Working in Silos: A Report on the Coordination of Course Collaboration at a Japanese University.

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Abstract
Universities can be workplaces where staff work in silos. Teachers are often left to their own devices when designing and implementing curricula. Whilst the freedom of independence may be welcomed by teachers, it can lead to missed opportunities such as the chance to encourage a spiral curriculum. This paper will report on the coordination of staff teaching on a variety of English courses across four years at a women's university in Japan. Tasks asked of teachers were chiefly related to the creation of a shared Google document containing separate tabs for each English language course. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was employed as a tool for teachers to choose language goals in the form of Can Do statements. Teachers were required to add course assessments, and any rubrics and test specifications where applicable. Additionally, columns were created for any comments or suggestions related to the course. Finally, a chart showing all courses was created to display any progression of CEFR course levels throughout the curricula. While in its infancy, initial feedback from a teacher questionnaire in this study has highlighted the importance of course collaboration to increase curricula knowledge and improve transparency for both teachers and students alike. Further benefits along with shortcomings are discussed. As a conclusion, future teacher workshops and smaller team meetings to improve the collaboration process are recommended.

Keywords: Spiral curriculum, coordination, CEFR, goals, Can Do statements, assessments, collaboration.

Introduction

This study originates from the author's five-year period spent as a General English (GE) coordinator (2012-2017), as well as his position as Global Communication Department (GCD) coordinator (2017-current). The study, which aims to improve collaboration amongst staff teaching English on GCD courses, comes off the back of a five-year GE curriculum project carried out by members of staff at the Bunkyo English Communication Center (BECC), located in Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University (HBWU), Japan.

At HBWU there are five departments: Early Childhood Education, Psychology, Welfare, Nutrition and Global Communication. Until 2018, all students were required take a GE communication course in their first and second years of study which are conducted by the BECC (from 2018, second-year students could elect not to take the GE course). In 2012, BECC management commenced a collaborative GE curriculum renewal project that involved all teaching staff. Up until this point in time teachers had been teaching the GE program somewhat independently of each other, an observation from the author given support by a former BECC director's recurring comment that teachers were 'working in silos.' As noted by Swap and Wayland (2013), universities are well-known to have figurative silos, whether institutional or personal, within their walls which can act as barriers to inhibit the exchange of knowledge amongst staff. An additional reason to include all staff on this project was every teacher at the BECC teaches the GE course, therefore have a vested interested in the outcome. Directors and coordinators started with the planning of a two-year curriculum based off the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). Course goals were chosen in the form of Can Do statements, a core component of the CEFR which describe what the learner can do in their target language at different levels. All teaching staff received various CEFR education and workshops, and were tasked with creating lessons and assessments, giving feedback once the curriculum had been taught, and revising content in a cyclical process over a period of five years. For more information on this project see Bower, Runnels, Rutson-Griffiths, Schmidt, Cook, Lehde, and Kodate (2017), and Bower, Rutson-Griffiths, Cook, Schmidt, Lehde, Kodate, and Runnels (2017).

In contrast to the GE course, GCD courses at the BECC are taught by either one, two or three teachers. Teachers who teach the same course are obliged to have some communication with each other regarding course content and assessments. However, teachers solely responsible for teaching GCD courses have little to no communication with other teachers regarding their curricula. Regardless of whether a course is taught by one or more teachers, apart from a GCD meeting once a semester there had been little coordination and sharing of information amongst teachers across the four-years of education at the BECC. It could be argued that these teachers were still working in silos, as they were mostly left to their own devices to create, teach and improve curricula. With this point in mind and from personal observations of various GCD classes over a period of two semesters in 2017, the GCD coordinator sought to improve collaboration regarding GCD courses.

The collaboration started by way of a shared Google document containing separate tabs for each course. Teachers were required to complete each of their course tabs with CEFR-informed course goals, assessments, test specifications, rubrics,

suggestions and/or any issues regarding courses. By sharing this information in a single easily-accessible document one intention was for teachers to see opportunities to promote spiraling across the curricula. A spiral curriculum is one that revisits itself enabling learners to progressively build on basic principles to gain a deeper understanding of more complex forms (Bruner, 1960, p.13). With the GE curriculum, one such example of spiraling is the replication of a presentation. In semester one, students give a presentation using Keynote to introduce themselves. In semester three, students partner up with a classmate to make another Keynote presentation introducing her, thereby switching from first person to third person tense. Conjugating verbs in the third person is a typical error for Japanese learners of English (Bryant, 1984), therefore students have an opportunity to build on their presentation skills while gaining experience with a more complex language point. On GCD courses, with teachers working independently of each other an opportunity is being missed to create materials which allow learners to revisit content at progressively more complex levels.

A later addition to the Google document was an outline created from the goals component to check the progression of CEFR course levels throughout the four-year curriculum (see Appendix A). As a follow-up to this collaboration document a teacher questionnaire was administered to obtain feedback on both the document itself, and collaboration in general. The purpose of this study is to document the collaboration process, analyze the results of the teacher questionnaire, reflect, and feed back into the plan to improve course collaboration on GCD courses at the BECC.

Background and Methods

Global Communication Department (GCD)

The list of courses and number of assigned teachers at the time this study commenced in April 2017 can be seen in Appendix B. Eight of the 17 courses are compulsory. The 13 teachers were from Canada (1), Japan (1), New Zealand (1), the Philippines (2), the United Kingdom (2) and the United States of America (6). In 2017, the registered number of GCD students were 32 first-year, 19 second- year, 28 third-year and 44 fourth-year.

Questionnaire.

A questionnaire asking the following three questions was distributed to teachers in April 2018:

1. Please give your feedback regarding the GCD course collaboration document created in 2017.
2. How do you feel about collaboration with GCD courses that you co-teach? For example, collaborating with teachers teaching the same course.
3. How do you feel about collaboration with all other GCD courses? For example, collaborating with teachers teaching different courses.

Data was collected via Google forms. Teachers were not required to give their names to responses. Eight teachers completed the questionnaire.

Results

To analyze the results excerpts from teachers' responses to the questionnaire have been selected. Full responses to the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

Table 1. *Feedback for the GCD course collaboration document.*

Teacher	Comment
1	Huge and cumbersome. Navigating and filling in the google sheet was tricky resulting in time wasted having to re-do portions, re upload links, etc…I suppose I could not see the direct benefit to me individually and so inputting all the data in all of these classes I teach just felt like yet another busy work task I had to take time away from my teaching/planning/research/committee work just so I could show that I filled in all of the boxes.
2	It was helpful to be able to consider concrete CEFR goals for the course. Also, it is handy to have all assessments in one place so that others can easily see what I am doing and likewise. It is also neat to see the CEFR bands of each class side by side.
3	This doc has hopefully / probably made everyone think more deeply about their course goals… It also helps us see what is being repeated across courses… and we can also see how we can help other courses complement each other…
4	… it helped root out some bad course goals I had and helped me focus on using the CEFR to improve the courses I teach. The assessment section helped me see how I could change the assessments I use to more closely match what I cover in class.
5	I think it will be really helpful when it comes time to revise my course, since I will be able to see what previous teachers have had to say about the course. I can also pull ideas from other courses relatively easily.
6	… it not only helps to give GCD teachers a better idea of what other teachers are doing, but also allows teachers to share ideas and see what works or does not work in other courses. In particular, being able to stretch vocabulary across different courses and utilize similar testing methods and rubrics is beneficial for both students and teachers.
7	I found it helpful because, by adding CEFR-based course goals, I could clearly see how challenging the content of my course can be for lower-level students. It was also helpful to see all of the course's assessments in one document, which made me reflect on some of the shortcomings of my course.
8	I like how you can find the information of all the courses in one place. I also like the Overview tab, where you can see the levels of can-do statements used for all the classes at a glance.

Comments in Table 1 highlight the usefulness of the collaboration document when considering course goals, assessments, the CEFR and the sharing of course knowledge amongst staff. Goals and assessments are integral components of a language course which require careful consideration. Comments made by teachers 2, 3, 4 & 7 highlight how teachers have now been made more aware of bad course goals, how they now have goals related to the CEFR, and how their goals give a better indication of the level of the course. The convenience of having all assessments in one document was noted by teachers 2, 7 & 8, and teachers 4 & 7 commented how this task has encouraged improvements to assessments. Teacher 6 could see the value of

sharing assessment rubrics and specifications to both teachers and students. Teachers 2 & 8 referred to the overview tab and the usefulness of the CEFR, where the bands of different English levels show a comparison of course goal levels at a glance. Teachers 2, 3, 5 & 6 noted the sharing of ideas and knowledge as being beneficial for teachers, particularly to be able to revise courses so that they can complement each other.

Teacher one's argument against the collaboration document would seem to relate mostly to the amount of time spent attempting the task. The use of Google documents has become somewhat of a standard practice at the BECC within different committees, however, navigating Google Excel can be a time-consuming process. This teacher's comments would also seem to address the busyness of teachers at the BECC, where they are expected to serve on different committees in addition to creating, teaching and grading courses.

Table 2. *Feedback for collaboration on courses co-taught by teachers.*

Teacher	Comment
1	Some teachers I get along with very well and so there are not many bumps in the road and teachers which I don't necessarily get along well with or have less respect for I don't collaborate much other than bare minimum. It is important for administrators to hire and train (and continue to train) the best staff they can/ who share similar work ethics.
2	I don't co-teach, but when I did, it was fine. We had many meetings, and often the assignments we came up with were a little simpler than I would have made them, but that may have been for the best as a counterbalance to my curriculum style.
3	…autonomy within the classroom, but all frameworks should be the same: Same rubrics, same terminology (between years), same dates for assessments (within a year). Also stops one class thinking it has to do more than another / is missing out on something...
4	…it can be tricky to stay on the same page or keep the students on roughly the same schedule for assessment purposes. It's certainly easier to have each course taught by one teacher, though that could lead to some people heading off in unhelpful directions if left unchecked.
6	My experience so far has been only positive. It is nice to bounce ideas off another teacher and share activities.
7	On the positive side, a lot of creativity can come out through a collaboration of ideas, and with more teachers involved creating new materials and making updates can be a quicker process. On the negative side, collaborating can be a challenge if the teachers have conflicting ideas about what they'd like to accomplish with their students, and teacher preference starts dominating the direction of the course.
8	When I worked at a different university in the past, teachers teaching the same courses used different textbooks and taught different contents, and to be honest I never understood it. It was usually left that way because there wasn't any communication among them, let alone collaboration. Students can't choose teachers, and if what's covered in the classes differ, I think it's not fair for students.

Comments in Table 2 outline both positive and negative aspects of collaboration where teachers must teach the same course. Teachers 1 & 7 mention the issue of conflicts and the necessity for people to share similar work ethics. Teachers 2, 6 & 7 comment on the positive aspects of sharing which includes reduced time, increased creativity and a balanced complexity when creating materials. Teachers 3 & 8 both touch on the issue of equity for students when course content can differ depending on the teacher. Teacher 4 brings up the topic of quality control on courses when there is only one teacher assigned to teach it.

Table 3. *Feedback for collaboration on different courses taught by different teachers.*

Teacher	Feedback
1	Regarding the compulsory GCD courses it is more important to collaborate among teachers to have background knowledge of what students have already learned or routines they are trained. For example, knowing the writing processes students are familiar with helps future GCD teachers and reduces student confusion/anxiety, etc.
2	To be honest I'm not really thinking so much at the moment about what others are teaching in their courses, but if there was a way to link them up so that we are sure students receive a holistic curriculum and are prepared skill-wise for the advanced level courses they wish to take, that would be excellent.
3	...a 'must'! Even if it is just letting each other know what they have done tech wise within courses, all FE GCD teachers should collaborate for the benefit of the kids!
4	It's helpful to think of our courses from the students' perspectives. If we can avoid having them give three presentations in a week on the same topic I think that's a good thing for them and the collaboration aspect generally helps set us apart from other universities.
5	I would like to have a chance once in a while to hear about some specific activities teachers have introduced into their lessons that were particularly successful, which I can adapt to my own course.
6	I think this is a good thing, but it is important to balance the amount of freedom teachers have with the amount of course integration required. I do feel it is important to coordinate aspects of a course so that the classes complement each other.
7	Students can gain a deeper understanding, if they can connect what they've learned in more than one course. Also, if there isn't enough time to fully cover something in one course, students are still able to receive support in another. (i.e. Students work on the final draft of their BEC paper in their Writing Strategies class.)
8	I'd be happier if I know how my course is related to other courses, where there are any overlaps, the roles my course plays in the bigger picture of BECC education. I think the teachers here don't mind / want to have some collaboration. The difficult question is how much.

In Table 3 we can see topics related to students acquired knowledge, benefits to students, teachers and the university, the optimum amount of collaboration, and a spiraled curriculum. Teachers 1, 2 & 3 comment on the usefulness of utilizing background knowledge such as routines already trained and skills learned to prepare students for other courses. Teachers 3, 4 & 7 agree that teacher collaboration is particularly important for the benefit of the students. These benefits include balancing

workloads and giving adequate support to students. For example, when time is an issue in one course they can still receive support in another if teachers collaborate. Benefits to teachers is mentioned in teacher 5's comment which asks for the sharing of successful activities so that they can be adapted to use in multiple courses. The amount of collaboration at the BECC is noted by teacher 4 as seeing this university set itself apart from others. In teacher 7's response we can see a reference to a spiraled curriculum, where students can gain a deeper understanding by connecting content in different courses. In agreeance with collaboration across courses teachers 6 & 8 raise a critical question; how much course integration is required to gain the most benefit when considering both students and teachers perspectives?

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to document a process of collaboration whereby teachers input CEFR-informed course goals, assessments, rubrics, specifications, and comments related to GCD courses at the BECC into a Google excel document. Subsequently, teachers gave feedback on this document and collaboration in general. The results from the teacher questionnaire showed that a focus on selecting CEFR-informed course goals encouraged teachers to work on improving the direction of courses for both teachers and students alike. This improvement is being achieved by pruning course goals considered not appropriate, and selecting new course goals based on Can Do statements from the six levels of the CEFR, from A1(Basic user) to C2 (Proficient user). The sharing of these goals gave rise to a course overview tab which shows a general picture of the level of progression of course goals throughout four years of English language education at the BECC. Regarding levels of the CEFR, teachers indicated that they are now more aware of how challenging their courses are for students. Consequently, they can inform students to carefully consider whether their English level is suitable to take the course in the case where it is an elective option.

When one considers the CEFR and language goals, the topic of assessment naturally springs to mind. From comments received by teachers who completed this task, benefits are primarily related to the convenience of having all assessments in one document. Learning and teaching are not static processes. Therefore, when it comes time to revise courses by having all assessments, specifications and rubrics easily accessible, teachers commented that the process may be easier and the value to students greater. An example of how students may benefit is familiarity with test formats. According to Lakin (2014), there is a reliance on metacognitive monitoring skills when encountering new test formats. Therefore, with a familiar test format a student may fully focus their attention towards the assessment itself, rather than how to answer it. Additionally, previous knowledge of a rubric may improve clarity of what is expected of an assignment for students, and subsequently the results obtained.

A major benefit to this study according to teachers has been the increased sharing of course knowledge. Knowing what occurs in one course can in turn enable teachers to create materials where content is revisited progressively in more complex forms, i.e. a spiral curriculum, Bruner (1960). The sharing of knowledge also allows for a bigger picture to be drawn, for example, how one course relates to others in terms of goals and assessments. Furthermore, teachers can see what comments previous teachers of a course have shared, or any suggestions as to where improvements could be made.

Not all feedback regarding the collaboration document was positive, however, and the issue of time spent doing the task including navigating a Google excel document was raised by one teacher as being a busywork task. The criticism raises red flags related to transparency of the purposes of the task itself, along with how much guidance was given, and whether feedback received was adequate. The purposes for the collaboration document task were stated as being:

1.   To investigate language goals for GCD students over four years of study.
2.   To investigate assessments for GCD students over four years of study.
3.   To determine how goals are being matched by assessments.
4.   To determine how language skills are being represented across curricula.
5.   To encourage teachers to draw upon specifications used in the GE course when creating GCD assessments.

Although transparency would seem to be covered by the five purposes above, the author notes here that guidance and feedback can certainly be improved in the future for teachers as improvements are sought for not only the courses, but the collaboration process itself.

Teachers at the BECC unanimously agree that there are numerous benefits to collaborating on courses for both teachers and students. The team of teachers have been collaborating considerably on the GE curriculum since 2012, creating materials based on the CEFR. Specific benefits of collaboration given by teachers were increased creativity, reduced time, and a balanced complexity when it comes to co-creating materials. However, the issue of conflicts arose where teachers have differing opinions on education, and domineering teachers may dictate the direction of a course. This brought up an important point regarding the hiring, training, and re-training of teachers who can share similar work ethics. Points raised by teachers from the questionnaire that could be used for future discussions of what constitutes good BECC teacher ethics would include ensuring that there is equity for students, adequate support within and between courses, and a balanced workload. Furthermore, to adequately prepare students for future courses the sharing of background knowledge and pre-learned methods, for example writing processes, could foster a smoother transition between courses for both teachers and students alike.

Conclusion.

The results from this study indicate a positive attitude towards not only the GCD collaboration document, but the concept of collaborating on courses at the BECC. The sharing of course knowledge by way of a Google document is the start of a metaphorical building of bridges between the silos that currently exist within GCD courses at the BECC. The next steps forward are to improve guidance for teachers regarding language goals and assessments, to seek stronger links and more spiraling between GCD courses for the benefit of students, and to continue the BECC's alignment of course curricula to the CEFR. This is hoped to be achieved by conducting CEFR workshops, by continuing to update the course collaboration document as courses are revised, and by having GCD teachers work together on small teams. Two-way feedback between management and teachers on projects will be critical as the BECC continues in its endeavor to provide a quality language education for its students, and a mutually beneficial collaborative environment for its teachers. With improvements to guidance and feedback, the question of how much course

integration being necessary to gain the optimal benefit when considering both students and teachers perspectives may be one step closer to being answered.

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Appendix A

Global Communication Department (GCD) course goal overview at the Bunkyo English Communication Center (BECC), 2017.

	Basic user		Independent user	
	A1	A2	B1	B2
Basic English Communication 1/2		�©		
English Communication 1/2		▦	▦	
Reading Strategies 1/2		▦		
Writing Strategies 1/2			▦	
English Communication 3/4		▦	▦	
Reading Strategies 3/4		▦		
Writing Strategies 3/4			▦	
Junior English Workshop 5/6			▦	
International Communication Strategies 1/2			▦	
Hospitality English			▦	
Tourism English		▦	▦	
English for Education			▦	
International Communication Strategies 3/4		▦	▦	
Business English			▦	▦
Senior English Workshop 7/8			▦	▦
Popular Culture		▦	▦	
Academic English			▦	▦

Footnotes: 1/2 is first-year, 3/4 is second-year, 5/6 is third-year, and 7/8 is fourth-year. An exception is International Communication Strategies where 1/2 is third year, and 3/4 a fourth year course. All other courses are electives which can be taken in either third or fourth years.

A1 to B2 refer to language levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001).

Appendix B

Global Communication Department (GCD) course list at the Bunkyo English Communication Center (BECC), 2017.

Course Title	Year	Number of Teachers
Basic English Communication I/II	1	2
English Communication I/II	1	3
Reading Strategies I/II	1	1
Writing Strategies I/II	1	1
English Communication III/IV	2	2
Reading Strategies III/IV	2	1
Writing Strategies III/IV	2	2
International Communication Strategies I/II	3	1
Junior English Workshop III/IV	3	1
Hospitality English	3 & 4	1
Tourism English	3 & 4	1
English for Education	3 & 4	1
Business English	3 & 4	1
Popular Culture	3 & 4	1
Academic English	3 & 4	1
International Communication Strategies III/IV	4	1
Senior English Workshop V/VI	4	1

Appendix C
Bunkyo English Communication Center (BECC) course collaboration teacher
questionnaire, 2018.

1. Please give your feedback regarding the GCD course collaboration document created in 2017.

Teacher	Response
1	Huge and cumbersome. Navigating and filling in the google sheet was tricky resulting in time wasted having to re-do portions, re upload links, etc. It's a big undertaking trying to sync all GCD classes into one all-encompassing document but at the same time it was not very user-friendly inputting and recording information. At the same time, I can' think of another alternative which would have been easier. It reminded me of homework I was tasked with, not really for a purpose, just for something for me to do and show my work by the deadline. I suppose I could not see the direct benefit to me individually and so inputting all the data in all of these classes I teach just felt like yet another busy work task I had to take time away from my teaching/planning/research/committee work just so I could show that I filled in all of the boxes. I'm sure all of this effort will be useful for administrators but it wasn't very meaningful for me as a classroom teacher.
2	It was helpful to be able to consider concrete CEFR goals for the course. Also, it is handy to have all assessments in one place so that others can easily see what I am doing and likewise. It is also neat to see the CEFR bands of each class side by side. However, I really only used my course's page and not others' pages, so I can't say I have a greater understanding of what they do (although I now know I could read about it any time).
3	Short version: I think it is a great idea...very necessary. Teachers should have (relative) autonomy in the classroom, but we can't have components of a course all over the place (as they have been in the past) with some teachers having proper goals, assessments (ie work!) while others 'see wikipaedia'! This doc has hopefully / probably made everyone think more deeply about their course goals and lesson plans etc. It also helps us see what is being repeated across courses so we don't have to / shouldn't do it, and we can also see how we can help other courses / other courses (writing / BEC / reading or business class / academic class can complement each other.
4	I liked engaging in the process, it helped root out some bad course goals I had and helped me focus on using the CEFR to improve the courses I teach. The assessment section helped me see how I could change the assessments I use to more closely match what I cover in class.
5	I haven't spent much time on it yet but I think it will be really helpful when it comes time to revise my course, since I will be able to see what previous teachers have had to say about the course. I can also pull ideas from other courses relatively easily.
6	I like the idea of this document as it not only helps to give GCD teachers a better idea of what other teachers are doing, but also allows teachers to share ideas and see what works or does not work in other courses. In particular, being able to stretch vocabulary across different courses and utilize similar testing methods and rubrics is beneficial for both students and teachers.
7	I found it helpful because, by adding CEFR-based course goals, I could clearly see how challenging the content of my course can be for lower-level students. (Ideally, students would know this too, before they sign up for a course that is well beyond their abilities.) It was also helpful to see all of the course's assessments in one document, which made me reflect on some of the shortcomings of my course. (i.e. There wasn't a writing assessment in semester one, so I created one.)
8	I like how you can find the information of all the courses in one place. I also like the Overview tab, where you can see the levels of can-do statements used for all the classes at a glance. Before, it was difficult to see how those courses were related to each other

(i.e., do we have overlaps between the course contents and the levels set for the courses). Also, inputting the course information made me think about my course more.

2. How do you feel about collaboration with GCD courses that you co-teach? E.g. collaborating with teachers teaching the same course.

Teacher	Response
1	As in any team-teaching situation it depends on the teaching partner. Some teachers I get along with very well and so there are not many bumps in the road and teachers which I don't necessarily get along well with or have less respect for I don't collaborate much other than bare minimum. This is the nature of team-teaching. It is important for administrators to hire and train (and continue to train) the best staff they can/ who share similar work ethics.
2	I don't co-teach, but when I did, it was fine. We had many meetings, and often the assignments we came up with were a little simpler than I would have made them, but that may have been for the best as a counterbalance to my curriculum style.
3	I teach all my year alone (guess who!?! :) , but I really feel that teachers teaching the same subject either within a year or between 2 years should collaborate. Again, autonomy within the classroom, but all frameworks should be the same: Same rubrics, same terminology (between years), same dates for assessments (within a year), all using wix sites rather than random google sites, recycling of vocab etc. Also stops one class thinking it has to do more than another / is missing out on something...both complaints that were made to me about another course last year.
4	I don't mind it, but it can be tricky to stay on the same page or keep the students on roughly the same schedule for assessment purposes. It's certainly easier to have each course taught by one teacher, though that could lead to some people heading off in unhelpful directions if left unchecked.
5	This does not apply to me at the moment, but seems like a very good idea.
6	My experience so far has been only positive. It is nice to bounce ideas off another teacher and share activities.
7	I have mixed feelings about it. On the positive side, a lot of creativity can come out through a collaboration of ideas, and with more teachers involved creating new materials and making updates can be a quicker process. On the negative side, collaborating can be a challenge if the teachers have conflicting ideas about what they'd like to accomplish with their students, and teacher preference starts dominating the direction of the course.
8	When I worked at a different university in the past, teachers teaching the same courses used different textbooks and taught different contents, and to be honest I never understood it. It was usually left that way because there wasn't any communication among them, let alone collaboration. Students can't choose teachers, and if what's covered in the classes differ, I think it's not fair for students. Yes, if the students' levels differ greatly, you may need to cater the course to your students, but I think you should at least try to share the same goals, contents (textbooks), and assessment.

3. How do you feel about collaboration with all other GCD courses? E.g. collaborating with teachers teaching different courses.

Teacher	Response
1	This depends on the course and grade of students. With GCD elective courses

there is not much collaboration because generally there is not much overlap in curriculum or students. Regarding the compulsory GCD courses it is more important to collaborate among teachers to have background knowledge of what students have already learned or routines they are trained. For example, knowing the writing processes students are familiar with helps future GCD teachers and reduces student confusion/anxiety, etc.

2   I guess I'm okay with it as long as I can continue to teach the contents of my course as I wish to. To be honest I'm not really thinking so much at the moment about what others are teaching in their courses, but if there was a way to link them up so that we are sure students receive a holistic curriculum and are prepared skill-wise for the advanced level courses they wish to take, that would be excellent.

3   Same as for the doc...a 'must'! Even if it is just letting each other know what they have done tech wise within courses, all FE GCD teachers should collaborate for the benefit of the kids! Also, stops scenarios where one teacher tells students one thing, and another tells them another....who should they listen to?

4   I like it. It's helpful to think of our courses from the students' perspectives. If we can avoid having them give three presentations in a week on the same topic I think that's a good thing for them and the collaboration aspect generally helps set us apart from other universities.

5   I would like to have a chance once in a while to hear about some specific activities teachers have introduced into their lessons that were particularly successful, which I can adapt to my own course. While sharing an activity document where teachers can write details (Moxtra or spreadsheet) is helpful, it would be much clearer for me if the teacher could explain and demonstrate in person.

6   I think this is a good thing, but it is important to balance the amount of freedom teachers have with the amount of course integration required. I do feel it is important to coordinate aspects of a course so that the classes complement each other. I hope that the majority of GCD teachers feel the same way.

7   If all participating teachers are onboard with the idea, I think it's good. Students can gain a deeper understanding, if they can connect what they've learned in more than one course. Also, if there isn't enough time to fully cover something in one course, students are still able to receive support in another. (i.e. Students work on the final draft of their BEC paper in their Writing Strategies class.)

8   I'd prefer collaboration to people working individually. I'd be happier if I know how my course is related to other courses, where there are any overlaps, the roles my course plays in the bigger picture of BECC education. I think the teachers here don't mind / want to have some collaboration. The difficult question is how much.