



## SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

### M. A. PROGRAMME

LALS 516 Special Topic: Learner Autonomy and Learner Strategies

### TRIMESTER 3 2010

15 November 2010 to 19 February 2011

#### Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 22 November 2010 to 11 February 2011

Mid-trimester/Christmas break: 20 December 2010 to 6 January 2011

#### Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

#### Course Coordinator & Lecturer:

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	Post:	School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Victoria University of Wellington PO Box 600 Wellington 6140 NEW ZEALAND

**Class times and locations:** Tuesday 4 – 6 p.m., 24KP 202

#### Course delivery

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as lectures plus workshops. For distance students, the course is available at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system. In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Further information about Blackboard is available under Frequently Asked Questions, under the Study tab of the School website.

The class meets on the following ten dates:

November 23, 30, December 7, 14, 21 (online) [Break], January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8.

For distance students, the course is available at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. 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 help, contact [scs-help@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:scs-help@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. Useful websites include <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/its> and <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/scs>. If you are an international student the following site could be useful for you <http://www.victoria-international.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

MA noticeboard Level 2 Von Zedlitz, and via Blackboard.

**LALS main office:** VZ 210, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

**LALS 516 Course Administrator:** TBA, Postgraduate administration  
 Tel: 463 5600/463 5255/472 1000 ext 8386  
 Web contact: [www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz)

### Aims:

This course introduces the principles and practices associated with learner autonomy and learner strategies in language learning. A key emphasis will be placed on how the theories and research covered can be translated into classroom practice.

**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.

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

Wk 1	22-28 Nov 2010	Learner autonomy: An overview	(Benson, 2007; Littlewood, 1996; Smith, 2008)
Wk 2	29 Nov-5 Dec 2010	Learner autonomy in self-directed learning	(Clemente, 2001; Hyland, 2004; White, 1995)
Wk 3	6-12 Dec 2010	Learner autonomy in the	(Crabbe, 1993; Little, 1995)

classroom			
Wk 4	13-19 Dec 2010	Learner autonomy and its promotion	(Cotterall, 2000; Hand, 2006)
Wk 5	20 Dec 2010-9 Jan 2011 (online)	Social autonomy and critical perspectives	(Holliday, 2003; Pennycook, 1997; Schmenk, 2005)
Break 20 Dec 2009 - 6 Jan 2010			
Wk 6	10-16 Jan 2011	Learner strategies: An overview	(McDonough, 1999)
Wk 7	17-23 Jan 2011	Learner strategies for the four skills	(Vandergrift, 2003; Graham, Harris & Mason (2005)
Wk 8	24-30 Jan 2011	Learner strategies for grammar and vocabulary	(Gu, 2003; Oxford & Lee, 2007)
Wk 9	31 Jan-6 Feb 2011	Strategy-based instruction	(Chamot, 2005; Macaro & Erler, 2008)
Wk 10	7-11 Feb 2011	Learner autonomy and learner strategies	(Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2003)

## Readings

### Essential texts:

There are two recommended books and one set text.

The set readings, *LALS 516 Set Readings*, are available from Vicbooks. Suggested additional readings will be posted on Blackboard when needed.

### Recommended Reading:

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

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.

All textbooks and student notes (undergraduate and postgraduate) will be available for purchase from Vicbooks on the top floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

**Assessment:** The course will be assessed by three assignments.

Assignment 1 due Fri 17 December 20% 1000 words Course objectives 1 and 2

Assignment 2	due Fri 21 January	20%	1000 words	Course objectives 1 and 2
Assignment 3	due Fri 11 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-MA@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:LALS-MA@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 done through Blackboard or through email.

**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 Friday 17 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 Friday 21 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 11 February)

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.

### **Relationship between assessment and course objectives:**

The assignments provide an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of issues involved in learner autonomy and learner strategies, to evaluate the applicability of the theories and research in your own contexts of teaching, and to design classroom-friendly research or classroom procedures that are well informed by your knowledge of learner autonomy and learning strategies.

### **Expected workload**

LALS 516 is a fifteen point one-trimester paper. The expected number of hours to cover this course is 150 over the trimester.

### **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. No credit will be given for work beyond the word limits. *Assignments which are plagiarised will not receive a grade and cannot be resubmitted.*

### **Mandatory course requirements**

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.

## **Attendance**

On-campus course members must attend all ten lectures. If an absence is unavoidable, then the course member should participate in the Blackboard Discussion Board for that week. Course members studying by distance must make a contribution to each one of the ten Discussion Boards.

## **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>

## **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](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx)