



Online resources to support international students' English language development

Final Report 2015

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List of acronyms used

Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL)

Centre for Language Studies International Conference, National University of Singapore (CLaSIC)

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW)

Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik (GAL) (applied linguistics conference in Marburg, Germany)

Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA)

Higher Education Research Group of Adelaide (HERGA)

Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT)

Online Writing and Learning Link (OWLL)

Pre-Enrolment English Program, The University of Adelaide (PEP)

The Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

Executive summary

Issues and context

Excellent written and oral communication skills are central to most universities' graduate attributes. These vital skills enable students to demonstrate their discipline understanding without obscuring their knowledge due to poor expression. Despite the range of existing resources for written and oral communication skills, there is a need for new materials that are unique, humorous, and interactive, and therefore more engaging for students.

Existing resources for international students vary in quality. There are some excellent English books with practical exercises, such as Raymond Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*. There are also some informative websites, such as the University of Hull's [Academic Writing Style](#) (AWS) site; Andy Gillett's [Using English for Academic Purposes](#) (UEfAP); RMIT's [Learning Lab](#); Purdue's [Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL); and Massey University's [Online Writing and Learning Link](#) (OWLL). These sites, however, are not always engaging or visually appealing. The AWS, UEfAP and OWL sites, for example, do not have interactive exercises. RMIT's *Learning Lab* does have these, providing students with more accessible material, but does not include detailed English as an Additional Language (EAL) grammar material. Massey's *OWLL* provides two excellent dynamic features in its APA interactive and Assignment Planning Calculator, but has no other interactive elements or any material specifically designed for international students. Moreover, none of these websites has videos to make their resources more multidimensional and attractive. Despite the emergence of educational websites, then, there is a clear potential for improvement.

Aim of the project

The project involved the creation of videos, interactive exercises, explanations and teachers' notes to be shared on the open access English for Uni website. The resources address five areas of English which the project leader's twenty years of English teaching experience have shown to be extremely difficult for learners: (1) the passive voice; (2) prepositions in academic writing; (3) conditionals; (4) tenses in academic writing; and (5) essay writing and referencing in Australia.

This project emerged from an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) seed project (Miller, 2012) involving the development of an educational resource on the use of the English article system (the words *a*, *an* and *the*). The wide uptake of the seed grant project and positive feedback via online evaluation indicated the great willingness of students and teachers to engage with high quality resources of this type, with the chance to make a real impact on student learning.

Project approach

Regular consultation was essential to the completion of the project. At the outset, this entailed trialling pilot video resources with the target audience (university students). As the

project progressed, there was consistent consultation between the project team members, the external evaluator, reference group members and the OLT.

The project team included members from various University of Adelaide faculties, as well as lecturers from universities from other states and in China, and they assisted in developing exercises based on the text from each of the five videos.

The reference group was drawn from several national and international institutions, and provided occasional evaluation of the project together with advice on the design, implementation and dissemination of the project materials.

Where necessary, intra-university liaisons were pursued (e.g. web-related assistance from The University of Adelaide's Marketing and Communications Group Online Media section, and reliance on the The University of Adelaide's Faculty of Professions to maintain the long term viability of the website). Formative and summative evaluation of the new resources and their use by students and lecturers was conducted by an experienced external evaluator.

The project leader had already worked closely with film producer Mike Piper of Piper Films on the seed grant project. This previous experience meant that Mr Piper was fully aware of the educational outcomes intended by the new project and had already shared many ideas for the proposed project, including suggestions for filming locations and storylines.

Project information was regularly disseminated throughout the year, through university-based lectures and workshops, academic conferences, online student portals, social media, other online settings and print media.

Outcomes and outputs

The following tangible outcomes were achieved as a result of the [English for Uni](#) project:

- Completion of five new web pages assisting students with English grammar and essay writing skills and updating of existing materials on articles
- Innovative, humorous videos for each area, available online and on DVD
- Explanations of the material for each area
- Interactive online exercises for each area
- Printable materials, downloadable PowerPoint materials and teachers' notes for each area
- Signposts to other longstanding and high quality academic skills websites (e.g. Purdue OWL)
- Information about related grammar points in other languages (French, Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese)

The site can be viewed equally well on Explorer, Firefox and Chrome, and the videos are also available on a DVD. The videos are also available in China on YouKu. Furthermore, the site has received an average of 1216 pageviews/week since its inception, with a peak of 4710 hits in the week of November 9, 2014. The high return rate of 38 percent

demonstrates that users are finding the site very worthwhile. (There is no academic research on return rates, but anything over 30 percent is regarded as favourable in industry terms (measureful, 2013).)

Surveys and external evaluation suggest that the following intangible outcomes have been achieved:

- Self-assessed ability to generate correct sentences and write good essays increased following use of the site, with 91.5 percent (n=82) of the student survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the site had stimulated their interest and 94 percent (n=51) agreeing or strongly agreeing that the site offered clear explanations. These responses suggest that the project's goal of improved graduate communication skills in oral and written presentation was met.
- Improved argumentation skills and research understanding in EAL students (as suggested by survey data)
- Clearer understanding by EAL students of instructions on or in their assignments
- Better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines due to students' improved English skills, leading them to more comprehensible and accurate writing
- Increased global competence for international students learning English
- Increased student and teacher awareness of difficult English language areas (as suggested by survey data and focus groups)
- Better communication and interaction between Australian and international students, due to the latter's improved English skills
- Greater understanding of some language issues for students of Japanese, French, Portuguese, Chinese and Indonesian
- Greater expertise in online resource planning which the project team can share with colleagues in their institutions

Key findings

According to the external evaluator's final report, "it can be concluded that the OLT has funded an extremely useful resource, which, given on-going promotion, will continue to be widely used well into the future, making a valuable contribution not just to the learning of University of Adelaide students, nor just to international students, but to all students at English-medium universities".

Project impact

The project provided professional development for the project team, increased communication self-efficacy in students, generated a high-quality and well-received open-access online resource, and facilitated interdisciplinary and cross-institutional linkage. The resources are now being used world-wide and have generated interest in the local media.

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Chapter 1 – Project aims

Project context

Excellent written and oral communication skills are central to most universities' graduate attributes. Command of these areas is vital for international students' academic work, enabling them to demonstrate their discipline understanding without obscuring their knowledge due to poor expression. By contrast, "imperfect control [of a language] may, consciously or unconsciously, suggest imperfect knowledge" (Master, 1997, p. 216), and students may receive lower grades if they cannot express themselves as competently as a native speaker of English.

Existing resources for international students vary in quality. There are some excellent English books with practical exercises, such as Raymond Murphy's *English Grammar in Use*. There are also some informative websites, such as the University of Hull's [Academic Writing Style](#) site; Andy Gillett's [Using English for Academic Purposes](#); RMIT's [Learning Lab](#); Purdue's [Online Writing Lab](#); and Massey University's [Online Writing and Learning Link](#) (OWLL). These sites, however, are not always engaging or visually appealing. The University of Hull, *Using English for Academic Purposes* and Purdue sites, for example, do not have interactive on-screen exercises. RMIT's *Learning Lab* does allow this feature, making the site easier to use and providing students with more accessible material, but does not include detailed EAL grammar material. Massey's *OWLL* provides two excellent dynamic features in its APA interactive and Assignment Planning Calculator, but has no other opportunities for students to interact with the website, and has no material which is specifically designed for international students.

Despite the range of options now available to students, there are gaps in the resource market that have rarely been filled. Few resources move beyond a traditional exercise format or, where videos are concerned, beyond simple top-down instruction with a tutor and whiteboard. Furthermore, there are few resources exploiting humour, or supplying students with interactive exercises, even though studies have shown that students feel humour improves their learning (Torok, McMorris, & Lin, 2004) and motivation (Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin, 2010). The wide uptake of the project leader's OLT seed grant project and positive feedback via online evaluation (both nationally and internationally) indicated the great willingness of students and teachers to engage with high quality resources of this type, with the chance to make a real impact on student learning. This suggested a need for resources that are unique, humorous, and interactive, and the English for Uni website aimed to fill these vacancies.

Aims

Based on perceived gaps in the existing resource landscape, the current project aimed to deliver the following tangible outputs:

- Teaching videos for five difficult but essential language areas (essay writing, the passive voice, tenses in academic writing, prepositions and conditionals)
- Explanations of the material for each area
- Interactive and open access online exercises for each area
- Printable materials for each area
- Downloadable PowerPoint materials for each area
- Teachers' notes for each area
- Signposts to other longstanding academic skills websites
- Applications for learners of French, Japanese, Portuguese, Indonesian and Chinese (Mandarin)
- A self-contained HTML5 package that could be used in any Learning Management System (LMS) for students in any discipline who want to improve their language skills

The intangible outcomes specified in the project proposal were:

- Improved graduate communication skills in oral and written presentation
- Improved argumentation skills and research understanding in EAL students
- Better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines due to students' improved English skills, leading them to more comprehensible and accurate writing
- Increased global competence for international students learning English
- Increased student and teacher awareness of difficult English language areas
- Better communication and interaction between Australian and international students, due to the latter's improved English skills
- Greater understanding of language issues for Australian students of Japanese, French, Portuguese, Indonesian and Chinese (Mandarin)
- Greater expertise in online resource planning which the project team could share with colleagues in their institutions

Chapter 2 – Project methodology

Theoretical background

The theoretical framework underlying the design and assessment of the resources was Biggs’ Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy (2011), which was also used to evaluate the seed grant video. The SOLO taxonomy outlines a series of increasingly sophisticated steps through which a student progresses when learning a new subject.

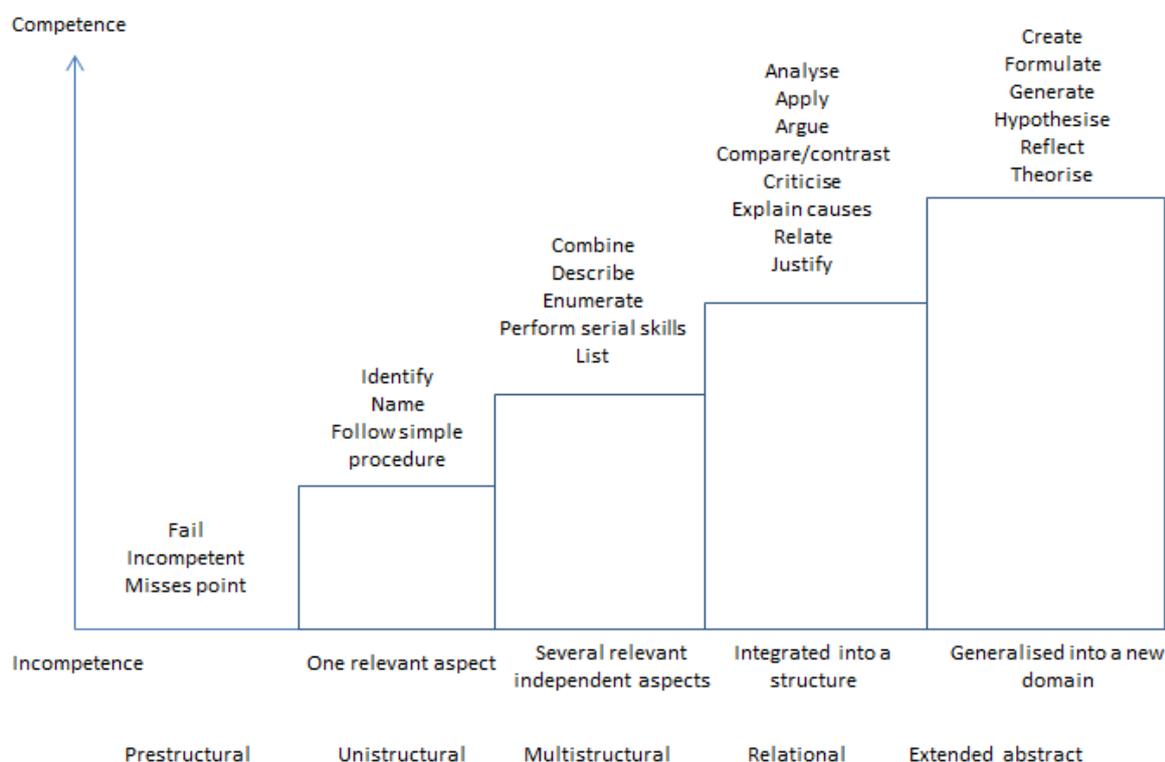


Figure 1: The SOLO taxonomy (Biggs, 2011)

Research on the seed grant materials suggests that students who used some of the materials in a lecture moved from what Biggs terms a “unistructural” to a “relational” level of competence. Importantly, an online survey framed around the SOLO taxonomy showed that 94 percent of student users of the seed grant resource agreed or strongly agreed that it would help them to use certain areas of grammar more accurately.

Assessment methods

Ethics approval for the project’s evaluation was obtained from the University of Adelaide’s Human Research Ethics Committee. The materials’ effectiveness in promoting independent learning was assessed using three main methods:

1. Focus groups were held mid-term (July 2014) and at the end of the project (December 2014), face-to-face and through Skype. Each set of focus groups was convened by an external evaluator (Kate Wilson from the University of Canberra), and involved international students from the the University of Adelaide's English Language Centre; international students and lecturers from different disciplines at Edith Cowan University; students at Henan University who also planned to study in Australia; teachers at the University of Adelaide's English Language Centre; and lecturers from language-based disciplines at the University of Adelaide.

2. An online survey was hyperlinked to the website to evaluate users' responses to the materials. Feedback was collected from both students (n = 68) and teachers (n = 39) (survey response figures at 20 February 2015).

3. Lectures were delivered to students from the University of Adelaide's English Language Centre, with content revolving around the language elements of two sets of materials. In each case, one set of students was given a lecture using the new materials and a control group was given a lecture using a more traditional method. Pre- and post-tests were conducted at the beginning and end of each lecture.

Project team and reference group

Regular consultation was essential to the completion of the project. At the outset, this entailed trialling pilot video resources with the target audience (university students). As the project progressed, there was consistent consultation between the project team, external evaluator (acting as a 'critical friend' in the initial stages of the project) and reference group.

Project team

A strong project team was drawn from members of the Education, French Studies and Asian Studies departments at the University of Adelaide, and lecturers at Edith Cowan University, Victoria University and Henan University. The team members were passionate about language and e-learning, and had an excellent working relationship with the project leader. They represented a range of disciplines and locations, providing a wider perspective on the resources than might have been obtained had The University of Adelaide partnered only with other Go8 universities. Edith Cowan University, for example, is a relatively new institution (1991), albeit based on a number of predecessor institutions, some with a long history, and has been commended by TEQSA for its post-enrolment English language assessment and learning support strategies. Victoria University is one of only five Australian multi-sector universities, partnering with TAFE to offer both vocational and higher education courses. This enabled the project to target a greater variety of students. Henan University is a partner with Victoria University, which made it an ideal testing ground for the materials, since many of their students study both in China and Australia.

Reference group

The reference group was drawn from several national and international institutions, including the Pre-Enrolment English Program (PEP) Advisory Committee of the University of

Adelaide's English Language Centre, Massey University in New Zealand, the University of South Australia, the University of Bergen, and the Centre for Language Studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The reference group provided occasional evaluation of the project together with advice on the design, implementation and dissemination of the project materials. Jyh Wee Sew from NUS was particularly helpful in providing feedback on the exercises and explanations, while Andrea Duff from UniSA acted in the videos.

Chapter 3 - Project outputs and findings

Project material

The final product consists of an open-access educational website addressing articles (*a*, *an* and *the*), conditionals, the passive voice, prepositions, tenses, essay writing and academic oral presentation skills. Each of the seven main pages incorporates a video providing a context to explain the form and meaning of the grammar topic or academic genre, as well as a series of interactive exercises in which students are offered immediate feedback with explanations. All the pages also include teachers' notes and PowerPoints, and all except the oral presentation skills page have a brief comparison with other languages (Chinese, French, Indonesian, Japanese and Portuguese). Other languages (Italian and Vietnamese) will be added in the next few months.

All resources (including videos, explanations, interactive exercises, printable materials, PowerPoint materials, and teachers' notes) are publicly available from the English for Uni site at The University of Adelaide (www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni/). The individual video resources can also be accessed from the University of Adelaide's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/universityofadelaide/playlists) and via Youku in China. Furthermore, copies of the DVD resource were produced and distributed to all project participants (including students), as well as lecturers and students around the world (e.g. in Burma, China, India, Sweden and Vietnam). More copies are available on request.

Project outputs were in line with the goals expressed in the project proposal, with the external evaluator stating in January 2015 that "the tangible outcomes proposed in the project application have been achieved, almost in their entirety. Only a few PowerPoints and some further comparisons with other languages remain to be added." These remaining outcomes have since been addressed. Links have also been provided to other useful websites, such as the ALTC-funded WRiSE site.

Knowledge scaffolding

An informal review of online resources, books and educational videos (see Chapter One, Project Context) informed the development of the project by highlighting previous successes and gaps in the existing resource marketplace. A thorough review of relevant grammatical and academic research also helped to provide theoretical background for the development of each resource.

The project built on previously-developed resources: an earlier educational video on oral presentation skills developed by the project leader has been widely adopted, and had 15,000 views at the time of writing. This resource is now part of the English for Uni website. The OLT seed grant resource demonstrated the feasibility and applicability of a video resource for teaching the use of the English article system, and student evaluation indicated that it was well received. Feedback and experience gained from both these resources allowed the project leader to optimise development of the current resources.

Linkages

Implementation of the project allowed for the development of relationships between various academic bodies and educational institutions, as well as between institutions and individual students. There was consistent communication and collaboration between the project leader and project team members from Edith Cowan University, Victoria University, and the University of Henan. Furthermore, the project leader's workshops around the country (e.g. at The University of Sydney, Edith Cowan University, Victoria University and RMIT University) allowed for a high degree of networking and inter-institutional communication. For example, the workshop at ECU attracted 35 participants, including Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) members and discipline-based academics.

Barriers and facilitators

Facilitators

The precise factors behind any project's success can be multifarious and interconnected. Nevertheless, the project leader and project manager agreed that the following factors had been favourable:

- A carefully-selected team, with members who had previously proven their communicative skills and efficiency
- Access to a strong university-based web division, which provided consistent support with technical aspects of developing the website
- Regular dialogue between the project leader and the OLT
- Use of social media to develop networks and increase dissemination
- Access to a large group of target audience members through The University of Adelaide
- The external evaluator's input as a 'critical friend' in the early stages of the project

The external evaluator also provided a list of factors behind the project's success:

- "the creativity, professionalism and tactful leadership skills of the project leader
- the professionalism of the film company, Piper Films and the web designer, Peter Miller
- the commitment of the core team in Adelaide
- the energetic dissemination of the product"

Barriers

Two main barriers to the project's progress were identified, both of which were of an institutional nature and could not be avoided:

- Complications in processing contracts and payments through the university system
- Institutional restrictions on the website template

In addition, the external evaluator noted a series of other barriers:

- The absence of an administrator with regular hours, which resulted in the project leader needing to spend additional time on administrative tasks
- Some difficulties for the production company in using non-professional actors
- Restricted input of universities other than The University of Adelaide (for example, in using the website template)

These additional barriers were due to the large expense of hiring a professional film production company, which meant that other expenses had to be reduced. The benefits of using a professional company outweighed the disadvantages, however, as survey respondents and informal evaluations indicated that the professional quality of the videos was an important factor in users' enjoyment of the materials.

Potential for implementation

The implementation potential of the project was partially covered in focus groups and surveys, and is addressed in the Evaluation section of Chapter Four. A number of other factors support the amenability of this project's approach and outcomes to implementation in a variety of settings:

- Positive feedback from national and international conferences and workshops
- Successful incorporation of resources into lectures by the project leader and some team members
- Web statistics indicating widespread uptake of resources (more details provided in Chapter Four)

Chapter 4 - Project impact, dissemination and evaluation

Project impact

The current project was designed with reference to the impact management planning and evaluation ladder (IMPEL). The IMPEL provides a benchmark against which to assess the extent of a project's impact with reference to increasingly broad spheres of influence, from team members through to all relevant students. The following table describes the project's impact:

Table 1: IMPEL ladder documenting project impact

1. Team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-reported increase in professional development as a result of project involvement• The project leader received a promotion to Senior Lecturer and won an Executive Dean's teaching award; team members Kayoko Enomoto and Richard Warner each presented conference papers on their parts of the project and also conducted research in Japan which they intend to incorporate into a journal article; team member Wang Lijuan won an International Academic Support & Development Grants from Victoria University to evaluate the role and use of the website in blended learning; and team member Fiona Henderson is due to present the materials at a major TESOL conference in Toronto (March 2015)
2. Immediate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who responded to website survey increased their communication self-efficacy• Students who responded to website survey influenced the development of the website resources through the comments in their feedback• Students involved in focus groups had the opportunity to assist in the development of the resources
3. Spreading the word	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A freely accessible online resource available for all students and teachers anywhere in the world

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information and flyers disseminated at national and international conferences • A virtual roadshow developed in collaboration with Piper films, to be showcased at various universities around Australia and on the OLT website • Resource information disseminated through lectures, workshops, social media, listservs, Twitter feeds and blogs, as well as online and print media (for further details, see “Dissemination” below)
4. Narrow opportunistic adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Enrolment English Program students at The University of Adelaide guided in use of resources by class teachers and project leader • Commencing international students and Australia Awards students guided in use of the resources by project leader
5. Narrow systemic adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of careers service at The University of Adelaide agreed to disseminate the website to students who visit the careers service • Website referenced on some Learning Management Systems at The University of Adelaide and Edith Cowan University • Use of the resources in Academic English courses at The University of Adelaide • Materials used in undergraduate French and Japanese courses at The University of Adelaide
6. Broad opportunistic adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources promoted on various websites used by students (e.g. the website of the International Student Centre at The University of Adelaide; for further details, see “Dissemination” in chapter 4) • Website promoted in places such as the Japanese Community School in Adelaide and on university websites (e.g. Reading University in the UK; the University of South Australia) following dissemination at conferences and through listservs
7. Broad systemic adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website promoted on multiple pages of The University of Adelaide website • Various other academics stated their intention

to share the site with student mentors or staff (e.g. a lecturer from Students Supporting Student Learning (SSSL) at Victoria University; an Executive Assistant from Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching)

- Website used by French language lecturers at Bristol and Liverpool universities in the UK
 - Website used and promoted by lecturers at Kagoshima University and Kagoshima National University of Technology
 - Website used and promoted by lecturers at Henan University
 - Materials used by a Vietnamese teaching manager in a department of training and education in Vietnam
 - Website used and promoted by lecturers at Victoria University
 - Use of resources in a new course by a lecturer at the University of South Australia
-

External evaluation will also add to the project's impact through the joint writing and submission of journal articles by the external evaluator and members of the project team based on the evaluation data.

In addition, the external evaluator's report indicated that the intangible outcome goals had largely been met:

"In terms of the intangible outcomes proposed in the application, both the focus groups and the surveys provide strong evidence of the value of the site in improving students' written and oral academic communication, and in increasing student and teacher awareness of difficult English language areas. There was also some limited evidence of students improving their ability to organise essays and so present arguments, hypotheses and research more effectively. It can be assumed that this indirectly increases students' global competence, and facilitates better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines. The focus group also provided some limited evidence of Australian students of Italian improving their understanding of English grammar and hence their ability to learn foreign languages.

A further intangible outcome of the project was that the team members all benefitted from professional development. Through her multiple presentations, Julia Miller has shared much of this learning with colleagues in her own and other institutions."

Dissemination

Project materials were disseminated in a variety of settings, including lectures (university-based lectures and workshops, and academic conferences), online student portals, social media, other online settings, and print media.

Lectures and workshops

Information on the English for Uni website was disseminated by the project leader and team members at various national and international conferences. These included

- a poster presentation at the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) conference in Sydney (June 2014)
- a paper presented at the international Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) conference in Hong Kong (July 2014)
- presentation of two papers at the international GAL Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik (GAL) 2014 applied linguistics conference in Marburg, Germany (September 2014)
- distribution of English for Uni flyers at the Europhras conference, Paris (September 2014)
- distribution of English for Uni flyers at an AALL symposium in Queensland (November 2014)
- a paper presented at the Centre for Language Studies International Conference (CLaSIC), Singapore (December 2014)
- a presentation given and flyers distributed at the international TESOL conference in Toronto (March 2015)

Details about the website were also communicated at workshops around Australia. This allowed for dissemination among a wide range of discipline lecturers:

- workshops given at Edith Cowan University (n = 35; June 2014) and Victoria University (n = 12; June 2014).
- a workshop on the English for Uni website at University of New South Wales Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) campus in Canberra (n = 12; August 2014)
- a workshop at the University of Sydney (n = 40; November 2014)
- a workshop at RMIT University with Fiona Henderson (n = approx. 25), during which a Burmese participant requested copies of the DVD to take back to Burma (November 2014)

There were opportunities for dissemination in workshops and lectures based around Adelaide. These included

- a workshop incorporating English for Uni materials given at the first Adelaide Language Festival (n = 20; May 2014)

- two lectures for Pre-Enrolment English Program (PEP) students (n = 400; May and December 2014)
- a short presentation at The University of Adelaide Arts Faculty Learning and Teaching Research forum (n = 45; July 2014)
- three lectures for local and international students during The University of Adelaide Orientation week (n = 50-100; July 2014)
- a workshop on essay writing for science communication at The University of Adelaide (n = 9; July 2014)
- a lecture at the Association for Academic Language and Learning day in Adelaide (AALL; n = 25; July 2014)
- a presentation on the website at the Higher Education Research Group Adelaide (HERGA) 2014 conference in Adelaide (n = 30; September 2014)
- flyers on the website displayed at the University English Centres Australia (UECA) PD Fest for TESOL teachers in Adelaide (October 2014)
- a presentation on the conditionals resources at the Australia China Transcultural Studies Symposium in Adelaide (November 2014)
- a screening of the DVD at a poster session during The University of Adelaide Festival of Learning and Teaching (November 2014)

Online student portals

Student service websites such as MyUni (a Blackboard Learning Management System used at The University of Adelaide) provide an effective means of disseminating academic material to students, and a number of lecturers shared the English for Uni resources among their course members. For example, a Senior Lecturer in Geography, Environment and Population shared a link to the English for Uni material with students in her undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The site was also shared on the grammar section of the LMS Writing and Speaking at University module and on the Writing Centre website. Furthermore, a research librarian from the Barr Smith Library included a link to the website in the library's resource guide for Architectural Design.

Social media

A dedicated Twitter account was set up in July 2014 and used to spread information on the site, the video production, and upcoming conference appearances from members of the team. The project leader aimed to keep content diverse and engaging, with tweets on the production and filming of the videos, language teaching resources, and a short interview in Marburg with popular linguist and broadcaster David Crystal. At 16 March 2015, the account had 132 followers. Content was retweeted on other users' feeds, including those of The University of Adelaide Library (November 2014), The University of Adelaide's International

Office (November 2014), University College Oldham (November 2014), and online English reading practice site Dreamreader (December 2014). The international PhD Comics website owner Jorge Cham will also tweet about the English for Uni website and credit it in his PhD Movie Sequel later in 2015, owing to our sponsorship of that initiative.

The resource also gained exposure, as well as positive feedback from many academics, through posts on social media sites like LinkedIn and Yammer.

An English for Uni blog was initiated in August 2014 in response to the external evaluator's interim report on the need for an interactive question and answer feature for the website. It covered a range of topics including behind-the-scenes information on production of the video resources, the virtual roadshow, and the movie premiere in November 2014, and generated some interaction, such as occasional language-related questions from users.

The Ms Parrot videos were uploaded to The University of Adelaide's YouTube account, as well as a Chinese video-sharing platform, Youku. A short overview of the Ms Parrot videos was also included on The University of Adelaide's YouTube account (October 2014). There had been 4878 views of the complete YouTube videos as at 18 May, 2015, with hundreds more views of the individual video 'chapters'. (Each video was divided into smaller sections after the mid-term evaluation indicated that users would prefer this viewing option.) Statistics are not available for the Youku videos.

Online networks

Mailing groups provided another means of distributing website information to academics and students with a specific interest in language teaching. Edward Palmer (School of Education, The University of Adelaide) distributed a website link to HERGA members (around 650 academics and staff). Heather Jamieson (Coordinator, Higher Degree by Research Thesis Writing Seminar Series, University of Wollongong) shared the articles video with her students. Information on the movie premiere was shared in The University of Adelaide's staff news (October 2014). The Communication and Client Services Coordinator from the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) distributed information on the resources in a monthly update to members (December 2014).

In addition, the project leader made use of various listservs to distribute information on the materials, including those of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW), the Learning Development in Higher Education Network (LDHEN), and Unilearn (for Academic Language and Learning advisors in Australia). This has resulted in uptake of the resources by Rhodes University Eastern Cape South Africa; an academic writing instructor working at different universities in Austria; a teacher in an underprivileged area in India; Reading University in the UK; the University of Nagasaki; and Kagoshima University.

Online and print media

Website details were frequently publicised via online and print publications. Details on the successful grant application and website were shared:

- on The University of Adelaide's Learning and Teaching blog
- in an Adelaide Japanese Community School newsletter (December 2014)
- through the website of the International Student Centre at The University of Adelaide
- in the *Adelaidean* magazine
- on the front page of the *Adelaide Advertiser* in conjunction with a feature on grammar teaching (average distribution of the paper was approximately 351,000 on weekdays at the time of writing (March 2015)). Website visits rose by 1014 (from 1414 to 2428) in the week following the *Advertiser* article

Other dissemination activities

In addition to the activities listed above, information on the website was disseminated to students and lecturers in the following ways:

- Meeting with head of careers service at The University of Adelaide, who agreed to disseminate the website to students who visit the careers service (September 2014)
- DVDs distributed to all the project participants (including students), as well as a village teacher in India; lecturers and teachers in Vietnam; visiting lecturers from Chinese universities; a lecturer in Sweden; a lecturer from Burma; and international delegates at the CLaSiC conference in Singapore, the GAL conference in Germany and the TESOL conference in Toronto
- Website advertised on a digital sign in The University of Adelaide Student Hub (October 2014)
- Website advertised on a digital sign in The University of Adelaide Professions Hub (October 2014)
- Site shared with Student Writing Mentors by lecturer from Students Supporting Student Learning (SSSL) at Victoria University (October 2014)
- Flyers distributed at AALL symposium in Queensland (November 2014)
- Site shared with international students in Vocational Education Training/Higher Education sectors by a partner from the Ngee Ann Adelaide Education Centre (NAAEC) (November 2014)
- Site shared by Imke Neumann (from Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin, Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, Germany)
- Resource information made available to staff by an Executive Assistant from the Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching (November 2014)

- Head of Program, Foundation Studies (Central Queensland University Australia) asked permission to use the Oral Presentation Skills resources for a foundation studies program (January 2015)
- Jorge Cham, director of second PhD movie (forthcoming 2015), who agreed to mention English for Uni in credits and to Tweet website details

Evaluation

External evaluation

Focus groups

To evaluate delivery on intangible outcomes, ethics approval was gained and two rounds of focus groups were conducted by an external reviewer: a mid-term round in June 2014, and a final round in December 2014. This strategy allowed for recommendations from the first evaluation to be implemented in the development of ensuing materials. Focus groups in the first round comprised lecturers from ECU (n = 6) and The University of Adelaide (n = 3), and students from ECU (n = 5), The University of Adelaide (n = 4), the University of Canberra (n = 3), and Henan (n = 5). Focus groups in the final round comprised lecturers from the University of Canberra (n = 6) and The University of Adelaide (n = 5), and students at a range of proficiency levels from South Australia, Canberra and Henan (n = 17). The group sessions ran from 35-60 minutes each.

The data shows that the site has been very positively received by both lecturers and students. Nearly all of the students in the focus groups found the site very useful, clear, engaging and attractive. They gave examples of how their understanding and use of English had developed as a result of interacting with the site, and the majority of participants expressed an intention to return to the site.

A large number of suggestions from the mid-term focus groups had been incorporated by the time of the final evaluation, resulting in fewer suggestions during the December 2014 focus groups. Where criticism and suggestions were provided, they involved the following themes:

- A reluctance to engage with resources hosted on the website of a separate university to that of the participant
- Some confusion over the Prepositions video
- (Among Chinese students) perceived density and difficulty of some website content
- Misgivings over the length of resources
- (Among lecturers) questions about how well the use of humour and metaphor would be received by students

These concerns may be addressed by teachers directing users to turn on the YouTube captions to help with language comprehension and to use the video chapters rather than

the full length videos. Online survey and focus group responses indicate that students enjoy the humour and metaphor.

Several of the lecturers in the focus groups had been successfully using the site in a range of ways in their teaching. Many also talked about their own increased understanding of English. One participant, a lecturer in Italian, spoke about using the site to enhance the teaching-learning of Italian amongst Australian students who are largely unaware of the grammar of English.

The evaluator concluded that most intangible outcomes had been achieved, particularly in terms of enhanced communication skills among both domestic and international students.

Interviews with project members

The evaluator was also asked to evaluate the team process. This part of the evaluation is informal as ethics clearance was not obtained, and the results are only intended for the purpose of reporting to the Office for Learning and Teaching. Informal interviews were held with key project members, either in person or on Skype: project leader, Julia Miller; web-designer, Peter Miller; project manager, Joseph Miller; director of Piper Films, Mike Piper; and team members Kayoko Enomoto (The University of Adelaide), Richard Warner (The University of Adelaide), Fiona Henderson (Victoria University), Wang LiJuan (Henan University) and Anne Harris (Edith Cowan University).

The project team gave exceptionally positive feedback about the team process, especially the dedication, creativity, responsiveness and respectful leadership of the project leader, Julia Miller. All agreed that they had made substantial professional development as a result of the project. Julia Miller has also been active in promoting the site, and sharing her learning from the process of developing it.

Other focus groups

One of the team members, Kayoko Enomoto, conducted a focus group based on the materials with engineering students in Osaka, Japan, who were introduced to the articles sections of the site in class by Richard Warner, another team member. The results are forthcoming.

Online surveys

In addition, users of the site were invited to complete an online evaluation through Survey Monkey, with separate surveys for students and teachers. Since writing this report, updated figures in May 2015 indicated that 88 students and 42 teachers had given feedback online. Surveys addressed the following broad areas:

- Demographics

- Initial reference to the site
- Use of resources
- Self-reported changes in knowledge of a topic covered by the resources
- Satisfaction with various aspects of the resources
- Suggestions for improvement

The majority of students surveyed had become aware of the resources through The University of Adelaide website, while the majority of teachers discovered it through a friend or colleague.

Among students (see Table 2, Appendix C), the most popular resources were those on articles (self-reportedly used by 73.9 percent of the sample), followed by essay writing (60.2 percent) and oral presentations (51.1 percent). For teachers (see Table 3, Appendix C), the most popular resources were those on articles (73.8 percent), oral presentations (66.7 percent) and essay writing (59.5 percent).

The survey shows a convincing shift in learning after accessing the site. Students' levels of understanding of website topics increased from 34.1 percent before using the site to 75.3 percent after using the site. This was indicated by their responses to the questions "I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people" and "I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and generate my own sentences correctly/write good essays" (see Table 4, Appendix C). Similarly, teachers' responses showed an increase from 90.2 percent to 97.6 percent in relation to the questions "I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people" and "I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and teach the content to other people" (see Table 5, Appendix C).

Respondents were generally very satisfied with the site. Ninety-one and a half percent of students (see Table 6, Appendix C) agreed or strongly agreed that the materials stimulated their interest in learning about the subject, and 91.9 percent of teachers (see Table 7, Appendix C) agreed or strongly agreed that the site stimulated their interest in teaching the subject.

Among students, suggestions for improvement tended to address the following issues:

- More examples, more exercises, more multi-media
- Posting research results showing how students' writing improves as a result of the site
- Including conjunctions
- More examples of pronunciation
- Better promotion
- Discipline-specific examples

- Reduce the length of the videos
- Present the explanations more graphically
- Add a search button

Teachers suggested

- Making the site mobile friendly by providing digital apps and posters
- More extensive promotion
- Expanding the content, adding more examples and exercises
- Varying the era and adding more characters
- Going back one step from the passive voice and setting up for it with a section on identifying the finite verb, subject and object of active voice sentences

Google Analytics

Information from Google Analytics indicated that as well as being used primarily in English-speaking countries, the site had also been accessed in countries as diverse as Azerbaijan and Zimbabwe. There were a high number of hits on the site: an average of 1216 hits/week since the inception of analytics for the site in May 2014, with a generally increasing hit rate peaking at 4710 hits in the week of 9 November 2014. The bounce rate of 53.56 percent falls within reasonable bounds¹ and the return rate of 38 percent is very encouraging. The length of time spent on each page averages only 2.08 minutes – certainly not long enough to view one of the videos, but given that many people spend only a few seconds or less on the site this average is quite acceptable, and some viewers are spending up to twenty minutes on the site. Not unsurprisingly, of the pages that were posted towards the beginning of the project, the generic skills pages—oral presentation skills and essay writing—have received the greatest number of hits (5869 and 4302 page views respectively) while the grammar pages have received fewer hits (4022 page views for articles and 3228 for the passive voice). Naturally, the more recently posted pages have received a lower number of hits so far.

Student evaluation

Evaluative data was also gathered through university lectures. For example, the project leader presented English for Uni materials on the passive voice to a lecture group of PEP students (n = 104) at The University of Adelaide, with a separate control group (n = 140) presented with materials from two regular English teaching textbooks. Participants were presented with three grammatical exercises before and after the session, as well as a series of satisfaction questions based on the materials. On the first exercise, performance was significantly better in the experimental than the control group when measured after the

¹ According to Anders Analytics www.andersanalytics.com/

session ($p = .046$). For the satisfaction items, the group exposed to the new materials was more likely than the control group to agree strongly with the following statements:

- “The materials stimulated my interest in learning about this subject”
- “The materials provided clear explanations”
- “The way the subject was presented made the content more interesting”

Recommendations

External evaluator’s recommendations

Finally, the external evaluator made a small number of recommendations based on her report:

“The following points need action:

1. Check the way in which links open and that all links (e.g. the conditionals PDF) are correct.
2. Remove links to sites with multiple advertisements
3. Ensure that sub-titles are opening correctly
4. Continue to promote the site actively
5. Finalise the remaining teachers’ PowerPoints and interlanguage comparisons

The following points could be considered, if further funding is available:

6. Simplify some of the explanations and replace with diagrams or charts
7. Highlight key terms in coloured font
8. Make the site mobile friendly by creating a phone app
9. Add more interactive exercises/ games, possibly using FLASH
10. Add annotated examples of “bad” writing, and discipline-specific examples at different grade levels
11. Add a section on identifying the finite verb, subject and object of active voice sentences”

The first five recommendations have already been acted upon. Portuguese language materials have been written and uploaded by the project leader who has produced final PowerPoint slides for each section of the website and will add more as time permits, using Camtasia software for which a free license was donated by TechSmith after the project leader and team member Kayoko Enomoto presented on the website at the GAL conference in Marburg.

Some of the recommendations cannot be addressed, however, because of the limitations of the University website template. (Coloured fonts, for example, are not possible.) Other recommendations, such as the production of a mobile app, would require considerable funding. Wherever possible, however, the project leader will continue to make improvements.

Project leader's recommendations

Another recommendation for future grant applicants is to consider the hourly rate at which teaching relief is calculated. This was not specified in the project application, meaning that the hours of teaching relief varied between team members, with relief from 'other academic duties' resulting in a much lower rate of pay (and more time for the project) than lecture or tutorial relief.

A final recommendation involves adoption of OLT-funded resources generally by university websites in Australia. The English for Uni project manager contacted every university in Australia, and the resources were widely disseminated (as indicated above), but embedding of the resources in university websites was generally low, despite promotion by individual lecturers. It is suggested that the OLT investigate ways not only of disseminating project outcomes, but of encouraging further adoption of resources by Australian universities.

Conclusion

The English for Uni project aimed to achieve a wide range of education-related goals within a short time period, and all these goals were successfully completed.

Tangible outcomes proposed in the project application primarily involved the development of resources for teachers and students, and these were completed, almost in their entirety. A self-contained HTML package was found not to be necessary, as the code for the exercises and all the contents of the website may be copied freely and used on other Learning Management Systems.

At the heart of the project were intangible outcomes relating to the improvement of students' written and oral academic communication, and in increasing student and teacher awareness of difficult English language areas. Focus group feedback and survey results provide strong evidence that these goals were met. There was also some evidence of students improving their ability to organise essays and so present arguments, hypotheses and research more effectively. It can be assumed that this indirectly increases students' global competence, and facilitates better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines.

The external evaluator's report indicates that team members all benefitted greatly from professional development throughout the project, and that the project leader shared much of this learning with colleagues in her own and other institutions, through a consistent round of national and international presentations.

Results from the various evaluation methods indicate that the project was a success, and that given on-going promotion it will likely continue to be widely used well into the future, making a potentially valuable contribution not just to the learning of University of Adelaide students, nor just to international students, but to all students at English-medium universities.

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Appendix A

Certification by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT grant provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Name: Professor Pascale Quester, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic),
The University of Adelaide

Date: 17 March 2015

Appendix B

External evaluator's report

ENGLISH FOR UNI

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT



Compiled by

**Associate Professor Kate Wilson, University of
Canberra**

External evaluator

21 January 2015

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Summary

The *English for Uni* website, funded by the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT), has been created to assist students to improve their English language skills for university by a multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional team led by Julia Miller at The University of Adelaide.

This end-of-project evaluation, conducted by an external evaluator, uses data from six focus groups with both lecturers and students in Adelaide, Canberra and Henan, with participants from seven higher education institutions; an online survey with 90 respondents; and site analytics. The evaluator also interviewed the key team members.

Tangible outcomes

The proposed tangible goals of the project have all been achieved, and in fact surpassed:

- Five new pages assisting students with grammar have been created: conditionals, passive voice, tenses, prepositions and essay writing. The existing materials on articles have also been updated and the page on oral presentation skills has been added.
- Each page opens with a humorous video supported by explanations, interactive exercises, and printable materials.
- Teachers' notes and PowerPoint materials have been provided.
- The site also has ample links to a selection of relevant and high quality selected sites.
- Some pages contain information about related grammar points in other languages, though this aspect of the site needs expanding.
- The site can be viewed equally well on Explorer, Firefox and Chrome, and the videos also available on a DVD. The videos are also available in China on YouKu.

The site has received an average of 1216 pageviews/week since its inception with a peak of 4710 hits in the week of November 9, 2014. The return rate of 38 percent demonstrates that users are finding the site worthwhile.

Intangible outcomes

The data from focus groups and online surveys provides evidence that students, and indeed lecturers, improve their understanding and feel more able to communicate in academic contexts after interacting with the site. Although intended originally for international students, the site has also benefitted domestic students.

The online survey showed that there was an increase from 15 percent to 37 percent in the number of respondents who self-assessed as "I will be able to use what I know about this topic to generate my own sentences correctly/write good essays" after viewing the site. 90 percent of the student survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the site had

stimulated their interest and 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the site offered clear explanations. They commented, for example, that the site was “innovative, unconventional, motivating”.

The focus group participants also found the site “very professional, polished... good quality” and gave examples of how their understandings and use of academic English had developed as a result of interacting with the site. Lecturers in the focus groups gave examples of how they had used the site in their teaching in a wide range of ways and commented that they had seen a lot of improvement in their students’ writing as a result.

Respondents to the survey and focus group participants nearly all expressed their intention to return to the site.

The project team gave exceptionally positive feedback about the team process, especially the dedication, creativity, responsiveness and respectful leadership of the team leader, Julia Miller. All agreed that they had made substantial professional development as a result of the project. Julia Miller has also been active in promoting the site, and sharing her learning from the process of developing it.

It can be concluded that the OLT has funded an extremely useful resource, which, given on-going promotion, will continue to be widely used well into the future, making a valuable contribution not just to the learning of The University of Adelaide students, nor just to international students, but to all students at English-medium universities.

1. Background

The *English for Uni* website has been prepared by a multi-disciplinary team led by Julia Miller. The site, hosted by The University of Adelaide, is funded by a grant from the Office for Learning and Teaching and has team members from Edith Cowan University, Henan University and Victoria University. It aims to assist learners with several key problematic aspects of using English at university: essay writing, oral presentations, and the use of articles, the passive voice, tense, prepositions and conditionals.

Each main page includes a humorous video exemplifying and providing a context to explain the form and meaning of the grammar topic or academic genre; a grammatical explanation of the topic, informed by grammarians such as Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman (1999); and a series of interactive exercises in which students are offered succinct feedback on right and wrong answers. All the pages also include teachers' notes and three of them have a brief comparison with other languages such as French and Japanese.

The site also includes a Twitter link and a blog on which students can ask specific questions about grammar.

The video scripts were prepared by the project leader, Julia Miller, and filmed by Piper Films. The grammatical explanations and exercises were prepared by Julia Miller; the material on tenses was prepared by Fiona Henderson (Victoria University) and the essay writing materials were prepared by Richard Warner. Most of the actors were students and staff of The University of Adelaide.

A mid-term evaluation was conducted by the external evaluator. Although the evaluation was strongly positive, a number of recommendations were made, of which the most significant were to:

- include more academic examples
- minimise blocks of text and include diagrams and pictures wherever possible
- break the videos into smaller scenes to allow more flexible navigation
- include optional sub-titles in the videos
- add a feedback link for grammar questions.

All of these recommendations have been addressed, although some sections of the earlier pages of the site remain text-heavy. The size of the font was also criticised in the mid-term evaluation, but this could not be changed because of the constraints of The University of Adelaide website template.

2. Method

Ethics approval for the evaluation was obtained from The University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee.

Focus groups

For the final evaluation, six focus groups were conducted by an external reviewer: two groups comprised lecturers from different universities:

- a group of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) lecturers from three higher education institutions in Canberra and
- a multi-disciplinary group at The University of Adelaide;

and four groups comprised students at a range of proficiency levels:

- a group of five students at Henan University in China (interviewed by Skype)
- a group of six EAP students at The University of Adelaide
- a group of two diploma students at the University of Canberra College
- a group of four EAP students at the University of Canberra College.

A fifth student focus group was conducted by one of the team members, Kayoko Enomoto, in Japanese, but was not recorded or transcribed. This group comprised Engineering students at a Japanese university, who were introduced to the articles sections of the site in class by Richard Warner, another team member.

Participants were recruited voluntarily by responding to an email request. Each participant was offered a \$50 Coles voucher or equivalent to thank them for their participation. Each group comprised roughly half men and half women.

Each focus group lasted between 35 and 60 minutes. The interviewer's external status was clearly explained so that participants would feel free to voice their opinions. With minimal guidance from the interviewer, participants were encouraged to talk widely and openly about their experience with the website. The semi-guided questions which shaped the group sessions are included at Appendix 1. The participants varied in the extent to which they had interacted with the site. Some had looked at only one or two of the videos, while others had worked through sections of site fairly carefully. None of the participants had looked at the entire site. Unfortunately, the students at Henan University were unable to view the more recent videos online because of restrictions on YouTube in China. Although Julia Miller had sent the remaining videos to China for the local team member Wang LiJuan (Laura) on USB, they had not yet been received.

The focus group sessions were transcribed and sent to the participants for checking to ensure that their words had not been misunderstood and to offer a further opportunity for clarification.

The data was analysed thematically and has been reported anonymously.

Online survey

In addition to the focus groups, data was also collected from a voluntary online survey included on the site using Survey Monkey. Separate surveys were prepared for students and teachers; the questions can be seen in Appendices 2 and 3. Participants were informed that they would be put in the draw for a \$100 Amazon voucher if they completed the survey. Data on site usage was obtained from Google Analytics.

By January 5, 2015, 56 students had given feedback online and 34 teachers had given feedback. 54% of student respondents were female and represented 19 different language backgrounds, although nearly 20% were Chinese speakers. The majority (54%) were in the 20-29 age range. 89% were either studying or about to study at university, including 43% postgraduate coursework and 9% postgraduate research students. 79% were studying in Australia at the time of completing the survey. Of the 34 teacher respondents, 18 were native English speakers, and 11 other language backgrounds were represented. 32 of the respondents were teachers of English, English for Academic Purposes or Academic Literacy.

Google Analytics

Further quantitative data was obtained through Google Analytics which provides information about the number of pageviews, unique pageviews, the average time spent on each page and the bounce rate.

Interviews with team members

In addition to evaluating the site itself, the evaluator was also asked to evaluate the team process. This part of the evaluation is informal as ethics clearance was not obtained, and the results are only intended for the purpose of reporting to the Office for Learning and Teaching. Informal interviews were held with key team members, either in person or on Skype: team leader, Julia Miller; web-designer, Peter Miller; project manager, Joseph Miller; director of Piper Films, Mike Piper; and team members Kayoko Enomoto (The University of Adelaide), Richard Warner (The University of Adelaide), Fiona Henderson (Victoria University, Melbourne), Wang Lijuan (Henan University) and Anne Harris (Edith Cowan University).

3. Findings

a. Overall appraisal of the site

Focus group data

As with the mid-term evaluation, nearly all of the participants expressed enthusiasm for the site: they used adjectives such as *useful, helpful, funny, simple to understand*. For example, when the students were asked if they would go back to the website, they strongly agreed:

K: Will you go back to this website?

Ss: Of course!

K: R, you're not so sure?

R: Yes I will.

K: WHY would you go back to the website?

C: Because it is useful. (Adelaide students)

K: Do you think you will go back to this website?

All Ss: Yes! For sure!

K: And would you recommend it to your friends?

All Ss: Yes!

R: I think this website is helpful for people from a low level (UCC students)

Students in two different groups asserted that the site is “very perfect”.

H: I think the website is very perfect. (UCC student)

J: Well, it's already very perfect I think (Adelaide student).

The Brazilian students were particularly interested in the table comparing prepositions in different languages, although other students and some teachers found the prepositions video and materials rather confusing. One of the participants felt that this was because there was “a long history” before the grammar point was introduced, so it was hard to find the point of the video. The conditionals video was deemed to be clearer, as the use of conditionals in the story helped to make the “form, meaning and use” (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) of the grammar item clearer.

The University of Adelaide students felt confident in the site because it is hosted by their own university: they felt that it would provide reliable information. The University of Canberra College students, however, said that they would rather access the material on referencing through their own university website and use materials that their own teachers had introduced to them. This suggests that more work needs to be done to persuade other EAP (English for Academic Purposes) institutions to integrate links to the *English for Uni* site into their own resources and actively promote the site.

Students in Japan, interviewed by Kayoko Enomoto, were excited to hear English spoken by native speakers and delighted by this new approach to learning grammar, although the level was rather high for these students, who did not represent the main target group of the site.

The students at Henan University, who had participated also in the mid-term evaluation, were less enthusiastic, although one student commented:

D: I think it is interesting and improve my knowledge. I think the website is much better than before. I can't find any problem yet. (Henan student)

Other Henan students commented that they found some parts of the website difficult to understand, and that the size of the font and the amount of text was demotivating:

B: Actually, some parts of the website are really difficult to understand. I don't know how to use it to give me more benefit. (Henan student)

E: Actually if there are lots of words, people will think it is so boring, they don't have the patience to read it. I think you can put something attractive. (Henan student)

When asked about the grammar, they felt that the information was already available in their grammar books. They found the exercises useful "even though some of them are extremely boring" (Henan student D). They pointed out that grammar exercises are more like "an intelligence test" for Chinese students. The great benefit of the site for them was its authenticity: it would help them "to understand the thinking of western people." The lack of enthusiasm among the Henan University students was understandable, given their frustration that some of the videos still were not available.

The lecturers were generally positive in their responses to the site. Some had already included the site in their teaching with great success, either in class or as a recommended site for self-access, and had had positive feedback from their students. For example:

D: The comments have been really positive, specifically about the videos.

K: So they like the sense of humour?

D: Absolutely. (Adelaide lecturer)

K: How did your students respond [to the video on oral presentations]?

L: They loved it. They really loved pulling it to pieces. Oh no-one could be that bad! ... It gave them permission to really say what was wrong and it led to a lot of discussion amongst them and they could identify what was good and bad. (Canberra EAP lecturer)

B: Overall I have to say that it's a very professional, polished site, I'd be happy to go to it. I can rely on it; it's good quality. If you don't have easy access to materials, this would be wonderful to have. (Canberra EAP lecturer)

P: You can find things easily. It's attractive and well-organised. (Canberra EAP lecturer)

K: In *Academic English* about two thirds of the students were native speakers, but they found the material on essay planning and voice really useful, even though some were in their final semester. I teach essay-planning to my students all the time, but when they went and had a look at the website, it seemed to gel. (Canberra EAP lecturer)

Some lecturers liked the fact that the grammatical explanations went beyond those in most upper-intermediate textbooks and commented on how they themselves had benefitted from the site: it had given them fresh ideas about how to teach, and deepened their own understandings of English grammar. For example:

R: And for me as an English language teacher, the grammatical explanations are really useful to help me think about how I as a teacher might go about explaining things in class. (Adelaide lecturer)

Other lecturers questioned whether the humour and metaphors would be well-received by their students, and felt that students might not have time to appreciate the site, particularly because the videos are lengthy. Teachers in both groups pointed out that there is no shortage of excellent materials on grammar both in print and online. Materials such as the short, intimate, teaching moments on the Engvid website www.engvid.com were more accessible and gave short immediate answers to their questions. Like the students, the teachers pointed out that students are time-poor and will only focus on what is necessary to their assignments.

R: Because my students are not currently here to learn English. The demands on their time are such that it's very unlikely they will actually use the site (Adelaide lecturer)

B: I give the link, but not many people are interested unless we set an assignment or a test or something. (Adelaide lecturer)

B2: A lot of my students just want to know what is right and what is wrong so that they can get on with their assignment. They want to be able to directly apply what they learn. They want to know 'Does it work here? Does it work here?' How much time do the students have? Everybody's time poor these days. Long explanations take a long time, though I know it's important to have them. (Canberra lecturer)

Although the lecturers questioned whether students would use the site in their own time, they also recognised that some students would be keen to use the site:

L: The problem is that many students don't have time to do things like this, and it's too academic for some of my students, but there will be some students who will lap all of this up.

Apart from the need to upload the final videos on to YouKu for Chinese mainland students, only one technical problem was reported: that the automatic sub-titles on YouTube were sometimes interfering with the official sub-titles on the videos.

Survey data

The survey allowed students to tick all the ways in which they had heard about the site. The majority (57%) of the student respondents had heard about the resources from The University of Adelaide website, while 38% had been advised to use the site by their teacher. Importantly, 38% of the student respondents had heard about the site from a friend or colleague. This data suggests that the promotion on The University of Adelaide website was an effective way of communicating about the site. That students are talking to each other about the site is an important indicator of its effectiveness, and this was reinforced by the response to a second question: "Why did you access these resources?" 23% of respondents said that they had been recommended by a friend, while a further 12% responded that they had used the site before.

In response to the question "What is the best aspect of the site?" the explanations and the fact that they are useful and easy to understand was frequently suggested (n = 14); the videos were mentioned by seven students; two students specifically mentioned the exercises.

In response to the question “What is the best aspect of the site?” students’ terms of appraisal included those shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Terms of appraisal used by students in the survey

detailed explanations	convenient	interesting
coloured diagrams with boxes and arrows	great video	funny
useful	easy to find and learn	easy to understand
interesting to read and watch	brainstorming	clear
updated information	interesting to read and watch	easy to find
	useful for academic culture learning	

As with the student data, the most common way for teachers to hear about the site was through a friend or colleague (24%); a further 12% had used the site before. These figures are a strong indication of the value of the site: users obviously find it valuable enough to recommend to a friend and to return to it. Others had found the site via The University of Adelaide website, or as a result of professional networks such as the AALL website (Association of Academic Language and Learning) or the EATAW (European Association of Teachers of Academic Writing) listserv. Others had accessed the site as a result of Julia Miller’s conference presentations and workshops. Only one had found the site as a result of a search engine. This suggests that on-going promotion of the site through professional networks and social media will be necessary to ensure that it receives continued use.

In response to the question “What is the best aspect of the site?” teachers’ terms of appraisal included those shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Terms of appraisal used by teachers

Content rich, yet concise	stimulating	humor
Mix of formats	clarity in audio	attention to detail
Comprehensive	effective use of repetition	fun
Simple, clear,	creative	understandable
Integration	innovative, unconventional, motivating	user friendliness
easy access	well-categorised	fast-paced
practical/ useful exercises	delightful	visually stimulating
interactive, effective	good examples	pain-free

No technical problems were reported by either students or teachers in the survey.

Analytics

Information from Google Analytics showed a high number of hits on the site: an average of 1216 hits/week since the inception of the site in May 2014, with a peak of 4710 hits in the week of November 9, 2014 (see Appendix 5). The bounce rate of 53.56% falls within

reasonable bounds² and the return rate of 38% is encouraging. The length of time spent on each page averages only 2.08 minutes – certainly not long enough to view one of the videos, but given that many people spend only a few seconds or less on the site, this average is quite acceptable. Not unsurprisingly, of the pages that were posted towards the beginning of the project, the generic skills pages, oral presentations and essay-writing, have received the greatest number of hits (5869 and 4302 pageviews respectively) while the grammar pages have received fewer hits (4022 pageviews for articles and 3228 for passive voice). Naturally, the more recently posted pages have received a lower number of hits so far.

b. Learning outcomes from the site

Focus group data

As in the mid-term evaluation, the focus groups brought up many examples of how students had learned from the site, reflecting progress through the stages of Biggs' SOLO taxonomy (Biggs 2011). This generally meant moving from the 'multi-structural level' to the 'relational level' (in which already known information is integrated into a coherent whole) or even to the 'extended level' (in which the content may be conceptualised at a higher level of abstraction and generalised to a new area).

The most interesting example of learning from the site was a student in the Adelaide group who had been confused about conditionals. After accessing the site, she had increased her own understanding to the point where she was able to take the initiative to explain the grammar to another student who was experiencing difficulties:

M: I just followed some of the exercises. ... It is useful for me ..tense..conditional clauses .. it is my weakness, conditional clause. And it's interesting because I taught my classmate about conditional clause. All of those I taught her from the website and she learned from me. I am proud of because I told her lots of things from the website. (Adelaide student)

Other students spoke about learning from the oral presentations videos. Several commented on how much they had learned from the contrast between the good and bad presentations:

C: The good one is a good example for oral presentation. It shows skills about the powerpoint – how we can develop a powerpoint with the main point, and also some skills like behaviour: eye contact, body language. The most important thing for me is the cue card. She uses a cue card. I watched that before I have my oral presentation. Before I don't know how to present a point like that. (Adelaide student)

² According to Anders Analytics www.andersanalytics.com/

T: Because when I saw the best presentation, I saw what mistakes I can get. I think I can avoid making those mistakes.

Others commented on learning about reporting verbs:

R: I just remember the grammar about reporting verbs. Because it is boring to use the same verb. So you can use different verbs. (Adelaide student)

P: For example, the reporting verbs, if you want to say it more strong you can choose another verb. You know how to use them (Adelaide student);

and about essay planning:

R: From the video you can compare the two examples [of cake-making as a metaphor for essay planning]. Who followed the structure step by step. What you need to search and how other people make a terrible cake. Because he just mix a lot of things and make no sense, no logical... [In my essay] I followed the structure, the introduction, background, scope and the topic sentence. (Adelaide student)

Lecturers who had requested their students to view the site were convinced that their students' work had improved as a result, though it was hard to prove this:

B: I can only compare my students this year with last year. Last year, the essay structure - many essays looked very disorganised. This year, at least some of the essays showed a proper structure: introduction, body and conclusion. And we noticed that the presentations are very content-rich ... One thing for sure is that Chinese students can benefit from the website very much. I can see that from the improvement in the quality of their writing. (Adelaide lecturer)

K: I noticed a lot of improvement in my students, but it's difficult to tell why they made the improvement – was it the lecture, the tutorial, the website? (Canberra EAP lecturer)

Survey data

The survey showed strong positive evidence of students' learning from the site, in particular their perceived increased ability to communicate academically. They were asked to reflect on one topic from the site; most chose the essay-writing topic (50%), while 39% chose the articles topic. The remainder chose passive voice (7%) and tenses (4%). Table 3 and the accompanying chart in Figure 1 show the distinct positive shift in student learning as a result of the website. For example, the number of students who felt they could explain the topic in a basic way to other people doubled: from 10 to 20 respondents. The increase was even greater in terms of the number of respondents who felt that they could generate their own sentences and/or write good essays as a result of using the resources: there was an improvement from 8 to 20 of the respondents. These results reflect a shift in terms of Biggs' SOLO taxonomy towards more multi-structural, relational and abstract understanding.

Furthermore, 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the materials had stimulated their interest in learning about the topic, and 94% agreed or strongly agreed that the materials provided clear explanations. Despite this strong support for the site, only 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the use of humour in the video had stimulated their interest, while 25% remained undecided.

Table 3: Students' improved learning outcomes after using the *English for Uni* resources

	Before using the resource	After using the resource
I didn't understand this topic	9.26% (n = 5)	1.85% (n = 1)
I had a very basic understanding of this topic and could name some things related to it	24.07% (n = 13)	1.85% (n = 1)
I had a basic understanding of this topic and could do some tasks related to it	33.33% (n = 18)	22.22% (n = 12)
I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people	18.52% (n = 10)	37.04% (n = 20)
I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and generate my own sentences correctly/ write good essays	14.81% (n = 8)	37.04% (n = 20)

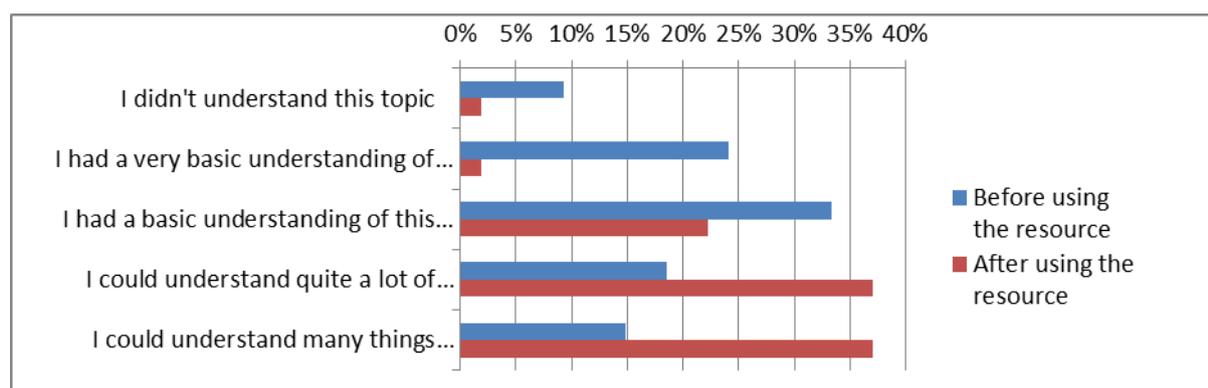


Figure 1: Students' improved learning outcomes after using the *English for Uni* resources

Like the students, teachers also reported improved knowledge and understanding. As shown in Table 4 and the accompanying Figure 2, teachers reported that their ability to teach a topic from the *English for Uni* website had increased after using the resource from 61% to 82%. 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the materials had stimulated their interest in teaching the subject, and 97% agreed or strongly agreed that the materials provided clear explanations. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that the use of humour in the videos had stimulated their interest,

Table 4: Teachers' improved ability to teach the topic after using the *English for Uni* resources

	Before using the resource	After using the resource
I didn't understand this topic		3% (n = 1)
I had a very basic understanding of this topic and could name some things related to it	0% (n = 0)	

I had a basic understanding of this topic and could do some tasks related to it	12% (n = 4)	
I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain it in a basic way to other people	27% (n = 9)	15% (n = 5)
I will be able to use what I know about this topic to create materials and teach the content to other people	61% (n = 20)	82% (n = 27)

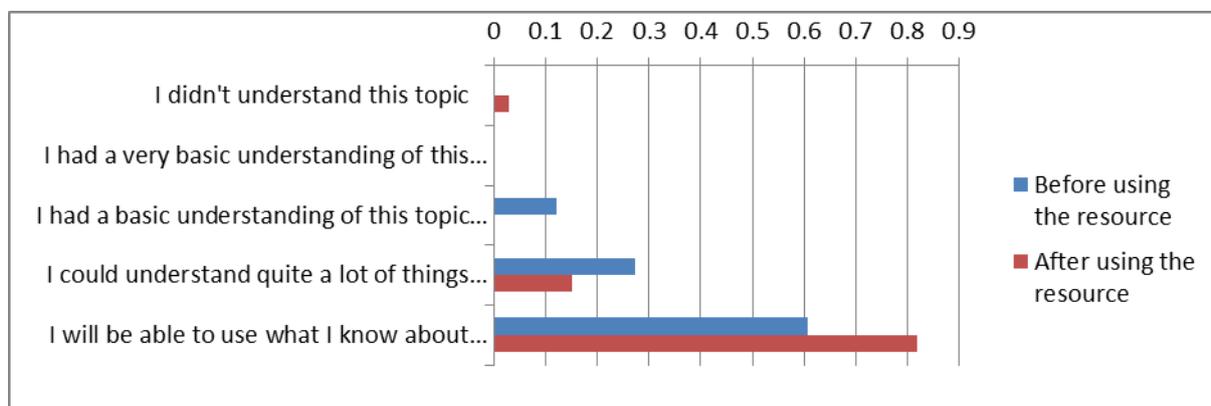


Figure 2: Teachers' improved ability to teach the topic after using the *English for Uni* resources

c. How the site is being used

Focus group data

A striking finding from the focus group data is the wide variety of ways in which the site is being used. These include:

- The essay writing materials were being used both in-class and as a supplementary resource in academic writing courses for both domestic and international students.
- Some lecturers were referring Individual students to particular aspects of the site.
- The lecturer in Asian Studies made clear his expectation that students would read the materials on essay-writing before preparing their major assignment
- An EAP teacher had printed out and distributed some of the PDFs for her students.
- Some students had found the site serendipitously and worked through sections of it. Some of these students completed the exercises; others merely watched the videos and/or read the grammatical explanations.
- Several lecturers had used the materials on oral presentations in class.
- The lecturer in Italian and also a lecturer in Academic English were using the site with native English speakers to raise their awareness of the grammar of English. The Italian lecturer found that this was a good foundation for her students and helped them to deal with complex grammar points in Italian.
- A lecturer in TESOL was using the site to stimulate discussion among student teachers about teaching English grammar.

- A lecturer in Dentistry had introduced the site in his first lecture, among other online resources which could assist new students, both domestic and international.
- One EAP teacher had assigned his students to look at the site during a computer lab session.
- One student had started at the beginning of the site with the glossary and learned how to define nouns and verbs.

In contrast to the mid-term evaluation, the December focus group participants were much more selective in their use of the resource, perhaps because there is now a wider choice of materials. Despite their enthusiasm for the site, few of the focus group participants had looked at more than two or three pages. Few of the participants had closely read the grammatical explanations and dense blocks of text on the site, and few had completed many of the exercises. Furthermore, those who had looked at the website in the computer lab session without any defined purpose claimed that they could not remember much:

E: [the site is] very useful and we keep in mind. But after finish it, just forget it very quickly. (Adelaide student)

Rather than reading through the whole site, users now seem to be picking out what they need, when they need it. For example, the Adelaide students had had a test on essay writing on the day of the focus group, and several of them had gone to the essay writing page on the *English for Uni* website to prepare:

M: I also saw the essay structure, how to conclude, linking verbs, controlling idea, topic sentence, and I received another email yesterday [a reminder about the focus group] and I saw again the website and I had another quick look at the essay writing. Because today we had a test. So I looked again and I think it was helpful. (Adelaide student)

As one student explained

J: I think when we see the website we just want to find out what is very useful to us. So I just see articles and presentations and some writing essay. Because yesterday we write an essay, so another I didn't see (Canberra student)

Others had had to prepare an oral presentation, so they had focused on that section of the site and found it very useful.

The student who had benefitted from the section on conditionals knew that was her “problem” – perhaps her teacher had told her. So she was able to target that section of the website. However, another student thought that his problem was “grammar” but was not able to define his needs more clearly, making it hard to know how to use the site. In fact, several participants pointed out that students’ difficulty with academic writing at this level may not be so much to do with discrete grammar points, but “idiomatic” usage of academic English. As one lecturer explained:

R: There is such a difference between knowing the grammar and actually being able to perform. When it comes to performance, my students need feedback on their performance rather than something in a different context. Cos they have learned all of these things before, and very often they know more than I do, but it's the performance that's the issue. (Adelaide lecturer)

The data from Google analytics, described in the previous section, shows that the site is being accessed widely. While many viewers leave the individual pages quickly, others are staying on the page for extended time, and many are returning to the site.

It can be concluded that the site is being used for multiple purposes and in multiple ways, contributing widely, therefore, to student learning.

d. Suggestions for improvements

Focus group data

At the mid-term evaluation, many suggestions were made for ways to improve the site, and almost all of these were promptly acted upon by the site developers. In this round of focus groups, fewer suggestions were put forward, perhaps because of the thorough work which has been done on improving the site based on the previous evaluation. Not all of the following suggestions proposed in the focus groups would be feasible or indeed desirable:

- Several students requested more annotated models, including model assignments of different quality: a bad essay, a pass, credit, or distinction essay. [It should be noted that many academic skills sites at other universities provide this kind of resource].
- Lecturers in both groups mentioned that although they had given their students the link, they were not sure whether they accessed it. They would have liked some way of checking to see who had used the materials. Others suggested that Moodle or Blackboard analytics might enable them to do so.
- Make sure that all the links open in the same way, currently some open in a new window, and some open in the same window.
- The students in Henan again complained about the size of the font, the dense blocks of text and requested more pictures, coloured fonts and diagrams.
- The sub-titles on the videos were still causing some problems: some videos were appearing with both YouTube automatic sub-titles and the official sub-titles provided on the site.
- One student suggested that the front page should include some affidavits or research results about students' improved grades as a result of using the site.
- Some students requested more exercises and games.
- One student requested more videos.

- Be more selective about the quality of links; do not include links to busy sites with lots of advertising.
- One suggestion was to trim the site by removing less useful additions, such as the roadshow.
- Put the glossary at the bottom of the menu rather than the top.

Survey data

The surveys also provided some suggestions. Students suggested:

- More examples, more exercises, more multi-media
- Posting research results showing how students' writing improves as a result of the site
- Including conjunctions
- More examples of pronunciation
- Better promotion
- Discipline-specific examples
- Reduce the length of the videos
- Present the explanations more graphically
- Add a search button

Teachers suggested

- Making the site mobile friendly by providing digital apps and posters
- More extensive promotion
- Expanding the content, adding more examples and exercises
- Varying the era and adding more characters
- Go back one step from the passive voice and set up for it with a section on identifying the finite verb, subject and object of active voice sentences

e. Evaluation of the team process

All members of the team were extremely enthusiastic about the team process. They were pleased with the quality of the product and felt that they had benefitted from considerable personal professional development as a result of the project.

Team members attributed the successful outcomes of the project in particular to the creativity and respectful leadership of Julia Miller. She had been responsible for the creative impulse behind the site and for most of the scripts, explanations and exercises. Richard Warner and Fiona Henderson had also contributed to the development of the site. Julia herself also pointed to the professionalism of Piper Films and the web developer, Peter

Miller, as a key factor in the success of the project. Importantly, The University of Adelaide IT team, particularly Emma Spoehr, had also been very helpful.

All team members spoke of the excellent teamwork and collaboration brought about by Julia Miller's dedication, commitment and honest, "gentle" leadership which inspired the whole team. Communication had been good: Julia sent out regular bulletins especially when there were milestones or achievements to celebrate. Even those not in Adelaide felt involved, though the core Adelaide team was definitely most bonded to the project. Among this core team, the commitment was substantial, and everyone, including the professionals, went well beyond the hours that they were paid for in contributing to the project. The high standard of the product and Julia's dedication to the project kept the momentum high, and enabled the team to meet interim goals in a timely fashion.

The key factor in the successful outcomes of the project was undoubtedly Julia Miller herself. The project funding enabled her to devote herself almost entirely to the project for 9 months. The quality of background linguistic research, the creativity of the conceptualisation of the site, and the excellent script-writing bear testament to her skills and talent. Julia was also able to promote the product through a series of workshops and conference presentations, which will be detailed in the project report, and through numerous other channels contributing to the wide scale distribution of the site.

Another major factor in the success of the project was the high standard of professionalism on the part of the film director, Mike Piper, and the web designer, Peter Miller. Both went well beyond the bare terms of their contracts to ensure the high standard of the finished product. It was clearly money well spent to hire an experienced and professional company to produce the videos as professional skills in film directing, lighting, costume and set design, continuity and post-production are essential to ensure a high quality product. Furthermore Julia Miller and Mike Piper had previously worked together on the seed grant pilot project and their ability to collaborate was proven. The project progressed smoothly and amicably throughout.

An issue for consideration in future projects is project administration. Although Joseph Miller, the project manager, did an excellent job, he was only employed one day/week, and so much of the fiddly administrative detail fell to Julia, which was arguably not good use of her time. An administrator with more regular hours and with good knowledge of university administration (payment of casual staff, booking rooms, arranging parking etc) would have made a big difference to the efficiency of the project.

A second issue of concern was casting for the movie. Some actors lacked screen presence or were hard to understand. More careful casting could have ensured a more polished product. The film production company would also have found it easier to work with professional actors.

Collaboration with team members outside Adelaide was not always so smooth. Ill health and competing priorities limited the involvement of some members. There were also inconsistencies in the way in which team members costed their teaching buy-out. Some calculated their time at lecturer rates, while others calculated their time at marking rates. While email kept the team members in touch, the commitment of those not in Adelaide was less, and the team leader had to compensate for this. Thus the input of universities other than The University of Adelaide was restricted. Nevertheless, Fiona Henderson at Victoria University was able to make a substantial contribution, and the links between Victoria University and Henan University facilitated the setting up of a focus group in China, which raised a key issue: the unavailability of YouTube in China.

The reference group proved generally unresponsive. Several members never responded to emails other than the original invitation to participate, although some made a valuable contribution.

To sum up, key factors in the success of the project can be attributed to:

- the creativity, professionalism and tactful leadership skills of the team leader
- the professionalism of the film company, Piper Films and the web designer, Peter Miller
- the commitment of the core team in Adelaide
- the energetic dissemination of the product.

Factors for consideration in further OLT projects:

- **Long-term, complete buy-out from other activities needs to be ensured for the project leader**
- Adequate provision should be made for project management
- Inter-university collaboration can be hard to achieve, especially on a project such as this which is the brainchild of one individual. More extensive collaboration probably needs to occur early in the project conceptualisation process
- Casting needs to be carefully considered in any similar multi-media project
- Parity of buy-out time for contributors should be considered.

4. Conclusion

The tangible outcomes proposed in the project application have been achieved, almost in their entirety. Only a few PowerPoints and some further comparisons with other languages remain to be added.

In terms of the intangible outcomes proposed in the application, both the focus groups and the surveys provide strong evidence of the value of the site in improving students' written and oral academic communication, and in increasing student and teacher awareness of

difficult English language areas. There was also some limited evidence of students improving their ability to organise essays and so present arguments, hypotheses and research more effectively. It can be assumed that this indirectly increases students' global competence, and facilitates better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines. The focus group also provided some limited evidence of Australian students of Italian improving their understanding of English grammar and hence their ability to learn foreign languages.

A further intangible outcome of the project was that the team members all benefitted from professional development. Through her multiple presentations, Julia Miller has shared much of this learning with colleagues in her own and other institutions.

A limitation of the data collection method was that all participants were volunteers, and so they generally came with a positive predisposition to the website. Nevertheless, not all the participants in the focus groups were enthusiastic about the site, and opinions of the humour, for example, varied. However, it is in the nature of online resources that users will pick and choose between them, using them flexibly for different purposes, and choosing whether or not to pursue learning objects or not. Although the site may not appeal to everybody, there is no doubt that it has great appeal for some.

Thus, the key finding from this evaluation pertains to the great variety of ways in which students and teachers interact with the site. This finding fits with a deeper philosophy of learning connected with online learning in general and language learning in particular. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008, p.31) point out, language learning does not need to be linear. Similarly, Lian and Pineda (2014) suggest that learning is more likely in the Internet age to be rhizomatic, as learners take off in different directions, choosing what they need or what captures their interest at any time. Open access site designers cannot control how people will use their site, but by offering high-quality, flexible materials, as this site has done, they make available valuable learning resources which support what van Lier (2004) calls an "ecological" and highly learner-centred approach to language learning.

It is for this reason that it can be concluded that the OLT has funded an extremely useful resource, which, given on-going promotion, will continue to be widely used well into the future, making a potentially valuable contribution not just to the learning of University of Adelaide students, nor just to international students, but to all students at English-medium universities.

5. Recommendations

Few recommendations remain to be mentioned at this final stage of the project, as not all the suggestions made by the focus groups and survey respondents are practical or necessary. The following points need action:

- Check the way in which links open and that all links (eg the conditionals PDF) are correct.
- Remove links to sites with multiple advertisements
- Ensure that sub-titles are opening correctly
- Continue to promote the site actively
- Finalise the remaining teachers' PowerPoints and interlanguage comparisons.

The following points could be considered, if further funding is available:

- Simplify some of the explanations and replace with diagrams or charts
- Highlight key terms in coloured font
- Make the site mobile friendly by creating a phone app
- Add more interactive exercises/ games, possibly using FLASH
- Add annotated examples of “bad” writing, and discipline-specific examples at different grade levels
- Add a section on identifying the finite verb, subject and object of active voice sentences.

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Appendix 1: Focus group questions

Innovative online resources to support international students' English language development

End of project Evaluation: Proposed schedule of questions for focus groups

A. Focus groups with students

Brief introduction concerning the purpose of the focus group: to learn how the project resources have been used, how useful they are, the strengths of the resources, and what could be improved.

Closed questions to gain demographic information:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your nationality?
4. What is your subject area?
5. What is your university year level?

Participants will also be reminded of the resources under discussion: the videos, explanations and exercises on the *English for Uni* website.

1. Before we begin, could you talk briefly about yourselves, your experience of learning English and your approach to learning grammar and academic writing?
2. Please could you describe how you **used** the resources (videos/ explanations/ exercises)? Could you talk about
 - a. When and how often you have used the resources?
 - b. Whether you used the resources in-class or out-of-class; on your own, with the whole class or with a small group?

3. Could you talk about how **effective** you found the resources?
 - a. How much did you understand about the topics on the website before using the resources?
 - b. Before using the resources, were you able to use these areas effectively?
 - c. Since using the resources, how have your understanding and use of these areas changed?
 - d. Do you think your academic English has improved overall as a result of using the resources?
4. Could you talk about **why** the resources were effective or not?
 - a. What were the major strengths of the resources?
 - b. What improvements to the resources would you suggest?
5. Would you like to make any other comments about the resources?

B. Focus groups with teachers

Brief introduction concerning the purpose of the focus group: to learn how the project resources have been used, how useful they are, the strengths of the resources, and what could be improved.

Participants will also be reminded of the resources under discussion: the videos, explanations and exercises on the *English for Uni* website.

1. Before we begin, please could you talk briefly about yourselves, your teaching experience, and your approach to teaching grammar and essay writing.
2. Closed questions to gain demographic information: What is your gender? What is your nationality? What is your subject area? What is your highest level of education?
3. Please could you describe how you **used** the resources (videos/ explanations/ exercises/ teacher notes/)? Could you talk about:
 - a. The nature of the student group
 - b. The frequency and timing of using resources
 - c. Your preparation before using the resources with students
 - d. Your use of the resources in-class (for whole class/ group work/ individual work)
 - e. The use of the resources for out-of-class work
4. Could you talk about how **effective** you found the resources?
 - a. for your own understanding of the concepts and ability to teach them effectively?
 - b. for your students' understanding and use of the concepts?
 - c. To what extent did the resources help them to:

- i. Be aware of these areas in academic writing
 - ii. Be able to use these forms effectively in academic writing
 - iii. Perform the exercises correctly
5. Could you talk about **why** the resources were effective or not?
 - a. What were the major strengths of the resources?
 - b. What improvements to the resources would you suggest?
6. Would you like to make any other comments about the resources?

Appendix 2: Online survey for students

English for Uni resources Evaluation

Please fill out the following information and answer the questions. Your answers will remain entirely confidential.

Gender Male Female

Age 1-10 11-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 Over 60

Home country

First language

Are you currently a university student? No
 No, but I'm doing a preparation program for university
 Yes – undergraduate student
 Yes – honours student
 Yes – postgraduate coursework student
 Yes – postgraduate research student

Are you currently studying in Australia? Yes No

Have you studied in Australia in the last 2 years? Yes No

Are you coming to study in Australia in the next 2 years? Yes No

How did you hear about these resources?

Friend Teacher The University of Adelaide website

Other university website Grammar Gang website

I have used them before

Other (please specify)

Why did you access these resources?

My teacher asked me to A friend recommended them

I found them by chance when searching the internet

I have used them before

Other (please specify)

Which resources have you used? (Tick all that apply.)

- Articles Passives Oral presentation skills Essay writing

Now please choose *one* of the following resources and answer questions about it below.

Tick which *one* you have chosen:

- Articles Passives Essay writing

Q. 1 What was your level of understanding of this topic **before** using the resource?

- 1 I didn't understand this topic
- 2 I had a very basic understanding of this topic and could name some things related to it
- 3 I had a basic understanding of this topic and could do some tasks related to it
- 4 I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them to other people
- 5 I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and generate my own sentences correctly/write good essays

Q. 2 What is your level of understanding of this topic **after** using the resource?

- 1 I don't understand this topic
- 2 I have a very basic understanding about this topic and can name some things related to it
- 3 I understand some things about this topic and can do some tasks related to it
- 4 I understand quite a lot about this topic and will be able to explain it to other people
- 5 I will be able to use what I know about this topic to generate my own sentences correctly/write good essays

Now please answer some questions about this particular resource

Q. 3 The materials stimulated my interest in learning about this subject

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | Undecided | | Strongly disagree | | |
| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q. 4 The materials provided clear explanations

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | | Undecided | | Strongly disagree | | |
| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q. 5 The use of humour in the video stimulated my interest in the content

Strongly agree		Undecided			Strongly disagree	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 6 The way the story was presented, using a TV show format, made the content more interesting

Strongly agree		Undecided			Strongly disagree	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 7 Did you have any technical problems using the resources? If so, please comment:

.....

.....

.....

Q. 8 The best feature(s) of this resource was/were:

.....

.....

.....

Q. 9 This resource might be improved in future by:

.....

.....

.....

Please add your email address if you would like to be in the draw to win an iPod nano:

Appendix 3: Online survey for teachers

English for Uni resources Evaluation

Please fill out the following information and answer the questions. Your answers will remain entirely confidential.

Gender Male Female

Age

Home country

First language

Number of years teaching English

Highest qualification

How did you hear about these resources?

Friend Colleague The University of Adelaide website

Other university website Grammar Gang website

I have used them before

Other (please specify)

Which resources have you used? (Tick all that apply.)

Articles Passives Oral presentation skills Essay writing

Now please choose *one* of the following resources and answer questions about it below.
Tick which *one* you have chosen:

Articles Passives Essay writing

Q. 1 What was your level of understanding of this topic **before** using the resource?

- 1 I didn't understand this topic
- 2 I had a very basic understanding of this topic and could name some things related to it
- 3 I had a basic understanding of this topic and could do some tasks related to it
- 4 I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people
- 5 I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and teach the content to other people

Q. 2 What is your level of understanding of this topic **after** using the resource?

- 1 I don't understand this topic
- 2 I have a very basic understanding about this topic and can name some things related to it
- 3 I understand some things about this topic and can do some tasks related to it
- 4 I understand quite a lot about this topic and will be able to explain it in a basic way to other people
- 5 I will be able to use what I know about this topic to create materials and teach the content to other people

Now please answer some questions about this particular resource

Q. 3 The materials stimulated my interest in teaching this subject

Strongly agree			Undecided			Strongly disagree
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 4 The materials provided clear explanations

Strongly agree			Undecided			Strongly disagree
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 5 The use of humour in the video stimulated my interest in the content

Strongly agree			Undecided			Strongly disagree
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 6 The way the story was presented, using a TV show format, made the content more interesting

Strongly agree			Undecided			Strongly disagree
7	6	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q. 7 Did you have any technical problems using the resources? If so, please comment:

.....
.....
.....

Q. 8 The best feature(s) of this resource was/were:

.....
.....
.....

Q. 9 This resource might be improved in future by:

.....
.....
.....

Please add your email address if you would like to be in the draw to win an iPod nano:

Appendix 4: Interview questions for team members

Innovative online resources to support international students' English language development

End of project evaluation with team members

Brief introduction concerning the purpose of the focus group: to learn how the project team has worked together to achieve the outcomes of the project.

1. Have the project goals been achieved? What remains to be finalised?

Revisit Section from the proposal to discuss whether they have been achieved, and whether there is more to be done.

Tangible outcomes:

- Teaching videos for five difficult but essential language areas
- Explanations of the material for each area
- Interactive online exercises for each area
- Printable materials for each area
- Downloadable PowerPoint materials for each area
- Teachers' notes for each area
- Signposts to other longstanding academic skills websites
- Applications in each area for learners of French, Japanese, Portuguese, Malay, Mandarin and Cantonese
- A self-contained HTML5 package that could be used in any LMS for students in any discipline who want to improve their language skills

Intangible outcomes:

- Improved graduate communication skills in oral and written presentation
- Clearer representation by EAL students of arguments, hypotheses and research
- Better communication between lecturers and students in multiple disciplines due to students' improved English skills, leading them to more comprehensible and accurate writing
- Increased global competence for international students learning English
- Increased student and teacher awareness of difficult English language areas
- Better communication and interaction between Australian and international students, due to the latter's improved English skills

- Great understanding of a language issues for Australian students of Japanese, French, Portuguese, Mandarin, Malay and Cantonese
- Greater expertise in online resource planning which the project team and share with colleagues in their institutions

2. How effective have you found the materials in your own practice?

2.1 Please could you describe how you have **used** the resources (videos/ explanations/ exercises/ teacher notes/)? Could you talk about:

- The nature of the student group
- The frequency and timing of using resources
- Your preparation before using the resources with students
- Your use of the resources in-class (for whole class/ group work/ individual work)
- The use of the resources for out-of-class work

2.2 Could you talk about how **effective** you found the resources?

- for your own understanding of the concepts and ability to teach them effectively?
- for your students' understanding and use of the concepts?
- To what extent did the resources help them to:
 - Be aware of these areas in academic writing
 - Be able to use these forms effectively in academic writing
 - Perform the exercises correctly

2.3 Could you talk about **why** the resources have proved effective or not?

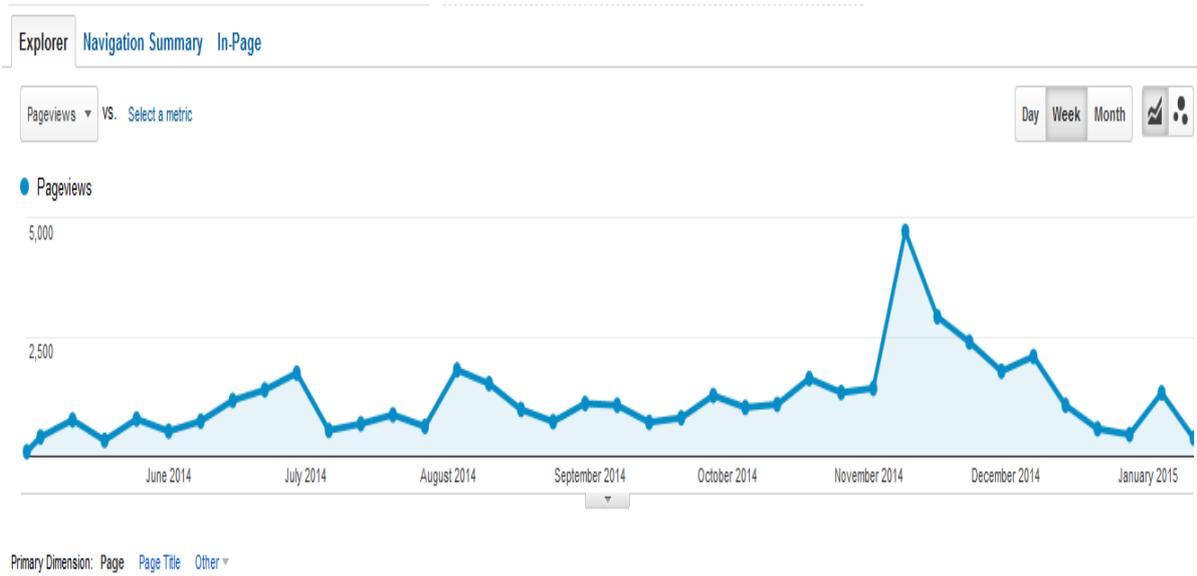
- What were the major strengths of the resources?
- What improvements to the resources would you suggest?

3. Could you talk about the team process?

- What worked well?
- What could have worked better?

4. What advice would have for future OLT grant holders?

Appendix 5: Pageviews



Source: Google Analytics

Appendix C

Tables

Table 2: Relative popularity of resources among students (n=88)

	Percentage (%) endorsing
Articles	73.9
Essay writing	60.2
Passives	44.3
Oral presentation skills	51.1
Tenses	22.7
Prepositions	21.6
Conditionals	19.3

Table 3: Relative popularity of resources among teachers (n=42)

	Percentage (%) endorsing
Articles	73.8
Oral presentation skills	66.7
Essay writing	59.5
Passives	40.5
Conditionals	14.3
Tenses	11.9
Prepositions	11.9

Table 4: Student levels of understanding of website topics before and after using the website (n=85)

	Before using the website (%)	After using the website (%)
I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people	24.7	38.8
I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and generate my own sentences correctly/write good essays	9.4	36.5
Total percentage	34.1	75.3

Table 5: Teacher levels of understanding of website topics before and after using the website (n=41)

	Before using the website (%)	After using the website (%)
I could understand quite a lot of things about this topic and explain them in a basic way to other people	26.8	12.2
I could understand many things about this topic and could create materials and teach the content to other people	63.4	85.4
Total percentage	90.2	97.6

Table 6: Student satisfaction with the website (n=82)

	“The materials stimulated my interest in learning about this subject” (%)
Strongly agree	28.1
Agree	63.4
Undecided	6.1
Disagree	2.4
Strongly disagree	0

Table 7: Teacher satisfaction with the website (n=37)

	“The materials stimulated my interest in teaching this subject” (%)
Strongly agree	35.1
Agree	56.8
Undecided	2.7
Disagree	5.4
Strongly disagree	0