

Wednesday 3 June **12:00pm - 12:40pm** Room: Block Y, Room Y301

Presentation Title: The assessment of learner autonomy: Where is the autonomy?

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Theme:	Assessment in self-directed learning
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

There are various pressures on educators in learning environments where autonomous language learning is facilitated, to provide evidence of the effectiveness of those autonomous learning practices. This suggests that some form of assessment would be valuable, yet the notion of assessing learner autonomy (LA) can seem counter-intuitive: if learners are successfully autonomous, then will they not also be successful language users, and is this not enough evidence that autonomous learning is justified?

Despite such debates in the literature about the assessment of LA, little is known about what actually happens in practice. In this paper I report on a piece of research using questionnaires and interviews to investigate the beliefs and self-reported practices of LA assessment amongst tertiary-level ELT professionals who aim to foster the development of LA. One major finding from the study is that assessment is widely practiced, but there is a gap between educators' beliefs about what learner autonomy is, and how the assessment of students is carried out. I will argue that (self-) assessment of the non-linguistic learning outcomes of learner autonomy can be useful for learners and educators alike, and that practitioners must develop their practice to foster autonomous assessment as well as autonomous learning.

Biodata

Lucy Cooker began her career teaching English in Japan and then studied for her Masters degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. In 1999 she returned to Japan as a Lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies where she set up the self-access learning centre (SALC). The KUIS SALC is now a state-of-the-art learning facility catering to the needs of over 3000 students with a team of dedicated learning advisors. In 2003 the SALC won a MEXT Best Practice award for the learning advisory system. Lucy was responsible for founding the Japan Association of Self-Access Learning (JASAL) in 2005, and was subsequently elected Vice President. She is continuing with her work as a Consultant to the SALC whilst studying for a full-time PhD with Barbara Sinclair and Richard Pemberton at the University of Nottingham, UK.