SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

Master of Arts
LALS 516 Special Topic
LEARNER AUTONOMY AND LEARNER STRATEGIES

TRIMESTER 3 2009
16 November 2009 to 21 February 2010

Trimester dates
Teaching dates: 16 November 2009 to 12 February 2010
Mid-trimester break: 24 December 2009 to 4 January 2010
Examination/Assessment period: 15 February to 20 February 2010

Course coordinator

Peter Gu

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Course Administrator

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Class time and location
Lecture: Tuesday 4 -6 pm, Murphy (MY) 401
There are no tutorials for MA courses

Course delivery
For distance students, the course is available at http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system.

When you enrol you will automatically be given a computer user account, which will be on your *Confirmation of Study* form. Usually, it is the first six letters of your family name and four letters of your first name. So if your name is Robert Cameron, your user name might be

camerorobe. Your password will be your student ID number. You need to use this computer user account when you access journals from off-campus.

For IT help, contact its-service@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5050. If you want to use other student computing services, you need to call the SCS Help Desk on (04) 463 5050. Staff will re-confirm your username and re-set your password after confirming your identity. The ITS website is its-service@vuw.ac.nz.

Distance students are welcome to come to the class if they are in Wellington. Contact Peter Gu for details.

Communication of additional information

Additional information or information on changes to the programme will be conveyed to students via the postgraduate noticeboard on level 2 of von Zedlitz building; or on Blackboard, or by email to all class members.

Please note emails sent to students via blackboard are sent to your student email address by default. You must check your student email address or set it to forward all mail to another address (see ITS).

Course content

The following topics will be covered in the course. The set readings for each topic are indicated besides the topic. The full references can be found in the table of contents of the set readings.

Wk 1	16-22 Nov 2009 (online)	Learner autonomy: An overview	(Benson, 2007; Littlewood, 1996; Smith, 2008)
Wk 2	23-29 Nov 2009	Learner autonomy in self-directed learning	(Clemente, 2001; Hyland, 2004; White, 1995)
Wk 3	30 Nov -6 Dec 2009	Learner autonomy in the classroom	(Crabbe, 1993; Little, 1995)
Wk 4	7-13 Dec 2009	Learner autonomy and its promotion	(Cotterall, 2000; Hand, 2006)
Wk 5	14-20 Dec 2009	Social autonomy and critical perspectives	(Holliday, 2003; Pennycook, 1997; Schmenk, 2005)
Break 23 Dec 2009 - 4 Jan 2010			
Wk 6	5-10 Jan 2010	Learner strategies: An overview	(McDonough, 1999)
Wk 7	11-17 Jan 2010	Learner strategies for the four skills	(Vandergrift, 2003; Graham, Harris & Mason (2005)
Wk 8	18-24 Jan 2010	Learner strategies for grammar and vocabulary	(Gu, 2003; Oxford & Lee, 2007)
Wk 9	25-31Jan 2010	Strategy-based instruction	(Chamot, 2005; Macaro & Erler, 2008)
Wk 10	1-7 Feb 2010	Learner autonomy and learner strategies	(Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2003)

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, course members should be able to

1) understand the theories behind learner autonomy and learner strategies in language learning,
2) be familiar with major research findings on learner autonomy and learner strategies, and
3) be able to integrate theories and research into classroom teaching practice.

Expected workload

LALS 516 is a fifteen point one-trimester paper. Course members should expect to spend about 12 hours per week for ten weeks on all the work for this course including lectures.

Readings

There are two recommended books and one set text.

The set readings, *LALS 516 Set Readings,* are available from the Student Notes Distribution Centre. Suggested additional readings will be posted on Blackboard when needed.

Five copies of each of the following two recommended books are available at Vic Books.

   Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Harlow: Longman.

   Cohen, A. D., & Macaro, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Language learner strategies: 30 years of research and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

For the first two weeks of trimester postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from vicbooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during trimester 1 and 2 (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays and in trimester 3). Phone: 463 5515.

Suggested additional readings will be posted on Blackboard when needed.

Assessment requirements

The course will be assessed by three assignments.

Assignment 1   due Tue 15 December   20%   1000 words   Course objectives 1 and 2
Assignment 2   due Tue 19 January   20%   1000 words   Course objectives 1 and 2
Assignment 3   due Fri 5 February   60%   3000 words   Course objectives 1, 2, and 3

Distance members of the course should submit your assignments through the Blackboard system. If Blackboard fails to work, assignments can also be submitted as e-mail attachments to LALS-516@vuw.ac.nz. Please submit each assignment (including cover sheet) as a single document in MS WORD format. On-campus members of the course can submit your assignments in class. You can also hand them in through the Assignments slot by the door to the School Office (VZ 210). If you send them by post, the postal address is on page 1 of this outline.

For the on-campus group, your assignments and feedback will be returned to you in class. Or you can collect them at the School Office. Feedback for the distance group will be sent to you through email together with your scanned assignments.

N.B. Note that if no work is submitted for assessment before the last three weeks of teaching, there will be nothing on which to base an aegrotat consideration.

The assignment topics are described below.

Assignment 1 (1000 words) (due Tuesday 15 December)

Review relevant research on an aspect of learner autonomy, and discuss whether and how learner autonomy should be promoted in your classrooms in a teaching context you are familiar with.

There should be two major parts in this assignment, a review and a discussion. Your review of theories and research should demonstrate your own understanding of the issues and should not be a mere list of factual introductions. Your discussion should show your awareness of the social and contextual relevance of learner autonomy. Where necessary, use examples to demonstrate your points.

Assignment 2 (1000 words) (due Tuesday 19 January)

Focus on one aspect of language learner strategies. Review relevant research and discuss whether and how learner strategies can benefit your students in a teaching context you are familiar with.

There should be two major parts in this assignment, a review and a discussion. Your review of theories and research should demonstrate your own understanding of the issues and should not be a mere list of factual introductions. Your discussion should show your awareness of person, task, or context relatedness of learner strategies. Where necessary, use examples to demonstrate your points.

Assignment 3 (3000 words) (due Friday 5 February)

October 2009

There are two options for Assignment 3. You can either design a study that looks into one aspect of learner autonomy or learner strategies or design a lesson that shows your ability to integrate current research findings on learner autonomy or learner strategies into your own teaching practice. Note that for both options, choose either learner autonomy or learning strategies. You do not need to do both unless you deliberately try to integrate the two. You are encouraged to incorporate Assignments 1 or 2 into Assignment 3.

Option 1 should include all elements of an empirical study. In other words, you should contextualize your study and your own research questions by foregrounding them with relevant theories and research on learner autonomy or learner strategies. You should next present all your design details such as participants, materials, procedures, and analyses. You should discuss your findings and be aware of the classroom implications before arriving at your conclusions. If you do not have access to language learners, choose option 2 or discuss with me an alternative as early as possible.

Option 2 focuses on classroom integration of learner autonomy or learner strategies. You should be aware of the main research findings on a specific aspect of learner autonomy or learner strategies, and custom-design a one-hour lesson (or two 30-minute lessons) for a particular group of language learners. There should be a language aim and a learner autonomy or learning strategy aim in this lesson; and you should show how the two aims are integrated in your classroom by means of classroom activities. Justify your design principles and procedures, and discuss in what ways your lesson could possibly benefit your students.

Penalties
Assignments must be submitted by the due date. There is no penalty for late submission but permission must be sought and a good reason given. Try to keep within the word limits especially for the shorter assignments. *Assignments which are plagiarised will not receive a grade and cannot be resubmitted*.

Mandatory course requirements
There are minimum course requirements which must be satisfied to be assessed for the final grade. In order to meet these requirements, course members must

- complete the 3 assignments, and
- attend all the ten classes or participate at least once in each of the ten web-based discussions.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx