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メタデータ	言語: 出版者: 琉球大学法文学部国際言語文化学科欧米系 公開日: 2017-02-20 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Watson, Kevin, Agawa, Grant メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/36286

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Kevin Watson & Grant Agawa

Introduction

Self-access centers in Japanese university English as Foreign Language (EFL) programs have spread over the past three decades, with 21 centers currently listed in the Japan Self-Access Center Registry as of 2015. However, the underlying theories backing certain centers may be called into question. For example, Benson (2011) states, "In many institutions, self-access centers have been established without any strong pedagogical rationale" (p. 11). Benson (2011) further explains that there is often an "assumption that self-access work will automatically lead to autonomy" (p. 11). In this article, we present and analyze the implementation of an integrated course-to-course and course-to-self-access center program. Changes to the program are predicated on several of Brown's (1995) elements for program development: Needs analysis, identification of goals and objectives, creation of materials, and evaluation. Granted, there are endless possibilities for the successful integration of a language program. However, in this study, the English language department creates and implements the use of a specialized vocabulary notebook, which stresses (a) support for the integration between the core language-skills courses (i.e., writing, listening, and speaking), (b) a link between those courses and student work in the self-access center, and (c) the development of the concomitant language learning skills that can transfer to other elements of the student learning experience. It is key to note that we do not claim that this specialized vocabulary notebook facilitates high-degrees of autonomy in language learning, a broader term with multiple components. Rather, we illustrate through analysis of opinion survey data that students perceived the specialized vocabulary notebook and

its constituent parts as supportive towards (a) course-to-course and course-to-self-access center integration and (b) student learning through the inculcation of new metacognitive skills and the fostering of a learning culture in the self-access center.

Self-access Language Learning

A confluence of research, particularly in the 1990' s (Dam 1995; Little 1996; Ushioda 1996; Lee, 1998;), propelled the literature on autonomy in foreign language learning and the spread of self-access centers. These centers are generally designed to provide students with resources and accessible self-regulating materials (Gardner & Miller, 1999) with the goal of developing students towards differentiating learning and independently striving towards greater target language proficiency. The term self-access incorporates materials and tasks that students are able to select at their own volition (Sheerin, 1991; Gardner & Miller, 1999). However, the assumption that Japanese freshman university students have the requisite mindset about language learning and metacognitive language learning skills to perform effective self-access for EFL learning is tenuous at best. This is due to the majority of Japanese students being indoctrinated into a concentration on rote-memorization skills in the nation-wide secondary schooling curriculum in preparation for formal testing (Nordquist, 1993; McVeigh, 2002). This contributes to the notion that not all language learners are at a fitting point of readiness for successful autonomy in language learning in relation to learner beliefs (Cotterall, 1995). Cotterall (1995) shows through analysis of student survey responses that particular students may still believe that teacher-prescriptive approaches benefit them to a greater extent than students being given the responsibility in their own language learning. Along this vein, at the university in the context of this case study, previously unpublished in-house reports through informal surveys (needs analysis) identified that a

majority. In the context of this study, these are primarily Japanese first-year university English language majors. Considering these viewpoints on self-access language learning, the program developers in this context created a specialized vocabulary notebook for students and created an integration program for its successful usage. The use of the notebook facilitates integration at both the course-to-course level and course-to-self access center level.

Simply supplying language learning materials, purchasing proper equipment, and even requiring students to spend a certain number of hours per semester in self-access centers assists students in the independent language learning process. Yet, the efficacy of such considerations may, at the same time, be called into question (Morrison, 2011) in that ways for learners to evaluate their own learning progress may be necessary (Gardner, 2001). On point to this, Mynard (2006) puts forth several options to promote learners evaluating their own progress, through first-person narratives, interviews, learner journals, observations, and frameworks. This falls in line with Watson and Agawa's (2013) definition of mobile learners and their ability to synthesize information and to understand how to function as a learner with that information.

Gap in the Literature

Vocabulary notebooks are certainly not a new concept, and the Fowle (2002) notebook system offers an example of how a vocabulary notebook was implemented across the curriculum. However, more can be researched into how a vocabulary notebook can be utilized to integrate courses and link those courses to a self-access center. In a similar way, various reports on self-access centers have been completed (Koyalán, 2009; Krug, Wurzinger, Hughes, Vye, 2011) and numerous suggestions for self-access center materials have been made (Gardner, 2001; Kranker & Servais,

2013; Tomlinson, 2010; Reinders & Lewis, 2006; Reinders, 2011). Yet, there are limited reports linking the self-access center to regular courses in an integrated manner. In particular, there is a need to investigate how programs relate what students accomplish in the self-access center with their regular core EFL courses (Reinders & Lazaro, 2011). Further, the review of the literature reveals a lack of vocabulary-related studies in self-access centers. Along this vein, we formulate two key research questions under which key survey items orbit.

Research question 1: Do students perceive the integrated nature of the self-access center vocabulary notebook with core courses as having enhanced their learning? By perceiving the integrated nature of the vocabulary notebook, we concentrated on questions relating to the ways in which the notebook was used in multiple courses as well as in the self-access center. We hypothesize that students will perceive the integration process (time-on-task in the self-access center and in core courses) as advantageous in their learning process.

Research question 2: To what extent do students perceive enhancement in learning in terms of (a) perceived gains in vocabulary knowledge, (b) new vocabulary learning strategies, and (c) general language learning motivation through the implementation of this vocabulary notebook into the curriculum? We hypothesize that students will perceive the vocabulary notebook as having provided structure to their learning, introduced new skills, and made their learning observable, all of which can contribute to gains in learner motivation.

Methodology

Context of the Study: The Past

Upon curriculum review in 2011, the head of curriculum found that the self-access center of this Japanese university did not have specifically

stated goals and objectives that students and teachers are aware of. Heretofore, course instructors commonly placed worksheets for students to retrieve and complete in the self-access center. However, reviewers became aware that there were minimal materials that provided meaningful experiences that the students could access on their own. The previous worksheets in the self-access center were tantamount to mechanical language drills (Paulston, 1972) and review of in-class work. Students completing homework in a self-access is certainly independent study; however, it cannot be stated to be fostering autonomy, as there is no support of advising nor are there new materials for students to discover and select on their own to foster self-access learning. Related to self-access learning, Holec (1981) defines autonomy as a student's "ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). Also referring homework completion in a self-access center, McMurry, Tanner, and Anderson (2009) state, "In fact, full-autonomy would involve complete self-access, whereas homework uses the least amount of self-access," basing their comment on Jones' (1998) study on adult foreign language learners, which implies that "research into autonomous learning should be seen as central to SLA" (p. 403). Based on the review of the literature and meetings with the Dean of the communication faculty, in early 2013, prior to the commencement of the 2013 Japanese academic year, a complete overhaul of the erstwhile self-access center homework retrieval system was called for. As a trial effort, the overhaul was specifically aimed at incoming first-year students at this university, and if successful, a similar system might be applied to other second and third-year students.

In this university's context, students are required to spend twenty hours per semester in the self-access center, and their time is tracked by library and self-access center staff. During the needs analysis interviews with self-access center staff, they revealed that these hours were left unallocated, which resulted in students frequently chatting or

sleeping in the self-access center. Certainly, there were students who were completing the aforementioned homework worksheets, assigned by reading, listening, speaking and writing course instructors. However, these drill-based worksheets evince a lack of understanding of (a) human learning (b) student guidance through mentoring, and (c) autonomy supporting behavior. Self-access center and library staff observation statements include students retrieved worksheets from self-access center materials drawers yet often did not complete them in the self-access center, preferring to either sleep or chat with friends. Further, self-access center staff complaints have consistently been that students do not know what to do with their time, despite wanting to improve their language skills (lack of guidance). Referring again to Cotterall (1995), not all students are at a point of readiness for successful learner autonomy. For these reasons, the worksheet retrieval system was deemed superannuated by a new team of course designers.

The Present: Program Development

Starting in the 2013 academic school year, the university began to use the course books (a) *Q Skills: Reading & writing* and (b) *Q Skills: Listening and speaking* for first-year students. The contents of these course books were disseminated over our four skills courses: Reading sections were completed in reading courses, listening sections were completed in listening courses, and so forth. This led to integration between courses through thematic units; however, the Dean and curriculum committee decided that additional course-to-course support was necessary. This realization served as an impetus for the self-access center vocabulary notebook. Prior to the creation of the notebook, however, a needs analysis was critical. Needs analysis in the form of interviews with the Dean of the Faculty of Communication, self-access center staff, and teachers were completed. These interviews resulted in a system analysis in which we were referred to the previously mentioned

an in-house report. This report revealed through opinion survey data that students wanted to improve their English but did not know how (lack of metacognitive language learning strategies and skills). The needs analysis also involved behavior observations of students in the self-access center, corroborating self-access center staff's identification of students off-task in terms of studying during their required self-access center time. Further, a review of literature on self-access centers assisted in the establishment of key theoretical considerations for future directions of the program development process.

The overarching goal of the vocabulary notebook is to support the integration between core courses (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and between those courses and the self-access center, by creating a system of learning for students. Moving from that goal to objectives, we selected key words from Gronlund's (1985) observable language and study behaviors.

Participants

Participants in this study (evaluation phase) were 106 first-year Japanese university students. However, due to participant mortality, the final count of participants is 95. Of these 95 participants, 31 were male, 58 were female, and 6 students did not respond to this prompt. These participants range from 18-19 years of age with a total mean TOEIC score of 275.8 (mean listening 163, mean reading 113.9). This TOEIC test was taken prior to commencement of classes for first-year students, and it signifies an overall low-level of English proficiency. Each semester, these students have four core English classes (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) at 100 minutes each and a once-a-week self-access center time requirement of 100 minutes (one class period) over a fourteen-week semester. Students sign in for their required self-access center time at the front desk of the center for student tracking. There are 20 class periods per week (4 a day, 5 days per week), and

first-year students are separated and spread out across these time periods for their once a week requirement.

Materials of this Study

Likert survey

In the context of this study, students were given surveys at the commencement of their 100-minute self-access center period, which was deemed enough time to complete the 21-item Likert survey. In the context of this case study, two full-time self-access center staff worked together in checking student surveys upon submission in order to ensure that students answered primary survey question items. Not all students have their self-access center period at the same time. These required periods are spread out for students throughout the day and week, and this greatly assisted the self-access center staff in the distribution and collection of surveys. A point by Dornyei (2003) is the issue of difficult language on surveys. We accounted for this issue through the use of a completely translated survey into the students' L1 (Japanese). Additionally, jargon words were not used in survey items.

Specifically, we utilize an opinion survey. In opinion surveys, Brown (1995) explains "A series of questions might be developed to determine what teachers think about the existing program, its objective, the materials, test, and so forth" (p. 50). In terms of reliability for surveys, Brown (1997) states, "Reliability is affected by many factors, but from the researcher's point of view, the three most important factors are the length (or total number of questions), the quality of the questions, and the fit to the group being measured" (p. 19). The survey instrument in this current study makes use of 21 questions, which are designed by two researchers and matched to the understanding and context of the participants.

Vocabulary notebook components

The specially designed self-access vocabulary notebook consisted of ten chapters to match the number of units in the utilized course books, *Q Skills: Reading and writing* and *Q Skills: Listening and speaking*. Each vocabulary notebook chapter consisted of a set of various components, which are utilized in all courses and settings and included a procedure that students followed involved five major stages:

As previously mentioned, prior to the start of the vocabulary book usage, the self-access center administrator orientated students with a formal 20-minute presentation on the workbook's purpose, use, and connection to other core language courses (listening, speaking, and writing). Referring back to the study by Reinders and Lazarou (2011), it was found that many self-access centers were not orientating learners on the use of self-access centers in other countries.

Coding and Reliability

A five-point Likert-scale serves as the basis for data collection with student response to prompt items ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) uncertain, (4), agree, and (5) strongly agree. Students completed the surveys in the self-access center in week eight of fourteen during the first semester of the 2013 academic year. One of two self-access center staff checked student surveys for completion of the Likert-scale items resulting in all questions for 95 students answered. Descriptive statistics represent student reactions to and perceptions of the structured vocabulary notebook. With respect to coding, survey question items specifically relate to research questions 1 and 2, listed below.

We group the following survey question items around the overall topic for research question 1: Do students perceive the integrated nature of the self-access center vocabulary notebook with courses as having enhanced

their learning?

Table 1. *Survey questions for analysis I*

1. I enjoy the book (Question 2)
2. I like bringing the vocabulary book to classes because it links the SAC to my classes. (Question 6)
3. My listening teachers support my vocabulary notebook vocabulary learning. (Question 10)
4. My writing teachers support my vocabulary notebook vocabulary learning. (Question 11)
5. My communication teachers support my vocabulary notebook and vocabulary learning. (Question 12)

Concerning research question 2, we assorted the subsequent survey questions around research question 2: To what extent do students perceive enhancement in learning in terms of (a) perceived gains in vocabulary knowledge, (b) new vocabulary learning strategies, and (c) general language learning motivation through the implementation of this course book into the curriculum?

Table 2. *Survey Questions for Analysis II*

1. The vocabulary book helps me to learn English. (Question 1)
2. The vocabulary book helps me to concentrate in the self-access center. (Question 3)
3. The book motivates me to study harder. (Question 4)
4. The vocabulary notebook gives me strategies in learning English. (Question 5)
5. The listening quiz helps me to recall my self-access center notebook words. (Question 7)

Other survey question items (not stated in table 1 and 2 above) serve a different purpose, not relevant to this study but to the improvement and pragmatic use of the SAC book at the university in this study.

To enhance credibility of findings for any study, we attend to reliability issues in the analysis of data. As the opinion survey meets the necessary assumptions for Chronbach alpha, we analyze reliability for research questions one and two separately in order to gain an understanding of correlations within those sets of questions.

Results

Table 3 displays student responses to questions specifically related to research question 1: student reactions to core course integration and the self-access center through the vocabulary workbook.

Table 3. Student Responses to Integration of the Self-access Center and Core Courses

Prompt	Standard Deviation	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy the vocabulary book	0.948	3.44	5.26%	6.32%	37.89%	40%	10.53%
I like bringing the vocabulary notebook to classes because it links the SAC to my classes	0.950	3.95	3.16%	1.05%	25.26%	37.89%	32.63%
My listening teachers support my SAC book vocabulary learning	0.869	3.78	3.16%	0.00%	31.58%	45.26%	20.00%
My writing teachers support my SAC book vocabulary learning	0.924	3.66	4.21%	1.05%	36.84%	40.00%	17.89%
My communication teachers support my SAC book vocabulary learning	0.894	3.74	3.16%	2.11%	30.53%	42.26%	19.95%

The data reveals areas of improvement in this system of learning. For example, only 50.53% students responded they enjoyed working on the book (question 2), which suggests more investigation into how this can be accomplished. Meetings will be held with respect to this finding. On a positive note, as the book was integrated with the listening, speaking and writing courses, this could have contributed to the total of 70.52% of student showing positive reactions to bringing their self-access center vocabulary notebooks to their core courses (question 6). Of this 70.52%, 37.89% agreed and 32.63% strongly agreed that they liked to bring their vocabulary notebooks to their regular courses. With respect to questions 10, 11, and 12, only 3.16% of students in listening classes, 5.26% of students in writing (Strongly disagree

+ disagree) and 6.90% of students in communication (strongly disagree + disagree) did not agree to their teacher' s support of the vocabulary notebook in class. It should be noted that the vocabulary notebook only consisted of 10 units to match the 10 units of the course books, *Q Skills*. It was not meant to be used in all 14 classes of the semester because needs analysis had revealed that the administration wanted to allow students time in the self-access center to pursue other interest in terms of language learning. However, this time allotted for extra studies was not monitored or measured in any way. Future analysis may be in terms of what students actually do during self-access center hours if they are not guided. While the reading course appears non-integrated, the students did obtain the weekly target vocabulary through self-access center readings that were specifically and thematically linked to the reading course.

Despite these promising results at first glance, it is critical to note Chronbach alpha scores for table 4 resulted in 0.814664 ($k=5$, $\Sigma \text{ var} = 4.212742$, $\text{var} = 12.09263$) leaving room for improvement.

Table 4. *Student Perception of Learning I*

Prompt	Standard Deviation	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The vocabulary book helps me to learn English.	0.839	3.98	2.11%	4.21%	10.53%	58.95%	24.21%
The vocabulary book helps me in the SAC	0.940	3.97	3.16%	2.11%	20%	43.16%	31.58%
The vocabulary book motivates me to study harder	0.959	3.55	3.16%	8.42%	33.68%	38.95%	15.79%
The SAC book gives me strategies in learning English	0.950	3.21	6.32%	10.53%	46.32%	29.47%	7.37%
The listening quiz helps me recall my SAC book words	0.893	3.64	3.16%	1.05%	42.11%	35.79%	17.89%

4b. *Student Perception of Learning II*

	Yes	No
After this semester, will you continue to study vocabulary using the book?	84.21%	13.68%
Teachers help me in the SAC.	70.53	20%

Table 4, above, displays participant responses to survey items that relate to research question 2. Survey item 1 shows that students who agreed and strongly agreed that the book helped them to learn English was 83.16% (agree 58.95% and strongly agree 24.21%). A positive effect of the book for self-access center staff was evinced by 74.74% students felt that the book helped them to concentrate in the self-access center (question 3, agree 58.95% and strongly agree 24.21%). Post-interviews with self-access center staff found them to be satisfied with students now generally on-task in terms of studying in the self-access center. During needs analysis interviews, self-access center staff had identified students not effectively using their time during their required self-access center hours (i.e., chatting with friends, browsing the Internet). Although motivation is a complex construct to measure, 54.74% of students felt that the book motivated them to study harder (question 4, agree 38.95% and strongly agree 15.79%). Future versions of the survey could do

well to ask additional cross-referencing questions. On a positive note, 53.68% of students felt the listening quizzes help vocabulary (question 7, agree 35.79% and strongly agree 17.89%). Of note is the 84.21% of students who indicated intentions to continue using the vocabulary notebook in the next semester. Chronbach alpha test for survey items 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 resulted in 0.840 ($k=5$, $\sum \text{var}=4.210526316$, $\text{var} =12.84587258$). This is a "good" rating but it shows that changes should be strived for in a future version of this paper and opinion survey.

The data revealed that 70.53% students felt teachers helped them in the self-access center, which could be a call for instructors to place greater effort into assisting students in the self-access center. Instructors are currently required to spend one period (100 minutes) in the self-access center per week. However, we do point out that the notebook is meant to foster basic foundational skills for self-access learning. After a few weeks of familiarization, faculty and staff observed that students did not need as much teacher support in the self-access center to complete their vocabulary graphic organizer sheets. During behavior observation and follow up interviews with self-access center staff (evaluation stage of curriculum/program development), it seemed that students gained the skills necessary to complete their self-access center hour tasks.

At the lower end of the spectrum, results for questions 14 and 15 hint at more areas of the program that could use improvement. Question 14, "I read the complete stories on the computer" resulted in a mean of 3.2. In a similar way, question 15, "I understand the stories on the computer," resulted in a mean of 3.21. From this data, it is evident that more can be done to scaffold the readings in the self-access center. A suggested plan of action for the upcoming semester is to add pre-reading questions that relate to student lives to each of the ten readings in the self-access center. Further, the addition of pictures to those readings could assist in activating background

knowledge of students or enhance contextual understanding prior to reading. Last, further integration into reading courses would be a rational next step. This could be accomplished through extension of comprehension questions following the readings. It was due to logistical constraints that the reading course was not involved in this initial program development endeavor.

Discussion

Referring to the findings of the Leeke and Shaw (2000) study, they found that the majority of participants did not exhibit the metacognitive skills or agency to meticulously maintain vocabulary learning notebooks. Relating Leeke and Shaw' s (2000) results this current investigation with Japanese learners, it is evident that if provided appropriate orientation, structure and teacher support, Japanese learners will use vocabulary notebooks (97% completion rate in first semester and 85% completion rate in second semester of this study) and find it beneficial to their learning (see table 2). In the context of this study, the two Japanese staff orientated students on the use of the vocabulary notebook (20-minute session), and their checking of notebook chapters for completion led to a structured learning system. Additionally, language teachers supported use of the vocabulary notebook by using the tasks, specific to their course, in their lessons (i.e., using vocabulary quizzes from the book in their listening class, and using communication tasks in the book in the communication class).

Recalling the aforementioned Walters and Bozkurt (2009) study, this study supports their results. Walters and Bozkurt' s (2009) findings had shown that vocabulary notebooks have a significant effect on student vocabulary learning. While there was no testing phase in this study, a number of students did perceive working on the notebooks as beneficial in their learning (see table 4, question 1). As a side note, with respect to autonomy, Walters and Bozkurt (2009) measure autonomy through the students'

responses on whether or not they would continue to use the vocabulary notebooks in the future. In our study, question 16 shows 84.21% of students stating that they intend to continue the vocabulary book in the future, while 13.68% said they would not. However, we do acknowledge that autonomy is a much larger concept that should be operationalized and measured in more rigorous detail in future versions of the opinion survey.

In a similar manner to the Fowle (2002) investigation, there were overall positive reactions by students to the implementation of the specialized vocabulary notebook in this study. For instance, students felt that the time on task contributed to their learning (see table 2 questions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7). In the Fowle (2002) study, the students stated working on a vocabulary notebook “makes me more diligent” which relates to the Japanese students in this study who felt that the process of reading and completing vocabulary worksheets helped them to concentrate in the self-access center (question 3) and motivated them to study harder (question 4). Self-access center staff are generally appreciative of the new system due to the observed student behavioral changes in terms of time-on-task and studying in the self-access center.

Implications

This study serves as one example of how an EFL department applied the elements of program development, as suggested by Brown (1995): Needs analysis, goals and objectives, materials, and evaluation (testing is forthcoming). We support Brown’s (1995) contention that it is not by one individual but through a joint effort involving the administration, teachers, materials developers, among others that leads to effective and successful program development.

Limitations

Likewise to any study, there are important limitations to address concerning the interpretation of the data collected and analyzed in this study. In terms of needs analysis, Brown (1995) specifies four stakeholders: target group, audience, needs analysts, and resource groups. From these categories, it should be pointed out that prior to the creation of the vocabulary notebook and system implementation, students were not interviewed in terms of their vocabulary learning needs. However, the creators of the vocabulary notebook had been teaching and observing these students and their learning styles for three years in this particular context prior to creation of the notebook. In that program development is cyclic in nature, the survey in this study (evaluation) does serve as a form of needs analysis because the information collected can be used to make changes to future versions of the vocabulary notebook and learning system (curriculum).

A second limitation is the issue of generalizability. This particular learning system may not be feasible in other university programs due to varying degrees of instructor participation or support from administration and Japanese staff. In the context of this study, teacher orientation to the use of the SAC book in their courses required a great deal of planning and effort following elements of program development suggested by Brown (1995). Two full-time Japanese staff members in the self-access center and the Dean of the communication faculty encouraged the use of the vocabulary notebook in core language courses facilitating integration.

A third source of critique may be that this self-access center vocabulary notebook is not facilitating a high-degree autonomy in language learning, despite that being the primary goal of many self-access centers. In fact, Jones (1998) considers homework completion as teacher directed and minimum in learner independence, as opposed to the facilitation of autonomy and self-directed language learning. That may be true, however,

we remind readers that this vocabulary notebook's learning outcome is to concomitantly develop important metacognitive language learning skills in first-year Japanese students, many of whom are not at the appropriate readiness point for effective autonomy in EFL learning (in terms of their attitudes and beliefs). These skills serve as one of the building blocks to later higher degrees of autonomy in L2 learning. This vocabulary notebook is but one step for first-year Japanese university students, which can be expanded in students second-year of study through different means. That being said, much different materials are currently in-use for second year students that work towards facilitating higher degrees of learner autonomy, and building on skills and culture of learning that was fostered in the students' first year.

A fourth point of criticism may be the deliberate vocabulary learning (or rote) component of the vocabulary notebook. However, we argue that such comments show limitations of critics themselves in that they are only able to see one component of the book and not the overall goal or way in which it supported integration and teacher collaboration. Additional components to consider are the communication and writing tasks that (a) engaged students through vocabulary use, (b) made learning observable, and (c) recycled target vocabulary in other courses. The component differentiated tasks attend to various modes of learning. Additionally, there are metacognitive vocabulary learning skills that are fostered through use of the book. To say this book uses rote-learning and dismiss the book is a first impression of some incoming novice instructors to this university. However, we argue that such viewpoints show a lack of an appropriate knowledge base in terms of human learning and seeing the larger picture of how the notebook supports the curriculum (course-to-course and course-to-self access center).

Fifth is the lack of longitudinal data, which would clearly contribute to administration and teacher understanding of student reactions and attitudes towards the integrated system over time. We suggest a follow up

survey at the end of the second semester for future evaluation of this portion of the new curriculum. In addition to following up on the use of this system, comparisons of student perceptions of learning through work at self-access centers in other Japanese universities may provide generalizable data for instructors and administration of English language departments in Japan.

A sixth limitation is the missing testing element of program development. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to create a vocabulary pretest to determine whether target vocabulary in the readings were at, below, or above the level of incoming first-year students. As previously mentioned, to cope with logistical issues, a team of 3 instructors (combined 25 years of teaching experience in various educational settings) held a meeting to select target vocabulary words from the *Q:Skills* course books which would be incorporated into the self-access center reading texts. The next logical step would be to create both pre- and posttests for the next cohort of students in order to not only measure suitability of target words, but also measure learner gains with target vocabulary.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate an EFL department' s program development efforts to make a connection between core language classes and the self-access center. This was predicated on a perceived lack of integration between self-access center student work and in-class work, a problem identified by Reinders and Lazarro (2011), in combination with findings from this Japanese university' s in-house reports and various forms of needs analysis. The English department' s curriculum change followed key elements of program development as put forth by Brown (1995): needs analysis, identification of goals and objectives, materials creation, and evaluation. In this context, curriculum designers, teachers, and self-access center staff cooperated to meet this challenge through target vocabulary

and the use of a specialized vocabulary notebook (specialized collaboratively designed materials). As a result of this joint enterprise, analysis reveals overall positive student perceptions to (a) the integration between self-access center work and regular core language courses and (b) learning though maintaining the vocabulary notebook. However, areas of improvement have also been highlighted through analysis of the opinion survey data with respect to materials. The encouraging outcomes found in this inquiry could not be achieved without the collective efforts of the different groups involved. This is certainly a call for more research into collaboratively designed integrated systems of program development in other university EFL programs.

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Abstract

この調査は、ある日本の大学における EFL プログラムの、ブラウン (1995) 提唱のカリキュラム発展 4 要素 (ニーズ分析、ゴールと対象の定義、教材作成、評価) との協同的応用事例を示すものである。カリキュラム作成者はボキャブラリー・ノートブックの活用を通し集約される、4 つの言語技能コースを編成し、かつこれらのコースを語学自学習センターにおける活動と関連付けた。評価に関し、(a) 各コースと語学自学習センター活動の統合、(b) ボキャブラリー・ノートブックを通した「学習すること」への見解、それぞれにおいて学生からの全般的な好反応が、調査データの分析より明らかになった。加えて、これらの調査データはこのカリキュラムにおける教材に改善の余地があることを明らかにした。これらの発見から、この教育機関における継続的かつ循環的なカリキュラム発展のための将来的な方向性が明らかとなるであろう。