unidimensional measure of vocabulary knowledge depth, and numerous researchers have questioned whether the various tasks contained on the scale can reliably be scaled by difficulty.

The present research examines the viability of the VKS as a continuum model of vocabulary knowledge depth, moving from ignorance of the target words through the ability to form semantically and grammatically-accurate sentences using them. Between July and December of 2010, 278 students ranging from very low to very high English proficiency were tested using a computerized version of the VKS. Resultant data were analyzed via full-information factor analysis, Master's Partial Credit Model, and the many-facet Rasch model in order to examine the usefulness of the VKS as a psychometric measurement model, and assess the scalability of the various tasks it contains.

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Liberating Constraints? EAP Presentation Training with the 20x20 Format

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Effective presentation skills are critical for university students as they prepare to be successful international professionals. This presentation reports an attempt to use a “20x20” format to enhance presentation skills of university students enrolled in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) courses.

20x20, also called “Pecha-Kucha,” requires the presenter to deliver a highly visual presentation using 20 slides shown exactly 20 seconds each. The slides advance automatically and the speaker must present within these constraints. Since its inception in Tokyo in 2003 by architects Klein and Dytham, the format has been growing in popularity worldwide. See pecha-kucha.org.

A 20x20 assignment was given to students in EAP classes at a bilingual liberal arts university in Tokyo. The levels of students varied from TOEFL IP 450 to 600. Students were allowed to choose any academic topic they wanted and many chose to present on a research essay they were writing.

A survey following the 20x20 presentations revealed that responses were mixed. Almost all students agreed that the 20x20 format was useful and enjoyable because 1) it forces them to practice more, 2) it helps them to focus and organize their points, and 3) and it helps the audience stay engaged. In contrast, students felt that some of the drawbacks were 1) presentations feel one-way, 2) it was difficult to prepare and practice enough, and 3) the format may be less conducive to certain types of topics.

400 seconds of this presentation will be given in an actual 20x20 format. More detailed explanations of various issues relating to the procedure for helping students to create and deliver successful 20x20s will be given and examples of student presentations will be shown.