

【原著】

## Do Regular Self-Access Learning Center Users Exhibit Characteristics of Effective Autonomous Learners?

Satoko Kato & Luke Carson

### Abstract

This research examines student learning patterns in a Self-Access Learning Center (SALC) in Japan, with particular reference to regular users of the SALC involved in second language independent learning. The research was undertaken to gain an accurate picture of actual SALC usage to see if SALC users are functioning as effective autonomous learners, and if not, to find out what provisions need to be made to facilitate their usage towards this end.

The results of the research suggest that the regular users clearly perceive the SALC as having a very positive influence on their language learning. It also shows high levels of ability in certain areas deemed important for self-access learning, such as needs analysis, and learning material selection. However, students appear to have lower levels of ability and awareness of metacognition and learning management—planning, monitoring, and evaluation, the absence of which may hamper the effectiveness of their independent learning and learning outcomes.

This research details the possible implications of regular student SALC usage patterns and the resulting proposed changes to environment, services, and materials provision in order to provide learners with the optimal conditions for effective autonomous learning.

Keywords: self-access learning center; independent learning; metacognition; effective language learning; learner behaviors

### Background to the study

In order to understand any research about learning, it is important to understand both the context where the learning is taking place, and the impact of the context on learner behavior. As Gremmo and Riley (1995) concluded from their examination of the history and development of self-access language learning

“one important lesson that has been learnt from this work is that self-directed learning schemes and resource centers have to be planned locally, taking into account specific institutional requirements and expectations, the particular characteristics of learners and staff, including the socio-cultural constraints on learning practices. There is no universal model for setting up a self-directed learning scheme, since all the parameters vary, but enough experience has been acquired to put forward general guidelines and objectives which can be adapted to meet local needs” (1995, p156).

This is a hugely important consideration when considering adopting and/or adapting existing approaches to new contexts. In the context of the SALC in this study, learners are coming from an educational background that has exposed them to a very top-down system based on the transmission of knowledge. They are also part of a society which places larger emphasis on group cohesion than autonomous action. While neither of these factors is directly at odds with the fostering of autonomous learning through self-access learning, they do create unique situations, and unique challenges for the provision and support of self-access learning.

Established in 2001, the SALC was created for learners, to promote self-directed and autonomous language learning. As a central pillar of the university, it is well-funded, well-staffed, fashionably designed, and fully equipped with state-of-the-art language learning educational systems. After celebrating its 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the SALC continues to attract students on a voluntary basis and around 350 to 400 students visit the SALC per day.

SALC usage in this context is completely voluntary which has a huge impact on how learners use the center, and the extent to which they make use of the available services. There were two main reasons for this voluntary policy. Firstly, it was felt that the idea of imposing self-access learning onto students could be counterproductive—if the use of the SALC was required, it could just become another requirement on top of many and this might turn learners off using the center. Secondly, when the center was being developed, those involved visited several SALCs around the world, and felt that the voluntary SALCs were both more comfortable and dynamic, and in some instances, had very high student usage of services (such as advising systems).

In the SALC, student learning is facilitated through a variety of systems—

- Learning Help Desk—this is desk in the center staffed about 4-5 hours a day, where students can just drop by and ask a Learning Advisor for help
- Advisory Booking System—students can book 30 minute appointments 6 days a week to speak with a Learning Advisor of their choice
- Self-access Courses—designed to allow students to move up the continuum of autonomy (more awareness raising and support is provided in the earlier courses)
- Informal encounters with Learning Advisors
- Materials Development and provision
- Elective course—offered to students in their final two years, who may or may not have undertaken any self-access courses, or independent language learning.
- Writing Center and Peer Online Writing Center
- Speaking Center
- SALC workshops (offered to all students, designed to assist students in how to use the SALC, or content based to encourage new avenues and motivation for learning)

All of these systems are designed to provide students with opportunities for language

use and/or learning training, and specifically to support self-access learning. There is consensus among educators in the fields of self-access learning and the wider autonomous learning field, that autonomy is not a static concept, but rather a continuum on which learners can move up, when levels of facilitation and opportunities appropriate to their position on the continuum are provided (Dam, 2000; Little, 2000; Thanasoulas, 2004; Voller, 1997; Wenden, 2002). As such, learning advisors attempt to support each learner individually, at a level most appropriate to them.

As of February 2008, the SALC has a team of 8 Learning Advisors (LAs) from a variety of international backgrounds. One of the main roles of LAs is to guide student learning through self-access courses offered by the SALC. The focus of these self-access courses is not placed on “language” itself but on “how to learn a language.” The principles of these courses are to promote students' abilities to (1) analyze one's language needs, (2) set goals, (3) create a study plan, (4) select and use materials, (5) use learning strategies, and (6) monitor and evaluate learning progress. A regular diary process is used to develop reflection on learning, and in turn, monitoring and evaluation abilities. It is hoped that by developing these abilities, effective autonomous learning will be enhanced. Therefore, these six abilities are used in this research as indicators of possible effective autonomous learning in the context under investigation.

Self-access learning centers, whether involving voluntary, semi-voluntary, or compulsory use, all attempt to support learners in some way—through language advising or learner training programs, integration of class and self-access work, specifically designed materials, physical or online services. Within all of these systems, there is a core of ‘abilities’ which educators are trying to engender in learners towards the ultimate end of effective autonomous learning. Sheerin (1997) identified these as the abilities to—

- Analyze one's own strengths/weaknesses, language needs
- Set achievable targets and overall objectives
- Plan a program of work to achieve the objectives set
- Exercise choice, select materials and activities
- Work without supervision
- Evaluate one's own progress

(1997, p57)

Looking at the recent literature, we can see different terminology being employed—“learning self-management” (Mozzon McPherson, 2007), “self-directed learning” (Victori, 2007), “monitoring” (Reinders, 2007), which does indicate that certain researchers are taking slightly different approaches to their support of self-access learning, although all involve the inclusion of similar abilities. Recent developments seem to be pushing self-access learning online. Examples of this are VELA program from Hong Kong, an online language advising platform, that students can use without an advisor (Toogood, 2006), and the Electronic Learning Environment in New Zealand, that allows learners to monitor and keep records of their work (Reinders, 2007), and the decade long ALMS project in Finland (Kjisik, 2007).

As stated earlier, each SALC exists in a specific context, and must tailor its approach to this context and its' specific learners. As such the development or revision of learner support and opportunities for learning can and should only occur after a clear understanding of the learners' position and needs in context have been clarified. A SALC is an evolving environment and one that needs to taken into account all shareholders-

“Its' maintenance and further development require a continuation of [this] initial dialogue amongst the different shareholders to ensure effective use and resources and facilities, avoid its obsolescence and fossilization, and encourage its' integration in teaching and learning structures” (Mozzon McPherson, 2007, p4).

In order to improve the SALC in this study, and in turn, the learners using it, an accurate picture of learning needs and usage patterns were required.

### The research

Despite all the services available to students, there seems to be a huge volume of SALC usage being undertaken by students outside of the services, as seen through the daily usage numbers (350-400 students per day). In an attempt to create a comfortable and open atmosphere in the SALC, detailed records of student usage are not kept. So there was no clear data, for example, on whether or not the daily figures users were made up of returning visitors or new visitors, whether these visitors were using the support systems or not (or had in the past), or a detailed picture of how they were engaging in language learning. In terms of improving the opportunities available to students, and ensuring that these opportunities matched the needs of the students, it became clear that it was very important to clarify such questions, in order to move forward. As Hobbs and Jones-Parry (2007) noted of the work of Vinkenleugel et al. (2003), within a self-access or independent learning center, there are “a number of students who contentedly use[d] the independent learning center for long periods, but who were apparently unaware of the metacognitive facets of their learning” (2007, p128). As SALC student usage is always voluntary, students are completely free to use the center as they choose. But how do they choose to use it? Could they be using it more effectively? If learners are, as Little (2000) notes “by definition inexperienced in relation to their learning targets, so they are likely to need guidance of various kinds” (2000, p11), what of the students who do not seek guidance? And of those who do, has it positively influenced their self-access learning? It was from these positions that this research project was undertaken, and three main aims were conceived.

- (1) To gain an accurate picture of actual SALC usage, to inform decisions about environmental design, service and materials provision.
- (2) To see whether or not the SALC is encouraging autonomous learning.
- (3) To see if SALC users are functioning as effective learners, and if not, what provisions need to be made to facilitate their usage towards this end.

This study consists of three levels of data collection and analysis. The reason for

conducting three levels of survey is because the results of each survey brought about unexpected questions which then prompted the next level of study.

The first level was a large scale survey, where questionnaires were administered to 353 students to see students' actual usage of the SALC. The large scale survey showed some interesting results, particularly the large percentage of regular users. Therefore, the second level survey in this study focused on regular SALC users to further investigate whether or not the SALC is encouraging autonomous learning. Although the results of the second survey provided the researchers with more information about regular SALC users, it was still not clear whether they show the characteristics of effective autonomous learners. This question led the researchers to finally focus on learners' six abilities which learners are encouraged to develop through our SALC support systems (e.g. ability to analyze one's language needs, set goals, create a study plan, select and use materials, use learning strategies, and monitor and evaluate progress). To clarify learners' characteristics, at the third level of data collection, qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken with regular users.

### *Research Phase 1—Who is in the SALC and what are they doing?*

The initial phase of this research project involved undertaking a large scale survey of students using the SALC. In line with the philosophy of the SALC, participation was voluntary. Over a one-week period, 353 students completed a questionnaire designed to explore how they were using the SALC. Analysis of responses showed several clear trends—

- Usage is highest among Freshman students and decreases over their 4 years in university
- 67.7% of users are regular users (classified as those using the SALC more than once a week)
- 36% had taken one or more Self-access Learning courses at some stage (64% had never done so)
- Although all students were happy to use the SALC as a second language only environment (this is the official center policy), only 18% of students were using physical language learning materials provided by the SALC at the time of survey. It seemed most students were (at the time of surveying) using the SALC primarily as either a “communication space” or a comfortable place to do homework, while being surrounded by English.
- The four top reasons cited for using the SALC were (in descending order): to talk with people from other countries, to get a job in the future, to study abroad, to prepare for TOEIC/TOEFL.

Perhaps the most striking results from this initial survey were

- (1) The large number of regular users (defined as using the SALC more than once a week)

- (2) The large number of students who had not undertaken any self-access learning courses (though the fact that 36% had chosen to voluntarily take one or more of these courses does indicate a perceived need and/or benefit among some learners)

As some of the other support services (such as the booked advising system) were not heavily used, it seemed as though there was a large group of students regular using the SALC without receiving or having received learner training or support. At this point, the researchers decided the focus on regular users specifically, as the largest population of SALC users.

### *Research Phase 2: Regular Users Diaries*

As mentioned earlier, research phase 1 (large scale survey) indicated that 67.7% of students in the SALC are using the center more than once a week. This result led the researchers to wonder whether the regular SALC users have some unique characteristics in terms of language learning. Therefore, the second level survey in this study focused on regular SALC users to further investigate whether or not the SALC is encouraging autonomous learning.

In the second level of the data collection, 15 regular SALC users were chosen and asked to keep a one-week Diaries to write about their language learning and how they were using the SALC in detail. These 15 students were newly selected students who did not participate in the large scale survey. From here on in this study, those students who use the SALC more than once a week in research phase 2 and 3 are named as “**Regular**” users.

#### *Participants*

The participants for the second level survey, the Regular Users Diaries, were selected by academic and administrative staff. 15 students who visit the SALC more than once a week were chosen as Regular users. Each student received a diary pack which consisted of a 2 page questionnaire (to collect background information) and 5 pages of blank diary sheets. Students were asked to use one blank diary sheet per day and keep records for one week every time they visit the SALC. They were encouraged to write about how they used the SALC and what activities they actually did in the SALC. All the students were informed that their participation is anonymous and confidential.

#### *Data analysis and findings*

From the Regular Users Diaries, the following characteristics were observed in this group.

- Visit the SALC every day (78%).
- 13 out of 15 students visited the SALC more than once a day during the week.
- Do not often use/borrow SALC materials.
- Use the SALC not only as a place to learn languages but enjoy the atmosphere of the SALC itself (“English only” policy in the SALC makes students feel like living

abroad).

Moreover, the results of questionnaires from Regular Users Diaries and the results from the same questionnaires administered to the students in the large scale survey showed significant differences. Compared with the student from the large scale survey, Regular users tend to use the SALC in many different ways. In other words, Regular users use the SALC not only for language learning environment but also use the place to chat with friends, have lunch, or just to hang out with their friends (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4).

In addition, 58.3% of Regular users completed or applied for the SALC self-access courses (Table 3) and were expected to know some strategies for effective language learning. However, the most significant difference between the Regular users and the students from the large scale survey was that 46% of the Regular users focused on more than one skill when learning a language in the SALC, whereas it was only 7% for the large scale survey (Table 5).

Table 1. "How often do you use the SALC?"

	Regular Users	Large scale survey
Every day	<b>78.6%</b>	25.0%
Once a week	7.1%	15.7%
More than once a week	7.1%	<b>42.7%</b>
A few times a month	0.0%	12.3%
Once a month	0.0%	2.7%
Other	7.1%	1.7%

Table 2. "What time of the day do you usually come to the SALC?"

	Regular Users	Large scale survey
Mornings	24.1%	7.0%
Lunchtimes	<b>35.7%</b>	8.3%
Afternoon	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>79.0%</b>
Evenings	14.3%	5.7%

Table 3. "Have you applied for or completed any SALC modules?"

	Regular Users	Large scale survey
YES	<b>53.8%</b>	36.0%
NO	46.2%	64.0%

Table 4. “What area of the SALC are you using?”

	Regular Users	Large scale survey
Listening Station	3.0%	1.2%
Edutainment Booth	3.0%	10.5%
Multi-purpose Room	20.9%	19.6%
Speaking Booth	7.5%	2.0%
Writing PC Area	22.4%	6.7%
Group PC Access	<b>31.3%</b>	7.9%
Group Access Area	20.9%	11.1%
Individual Study Area	13.4%	7.6%
Reading Lounge	4.5%	4.4%
Just Borrowing Materials	0%	1.5%
Learning Advisory Room	1.5%	0%
Practice Center	14.9%	0.9%
Writing Center	16.4%	1.8%
ELI lounge	28.4%	<b>23.4%</b>
Other	6.0%	1.5%

Table 5. “Are you focusing on any particular language skill?”

	Regular Users	Large scale survey
Speaking	15.4%	<b>31.4%</b>
Reading	0%	2.1%
Writing	15.4%	13.3%
Listening	0%	11.5%
Vocabulary	0%	3%
Grammar	7.7%	0.6%
Exam preparation	7.7%	3.3%
More than one language skill	<b>46.2%</b>	7.4%
No	7.7%	22.8%
Other	0%	4.7%

From the Regular Users Diaries, it became quite obvious that Regular users have some different learning patterns compared with the students from the large scale survey. However, perhaps because the students' output was in a written format, their answers were limited to a certain extent. Thus, the results of the second survey led us to conduct semi-structured interviews with Regular users to gain a more in-depth insight into the characteristics of learners by focusing on the six abilities as described below.

### *Research Phase 3: Qualitative Semi-structured Interviews*

#### *Participants*

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Regular users to determine to what extent they exhibit characteristics of effective learners through their SALC usage. As the participants of the second survey did not often use/borrow SALC materials, this time, 12 participants were selected in three different ways to have a



strategic and purposive theoretical sample of students. They were chosen (1) by academic staff, (2) by administrative staff, and (3) based on the SALC material borrowing history. By using these three methods of finding participants, we could access different ‘types’ of students, or students with different SALC behaviors—though all had the common behavior of using the center more than once a week.

Assessment of learner autonomy is often considered as a challenging task in the field of self-access learning. In this research, the following six abilities were used to define effective language learners –

- Ability to analyze one's language needs
- Ability to set goals
- Ability to create a study plan
- Ability to select and use materials
- Ability to use learning strategies
- Ability to monitor and evaluate progress

As mentioned earlier, these six abilities were chosen based on a literature review of self-access and autonomous learning, and based on the principles of the SALC self-access courses which LAs run at the SALC. In the third survey, interview questions were formed in order to investigate to what extent Regular users show the six abilities. Some more general questions were also included, to get a more rounded picture of each learner's situation.

#### *Data analysis and findings*

Each interview was undertaken for 20-30 minutes, recorded with students' permission and confidentiality was assured. Students' response was assessed independently by two raters by using a rating system, ranging from 1-5. For example, if a student showed a clear understanding of one's language needs and could specify his/her needs by giving detail explanations, that student gets a “5” for “ability to analyze one's language needs”. During the assessment, two raters were not only asked to give scores to students' response but they were also asked to log the reason for giving a certain score to a certain student. In this way, all the score could be easily tracked with supporting evidence. All interviews were scored by two raters.

Prior to the administration of the assessment, the two raters conducted norming sessions to obtain an agreement on the scoring definitions. As two raters were LAs who run the SALC self-access courses and who are familiar with assessing students', no major problem was found during the norming sessions. Moreover, in order to check the validity, interview questions were piloted before being administered.

Table 6 shows the result of interviews rated by two raters focusing on the six abilities. Overall, Regular users who took the interview were able to answer the interview questions in detail, showing their high awareness towards language learning. In fact, the average score for each student was above ‘3.4’ as shown below. Higher scores were observed in questions related to ability to “analyze one's language needs (avg. 4.3)”, “select and use materials (avg. 4.4)”. On the other hand, lower scores were observed in questions related to

ability to “set goals (avg. 3.5)”, “create a study plan (avg. 3.3)”, and “evaluate learning progress (avg. 3.5)”.

Table 6. Results of interview rating

	Needs analysis	Goal setting	Planning	Materials	Evaluation	Learning Strategies	Avg.
Student 1	5	4	5	5	3.5	4.5	4.5
Student 2	5	5	3	4	3	5	4.3
Student 3	4.5	3.5	2	5	3	4	4
Student 4	4	3	2.5	4	4.5	3.5	3.8
Student 5	4	2.5	3	3	4	4.5	3.7
Student 6	4	3	3	4.5	3	3.5	3.6
Student 7	4	2	2	4	4	4.5	3.8
Student 8	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.4
Student 9	4	5	5	4.5	4	4	4.2
Student 10	4	2	2	4	3	3.5	3.4
Student 11	4.5	3	3	5	3	4	4
Student 12	4	4	4	5	3	4	4.1
Average	4.3	3.5	3.3	4.4	3.5	4.1	

The followings are examples of students' actual responses from the interview for higher scores (Language needs and Material usage) and lower scores (Goal-setting, Planning, and Evaluation).

Examples of students' answers for high scores:

Needs analysis (avg. 4.3)

- “I get nervous when I talk in front of other people. I need to speak more clearly.”
- “I want to communicate with people around the world and use English in my future career” (e. g. English teacher, translator, or not specific).
- “I need to get higher TOEIC scores in the listening (reading) section”
- “I want to study abroad in the future.”
- “It is difficult for me to understand what my teacher says. I need to improve my listening skill.”
- “My weakness is writing skill. I need to improve my essay writing.”
- “I want to improve my pronunciation. I am weak at pronouncing L and R.”

Material usage/selection (avg. 4.4)

- “I try to improve my listening skill by using DVDs. I usually take notes while watching.”
- “I choose TOEIC materials based on my weakness.”
- “I check if I can learn new words from the book.”
- “I check the material level and see if it is easy to understand.”
- “I use the same material again and again.”
- “I ask teacher/advisor/SALC staff/friends for advice and choose materials.”

Examples of students' answers for low scores:

Goal setting (avg. 3.5)

- “I study English for fun and usually don't set goals.”
- “I know it is better to set goals but I often cannot reach my goals.”
- “I want to become more fluent in English.” (*The goal is vague*)
- “I want to get 750 in TOEIC” (*Although the goal is to improve speaking fluency and the test does not have a speaking section.*)

Planning (avg.3.3)

- “I make a plan when I prepare for TOEIC” (*Doesn't make plans other than test study*)
- “I don't like the feeling of lagging behind the schedule. So I don't make a plan.”
- “I used to make plans but it was not so much effective.”

Evaluation (avg. 3.5)

- “I don't usually evaluate my progress.”
- “I use TOEIC score to see my progress.” (*However, the test does not evaluate speaking and writing skill, which the student wanted to improve*)
- “I see my progress if I feel more comfortable when I talk with people.”
- “I cannot evaluate speaking or writing by myself.”

The results indicate that although the Regular users tend to have many of the characteristics of effective language learners to some extent, their weaker areas were found in upper-level skills, such as “goal-setting”, “creating a study plan”, and “self-evaluation” skills, showing relatively weak metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive control.

### Metacognition: still the neglected variable?

In 2001, Wenden referred to metacognition as the “neglected variable” in SLA. Victori and Lockhart referred to it as “an area frequently slighted” (1995, p224). Metacognition came into recent educational discussion through the work of Flavell (1979). Brown (1987) defined it as “one's knowledge and control of one's own cognitive system” (1987, p66). Obviously of huge importance in any type of learning, it is our contention that it is vital importance to improving the effectiveness of our students' autonomous learning.

Although a relatively new research field, there have been some very influential and positive studies that have illustrated the benefit to learning outcomes of educational design that has metacognition as a central aim. As Wenden noted, metacognition is “a stable body of knowledge, though, of course, it may change over time” (Wenden, 1999, p436). Several research projects have examined both the role of metacognition, and the learning outcomes of projects designed to enhance it. In 1990, a study by Swanson showed that learners with low aptitude for a subject but high metacognitive ability could outperform learners with high aptitude but lower metacognitive ability. The Project to

Enhance Effective Learning in Australia (Gunstone, 1991), the Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education project in the UK (Adey and Shayer, 1994) and the work on situated metacognition in Cyprus (Georghidas, 2001) all clearly showed the learning benefits of curricula and teaching designed to promote metacognition.

In a self-access context, it would seem that metacognition is especially important, as unlike a classroom context, the teacher does not provide control of learning. In other words, a student may be autonomous in the sense of regularly choosing to use a self-access center, and making choices about what to do in the center, but without ‘knowledge of and control of’ their cognitive systems, the effectiveness and resulting learning outcomes of such choices may not be optimal. Although the research discussed above did not include a quantifiable measurement of learning outcomes, it did illustrate lower levels of metacognition. It is not too much of a leap to suggest that if students are not particularly aware of their existing knowledge, or able to control and monitor their learning, that it cannot be occurring in its most effective state. This is the case with the learners in this study.

### Conclusions, solutions and future directions

So are Regular SALC users effective autonomous learners? In our context, the answer is, in some ways, yes, in others, no.

“Autonomy is usually defined as the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one’s own learning” (Benson, 2001, p47). This does not simply mean the act of undertaking learning independently, but involves the ‘capacity’ to do so well. Our research indicates that on some levels, this capacity may not be sufficiently developed among SALC users. On a positive note, the regular users in this study did show some important elements of this capacity—

- the high number of regular users, and their positive attitudes towards self-access language learning, indicates a strong awareness of the benefits of such learning on their language improvement
- Regular users are capable of analyzing their language needs and choosing materials to have them with these needs
- Regular users can develop their own way of using the self-access learning center and materials
- Regular users are able to clearly describe their strengths and weakness and learning processes

However, two main points became clear from this study. Firstly, a very large proportion of students who choose to use the SALC do so without availing of support and training options available to them. Secondly, students may not have the metacognitive ability to undertake self-access learning in the most effective way. Despite the capacities they do possess, they do not tend to consistently monitor, regulate or evaluate their self-access learning outside of when they may have used the center's support

services, which explicitly prompt them to do so. As such, we now face two challenges—

- how to encourage learners to use the support systems
- how to specifically target metacognitive ability in learning

As so many students choose not to avail of support in their learning, it cannot be clear to them that such support may be necessary or beneficial. But just as Kjisik said in her analysis of the ALMS project, “It soon became evident in the research that the ‘between’, that is, the dialogue and the discourse in the counseling sessions, was of utmost importance to the process of learners “going meta”, reflecting and self-evaluating” (Kjisik, 2007, 117). Although as educators, we may know this, our learners may not. A possible solution to this issue would be to require students (optimally as Freshman) to undertake self-access work with an advisor, either individually, or through a course designed around learner training. If such a course could result in specific gains for learners, any demotivating possibility of its ‘required’ nature could be negated. What is of immediate importance to learners is that learning be effective. If educators desire learners to want to aim for the lofty lifelong goals of autonomous learning, perhaps the most direct route to engendering this mindset in students is through showing them the effectiveness that such learning can provide, and provide outside of the arenas of language learning, the self-access center, and the university or school. In this socio-cultural context, where learners have not internalized goals of autonomy, actual clear concrete learning gains may be paramount to engendering such beliefs, and showing that support can improve this learning initially.

Another direction is to make the services more appealing. Presently, all advising is offered only in learner's second language. Perhaps mother tongue advising as suggested by Riley (2003) might be more appealing to students. We are currently attempting to advertise the services more, through university-wide poster campaigns, class visits and voluntary workshops on how to use and benefit from the service. We continue to advertise our self-access courses, and do have a very high take up rate among Freshman students. Part of the reason for high take-up with these students may be that they are often prompted to use the SALC as an extension of their regular classes. Further integration between SALC and required coursework for all students may promote more use among senior students. If such integration could also encourage the use of the support services, more optimal learning may be achieved.

We also hope to create more materials to scaffold student learning without actually consulting an advisor. One example of this is a library of short DVDs on how to learn in different ways, and with different tools (i. e. how to use the internet to improve your English). Within each different materials section in the center, there are diagnostic and evaluation materials provided to help students assess and evaluate their ability for a specific skill (grammar, speaking etc.) by themselves. It is hoped that such endeavors will assist those learners who may not be convinced to seek learner help from an advisor.

In terms of improving metacognition, several initiatives are underway. A comparative analysis is being done between SALC users who have regularly availed of the support services (working regularly with an advisor in some way) and those who have not. This

will help us to understand to what extent our existing approaches are fostering such ability, and how they may need to be improved. It will also illustrate exactly why many students choose not to seek help. We are also testing a variety of scaffolding educational strategies specifically designed to foster metacognition. We also hope to undertake more direct dialogue with learners to understand what services they would like to use, and in what format such services should be delivered.

## References

- Benson, P & Voller, P (1997). *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning* Pearson Education Ltd: London.
- Brown, A. (1987). Metacognition, executive control, self-regulation, and other more mysterious mechanisms. In F. E. Weinert, & R. H. Kluwe (Eds.), *Metacognition, motivation, and understanding*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cohen L, Manion L & Morrison, K (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Dam, L. (2002). Why Focus on Learning rather than Teaching: From Theory to Practice. In Little, Dam & Timmer (Eds.) *Focus on Learning Rather than Teaching: How and Why?* (pp.18-36). Dublin: CLCS.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) (2005). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. CA: Sage.
- Dixon, D, & Baba, H & Cozens, P & Thomas, M (2006). *Independent Learning Schemes: A practical approach*. TESOL Arabia
- Flavell, J.H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring. *American Psychologist*, 34:10, 906-911.
- Gardner, D & Miller, L (1999). *Establishing Self-Access: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Georgiades, P (2004). From the general to the situation: 3 decades of metacognition *International Journal of Science Education*, 26:3, 365-383.
- Gremmo, M-J & Riley, P (1995). Autonomy, Self-Direction and Self Access in Language Teaching and Learning: The History of an Idea. *System*, Vol.23:2, 151-164.
- Hobbs, M. & Jones-Parry (2007). In the eye of the beholder: student opinions of language advisory services in two independent learning centres. In D. Gardner, (Ed.) *Learner Autonomy 10: Intergration and Support* Authentik: Dublin.
- Kjisik, F. (2007). Ten years in autonomy: reflections and research on the ALMS project. In D. Gardner, (Ed.) *Learner Autonomy 10: Intergration and Support*. Authentik: Dublin.
- Little, D (2000). Why Focus on Learning rather than Teaching. In Little, Dam & Timmer (Eds.) *Focus on Learning Rather than Teaching: Why and How?* (pp.3-15). CLCS: Dublin.
- Mozzon McPherson, M (2007). Supporting Independent Learning Environments: An analysis of structures and roles of language learning advisers, *System*, 35:1, 66-92.
- Reinders, H (2007). Big Brother is helping you: Supporting self-access language learning with a student monitoring system, *System*, 35:1, 93-111.
- Riley, P. (2003). Self-access as access to 'self': cultural variation in the notions of self and personhood. In D. Palfreyman & R. Smith (Eds.) *Learner Autonomy Across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Son, L. K (2007). Introduction: A Metacognitive Bridge, *European Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 19:4, 481-493.
- Strauss A & Corbin J (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedure and Techniques*, CA: Sage, Newbury Park.
- Swanson (1990). Influence of metacognitive knowledge and aptitude on problem solving. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82:2, 306-314.
- Thanasalous, D (2004). What is Learner Autonomy and How can in be Fostered? Retrieved June 6, 2008, from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Thanasoulas-Autonomy.html>.
- Toogood, S. (2006). VELA (Virtual English Language Adviser), *Independence*, 38, 14-15.

- Victori, M (2007). The development of learners' support mechanisms in a self access center and their implementation in a credit-based self-directed learning program, *System*, 35:1, 10-31.
- Victori, M. & Lockhart, W. (1995). Enhancing Metacognition in Self-Directed Language Learning, *System*, 23:2, 23-234.
- Vinkenvleugel, I., Lotoval, S. & Jones-Parry, J (2003). *Pathways to independence*. Paper presented at the Independent Association of Learning Oceania Conference, Melbourne.
- Voller, P (1997). Does the teacher have role in autonomous language learning? In Benson & Voller (Eds.) *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning* (pp.98-114). London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.
- Wenden, A (1999). An introduction to Metacognitive Knowledge and Beliefs in Language Learning: beyond the basis. *System* 27, 435-441.
- Wenden, A. (2001). Metacognitive Knowledge in SLA: the neglected variable. In M. P. Breen (Ed.) *Learner Contributions to Language Learning* (pp.44-64). Harlow: Pearson.
- Wenden, A. (2002). Learner Development in Language Learning. In *Applied Linguistics*, 23:1, 32-55.

—平成21年10月29日 受理—