*, non-tech for *review*, tech for *progress evaluation.*

A document analysis of all 8 learning journals for both languages was carried out. The data regarding resources, activities and evaluation from all 12 weeks' work was input into a spreadsheet. This allowed for an overview of each student to be seen as well as an analysis of the group. In the next stage of the study, the researcher aims to look for patterns to emerge from the data, as well as producing a list of big/small goals, language, resource and activity, and student resource evaluation for dissemination with other LAs. This research will be completed and the documentation available before the end of February 2012.

4. *A description of self access centres through roles, purposes, and learner involvement*

*Diego Navarro*

This research was designed to investigate the following questions:

- How do different stakeholders perceive the roles and purposes of self access centres?
- In what ways are learners involved in the running of self access centres?

The study involves surveying and interviewing a large number of people involved in the day to day administration of and education in self access centres (SAC). It is

investigating how these different stakeholders perceive the different roles and purposes of SACs. The first stage involved the construction and administration of a questionnaire for preliminary data collection and analysis. The second stage will involve semi-structured follow-up interviews.

The questionnaire was constructed and piloted over the first semester. To build the questionnaire, various articles and books written about SACs were consulted. From this extensive bank of literature a collection of items 'defining' what SACs are and what SACs are meant to provide and do was assembled. In addition to the literature, various experts in the field of self access learning were consulted directly for input.

Questions used to create a general profile of the respondents and their centres, as well as questions asking specifically about student involvement in SACs were added to the 'collection of items'. A word document version of the questionnaire was then sent out to 5 people for initial feedback. Based on this feedback (comments, questions, and suggestions) a finalized version ready for piloting was created using survey monkey.

In September 2011 a pilot version of the questionnaire was sent out (via survey monkey) to four self access centres in Japan. Four SAC directors and two (experienced) learning advisors completed the online questionnaire and provided detailed feedback regarding the questionnaire itself and their experiences completing it.

Using this detailed feedback, a new (survey monkey) version of the questionnaire was created.

Official administration of the questionnaire commenced on November 1st, 2011. The questionnaire was sent out to various self access learning and learner autonomy mailing lists. To this date, there have been 15 official responses. Plans are being hatched to send out the link to the questionnaire to more mailing lists as well as personal contacts of people working in SACs around the world. The researcher is aiming on gathering a minimum of 50 responses by the end of March 2012. Once the responses are gathered, the data will be analysed and written up. This will conclude the first stage of the research. The second stage will commence in April 2012 and involve conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants who provided consent.

Preliminary findings indicate varying perspectives of the roles and purposes of SACs. Additionally, various roles and opinions exist regarding the involvement of students in SACs.

5. *An analysis of First Step Module student awareness of SALC resources*
   *Elizabeth Lammons*

This research investigated the following questions:

- What materials do Freshman students use to meet their goals in FSM?
- How do they evaluate the different resources?
- How do students relate the resources to their big and small goals?

This research was designed to inform learning advisors about the awareness that students have of how to evaluate resources for their independent study. The results of the analysis will be used to evaluate the relevance of a larger study on how students perceive the usefulness of resources in the SALC.

A document analysis of thirty-four *Unit 4:* Resources units has been conducted. The data from pages three and four of *Unit 4:* Resources from the First Steps Module was inputted into a spreadsheet. In the next stage of the study, the researcher will look for patterns to emerge from the data regarding the resources that students chose in relation to their big and small goals and their evaluation of these resources. This research will be completed and the documentation available before the end of February 2012.

6. *Investigating how advisors respond to learner reflections and issues that arise in the First Steps Module.*

   *Katherine Thornton*

This study was designed to develop an inventory of the discourse strategies that advisors use when interacting with learners through this module by analysing the comments advisors make to learners in the reflection pages of the First Steps Module.

The project aimed to answer the following questions:

- What discourse strategies do advisors use to comment on learners' reflections? (RQ1)
- What do advisors focus on when commenting on learner reflections in the

First Steps Module? (RQ2)

Having obtained permission from the advising team, the researcher collated 50 comments on learner reflections in total from 4 advisors, taken from all 7 units of the module and analysed them using Nvivo. Each clause was coded twice, in relation to each research question, first for the discourse strategies and then for the overall focus of the comment.

For RQ1, each clause was isolated and assigned a function, in order to determine whether common patterns could be found in the data. Through discussions with Jo Mynard, who has been conducting similar analyses with the Learning How to Learn Module, the initial coding categories were refined and a coherent coding frame was developed and applied to the data.

In order to determine the focus of advisor comments for RQ2, the researcher first determined whether each comment had a cognitive, metacognitive or affective purpose, designating all other comments as "other". Further categories were then determined within these categories.

The results of the discourse analysis show that advisor comments are overwhelmingly positive. A common pattern found in the data was of "Meet & Extend", a concept borrowed from humanistic counselling, whereby the advisor first "meets" the learner with a comment that either restates the learner's actions or words, often with positive reinforcement, before going on to give input designed to encourage further reflection.

Common strategies for giving input include:

- asking direct questions designed to prompt reflection
- making explicit suggestions, with varying degrees of modality to soften them
- modelling learning actions, with either themselves or another learner as an example
- giving concrete examples
- using if clauses
- using their expert knowledge to connect the learner's thoughts or actions with wider concepts

The following table (Table 1) shows the number of comments which addressed the cognitive, metacognitive and affective dimensions of learners' module work. It was found that all three categories are fully represented in the data.

Table 1. Comment analysis

| Focus of comments | No. of comments |
|---|---|
| Cognitive | 34 |
| Metacognitive | 35 |
| Affective | 23 |
| Other* | 18 |

*Other comments included keeping learners on track - reminding them of deadlines, uncompleted work etc.

7. *An investigation into the choice of resources for language learning by LHL students*
    *Keiko Takahashi*

Learning How to Learn Module (LHL) students spend 8 weeks implementing a learning plan and within this time, they have to choose their own resources which are relevant to their goals. When they implement their learning plan, they need to think about their learning cycle based on the SURE+E (Study, Use, Review, Enjoy and Evaluate) model which they learned from the previous module, First Steps Module.

The researcher has been looking at patterns in the balance of different activities (Study, Use, Review, Enjoy and Evaluate) by analyzing 11 LHL Module students' 8-week learning journals. By considering their goals, the resources they chose, the activities they did with these resources and their experience, there will be a better understanding of the trends of resource usage and patterns of learning activities for specific language goals.

To date, the data of 11 students who chose speaking as their goal have been inputted into Excel. There are 11 spreadsheets currently containing 5 by 8 cells. Each student's information includes: big goal and small goal; activities from Week 2 to Week 8; extracts from their learning journals related to rationale; material usage; and material evaluation. In addition, each activity has been categorized as Study, Use, Review, Evaluate and/or Enjoy to consider the balance of SURE+E.

By the end of the semester, the researcher will complete the material selection analysis, select effective learning activities and create a learning advisor's guide for

the Learning How to Learn Module. The guidebook based on the findings of the research will inform other learning advisors about 1) effective learning activities observed in the data 2) useful resources that the students chose and 3) how the data can inform our advising.

8. *Evaluating the SALC Learning Course after 2 semesters*
    *Tanya McCarthy & Yuki Hasegawa*

The research conducted for SRG 2011-2012 is a continuation of the 2010-2011 report filed last year. In 2010-2011, the SALC Learning Course was offered to ILC students as an alternative to the First Steps Module (FSM) course. A questionnaire was administered to get feedback on the course, such as amount of homework, level of difficulty and feelings about independent study and to get an idea of learner usage of the SALC. From learner feedback, the researcher found areas of the course that needed improvement and this formed the basis of the 2011-2012 research.

The SLC course was held again in semesters 1 and 2 in 2011-2012. In semester 1, based on feedback from the previous questionnaire, the researcher re-designed worksheets, created new materials (such as writing and speaking self-evaluation forms and a self-reflection worksheet) and developed new activities that encouraged more interaction in class. The 2010-2011 questionnaire was then administered in the final class. At the beginning of semester 1, the researcher wrote a comprehensive paper which described the design of the course and presented the results of the questionnaire. After analyzing data from the 2011-2012 questionnaire, this paper was used as the base from which to compare results. A

summary was written and shared with the team.

To add to the questionnaire and to further understand the students' opinions and experiences toward the class, it was decided that focus group would provide the opportunity to capture the student voices. It was hoped that the voices from the students will provide us with richer data to evaluate our curriculum and also to the curriculum development or re-designing process.

The researchers used 3 questions developed from the research questions that needed further input from students. They were discussed by both researchers and were first written in English. Then, they were translated into Japanese by the Japanese researcher.

There was a total of 18 students that participated in the focus group discussion which the researcher divided in 6 groups, each including 3 students. Each session lasted 16 minutes. In order for the students to express themselves as fully as possible, the discussion was held in Japanese, and the researchers were not present during the session. Instead of a moderator, a prompt card (written in Japanese) was given and each student in a group was given a role of either a 1) time keeper, 2) recorder, or 3) captain. The time keeper was responsible for setting an alarm and making sure that the discussion finishes in time, the recorder was responsible for making sure that the discussion was recorded on an IC recorder properly and to call out the discussion questions number before going into a discussion, and the captain was responsible for reading out the discussion questions and to make sure that everyone in the group had spoken before going on.

The discussion was recorded on an IC recorder for analysis and the Japanese researcher is in the process of analyzing the data. Although the data is fully in Japanese, some parts of discussion will be translated into English and a summary will be written in English.

**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, Elizabeth Lammons, Katherine Thornton, Keiko Takahashi, Jo Mynard, 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.

2. *SALC Learning Course, Course Materials & Advisor Notes*

   *Brian Morrison, Diego Navarro, Tanya McCarthy & Yuki Hasegawa*

Based on student feedback and observation from the first year of the SALC Learning Course (2010-2011), materials and activities were modified to keep the class-based aspect of the course as dynamic and interactive as possible and to take into greater consideration the pressure on students' time outside of class. Notes for future advisors delivering this course have also been kept to pass on information about what worked, what was modified and considerations for future classes.

3. *Student involvement in the SALC: the work of the SALC Student Committee (SSC)*

   *Diego Navarro*

Work with the SALC student committee continues to progress smoothly with the LA conduit liaising between administration and the SRG. The SSC continues to meet 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 group has grown significantly (12 members) and is working harmoniously and autonomously. In addition to the weekly meetings, this past year, the LA conduit has been more involved with the group via email discussions.

This year the SSC decided to split up into 4 groups correlating with 4 sections of the SALC (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). They have been working on small group projects to help promote these sections. At the end of the year, they will write up a summary report of their work. They continue to work hard to

promote a fun and interesting atmosphere both in the SALC and throughout the institution. The group put on two events: the summer party and the Halloween party which were extremely successful with hundreds of students coming in to the SALC. Also, for the first time, they participated as a SALC affiliated group at Hamakaze, selling tapioca and promoting the work they do in the SALC.

4.  *SALC Newsletter*
    *Elizabeth Lammons*

For the first issue in the academic year 2011-12, the new editing team consisted of an ELI teacher, a SALC assistant manager and a learning advisor. The team decided to continue to focus content on those working both in the SALC and in the ELI communities as well as activities within these communities. In addition, the team decided to change the layout of the newsletter to make the articles shorter and more accessible to students.

The content of the newsletter has included the following features for each issue: *Interview, Recommendation, My Learning Strategies, People in the SALC*, and *SALC English*. *Interview* is based on an interview with an ELI teacher about their experiences living in Japan or traveling the world. 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. The Learning Advisors are introduced in *People in the SALC*. Other features included in the newsletter are SALC schedule, news via SALC twitter and facebook) and SSC (SALC Student Committee) announcements and recommendations.

Two issues were published in July and October, 2011. Two more issues will be published in January and April 2012. Archives are kept by the SALC Assistant Manager.

Writers and Editors for 2011-12 are Elizabeth Lammons, Nathan Johnson and Tomoko Hoshi. Proofreading is done by Keiko Takahashi and Yuko Momata. Design is by Noriko Takasago and Yuko Monden.

5. *Diagnostic Frameworks for Learning How to Learn (LHL)*
   *Brian Morrison, Katherine Thornton, Diego Navarro, Elizabeth Lammons, Jo Mynard & Keiko Takahashi*

These frameworks were originally developed by Brian Morrison for the *SALC Learning Course* with the purpose of raising students' awareness of their skill-specific strengths and weaknesses. It was considered that raising students' awareness would then allow them to make more informed decisions about selecting their 'small goal' and prioritizing their learning in ways that would meet their aims and objectives. In other words, the diagnostic framework was designed to help inform the direction of self-directed learning.

The group working on this project, led by Diego Navarro and Katherine Thornton, modified the four diagnostic frameworks and the Learning How to Learn module introduction to guide learners and integrate the diagnostic frameworks. In order to document this pilot a spreadsheet was created and data inputted to log which framework was used by each module participant and to what extend the diagnostic process was followed. This will inform future integration of this

framework into the Learning How to Learn module and where further student support may be most effectively applied.

**SALC Curriculum Development Project**
**Semester One: Working Groups**

With the appointment of an Academic Coordinator for the SALC, the SALC team has decided to implement a rigorous evaluation of our existing curriculum, namely the SALC modules offered to students. In the first semester of 2011/12, this evaluation focused on investigating student experiences of the modules through a number of projects. These projects have been carried out by 3 working groups, each focusing on a different SALC module: First Steps Module, Learning How to Learn & Sophomore Modules & the non-credit bearing Planning for your Future (IELTS/TOEIC/TOEFL) modules. This section of the report focuses on these working group projects.

1. *First Steps Module Working Group*

The First Steps Module working group conducted two small projects, one focusing on determining the aims and outcomes of the module, and the other focusing on student experiences of the module.

1.1. *What are the aims and outcomes of the LHL and Sophomore modules?*
    *Tanya McCarthy & Elizabeth Lammons*

Curriculum research conducted aimed to discover learning advisor perceptions of the overall aims of the First Steps Module (FSM). In the first semester during weekly advisor meetings, advisors discussed their perceptions of the aims of units

1 – 7 in the module. These discussions were recorded and transcribed. A summary was then written to highlight what advisors considered to be the main aims of the module.

In brief, advisors commented that the FSM is largely an awareness-raising course which helps learners to reflect on current learning practices and introduces new concepts of self-directed language learning. The aim of each unit is to promote self-discovery and help learners identify new ways of looking at their learning so that learners can make more informed and effective decisions about their learning.

## 1.2 *Investigating student experiences of the First Steps Module.*
### *Katherine Thornton & Yuki Hasegawa*

Katherine Thornton and Yuki Hasegawa have been investigating student experiences of the First Steps Module (FSM). Each semester the SALC administers a questionnaire to students on completion of the First Steps Module, but it was felt by the SALC team that richer data from students was necessary to inform our curriculum evaluation and development process.

Given the constraints of time and resources, it was felt that focus groups would provide the best opportunity to solicit multiple student voices on issues connected to the module. The researchers first designed the format and structure the focus groups would take, in consultation with Lucy Cooker, who had implemented a similar study in 2004 & 2005 (Cooker, 2004).

40 students were selected from those taking FSM and invited to attend a session. Selections were based on the department of the student and their final points score, including drop-outs, to try and ensure that both low and high achieving students from different departments were represented in the make up of the groups. Care was taken to ensure than students from each advisor were represented. 1500yen was offered to encourage participation. 18 responses were received. A second round of recruitment, targeting 20 additional students, was held 2 weeks later and 4 focus groups of 6 students were arranged. Each group consisted of a mixture of departments, advisors and achievement levels.

Each session lasted 1 hour. In order to have students express themselves as fully and as honestly as possible, the sessions were held in Japanese, and no advisors were present during the session. Instead of a moderator, a prompt card system was used, and students were asked to check that they had all given a response before moving onto the next question on the next card. Sessions were audio-recorded with two recorders and video-recorded.

The questions were developed from our research questions and the data gathered in the questionnaire. They were discussed by both researchers in English & Japanese, written in English then translated into Japanese by the Japanese researcher. They were then piloted for language and understanding with a SALC student staff member. On completion of the first focus group, which was treated as a pilot, both researchers listened to the session and determined that the questions were eliciting the appropriate information from the group. No major changes were made to the questions and this data was included in the data set.

The researchers are in the process of independently summarising and analysing the data. Both researchers have independently summarised each session, and then met to agree on a final version of the summary. This summary will then be analysed and coded using a grounded analysis, in order to determine a clear picture of how students have experienced the First Steps Module and to inform the SALC's wider curriculum development project.

2. *Learning How to Learn/ Sophomore Modules Working Group*
   *Jo Mynard, Keiko Takahashi & Atsumi Yamaguchi*

2.1. *Analysis of students' feedback on LHL survey*

A pilot survey had been administered in February, 2011 to LHL students and the present research aimed to investigate the following research questions:

- What are the students' perceptions of LHL?

2.1.1. *Results*

Generally speaking, LHL module takers show satisfaction with LHL and associated advising sessions. They report that sessions with LAs helped their learning in cognitive, metacognitive and affective ways.

Although LHL module takers understood the importance of writing reflections, this does involve a lot of writing. We may want to offer alternative ways of facilitating reflective processes in the future.

2.1.2. *Action*

Based on the results the survey was amended for the next administration of

Sophomore Module takers in spring 2011.

2.2. *Sophomore Module Survey (pilot)*

The instrument was amended and administered to Sophomore students in July 2011. Nine students completed the survey and the results of the survey were analysed. The majority of the participants took the Media English module.

Expectations

Four students indicated that they expected to improve their language proficiency and four students indicated that the aim was to improve the learning process.

Cognitive development

The majority of the students mentioned in open response questions that the module helped them to learn new strategies for learning.

Metacognitive growth

All but three participants claimed to have used the concepts that they had learned in the First Steps Module. All but one of the students found the SURE+E Model useful. Most of the students found the process of writing a good way to deepen their understanding. Two students mentioned that the writing process was repetitive, however all students found the reflection process useful.

Social, affective and motivational factors

All of the participants demonstrated positive feelings toward their learning advisor's comments. Most of the students reported that their LAs helped to

maintain their motivation. The data indicated that Sophomore Module-takers have minimum interaction except for with a couple of other students.

Conclusions

The data indicated that most of the respondents would be confident in carrying out future independent learning based on what they learned through the module. Two participants mentioned that the module maintained their enthusiasm to keep learning. One reported a feeling of accomplishment though the module experience. The data implies that module-takers feel that the module is not a collaborative learning experience but individual learning. It might be interesting to create a more interactive situation among module takers.

2.3. *What are the aims and outcomes of the LHL and Sophomore modules?*

Research aims:

To establish a shared understanding of the aims and outcomes of the Sophomore and LHL Modules, document and disseminate them.

Summary

The aim of this process was to examine as many relevant data sources as possible, code the data according to content using *HYPEResearch,* a qualitative data analysis software program, and then create a description of the aims and outcomes of the LHL and Sophomore Modules. The following data sources were included in the analysis:

- LA views on the aims and outcomes (open-response question)
- Website and brochure information

- Literature (articles published by Lucy and former LAs)
- Information in the module packs including grading bands
- Students' opinions on the LHL module (6 learners)

Findings
- The aims and outcomes of LHL and Soph are largely the same apart from some restrictions on the focus of study as Sophomore Modules need to be more closely tied to a course the student is taking
- The results helped to identify elements that should be included in revised descriptions of the LHL and Sophomore Modules
- Some differences between what LAs think is the purpose of the modules is, information given to students in module packs, and information contained on promotional literature were found
- Some ways in which students felt they benefited were not reflected in the other sources

A document was drafted for LAs to comment on and the following aims and outcomes were agreed:

Aims

The purpose of the LHL and Sophomore Module is to promote learner autonomy and develop self-directed learning skills in a supported and enjoyable way. Students draw on previous knowledge, for example, from what they learned in class or in the First Steps Module to create and implement an individualized course of independent study. Through the process of monitoring, experimentation and

reflection, by interacting with others, by selecting and using appropriate resources, and by receiving support from learning advisors, the learners develop a deeper level of cognitive and metacognitive awareness.

Outcomes

At the end of the process, learners are likely to see an improvement in language proficiency in their target areas, but this is not an explicit aim of the module. By the end of the module period, students should be able evaluate the effectiveness of the process and be able to create an implement an effective course of independent study in the future.

These aims and outcomes were simplified and included in module packs for students in the fall semester 2011. They will be included in all SALC literature from now on.

3. *Planning for your future - TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS Working Group*
   *Brian Morrison & Diego Navarro*

In the academic year 2009 – 10, a new self-directed learning module, *Prepare for Your Future (PFYF)*, was developed and piloted in response to student demand for exam-based support. The three exams focused on were *IELTS, TOEFL and TOEIC*. Due to the varying demands of these exams, although the overarching philosophy was of student choice, flexibility, and learning cycles in all 3 versions, there were differences in the design, particularly in the diagnostic frameworks. In order to establish a record of the design and development of the differing *PFYF* modules before all the materials developers leave KUIS, the researchers reviewed existing documents and interviewed the remaining learning advisors responsible

for the material development. There was enough 'institutional memory' of *IELTS* and *TOEIC PFYF* modules to produce documents but the information for *TOEFL* has already been lost. The documents are available from:

\\kgnfs03\salc_only\Working Groups\PFYF

3.1 *Prepare for Your Future module take up and patterns of use for IELTS, TOEFL & TOEIC modules examined.*

In 2010 – 11, the *PFYF* module was officially launched and offered primarily to 3rd and 4th year KUIS students. Due to the flexible nature integrated into the design of all three versions, and the tendency for one or two learning advisors to 'specialize' in one exam, knowledge about which students were taking a *PFYF* and how they used the flexibility of the module was anecdotal. As part of the current SALC curriculum audit, the researchers investigated the student numbers, year-group profiles, general skills focused on and patterns of interaction with advisors. Databases of module allocation, booked advising, and student year-group were analyzed, and advisors who had supported students on *PFYF* interviewed. The data was used to produce a report available at \\kgnfs03\salc_only\Working Groups\PFYF\Implementation of PFYF. This report also contains recommendations and recognizes that more rigorous record keeping is necessary to decide whether students are meeting their goals.

**Semester Two: Curriculum project**

In the second semester, building on this working group research, the SALC team has embarked on a structured, long term curriculum project, the aim of which is to both evaluate our current curriculum and implement any changes deemed

necessary to make the SALC curriculum as relevant as possible to all KUIS students. In order to achieve these objectives, a systematic curriculum evaluation framework has been adopted, based on the Nation and Macalister (2010) model of language curriculum development.

1. *Environment Analysis*
   *Atsumi Yamaguchi, Brian Morrison, Diego Navarro, Elizabeth Lammons, Katherine Thornton Keiko Takahashi, Jo Mynard, Tanya McCarthy & Yuki Hasegawa*

In line with this framework, as the first step, the SALC team has embarked upon an environment analysis, the aim of which is to raise our own awareness of the constraints of the environment in which we work, in order to produce a project which is relevant, sustainable and practically implementable in our context.

The environment analysis has been broken up into 3 areas: the situation, the learners and the learning advisors. Each of these has been investigated by developing a list of questions, using existing lists from Nation and Macalister (2010) and Richards (2001), and answering them for each area. In the case of the learners, this has involved contacting coordinators from each department.

The results of this analysis were then shared with the team on Moodle and discussed in a meeting in which all learning advisors, Jo Mynard and Lucy Cooker participated. As a result of this discussion, 6 factors were identified as important constraints in our context:

- Students have limited time

- Explicit skills and strategy instruction is limited/ inconsistent

- All departments are currently in flux

- No consistent definition of Learner Autonomy exists at KUIS (Theoretical and practical approaches are vague at best)

- The amount and type of work LAs do is limited to the number and experience of LAs

- Learners' have varied proficiency levels (from false beginners to near-native speakers)

The team has then discussed how these constraints will impact our curriculum (the product) and the development process.

**The Future**

In the year the SALC celebrated its 10th anniversary, the SRG has continued to research areas and develop materials which directly impact KUIS students and their relationship with the SALC. In addition, with the appointment of an academic coordinator, the whole group has taken on a collaborative curriculum project in order to evaluate the current programmes offered and how these meet the contemporary needs of a variety of KUIS stakeholders both now and as we proceed with curriculum modifications and development.

## References

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