



## **Working Papers in Language Education and Research**

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### **Abstracts of Other Papers Supported by RILS&LE Funding**

#### **Working Papers in Language Education and Research - Abstracts Only**

**1. Katherine Thornton** received funding to present at IATEFL in Glasgow, 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2012. Her paper was subsequently published:

Thornton, K. (2012). Evaluating a curriculum for self-directed learning: a systematic approach. *Independence IATEFL Learner Autonomy Special Interest Group Newsletter*, 55, 8 – 11.

#### **Abstract:**

Since 2003, the Self Access Learning Centre (SALC) at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) has offered elective, non-classroom based self-directed learning modules for first and second year students which are taught through the SALC by a team of Learning Advisors. The modules aim to help students develop their self-directed learning skills through learning about and implementing a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This article describes the evaluation and modification process of this SALC curriculum currently being undertaken by the Learning Advisory team, and introduces an adaptation of the curriculum design model discussed by Diego Navarro in his interview with Paul Nation and John Macalister in *Independence* 54 (Navarro 2012).

**2. Elizabeth Lammons** received funding to present at the 9<sup>th</sup> FEELTA Conference in Vladivostock in November 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

### **Encouraging student evaluation of language learning resources**

Abstract:

The Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies has about 11,000 materials that students can use for their self-directed study. In addition to books, DVDs, CDs, and worksheets, students have access to Speaking Booths and Multipurpose Rooms (MPRs). Further there is an English Language Institute (ELI) lounge area with yellow sofas where students can speak with one another and teachers in English. Other areas of ELI which are located within the SALC are the Writing Centre and the Practice Centre where students can practice speaking in English with teachers on a one-on-one basis. Within the SALC there are also Learning Advisors (LAs) who assist students with their self-directed learning through modules and advising sessions. The first module freshmen students can take is the First Steps Module (FSM). This module gives students the opportunity to learn more about themselves as learners and to explore the resources within the SALC. One of the units of the module specifically focuses on resources, and FSM students have to find resources that they can potentially use to meet their individual language learning goals, try them, and then evaluate the resources. A document analysis of 34 FSM module takers was conducted to discover which resources the students were using, how they evaluated the resources and how they related the resources to their goals. The results indicate that while students could identify materials that they could use for their goals they sometimes have difficulty choosing appropriate levels of materials or resources. The students evaluated the resources positively. The paper contends that students need more opportunities to try and evaluate resources that are available to them with assistance in how to choose appropriate leveled materials and in using materials in different ways.

**3. Tom Lockley** received funding to present at the Fifth International CALL Conference in Taiwan, 2012. His paper was subsequently published:

Lockley, T. (2012). Native Speaker “digitalians”, we just don't speak your dialect...Yet. “digital/keitai native” Culture and CALL in Japan. *5th International CALL Conference Proceedings*, Taiwan, 473 – 477.

Abstract:

Young people currently at university have been labelled “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001) in the USA and “keitai (mobile phone) natives” (Takahashi, 2011) in Japan. In fact, they have never known a world without internet and pervasive Information and Communications Technology (ICT). While these “digital/keitai natives” are expert, incessant social media users (Takahashi, 2011), many educators perceive them as lacking more formal ICT skills (Lockley, 2011a; Jones & Healing, 2010; Williams, 2011), resulting in an apparent dissonance when attempting CALL in class. Some educators go so far as to give up trying and return to more traditional mediums (Lockley, 2011b). Through a review and analysis of the latest research, this paper will assess the current situation of Japanese university students’ ICT experience and consider its implications for realization of the medium of CALL in the Japanese context. It will present the language of the “digital/keitai natives”, “Digitalian” and show that as with all languages there are many dialects and accents and sometimes they are not, initially at least, entirely mutually comprehensible; Japanese students are actually more adept than many educators perceive. This paper will encourage educators to engage proactively with CALL and understand the students’ particular “Digitalian” dialects.

**4. Lara Promnitz-Hayashi** received funding to present at IAWWE Conference, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, Monash University, Melbourne. Her paper was subsequently published: Promnitz-Hayashi, L. (2012) Australian English: But a Blip in the World of Japanese Academia. *The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2012, Official Conference Proceedings*, 290-315.

Abstract:

“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 focuses 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 places added emphasis on Australian culture, Australian English and even Kriol. The paper draws on multiple sources of data -- surveys, interviews and examples of students’ classwork (such as face-to-face and online discussions, translation exercises, glossaries and presentations) – to present cases of students’ perceptions and misconceptions of Australian English and culture.

5. Alex Worth received RILS&S funding to present at CAMTESOL in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2012. His paper was subsequently published:

Worth, A. (2012). 'A dogme based approach from the learners' perspective'. *The Journal of Kanda University of International Studies*, Vol. 24 (2012), p.77-99.

Abstract:

The Dogme methodological approach is a relatively new addition to the ELT profession and, as such, has generated considerable debate among teaching professionals. The current study examines the dogme-based approach when taught alongside the more traditional coursebook-based lessons and the opinion from students as to the merits of the two lesson styles when taught in tandem. The current study took the form of action research into a class of Japanese learners with the purpose of resolving and answering many outstanding concerns and questions as to the appropriateness of dogme ELT as a pedagogical approach. The findings of the research have provided a reference point for the practical application of Dogme ELT in the classroom and indications as to the potential benefits and disadvantages that a dogme-based approach might have on an English language learner in the Japanese educational context.

**6. Tamatha Roman** received funding to present at IATEFL in Glasgow, March 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012. Her paper was subsequently published in the IATEFL Conference Proceedings.

Abstract:

Research has shown that self-assessment fosters independence and increases motivation, as students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses through revising and reflecting upon their own work (Bailey 1998; Nunan, 1996; Von Elek, 1985). One way to promote self-assessment is through VoiceThread, a collaborative and interactive web program that allows teachers and students to record their voices in a free, simple, and self-contained space for the EFL classroom. VoiceThread can be used for a variety of individual and group activities, allowing students to evaluate their own work and the work of others and observe their individual progress within a given amount of time. In this paper, the author presents what VoiceThread is and how it can encourage social cohesion, critical thinking skills, and self-assessment through its online resource. Furthermore, the author will explain the results of presenting this paper for the Testing SIG at the 2012 IATEFL Conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

**7. Jake Breaux** received funding to present at the International Conference on Language and Communication in Bangkok, Thailand on 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011. His paper was subsequently submitted to the *World Englishes Journal* for consideration.

Abstract:

The growth of English education in Korea, and the increasing importance of English language skills in Korean society have resulted in a demand driven market with high stakes for learners and the nation's future. Traditionally, American and British models have dominated this market. Recent research, however, has claimed that there has been a paradigm shift in Korean attitudes towards other varieties of English, and that Koreans are more accepting of World Englishes and EIL. In so doing it has largely ignored Korean university students, to whom such a shift is arguably most relevant, and focused instead on English language majors and adult office workers. This study investigated the attitudes of 60 Korean university students towards varieties of English in a World Englishes context. Results contradict recent assertions that Koreans are more accepting of other varieties (Shim, 2002) and do not have a preference (Kim, 2007). It is argued that these preferences are problematic, with potential implications for policy and pedagogy with regard to English language education in Korea.

8. **Yuki Hasegawa** received funding to present at IATEFL in Glasgow, 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2012.

### **Examining Students' Experiences Toward Self-study Through Focus Group Discussions**

Abstract:

It seems that it is widely agreed that learner training is necessary in fostering learner autonomy among students. On this account, a course in which students were taught how to study English independently was offered to the freshman students at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. Within a semester (15 weeks), students learned ways to become better language learners as well as to self-study effectively. At the end of the semester, students were asked to discuss their experiences and thoughts which they gained through the course. Students were asked for their opinions about the mix of classroom learning and independent learning, a useful and not so useful self-studying strategy that they learned in the course, and for suggestions for a better course. As a result of the analysis, three findings were recognized. The first is that students generally appreciate that there are both class time and the self-study time within the course. However, many found themselves working alone for most of the time and wished for more time to work together. Secondly, the most popular unit of the course was the Goal Setting unit whereas the least popular was the Learning Strategies unit. Finally, students seemed to want to use the Self-Access Learning Centre (SALC) more as a part of class work rather than only for the purpose of self-study. Students' opinions suggested that they need more guidance on how to look for resources in the SALC.



**9. Dani Fischer** received finding to present at IATEFL in Glasgow, 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2012. Her paper was subsequently published in the IATEFL Proceedings.

### **Cultivating Effective Peer Feedback Strategies In An Academic Writing Course**

Abstract:

This poster presentation summarizes the results of action research based around an experimental syllabus and original classroom materials designed for peer feedback training. Materials and instruction focused on helping students become less dependent on the teacher for drafting, writing, and editing academic writing assignments. The main focus is on how students were trained to use peer feedback strategies and how feedback sessions were conducted in class. Successes were shared to give teachers some helpful recommendations and failures were also reported to avoid potential pitfalls in the future. In terms of the target population of students, the researcher concluded that ideal student feedback groups consisted of 3-4 people, involved students staying with the same groups for several sessions of feedback, and focused on structure and content rather than grammatical accuracy. The researcher's conclusions were based on classroom observation, personal teacher reflections and an anonymous open-ended question survey administered to students.

**10. Marnie Brown** received RILS&LE funding to present at the Fifth International CALL Conference in Taiwan, 2012. Her paper was subsequently published in the JALT CALL Journal as part of a wider collaboration in the ELI.

### **Integration of iPads into a Japanese university English language curriculum**

Abstract:

Tablet computers are a growing trend in education that has been gaining momentum since the introduction of the Apple iPad in 2010. This paper presents a case study at a Japanese university that investigated the integration of iPads into an existing English language curriculum. It reports on the experience of teachers and students using this particular tablet for several learning tasks in a Freshman English course. The tablets were used as a presentation tool, digital handout, Internet browser, transcription recorder, and media playback device. Data gathered from the study describe benefits and drawbacks of using tablet computers in the Japanese university EFL context. In addition, teacher and student views on using tablets in class activities were gauged. The researchers used direct observations, video recordings of student use, and survey data from teachers and students. It also details the mobile applications that were used for the classroom tasks. While the iPads showed promise in collaborative projects involving media, connectivity, unfamiliarity, and incompatibility issues limited their effectiveness. Although only a few iPads were available for the study, the issues and results are considered from the perspective of tablet technology in general. Furthermore, the lessons learned here might provide additional insights into the broader implementation of mobile devices in language learning environments.

**11. Eric J. Hall** received RILS&LE funding to present at CAMTESOL in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**DOGME ELT In Cambodian Schools: One Piece of a Larger Puzzle**

Abstract:

This paper illustrates that though the Dogme ELT methodology developed by Meddings & Thornbury (2009) was originally developed to reinvigorate any ELT classroom regardless of its location using materials-light teaching, it's especially suited for use by teachers in developing countries who have little or no access to support materials with a focus on how Cambodian teachers in particular could employ Dogme ELT to provide their students with effective English lessons. The paper begins by including an overview of the long-lasting consequences of the Khmer Rouge genocide on the education system in Cambodia, and then outlines the core principals of Dogme ELT and how it's perfectly suited to circumvent some of the difficulties faced by Cambodian teachers and students. The paper also includes a representative lesson outline to illustrate how Dogme ELT is used in the classroom.

**12. Stuart Benson** received RILS&LE funding to present at CAMTESOL in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

### **Student Centered Approach To Explicitly Teaching Vocabulary Learning Strategies**

Abstract:

This study looks at a project for a student-centered approach to vocabulary learning strategies. Through a three-week vocabulary unit, 26 Japanese University students were introduced to nine vocabulary learning strategies. At the end of the unit as a final project, the students formed groups to firstly develop then conduct a twenty minute class in which they actively explained the strategy then used a task developed by them to teach the strategies to their fellow classmates. This study will introduce the vocabulary unit, the tasks that the students developed and used to explicitly teach the strategy and their reflection on the unit and final project. Pedagogical implications of the final project in the language classroom will also be discussed.

**13. Neil Johnson** received RILS& LE funding to present at the Intercultural Competence and Foreign/Second Language Immersive Environments Conference in Tucson, Arizona, January 2012. His paper was subsequently published: Strategic Interaction 2.0: Instructed Intercultural Pragmatics in an EFL Context. *International Journal of Strategic Information Technology and Applications*, 4(1), 1-14, 2013.

Abstract:

The potential of web-based 2.0 technology for teaching and assessing intercultural pragmatics has become an area of focus for language educators (Cohen, 2008; Belz, 2005, 2006). Research has highlighted that second and foreign language learners show significant differences from native speakers in language use, in particular, with the execution and comprehension of certain speech acts (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Without effective instruction, differences in pragmatics are evident in the English of learners regardless of their first language background or language proficiency. In EFL contexts, such as Japan, where learners have limited exposure to native speaker norms, teaching and learning pragmatic competence can be particularly challenging. The authors describe an ongoing curriculum development project in a Japanese university context, where the goal is to design and implement an effective approach to teaching interlanguage pragmatics. Digitally enhanced Strategic Interaction (SI) sequences (Di Pietro, 1987) provide opportunities for learners to engage in realistic interactive situations that are mediated by use of model conversations, an online wiki space, and digital video technologies. The online space provides opportunities for learner reflection, peer assisted feedback, and detailed intervention from the instructor. Data analysis from pre- and post-written discourse completion tasks suggests that learners are able to use language in more context sensitive ways having engaged with the teaching/learning cycle design.

**14. Joachim Castellano, Jo Mynard, and Troy Rubesch** received RILS & LE funding to present at EuroCALL, Nottingham, England, 31<sup>st</sup> August to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011. Their paper was subsequently published: Castellano, J., Mynard, J., & Rubesch, T. (2011). Student technology use in a self-access center. *Language Learning & Technology Journal*, 15(3), 12-27.

Abstract:

Technology has played an increasingly vital role in self-access learning over the past twenty years or so, yet little research has been conducted into learners' actual use of the technology both for self-directed learning and as part of everyday life. This paper describes an ongoing action research project at a self-access learning center (SALC) at a university in Japan. Previous research has mainly looked at resource availability in a self-access setting (see for example Lázaro & Reinders, 2007) or has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of various technology tools (for example Ruiz-Madrid, 2006; Mynard, 2009). This paper presents an expansive view of technology-based language learning tools that includes materials design, support, and purchasing decisions. The paper shares findings of a qualitative research study involving a questionnaire and interviews with self-access center users. Concrete, corrective actions to remedy issues and improve language-learning opportunities for SALC users are reported. These include: raising awareness of the materials, improving formal and informal support, developing materials based on students' patterns of use, and making more strategic purchasing decisions. Broader implications of the research are that technology deployment and support can be improved by focusing careful attention on the students served by a particular self-access center.