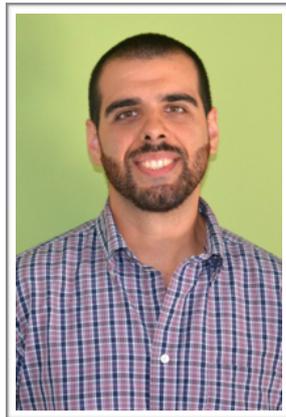


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## Devising a GAME plan: Promoting learner autonomy with iPads

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### Introduction

The presentation was based on research into developing a process, yet to be trialled, for promoting student autonomy when studying English with iPads. The presentation began with an introduction to the situation of iPad integration at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS). This involved an explanation of the move towards 1:1 student ownership of iPads, for all Freshman English students, and the possible justifications for this. The presenter explained the ubiquitous learning potential of the iPad to offer seamless switching of contexts at any time or location (Geist, 2011), and highlighted the students ability to tailor the content and personalise their apps to their specific learning needs.

This, it was claimed, would empower and motivate

students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

### Learner Autonomy

The presentation reviewed definitions of learner autonomy focusing on Benson's (2007) explanation that autonomy may be considered as a continuum with a learner's capacity for autonomy increasing and decreasing depending on how they apply themselves to the situation, tasks and activities. It was clarified that in the presentation autonomy will be considered as a process using the stages identified by Kumaravadivelu (2003). These were identified as: 1) Initial - Raising awareness of the teacher's choices of goals, tasks and materials; 2) Intermediate - Students choose from a range of options provided for by the teacher; 3) Advanced - Learner self-determination of goals, tasks etc.

### The GAME plan process

This led on to an explanation of the G.A.M.E. plan process, an activity adapted from Kumaravadivelu (2003) and reconceptualised for iPads. The method uses the acronym GAME (Goals, Applications, Methods, Evaluation) to structure a gradual transfer of responsibility to students and assist in their development of greater autonomy.

The first stage discussed was the G (Goals). The importance of offering students a choice of goals, or allowing them to develop their own goals was highlighted. It was suggested these goals could include course objectives, personal language goals or study skills development. The mnemonic SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) was identified as a useful method for allowing students to evaluate the suitability of their goals.

The second stage identified was the A (Applications). The researcher stressed the challenge of selecting or suggesting apps due to variety available or costs involved. It was put forward that teachers may create a tool kit of the most commonly used apps that students could download at the beginning of the course, but after that apps could be shared or suggested based on different ways of categorising them. The three methods identified and represented visually were 1) By task - what you want to achieve with the app; 2) By cognitive skill - using Bloom's taxonomy; 3) Using the SAMR model (Puentedura, 2012) to identify whether apps enhance or transform learning opportunities. Finally, the researcher highlighted the most common apps used by teachers and students at KUIS.

The third stage to be explained was the M

(Methods). It was suggested that students should be supported in exploring their own personal learning styles, which could take the form of multiple intelligence tests, learner training, study skill development and cognitive or metacognitive strategies. This could help refine the most suitable apps for them to use. It was also stressed that learners should explore collaborative methods of study and also be prepared to teach each other.

Finally the E (Evaluation) stage was explained. This stage requires the students to evaluate on the success of their methods and apps at achieving their linguistic goals. A number of methods of evaluation were considered such as self-reflection, oral reports, an E-Portfolio, a reflection diary, questionnaire or app quizzes.

## Conclusion

The presentation concluded with the claim that the iPad has exciting potential as an autonomous learning tool due to the ubiquitous access and range of multimodal functions and applications the device offers. The researcher suggested teachers can support learners developing greater autonomy by using the GAME plan process to help ensure they carefully consider their goals, the applications they use, their methods of study, and finally evaluate and reflect on their success.

## Q and A

The audience raised some interesting points in the Q and A session. One teacher described their experience of using iPads at their university and the difficulty in finding collaborative apps. This led to a brief review of apps previously mentioned to identify those that students could work on simultaneously such as Popplet. Another teacher was interested in discussing the evaluation stage in greater detail, and the potential difficulty or reluctance of students to sufficiently reflect. Overall, it was made clear that this was a new process yet to be trialed and the researcher would welcome any feedback on how the stages could best be implemented.

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## Bio:

Peter Harrold is an English lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan. His research interests include teaching English for Academic Purposes, technology and learning, and extensive reading.

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# From Paper to Pixels: Design and delivery of online language courses

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The English program at the Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology was revised in 2012. Initially, a needs/means analysis (Brown 1995) was carried out to determine learning objectives for postgraduate science and engineering students. The analysis revealed three dissimilar groups, namely: Japanese students in need of remedial English instruction, Japanese students with goals to present or publish in English in Japan, and international students writing and publishing in English for an overseas audience. In order to satisfy the needs of the groups, three courses in a paperless, foundation level English language program were developed: a self-access course, an oral/listening course and an academic reading course. The challenge was to create