Seminar on
Self Access Learning and Learner Independence:
A South East Asean Perspective
13–15 March 1995

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Proceedings of KMITT’s Seminar

on

“Self Access Learning and Learner Independence: A South East Asian Perspective”

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The Royal River Hotel

Bangkok

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS, KMITT  MAY 1996
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SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS, KMITT MAY 1996
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Acknowledgements
Editorial Committee
INTRODUCTION

There has been growing interest in Self Access Learning in South East Asia over the past few years, represented by the growth of self access centres and the increased incidence of papers given in conferences and published in journals. Consequently, the Languages Department at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi regarded this as an opportune time to run a Seminar on Self Access in order to provide a platform from which persons and Institutions in the region could share experience of developing learner independence and self access learning for languages.

The Seminar was run over 3 days at the Royal River Hotel, attended by 115 participants. All the presentations were from invited speakers, representing Thailand, Malaysia, Britain and Hong Kong.

The first day began with an introduction to the Seminar in which the speaker set out to present a conceptual map of self access which showed its relation to learning independence, and to other related notions. This functioned as a guide to the organisation of the seminar. This was followed by a survey of Self Access in Thailand, and the remainder of the day was taken up with presentations describing self access centres in KMITT, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Day two was concerned with various methodologies for developing learning independence, sometimes through the use of self access centres and sometimes in other contexts. Talks and demonstrations were given on materials for self access; using a computer network; integrating self access and the conventional classroom; and developing learning independence within the conventional classroom.

The third day was largely devoted to learner training. Besides learner preparation for language learning in both the conventional classroom and the self access centre, there were papers on developing language awareness and on preparing teachers. Finally, there was a presentation on the evaluation of the Self Access Centre at KMITT. The seminar ended with a question and answer session in which all the presenters responded to questions and comments from the participants.

This book of proceedings is meant to offer the written versions of papers and talks which were delivered at the seminar. An attempt has been made to ensure that the original papers were changed as little as possible. In case of any queries about the papers, the readers are invited to contact the authors directly.
The Opening Ceremony of the Seminar
on
“Self Access Learning and Learner Independence:
A South East Asian Perspective”
on 13 March 1995
9:00 - 9:30 A.M.
Report on the Seminar
Associate Professor Dr. Harit Sutabutr
President of King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi

Permanent Secretary,

With your permission, I would like to begin by saying that it is both an honour and a pleasure to report today on the King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi’s seminar on “Self-Access Learning and Learner Independence: A South East Asian Perspective.” May I also add that it is an honour and a privilege to address such a distinguished international gathering, comprising, as it does, a number of eminent scholars and experts both in teaching English as a foreign language in general and also specialists in Self Access learning and teaching from Great Britain, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and all over Thailand. On behalf of King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi therefore, indeed on behalf of the Thai English Language Teaching Profession as a whole, I would like to wish all our guest speakers and participants a very warm welcome.

The Department of Language and Social Studies, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi, for over two decades, has been playing a major role in both teaching English for Science and Technology and preparing teachers of English. Moreover, the Department has adopted as its major contribution to the world of
teaching in Thailand, the role of trainer by offering short courses and seminars involving highly qualified expatriates almost every year.

In 1991 the Graduate Diploma Programme in Resource Based English Language Learning started with the aim of training English teachers in optimizing the use of a resource centre and a self-access centre as well as utilizing other resources for individualization. This Post Graduate Diploma is the first of its kind in the Kingdom of Thailand. The curriculum was developed by the staff of KMITT with the assistance and inspiration of Leslie Dickinson, a world authority in the area whose contribution was made possible under the auspices of the British Council Thailand. With the inception of the Post Graduate Diploma, a Self-Access Centre was developed. The Centre started from scratch and with a modest budget but with a major contribution from the Department staff members.

Since the Post Graduate Diploma programme began and the Self-Access Centre began full operation the Department has received a variety of requests for help. Since 1992 there have been a number of visits from educationists and administrators both from Thailand and other countries to the Self-Access Centre. The Department has also conducted short in-service tailor-made courses for teachers from Laos and Ministry of Defense, among others. Such interest from the country's English Language Teaching profession led the Department to organize this Seminar on Self Access Learning and Learner Independence: A South East Asian Perspective. It is almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of English teaching and learning in the world in which globalization is in rapid expansion. It is of particular significance to the nations of South East Asia such as Thailand. Especially now, when Thailand is at a turning point in the process of transforming herself from an agricultural society to a newly industrialized country. Mastery of English, and equipping ourselves with modern information technology, are even more essential. What has been said is true of English as a foreign language. It is more true of learning English using a Self-Access Learning mode. The approach which aims to meet learner needs and account for learning strategies, to enable learners to accept responsibility for their own
learning and to develop greater autonomy, will in turn, prepare learners to be responsible and independent individuals for this rapidly developing country and for the rapidly changing world - the global village.

This Seminar aims to review the practice of Self Access learning and its implication for learning material, to examine the theory and justification of learner independence, to examine the requirements of learner and teacher preparation for self-access learning and to report on the evaluation of the self-access centre in their institution.

This Seminar is divided into 2 parts. Part one lasts 3 days from Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th March 1995. It is being held at the Royal River Hotel and attended by 61 participants. The second part is in the form of hands-on workshops and will be held at King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi for another 7 day from 16th - 24th March 1995. I am extremely pleased to say that, to direct both the seminar and workshops the Department has, as its staff members, Leslie Dickinson and Norma Dickinson. Leslie Dickinson is the Director of Studies of Part 1 i.e. the Seminar, and Norma Dickinson will be the Director of Studies of Part 2, namely the workshops. The workshops will be attended by 60 participants. As well as including eminent scholars and experts, the participants are experienced teachers of English from all levels and all sections of the public and government from Thailand and other South East Asian Countries.

I trust, therefore, that the next few days will prove a valuable learning experience for all those involved, one that will enhance the working lives of the participants as ELT professionals.

Sir, Permanent Secretary, may I invite you to honour this gathering by saying a few words and declaring this Seminar open.
Opening Speech
Professor Dr. Kasem Watanachai, M.D.
The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of University Affairs
on the Opening Ceremony of the Seminar
on
“Self Access Learning and Learner Independence: A Southeast Asian Perspective”

President, Honoured guests, Directors of Studies, Guest Speakers,
Organizers and Participants,

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to address this august forum
and to preside over this, the opening ceremony of the seminar on “Self Access
Learning and Learner Independence: A Southeast Asian Perspective.”

As an educational objective, autonomy, or independence, has long been a
concern of educators and teachers. An implication is that independent learning should
be seen in education at all levels, all disciplines and in all age groups of learners.
Bearing that in mind, I am extremely pleased to see such an ideal realized in the form
of the English teachers' training programmes at the Department of Language and
Social Studies at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology. The Department's
Diploma programme may have already reached some key personnel in English
language teaching. This seminar is reaching an even wider audience. I feel that the
task of those who are involved in this Seminar as well as in other similar events,
training and teaching English using the Self Access mode of learning, is very admirable,
for 2 reasons.

Firstly, the task of teaching and training individuals, either teachers of learners,
cannot be easily given due to the constraint of our culture, in which the level of
dependency is very high. We are used to the spoon-feeding model of teaching/learning
and as we all know, old habits die hard. The other reason which makes the practice of Self-Access Learning in English language teaching admirable is the outcome, i.e. the learners will not only be equipped with skills of using the English language but will also be independent individuals in a more general sense. Of course, I don't believe that realistically we can expect those individuals to have acquired total autonomy once they leave schools or universities. However, we can certainly have good reason to hope for a better contribution from them to the country's growth and development, in particular when the nation, Thailand, or other Southeast Asian ones for that matter, are in the process of rapid development and are now catching up with other parts of the world.

I must say that it is extremely pleasant and promising to see representatives from many countries in the Southeast Asian Region. It is not only indicative of the regional spirit of collaboration but also of the strength and thus powerful influence of education, and English Language Teaching in particular. Self-Access Learning may have its origin elsewhere but when planted in Southeast Asian soil, the outcome may be a different variety. Nobody knows whether the new variety will be better or worse, but what I know is that this sort of gathering will have a great influence in putting the Self Access Learning: a Southeast Asian variety into shape. I am certain that the spirit of collaboration that will continue to prevail in such a gathering as this one and also in the English Teaching community as a whole will be a major force in attaining the objectives of English Language Teaching and education in general in each and every country in the region of Southeast Asia.

To the organizers - King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi and its Department of Language and Social Studies .... to the guest speakers and to the participants in general .... it is my sincerest wish that the Seminar will prove to be a memorable and fruitful experience and that you will leave this conference feeling that you have also contributed to the development of English Language Teaching and Learning. I hereby declare the Seminar open.

Thank you.
Self Access Learning and Learner Independence: A South East Asian Perspective
13-15 March 1995
The Royal River Hotel

Seminar Programme

Monday 13 March 1995
08.00-09.00   Registration
09.00-09.30   Opening Ceremony
09.30-10.30   Introduction to the Seminar; Leslie Dickinson (KMITT)
10.30-11.00   Coffee
11.00-12.00   Self Access in Thailand; George Kershaw (Mahidol University)
12.00-13.00   KMITT Self Access Centre; Pornapit Darasawang and Wichai Kritprayoch (KMITT)
13.00-14.00   Lunch
14.00-16.00   Parallel Sessions: Presentations of Self Access Centres;
              Bank of Thailand, City University of Hong Kong, Thai Secondary School.
15.00-16.00   Malaysia Teachers’ College, Malaysian Primary Schools.

Tuesday 14 March 1995
09.00-10.00   Materials for Self Access; Lindsay Miller (City University of Hong Kong)
10.00-11.00   Self Access through a Computer Network; Hilary Nesi (University of Warwick, U.K.)
11.00-11.30   Coffee
11.30-12.30   Learner Training through Interactive Reflection; Nantha Gohwong (KMITT)
12.30-13.30   Lunch
13.30-14.30   Integrating Self Access and Classroom Learning; Terence Pang (Lingnan College, H.K.)
14.30-15.30   Linking SAC Tasks to Classroom Activities; Andrew Barrett (British Council Language Centre, Malaysia)

Wednesday 15 March 1995
09.00-09.45   Learner Training Overview; Leslie Dickinson (KMITT)
09.45-10.45   Learner Training for Self Access Learning: A Malaysian Perspective; Lum Yoke Lin (STTL, Malaysia)
10.45-11.15   Coffee
11.15-12.15   Language Awareness; Richard Watson Todd (KMITT)
12.30-13.30   Lunch
13.30-14.15   Changing Attitudes: Teacher Preparation for Self Access Learning; Metta Limpongsan (KMITT)
14.15-15.00   Evaluation of KMITT SALL; Nuan tip Tantisawetrat (KMITT)
15.00-16.00   Questions and Answers: Panel Members; Andrew Barrett, George Kershaw, Lum Yoke Lin, Lindsay Miller, Hilary Nesi, Terence Pang, Metta Limpongsan, Leslie Dickinson (Chair)

Tea will be served each day after the final session.

In addition to the presentations, there will be a book exhibition by publishers and an exhibition of equipment by manufacturers.
Introduction to the Seminar

Leslie Dickinson
King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Abstract

This introduction will give one possible conceptual plan of self Access, attempting to show the major factors to be taken into account and the relationships among the factors. The Handout "A conceptual Map of Self Access and Learner Independence" is an essential aid to following the talk.

I regard the areas of Learner independence and self-access learning as being inextricably linked, in that self-access learning is seen as an excellent way of giving practice in learning independence. It is, of course, Learning Independence which is the key concept, and that is why it is placed centrally in my conceptual map of these areas. (See page 00). The other components are, at best, merely ways of facilitating or practising learning independence.

Each participant in the seminar will have his/her own ideas about the components of learning independence and its educational significance; some will see self access as a convenient way of getting learners to undertake additional, directed, practice in the language, rather like homework. Others, and I include myself in this group, will see these developments as having major implications for learning and teaching, with the possibility that crucial basic assumptions about learners' and teachers' roles will be changed.

Why is learning independence so important? I offer two reasons; the claimed relationship between learning independence and effective learning, and that between learning independence and motivation. Let us consider each briefly.

Learning Independence and Effective Learning

Wang and Peverley (1986) review research into effective learners in education generally and conclude that

"...one feature is salient across the research from the various perspectives. Effective learners are characterised in the research literature as being cognitively and affectively active in the learning process. They are seen as being capable of learning independently and deliberately through identification, formulation and restructuring of goals; use of strategy planning; development and execution of plans; and engagement of self-monitoring. (p.383)"
Similar findings have been suggested for language learners. The early research on language learning strategies carried out by such researchers as Rubin (1975), Stern (1975), and Naaman Fröhlich Stern and Todesco, (1978) suggest that good learners have an active involvement with language learning, that they have clear ideas about the best ways for them to go about language learning, and that they set up their own learning objectives in addition to the teacher's objectives. Groups like the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pedagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL) at the Universite de Nancy II in France, and individuals like Ellis and Sinclair (1989), and Dickinson (1987) see language learning best facilitated by the development of greater independence on the part of the learner involving the learner in accepting a greater share of responsibility for his own learning.

These sources indicate that good learners are able to

- identify what is being taught. That is, they are aware of the teacher's objectives;

Not all learners actually know what the aims of the lesson are, or know what the objective of a particular exercise is. In order to be aware of these things, a learner has to be active; this involves things like reviewing the lesson beforehand, taking note of the statement at the top of the exercise saying what the exercise is trying to teach, and carefully reading any descriptive materials introducing the lesson and the activities.

- State and follow-up their own purposes in addition to those specified in the materials. That is, they are able to formulate their own learning objectives;

Independent learners select and construct their own objectives and purposes in addition to those specified in the learning materials. These are not in competition with the "official" objectives, but are often objectives which develop out of the lesson being studied. Thus, a student may want to expand his vocabulary in a particular area - maybe words concerned with an aspect of his main subject of study, or another student may be aware of difficulty in pronouncing a particular sound, and want to practice this.

- select and implement appropriate learning strategies;

"Learning strategies" here are taken to be cognitive strategies directly involved with learning. An obvious, but significant implication of this is the need for conscious awareness of learner strategies on the part of learners, and their possession of a rich repertoire of strategies.
- monitor and evaluate their own use of learning strategies.

An obvious continuation from the selection and implementation of learning strategies is monitoring their effectiveness. This involves recalling the objectives of the task and checking the effectiveness of the strategies against the task objectives, as well as monitoring their penchant for the particular selection made.

- monitor their own learning;

A very important aspect of being an active and independent learner, is your willingness to monitor your own learning; to check how well a piece of work was done, or how accurately a sentence was imitated and so on. A learner who is actively involved in her own learning is active in self-monitoring.

Learning Independence and Motivation

Much of the discussion on motivation in language learning over the past ten years or so has been concerned with the learner's attitudes to the target language and the speakers of the language. This is often discussed in terms of integrative versus instrumental motivation. However, there are other theories of motivation which show a strong link between learning independence and motivation.

Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Motivation

The *intrinsic/extrinsic* motivation theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) claims that learners who are interested in the learning tasks and outcomes for their own sake (intrinsic) rather than for rewards are likely to become more effective learners. Two important conditions for the development of intrinsic motivation are first that learners perceive the learning environment to be "informational" rather than "controlling" - that is that the environment supports the learner through informative rather than evaluative feedback. The second is that the learning context is autonomy supporting in that it facilitates self-determination on the part of the learner.

Attribution Theory

The second relevant theory - the *attribution theory of motivation* - relates motivation to the reasons the learner believes are responsible for her success or failure. (See, for example, Skelton 1989) There is evidence to suggest that those learners who believe that success or failure results from "fixed" causes such as ability, or causes which the learner sees as external to him, such as task difficulty, tend not to persist when they fail and so overall are less successful than they might be. By contrast, people who believe that success or failure results from their own efforts tend to take responsibility for their own learning and persist after failure. Not surprisingly, such learners tend to be more effective than those who assume that success derives from fixed ability (either you have it or you do not). Furthermore, it seems to be the case that learning success
strengthens the learning confidence only of those who accept responsibility for their own success.

It seems then from these theories of motivation that those learners who feel in control of their own learning have the strongest motivation to learn.

**Role of the Classroom**

Let us return to the conceptual map and consider the relationship between the classroom and self access. As you can see from the box at the top right of the conceptual map, I suggest that there are two main relationships between the self access centre and the classroom—that in which the two are integrated in terms of teaching and learning objectives and materials, and that in which the two are independent of one another. Where the two are integrated the self access centre is often used as a practice facility, where students practice objectives which have been introduced in the classroom. Where they are independent, the self access centre may also be used as a practice centre, but is often used as a learning centre in that different and/or new objectives are pursued.

In the “practice centre” mode there is no guarantee that the learner has any significant level of independence; all the important learning decisions may be made by the teacher. However, if the teacher deems it desirable, the learner can have significant levels of independence.

Where the self access centre and the classroom are independent of one another, it may be that the self access centre is the main or only language learning facility available. Alternatively, there may be a regular classroom course, and the self access centre used to cover some objectives, but independently of the classroom. Or, the self access centre may be available for individual use in which the learner can choose which objectives he/she wishes to pursue.

**Supporting Learners in Self Access and Independent Work**

A major function of the teacher in the classroom is to provide purpose and structure in students’ learning, and a crucial question for self access learning is how these are provided. One of the main differences between learning in a teacher led class and learning in an autonomous mode is the means through which the learning is structured. All language learners need to feel that their learning is purposeful to be successful. Purposefulness is, at least in part, dependent on the structuring of the learning. The identification of relevant objectives, their incorporation into a realistic learning programme, the decision on what materials to use, over what period, and with what intensity, and a clear idea of how the learning is to be assessed, are all of crucial importance in efficient learning. The teacher in a conventional class structures the learner’s work; the independent learner must provide the necessary structure for himself. Learners who have no clear idea of their objectives, who are wandering from
one piece of material to another - grazing - with no clear idea of where they are progressing, or what they want to achieve, very quickly get dispirited and are likely to give up their attempts at language learning.

Support must be provided. This support is likely to be provided through
- the teacher or counsellor
- some form of needs analysis leading to the identification of learning objectives;
- some form of work planning, including, for example deciding on and ordering objectives; selecting materials to meet those objectives and creating a realistic work schedule.

Learning Materials

Another aspect of the support system are the learning materials, especially if they have been designed for independent work. Clearly, learning materials are THE essential component of a self-access learning system, and to be effective for this purpose, there are certain requirements that they must meet.

Learning materials for the self-access centre must meet three essential requirements; in addition there are at least three desirable requirements.

Essential

- The materials must be self contained, that is they must not need to be mediated through a teacher.
- They must have objectives which are stated clearly and intelligibly for the user.
- They must have clear instructions for use.

Desirable

- The materials should give guidance as to progression, that is, what to do next after completing the immediate set of materials, and ideally with different paths, depending on the success level of the user.
- The materials might suggest ways of doing the task, that is, the strategies to be used.
- They might contain a self-assessment check either in the form of an answer key where this is appropriate, or with suggested/model answers.

Materials with these characteristics have an important contribution to learner training, with the intention of leading the learner towards greater independence, where he/she will ultimately be able to cope with authentic materials.
Teachers’ Roles and Preparation of Learners (See boxes at the bottom of the chart).

The endeavour to make learner independence through self access learning a success centres crucially on developing in both learners and teachers a positive attitude to learning independence. If both groups of participants have such an attitude, nothing else matters very much.

Characteristics of a Positive Attitude to Independent Learning

I suggest that there are three factors in such an attitude:
- the acceptance that learning independence is legitimate
- the recognition of the feasibility of learning independence
- the belief in the desirability of learning independence.

If either learners or teachers do not have a positive attitude to learning independence, then it is necessary to try and develop this through a programme of psychological preparation.

Psychological Preparation for Teachers

I suggest that there are at least 5 objectives in such a programme:
- to reach an understanding of the role of independent learning, i.e. what it means, how it relates to classroom learning, etc.
- to reach an understanding of the teachers’ role in independent learning;
- to have a successful experience of personal independent learning. This is likely to be recollected from previous learning episodes, or, if necessary, experienced as part of the programme;
- to find out about educational research findings into the efficacy of independent learning;
- to have opportunities to talk to other teachers, especially those with a positive attitude to independent learning.

Psychological Preparation for Learners

The following are among the important objectives in such a programme:
- the recognition that learning independence is legitimate;
- the recognition that learning independence is feasible;
- the recognition that learning independence can be effective;
- the understanding that learning independence does not necessarily mean being in competition with the teacher.
Methodological Preparation

It has been conventional for many years to divide preparation into Psychological and Methodological (See Holec 1988: p.20). The decision is convenient for discussion but does not necessarily reflect reality. Attitudes of both teachers and learners may change through the experience of working in a successful self access centre, and attitudes may well be affected by greater knowledge about learning and teaching.

Methodological Preparation for Teachers

The development of learning independence in a self access centre does not, of course, threaten teachers with redundancy, but it does involve a change of role for teachers. In addition to being expert target language users and experts in language learning and teaching, the teacher has to learn and adopt other roles. These include:
- helper/counsellor to individual language learners
- librarian: looking after resources;
- materials writer/preparer.

Methodological Preparation for Learners

Even if learners have strongly positive attitudes towards independent learning, their efficiency as learners can be improved through learning more about how to learn; this is what methodological preparation is about. Methodological preparation is frequently discussed in terms of strategies nowadays. Such preparation for learners, then, involves helping learners to develop and/or become conscious of

- **cognitive strategies** - i.e. learning techniques;
- **metacognitive strategies** i.e. techniques for managing their own learning, including, for example
  - deciding what to focus on;
  - deciding how long to work;
  - deciding how to check work;
  - deciding what to do next.

- **metacognitive knowledge**, which involves developing awareness of oneself as a learner, some knowledge of how other people learn languages, and some awareness of language as a system.

End-note

Many of the topics covered in this introduction are dealt with in much more detail in subsequent papers in the Proceedings, which is why they are dealt with rather briefly here.
A CONCEPTUAL MAP OF SELF-ACCESS AND LEARNER INDEPENDENCE

SUPPORTING LEARNERS
- Structure and Purpose
  - Needs Analysis
  - Work Plans

MASTERIALS FOR SELF-ACCESS LEARNING

ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM
- SAC and the Classroom are Integrated
- SAC is Independent of the Classroom

LEARNING INDEPENDENCE

OTHER WAY TO LEARNING INDEPENDENCE
- Project Work
- Supported Self Study
- Self Instruction

TEACHER'S ROLE
- Teacher Preparation for Innovation
  - Psychological Preparation
  - Methodological Preparation
  - Attitudes to Learning and Teaching
  - Teacher as Helper, Learner, Planner, Materials Writer

LEARNING PREPARATION
- Psychological Preparation
  - Attitudes in Learning
  - Learning Strategies
- Methodological Preparation
  - Metacognitive Strategies
  - Knowledge

LESLIE DICKINSON KMITT 1995
SUPPORTING LEARNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING AUTONOMY

TEACHER/HELPER

SPECIFIC SUPPORTS
- NEEDS ANALYSIS
- WORK PLANNING

LEARNER PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LEARNING

LEARNING MATERIALS

ESSENTIALS:
- CLEAR OBJECTIVES
- CLEAR LEARNING INSTRUCTIONS

DESIRABLE
- SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRESSION
- SUGGESTIONS ABOUT LEARNING STRATEGIES

DEVELOPMENT OF TASK KNOWLEDGE
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Self Access Centre

Pornapit Darasawang
Wichai Kritprayoch
King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Abstract

This session will present the Self Access Centre at King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi. It deals with its development as well as the current condition of the Self Access Centre. In addition, the presentation will cover how the Self Access Centre is integrated with English courses offered.

Background

Dickinson (1987:106) states that a self-access centre is a place where learners can do the following things:

1. Decide on what to do; this may include decisions on what objectives to work on, what particular skill areas to work on, and so on.
2. Find the appropriate material to work on for the objectives decided on, or do further practice on something that was begun in class.
3. Use the material; this includes such matters as knowing how to do particular activities, what to do first, and next, as well as how to assess themselves on the achievement of the objectives.

The Self Access Centre or the Self Access Learning Laboratory (SALL) at King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Thonburi (KMITT) was first opened to give service on August 13th, 1991 on the 2nd floor of the Central Building II (CB2214) with a floor area of approximately 160 square metres (10 m. x 16 m.).

At the beginning of April 1994, it was moved and expanded to take up the whole of the 4th floor of the new Building of Language and Social Studies with approximately 800 square metres.

Objectives

The objectives of the SALL are as follows:

1. To run workshops for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Resource Based English Language Learning and M.A. in Applied Linguistics in EST.
2. To provide undergraduate students with learner training by integrating the SALL into English courses.
3. To meet the needs of the students who would like more practice in English.
4. To serve all KMITT instructors, officials, and employees to enable them to practise and develop their English language skills, independently, according to their individual needs and level.

**Target Groups**

The target groups which are involved in using the SALL include:
1. Post-graduate and undergraduate students who are taking English courses.
2. Students who have already passed English courses.
3. All KMITT staff and students who are interested in improving their own English proficiency.

**Administration**

In terms of administration, the various responsibilities have been divided up among the SALL staff so as to run and manage the SALL more efficiently. These different responsibilities are allocated to teachers of English and a technician.

1. The SALL manager is the one who takes charge of:
   - preparing plan and fiscal budget;
   - providing all the materials needed;
   - subscribing to and renewing newspapers and magazines-ordering and purchasing appropriate dictionaries, textbooks, educational audio and visual tapes, etc.;
   - dealing with all the materials and equipment which are damaged or out of order;
   - co-ordinating with every section, staff, helpers and technician;
   - maintaining public relations;
   - arranging the schedule for teachers in charge / helpers to suit their time-table; and
   - running support systems.

2. The deputy manager of the SALL is involved in:
   - helping the SALL manager with the responsibilities mentioned above; and
   - taking responsibility for the SALL manager when he is on leave.

3. The other members of the SALL staff form groups, each of which has responsibility for material preparation for at least one section of the SALL. Each group then takes on the following duties:
   - taking charge of at least one section in the SALL;
   - preparing and producing self-access materials; and
   - adopting and adapting self-access materials.

4. SALL helpers play an important role in the self-access system. They do the following things:
   - acting as teachers on duty; and
   - giving advice and consultation about how to use the SALL, each section, equipment and materials, learning strategies and language points.
5. The technician takes responsibility for:
   - maintaining the equipment and
   - repairing the equipment which is damaged or out of order.

Sections Opened

At present, there are a total of 15 sections or corners provided in the SALL. This has come through gradual development of the SALL year by year. That is to say, in 1991, 6 sections were opened based on the most urgent needs and equipment available. The receptive skills, i.e. reading and listening, we focussed on initially because there were many commercial books on reading and listening available. Thus, the following first 6 sections were opened:

1. Reading for Pleasure
2. Self-Instructional Reading
3. Listening
4. Video
5. Learn English from Songs
6. Study Abroad / TOEFL

In 1992, from informal talks with SALL users, more sections focussing on productive skills were added:

7. Grammar
8. Writing

In 1993, to meet the needs of the students and as one part of the Oral Communication I course, a speaking corner was opened to provide them with more opportunities to practise speaking. The ninth corner was added:

9. Cassette Friend

In 1994, the SALL was moved to the new building; with the resulting increase in space, 4 more corners have been introduced:

10. Games
11. Vocabulary
12. German
13. Japanese

In 1995, the SALL staff are in the process of adding the two following corners:

14. Thai
15. CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)

Layout of the SALL
The Use of the SALL

The use of the SALL can be separated into 3 kinds of uses: 1) direct integration with the course, 2) indirect integration with the course and 3) a resource not related to courses.

1. Direct integration with the course. This is separated into two types:
   a. teaching conducted in the SALL such as Basic Study Skills which deals primarily with learning how to learn. In this use the SALL is used as an ideal classroom well equipped with audio visual aids where the teacher can choose the equipment suitable for the task and the students are able to do the task in groups or individually according to their own pace. The teacher can also assign the students to do tasks in the SALL after the input is introduced in class because they can complete the task at their own pace. However, completing tasks is not counted for grades.
   b. assignments to be completed in the SALL. Since these assessments are graded, the students’ use of SALL is graded too as, for example, in reading course and writing course. In the reading course, the first two months is spent on teaching necessary reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, word tackling and so on. Then we will ask them to apply these strategies. Therefore, we have them use Science Research Associates, Inc. (SRA) material in the SALL because this material caters for individual differences through different levels of difficulty and interest and the students can also work at their own pace. While working with the SRA material, the students are encouraged to think about their problems during reading. The by-product from this course is the reading test which is a requirement for this course. It is the task that can demonstrate whether the learners understand what they read or not. The task is kept in the SALL for the other users to use.

   In the writing course, the task at the end of each topic is put in the SALL. We provide choices of tasks according to level and interest of the students.

2. Indirect integration with a course. This is also separated into two types:
   a. as a resource for the content of the project work as in the course General English for Science and Technology. The SALL provides resource for non-linguistic information.
   b. as a resource for language such as in speaking courses where students use the cassette friend activity in the speaking corner to practise speaking.

3. A resource not related to courses. Interested persons come for practice on Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and other tests. The students who want to practise English to catch up with the class can use listening corner or grammar corner and so on.

To facilitate all of these, we introduce the SALL to the first year students during their first week of study. We also provide learner training so that the students are able to use the SALL in whichever nature of use appropriate i.e. SALL directly integrated with courses, or SALL as an independent resource.
Reference

Self-Access Learning at Chaiwanwittaya School

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Abstract
This session will present a description of how the self-access facility which presently comprises a listening corner, has been developed at Chaiwanwittaya school, a small school in one of the districts in Udon Thani. It will show how the learner training is provided gradually to familiarise the students with the idea of learner independence. The students' use of the facility as a practice centre will be described and plans for extending its use to other classes in the school will be outlined.

Rationale
English learning and teaching in the secondary school curriculum nowadays tends to focus on the learners. That is learners are the centre of learning. However, there are different individuals in learning. The abilities in learning of different people are not at the same. It is difficult, and may not undesirable, to make learners get through to the same goal. Self-access learning is one way of learning that can provide material which is suited to each learner's ability.

Previously, in Chaiwanwittaya School, there was no source providing variety for students to learn English skills by themselves.

When I found out about self-access learning at KMIMIT, I wanted to get knowledge and make the knowledge available to my students. I wanted to get this type of learning integrated with the English core course in order to improve our students' English language skills. Furthermore, I wanted the students to have appropriate material which suited them best and allowed them to gain more experience in English language learning by themselves. Therefore, we began setting up a self-access room and self access materials in Chaiwanwittaya School in 1993. The self-access room has been fully operational since November 1993.

How to Integrate Self-Access Learning to the Core Course

Self-access material in Chaiwanwittaya School is used incorporated with classroom teaching but it is used in supplementary hour (remedial hour). At first, participants who used it is M1. Listening skill is the first for our students to learn. There are three main reasons for me to select listening skill to start with.

1. To improve student's efficiency in listening
   The results of formative tests showed that our students were weak in listening. 80% of the students got a low grade in listening. From all English teachers'
arguments, it emerges that there are 3 causes of ineffective listening among our students.

1.1. They did not continually practise this skill because there are not enough tape players.

1.2. They did not have any chance to practise or brush up their English with native speakers so they lacked the motivation to develop their listening skill.

1.3. There are not interesting materials to encourage them to learn.

Therefore, my colleagues and I decided that the listening skill should be the first skill for our department to deal with and we began to operate a listening area.

2. To focus on a communicative approach to English language learning

At present, listening and speaking skills are focused on English learning and teaching in the secondary curriculum. It means that students can get English language to communicate in their daily lives. So, this is a reason for our department to set up facilities for developing the listening skill to support the secondary school curriculum.

3. Facilities already available

The third reason for concentrating on the listening skill is that there was space to set up a self-access room and there were some existing equipment and materials to support this skill.

We wanted to make full use of all.

The Process of Setting-up Self Access Learning

1. The first thing we had to do was to ask the administrators for permission to set up a self-access room.

2. We also had to survey the problems before setting up a self-access room. We cooperated with an industrial teacher in order to set up the room. He helped us in laying out the self-access room, designing the equipment and designing the electronics systems.

3. However, one of the main tasks was that of teacher training to change the attitudes of our staff. The teacher training scheme was thus designed as follows:

3.1. We provided the time for dissemination of information about this type of learning.

3.2. We told our staff about this type of learning, its objectives and good points. Then we explained the setting up of the self-access room.

3.3. We showed them how to prepare self-access material.

3.4. We trained them to know how to train students in various English learning strategies.

4. We also had to train the learners. The following is what we did:

4.1. We trained them gradually in their normal class to learn variety of methodology or strategies for self learning. This training was given over one semester.

4.2. We organised an orientation session for introduction of self-access material. We demonstrated the self-access material, explained at the beginning of each unit its objectives, why and how to use it, etc.

5. Processes of using the self-access room also had to be designed as follows:
5.1. We classified the students who attended this remedial session according to their formative test results.

5.2. We provided time to learn how to use self-access material outside of normal class time.

5.3. We let them work independently on their materials according to work suggestion and asked them to follow the instructions included in the material. While this was happening, the teacher's role was to help them to solve some problems when they did not understand. The teachers also encouraged them to work by themselves and to assess themselves.

5.4. We had to divide the students into two groups when using the self-access materials because there are not enough listening booths for 40 students in each class. The students who were not using the booths worked with other worksheets provided.

5.5. Finally, self-access materials were prepared to include self assessment. The results of any exercises that a student does can be recorded on his or her own card. In this way a record of progress is kept. The card is given to the teacher at the end of a self-access period.

Advantages of Self-Access Learning

From interviews with the students, it was found that:

1. self-access learning enriches our English department room. We now have modern materials, modern laboratory in listening skill for students to learn with;
2. the students have developed immensely in English learning (listening) from the beginning of the course;
3. self-access learning has reduced the incidence of grade “0” in listening skill for target learners (M.1);
4. now the students can use available time usefully by learning with self-access listening materials;
5. the students now have better attitudes towards English learning; and
6. the students are proud of themselves from their own assessment.

Problems and Suggested Solutions.

1. Problem: teachers could not provide materials for all student's needs because there was not enough time. Each of us had to teach about 20-24 periods per week.

   Solution: we tried to use some holidays and leisure time after school to prepare materials. But we could not often manage this because sometimes all teachers had to do other work during the holidays. (It is school's policy.) As for myself, I spent the night time doing things for our self-access room. I designed material and my colleagues helped with the typing.

2. Problem: this problem concerned training of my colleagues. We had no time for training how to prepare material together. We were not free at the same time. We decided to train them one by one whenever they and I were free.
3. Problem: there are not enough new materials for students’ need because we did not and do not have enough time to provide them. Furthermore, we also have to do the extra work at school.

4. Problem: the duties of teachers teaching other subjects. There is only one industrial teacher in my school. He has to do all the work in the school. This is the cause of the delay in my project. And we were not able to hire the other workers because of limited budget in each academic year (30,000 baht).

Solution: During the project I tried to encourage the technician and his team work to go on with their work. And he and his students devoted their free time in helping with my project.
The Self Access Centre in Specialist Teachers Training Institute (STTI), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Abstract

Self access centres are now a common feature in most learning institutions. Each centre has its own characteristic features to reflect its own identity. The self access centre in the Specialist Teachers' Training College in Malaysia is the National Self Access Centre and acts as a centre for dissemination of knowledge and clearing house for materials for all the 31 teacher training colleges in Malaysia. The networking of all these colleges has resulted in the establishment of the largest integrated self-access programme in the world (Report of consultancy visit related to the Evaluation of the Project by Leslie Dickinson, September, 1994).

This paper begins with a short history of the Self Access Project. This will be followed with a description of its size, location and the contents in the centre. A section is set aside for a discussion of the users of the centre. This paper is not complete unless there is a section on the implementation and management of the self-access centre. This is found towards the end of the paper. This paper concludes with a short description of the present state of the centre.

History

In our pursuit for quality education as well as preparing teachers for life long education and professional development, the Teacher Education Division of Malaysia has introduced various schemes and projects to meet these ends. Thus in late 1989 the Self Access Project was launched. The project was initially funded by the British Overseas Development Administration. To start off, we were very fortunate to have the service of a full time ELTO consultant, Mr. Ray Brown, training awards for overseas study tours, consultancy visits and book presentations. However from mid 1993, the Teacher Education Division has taken full responsibility for the running and management of the project.

The Self Access Project was initiated with the objective of providing self access facilities for trainee teachers to improve their English language proficiency and to encourage learner autonomy. This is due to the constraints of time and staffing which most colleges face. The contact hour in class proves to be insufficient for language improvement and hence the SAC provides an alternative for trainees to improve their language proficiency.
Pioneering work was carried out in late 1989 in seven colleges which also act as zonal centres. The zonal centres function as 'model' to the other colleges in the respective geographic areas and they are also responsible for their training. Of the seven pioneering centres, the centre in STTI acts as the National Self Access Centre. Its functions include dissemination of ideas and clearing house for materials. It also provides resource for staff training and materials writing workshops.

Definition

The SAC in STTI refers to the premises where learning materials are kept and made available to the trainees. The trainees can work on these materials at their own pace and evaluate their own performance. Alternatively they can go to the centre with their classmates during time-tabled hours. They have a choice of studying on their own, with their friends or under the guidance of the facilitator. Support is also provided by teacher educators during learner training.

Location and Size

The SAC in STTI is located on the first floor of the library. The opening hours are thus the same as that of the library and this includes night opening. Hence it is easily accessible. There will always be someone whom the trainees can seek assistance as the SAC is manned by three support staff. The facilitators are full time teacher educators and will be in the Centre during time-tabled hours.

The size of the SAC in STTI is 35'x60'. The Centre is divided into different sections. The main section of the SAC is the study area which can accommodate 60 trainees. Here the trainees will work on their worksheets or do reference work. The print materials or worksheets are placed in browser boxes in the study area. The main counter is also located here.

Another section of the Centre is reserved for audio-visual and aural-oral activities. In the audio-visual room, there are carrels for listening or pronunciation practices. Television and video cassette recorders are also made available for trainees to watch their favourite programmes. In this room, we have also placed a computer for trainees to use the computer assisted language learning programmes (CALL). Some trainees may also use a section of this room to practise speaking or play language games.

In yet another section of the SAC, you will find a working room where the facilitators use it to do counselling work or prepare self-access materials. The master copies of these materials are stored in this working room.

Users

Initially the target group of users were the preservice English language option teacher trainees. Today we have extended this service to the Matriculation students, trainees from non-English option and other in-service teachers.
The concept of self-access has now been adopted by other departments in the college. The Bahasa Melayu department has set up a corner in the SAC to cater to the needs of trainees who need to improve their Bahasa Melayu. Thus we now have trainees coming into the centre to work on other subjects as well.

**Materials**

We have a wide range of self-instructional materials in the centre and they come in different medium. Most of the materials are in-house materials produced by our teacher educators. Seminars and workshops have been held to train and to provide opportunities for our teacher educators to write, adapt or adopt materials to make them self-instructional as well as targeting them at the correct level. This is in view of the fact that we have trainees with wide ranging abilities. Hence to meet the needs of individual learners, our materials are graded at four main levels: elementary, lower intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced. A common classification system of these materials is adopted by all the training colleges.

Our bank of materials consists of 3000 pieces of print and audio materials, 500 computer assisted materials and 50 pieces of video tapes.

All our materials are laminated to prevent from wear and tear and hence making them durable. To make them accessible we display them in browser boxes. These boxes are placed directly under catalogues for easy retrieval.

Our materials cover the following areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, methodology and literature in English. There are also materials on study skills and tests. Besides these in-house materials, literary texts and class readers are available. Some reference books are also kept in the centre.

To motivate and sustain learners' interest it is of utmost importance that the materials produced are linked to classroom work (Lum 1992). This is because learners need to see the relevance of the materials and obtain immediate results. The general perception of our learners is that these materials have helped them to improve their language proficiency.

**Role of Learners**

In the SAC learners are expected to take responsibility for their own learning after the initial training. They are to make their own decisions regarding what, when, where and how they learn. After the initial induction and training on independent learning support is made available whenever possible.
Role of Facilitator

Our teacher educators are facilitators in the centre. They facilitate learning by providing resources and information to the trainees. They are also negotiators and diagnosticians when they help learners draw up their learning contracts. They check learners' record cards to monitor learners' progress and to give advice.

Learner Training

Our facilitators are expected to conduct learner training to help our learners to be autonomous and to learn effectively in the SAC. At present there is a learner training pack (from Appendix of Luna Y.L. dissertation, 1993) distributed to all the training colleges to help the facilitators in achieving this aim.

Time-tableing

We are fortunate in that we are able to allocate an hour a week on the time table for self access learning. Learner training and self access learning are carried out during this time. Trainees are encouraged to use the centre outside the time-tabled hour as well. However, not all colleges have time-tabled hours for self access learning. Consequently these facilitators find it difficult to carry out learner training and monitoring.

Implementation and Management of SAC

Since our SAC is housed in the library, the opening and closing of the centre is the job of the library staff. We have three support staff to help in clerical services. However, the management of the SAC, for example keeping of stock, filing of materials, etc. is the responsibility of the SAC coordinator and the committee members. Students are enlisted to help in the decoration of the room or to help the facilitators in keeping stock and lamination of materials.

Conclusion

The SAC in STTI is now five years old. We are consolidating our work and trying to better ourselves learning from our experience. We are now concentrating our efforts on trainer training and learner training. Trainer training is needed as we have quite a number of new staff in the department who have not been exposed to this mode of learning. Learner training is essential as this will help our learners to be autonomous and use the SAC effectively. If learner training is not conducted effectively, then there is this danger of the SAC being treated like any other resource centre.

Terms and Abbreviations

STTI          Specialist Teachers' Training Institute
SAC           Self Access Centre
Developing Material for Self Access Language Learning

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Abstract

This session begins with a consideration of the type of background knowledge we need to have before we can start writing materials for self-access. Then, some common features of self-access materials are examined and the implications these have on the development of the materials are discussed. A suggested framework for self-access materials is then outlined and an example of such materials is examined. The session ends with some of the problems encountered when developing materials for self-access language learning.

Introduction

The renewed interest in self-access language learning in the past few years has prompted many institutes to develop self-access centres. Such centres can now be found in differing degrees of complexity in secondary schools, private language schools, company training centres. The renewed interest in self-access language learning in the past few years has prompted many universities in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. A lot of man-hours and effort has been expended in setting up these self-access centres, from hiring staff, designing layout, ordering equipment and material and training learners. Establishing a self-access centre is a huge task and many of them take years to evolve. Part of the problem in setting up a self-access centre is that there is no one 'correct' way of doing it.

Although there are many aspects to developing a self-access centre, one of the main areas of difficulty is how to stock the centre with materials that will be used and of use to the learners. The practical considerations in developing materials specifically for self-access use is the focus of this paper.

Features of Self-Access Materials

There are several types of materials which can be used in self-access mode, these are:
- published material;
- authentic material;
- student prepared material;
- specially prepared material.
Published Material

Published materials are a good way of initially stocking a self-access centre. There are several good reasons why published material are useful in the SAC.
- They are well produced
- They cover all the skills
- There are specific books for specialist areas (academic writing, English for nurses etc.)
- They have usually been piloted and tested
- The students may already be familiar with the book and so find it easy to use
- They save time in material production
- Some books are impossible to produce yourself (dictionaries, grammar books)
- There are pathways through the material

Authentic Material

Authentic materials are another way to begin stocking a self-access centre. Some types of authentic materials are:
- newspapers and magazines;
- user manuals;
- leaflets and brochures (government departments, travel agencies, banks etc.);
- foreign mission information packs (Embassies, non-government agencies etc.);
- international company information packs, advertisements;
- airline magazines.

Both published material and authentic material can be used as is, that is, placed in the self-access centre for students to use as they please. Or, worksheets can be prepared for use with them. The main benefit these types of materials have for a self-access centre is that they are relatively easy to obtain. In comparison, student generated material and specially prepared material takes longer to produce. Therefore, in the initial stages of setting up a self-access centre we should perhaps first look to published and authentic materials. These types of material are also useful in prompting ideas for developing materials ourselves for the centre.

Student Generated Material

Students, themselves, are a resource in producing materials for the self-access centre. In fact, as the centre is developed for the students' use they should become actively involved in what materials are placed in the centre. The following are some ideas for student generated materials:
- questionnaires asking students what type of materials they would like to have access to;
- a self-access club for students where they can become instrumental in decision making about the self-access centre and in helping develop, for example, posters for display in the centre;
- competitions for students to develop materials;
- writing competitions where the contributors' entries are later used in the centre;
- in-class project work which is displayed in the self-access centre;
- a materials drop box for students to leave any useful material they used outside of
  the centre.

By involving students in developing materials for use in the self-access centre they
may feel a greater commitment to using the centre and this moves further towards the
goal of empowering the learners with more responsibility for their own language
learning.

Specially Produced Material

Self-access centres also need specially produced materials. This is because our
students have special needs which cannot be met with published materials; authentic
material may be too difficult or unsuitable for our learners; and student generated
materials may take a long time to develop.

Other reasons for producing materials ourselves for our self-access centres are:
- they can be specially tailored to meet our students learning needs (styles, exams);
- they can be specially tailored to meet our students view of learning;
- they can be culturally specific;
- they may be cheaper than buying published material;
- they may help in developing pathways which the published books can't meet;
- they offer more variety to the learners;
- they demonstrate the interest of the teacher to the learner;
- they might save space;
- they aid in teacher development and commitment to the self-access centre.

Therefore, there are many reasons for producing our own materials for the self-access
centre. However, before designing any materials we must consider the practical and
pedagogical aspects to preparing such materials.

Practical Considerations

The following are some of the practical considerations we need to keep in mind before
starting to produce materials:
- do we have the staff to do the job, or can they be trained?
- how much is producing our own materials going to cost (an estimate)? or how much
can we spend?
- what system of storage can we use? do we need to build any special units to house
  the material?
- how durable can we make the material? i.e. if we are going to spend a lot of time,
effort and money on developing material, will they last?
- will we have any copyright problems with what we want to do? If so, we must try to resolve this before starting on the production of the materials.

**Pedagogical Considerations**

After we have thought about and resolved our practical consideration, we then have to turn our attention to what we are going to produce. In making decisions about what we are going to produce we also have to keep certain pedagogical consideration in mind, for example:

- level of our learners. Are we only going to produce materials for one specific group of learners, or are we stocking a self-access centre for many different types of learners?
- objectives. What will the main objective be in the material and what are some of the sub-objectives?
- skills area. Which skills are we aiming at developing?
- length of activity. How long, at any one time, will our students want to spend in the self-access centre?
- language of instruction. How are we going to write the instructions into the material? Will we use a simple English type of format or the L1?
- technology. What technological support do we have and how are we going to indicate to the student when they need to use this technology?
- assessment. How are the students going to assess their achievement on the task? How will we give them feedback?
- self-access centre assessment. Are we going to try and create some form of student feedback as to the usefulness of the material? How can we do this?
- progression. How are we going to show the learners where to go next once they have completed a worksheet? Is this important?

**Implications for Material Design**

All the above aspects about the features of self-access material have implications for developing materials. Some of these implications are:

- why self access? Can the activity be done more effectively in the classroom or is it an already establish part of the student language repertoire and we feel that they can handle this concept in self-access? Can we convince other teachers to use certain activities in the classroom so that they can then be exploited in the self-access centre?

- does the activity need a teacher? How are we going to develop the materials so that they stand alone? Can we develop materials like this or will we need a facilitator in the self-access centre to assist the learners? What level of assistance are we going to build into the materials?
- credit bearing or not? Will the material in the self-access centre be credit bearing or non-credit bearing? If credit bearing then the link between classroom activities and the material must be transparent. If non-credit bearing why will the student want to do the activity?

- student interaction. If we build a lot of student-student interaction into the material will it work? Will the students cooperate with each other? Will there be a problem with the noise level?

- technology. If we ask the students to use some form of technology will this be available, and will it be possible for all the students to use it (e.g. some students might not know how to operate a computer)? Will the software be available (i.e. not only computer software but also recordings off video and listening material)?

- information. How are we going to let the students know about the material we have developed?

- problems. What if the material doesn't work? What is the student fails to use the material?

- flexibility. How flexible are we going to be with the materials?

- answers and feedback. How are we going to give students access to the answers or gather feedback on the materials?

Some of these implications will be more important than others. e.g. if there is not any technology available then we obviously do not have to consider the implications concerning technology. However, many of the above are fundamental considerations which we have to keep in mind while developing materials for use in a self-access centre.

**An Example of Self-Access Material**

When developing materials for self-access we should try as far as possible to establish a set format and write to that. The benefits of this are that once a format has been established it becomes easier to write to the format, and if our learners understand how the materials have been developed they will be able to use them more efficiently.

The following is a suggested format for developing materials for self-access. First, we should prepare notes of what we are aiming to achieve with the material, and second, we need to prepare a worksheet for the students to use.

In preparing the notes the following sections may be useful:
SECTION We should consider having a variety of sections for our self access material. This will help in cataloguing material and clarify what we are aiming at. Some possible sections might be Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary, Grammar, Paralinguistic Communication, Self-assessment, Learner Training.

TITLE We need to give our materials titles. This will again help in cataloguing, it will aid identification by students and staff (e.g. it might be confusing if the material only has a catalogue number such as FEN-X-412-001), and it may motivate students to choose the material, e.g. Excuses for being late.

LEVEL We have to identify the level of the material. Some material can only be used for one level, but we should try to cover more than one level with the same material. We need to orient the worksheet for specific levels, then the students can try different activities with the same material and may feel successful in completing the tasks at different levels.

AIMS The aims for the material that we develop have to be clearly stated.

ACTIVITY TIME We need to consider the time we would expect the students to compete the activity in. This may be prescribed by the institute or by the students themselves.

PREPARATION TIME If we state the preparation time, other teachers who want to develop similar material will have an idea how long it will take them.

RESOURCES We should make a list of all the things we need to develop the idea and all the things the students will need to complete the task.

PREAMBLE A simple rationale for developing the material should be stated. For example: the task is part of the homework activity; the students have problems with a specific area; the students have asked for certain types of material; there are pedagogically sound reasons for asking students to do this type of task; we are trying to accommodate the students learning styles. This will be of use to other tutors when they look at the materials, or if students ask them for help.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO We need to outline in stages all the things we have to do to prepare the activity. This will clarify in our own mind what we have to do and it may generate other ideas of how the material can be used. It will also help other teachers with similar ideas.

WHAT THE STUDENT HAS TO DO We should clearly outline what the student has to do. We must ensure our demands are not too great or unusual, and that the students will be able to achieve something by the end of the task.
POSSIBLE VARIATIONS Brainstorming possible variations for our material will ensure that material can be used on more ways than one. This may also stimulate other teachers to create similar materials.

MATERIAL WRITER We should record who prepared the material so that if there are any problems with the activity the author may be able to solve this.

When preparing the student worksheet we should consider such things as: Language of Instruction, Learner Training, Language Learning Hints, Feedback, Motivational factors, Pathways, Keeping a Record, Trouble Shooting. Some of these will become an integral part of our material writing, e.g. we will always tell our students how to check their answers, but other aspects of the materials design process may happen with some materials but not with others, e.g. we may decide that it is not necessary to provide Language Learning Hints in all the worksheets, or that most of the Learner Training is done by the time students get to a particular set of materials so we do not want to continually remind them of something. These are decisions which we have to make as individual materials writer.

The following is a worked example of an information sheet and work sheet for self access material.

Section: Listening

Title: Listen and match [Unit 9 Power in Conversation]

Level: Intermediate

Aims: To sensitize students to differences in various aspects of speech. To act as a model for students to imitate so as to improve their own speechwork.

Activity Time: 20 minutes

Preparation Time: This will vary depending on how easy it is to gain access to native speakers of English who have different accents.

Resources: Worksheet (see example), tape, and tape recorder.

Preamble: This activity helps students to practise their listening skills. Many students find it relatively easy to listen to a commercially taped conversation, however, when faced with native speakers they have difficulty in understanding as they are not ready to listen to speakers with 'strange' accents, or to speakers who do not make allowances for non-native speakers. We therefore have to expose our students to examples of native speakers speaking in natural situations, and with a variety of accents.
What the Teacher Has to Do:

1. Ask a number of native- or near-native speakers to help make a tape recording. Try to find a variety of accents and a mixture of males and females.
2. Record the speakers having a conversation.
3. Then ask each speaker to record something about themselves.
4. Prepare an answer card for the tape.
5. Add the catalogue number for the tape at the top of the worksheet.

What the Student Has to Do:

1. Select the worksheet No 5.
2. Get the tape recording of Listen and Match No 5.
3. Use a tape-recorder to listen to the tape and complete sections of the worksheet.
4. Student makes a recording of the accents on the tape. They record their personal information.

Variation: This worksheet could form part of a larger collection on speech patterns. Students may wish to spend some time regularly on trying to improve their own speech and so a variety of similar tapes should be available. The tape can be used for dictation practice. The student’s tape could be recorded as a part of the material bank.

Contributor: Lindsay Miller
Example of Student Worksheet:

LISTENING TO ACCENTS WORKSHEET NO 5

FOR THIS WORKSHEET YOU NEED TAPE NO. LIST-ACC #5

1. Listen to the conversation on this tape and write down the number of speakers taking part in the conversation. Number of speakers:
   Number of male speakers □
   Number of female speakers □

2. Listen to the conversation again and try to decide which nationality each speaker is.

   Now check your answers to questions 1 and 2 with the answer card.

3. Listen again to the tape (you can listen as often as you like) and try to find some special features to the speech of each speaker, e.g. Speaker 1 has many rising tones at the end of his sentences.

   Now check the information about each speaker on the answer card. Were you able to identify any of these speech features?

   If you have a problem identifying the special features of the speakers speech ask a classmate what they think, or talk to the self-access tutor.

4. The second section of the tape contains the speakers who took part in the conversation talking about themselves. Decide which speaker's voice you like listening to the most and try to imitate their speech patterns. After practising this, make a recording on your personal cassette giving similar personal information about yourself. Try to use the speech patterns you have been practising.

RECORD WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TODAY IN YOUR SALL DIARY
Self-Access through a Computer Network

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Abstract

The University of Warwick offers non-credit-bearing courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to students whose first language is not English. While many overseas students attend formal classes, many more cannot use this service, because of timetabling clashes, unconventional working hours, or the distance between their departments and the classrooms. In October 1991 it was therefore decided to set up a package of computer-based activities on the University network, so that students could have 24-hour access to English language support from any networked workstation on campus. The project was developed in a number of phases: a pilot version was devised, evaluated on the basis of interviews with subject specialist staff and students users, and expanded and edited in accordance with these findings. The full version of the package has been running since January 1993, and for twelve months details of its use were recorded unobtrusively by means of a network monitoring device. The data obtained in this way reveals the identity of every user, their department, status, the activities they selected, the dates and times when the activities were accessed and the length of time spent on each activity. Most investigations into the use of self-access materials rely on users' co-operation in completing report cards, diaries, questionnaires etc, but may still miss vital information. A network monitor, however, records a wide range of information accurately, and without interfering in any way with normal user behaviour. It is hoped that the information we have gathered can be used to improve and add to the exiting package, in accordance with the needs and preferences of identified categories of user.

Introduction

This paper describes one way in which self-access study can take place without a self-access centre. I do not suppose that the self-access system I describe is a perfect model, nor do I suppose that the Warwick system would perfectly suit the resources of South East Asian universities. I hope, however, that South East Asian readers will be able to adapt to their own situation some, if not all, of the features of computer-based self-access recorded here. Despite its "high-tech" image, they will find that self-access through a university computer network is a surprisingly cheap option, and one which is relatively easy to set up.

Background

In Britain, most universities offer some sort of English language support programme for overseas students who have difficulty studying in the medium of English. Support may be in the form of lunch-time or evening classes and/or the provision of materials on a self-access basis, possibly with a staff member to hand to act as a consultant. Programmes of this kind are extremely popular and provide a vital service, but their availability is inevitably limited. Some students may be unable to attend classes on a
regular basis, while others may have difficulty reaching classrooms or a self-access centre because their main course of study is located elsewhere (at Warwick, for example, we have a three-past campus on a 500 acre site). And of course, at any university there are always people in need of English language support who do not conform to the expected student profile; visiting academics, part-time students and participants on short courses may attend the university during vacations when tutors and support classes are not available, and may also have special needs which support classes do not meet.

One teaching medium which is permanently available to all students based at Warwick is the University computer network. There are hundreds of networked workstations on campus, and many of them are accessible 24 hours a day, all year round. Whereas teaching and resource rooms, and the staff to run them, are a constant drain on departmental resources, using the University network costs virtually nothing, as the network exists independently of any use made of it for teaching purposes, and is maintained by the University Computing Services in any case. It therefore seemed a good idea to make use of this free resource to back up our timetabled English language support classes - and also to reach those people who needed help with their English, but could not obtain it by conventional means.

I should make clear that, at present, the sort of simple commercially available English language teaching programs that can run on a multiple-user network are not designed to meet a full range of English language learning needs. They are excellent for presenting and practising grammatical accuracy and vocabulary, and they can also provide opportunities for guided writing, but they can offer very little help with speaking/listening skills (unless the learner also accesses tape recordings, and/or works with a friend) and they cannot support open-ended reading and writing activities which require feedback from an intelligent tutor. In this respect computer-based activities are similar to most other activities designed for self-access, and indeed are more successful than most paper-based exercises because the computer can often evaluate learners' answers instantly. We felt that there was no possibility, however, that computer-based activities could entirely replace tutor-led English language support classes.

Setting up Self-Access on the Network: Five Phases

I first started work on an English language learning package for the network in 1991. I was awarded a small grant by the University, which was to cover the purchase of six English language teaching programs, and the printing of publicity leaflets and questionnaires. I was also lucky enough to have the assistance of a postgraduate research student, Celia Tsai from Taiwan, who helped design the menu in the first phase of the project, and gathered feedback in phase two.

Phase One. The first task of the project was to select some computer programs. We decided to buy six well-known programs which between them offered a fairly exhaustive range of CALL exercise types. The programs were Eclipse (John Higgins)
and *Choicemaster*, *Gapmaster*, *Matchmaster*, *Pinpoint* and *Vocab* (Wida Software). The exercise types provided by these programs included total deletion (*Eclipse*), multiple choice (*Choicemaster*), cloze (*Eclipse* and *Gapmaster*), matching (*Matchmaster* and *Pinpoint*), predicting (*Pinpoint*) and ordering (*Vocab*). All these programs offered an authoring facility, so that we could customise our teaching materials for Warwick students. We selected texts and language items with specific EAP and/or survival needs in mind; in many cases we used authentic texts relating to University matters, such as course descriptions, library regulations, and even restaurant and cafeteria menus.

In the first phase of the project we prepared a limit amount of trial material, because our chief concern was to develop a menu structure for the programs which would provide easy access to the materials and permit us to continue adding to them in later phases. Whereas in many self-access centres students locate activities by program name, we thought it was more important to have a system which would enable students to access activities according to the language area they wished to practise. Thus we designed a menu which on its first screen offered a choice of *Language Functions*, *Grammar*, *Topics* and *Vocabulary*, with a further subdivision of *Topics* into *British Life*, *University Life*, *Places*, *Jobs* and *Colloquial English*. Only when the student had selected the language area they wished to work on was the choice of program type permitted, via a submenu.

**Phases Two and Three.** A first version of the package was run on the network in 1992. Feedback from University staff and student users was gathered by means of questionnaires and interviews in phase two, and on the basis of this feedback the package was edited and expanded in phase three. Feedback from the Economics department, for example, suggested that overseas students should acquire more background knowledge about British industries. We acted on this feedback by adding descriptions of major companies to *Pinpoint* in the *Jobs* section of the *Topics* menu. Similarly a number of European visiting students expressed a need for more everyday language on topics discussed by fellow students (rather than subject lecturers). We responded to this by adding extensively to our *Colloquial English* submenu.

**Phase Four.** The package has run in its present form from January 1993, and for twelve months, from February 1993 to February 1994, we monitored all use of the package by means of a piece of software called *Sabre Meter*, which recorded the identity and status of users, the date and duration of use, the location of the workstation and the type of activity accessed. The great advantage of monitoring use in this way was that we could accurately record every instance of every students' use of every activity without interfering in any way with normal behaviour. Investigations into the use of self-access materials are usually somewhat intrusive, because they rely on users' co-operation in completing user cards, diaries and questionnaires. Our network monitor could not directly record students' levels of satisfaction with the materials, because users were not required to comment on their behaviour, and in fact were not aware that their behaviour was being monitored. However this meant that all our information regarding network use was objective fact; users could not claim one
thing yet do another. We assumed that user satisfaction with the system would be reflected in the frequency and duration of use.

**Phase Five.** In this phase all the data gathered in phase four was analysed with a view to gaining insight into users' preferences and habits. The results of this analysis should guide us in further phases of the project, when we decide which areas of the package to expand, and which groups of users to target in future publicity for the package.

The appendix to this paper contains an example of the kind of raw data the network monitor provided. Column one shows the activity selected. In this case, it is the Wida Software program *Choicemaster* (cm) in the *British Life* section of the *Topics* menu. Columns two and three indicate the time when the activity was accessed, and the length of time spent on it. The afternoon was peak time, but in this sample of data the user called MAUFM preferred early morning, while the user called ESREH worked late at night. Column four shows the user name, which encodes the department (the first two letters) and the status of the user (undergraduate, postgraduate, research staff or tutor). Thus MAUFM can be identified as a Mathematics undergraduate, ESPTE as an Engineering postgraduate, and so on. Columns five and six show the date of use (month, day and year), and column six shows which workstation on campus was used for the activity.

**Results**

In the 12 month period for which we have data, the monitor recorded 1,486 instances of use above 5 minutes. We decided not to analyse shorter periods of access, because they may have occurred accidentally, and certainly could not have resulted in much language learning. A spread of 391 different users from 33 different university departments was recorded. More users were registered with our own department than with any other department in the University, but there were almost an equal number of Engineers, and other non-Arts subjects were also well-represented. Almost equal numbers of postgraduates and undergraduates used the package. We were particularly interested in the relative popularity of the different language areas, but found that choices from the main menu were fairly evenly distributed: perhaps not surprisingly *Grammar* was most frequently accessed (509 times), but there was also frequent access of *Topics* (358 times), *Language Functions* (347 times) and *Vocab* (272 times).

Another trend that emerged from the data was that students seemed to be less interested in more demanding exercises which involved reconstructing longer passages of text. They chose *Matchmaster* 534 times, and *Choicemaster* 357 times. These are the programs that require users to use the arrow and return keys, rather than to type words into a text. On the other hand *Gapmaster* was chosen only 166 times, *Eclipse* 150 times and *Vocab* 139 times. Users of these programs need to use the keyboard to complete sentences and texts. Students may have preferred choosing and matching to reconstructing and completing because they turned to English language
exercises as a kind of light relief from more demanding work in their subject specialization which had brought them to the work station in the first place. *Pinpoint* (accessed 140 times) is an exception to this trend, as it is a matching program, yet was no more popular than the text reconstruction programs. Perhaps this was because students found the opening screens of the program off-putting; many users logged out of this program within five minutes of selecting it.

Interestingly, the amount of time actually spent on an activity did not vary significantly from program to program. One might expect a demanding text reconstruction activity to take up far more time than a simple matching or selecting activity, but the mean time spent on activities in each program type are remarkably similar, as can be seen from the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>mean time</th>
<th>std dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chocemaster</td>
<td>15.84</td>
<td>12.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eclipse</td>
<td>15.84</td>
<td>11.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matchmaster</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>11.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gapmaster</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>10.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinpoint</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>09.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocab</td>
<td>15.78</td>
<td>11.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This finding may have a wider significance for all those concerned with self-access education, as it suggests that language learners (at this level at least) tend to work independently in 15 or 16 minute-long spurts, regardless of the activity type. It will be noted, however, that standard deviations are high; sometimes learners worked on one activity for over an hour, while at other times they stayed with an activity for only five or six minutes.

**Conclusion**

Although overall the results from this experiment are encouraging, it would seem that the networked package is not acting as a substitute for the English Language support classes we continue to provide. The number of students who accessed the network was similar to that of students who attended English language support classes, insessional and presessional, during the same twelve month period. However, many of the network users only accessed English language exercises once or twice, while students on courses attended weekly for a term or more. Moreover, it would appear that, left to their own devices, students may "learn through play" on the network, but are less likely to tackle more serious writing activities, which would seem to require the encouragement of a tutor in human form.

There are a number of ways in which it would be possible to improve our service to overseas students on the network. In particular, learners would probably continue to use the package for longer if we indicated possible learning routes through the activities, rather than expecting students to pick their own way through the hundreds of exercises on offer. When suggesting routes, we could also lead learners from
simpler to more demanding exercises, thus building on earlier work and providing opportunities for greater work satisfaction. The greatest improvement to the package would be made if we took advantage of the information provided by the network monitor to contact users individually, through e-mail. It would, in theory, be possible for a language tutor to survey the use of the network on a weekly basis, and welcome new users while guiding and encouraging regular participants.

Perhaps these developments will take place in South East Asia, rather than at Warwick, when English language departments in this region set up their own networked English language support packages?
Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLID</th>
<th>TIME IN</th>
<th>TIME OUT</th>
<th>LOGIN</th>
<th>DATE IN</th>
<th>DATE OUT</th>
<th>STATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>08:40:16</td>
<td>06:46:20</td>
<td>MAUFM</td>
<td>3/14/93</td>
<td>3/14/93</td>
<td>08004E02DA12</td>
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<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>16:07:17</td>
<td>16:12:56</td>
<td>LSRGL</td>
<td>10/11/83</td>
<td>10/11/83</td>
<td>00007B10F629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>11:12:40</td>
<td>11:38:59</td>
<td>SYRAD</td>
<td>12/17/93</td>
<td>12/17/93</td>
<td>08004E02B4AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>08:24:03</td>
<td>08:28:28</td>
<td>SEUDB</td>
<td>1/14/94</td>
<td>1/14/94</td>
<td>0800407B10D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12:42:53</td>
<td>ELPCV</td>
<td>7/20/93</td>
<td>7/20/93</td>
<td>08004E02G428</td>
</tr>
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<td>cmbritlife</td>
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<td>15:18:15</td>
<td>ESUG</td>
<td>12/15/93</td>
<td>12/15/93</td>
<td>08004E02B4B4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>20:20:50</td>
<td>20:25:32</td>
<td>GSUCX</td>
<td>12/18/93</td>
<td>12/18/93</td>
<td>0800407B103D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17:08:04</td>
<td>ESPOP</td>
<td>1/28/94</td>
<td>1/28/94</td>
<td>08004E02B523</td>
</tr>
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<td>13:00:30</td>
<td>CSRAK</td>
<td>2/7/93</td>
<td>2/7/93</td>
<td>0800407B10C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmbritlife</td>
<td>18:52:35</td>
<td>18:56:40</td>
<td>GSUDD</td>
<td>11/21/93</td>
<td>11/21/93</td>
<td>08004E02B4B9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hilary Nesi, CELTE, University of Warwick
Part of a typical page from the database file containing data obtained from the Saber Meter network monitor.

Column one shows the activity selected. In this case, it is the Wida software program "Choicemaster" (cm), in the "British Life" section of the Topics menu.

Columns two and three indicate the time when the activity was accessed, and the length of time spent on it. The afternoon was peak time, but note that MAUFM preferred early morning, and ESREH worked late at night. All instances of use for less than four minutes have been removed from the data, to rule out accidental access. This Choicemaster activity (a quiz) was not very time-consuming-other activities were more so.

Column four shows the user name, which encodes the department (the first two letters) and status of the user (undergraduate, postgraduate, research or tutor). Thus MAUFM is a Mathematics undergraduate, ESPE is an Engineering postgraduate, etc.

Columns five and six show the date of use (month, day and year). Monitoring took place from February 1993 to February 1994.

Column six shows which workstation on campus was used for the activity. Hundreds of workstations on three separate sites are linked to the network.
Learner Training Through Interactive Reflection:
Introduction

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Abstract

In this study, the tutor used written interactive reflection between the teacher and the students to develop awareness of the language learning process with the intention of making students manage the greater degree of freedom offered in this course. The investigation revealed that students were already aware of such responsibility. They, in fact, were willing to take more responsibility in their learning but said they needed more teacher assistance to guide them from teacher-centred learning experiences to greater learning independence.

Introduction

In this paper I am going to outline an evaluation of an experimental language teaching programme I carried out which required students to reflect on and analyse their own learning process with the aim of moving them on the way towards independence.

This paper is divided into three main parts:

First part: who was being investigated?
Second part: what was being investigated?; why and how this was being investigated?
Third part: discussion of the findings of the investigation and drawing conclusion.

Definition

Before going on, it is necessary to define what learner training is.

Learner training is currently seen as being one of the ways in which students can be guided towards more independent learning in KMITT and, of course, it is one of the main themes of this seminar and the following workshop.

Ellis & Sinclair (1989) claim that learner training is "related to the concept of learner autonomy in that it aims to provide learners with the ability, that is strategies and confidence, to take on more responsibility for their own learning...its aim is to prepare learners for independence."
Reflection on what we do and what we learn is seen as enriching and improving the processes of learning.

Wallace (1991) says that "One of the crucial factors in the success of learning anything depends on what the learners themselves bring to the learning situation."

Schön (1983) argues that reflective practice is a part of any effective learning process and that it is necessary for learners "to turn thought back on action". We have to encourage our students to think on the actions/decisions they take and help them to think about these actions and decisions so that learning and planning can be more effectively structured.

We would all, as teachers, very much like to encourage our learners to reflect on the process of learning as they undergo it so that they will become more sensitive to the ways in which they can maximise their language learning ability.

All reflection on the learning process can be seen as being interactive because the learner is interacting with materials or tasks or books, but the kinds of interactive reflection I am going to discuss involved several kinds of interaction:

a) interaction with the materials or the course
b) interaction with the tutor in reflective written comments on the materials which were replied to by the tutor
c) interaction with peers both in the course material activities and, more significantly, in the process of self evaluation which was then peer evaluated.

In the first part I am going to say who the students were that I decided to investigate and what course they were doing.

**Part One : The Students and the Course**

**The Students**

The subjects of this study were 16 Architecture students, enrolled in a language course LNG 102, from October 1994 to February 1995. They were reasonably good at English, with the average grades of A and B from the English exams in the previous semester.

These students need to be trained for studying in a special program employing English as the medium of instruction. Consequently, they need to master the language skills so well that they become efficient users of the English language for academic communication, as well as for their future professional life.

It is unfair to blame these students for not being self-directed and reflective. In school the work they do is exam oriented and the "good" teacher is one whose pupils pass the exam with good grades. When these students arrive in KMITT they have to be led gently but firmly to see that it is desirable if not essential that they take some responsibility for the decisions that they make about their learning process.
LNG 102 Course

A. Content Information

Content information in course materials cover facts on language learning, study skills, learning how to learn, and techniques or tips on how to improve one's ability in the four language skills of English. Self-correction and peer-correction are encouraged throughout the course. The teacher's role is more as a helper and teacher intervention was kept to the minimum. In addition to receiving input information and practice, students are encouraged to think for themselves about what knowledge or usefulness they had gained from each piece of learning material, so that they can make use of this information during their own practice.

B. Course Targets

In addition to the primary target, which was to help the students to improve ability to use the English language for efficient communication, practice in reasonably accurate and fluent note-making, summary writing, and clear reasoning were emphasized. Consequently, written and spoken practice were integrated into learning materials as a means to express oneself through making of notes and summaries, expressing opinions or comments in both oral and written forms.

C. Time Allocation

The course met twice a week for 14 weeks in the semester, in 2 sessions. One session lasted 100 minutes, the other 50 minutes. Both sessions started at 8.30 a.m.

D. Course Requirements

- Completion of 26 pieces of learning materials, of various length, some parts were done in class, some outside.
- Practice in speaking sessions, approximately half an hour/week for 14 weeks.
- Two formal assessments, mid-term and final. Both were open-book exams.
- One written project.
- Six student-selected extra listening passages.
- Student filing record to be kept.

E. Student Manual

At the beginning of the semester, a Student Manual for this course was distributed to each learner. It gives details on course description, course components, course requirements, and informs learners about the concepts on which this course is based (e.g. self-correction, the need for self assessment, choosing how to work, etc.) In other words, the Student Manual was the framework set for students, which gives details on what has to be done, how, when and why. It provides them with a framework within which they should become more independent, as all the information about the work is given to them.
The Student Manual was referred to at certain time intervals during the semester when students were reminded about what work needs to be completed e.g. when the work for each step of the project had to be handed in. Therefore students were fully aware of the framework of the course and the course requirements.

Two weeks after the distribution of the Student Manual, a multiple choice test was administered, to make sure that every student had read through and understood the concepts in the Student Manual. From their comments, all students liked the test because they realized that it helped them to understand what the course was about and also the rationale behind it.

"I like it because I test to understand in Manual Part II."  
Sample 1

"I like it because it can help me to response my own learning."  
Sample 2

"I like it because I can know by myself, can check my respon by myself."  
Sample 3

I would now like to describe briefly what happened on the course and why I decided to carry out an investigation into students on this course.

Events Leading to the Investigation

a) During the first three weeks, the teacher had advised the students on how to keep record of what they had studied in a file and they had already been given suggestions on filing in the Student Manual.

However, after three weeks it was clear that most students merely collected and filed the handouts according to the dates that they had received them, not classifying them into relevant headings nor making any cross-references as the manual asked them to do.

b) These students enjoyed learning activities but regarded them as being done to satisfy the teacher and the course requirements. One student said during a chat that "We'll do what you ask us to do."

c) The group complained about the class schedule being too early (8.30 a.m.) and some were often absent or late to class, because of their having to work late the night before on other assignments, or the traffic jam, etc.

Even though the first half hour of the long session (from 8.30-9.00) was set for conversation each week, to motivate students to come to class on time, all went well for only 3 weeks. After the first three weeks, students gradually came late, until there were only 3 students who came before 9.00 in the sixth week.
It was clear that the students have not moved towards taking responsibility for their own learning: they were not meeting the requirements of the course or the manual to file cross reference materials outside class, they were not being punctual for classes and they were frequently not attending classes. This situation made me decide to investigate ways of altering and improving their learning attitudes.

Part Two: The Investigation

In the second part of this paper I shall outline the investigation I decided to carry out with these students. I must emphasise that these students were well above average on the language tests in the previous semester. I would not have carried out this investigation with weak students.

In order to develop more effective learning processes, students have to be encouraged to reflect on and make explicit both the process they are currently using and those which are suggested to them in the materials they are using. By reflecting on these learning processes it was hoped that students would become more motivated to do the work of the course to the limits of their ability and to become more aware of the range of strategies that can be used in learning.

So, I decided to investigate and innovate in three areas.

Interactive Comments

Firstly students were asked to write comments on the course materials and on the processes of working through them. Here the aims were:

a) to make them more aware of their own involvement in the learning process,
b) to make them more conscious of the actual learning process they are going through,
c) to make them more involved with the materials in the course so that they would appreciate what the aims were.

These comments would be replied to by the tutor in writing. I decided that my written replies to their comments would be non-judgemental.

Examples of the Headings for the Comments
1. Planning Your Study and Review Time
2. Text Type and Activity Format
3. Information from Diagrams
4. Self Assessment and Self Correction
5. How Responsible Are You? (a test on the Student Manual)
6. Improving Your Learning Efficiency
7. Objectives of the Course
8. Has Something Like This ever Happened to You?
9. When Should Mistakes Be Corrected?
10. Information You Should Know about Reading.
Timetabling and Attendance

The second area of the investigation was related to the timetabling and attendance on the course. It seemed to me that I should involve the students in making decisions about these matters so that they would accept responsibility for attendance and coming in time. Clearly there is a tension between compelling attendance at classes and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. However, the institute's regulations on attendance had to be met so the teacher reacted at times by making casual remarks and warnings, referring to the institute's regulations about class attendance which might affect the students' eligibility to sit for the final exam. No actual penalty was imposed throughout the course for 2 reasons. These students were quite good at English and could express themselves through speaking and writing, although not grammatically accurate. When in class they worked quite well, asking questions when they were not clear about something. Therefore, simple warnings should be enough to remind them of what they should do. Secondly, the teacher tried not to disrupt the concentration of the early comers who had already begun working on the lessons, thus avoiding wasting time on disciplining the late comers by reproaching them.

Since only few students came for the conversation practice in the sixth week, the teacher talked to students and asked them to decide if they still wanted to have conversation practice or not. If they still wanted it, they had to decide when it should be done and how it should be carried out.

The teacher also called the students' attention to the Student Manual, which indicated that there would be a conversation test at the end of the semester and also the details of it.

After discussion, students agreed to have "conversation practice" in the last half hour of each long session for the rest of the semester.

This meant that attendance at this session would be maximised. Here the students were accepting responsibility for attending but at a time more suitable for them.

Self Evaluation

The third area of innovation in the investigation was to ask the students to evaluate their own learning progress.

In conjunction to writing comments on learning materials, each student was asked to evaluate her/his own learning progress and present it in a diagram form, and also to indicate the reason(s) why the learning progress was like that. Then a partner was chosen to read the self evaluation and write down her/his reaction (i.e. agreement or disagreement) with the writer's opinion and the reason(s) for it. This aimed to encourage peer consultation and evaluation of one's learning progress.
Research Questions

The research questions considered are:
1. Can asking students to comment interactively with the tutor on learning materials help motivate students to take more responsibility for the learning?
2. What would be their attitudes towards being given this freedom to control themselves?
3. How well could students handle such a loosely-controlled course with especial reference to attendance?
4. How well can these students evaluate their progress and that of their peers?

Sources of Data

The data collected were from:
1. Three sets of students' comments on learning materials.
2. Two sets of students' self-evaluation on learning progress, handed in after submitting the first and the second set of comments.
3. One open-ended questionnaire to find out the students' attitudes towards the different aspects of the course, administered after the second set of comments were turned in.
4. One informal interview at the end of the course after students had taken the final course exam and submitted all course-requirements.
5. Students' overall class attendance.

In the third part of the paper, I shall outline the results of the investigation. (see samples from the Appendix).

Part Three : The Results

The first area of the investigation i.e. research questions 1 and 2, is related to students' reflective comments on learning materials and the interaction between the tutor and themselves in the written comments as they move towards greater independence in learning.

A. Data from Students' Comments

Data from the students' comments indicated that students realized the value of the learning materials and liked them and also that some of them perceived the usefulness of reflecting on the materials, commenting on this and then receiving feedback. (see Sample 4 and 5 in the Appendix)

Students who at first did not hand in their comments admitted that it was because they were not sure of how the teacher would treat or react to their comments. Having seen the teacher's reacting in a friendly and helpful way, they felt relieved and willing to write the comments.
This reflected how the students' motivation to learn and to write reflective comments could be encouraged by the teacher's friendly and helpful responses.

Their noting down their absence on the record sheets and later working on what they had missed, indicated their being honest and responsible for their learning. (see Sample 6 in the Appendix)

Those who did not like material titled "Planning Your Study and Review Time", (i.e. Sample 8, 9, and 10 in the Appendix) agreed to try to follow the suggestions in the unit, after having talked with the teacher.

It is worth noting here that these 3 students saw the value of "Planning Your Study and Review Time" (i.e. Sample 7 and 9). Sample 8 indicated the dislike for having some control, i.e. "I don't like anything that control my mind." Sample 6 indicated the willingness to try again. For Sample 10, the student later explained that he wrote "my heart" instead of "my head" because he did not sleep the night before and said that he too would try to follow the time planning.

Data from the students' comments indicated that, to some extent, students realised the value of commenting on the learning materials and that they liked doing this.

B. Data from the Open-ended Questionnaire, on Method of Teaching

From the open-ended questionnaire we saw that four students out of a total of 16, 25%, said that they liked the present method of teaching.

Two students, 12.5 %, simply said that there was too much work with sheets, while eight, 50%, wanted to have more interactions in class.

Three students, 18.8 %, gave interesting comments on how the loose control had affected the students' learning.

"Although we are the university student but I think that some time we want you to give us or feed us some things that we although can read from file some times we don't know that what we don't know (ไม่รู้เรื่องอะไรบาง) so that we don't ask."

Sample 11

"Should encourage more, tell us if the work is good."

Sample 12

These 2 quotations could be interpreted as students wanted to have more direct feedback from the teacher, after finishing the work in order to confirm what (they thought) they had learned.

"I think all that you are in this semester is good but you have to know it only some of us will follow the way that you want and I think I do it the best that I can."
My opinions about the course is we don't know the real purpose of this course. I already read the Student Manual but I'm still confuse when I learn, I don't know what I'm get in the class O.K. I got about my English conversation but the other I just get only a few things.

We have freedom to do or to learn the course but many freedom 'll make us in disorder and because of this I feel like I can't get much things in this course because I've to seek the knowledge by myself and if you control us in someway (not all because if you control all, we'll feel unhappy to come in the class) we will have more attention than this."

Sample 13

From Sample 13, one could see that this was a good student who had tried to work out about what went on in the classroom but got lost because of two reasons. One is the lack of the teacher's direct guiding, the other is the student's unfamiliarity with the importance of asking questions when he had a problem, or not understanding anything. The student said, "I already read the Student Manual but I'm still confused when I learn." because the teacher often referred to the Student Manual when some work would be due soon, or when talking about a concept which was already mentioned in the Student Manual (and the students were already tested on their comprehension of these concepts). This student would have benefitted from coming to the tutor and raising the specific problems he had in relation to the Student Manual and the overall objective of the course. He did not go to his tutor and discuss matters but he did take the opportunity of expressing his concerns in writing.

Therefore data from the open-ended questionnaire clearly indicated that all students were aware that they should be responsible for their own learning, but some admitted that they need more help to control or adapt themselves to this responsibility. Clearly, it is important not to put too much responsibility for their learning onto students who are in a new learning situation - their first year university.

It can be concluded from these feedbacks that different students were used to and expected different styles of teaching/learning. Of course, this is what would be expected in many classes but it does present difficulties to the teacher who is trying to innovate as some students are prepared to accept the innovation but others are not yet ready.

C. Data from the Open-ended Questionnaire, on Students' Responsibility

The data clearly indicated that all students were aware that they should be responsible for their own learning, but some admitted that they needed more help to control or adapt themselves to this responsibility.

Six students, 37.5 %, said that it was a good training for students to be responsible for themselves.
"Sense of taking responsibility for your own learning. It's the best way to start making you qualified because you're in university now which will step into adults. No one will give you as high school."

Sample 14

Six students, 37.5 %, said that there should be more disciplining.

"I know we are university student, but you must give us the time to adapt ourself from school kids to university students."

Sample 15

"There should be some disciplining because some students may not be able to adapt or control themselves."

Sample 16

Two students, 12.5%, said that they would like to have more care or direct contact with the teacher.

"- Good freedom in learning. We learn to divide the time.
-Teacher should remind students more to hand in works because sometimes we not sleep for many nights and forgot to hand in your assignments."

Sample 17

"I feel more mature. But sometimes I feel empty keeping on working. Sometimes, my answers were correct I wanted teacher to explain again why answers were like that. If we have to ask, we have to walk all the time."

Sample 18

One student, 6.3 %, said that students needed to be more responsible.

"- students, including myself, need to be more responsible for learning."

Sample 19

One student, 6.3 %, described how he had tried to improve his responsibility and what had happened.

"And I think my responsibility is bad. But I tried to improve it and when I did, I found that it interesting to learn this course. But it's quite late for me. But at last I think I learn something from this course."

Sample 20

Two important points emerge from the students' feedback for this course. First students were honest when giving opinions on themselves, on the learning materials, and on the teacher's teaching method, both on positive and negative aspects. Three students asked for permission after the informal interview to take back their record.
files, to "organize it better" as they said, it confirmed that they did have positive attitudes towards this interactive reflection process and ready to take more responsibility in their own learning. Secondly they had trust in the teacher's sincerity and open-mindedness in welcoming criticisms from learners. This trust resulted in their giving honest feedback and strong negative comments. This trust can be interpreted as resulted from the non-judgemental freedom that prevailed in the whole course. Some of them had summarized their opinions as follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Points</th>
<th>Weak Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. training students to be responsible for ourselves.</td>
<td>1. more interesting teaching techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. not being serious with clothing.</td>
<td>2. there should be more conversation in class, without limiting the time, interacting all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. very good learning materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. conversation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. listening from SALL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- students have a lot of freedom, it is a good training for students to be responsible of our learning and our duty.</td>
<td>- sometimes students are so free that they become irresponsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- good improvement of skills.</td>
<td>- more information on improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- good to learn to identify our own weak point.</td>
<td>- too much work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- this course is very useful and I've learned a lot of knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. conversation.  
2. responsibility of teacher.  

1. method of teaching.  
2. responsibility of students.  
3. punctuality of students.  

1. good training for students to have more responsibility, have the courage to speak.  
2. can remember how to learn English efficiently.  

- not as successful as it should be.

The second area of investigation is related to class attendance within a fairly loosely controlled course. (i.e. research question 3)

Class Attendance and Non-attendance

As said earlier, class attendance is seen as another area in which it was possible to give students a certain degree of freedom.
a) According to the data from students' class attendance, it seemed possible that the mid-term scores had a lot of influence on the students' class attendance.

b) From the open-ended questionnaire only one student, 6.3%, said that it was very good that the teacher did not blame him for coming late, otherwise he would be discouraged to come to class.

"Good make me responsible for myself when I came late, it's because I really could not get up. I'm glad you didn't blame being late because if you did, next time I late, I would not dare come to class. That make me lose knowledge."  

Sample 21

Three students, 18.8%, agreed with the present arrangement of class time.

The majority, 81.3%, asked for more enforcement on classtime regulations to help students control themselves.

"Suggest: For someone that didn't go to the class you just threaten them that they can't miss the class, not be able to sit in examination."  

Sample 22

This indicated that students were in fact responsible for their learning but the temptation still remained for being late or absent and that comes from the lack of penalties (i.e. the classtime regulations) that they were so familiar with.

The students' expressing of the need for regulation enforcement indicated that all students were in fact responsible for their learning and they wanted to overcome the temptations that prevented them from being responsible and being frequently absent or late.

An additional question which I thought would be useful to ask in connection with attendance was, "Can asking students to make interactive reflective comments on their learning materials help motivate class attendance?"

Considering the data from the students' comments which indicated their positive view on the learning materials and the fact that their class attendance increased after the first submission of the comments, it is possible to regard the improved class attendance as the result of their realizing how useful the learning materials were after they had written the comments. However, it can be argued that asking students to comment on learning materials might help motivate students' class attendance for they could see that the knowledge obtained from their interaction with the materials can help them in the examination and also make the course more meaningful to them as they work through it.
The relationship that the students establish with the materials as they work on them is that of deepening understanding and consequently more awareness of how useful the materials are in the learning process they are involved in.

Self Evaluation

The third area of the investigation is related to the findings about the students evaluation of their own progress. (i.e. research question 4).

One student constantly made high learning progress through the course and could give justified reasons for it. (see Sample 23 in the Appendix)

For others, these self-evaluations made them think more about why they did not make more progress. (see Sample 24 and 25 in the Appendix)

However, the fact that all of them enjoyed this process of learning progress evaluation indicated that students should be asked to evaluate on their work and on themselves more often. The fact that the self-evaluation of their learning progress made them think about the reasons why they did not make more progress, and that they enjoyed making self-evaluation can be interpreted that frequent self-evaluation of the learning progress can be used as one instrument to help students control themselves and be more responsible.

The Informal Interview

To discover more about some of the earlier comments expressed in the open-ended questionnaire, I decided to have an informal interview with the students.

An informal interview was conducted as a group. The teacher showed students how their comments and reactions were taken seriously into consideration as a basis for the future improvement of the course. They were shown the total data collected, analysed and interpreted.

All students confirmed their comments on the value of the learning materials and most of them stressed the need for the teacher to be firm on class attendance to help students control themselves and their responsibility better. It was remarkable to see that students could distinguish between how good learning materials were and how the teacher's teaching needed to be improved and why.

"We don't change ideas of lessons. But you must be serious more. We should speak more."

Sample 33
Discussion of the Findings

Robert O’Neill (1991) talks about the advantages and disadvantages of the teacher-centred approach and the student-centred one. With the teacher-centred approach, learners see what format of the lesson to follow. O’Neill calls this "obvious and ordinary things" that are important in the classroom. With the student-centred approach, some students may not be able to see which direction to follow, and thus need to have more time and/or guidance to adapt themselves. He suggests that teachers should be more concerned with giving "good lessons" for the benefit of the learners, in stead of completely ascribing the teaching to one or another approach. Consequently, teachers should develop the critical skill of judging and selecting when the teacher-centred or the student-centred approach is "most likely to yield fruitful results with a particular class at a particular time," since each has its own value and drawbacks.

He emphasized "the importance of doing obvious and ordinary things well, (in the classroom) of doing them with obvious professional control and sensitivity...like ensemble acting and orchestra playing." And this is what the teacher of this course needs to do to improve the course, to make it more explicit to students what they are expected to do in class and outside of class, and why.

Wong Fillmore suggests (1985) as quoted by O’Neill (1991) that:

"By and large, the most successful classes for language learning were the ones that made greatest use of the teacher directed activities. In such classes, individual work was assigned mostly as follow up activities to formal lessons during which teachers led students through the materials that were being taught and directed them in discussions of that material. Indeed, classes that were open in their structure and those that made heavy use of individual work were among those found to be the least successful for language learning."

This seems to be true for this study. The students, in spite of the freedom given and the democratic negotiations made with them, wanted to be led more gradually from their past experience of teacher-led familiarity towards more learning freedom.

It can be concluded in this investigation that learning to reflect by making comments leads to change in student attitudes towards their part in the learning process - they felt that their comments were VALUEd- that they, the students, were EMPOWERED, and consequently they moved some of the way towards readiness for taking more responsibility for their work.

The next time I teach this course, two major points will be taken care of. First, at the beginning of the semester students will be made aware of their present preferred learning styles and the target learning style they should adopt. Second, student class attendance will be made related to certain test schedules, i.e. forcing students to get prepared for the tests. In other words, the tests would serve as their immediate
realistic aims and feedback (i.e. scores) from successive tests should emphasize the need for learners' efforts for continual self improvement.

Acknowledgement

I am especially indebted to Norma and Leslie Dickinson for insightful comments and suggestions, which helped considerably to clarify my thoughts.

References

**Appendix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Comment/Details</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has something like this ever happened to you?</td>
<td>I like it because this event has ever happened to me. And now, I know “How to get rid of mistake?” But besides, writing sentence correctly, I want to speak and pronounce the words correctly too. I hope that we will have more practice about speaking and stressing.</td>
<td>Yes, very good. Do look at the unit titled, “Tips for Speaking Practice.” Please come to see me if you have any questions (i.e. problems).</td>
<td>Sample 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has something like this ever happened to you?</td>
<td>I have known about topic in newspaper and learn about analysis from passage and asked question. It’s good that I have shared my idea with my friends about my answers from passage.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sample 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Nov.</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>Good to be honest. Have you caught up with the work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning your study and review time</td>
<td>I have known about how planning my time for review, study, rest, play, take a car, and etc. It’s may make me a planning man.</td>
<td>Very good. Please come to see me &amp; we'll talk about how to express your idea accurately.</td>
<td>Sample 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning your study and review time</td>
<td>I don't like to make timetable because I used to make it, but I could not treat follow it. I don't like anything that control my mind, when I read book.</td>
<td>Yes, at the beginning you might feel this way. However, if you continue following it you will find that you can get more work done, in time.</td>
<td>Sample 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning your study and review time</td>
<td>It don't work to me, I can't follow it but if I can follow it, it'll make me better. So I'm trying.</td>
<td>Very good. My best wishes for your success...</td>
<td>Sample 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the step 4 of “Planning your study &amp; review time &amp; check the answer in step 1.”</td>
<td>Today class make me bore, because I think I can't get anything in my hear.</td>
<td>Sorry about this. What do you mean by this? Please come to see me and we'll talk about it.</td>
<td>Sample 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I first go to the class I think that I didn’t learn anything from this class, but after I go to the class quite often and I know your purpose to study it. I get a lot of things from you because you not just teach English, but you also teach the thing that can use in every day life.

Sample 23
I think that I haven't increase my English language because I don't have practise after class about my writing and I don't have review my lesson and neglect about my home work.

I disagree with Korrakoj because you can increase your knowledge of English but you don't try to develop. You should omit the boring and laziness, so you are increase in English.

Sample 24

It's increase 30-40% because I don't learn it hard. I come late so it is increase so a little but i read all the paper and i don't do the homework.
I think that I can increase because the teacher lead me to read, to summary the class.

I agree with you because I've seen you always late for the class, but I know your home is very far from Institute. You better try to get up earlier. OK?

Sample 25

Data from the Open-ended Questionnaire Concerning Method of Teaching

Four students, 25%, said that they liked the method used.

Method of teaching:
"I think it's very excellent to do like this because no one can control you as well as yourself. Moreover, it'll make you have much more responsibility and conscious that are very important for your life."

Sample 26

"I think this is a good course. I feel that it can improve my English if I come to class often enough. And I like your style of teaching freedom and responsibility."

Sample 27

"good to let students have some freedom in learning and to be responsible for ourselves. It makes use learn to budget the time."

Sample 28

"classwork and conversation encourage me to speak more and to know where to improve myself.
-work with sheets reviews reading skill and comprehension. Good to have suggested answers.
- there should be more difference/varieties."

Sample 29

Two students, 12.5%, said that there was too much work on sheets.

Eight students, 50%, said that there was not enough speaking practice or interaction with classmates.

"The conversation practise should have note. Those help me to listen and speaking very much because it's useful to study with professor in Architectural class."

Sample 30
"Conversation Practice. This is the big problem of studying in ENGLISH COURSE ARCHITECTURE because most students are very shy to speak and lack of confidence. So I think you'll have to set the time for the conversation part more than the others."

Sample 31

"It's the serious problem because they don't speak anything whether they can speak English or not. You'll have to make them feel that it's very common thing. The more you give them a chance, the more students will be better."

Sample 32

Three students, 18.8%, said that the teacher had allowed too much freedom that it affected the course as a whole.

Data from the Students' Comments

At first only 11 students, 68.8 %, handed in comments. Most comments, 81.3%, were positive. Only 3 students, 18.8 %, did not agree with the idea on "Planning Your Study and Review Time."

In return, the teacher reacted by:
- giving explanations to some students how ideas in the materials could be helpful to learner.

- giving a memorandum containing encouraging words to each person with suggestions on how to organize the student's record file.

- asking some students to come and discuss with the teacher how they should verbalize what they wanted to say.

- distributing a list containing objectives of the learning materials that had been covered so far so that students could see if they had correctly identified the usefulness of the materials.

For the second time, all 16 students, 100% handed in the comments. Three students (18.8 %) gave negative comments to the teaching method. Five (31 %) did not give comments on some materials, simply left the space blank.

Samples of negative comments are Sample 8, 9, 10

The teacher reacted by giving 4 types of responses as before.

For the third time, after the final exam, all 16 students handed in their record files, with comments.

All comments were positive.

Data from Students' Evaluation of Their Own Learning Progress

Twelve students, 75%, handed in their first self-evaluation.

Three students, 18.8%, (i.e. Student 1, 2 and 5) said that their progress was more than 30%, represented by

The reasons given for the progress were:
- knowing the purpose of the course
- studying by oneself
- asking questions when having problems.

Two students, 12.5%, said that their progress was between 20-25%, represented by

Six students, 37.5%, said that theirs was only 10% progress, represented by

The reasons given for not making more progress were:
- sometimes not understand the lessons (= 6.3%)
- often late to class (= 12.5%)
- not speaking English much enough (= 6.3%)
- never review or practise after class (= 37.5%)

One student, 6.3%, said that she did not make any progress at all because she did not practise nor review after class, and did not do any homework.

Fourteen students (87.5%) handing in the second self-evaluation. Three students (18.8%) said their overall progress in this class was high, but only one student gave reasons for his progress.

Eleven students, 68.8%, did not specify the percentage of their progress. However, from the diagrams that they drew, the progress was between 10-20% but no reasons were given for their estimates.

The reason for the students giving very rough feedback at this time could be that they were in such a hurry, going to have an exam on one subject right after this class.

Data from Students’ Class Attendance

There were 16 students in this group. Only 33.6% of the classtime throughout the semester that the whole group were present on time.

Students who got high grades in English in the last semester often were either late or absent from class. They seemed confident that they would be able to pass this course, since it was announced at the beginning of the semester that the exams for this course would be open-book.

However, when the mid-term scores were announced with the means score of 63.7, students seemed to realize how class time did affect their marks. Those who attended class regularly scored high, while those who were often absent were below the means score.

After the mid-term exam, class attendance became better. Fewer students were absent. Fewer students came late.

Data from the Open-ended Questionnaire Concerning Class Time

1. Three students, 18.8%, said that the present arrangement of class time was alright.

2. Two, 12.5%, said that it was the students’ responsibility to attend class or not to be late.
3. Nine students, 56.3%, asked for more enforcement on classtime regulations to help students control themselves.

4. One student, 6.3%, said that it was very good that the teacher did not blame him for coming late, otherwise he would be discouraged to come to class.

5. Four students, 25%, explained why students had to come late or be absent.

6. One student, 6.3%, agreed with what the teacher had done - asking students to work in class so as the late comers could catch up with the work later and not to waste the time of the early comers.
Incorporating Self-Access Elements in a Taught Course

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Abstract

Self-directed language learning is a cultural alien concept to students in some Asian countries. To facilitate the transition from teacher-directed to self-directed learning, an ESP course for Year One Translation degree students at Hong Kong Lingnan College incorporates a variety of self-access elements, including looking for grammar and language support units from books in the Self-Access Centre, using facilities at the SAC for viewing video and writing transcription, collecting and analysing authentic materials from government agencies and enterprises, looking up CD Rom databases for references etc. While there is a wide range of tasks, they actually resemble ordinary tasks that students undertake for language courses and are hence non-threatening. The difference is not only in the label but also the reflective element which is heavily emphasised. Students are feeling much more confident and capable of learning language on their own. Worksheets from the course, student work and feedback will be used to illustrate the approach taken and some of the benefits derived.

Directing learners to perform tasks outside the classroom is certainly not a novel idea. However, directing learners consciously to learn on their own, integrating self-directed learning in a systematic and gradual manner is a precious part of learner training. Learners not only improve their learning strategies as a result, but also develop an understanding of the reason for doing so, and in the course, acquire more understanding on how they can learn better on their own. This paper introduces an English course for first year Translation degree students at Lingnan College, Hong Kong, which integrates a number of self-access tasks. It explains the rationale for doing so, and reports benefits as well as problems encountered by both the teacher and students in carrying out the tasks.

Rationale

Quite a number of current language syllabuses are task-based.

Nunan (1988) defines task as "a unit of planning/teaching containing language data and an activity or sequence of activities to be carried out by the learner on the data." (p 159) He further distinguishes real-world tasks, those that are performed in real life, and pedagogic tasks, those that are performed in the classroom (p.45). The course we are examining, Models of Speech and Writing I, a first year course for Translation degree students at Lingnan College, is task-based, as each unit is divided into a number of tasks and both real world and pedagogic
tasks are incorporated. The rationale for adopting a task-based approach here is based on the conviction that language is, in the words of Halliday, a social semiotic, that language is a form of action, and learning a language is actually learning how to mean. The units in the course, Models of Speech and Writing, are drawn from different genres, e.g. editorials, film reviews, lectures, public information (pamphlets), narration, interviews. 'A genre,' remarks Swales (1990), 'comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some communicative purposes.' (p.58). Similarly, Martin (1974) sees genre as purposeful activity recognizable by members of a particular culture. Miller (1984) states her position clearly: "And if genre represents action, it must involve situation and motive, because human action, whether symbolic or otherwise, is interpretable only against a context of situation and through the attributing of motives." (Miller, 1984, p.152)

She highlights the pedagogic significance of genre, "... for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of the community." (ibid: p.165)

Since genres are social actions, learners would benefit most if they engage in the actions as apprentices. The actions of the real life players can of course be realized through language or physical action. The genre of service encounter explains this very clearly – while goods and cash are being handled, language, no matter how minimal, accompanies the actions.

In the Models course, some of the tasks are purely 'pedagogical', e.g. analysing the language or grammar used in the text; others are real life activities, e.g. designing pamphlets for a certain organization, or watching a movie and writing a film review afterwards. The pedagogical tasks can be seen as enabling tasks, for they provide necessary support for the successful conduct of real life tasks. The differentiation of tasks into pedagogical and real life ones makes sense for the course under discussion, since learners first learn to analyse the linguistic, discourse and contextual features of modal texts in the genres, before they are required to produce texts in the target genre. Other real life tasks, apart from the production of a target genre text at the end of each unit, are built into the course, to provide opportunities to enrich the learners' learning strategies. An example of this is locating suitable material in the SAC. Another which is forthcoming is identifying a suitable interviewee for a radio programme on a topic of current interest.

The task and genre based approach is thought to be particularly beneficial for Translation students because they need to be exposed to a variety of texts for both their future career and for discovering the textual and contextual features that make a text what it is. An advantage of the approach is that it would provide access for the learners to real world knowledge, both in the sense of knowing about the world outside the classroom and in the sense of knowing what actions people engage in when they produce the texts in the target genres.
The Self-Access Tasks

Self-access tasks were not a feature of this course in previous years. A compelling reason to introduce them in this academic year is concern about the learners' proficiency, especially if they are to function adequately as professional Chinese-English translators in their career, and that the two contact hours per week does not allow us to cover the grounds we would prefer to. However, the essential pedagogical motive is to encourage learner independence which I find is crucial if the students are to perform well as tertiary students.

Two kinds of self-access tasks are being introduced -- those which form an integral part of the units, e.g. all the text production tasks at the end of the units and some activities which in previous years took place in the classroom, for example, viewing the movie on which the model film review is based and discussing the movie. The tasks which are self-accessed are those that the teachers believe the learners are capable of performing on their own, with or without support. Where necessary, support is built into the tasks. For example, if learners are required to locate a specified piece of material in the SAC, there is always somebody on duty there to help. If they are asked to search some material to suit their need, the teacher would indicate to them the hours when he would be on duty for consultation at the SAC.

Apart from the tasks which are self-accessed from the course, others are added onto the unit to help learners overcome problems with language, or to provide them with additional opportunities to analyse the texts. The language support tasks in the first unit on editorials are 'add ons'. They were added because experience from previous years indicates that these are the areas which some learners might find difficult. These tasks are not integrated into the taught part either because it is felt that learners can learn on their own. or the tasks may not benefit the majority of learners, or they are not central to the theme of the unit.

Another obvious reason for introducing self-access tasks in a taught course is that these tasks provide valuable links between the classroom and the Self-Access Centre as well as the world outside the campus. Tasks performed in the Self-Access Centre require the learners to make use of either the Centre's materials or the facilities or both. For many learners, it was their first hands on experience in using the SAC after the first orientation visit. The tasks in the first unit on editorials require them to look up books on the shelf for further language input. The second unit on film reviews requires them to preview a movie on stock at the Centre before coming to class. Another self-access task requires them to view a movie of their choice in order to write a film review. Most students viewed a film at the Centre rather than hiring one from the video shop or watching one at a cinema. Refer to Appendix I for a full list of self-access tasks up to this point. A side benefit of requiring the students to use the centre's materials or facilities is that they became familiar with the centre's physical and human resources, even though this means further draining the limited resources available at a small centre which are reflected in the student comments given below. To alleviate the problem, activities designed for the rest of the semester will be more outward bound.
A variety of self-access tasks are introduced here. The kind of self-access tasks one can introduce is only limited by imagination. Basically, most classroom tasks can be transformed into self-access ones, provided that enough briefing and support are given. For example, in the unit on editorials, the self-access task to introduce journalistic vocabulary could in fact be done in the classroom. However, it was felt that the task is not a primary focus of the analysis and that not enough time was available to teach everything one would wish to in class. Instead, the reason for studying journalistic vocabulary was explained to the students when the worksheets were handed out to them. They were also informed of the time when a teacher would be on duty at the centre to help them in case they have problems. However, a number of students had time table clashes when they wished to consult the teacher. This is where building explanation into the materials in the form of accompanying notes would be extremely helpful.

An objective of introducing self-access tasks is to make learners aware that they can learn language on their own; a related objective is to show them that language can be learned in many places other than the classroom. However, given that most Hong Kong learners are authority-dependent, a phenomenon discovered in my other research on learning styles of students at Lingnan (Pang 1993 and Pang 1994), they have to be eased into self-directed learning. The tasks in the course are so sequenced that the ones most similar to classroom learning and most familiar to the learners are introduced first. These tasks are also done at the self-access centre. The less familiar ones and those which are to be conducted outside campus are introduced later. For example, a task to be introduced in a later unit on interviews requires the learner to interview a person not in the college. Again adequate support has to be available when learners take up such a ‘formidable’ real life task for the first time. For learners who do not know how to make a request for an interview, they are directed to visit the SAC to look up material on writing letters or making telephone calls for doing so; for those who have little experience in interviewing people, they are given interviewer guidelines and if necessary, directed to watch videos on interviewing techniques. On the whole, self-access tasks are introduced in a step by step manner, starting with the familiar in terms of both strategy and format, and then gradually learners are introduced into less familiar territory. Table 1 shows the sequence of tasks introduced up to this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking for a prescribed book at the SAC on journalistic vocabulary and working on it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a prescribed book at the SAC on opinionative language and working on it.</td>
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<td>Looking for a prescribed book at the SAC on techniques of persuasion and working on it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a non-prescribed book at the SAC on modal verbs and working on it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a prescribed movie at the SAC, watching it and discussing it according to detailed guidelines given.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a non-prescribed movie at the SAC, watching it and discussing it according to guidelines previously given. Writing the film review based on a ‘model text’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a tape at the SAC and transcribing parts of a lecture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting pamphlets from sources outside campus and analysing them in the way taught.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for a video at the SAC, viewing it and comparing a taught scene on video and in the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparing a scene of the learners’ choice in a similar fashion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcribing a dialogue in a language other than the one taught and critiquing the translation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(To be introduced later in the course) Interviewing people outside campus, transcribing/ translating the interview and writing a report on it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
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<td>I. EDITORIAL</td>
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<td>II. FILM REVIEW</td>
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<td>III. ORAL PRESENTATION</td>
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<td>IV. PUBLIC INFORMATION</td>
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<td>V. NARRATION</td>
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Table 2: TASK NATURE BY SKILLS

In terms of skills, again the ones learners are more likely to feel at ease like grammar, vocabulary building, reading and writing are introduced first. Table 2 represents the kinds of skills practised in each task and Table 3 shows the order in which the skills appeared in the course. It should be noted that every task involves more than one skill. Even the initial task requires them to look up the material using the catalogue, not to mention finding their way to the SAC.

| library   |
| reading   |
| vocabulary|
| writing   |
| grammar   |
| life      |
| listening |
| language in context |
| transcription |
| speaking  |
| editing   |
| graphic   |
| translation |

Table 3: ORDER IN WHICH SKILLS APPEARED

An obvious trade off in introducing grammar and vocabulary at the beginning of a series of self-access tasks is that it would reinforce the belief of some learners that lexis and grammar are what learning a language is all about. However, this is later corrected by the number of other tasks that are introduced. Table 4 represents the frequency of skills, and it can be seen that the ones at which learners are less proficient receive more attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>editing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>graphic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language in context</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: FREQUENCY OF SKILLS IN SELF-ACCESS MODE

| Speaking  | 9  | 18% |
| Transcription | 2  | 4%  |
| Translation  | 1  | 2%  |
| Vocabulary   | 2  | 4%  |
| Writing      | 5  | 10% |
| **Total**    | 50 | 100%|

**Monitoring Progress**

The student questionnaire reports a completion rate of 85% of all self-access tasks, which can be considered satisfactory. There are a number of ways to ensure that students do perform most of the tasks they are assigned, even though they are allowed the freedom to decide whether to perform some of them. Some tasks require the students to report their findings to the class, e.g. an analysis of the pamphlets they have collected in the Public Information unit; a comparison of the scene in the book and in the movie in Narration I. Some other tasks have to be completed before they can hand in their final assignment for the unit, e.g. viewing a film of their choice in order to write a film review and interviewing a person in order to write the report. There are others which are more ‘intractable’, the tasks in the first unit on Editorials. They offer learners the freedom to decide whether they need to perform the tasks which are by nature supportive of the target learning to write an editorial in the imagined capacity of an editor. However, a system in the SAC helps to keep track of learner use of the particular materials in question – every user of the SAC is required to fill in an evaluation form stating the material s/he has used. Of course, this is no guarantee that learners have successfully completed the tasks required of or recommended to them.

A better way to monitor learner progress in the self-access tasks is to require them to keep a log book/diary, but it is impractical in this instance as learners already complaining about their overall workload for all the courses they are taking. My compromise solution is to make use of every opportunity to chat with them informally, and through this, I get honest feedback from learners, especially regarding the difficulty and the perceived relevance of the task.

**Student Feedback**

A questionnaire on self-access activities was sent out to learners at the end of the fifth unit in the course (See Appendix II). The first group of questions are on the difficulty and interest levels, as well as the significance or usefulness of the various self-access tasks to their English proficiency, their study skills and their future career. The answers display such a great range and diversity that I believe that overall tallying may not be indicative of the real situation. It is safer to say that overall, the results lean on the positive and there are great individual differences. Another observation is that they do
get a lot of help from the SAC staff and they also help each other. Where it is allowed, they do perform the tasks in a group or in a pair and they report that they enjoy working with their fellow students a lot.

In terms of benefits, i.e. questions 174-186, they are again positive. The benefits that are regarded to be particularly significant are as follows:

174. extending the learning scope outside class
176. using language realistically
177. engaging in real life activities
178. building up confidence
180. learning to work with others
182. preparing for independent learning in future
185. knowing more about the target language than through classroom learning
186. knowing more about the culture of the target language than through classroom learning

However, the most striking is the 'metalanguage' used by some learners in their comments on questions 172 and 173 asking them whether they think marks should be given to self-access tasks and reasons for their answer, question 189 asking them to suggest activities for the rest of the course and question 190 asking for their overall comments on the self-access activities. The more interesting ones are given as follows:

**172. Do you think marks should be given to Self-access tasks?**

**173. Give reasons for your answer.**

- No. Because our SAC is so small that we always have to wait for a long time to get a seat. It's difficult to finish tasks on time.
- No. Because it's informal study.
- No, it's difficult to assess how much work one has done.
- No, if self-access activities are given marks, it will create a lot of pressure and we won't enjoy them.
- Self-access tasks are done on our own; giving marks will decrease our interest in learning.
- No, the aim of self-access activities is to let students improve English on their own.
- No, we can't complete every self-access task.
- It's our own business whether we learn and absorb the knowledge.
- I for one am not enthusiastic about the tasks and we simply do not have so much time.
- It's only extra self-access tasks – I think we should be 'self-accessed'.
- The needs of every student are different; some find them useful while others do not.
- No, we can copy from others.
- No, it's difficult to assess.
- Marks are meaningless. The importance is how much we can learn.
- Yes, force students to do the task or they'll set it aside.
- Yes, students would be encouraged to perform the tasks.

**189. Please suggest other types of self-access activities you would like for the rest of this course.**

- I can't think of other types of activities, but I enjoy group work; through the discussion, we get ideas and learn how to co-operate.
- No suggestion as what we have now is quite satisfactory.
- No more self-access activities as they are quite time consuming.
- Movie watching competition.
- More real life activities; group work and career related activities.
- Free talk, drama...

190. Please give your overall comments on the self-access activities you have had in this course.
- Quite good, but too many tasks. It's impossible for us to finish all of them.
- The amount is enough and activities are well designed.
- Even though I have finished all the tasks, I still don't think I've got the skills. For example, I still don't know how to write an editorial. Maybe I don't understand the lectures. Am I foolish?
- Group work in self-access is quite good because it's convenient to our studies.
- Overall, the self-access activities are useful as follow up to the lesson.
- The teacher should make sure that the students have done the tasks every time.
- I think we should concentrate on several areas instead of diversifying too much.
- It's a pretty good idea, but the demand on translation students here don't allow us too much time.
- Overall, it's a very interesting course. I have learnt very much from the activities, esp. the oral presentation after we have finished the activities. This enhances my confidence very much.
- Quite good, but the SAC is so small that we can't enjoy the activities comfortably.
- Some activities are interesting, but some are boring.
- On the whole the self-access activities are quite useful. Through the learning process, we build up our confidence and improves our weaknesses.
- Boring, bounded, not enough equipment for the activities.
- More guidelines are needed and more interesting activities outside the campus.
- Good, but not enough copies of video and audio tapes.

In the response to the idea of giving marks, most students are negative. Apart from the physical constraints like time, equipment and space, more striking are their emphases on individual differences, learner autonomy and interest which can be paraphrased as motivation in learning.

Their suggestions for further activities are rather limited in scope, but they confirm their desire for group work and discussion as well as less directed activities like free talk and watching movies. One of the most popular activities at the SAC is in fact watching the film videos.

Again, their overall comments display their ability in making decisions as to what interests and benefits them most. They have also given very practical suggestions for improvement.

Talking to some of the learners, I obtain other impressions not found in the answers to the questionnaire. Some students welcome the self-activities as an extra opportunity to learn or practise the language. Students in Hong Kong are used to private tuitions after school; they welcome any opportunity for additional practice or learning. They like to see the SAC as a place they can visit during the odd 'off hours' in between lectures, especially if it can provide a relaxing atmosphere. They are also aware that their present language proficiency is not quite sufficient for their target occupation as translators or interpreters and they do realize that they have to practise more. While they do cherish the opportunity to use language realistically, what they actually underestimate is the fact
that the activities do not just help them with their proficiency, but also with the real-life skills and study skills like taking notes from lectures.

Conclusion

The incorporation of self-access tasks in the taught course mentioned here have produced rather subtle and profound changes in the learners' development towards autonomy. First of all, they are exposed to a variety of learning experiences which stretch beyond the scope of traditional classroom learning. Secondly, through such experience, they become exposed to situations and challenges, linguistic or otherwise, which are rather unfamiliar to them. The strategies demanded of them to meet such challenges produce in turn a deeper awareness of the nature of language learning and of the target language itself. The kind of decisions they have to make regarding whether to perform the task, or whether to perform it in the prescribed manner, and afterwards, evaluate whether the experience is worthwhile and make them better language learners. The fact that some of the learners are able to use terminology which are normally used by teachers in the field reflect that they have moved closer to the teachers in terms of their beliefs about language learning. As Dickinson notes, "we teach advanced students some of those techniques we, as teachers, use so that they can take a much more important part in directing their own learning." (Dickinson 1974, cited in Dickinson 1989)

Obviously, building self-access tasks into a taught course is not a remedy for all problems. The teacher has to be very sensitive to learner preparedness and learner feelings towards self-access learning and especially to self-directed learning. Adequate help and support have to be made available, especially at the initial stage of implementation. Learner needs -- linguistic, strategic and affective -- have all to be taken into consideration. The learning style and preferences of learners also influence the performance of the tasks. The most valuable lesson to learn from this course so far is that the amount and the difficulty of the tasks have to be monitored. Some idea of the proficiency of the learners would be very helpful.

At the time of writing, the year course has gone into the second semester. The focus for the rest of the course is first to open them to a variety of real world contexts where language would be used in everyday social and professional life, so that they gain more exposure to the multiplicity of genres that operate in the community. Another direction would be to allow a greater degree of learner participation in the curriculum, not only in what they learn but also in how they learn. Such a democratic and critical approach to language learning is conducive to breeding truly autonomous learners who know why they are learning what they are learning and how they can best accomplish their goals.
References


Appendix I

LIST OF SELF-ACCESS TASKS UP TO UNIT 5
OF MODELS OF SPEECH AND WRITING 1

UNIT 1: EDITORIALS

Macro-skill: Writing
Micro-skills: Editorial Writing
Building coherence
Comparing factual and opinionative writing
Theme: Imported/Exported Labour
Sources: Soliven, M.V., The misunderstood Filipino, Asian magazine

PRE-SESSION SELF-ACCESS TASK:

1. To familiarize yourself with vocabulary used in newspapers which is one of the targets of this unit, select some tasks from Unit 31 of Activating Vocabulary (EN/A/F01.005/WKB.L1) in the Self Access centre by Mark Fletcher and Roger Hargreaves and work on them either individually or in pairs.

PRE-WRITING SELF-ACCESS TASKS:

1. Work on Units 44-46 in Mark Harrison's Word Perfect: Vocabulary for Fluency (EN/A/F01.003/TXT.L3) in the Self-Access centre in order to learn more expressions for opinionative language.
2. Do Exercise 27 (pp. 52-53) of Writing as a Personal Product (EN/A/E02.001/TXT.L2) by Laura Donahue Latulippe in the Self-Access Centre in order to decide on the audience you are writing for.
3. 'To learn more about techniques of persuasion like 'acknowledging the opposition', 'appealing to emotion' and 'appealing to authority', read pp. 248-260 of Mary Jane Schenck's Read, Write, Revise (EN/A/E01.003/TXT.14) in the Self-Access centre.

* Only self-access tasks are presented here; the non self-access tasks are omitted.

POST-SESSION SELF-ACCESS TASK:

1. If you have difficulty following the arguments in the second half of 'Working Wonders', this may be due to unfamiliarity with English modal verbs which are used to express attitudes and opinions like certainty and suggestion. You may have noticed that the writer does not use the modal verb 'should' which is much preferred by Hong Kong students when they express opinions. For a revision in the use of modal verbs, go to the section on
UNIT 2: FILM REVIEWS

Macro Skills : Listening and Speaking
Focus : Watching and Commenting on 'Dead Poets Society'

INTRODUCTION

'Dead Poets Society' is a story about challenging tradition and self-consciousness. Set in the fifties in the U.S., it is about how a radical teacher guides his students through poetry and romantic vision to a journey which is destined to change their fate.

Without official disapproval, the students form the Dead Poets Society and congregate in the woods in secret at dead of night. Each student develops a different pathway. One starts an acting career, another finds a voice, and yet another becomes a nonconformist. The investigation which inevitably follows results in the teacher's dismissal and sets actions rolling.

SELF-ACCESS TASKS

Perform ALL these tasks in your own time before you come to class next time.

1. Watch the movie Dead Poets Society in the Self-Access Centre. You may have to watch more than once to gain enough understanding about the movie.
2. In groups of 4 or 5, retell the story (in English as much as possible) and jot down the major developments of the story.
3. Discuss the following points about the film with your fellow students:
   a. Do you like the movie?
   b. Which character do you like best?
   c. Which character do you dislike most?
   d. What is the message/meaning behind the story?
   e. What kind of information about American society and American education did you get from the movie?
   f. Do you think such a story might happen in the Hong Kong setting? Why or why not?
   g. The movie is becoming a classic. Why do you think this is the case?
   h. How difficult did you find the English used in the movie?
   i. How did you overcome the difficulties?
   j. What genre does this movie belong to? Explain your answer.

4. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

A lot of devices are used to create a historical setting in films. The following clues are used in Dead Poets Society to indicate the historical setting. Write down what you see against
each item with your friends.

Buildings
Costume
People
Speech
Social Mores
Entertainment
Vehicles

5. As the agent of change, the teacher affects the students' development in different ways. Not all the students are able to return to their former selves. Record descriptions of the students in the table below.

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**WRITING TASK**

Macro Skill : Writing
Focus : Writing Film Reviews
Objective : To see how well you can apply the knowledge you have gained in this unit to write film reviews.

1. In groups of 4 or 5, watch a movie of your choice. (You can watch the same movie individually).
2. With your partners, retell the story (in English as much as possible) and jot down the main points of the story.
3. Comment on the film freely using the points identified in Question 3 of Worksheet A/W123.
4. In about 500 words, write an individual review of the movie similar to 'A Poetic Awakening' to be published in the 'Saturday Review' of the South China Morning Post.

**UNIT 3: ORAL PRESENTATION**

Macro Skills : Listening and Oral Presentation
Macro Skills : Information Sequencing, Transcription, Discourse Features of Oral Presentations

**TASK B: SELF-ACCESS TASK**

Form groups of seven. Each member will transcribe one section of the lecture.

You can ask the Self-Access Centre staff for a copy of the audio cassette of the lecture and transcribe it there.

Put in the appropriate punctuation marks where it is grammatically correct to do so. Do not worry about hesitations like 'mm', 'eh' etc.

Cross-check each other's transcription and then compile a complete transcription. This should be easy if you use the same word processing programme to type it.

For groups with fewer than seven members, leave out the remaining sections.

The transcription constitutes 3 marks for your unit assessment.

**UNIT 4: PUBLIC INFORMATION DOCUMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro Skills</th>
<th>Reading and Writing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Linguistic and Discourse Features of Public Information Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>To analyze and compare the mentioned features in two documents on related topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Guangdong Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station</em></td>
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<tr>
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<td><em>Contingency Plan</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TASK I (SELF-ACCESS TASK)**

Collect pamphlets from different authorities. Pool your pamphlets together and compare them in groups of three or four. Consider these features:

1. author and publisher,
2. purpose and audience,
3. information and content,
4. language, and
5. design and layout.

Bring the pamphlets back to the class and briefly report your observations.
UNIT 5: NARRATION I

SELF-ACCESS TASKS:

1. After attending the lecture analysing the treatment of light and sound effects and symbolism in this scene. Watch the movie *Joy Luck Club* at the Self-Access Centre with a few fellow students. Compare and contrast the same scene in the book and the film.

2. Analyse another scene in the book on your own and do the same comparison. Report on class at the end of this cycle.

3. Transcribe the Putonghua used in the film "Who is this ghost? ... Never able to lift up her head." Would you say that the E-C reverse translation is appropriate? Present your finding to the class in a group, using transparencies and video if necessary.
Appendix II

SELF-ACCESS ACTIVITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please refer to the worksheets of the relevant units when answering the questions. Your comments are very important for the design of a successful course.

How difficult do you find the following self-directed tasks you have undertaken in the course so far? (Difficulty: 1 very easy, 2 quite easy, 3 not difficult, 4 quite difficult, 5 very difficult, 0 you did not do the task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Difficulty Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
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<td>12. Film Review</td>
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</table>
How useful do you find these tasks in A. improving your study skills, B. improving your English and C. to your future career?
(1 very useful, 2 quite useful, 3 not quite useful, 4 not useful at all, 0 you did not do the task)

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</table>
61. comparing the scene in the book and in the movie
62. analyzing another scene
63. transcribing the Putonghua script
64. critiquing the translation

How interesting do you find these activities?
(1 very interesting, 2 quite interesting, 3 neutral, 4 quite uninteresting, 5 very uninteresting, 0 you did not do the task)

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<th>Unit</th>
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<th>Interest</th>
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| Public Information | post-session SA task |          |
| 88.                | collecting the pamphlets    |          |
| 89.                | analyzing the pamphlets     |          |
| 90.                | designing the pamphlets     |          |
| 91.                | looking for the tape        |          |
| 92.                | watching the film           |          |
comparing the scene in the book and in the movie
analyzing another scene
transcribing the Putonghua script
critiquing the translation

How much help did you receive from either the Self-Access Centre staff, teachers, fellow students etc. in performing these tasks? (1 a lot of help, 2 a little help, 3 no help at all)

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Amount of Help</th>
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</table>
comparing the scene in the book and in the movie
analyzing another scene
transcribing the Putonghua script
critiquing the translation

If you had received help in performing the self-access activities, how helpful did you find these people? (1 very helpful, 2 quite helpful, 3 not helpful, 4 you did not ask them for help)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Helpfulness</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>the SAC secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAC student helpers</td>
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<tr>
<td>the course lecturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>other teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>fellow students</td>
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<tr>
<td>others (Specify)</td>
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Did you work individually, in a pair or in a group in performing the activities? (1 individually, 2 in a pair, 3 in a group)

<table>
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<th>Task</th>
<th>Work Format</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Working on the task</td>
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<td>pre-session SA tasks</td>
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<td>borrowing the tape</td>
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<td>viewing the movie</td>
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<td>retelling the story</td>
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<td>discussing the movie</td>
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<td>analyzing the historical context</td>
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<td>analyzing the characters</td>
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<td>post-session SA task</td>
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<td>choosing a movie</td>
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<td>watching it</td>
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<td>retelling the story</td>
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<td>commenting on the film</td>
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</table>
156. Oral Presentation writing the review
157. Oral Presentation writing your part of the transcription
158. Public Information editing the group's overall transcription
159. Public Information post-session SA task collecting the pamphlets
160. Public Information analyzing the pamphlets
designing the pamphlets
161. narration  looking for the tape
162. narration  watching the film
163. narration  comparing the scene in the book and in the movie
164. narration  analyzing another scene
165. narration  transcribing the Putonghua script
critiquing the translation
166. narration

How well did you enjoy working in these forms? (1 very much, 2 a little, 3 neutral, 4 not at all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Level of Enjoyment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>169. Individually</td>
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<tr>
<td>170. In a pair</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>171. In a group</td>
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<tr>
<td>172. Do you think marks should be given to self-access tasks? (Tick the answer.)</td>
<td>Yes     No</td>
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<tr>
<td>173. Give reasons for your answer.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How significant do you regard these benefits one can derive from self-access activities? (1 very significant, 2 quite significant, 3 not very significant, 4 not significant at all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>174. extending the learning scope outside class</td>
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<td>175. enriching the variety of activities</td>
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<td>176. using language realistically</td>
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<tr>
<td>177. engaging in real life activities</td>
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<td>178. building up confidence</td>
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<td>179. building up autonomy from teacher</td>
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<td>180. learning to work with others</td>
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<td>181. learning how to learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>182. preparing for independent learning in future</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>183. preparing for future career</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>184. finding out where resources are</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please suggest types of self-access activities you would like for the rest of this course.

Please give your overall comments on the self-access activities you have had in this course.

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire.
Linking SAC Tasks to Classroom Activities

Andrew Barrett
British Council Language Centre
Malaysia

Abstract

Linking core elements in classroom and SAC activities to provide for more controlled learning, choosing appropriate materials and exploiting them in the most beneficial way to the learning process, and providing more guidance (and less instruction) for the student, leading to greater learner autonomy.

Why must there be a link?

Students who are able to define what they need to know in order to complete as course of study ("natural language learners") can progress at their own pace.

Where there is no fixed syllabus - free learning
d- and courses can be individually defined on a 1:1 basis, this presents no problem.

Most students however expect and prefer to follow a fixed/prescriptive plan - controlled learning. As Gill Sturtridge points out,

"For many students the idea that they can learn without a teacher is an alien one..."

That is to say that we as teachers cannot expect students to teach themselves, neither can we expect them to produce study plans or to monitor their own study without some input in the form of learner training.

But does this always work? With a fixed syllabus, students can see where they are and can progress in clearly marked steps, but it does not leave room for them to be inquisitive/curious or experimental with the language (again at their own speed), and therefore why have a plethora of material in SAC when they could be completing prescribed exercises at home?

---

1 Free Learning: the students' needs prescribe the core elements in the course which are free to change at any time; usually restricted to 1:1 teaching.
2 Controlled Learning: the syllabus is fixed and follows a prescribed course outline which must be adhered to; usually grammar- or skills-based.
Controlled Learning - how can the teacher check that work done outside the classroom maintains the link?

I shall now be comparing SAC programmes in two British Council teaching centres, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Guayaquil, Ecuador.

In Kuala Lumpur students are given a self-study programme which links specific tasks in SAC to specific units in the particular course book used in class.

In Guayaquil a "SAC Menu" is given whereby tasks covering the core elements of each course are and may be completed in any order.

Why the difference? The Kuala Lumpur centre uses course books, whereas the Guayaquil centre has no restrictions on material provided that it is, of course, appropriate regarding course level and includes the core elements of grammar, vocabulary, function, etc. as defined in the syllabus. Also the points may be taught in any order. Therefore the teacher has to constantly refer to particular material in SAC.

Students in Guayaquil however do not feel so restricted and are given more responsibility for their own learning, even though they may not be used to this.

When it comes to checking on study outside the classroom, Kuala Lumpur simply has a space at the side of each section on the programme to be signed and dated by the SAC Officer once the task has been completed. Guayaquil has a separate sheet for students to record what they have studied, and also to add their comments on the tasks (i.e. whether they found it useful, difficult, interesting etc.). This obviously means more work for the teacher and leaves room for "syllabus error" on the part of the student as the menu does not show which point of grammar etc. will be studied and in which order, and as said before, the points may indeed be covered by the teacher in any order.

Available space is one factor in the difference between the two systems, as Guayaquil is fortunate enough to be able to devote one whole level of the building to its SAC, and therefore to house much more material for the students to pick and choose from. Kuala Lumpur restricts shelf space to the most appropriate material.

There is also the "cultural difference" to be taken into account; in Malaysia students are used to being instructed rather than guided and are therefore already used to a more prescriptive system. This must not be taken as a criticism, rather as underlining the fact that as with any new system in whatever field, new ideas cannot simply be imposed with no regard to the existing system. A gradual introduction of anything new is called for.
Providing more guidance and less instruction

SAC MENUS

As already said, the menus currently in use in the British Council Guayaquil centre are less restrictive in the sense that they are not strictly tied to classroom exercises. Students can also study the suggested material in any order. In the BCLC Kuala Lumpur Students know what they are expected to be looking at when and thus feel more secure.

Therefore at face value it would seem that the KL system relies more on instruction, yet it also means that students don't have to keep asking if they are doing "the right thing" - a timesaving device for both students and teachers alike. It could also be argued that optimum guidance has been achieved here, i.e. "Here's a guide book with all you need to know."

So what about visible guidance?

SAC Doctors and the role of the supervisor

In Guayaquil a new service was suggested - that of SAC Doctor. A teacher would spend an hour in the SAC twice a week during peak usage times to answer any questions that the students might have.

The advantages of this was that without realising it themselves, the students were being monitored, and the Doctor was there to offer guidance when required (sometimes by going from student to student and asking if any help was required).

The main disadvantage was that if the duty Doctor was the student's own class teacher, they were reluctant to ask for help as they felt it would be similar to asking the same question over and over again in class.

The fact that the Doctor may have to discuss a certain point already studied in class could be seen as repetition of instruction in the eyes of the student, but with limited personnel resources, there is no solution to this problem.

The latest news from Guayaquil on this subject is that the service is greatly appreciated by the students. Not only does it offer them greater value for money, but it also demonstrates a sincere interest on the part of the academic staff in their studies.

However, the Doctor should not be confused with the Supervisor/SAC Officer, whose role in the SAC should remain a purely administrative one. That is to say that the Supervisor cannot be expected to answer academic questions from the students. In some centres the Supervisor may be a high-level student (who may be offered a free course in return for a certain number of hours' work in the SAC), and is in fact able to offer advice based on his/her own experience. This leads to the problem of students expecting too
much from him/her. Therefore the roles of SAC personnel must be made clear to the students from the word go.

Choosing appropriate materials

Just how far does SAC work reinforce the point introduced in class?

In a typical scenario, the Present Perfect is introduced, the rules of usage examined, practice undertaken in class, and the students sent off to do more exercises from the teacher's favourite grammar book. Why?

"Remember that repetition and practice are the foundation stones of language learning."

But does this type of repetition really help the student to retain the rules and use the point accurately? According to Byrne, not as much as it is believed:

"...it is a common experience for students to repeat dozens of sentences of a certain type and yet be unable to produce the same type of sentence for themselves. These procedures seem to leave the learners where they started off; at the level of repetition."

So it would seem that repetitive exercises amount to nothing more than ineffectual brainwashing, but students do still need to practise the language firstly in a controlled environment, then in the real world and by trial and error get the feeling of the language.

Failing this they have the next best thing - SAC.

Nowadays we are fortunate in having a sizeable amount of up-to-date material at our disposal for practising all four skills, in printed format as well as on computer. Interactive CD-roms are as near to natural conversation as technology will allow, and in the near future we could be witnessing the introduction of virtual reality by way of holograms.

The environment is still artificial, but as near to reality as possible. Therefore it can be said that students are not simply being "instructed" as long as materials are realistic.

When can SAC materials not replace a native speaker?

A book on pronunciation gives a student a typical sentence and instructs them to repeat it. How can a book correct any errors and guide the student towards correction?

Students need detailed material showing them a variety of techniques (for a variety of learners) and not simply instructing them to repeat. Material may be appropriate to the course, but it also has to be appropriate to the learning process in order to be effective. Part of this process demands the presence of a native speaker giving demonstrations and individual correction.

The obvious solution would be to design one's own material, specifically tailored to the students' needs which can be more closely linked to classwork. However, this again is repetition rather than practice.
Learner Preparation

Leslie Dickinson
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Abstract

The intention of this talk is to give an overview of learner training which will attempt to analyze the concept into its component parts and provide a context for the various talks on learner and teacher preparation which follow.

Many people find the idea of learner preparation for language learning very strange because they assume that it is the teacher's job to guide learners in what they learn, when, and how they learn. Language teacher training emphasizes TEACHING METHODOLOGY, which is concerned with the teacher as the central figure, and it is concerned with what the teacher does. In our concern for teaching methodology, we sometimes lose sight of the learner. The development of concern with learner centred methodologies and the interest some people have in learning autonomy or learning independence has begun to shift the focus on to the learner. No one, so far as I know, has yet suggested that language teaching should develop an area called learning methodology, but, in fact, this is what is happening in the profession.

The central thrust of learning methodology is NOT TO dispense with teaching methodology (or indeed teachers) but to balance it and enhance it by looking for answers to the question "HOW CAN WE BEST HELP OUR STUDENTS TO LEARN HOW TO LEARN?"

Learning Methodology

Learning methodology is still in its infancy - indeed, it is so small that it has not yet got a proper name - merely a set of nick-names. One of these, which looks like sticking - is Learner Training. Some people dislike the idea of training, seeing in the term an emphasis on mechanical skills. Training seems to emphasize "hands on" experience - learning how to do something by practising it; giving people a variety of techniques for doing something. This seems to be what we are concerned with in helping people to LEARN HOW TO LEARN, so the name Learner Training seems appropriate.

Learner Training, in the sense of training learners in language learning techniques is, I believe, valuable for all learners, no matter in what circumstances they are learning. However, when learners are being introduced to self-access learning as a preparation for learning independence, learner training with its emphasis on TECHNIQUES is not enough; there is a need to include more than techniques of language learning. When we
are trying to prepare learners for greater learning independence, then part of that
preparation must be PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

Psychological Preparation

Let us begin by looking at a conceptual map of LEARNER PREPARATION. As you
can see, Learner preparation divides into two areas METHODOLOGICAL
PREPARATION and PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION: a distinction originally
made by Henri Holec. I will deal with Psychological preparation first.

Developing greater learning independence is quite often a new and threatening idea to
language learners. The model of learning espoused by many learners is one with the
teacher at the centre, directing the learners and controlling their learning. However, if
learners believe that learning is ONLY possible when it is directed by a teacher, then
trying to get them to consider the idea of taking on responsibility for their own learning
can be very difficult. So we have a need for PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION. As
you can see from the conceptual map, I have divided it into three areas.

1. Changing Attitudes

As I said in the Introduction to the Seminar, this is the key area for both learners and
teachers. If the learner's model of language learning is one in which the learner sees
himself as continually and correctly subject to the teacher's direction, then he is unlikely
to embrace learning independence with joy and confidence.

Many believe that an attitude of subjugation to the teacher's direction is valid and should
be accepted. It is certainly valid to have such an attitude, but it may also prevent success
in language learning. I see a conflict - a tension - between the need to become an
autonomous user of the target language, and being teacher dependent. I also believe
that independent learning is much more effective- partly because of the correspondence
between learning independence and being an autonomous user, but also because of the
relation between effective learning and the enhancement of motivation.

Changing Attitudes is a key requirement of Psychological Preparation. This might be
achieved through persuading the learner to recognise the legitimacy of learning
independence, its feasibility and its effectiveness; and also persuading her that all this
can be achieved in co-operation with the teacher. This is not something that can be
achieved in a one week induction course in self access learning. Like all attitude change
-it requires slow development over time.

2. Developing Confidence.

The learner must have confidence in her ability to undertake greater responsibility as a
learner - to be in control of her learning. Probably the most successful way to achieve
this is successful experience of Self Access learning - which needs to be carefully
managed.
3. Developing self-esteem as a learner

Self-esteem is the belief that you are, or have the ability to become, a good, effective, learner and that you feel equal to others in your class. Related to this is the belief that you are in control of your own learning, and that if you are not succeeding it is because of factors like not working hard enough, using the wrong strategies and so on.

Methodological Preparation

Let's look again at the conceptual map and focus on Methodological Preparation. This is concerned essentially with getting the SKILLS and the KNOWLEDGE required to undertake greater learning independence. I will deal quite briefly with Strategy Training since this is an area that Lum Yoke Lin will talk about in some detail; perhaps it will be enough to remind you of what I said in my Introduction to the Seminar: cognitive strategies are essentially learning techniques, whereas metacognitive strategies are concerned with managing learning.

Let us look at some examples of learner training in practice, and then draw from them a broader description of learner training. (I have taken an extract from my monograph on Learner Training for this purpose - see Dickinson 1992)

A teacher, who has recently taken over a class in their 4th year of English, asks them about the ways they have of memorising vocabulary so that they can recall required words when they want them. She is not surprised to discover that only a few members of the class have any systematic method of vocabulary learning, and that those who do have use a simple vocabulary notebook in which new foreign language words are listed alphabetically with their mother tongue equivalent (s) written opposite.

She praises the pupils who have some system, and recommends to all the pupils that they should adopt a way of learning vocabulary which suits them. She says that she will spend fifteen minutes once a week describing some ways of learning vocabulary. She then describes how, for some important words, pupils can create a semantic network to which they can add as they discover suitable words. (Supply example).

There are several points about learner training that we can extract from this example. Firstly, the teacher indicates that she values any device or strategy which pupils' adopt to increase their learning. Secondly, she supplies alternative strategies, and recognises that different individuals may favour different strategies. Thirdly, she recommends that pupils should choose the strategy which suits them best - recognising, though not actually saying - that some people may have to try out several before they can decide on the best one. Perhaps most importantly, this teacher is involved in learner training. She is doing something that language teachers have done for many years, and are doing throughout the world without recognising that they are engaged in learner training. Whatever definition of learner training we end up with, it will have to recognise that this has long been regarded as the teacher's job. But two things are new; firstly, the
systematising of this aspect of the job is new, and secondly, the recognition of the importance of making the learner more independent.

A teacher at an adult evening class for beginners is suggesting to the participants that they should do a homework exercise with a partner rather than alone. The exercise is to memorise a short dialogue which they will use in class in preparation for a role play. The teacher suggests that the pairs can listen to one another, prompt one another and monitor the other's accuracy, particularly in pronunciation. There is a certain amount of uneasiness among the participants at this and they raise their worries in a class discussion. The commonest worry is that the partner's English pronunciation might be no better or even worse than the speaker's. Another worry which emerges is the embarrassment of exposing one's language deficiencies to another - even (or maybe, particularly) a friend. The teacher accepts these as genuine concerns, but points out that even though the partner's English pronunciation might be worse, monitoring another is easier than self-monitoring, and in any case, the weaker partner might learn something in listening to and monitoring the stronger.

The embarrassment of practising with a single individual turns out to be the more major worry. One of the participants wonders why it is that they should feel more worried about making mistakes in speaking the foreign language than they do, for example, in making mistakes in mathematics. Another reflects that her baby makes lots of mistakes in speaking, but no one laughs at him.

The teacher takes the opportunity to talk about the close relationship of one's language with one's feelings of being adult, of one's self-esteem, and how as a beginner in a foreign language one is reduced to a kind of baby state and feelings like self-esteem are put on the line. The discussion then moves on to whether different people react in different ways to these challenges; whether there is some relationship between feelings of inhibition and lack of success in learning to speak a foreign language, whether quick learners are those that are willing to take every opportunity to try out the foreign language, and are somehow able to suppress the feelings of embarrassment. Every one in the class ends up being willing to practice the dialogue with a partner.

What additional notions about learner training can we extract from this example? Firstly, the teacher is helping the learners to organise their learning in a slightly different way by suggesting that they practise with a friend or "study-buddy". This is an aspect of the management of learning, and once again, the teacher is trying to introduce a little more independence into the student's learning by suggesting that peers - as well as the teacher herself - are useful for help with monitoring accuracy.

A second aspect of learner training is the introduction of information about factors which help or hinder language learning. The discussion about being made to feel infantile, and about the damage to self-esteem of struggling to utter in a new foreign language is, of course well known to language teachers and researchers, but not necessarily known at all to naive language learners. The sharing with language learners of hypotheses and experiences related to language learning can be very helpful to them in helping them understand their own reactions to the learning process.

The same group of students as in the last example have a session every three months or so in which they re-assess their objectives for language learning, and check whether the course that they are following is continuing to meet their objectives. This all sounds rather technical for language learners, so let's look at what actually happens.
When they first met as a class the teacher got them in groups to think through what their needs and wants were (needs - the essential objectives they had according to their reasons for learning the language; wants - additional objectives which they would like to cover but which may not be essential). They then reported back to the class as a whole, and together discussed what would be realistic to hope to achieve in the time available. Then, in small groups again - they examined the objectives of the course the teacher was proposing to use and identified the areas that were not covered so far as individuals' realistic objectives were concerned. The teacher suggested that those who wished to could follow up a small number of additional objectives in self-study, using materials that she could recommend for them.

At regular intervals during the course - about every three months or so - the teacher devotes a period to getting the participants to review these needs and wants and to check that the course and the additional work they have decided to undertake is still appropriate to meeting their objectives. Both the needs and wants change and are refined as learners become more informed about the language and language learning. Where it is necessary and appropriate (i.e. where it is applicable to a high proportion of the class) a course lesson will be dropped, or, more likely, the teacher agrees to supplement the course book with additional material covering other objectives or revising ones which have not been learned thoroughly. The participants will similarly review their own additional objectives.

The learner training going on here is concerned once again with the participants' control over the management of his learning. The teacher is guiding the participants to the realisation that any given course book will cover only a selection of possible objectives; that teacher and participants can take control of the material covered, and do not have to be slaves to the course book, and that it is possible for individual learners to pursue objectives which are additional to those being covered by the course. In addition, the participants are being helped to understand that decisions on objectives can be dynamic, that is they can change to respond to a developing understanding of one's wants and needs and of one's own language learning.

Another aspect of learner training is helping the learner to become involved in the assessment of his own learning.

Mrs. Pearson, the school teacher who introduced her pupils to vocabulary learning strategies, introduces another class to self-assessment. She points out to the class that they each make informal assessments of their own learning anyway. These might be quite different from the assessment that the teacher makes of the individual, but the important thing is that individuals actually make assessments of the degree to which they have mastered a particular objective, and sometimes they devise personal tests to confirm their assessments.

Mrs Pearson suggests the use of the self-made cloze tests as a (fairly crude) way of getting an estimate of their reading level. In a class discussion on self-testing a number of the pupils say that they use books of tests to test things like vocabulary and grammatical structure.

Many teachers and other experienced language learners believe that involvement of the learner in assessing his own learning is an essential learning skill if they are to be efficient and effective language learners. Consequently, the encouragement of self-assessment is an important factor in improving the efficiency of learning.

The final example of learner training describes a teacher assisting learners to become more familiar with the way the target language sounds.
Mrs Pearson has a class who are just beginning their study of French. She wants to help them to become more aware of French pronunciation and how it differs from English, and she wants to give them an early experience of trying to speak with a French pronunciation. She thinks that these things are important, and will have useful pay off later in the learners' French course, so she is prepared to spend at least two periods on these activities.

She begins the activity by showing the class a video recording of a French Television advertisement for a product which is also frequently advertised on British television. Her intention is to get the class to listen to French, and to give them an early experience of French, since this is what they expect French lessons to be about, and she does not want to damage motivation. She gets the class to guess what the individuals in the advertisement are saying, using situational clues and the classes' knowledge of the British advertisement. She then tells them that she wants them to learn to speak French like the people on the advertisement, but first she wants them to listen to the way English is spoken. She now shows two segments from videos of people speaking English with regional accents. She uses the first, which is of people speaking English with a northern accent, to get discussion going about speech sounds, and how the vowel sounds of the people on the video differ from the local vowel sounds. Her purposes include getting the pupils to listen carefully for speech sounds, and establishing a vocabulary with which to talk about them. Her second video clip is of people speaking with a Welsh accent. This time she gets the pupils to describe the speech "noises", that is, the rise and fall of the voice, and the pattern of stresses over segments of the utterances. Here her purpose is to draw attention to speech rhythms which are different from the ones which the pupils are used to in their local accent, and again to establish a vocabulary for talking about rhythm and intonation.

The next time Mrs Pearson meets the class, she shows them a segment of a video of someone speaking English with a French accent. Together, she and the class analyse in what ways the accent differs from the English which the pupils are familiar with. They use the descriptive terms, and use their experience of analysing speech, established in the earlier exercises. Then the pupils try to imitate the French accent, though speaking English, in a simple role play. The final activity is to return to the video of the French advertisement and compare the sounds and rhythms of the French accent in English with the speakers' speech sounds and speech tunes in French. She then has an exercise in simple spoken French for the pupils to try out.

Mrs Pearson is concerned with language awareness - in particular, of course, with awareness of the spoken language. Her objectives include establishing a foundation for the pupils learning French pronunciation, to begin the process of "ear training", and to help the pupils to begin to build a vocabulary for talking about pronunciation. Her approach is to try to achieve her objectives through using a good deal of English material. In this way, she can focus on things like establishing a vocabulary to talk about accents, and to sensitise the learners to differences in speech sounds using a familiar language. The principle her approach illustrates is that of minimizing learning difficulties in order to focus more precisely on the current objectives.

The examples of learner training illustrated above have included training in learning techniques, (cognitive strategies in the current jargon); in the first example the learners' awareness of learning techniques was raised, and an example of a particular technique was given. Secondly, there was an example of a social strategy - working with someone else on language exercises (example 2); related to this was an illustration of awareness raising of affective factors in language learning and how they can inhibit learning and practice. We then saw in example 3 how learner training might be concerned with the learner's own language needs and how it was legitimate for learners to monitor the course and evaluate the degree to which the course objectives matched their own needs.
Learner training might also be concerned with self assessment; example 4 was concerned with raising awareness of self assessment and giving an example of a simple self assessment technique. Finally, example 5 was of learner training concerned with language awareness - in this case, awareness of accent, and the establishment of a vocabulary for talking about accent.

**Metacognitive Knowledge**

We now return to the conceptual map and consider Metacognitive Knowledge. Although there is quite a lot written about strategy training (or learner training in the sense of developing learning and management techniques) there is a great deal less about metacognitive knowledge. I have divided metacognitive knowledge into two parts: Learning awareness and Language awareness. Let's begin by looking at learning awareness.

**Language Learning Awareness**

The argument for teaching Language Learning Awareness is that if naive learners know about the kinds of things that affect everyone learning a foreign language then they are less likely to become discouraged - forewarned is forearmed. If we can also provide learners with strategies for overcoming these problems, then we are likely to be giving them significant help in their language learning. A new language learner may think that she is alone in feeling embarrassed when she tries to speak the foreign language; she is unlikely to understand why she makes errors, nor be able to judge the importance or triviality of the errors she does make, and so she may become frustrated and discouraged. If she learns possible reasons for the embarrassment, error making and so on, and if she learns that most other people feel and behave in a similar way when beginning to learn a language, then she may feel less discouraged.

What kinds of things might we deal with in Language Learning Awareness. There are many possibilities - three are:

- mother tongue interference;
- translation; and
- affective factors.

**Mother Tongue Interference**

All learners are likely to suffer from interference and it may be helpful for naive learners to know that this will happen.

**Information about Translation**

Naiman et al (1978) report that "Only 26% (of their respondents) considered (translating into the mother tongue) useless or a hindrance in the assimilation of the new language. The rest generally considered translating useful to a certain extent. Some interviewees
felt that translation could be used as a "checking tool" for comprehension, especially at the beginners' level in a formal learning situation" (p.12)

**Information about Affective Factors**

Good learners are not immune to negative affective feelings. Naiman et al (1978) report that 85% had experienced some or all of the feelings of *discouragement, frustration, impatience* and or *confusion* related to the language learning task.

About half of the respondents experienced *inhibition* and *embarrassment* and eight learners had experienced helplessness from time to time when they had to communicate in the foreign language. Some of the respondents found communicating with fellow students less inhibiting than with native speakers. Several of the learners consciously accepted these feelings, deciding not to let it upset them when they made mistakes and people laughed at them.

**Awareness of Oneself as a Learner**

A useful pre-requisite to improving your techniques as a learner, or maximising the effectiveness of your techniques, is to become consciously aware of what techniques you are using. This is a little like serious golf players having video recordings of their golf swing which they study to see how closely they match the recommended movements. How do you help your learners to become aware of their learning techniques? There are a number of questionnaires published in books about language learning strategies and styles, and Lum Yoke Lin is hoping to find time to describe some to you. (See Lum Yoke Lin's paper in this volume.) In addition, group and class discussions about how particular tasks were tackled, what strategies people used, helps to create awareness of one's own learning and, of course, gives one information about alternatives.

**Language Awareness**

Language awareness is knowledge about the language you are studying, and, indeed, about language in general. The problem with language awareness is that it sounds like "grammar", and indeed, it is quite often discussed in those terms. There is a great deal more that one might know about a language than parts of its syntax, and Richard Watson Todd will tell us some of it this afternoon. (see Richard Watson Todd's paper in this volume.) Language learners probably need to know a certain amount about the grammar of the language they are studying, but that is part of the usual language course anyway. Language awareness is knowledge of language, or THE language being studied, beyond the ordinary grammar. Mother tongue English speakers, for example, may take a more generous view of the fact that tones in Thai make a difference in meaning if it pointed out to them that word stress in English also changes meaning. Thus we have REfuse and reFUSE, CONtract and conTRACT, and the difference between A LIGHThouse keeper and a light HOUSE keeper. Similarly, an understanding of phonological concepts like the difference between plosive and non-plosive, the recognition that English has some sounds that occur in the middle and end of words for example /ng/ as in /sing/ - which
occur at the front of words in other languages, can make learning a language a little easier, and perhaps more interesting.

End-Note

Many of the topics touched on here are covered in detail in following papers in these proceedings. My purpose was to offer a framework showing the close relationship among concepts which may appear discrete.

References


LEARNER PREPARATION

METHODOLOGICAL PREPARATION

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

LEARNER TRAINING

CHANGING ATTITUDES

DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM AS A LEARNER

STRATEGY TRAINING

METACOGNITIVE KNOWLEDGE

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

LEARNING AWARENESS

LANGUAGE AWARENESS

DIRECTLY RELATED TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

AWARENESS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING POSSIBILITIES

AWARENESS OF ONESELF AS A LEARNER

KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE STRUCTURE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE L.I.
DEVELOPMENT OF
TASK
KNOWLEDGE

TASK PURPOSE

WHY SHOULD I DO THIS TASK?

WILL IT HELP ME TO ACQUIRE THE LANGUAGESKILLS I NEED?

TASK CLASSIFICATION

WILL I LEARN OR WILL I HAVE TO SHOW WHAT I KNOW?

WHAT KIND OF TASK IS THIS?

HAVE I DONE SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE?

TASK DEMANDS

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?

WHAT DO I HAVE TO KNOW, AND WHAT DO I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DO?

LEARN

- DOES THE TASK OFFER A CHALLENGE?
- IS THERE A LACK OF COMPETITION?
- IS SELF-EVALUATION ENCOURAGED?

SHOW

- IS THE EMPHASIS ON TESTING?
- IS THERE A CLIMATE OF INTERPERSONAL EVALUATION?
Learner Training for Self Access Learning: A Malaysian Perspective

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Abstract

The significance of learner training in English language teaching and renewed interest in this area has resulted not only in its integration into classroom teaching but also forms an integral part of learning in autonomous learning schemes. This paper attempts to trace the background and purpose of learner training with the aim of developing a curricular framework to help teacher trainees to learn independently in self access centres in Malaysian teacher training colleges. The different components of learner training together with training activities are briefly described to give facilitators better insight into learner training. These activities aim to raise learners' awareness on learner autonomy and to equip them with the skills to learn independently and effectively.

Background to Learner Training

Learner training grew as a result of two major changes in the field of education, namely, a change in researchers' focus and the introduction of more learner-centred learning schemes. Researchers in the '70s have shifted their focus from research on methods of teaching to research on learner characteristics that may have possible influence on their language acquisition. The other cause for renewed interest in learner training was a result of the introduction of more learner-centred approaches to learning. With the introduction of these approaches, there was a need for the systematising of learner training content and procedures. Consequently this diverse interest of different researchers has resulted in the development of different schools of thought for learner training. They are divided into two main schools of thought: the strategies group and the autonomous group.

The strategies group developed from language acquisition research and is basically concerned with research in learning strategies used by learners. They set out to discover what strategies the 'good' language learners used hoping that these strategies could be taught to the poor learners. The second school of thought, the proponents of autonomy, grew out of concern for developing learners for autonomous learning. They are concerned with training learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

A review of literature has indicated that there is a link between the two groups. The autonomous group advocates learning autonomy by giving the learners more responsibility and the acquisition of skills or know-how to carry out autonomous learning. These are the same skills promoted by the autonomous group to facilitate autonomy. This shows that the two schools complement each other in their work.
A significant revelation of the research findings from the strategies group is that there is a close relationship between the autonomous learner and the regulation of learning strategies. Wang and Peverly (1986) in their review of research findings on the use of learning strategies conclude:

"Effective learners are characterised as being cognitively and affectively active in the learning process. They are seen as being capable of learning independently and deliberately through identification, formulation and restructuring of goals; use of strategy planning; development and execution of plans; and engagement of self-monitoring."

Similarly, a number of other researchers and theorists in educational psychology for example, Paris and Byrne (1989), discover this: "the key feature that makes a learner autonomous seems to be the independent control of one's own cognitive as well as affective resources and activities." The conclusion is the autonomous learner is also an efficient and effective learner.

**What Is Learner Training?**

Learner training is used to mean different things to different people due to diverse interest. Sheerin (1991) uses the term learner support or learner development with reference to learner training in self-access learning. Some writers use the term to mean help learners acquire the characteristics and behaviour of the 'good language learner' (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naaman et al.1978). Though different writers may differ in what learner training means, they all seem to agree on the aim of learner training, namely, learner autonomy (Richardson, 1992). This is very evident in the definitions and aims of learner training expressed by Ellis and Sinclair (1989), Haligarten (1988), Holec (1985) and Dickinson (1988). For example, Ellis and Sinclair (1989) state that the aim of learner training is:

"to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the learning strategies that suit them best so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning. It focuses their attention on the process of learning so that the emphasis is on how to learn rather than on what to learn .... Learner training, therefore aims to provide learners with the alternatives from which they can make informed choices about what, how, why, when and where they learn."

It can be concluded that based on the above definition learner training aims to help learners to develop learner autonomy. It means training on the 'how' (or the processes) and decision making involved in learning rather than the what of learning.

In the Malaysia context, learner training would mean preparing our learners to learn effectively on their own or with minimal supervision in the self-access centres.

**Curricular Framework for Learner Training**

To incorporate a learner training programme in our autonomous learning scheme, we need to take into consideration the aim, content, procedures, materials, learners' and
teachers' roles in self-access learning. Once these areas are considered we have set the context for drawing a curricular framework for learner training.

In our discussion earlier, it is evident that to develop an autonomous and efficient learner it is imperative that the design of a learner training programme should take into consideration the work done by the two schools of thought, the autonomous group and the strategies group.

The proponents of Autonomy advocated that learner training be conducted at two main levels: psychological and methodological/technical (Holec 1985; Dickinson and Carver 1980; Dickinson 1987, 1992). The School of Strategies proposed that learners be trained in effective learning strategies. However, some of the strategies advocated by the Strategies group are already subsumed in methodological training proposed by the Autonomous group. Hence for our following discussion, the components of learner training will be grouped under two main headings: psychological preparation and methodological preparation.

Psychological Preparation

Psychological preparation aims to help learners change their attitude towards learning and adjust to new roles and responsibilities. In addition, it also aims at 'deconditioning the learner' (Holec 1985), weaning learners from dependence on others for their learning. Thus this involves building learners' confidence in their ability to learn independently and to accept responsibility for their own learning (Dickinson and Carver 1980; Dickinson 1987, 1992). Psychological preparation can be examined under three headings: personal role and responsibility, personal capability and learning style.

Personal Role and Responsibility

Learning in the traditional classroom is very much teacher-centred. Many learners have developed this tendency of relying on the teacher for knowledge. This has led to the misconception of the teacher as 'possessor of knowledge' and the learner the expected recipient waiting for the word of wisdom (Rogers 1983) and result in learners taking a passive role in the learning process. The traditional classroom does not provide learners with the opportunities to choose what, how and where or why they learn. In self-access learning, learners are now resuming control for their own learning. They have to take the responsibility in making their own decisions regarding learning. In psychological preparations learners are made aware of their new roles and responsibility.

One of the activities facilitators can work with learners is to discuss learners' previous learning experiences based on a task sheet containing statements of learning experiences, roles and responsibilities (for example 'Unfreezing', Appendix A). Discussion on learning experiences may raise learners' awareness about their learning experiences and free them of their misconceptions on language learning.
Personal Capability

In psychological preparation, learners are assisted in building their self-confidence. To build learners' confidence, the teacher needs to convince learners they are capable of learning independently and legitimize their learning independence (Dickinson 1992). They are also made aware that the autonomous learner is also an efficient learner. If the nature of self-access learning and how it is carried out are made known to learners, they feel more confident in venturing into this new mode of learning. To assist learners to find out their readiness and capability for self-directed learning, they can assess themselves by using a self-directed competencies list (Appendix B).

Learning Style

Learning style refers to an individual's natural, habitual and preferred ways of learning (Willing 1988). Knowledge on how different people learn, why people learn or the motivation behind learning may enhance learner awareness on learning. This may result in learners analyzing themselves and changing their approach to learning. In our self-access centres, learners bring with them concepts that have formed into beliefs about learning. For example, some learners believe that the best way to learn is through memorisation or rote learning. Some of these beliefs need to be brought to awareness, examined, evaluated, reconstructed and in some cases totally rejected (Wenden 1988). The understanding of learner style may help learners to be aware of the learning process which may lead to change of attitude towards learning.

One psychological preparation activity that is used to help learners find out their learning styles and also raise their awareness of the existence of other learning styles is through the use of a quiz containing questions regarding learning habits (Appendix C).

Methodological Preparation

Methodological preparation ((Dickinson and Carver 1980; Dickinson 1987, 1992) or technical training (Holec 1985) is essentially equipping learners with the tools or techniques central to autonomous learning. This component covers a vast area, ranging from planning to actual tackling of task and evaluating outcome. All these processes require different skills and strategies.

In self-access learning learners are required to perform the tasks listed below. Hence skills training in the following areas are required:

- diagnosing learning needs;
- formulation of learning objectives;
- identification of resources and materials;
- defining place, time and pace of learning;
- tackling of tasks found in self-access materials;
- self-evaluation and self-monitoring.

(adapted from Holec 1985)
Diagnosing Needs

Before learners start to use the materials in the self-access centre, it is advisable that they self-assess their level of proficiency and their needs. Ellis and Sinclair (1989), suggest that a learner assesses and prioritises his own needs using a chart (Appendix D).

In the Malaysian context, the self-assessment questionnaire devised by the National Self-Access Centre will serve the dual purpose of self-assessment and needs analysis. The list of skills and competencies found in the questionnaire is drawn from the trainees' English language proficiency syllabus. These skills form the competency profile (Hammond and Collins 1991) of the learners. Learners will rate themselves on a scale against the different skills and competencies.

Having identified needs learners next prioritise these needs. Once learning needs are prioritised, learners are taught to translate them into objectives. They can write the objectives in the form of statements, for example, to be able to pronounce /sh/ correctly by the end of the week. Learners can practise writing these needs with their peers.

Identifying Human and Material Resources for Learning

For identification of human and material resources, learners are not only using metacognitive strategies but social strategies as well. Learners need to identify and retrieve the relevant self-access materials from the jungle of materials. They should be aware that the self-access materials are especially designed for self-instruction, making learning more manageable.

Human resources are a rich source of information which learners can tap for self-access learning. Surveys by Brookfield and Thiel (cited in Brookfield 1985) have shown that many successful independent learners instead of choosing material resources for learning, they chose to use peers, experts and fellow learners as their sources of information and as their skill models.

Self-directed learning does not mean learning in isolation. Learners are encouraged to do cooperative learning. Research and experience have indicated that at some phases of self-directed learning learners need to have support in sharing insights or test of understanding (Taylor 1987, cited in Hammond and Collins 1991).

Defining Place, Time and Pace of Learning

In self-directed learning, learners decide when to study or how long to study. This allows them to adjust their learning rhythm to acquisition rhythm. Learners should be aware that language acquisition takes time. They need to allocate enough time to ensure that there is sufficient learning and practice. Although the self-access centre is the recommended place for learning learners could also continue learning in other places, for example, the library.
Tackling of Task

Learners spend a lot of time tackling tasks in the self-access centres. Although the materials are self-instructional, there is no guarantee that learners are able to tackle these tasks successfully or effectively. Learners need to employ various strategies to tackle these tasks. It is desirable that learners understand concepts related to task to enable them to do self-instructional work.

One activity which facilitators can practise with the learners for tackling task is the use of a checklist in the IDEAL procedure (Appendix E). It consists of a list of questions which learners will check as they tackle task.

Evaluation and Self-Assessment

Self-assessment here refers to learners assessing their present learning performance or outcome with the aim of obtaining feedback. Formative evaluation or most of the self-assessments carried out in self-access learning are concerned with self-monitoring. Learners self-assess and monitor themselves while tackling the tasks in the self-access materials or on completion of these tasks.

Learners may have difficulty setting their own criteria for self-assessment. However they can use 'standard' criteria that are used by teachers for testing or marking students' work. Ellis and Sinclair (1989) have samples of criteria which learners can apply for their self-assessment (Appendix F). Samples of learners' self-assessment can also be shown to learners to help them learn to self-assess (Appendix G).

Record keeping is another area which learners have to look into to enable them to have access to information on their performance. Some record cards are also known as self-assessment cards. The record card enables learners to have an overall picture of the formative self-assessments that have been carried out and recorded. From the information gathered learners can find out whether their learning objectives have been achieved and hence they plan their next course of action, for example to plan another learning contract or change learning objectives.

Contractual Learning

Many decisions made by learners in self-access learning need negotiation or counselling. They need to make decisions in:
- need analysis;
- formulating objectives;
- identification of resources;
- defining place, time of pace of learning;
- self-monitoring and assessment.
The making of the above decisions fits into the process of contractual learning found in Thompkins and McGraw's model (1988). Reproduced below is a model of contractual learning suggested by Thompkins and McGraw.

The figure below is a summary of the components of learner training.

**Conclusion**

Studies have shown that there is a close relationship between the autonomous learner and the effective learner. It is our contention here that learner training enables us to help our learners become autonomous based on the assumption that learners can be trained to be autonomous. It is hoped that through learner training together with practice of autonomy in the self-access centre, our learners are able to self-direct their learning and to carry on life-long education.

**References**


Dickinson, L. *Learner training.* (unpublished mimeo).


## Appendices

### UNFREEZING

Answer the following statements by ticking the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can only learn when I am taught by my teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have to depend on my teacher for my learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My teacher is only assisting me in my learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teacher is teaching content which is useful for the present but not the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. No course could ever teach me all I need to know about language and learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can only learn English in class or from my textbook.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have to learn myself. My teacher cannot learn for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Success in learning is mostly attributed to one's own effort.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Everybody learns the same way.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 What sort of language learner are you?

Score: 23-27 points Analytic?
You may feel it is very important to be as accurate as possible all the time. You probably prefer the sort of language learning where you need to think carefully: for example, when you are learning your mistakes, working out the meanings of words, practising pronunciation, etc. This is very often the sort of language learning you do in class or when you are studying alone.

You may be able to improve your language learning. Look at the following suggestions.

Suggestions
You could improve your fluency by:
- trying to speak more
  For example, try talking to English-speaking friends, tourists etc. as often as possible.
- not worrying too much about your mistakes
  Trying to be correct all the time is hard work and can stop you from communicating well. Although making mistakes is an important part of the learning process, don't always try to correct yourself immediately. Remember that the people you speak to won't be listening for your mistakes, but for what you are trying to say. After you have finished speaking, you can usually remember the mistakes you want to work on; this is a good time to make a note to yourself to do something about them.
- depending on yourself
  Outside the classroom you won't always have a dictionary or a teacher to help you, so don't be afraid to depend on yourself: you probably know more than you think.

Score: 14-22
A mixture?
You may find that you do not fall exactly into either of the categories marked Analytic or Relaxed. Many people are a mixture and learn in different ways at different times depending on the situation and what they are doing.

Suggestion
Look at the descriptions for Analytic and Relaxed. You may find that you are more similar to one than the other and this could help you to think about what areas of your learning you might improve. If you can't decide now, try to do this during your course.

Score: 0-8 points
Not sure?
Your score does not mean that you are not a good language learner. Perhaps this is the first time you have thought about the way you learn. To know more about this can be very useful in helping you to become a more effective language learner.

Suggestion
You can find out some general information about learning languages by looking at the descriptions marked Analytic and Relaxed. During your course, try to become more aware of the ways you learn. This can help you decide which areas of your learning you might improve.

Suggestions
- try finding more time to learn.
  You may need to spend more time thinking about and practising things like grammar, pronunciation, etc.
  Try to organise a regular time for learning.
- try being more self-critical
  You probably need to correct yourself more. You may not worry or even notice when you make mistakes, but if you try to become more aware of the mistakes you make it is easier to do something about them.

What sort of language learner are you?

Try the following quiz. Tick (/) your answers to the questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you get good results in grammar tests?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you have a good memory for new words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you hate making mistakes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In class, do you get irritated if mistakes are not corrected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is your pronunciation better when you read aloud than when you have a conversation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you wish you had more time to think before speaking?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did you enjoy being in a class?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you find it difficult to pick up more than two or three words of a new language when you speak a foreign language?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you like to learn new grammar rules, words, etc. by heart?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to calculate your score:

Score: 3 points for each Usually
2 points for each Sometimes
1 point for each Almost never or never
0 points for each Don’t know

Total score: [ ]

Now read the appropriate comments on the next page.
1.3 Why do you need or want to learn English?

1 Analysing your needs

Before you start your course, it is a good idea to think carefully about what you need or want English for. You could analyse your needs like this.

a) Decide on your main purpose for learning English e.g. for work.
b) Make a list of the specific situations where you need to use English e.g. speaking on the telephone, answering enquiries, giving information, writing business letters.
c) Decide which skills you need for each situation: extending vocabulary, dealing with grammar, listening, speaking, reading or writing.

You should then have a better idea about which skills you need to work on and be able to establish your priorities.

Here is an example of how one learner analysed his needs. Stig is a Swedish Youth Hostel warden who needs English for his work. He filled in the following chart. You will find a blank chart on page 109 in the Appendix, which you could use to analyse your own needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Hostel Reception Desk</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- welcoming new guests</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- giving you information</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- explaining regulations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- answering enquiries</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- putting up notices</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now turn to page 3 and complete your own self-assessment. Make your own decisions. After that continue with "prioritising your needs".
2 Prioritising your needs

How much do you know / can you do already?

Sig used an assessment scale from 1 to 5:
1 = this is the standard I would like to reach – my goal.
5 = I can do very little. I am a long way from my goal.
He considered each skill that he needed and circled the number that he felt
represented his position on the scale, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extending vocabulary</th>
<th>Dealing with grammar</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He was then able to see more clearly what he needed to improve most.
You will find a blank self-assessment scale in the Appendix (page 110) for
your own use.

What are your priorities?

Sig then gave each skill a priority rating from 1 to 6:
1 = highest priority
6 = lowest priority

I thought I needed to improve my speaking, but now I realise that it
is mainly vocabulary that is missing. My speaking is quite .
good, in fact. I also realise that I
need to concentrate on my
listening and writing. I can read
English quite well – I don’t need
to do it much, anyway.

Sig, Sweden

You could prioritise your own needs in the same way. If you do this, it will give
you a clearer idea about which skills / areas you need to concentrate on.

Self-assessment scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extending Vocabulary</th>
<th>Dealing with grammar</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Record of priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Priority rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extending vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with grammar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### NEEDS ANALYSIS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary (✓)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Learner's Book, C.U.P. 1989
IDEAL procedure for problem solving

| Identify | Identify and acknowledge the existence of a problem.  
Example: Am I having a problem now since I cannot go on with the task? |
| Define | Define the exact problem or the cause of the problem.  
What exactly is the cause of my problem?  
Examples:  
Is it due to lack of information?  
Is it because I was not paying attention?  
Is it because a particular word is affecting the meaning?  
Is it because the structure is too complex? |
| Explore | Explore all possible ways and activities of solving the problem.  
What are the possible activities or ways I can use to solve the problem I have identified?  
Examples:  
Check the text again for information I have missed.  
Check the words in the dictionary or find other clues in the text that may explain the meaning.  
Break the sentence into parts. |
| Act | Act on one of the possible solutions you have explored above. Work on it. |
| Look | Look at your performance. Evaluate it.  
Example:  
Did the activity or solution I acted on helped me solve the problem?  
If yes, continue with your task.  
If no, try the IDEAL cycle again. |

(adapted from Brandford et al., 1986)
1. **Points to assess: speaking**

Before you can assess your speaking, you must be clear about what aspect(s) you want to assess. Firstly, are you going to focus on your accuracy or your fluency or both? Your choice of points to assess will probably also depend on:
- your strong and weak points in speaking
- your personal level of satisfaction with the way you speak
- your long-term aims e.g. to pass an oral examination, to give speeches at conferences, to visit your cousin in Dallas.

**Focus on Accuracy**

This can be broken down into very specific points, from which you can select what you want to focus on. Here are some suggestions:

a) **Vocabulary,** for example:
   - correctness: Did I use the right words?
   - range: Did I use only a limited range or words?

b) **Grammar,** for example:
   - tenses: Did I use the right tense?
   - prepositions: Did I use the right prepositions?
   - question tags: Did I use the right question tags?

c) **Style:** Was I formal/informal enough? etc.

d) **Pronunciation of sounds:** Did I have a problem with a particular sound? e.g. /b/ as in think, /t/ as in ‘sit’, or /ð/ as in ‘doctor’.

e) **Stress:** Did I stress syllables/words correctly?

f) **Intonation:** How did I sound?
   - police?
   - friendly?
   - aggressive?
   - etc.

**Focus on Fluency**

In this case, you are not concerned with assessing the correctness of specific points, but with the general effect of your spoken English. Here are some suggestions:

a) **Meaning:** Was my meaning clear?

b) **Spontaneity:** Did I hesitate too much?
   - Was my speed slow and laboured?
4 Examples

This is how Erik and Sofia assessed their reading.

Name: Erik

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity/Situation</th>
<th>Points to assess</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1.88</td>
<td>Reading newspaper article on sport</td>
<td>Speed Understanding of main ideas (skimming)</td>
<td>2 mins. 50 secs. 00% of main ideas! Speed! Still trying to read every word!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name: Sofia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity/Situation</th>
<th>Points to assess</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.4.88</td>
<td>Reading User Guide for my home computer</td>
<td>Reading for detail</td>
<td>Not very good. Must learn some more computer vocabulary before I try again. Must find out more about how computers work in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Ellis and Sinclair, 1989a)
SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read these instructions carefully before you begin.

This questionnaire will allow you to tell us how good you think your English is. Our purpose is to help you, so it is important that you be as frank and honest as possible. Take some time to think before you put an answer to a question.

For each item in the questionnaire you will give yourself a ‘mark’: 4, 3, 2, or 1. Remember:

4 = excellent;
3 = good;
2 = satisfactory;
1 = weak.

If you feel that you cannot answer the question then you will select the box DON’T KNOW.

Indicate which box you select by putting a tick.

EXAMPLES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My ability to understand almost everything I hear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My English language vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.8.1 words</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.2 idioms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your answer will help the Self-Acess Centre provide material that is suitable for your level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LISTENING</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>When listening to the news in English, my ability to understand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.1 the headlines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.2 how the details are related to the headlines</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>When watching a play or a film, my ability to understand</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.1 When a person is being serious or sarcastic or sincere, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.2 the mood or feeling of the speaker from his choice of words, way of speaking, gestures and facial expressions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.3 accents, for example, British, American or Australian accents</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>My ability to quickly note down telephone numbers, telephone messages or addresses given to me in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>When listening to a talk or lecture, my ability to take notes and especially</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4.1 pick out main points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4.2 relate relevant details to main ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4.3 use of short forms and symbols, e.g. N for North</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4.4 numbering, spacing and arrangement of notes to give a clear picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>When I write my ability to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.1 rearrange the content into paragraphs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.2 organize the flow of ideas</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>My ability to present an argument clearly and convincingly in writing</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
<td>When writing a letter to a foreign company in the private sector my ability</td>
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<td>4.3.1 to express my ideas or views</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.3.2 to write fluently without being hampered by grammatical mistakes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.3.3 to choose the correct words to express my needs or wishes or intentions</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>My ability to write a letter to a friend or a colleague</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>When I have to teach a weak class, my ability to rewrite a difficult text to suit the level of the class</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>When preparing for classes, my ability to write effective</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.6.1 dialogues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.6.2 stories</td>
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<td>4.6.3 descriptions</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>My ability to frame questions on a text for use in class</td>
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<td>4.8</td>
<td>My ability to write assignments required for coursework or lesson plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My ability to apply grammar accurately in</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 short simple sentences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.1.2 longer sentences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My knowledge of the terms used in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grammar, such as 'articles', 'conjunctions',</td>
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<td>'gerund', 'participle', 'adverb', etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My ability to find the right words</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.1 in everyday conversation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.2 in discussion with friends and colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My ability to read and understand the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>meaning of unfamiliar words found in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.2.1 stories</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.2.2 non-fiction writing, e.g. a pamphlet about new products or a book about pollution</td>
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<td>My ability to understand the words used in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the range of subjects encountered in a magazine like ASIAWEEK, ASIA</td>
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<td>MAGAZINE or READER'S DIGEST</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My ability to read words and terms in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>books/articles on ELT recommended by my lecturers</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from National Self-Access Centre)
Learning Contract

Name:

Class:

Objective: To be able to pronounce /sh/ correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task/Activity</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Evidence of achievement</th>
<th>Assessment of performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.8.93 to 10.9.93</td>
<td>1. To listen to five pronunciation tapes. 2. Drills. 3. Practice in front of mirror. 4. Read ten tongue twisters.</td>
<td>Self access tapes: P2/1.3 Self access materials: P2/25</td>
<td>1. Have listened to 5 tapes. 2. Have read 10 tongue twisters. 3. Able to pronounce /sh/ correctly.</td>
<td>1. No difficulty doing the drills. 2. Drills are effective but boring. 3. Able to master the sound faster than I thought. 4. The pronunciation materials are interesting and this makes the exercise fun to work with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilitator’s comments:
Three Approaches to Language Awareness

Richard Watson Todd
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Abstract

Language Awareness is one part of the metacognitive knowledge learners need to move towards independence. This paper presents a definition and rationale for Language Awareness and then examines three approaches to raising learners' Language Awareness based on different learning modes. The first is an activity which could occur in a traditional, teacher-fronted classroom. The second is also classroom-based but entails more learner involvement and independence. The third approach concerns integrating Language Awareness into self-access materials.

Introduction

Language Awareness (LA) is a comparatively recent and fast-growing area in language teaching. Its youth and rapid expansion have led to a plethora of interpretations, such as the holistic grammar teaching of Rutherford (e.g. 1987) the link between L1 and L2 education advocated by I Hawkins (1984, 1992) and the metacognitive knowledge argued by Dickinson (1992). In this paper, I take the view of LA as metacognitive knowledge, as I feel this position is the most useful and most applicable of the interpretations. Such a view needs an explanation and a rationale, and I attempt to provide these in the first part of this paper.

The second part is more practical and examines three tasks that can be used to raise the learners' LA. These tasks are designed to be used in different instructional modes, so that together they provide an overview of the range of possibilities available to the teacher and learner for implementing LA.

What Is Language Awareness?

Language knowledge can be divided into three modes: performative knowledge, or the ability to perform in a language; intuitive knowledge, or unformulated intuitions about the language; and metacognitive knowledge, or the faculty of explicitly thinking about language, learning and thinking (James 1987). As part of the metacognitive mode, LA has been defined as "an ability to contemplate a language which one also commands both performatively and intuitively" (James 1987:5) and "the ability to explicitly reflect upon what you implicitly know of a language" (Watson Todd 1994:53). As such, LA allows a deeper reformulation of one's ideas and intuitions about language, raises these to the conscious level and makes language knowledge explicit.
The Rationale of Language Awareness

Several authors have suggested benefits accruing to LA. For example, James and Garrett (1991) argue that LA can have positive effects in five domains: affective, social, power, cognitive and performance; Kumaravadivelu (1994) suggests that LA helps learners notice facets of the language; and Rutherford (1987) asserts that LA allows learners to see language as more than simply a series of discrete steps to be learnt. These suggested benefits are largely applicable to a classroom-based mode of learning and, although little research has been conducted into these claims, they sound convincing.

As the seminar concerns 'Self Access Learning and Learner Independence', we need to consider benefits of LA in independent learning modes as well as more traditional, classroom-based modes. To do this we need to consider what learner independence or autonomy entails.

Holec (1985) states that, for a learner to be autonomous, two things are needed, namely, skills and knowledge. Most work on independence has focussed on the skills required and these can be dealt with through strategy training. However, as Cotterall and Crabbe (1992) argue, if the knowledge aspect is left neglected, strategy training may not be enough to support learners towards independence. We also need to consider how to help learners to acquire the requisite knowledge.

This knowledge can be classified in various ways (see Holec 1985; Wenden 1991), but one component which is central in each of the classifications is knowledge about content. In ELT this knowledge normally concerns language. Such language knowledge has many applications in autonomous learning, such as expressing objectives, gauging the degree of relevance and judging the level of difficulty of tasks, and evaluating tasks. Although these applications may be accomplished intuitively (for example, a learner might judge the difficulty of a task purely by glancing at it), more explicit knowledge could have beneficial effects. Explicit knowledge potentially enhances the learner's understanding of objectives, the learner's ability to identify, describe and state needs, and the learner's skill at gauging and evaluating tasks. If this explicit knowledge concern language, LA is implied. Thus we can say that LA is an important prerequisite to independence and should be considered as a necessary component of learner training.

Different Approaches to Language Awareness

Having seen the benefits of LA both in traditional classrooms and in independent learning modes, we can now look at ways of raising learners' LA. In EFL literature, there is a surprising dearth of LA raising activities. Most such activities as are published are targeted at teacher trainees (e.g. Boltho and Tomlinson 1980; Gairns and Redman 1986; Hubbard et al. 1983). For language learning, some grammar books claim to contain awareness activities (e.g. Franke and Rinvolueri 1987) but actually consist of little more than personalised grammar practice. More usefully, Watson
Todd (1994) sets up a framework for awareness raising activities, but only gives the rubric for examples of such activities. In the rest of this paper, then, I intend to give three examples of LA raising activities from which we can draw conclusions concerning the nature and characteristics of these activities.

In order to show the variety of approaches to LA raising, the three activities which follow are set in different learning modes (see Wright 1987) based on the level of learner independence that the mode entails. Dickinson (1987) suggests that a large part of independence concerns who makes the decisions about learning, among which is who defines the content to be learnt. We can then make a continuum of less to more independent learning modes with the teacher defining the content and the learner defining the content as the two extremes (see figure 1). On such a continuum, of the three activities presented, the first could be set in a mode towards 'the teacher defining the content' end of the continuum. In other words, the first activity may occur in a traditional, teacher-fronted classroom. The second activity, though still probably classroom-based, would occur in a mode around the middle of the continuum. With self and peer correction, the teacher often dictates where and when such correction should be done, but the learners decide on the language focus. The last activity would occur in a more independent learning mode (i.e. nearer 'the learner defining the content' ), such as self access. It should be noted that these positions on the continuum refer to these activities only as they are envisaged in this paper. The activities could easily be adapted to be set in other learning modes.

![Figure 1: An independence-based continuum of learning modes.](image)

**Approach 1: A Classroom Exercise**

The first activity exemplifies a traditional approach to language teaching set in a teacher-fronted learning mode. The content concerns spelling, a frequent problem for Thai learners not familiar with the Roman alphabet. Many teachers ignore spelling problems and hope they will go away on their own. If a teacher does treat spelling problems, this is often done through rather boring mechanical exercises. The following activity presents an alternative to these by raising the students' LA.

**Material:** A list of imaginary words, some of which follow English spelling conventions and some of which break these conventions (see Appendix 1 for such a list).

**Procedure:** The learners are asked to decide which words are possible words in
Rationale: In this activity, the learners have to consider the acceptability of various vowel and consonant combinations. This encourages them to explicitly formulate rules to govern letter combinations in English, which would be reformulated on learning the answers to the exercise. This explicit rule formulation and reformulation involves knowledge about language and is thus L.A. It might be hoped that the learners could use their rules to monitor their own spelling when writing in the future.

Approach 2: Self and Peer Correction

One of the more common ways of engendering independence in the classroom is through self and peer correction. The focus in the following activity exemplifying this second approach is on the correction of written language. The procedures given are based on suggestions in Watson Todd (1994).

Material: The material is learner-generated, that is, the learners are working on their own writing. The errors may or may not have been identified by the teacher but they will not have been corrected. An example of learner writing is included in Appendix 2 for the reader to consider as sample material for this activity.

Procedure: The learners should try to identify and, if possible, correct the errors. They can then decide which language points require further teaching and, possibly, what form that teaching should take. Next, they can rank the errors in order of gravity. Finally, they can draw up guidelines (in the form of a poster or a checklist) to remind themselves of the common or serious errors they make and the correct forms.

Rationale: Simply asking learners to self and peer correct may in itself raise L.A as learners have to consider their own models of the language in order to judge the correctness of the work under consideration. Adding further dimensions to the process of correction, such as those suggested in this activity, requires the learners to reach deeper levels of cognition concerning the language and thus to consider the errors and the language more explicitly.
Approach 3: Self Access

The third activity is based on self-access materials taken from Sheerin (1989:160-162). The language content in this activity is one area of grammar, namely, articles.

Material: The material consists of a task sheet and a key. The task sheet is a short reading passage with the articles omitted. In their place (and before some other noun phrases) are gaps with numbers. The answer key gives the articles to be put in the gaps. These are grouped in such a way as to illustrate the rules governing article use. The passage and key are provided in Appendix 3.

Procedure: First of all, the learners should “Fill in the gaps in the story with ‘the’, ‘a’, ‘an’, or, if necessary ... not put any article” (Sheerin 1989:160). They should then decide for which gaps they are certain of the answer. For these gaps, they can think about why they chose that answer and then see if they can apply these reasons to other gaps of which they are not so certain. They can then check both their answers and their reasons against the key.

Rationale: Frequently, self-access materials take the form of practice exercises which only ask learners to recall or recognise, the lowest cognitive level in Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (see Arends 1989). Examples of materials like this can be found in Sheerin (1989: e.g. Task 3.1, p.55-56; Task 3.5, p.62-63; Task 3.10, p.73-74). To stimulate deeper learning, the material should either include new language content or encourage deeper consideration of present knowledge. By asking the learners to find their own reasons and then apply them, the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, and thus deeper levels of cognition, can be reached. In this way, the learners’ awareness, and especially their LA, can be raised.

The Characteristics of Language Awareness Activities

In order for an activity to raise the learners’ LA, that is to make their language knowledge explicit, it should provide opportunities for the learners to, as it were, take a step back and consider the language they are using. This can be done in three main ways. Firstly, the learners can be asked to formulate or reformulate rules about the language. Secondly, the activity may require the learners to reach deeper levels of cognition. Thirdly, the learners may need to consider why they are using the language in the way they are. By incorporating one or more of these into an activity, the learners’ LA can be raised and an important step on the road to independent learning can be taken.
References

Appendices

Appendix 1

ngouth
gnair
sfalk
priet
splinch
chraoph
smunths
wraught
scraald
sdloopt

Appendix 2

I am afraid of dog (1)

An animal that I fear in my life is a dog. I am especially afraid of a big dog and a dog which is making a loud noise. I think a big dog can kill me by its biting when I meet a dog, I will walk far from them and I will cross a road for avoiding it. The important reason which makes me fear of dog is this event in my child. Now when I close my eyes, I still see that event.

This story will be continue
Appendix 3

INSTRUCTIONS
Fill in the gaps in the story with the, a, an, or, if necessary, do not put any article.

TASK SHEET
John lived alone in (1) . . . small house. He had (2) . . . cat to keep him company but, even so, he sometimes felt lonely. Each day he went to (3) . . . work and in (4) . . . evening he came back (5) . . . home. Nothing exciting ever happened. Then, one day, he decided to go to (6) . . . cinema to see (7) . . . film. He left (8) . . . house, locking (9) . . . front door behind him. (10) . . . cat was asleep inside. What John didn’t know, however, was that he was being watched, and about half (11) . . . hour after he left (12) . . . man came out from behind (13) . . . tree and climbed through (14) . . . open window at (15) . . . back of (16) . . . house. He went into (17) . . . sitting room and started to look for (18) . . . money in (19) . . . drawers of (20) . . . desk. (21) . . . cat was awake now and very angry with (22) . . . burglar for disturbing her. She crept silently across (23) . . . room and suddenly leapt like (24) . . . wild thing onto (25) . . . burglar’s back with (26) . . . horrifying cry. (27) . . . man was terrified and ran out of (28) . . . house as fast as he could. He thought he had been attacked by (29) . . . fiend from (30) . . . hell.

Key 1

1. a 7. a 13. a 19. the 25. the
2. a 8. the 14. an 20. the 26. a
3. - 9. the 15. the 21. the 27. the
4. the 10. the 16. the 22. the 28. the
5. - 11. an 17. the 23. the 29. a
6. the 12. a 18. - 24. a 30. -
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY 2</th>
<th>1 a small house</th>
<th>2 a cat</th>
<th>7 a film</th>
<th>12 a man</th>
<th>13 a tree</th>
<th>24 a wild thing</th>
<th>26 a horrifying cry</th>
<th>29 a fiend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first mention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 an open window</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 half an hour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 the cat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 the cat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 the burglar's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 the man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 the burglar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 the evening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 the front door</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 the back</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 the sitting room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 the drawers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 the desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 the room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 the cinema</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 back home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 from hell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **all houses have windows but this is the first mention of a window that is special, i.e. open**
- **first mention, but uncountable noun**
- **set phrase, 'h' is not pronounced, so 'hour' begins with a vowel sound**
- **second or subsequent mention of the word**
- **second or subsequent mention of the person, although first use of the word**
- **first mention, but unsurprising, i.e. not really new information, because most people have a local cinema, one that they usually go to**
- **set phrases with no article**
- **like 'heaven', 'hell' is used almost like a place name, therefore no article**
Evaluation of KMITT SALL

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Vithida Chongsuphajaisiddhi
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi
Thailand

Abstract

This is a pilot study to investigate the attitude of 240 undergraduate students towards the use of the SALL. The subjects were divided into two groups: 120 first year students who were taking an English course between June-December, 1994; and 120 third year students who did not take any English course after finishing the English compulsory in the second year. The questionnaire concerned the frequency of the use of the SALL, the evaluation of the SALL 13 corners, the students' satisfaction with the helpers' advice and help, general atmosphere including quality and quantity of the equipment and the students' intentions of the future use of the SALL. Although this study is a preliminary study, the results indicate many interesting aspects for a careful consideration for a SALL establishment.

Introduction

This is a pilot study to investigate the KMITT students' attitude towards the new Self Access Learning Laboratory (SALL). It aims to be a preliminary study in order to conduct further research into specific problems at a later stage. The duration of this study is from the middle of December 1994 to early of March 1995 (during the second semester).

Under the supervision of Leslie and Norma Dickinson, all of the staff who teach English to the undergraduate students shared the roles in conducting this study. We brainstormed for the aspects concerning the use of the SALL, and selected the most suitable groups of students to be our subjects. Then we divided ourselves into smaller groups to be responsible for different stages of the study; e.g. devising the questionnaire, administering it and analysing the responses. Vithida Chongsuphajaisiddhi and I were assigned by the group to do the data analysis, and finally I summarised the results and wrote the paper to be reported in the Seminar.

Subjects

The subjects were selected groups of the first year and the third year students of the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Sciences. The total number was 240 students: 120 first year and 120 third year students. They were from four departments: Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemistry and Microbiology. Out of 240 students, there were 158 males and 82 females. The students in these four departments were considered as representative of the students in both faculties in terms of the characteristics and the background in English gained from the English
requirement courses on which they were formerly enrolled. That is the first year students had taken one English compulsory course in the first semester and were taking another English course in the present semester. The third year students had finished their English requirement courses in their second year and did not take any English optional course for their third year. However, they had experience in using the SALL in all of the English courses.

The details of the subjects, i.e. the departments, numbers of males and females in each department, the names of English courses the first year students were taking, are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Subjects' Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept./Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Elect.</th>
<th>Civil</th>
<th>Chemistry</th>
<th>Micro.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: First Year Students on Three English Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Course</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Topics of the Analysis

The data to be selected from all aspects of the survey would be analysed and presented in two main categories as follows:

1. The Operation of the SALL
   1.1 Frequency of the use of the SALL
   1.2 Students' attitude towards the SALL
   1.3 Students' satisfaction with the helpers' advice/suggestions and the kind of help or advice
   1.4 Students' satisfaction with the SALL corners (sections)
   1.5 Reasons for not using the SALL
   1.6 Predicted future use of the SALL corners (sections)
   1.7 Conditions for the use of the SALL

2. The Use Made of the SALL
   2.1 Perceived usefulness of the SALL corners (sections)
   2.2 The use of the SALL corners: for skills improvement
   2.3 The use of the SALL corners: for future career
   2.4 The use of the SALL corners: for future study
   2.5 Students' perception of the usefulness of the SALL in general
   2.6 Students' perception of independent learning

The results of the data analysis are presented in the forms of charts and graphs in the next section.

The Results of the Data Analysis

1. The Operation of the SALL

1.1 Frequency of the use of the SALL

The frequency of the use of the SALL between June-December 1994 is illustrated in Table 3 below. It summarises the results gained from the responses to the Questionnaire, Question 2, which asks, "Between June-December 1994 how often did you use the SALL in one month on average?"
Table 3: Frequency of Use of SALL (Between June-December 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency / Month</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be concluded that there were 143 students--117 first year and 26 third year--who used the SALL. The first year were called the Course Related Users since they were taking one of the 3 English courses shown in Table 2 above. The teachers of all courses required them to use the SALL to complete course activities. The third year students were called Voluntary Users because they did not attend any English course for the whole academic year. They used the SALL of their own free will.

All users indicated that they used the SALL at least once or twice a month. There were 4 first year students and one third year who used the SALL more than 10 times a month.

Of all the subjects, 40\% (97 students; 94 third year and 3 first year) said that they never used the SALL during the stated period. They were called Non Users for this study.

1.2 Attitude towards the SALL

In Question 8, the students were asked to rate the 4-point-rating scale (from 4='very good' to 1='very poor') to evaluate 8 aspects of the SALL: i.e. the atmosphere, the advice of the helpers, audio quality and quantity, video quality and quantity, the ease of finding the equipment and materials, and variety of the corners or the sections in the SALL. The users were separated into male and female groups to see also the different attitude and the means were calculated. The results are summarised in Figure 1.
The above figure shows the similar attitudes of the male and female students. The atmosphere was graded the highest with means of 3.29 in the total column, 3.27 in the male and 3.34 in the female column; the quantity of the audio and video were rated the lowest.

1.3 Students' Satisfaction with the Helpers' Advice

Under this heading, two types of information are selected to illustrate the 143 users' satisfaction with the helpers' advice; they are the satisfaction levels of the two groups, the voluntary users and the course users, and the kinds of help or advice the users asked for from the helpers. Figure 2 summarises the answers to Question 14, which asks how far the students were satisfied with the helpers' advice. The users were requested to place a check in the four columns ranging from 4='very satisfied' to 1='very dissatisfied'. The results are given in Figure 2 below.
Users' satisfaction with the helpers' advice can be summarised as the follows:

1) 13.7% of the course related users and 15.4% of the voluntary users marked that they were very satisfied with the helpers' advice.

2) The means of the course related and the voluntary users are 3.1 and 3.2 respectively, i.e. between 'quite satisfied' and 'very satisfied'

3) A majority of both groups of users (78.6% of the course related and 76.9% of the voluntary users) marked the quite satisfied column.

For the kinds of help or advice that the users asked for from the helpers, the users marked one of the four columns, i.e. 'yes-often', 'yes-sometimes', 'yes-rarely' and 'no-never' on the 10 kinds of help or advice listed in Question 15 of the questionnaire, as follows:

- Identifying or analysing students' needs in language learning
- Setting up students' objectives
- Planning what to do to meet students' needs
- Language use or function
- Instructions about how to use each corner
- Choosing the materials appropriate/suitable to the learners' needs and objectives
- Learning strategies how to improve language skills
- Assessing students' work/progress
- Asking for equipment (e.g. videotape, cassette tape)

Figure 3 shows the summary of the data obtained from the users' responses.
The ‘sometimes’ column obtained the highest percentages for all kinds of help. Approximately 42%, 43%, and 41% of users sometimes asked for help on the use of language, instruction about how to use each corner, and choosing the materials appropriate/suitable to the learner’s needs and objectives respectively. Twenty percent said that they often consulted the helpers on the use of language and 23% often came to ask for the equipment.

The ‘yes-rarely’ columns of nine kinds of help (except ‘setting up the students’ objectives’), were marked by 25% - 32% of students.

For the ‘no-never’ column, as many as 30% of users (43 students) never asked for help on ‘setting up students’ objectives’. Approximately 29% (41 students) never asked helpers for advice on how to assess their own work or progress. Twenty-seven percent or 38 students never sought help from helpers on planning what to do to meet their learning needs and on learning strategies to improve their language skills.

1.4 Students’ Satisfaction with the SALL Corners

The users were requested to evaluate 13 corners of the SALL in order to investigate which corners were useful for the users and how satisfactory the materials of all the corners were. The 13 corners are Learn English from Songs, Games, Cassette Friend, Reading for Pleasure, Grammar, vocabulary, Writing, Study Abroad, Japanese, German, SRA (Self-instructional Reading), Listening and Video. However, after the analysis of the data, the German corner was excluded since very few users used it. The satisfaction level is presented in this section and the perceived usefulness will be presented in Section 2.1.
For the four most useful corners chosen in Question 12, the students were to state their opinions about the materials of those four corners in Question 13 applying the four-rating-scale: 4="strongly agree", 3="agree", 2="disagree" and 1="strongly disagree". There were 9 characteristics of materials provided: i.e. clear instructions, clear explanation, clear answer keys, easy to find, sufficient quantity, interesting, attractive, serve your needs and right for level. The students’ opinions on all characteristics of each corner were used to obtain the means of satisfaction with the materials of all SALL corners. Figure 4 shows the conclusion.

The materials of the Writing corner obtained the highest satisfaction level with the mean of 3.16, while those of the Cassette Friend and the Reading for Pleasure were the least satisfactory compared to the others (the means of 2.82 and 2.83 respectively).

On considering the characteristics of the materials of all corners, the three most interesting characteristics are selected, they are sufficient quantity, interesting and serve needs. Figure 5, 6 and 7 present the users’ opinions on the three characteristics as follows:
In general, none of the materials seems very sufficient. However, the users agreed that materials of the Cassette Friend and the Writing corners were the most sufficient, while those of the Japanese were the least sufficient.

Figure 6 indicates that the materials of almost all corners obtained means between 3-4 which can be interpreted that, from the users' opinions, the materials of most corners were interesting. The materials of the Japanese corner were the most interesting (with
a mean of 4) and those of the SRA were the least interesting. The users also stated that the materials of the Writing and the Video corners were interesting with means of 3.5 and 3.42 respectively.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with Materials of SALL Corners: Serve needs

The users stated that the Writing and the Japanese materials served their needs the most while those of the Study Abroad served their needs the least. The Games, the Cassette Friend and the Reading for Pleasure materials did not serve users' needs as much as those of the Grammar, the Vocabulary and the Writing corners.

When comparing the users' responses of the three characteristics, i.e. sufficient quantity, interesting and serve needs, the following can be stated:

1. The users thought that the materials of the Japanese corner served needs and were most interesting, so they wanted more of them; i.e. they found the materials sufficient in quantity.

2. The Cassette Friend materials seemed not to serve needs very much and not to be very interesting; therefore, the users did not ask for more.

3. The Writing materials were rated as interesting, serving needs and also sufficient in quantity.

4. Although the Learn English from Songs materials were interesting, they did not serve their needs.

5. The Study Abroad materials were interesting and sufficient in quantity but did not serve the users' needs.
1.5 The **Reasons** for Not Using the SALL

The 97 non-users were asked to give reasons for not using the SALL. In the questionnaire seven reasons were provided and they could mark more than one reason. Figure 8 illustrates the non-users’ responses:

![Bar chart showing Reasons for Not Using SALL](image)

- Not taking English courses
- No free time
- Completing projects
- Doing part time job
- Living far
- Not knowing about SALL
- Disliking English
- Learning English in other ways

* Non-users: 97
* Males: 65
* Females: 32

Both male and female students seem to have similar opinions about the reasons for not using the SALL. The highest percentage from the responses of all users (68% or 40 males and 26 females) was the first reason, "Not taking English courses". The second highest percentage was "No free time". All female students knew about the SALL, while there were 9% of male students (6 students) who did not know about it. Twenty-eight percent of female students or nearly four times higher than male students marked "Living far". Very few students, 6 males and 2 females, said that they disliked English.

The reasons the students stated indicate the students’ lack of intrinsic motivation to pursue English study if it is not for getting pass grades in English courses.

1.6 Predicted Future Use of the SALL

Question 4 asked all 240 subjects if they intended to use the SALL after this semester. 184 subjects answered "yes" and 35 answered "no". The ones who said "yes" were asked to rank the 4 corners which they wished to use in the future. The responses of male and female subjects were separately analysed in the way that chances of each corner to be chosen in one of the four ranks by the 121 male subjects and 63 female subjects were calculated in percentages. Then the corners were ranked in two
columns, "Males" and "Females" to compare the favourable corners. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Predicted Future Use of SALL Corners: Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Males Corners</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Females Corners</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>SRA</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SRA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two corners, the Cassette and the German, which were newly established, were completely ignored by the subjects. Therefore, they were removed from this analysis. The results show the following:

1. The Video was selected the most as one of the first four choices by both male and female predicted future users.
2. The Listening corner comes second in both groups.
3. A higher percentage of females showed the need to use the Writing and Vocabulary corners while a higher percentage of males chose the Grammar and Games.
4. The percentage of the females choosing the SRA reading corner is almost three times higher than that of the males.

If we examine the selection of the predicted future use of the SALL corners according to the subjects' major fields of studies to see their influence on the choices, there is no clear difference among students in different departments and different faculties. Figure 9 shows the results.
The 36 subjects, who said they would not use the SALL in the future, were asked to respond to Question 6 asking if they would use the SALL if the conditions were improved. The improved conditions were specified for them. Table 5 shows the analysis of the responses of 36 future non-users.

Table 5: Conditions for the Use of SALL: Future Non Users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>% (36 Students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials were more interesting.</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were more facilities in SALL</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were more materials appropriate for my level.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The materials met my needs.</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked independent learning more.</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interesting results from this table are as follows:
1. The majority of the future non-users said "no" even if the materials were more interesting, or there were more facilities or more materials appropriate to their levels or their needs.
2. More of them said "yes" if they learnt to like independent learning more.

2. The Use Made of the SALL

2.1 Perceived Usefulness of the SALL Corners

This is to survey the students' opinion on the usefulness of each SALL corner. The subjects were asked to rank the four most useful corners in Question 12 of the questionnaire, the responses are given in the following figure.

Both groups of subjects agreed that Video and Listening were the most useful corners even though the percentages of male subjects ranking these two corners are much higher than those of the female subjects (66% and 50% for both corners respectively). The percentage of female users perceiving the SRA as one of the four most useful corners is more than three times higher than that of the males. Fifty percent of females and 38% of males graded the Grammar as one of the most useful corners.
2.2 The Use of the SALL Corners: for Skills Improvement

In Question 12, the 143 users were also required to state the purposes of using the four corners which they ranked as the most useful. The purposes were provided in the column form which the subjects were to mark if they agreed with them. After analysis only three most interesting purposes were selected to reveal the students' attitude; namely "for skills improvement", "for future career" and "for future study". The results of the responses to "for skills improvement" are summarised in Figure 11.

The opinions of the two groups of subjects, males and females, seem to be similar. The highest percentages of both groups are for the Listening. They also agreed on the Video corner. However, the percentage of the females who perceived the SRA corner as important for skills improvement is much higher.

2.3 The Use of the SALL Corners: for Future Career

This is to see if the users ranked the four corners as the most useful because they thought of their future careers. Figure 12 illustrates the results.
The Listening corner was considered the most important for future career by most males and females. The Writing obtained the second highest percentage. Again a higher percentage of females marked the SRA. None of the female subjects thought that the Games and the Japanese corners were relevant for their future careers.

2.4 The Use of the SALL Corners: for Future Study

For Future Study, both groups of users expressed different opinions from the use of the SALL for future career. The Figure below shows the results.
For this purpose, although both groups still indicated that the Listening was useful, they put more emphasis on the Grammar and the Vocabulary. For the female group the Grammar even obtained higher percentage than the Listening. More male subjects considered the Study Abroad useful for future study than the females. No female users marked the Song and Game corners useful. The SRA was also considered useful for this purpose in the female group.

2.5 Students' Perception of the Usefulness of the SALL

Question 7 asked the users to agree or disagree with the stated opinions about the usefulness of the SALL. There were 2 opinions stated in the questionnaire and the 143 users were to check the four columns rating from 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' on each opinion. For the analysis the means were calculated based on the rating scale from 4-1, 4='strongly agree' and 1='strongly disagree'. The following table shows the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' opinions</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SALL is useful for improving my English</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would advise other students to use the SALL to study English.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means are high on both items indicating that the users realized the usefulness of the SALL for improving their English and they would advise others to use it. Both male and female groups agreed on these.

2.6 Students' Perception of Independent Learning

The users were asked to rate the statements on a 4-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). They gave their
All users, both the first and the third year students and also males and females had the same opinions on studying English in the SALL. The mean of each group on each opinion is high.

**Conclusion**

The results of this preliminary study indicate that:

1. The students, in general, realized that the SALL was useful and they seemed to favor studying English in the SALL which can be interpreted that they liked to study independently.

2. They expressed positive attitudes towards the SALL management, e.g. they were satisfied with the advice of the helpers, atmosphere, quality of audio and video equipment, and variety of the SALL corners.

3. The majority intended to use the SALL in the future to help them improve their language skills, for further studies and careers.

4. They liked the corners with fun elements, such as video and games. They did not like reading neither the Reading for pleasure nor the SRA (self instructional reading). This indicates the students' unfavourable attitude towards reading in general, despite the fact that reading corners are attractively organized.

5. It was clearly stated that the present non-users of the SALL did not intend to use it in the future, no matter how much the conditions of the SALL were improved. This implies their lack of intrinsic motivation to pursue English study either with the help of the teachers or by themselves. They studied English only to fulfill the requirement of their programmes of study.

6. From the indication of the results above, the non-users could become the future users of the SALL if they were trained to learn more independently. This confirms the need for learner training, which can be best delivered in the compulsory courses.

7. The learner training needs careful planning and serious practice. It involves a great effort on the part of the teachers of English to train the students to be responsible for their own learning. This requires psychological preparation as well as strategy training to enhance students' ability to learn effectively by themselves.

**Acknowledgement**

This report of the preliminary study could not be finished without the effort of all the staff of Department of Language and Social Studies, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi, especially Leslie and Norma Dickinson who supervised us in all the stages of this study; Richard Watson Todd who helped shaping the ideas of the report and David Gardner who gave valuable comments on the final draft.
Department of Language and Social Studies  
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi  
Questionnaire  
On the Evaluation of the Self Access Learning Laboratory  

1. Personal Details:  

This questionnaire is entirely confidential. However, we want to analyse the data in categories such as SEX, FACULTY, YEAR OF STUDY etc.  

Please tick the boxes which apply to you.  

SEX  
[] FEMALE  
[ ] MALE  

YEAR OF STUDY NOW  
[] FIRST  
[ ] SECOND  
[ ] THIRD  
[ ] FOURTH  

LANGUAGE COURSES TAKEN THIS SEMESTER  
[] LNG 102 BASIC STUDY SKILLS  
[ ] LNG 103 COMMUNICATIVE WRITING IN EST  
[ ] LNG 104 BASIC READING IN EST  
[ ] LNG 221 ORAL COMMUNICATION I  
[ ] LNG 411 ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT  
[ ] OTHERS; please write in the space below:  

LANGUAGE COURSES TAKEN LAST SEMESTER  
[] LNG 101 GENERAL ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
[ ] LNG 102 BASIC STUDY SKILLS  
[ ] LNG 103 COMMUNICATIVE WRITING IN EST  
[ ] LNG 104 BASIC READING IN EST  
[ ] LNG 221 ORAL COMMUNICATION I  
[ ] LNG 411 ENGLISH FOR EMPLOYMENT  
[ ] OTHERS; please write in the space below:  

MAJOR SUBJECT  
[ ] ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING  
[ ] PRODUCTION ENGINEERING  
[ ] CHEMISTRY  
[ ] MICROBIOLOGY  
[ ] OTHERS; please write in the space below:  

FACULTY  
[ ] ENGINEERING  
[ ] SCIENCE  
[ ] OTHERS; please write in the space below:  

2. Between June and December 1994 how often did you use the SALL in one month on average?
If you used the SALL twice per month or fewer, go on to Question 3. Otherwise, go to Question 4.

3. Please tell us your reasons for not using the SALL very much. You can tick more than one reason.
   1. I was not taking any English courses [ ]
   2. I did not have enough free time. [ ]
   3. I had to complete work/a project for my department. [ ]
   4. I have a part time job to do. [ ]
   5. I live far away from KMITT. [ ]
   6. I did not know there was a SALL in KMITT. [ ]
   7. I dislike studying English. [ ]
   8. I prefer learning English in other way, e.g. 
   9. Other reasons; please write in the space provided: ________________________________

4. Do you intend to use the SALL after this current semester?
   Yes [ ] Go to Question 5
   No [ ] Go to Question 6

5. Look at the list of corners in the SALL given in Question 12 and write down four corners that you hope to use in the future:
   1. ________________________________
   2. ________________________________
   3. ________________________________
   4. ________________________________

6. If you answer “No” in Question 4, please answer this question by ticking the box(es) below. You can tick more than one box.

   Would you use the SALL if:
   1. the materials were more interesting? [ ]
   2. the materials were more varied? [ ]
   3. there were more facilities in the SALL? [ ]
   4. there were more materials appropriate for my level? [ ]
   5. the materials met my needs? [ ]
   6. I liked independent learning more than I do? [ ]
   7. Other factors: please specify ________________________________
7. We would like to know your opinions about the way of studying English in the SALL. Please tick the column which represents your opinion for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The SALL is useful for improving my English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would advise other students to use the SALL to study English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I enjoy using the SALL to study English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like studying English in the SALL more than studying English in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. We would like to know your attitude towards the SALL. Please tick the appropriate column for each topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General atmosphere</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Help/suggestion provided by helpers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quality of audio equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quantity of audio equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Quality of video equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Quantity of video equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ease of finding materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The variety of courses offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Is the SALL usually open when you want to use it?

Please tick: Yes [ ]
No [ ]
Suggest appropriate time: __________________

10. Is the SALL open for a sufficient number of hours per week?

Please tick
Yes [ ]
No [ ]
Suggest appropriate number: ________________
11. Do you find the system for borrowing materials adequate?

Please tick   Yes [ ]

No [ ] Because: _______________________

12. Choose the four corners that are most useful to you. Rank them in order 4 (most useful) to 1 (least useful) in the column headed RANKING. Then complete the columns on the right asking about your purposes of using these 4 corners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corners</th>
<th>RANKING</th>
<th>Purposes of Using Corners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Related to Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn English from Songs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassette Friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading for Pleasure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Instructional Reading (SRA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. You choose 4 corners for Question 12. Please give us your opinions about the materials in these four corners. Put 4 to 1 in the columns; 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corners</th>
<th>Clear instruction</th>
<th>Clear explanation</th>
<th>Clear answer key</th>
<th>Easy to find</th>
<th>Sufficient quantity</th>
<th>Interesting</th>
<th>Attractive</th>
<th>Serve your needs</th>
<th>Right to level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn English from Songs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Games</td>
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<td>Cassette Friend</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for pleasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
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<td>Japanese</td>
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<td>German</td>
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<td>Self Instructional Reading</td>
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<td>(SRA)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. We would like to know your opinion towards the helpers' help. Do you think it is necessary to have a helper in the SALL?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

How satisfied are you with the helpers' advice? Please tick the appropriate column?

Very satisfied
Quite satisfied
Rather satisfied
Very dissatisfied

Please comment: __________________________________________
15. Identify the kinds of help you have asked for from the helpers and indicate how often by ticking the appropriate columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Help/Advice</th>
<th>Yes Often</th>
<th>Yes Sometimes</th>
<th>Yes Rarely</th>
<th>No Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifying or analysing your needs in language learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Setting up your own objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Planning what to do to meet your needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language use/function.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Instructions about how to use each generator.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Instructions in the materials.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Choosing the materials appropriate/suitable to the learners' needs and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Learning strategies how to improve language skills.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Asking for equipment (e.g. videotapes, cassette tapes).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Others; please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. What foreign language(s) do you think you will need to use after graduation? Tick the appropriate box(es).

[ ] None
[ ] English
[ ] Japanese
[ ] German
[ ] Others; please specify: __________________________

17. What will be your future needs for English after graduation? Please tick:

[ ] Speaking, e.g. communicating with foreigners.
[ ] Listening, e.g. comprehending foreigners.
[ ] Reading, e.g. reading manuals, textbooks, journals.
[ ] Writing, e.g. writing reports, memos, dissertations.
[ ] Others; please specify: __________________________
Acknowledgements

The Department of Language and Social Studies, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi is most grateful to all those who are contributing to this Seminar. We are very grateful to the British Council Malaysia for the financial support for a speaker and to the British Council Thailand for distributing advance information.

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8. Sony Thai Co. Ltd.
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