



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

MASTER OF ARTS

LALS 525 LEARNER AUTONOMY AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 3 2015

Key dates

Trimester dates: 16 November 2015 to 21 February 2016

Teaching dates: 16 November 2015 to 7 February 2016

Mid-trimester/Xmas break: 22 December 2015 to 4 January 2016

Last assessment item due: Fri 12 February 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Tuesday 4-6 pm, 24 Kelburn Parade Room 101

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator and Lecturer:

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Course Administrator:

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Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be posted on the course website in Blackboard and announced in on-campus classes.

Prescription

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.

Course content

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

Wk 1	16-22 Nov	Learner autonomy: An overview	(Benson, 2007; Littlewood, 1996; Smith, 2008)
Wk 2	23-29 Nov	Learner autonomy in self-directed learning	(Clemente, 2001; Hyland, 2004; White, 1995)
Wk 3	30 Nov-6 Dec	Learner autonomy in the classroom	(Crabbe, 1993; Little, 1995)
Wk 4	7-13 Dec	Learner autonomy and its promotion	(Cotterall, 2000; Hand, 2006)
Wk 5	14-20 Dec	Social autonomy and critical perspectives	(Holliday, 2003; Pennycook, 1997; Schmenk, 2005)
Mid-trimester/Xmas break 22 December 2015 to 4 January 2016			
Wk 6	5-10 Jan	Learner strategies: An overview	(McDonough, 1999)
Wk 7	11-17 Jan	Learner strategies for the four skills	(Vandergrift, 2003; Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005)
Wk 8	18-24 Jan	Learner strategies for grammar and vocabulary	(Gu, 2003; Oxford & Lee, 2007)
Wk 9	25-31 Jan	Strategy-based instruction	(Chamot, 2005; Macaro & Erler, 2008)
Wk 10	1-7 Feb	Learner autonomy and learner strategies	(Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2003)

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. critically examine the theories behind learner autonomy and learner strategies in language learning
2. synthesise major research findings on learner autonomy and learner strategies and design their own studies
3. integrate theories and research into their own classroom teaching practice.

Teaching format

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.

The class meets on the following ten dates:

17 November, 24 November, 1 December, 8 December, 15 December, [Break], 5 January, 12 January, 19 January, 26 January, 2 February.

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

Attendance

On-campus course members should 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 should make a contribution to each one of the ten Discussion Boards. If circumstances prevent them from posting for a particular week, a distance course member should make it up by contributing their post the following week.

Please note that this is a short course at the postgraduate level. Learning is considerably compromised if a course member does not actively engage in attending classes and/or contributing to in-class discussions/tasks.

Workload

LALS 525 is a fifteen-point one-trimester course. The expected number of hours to cover this course is 150 over the trimester. Class attendance takes 20 hours. All other course work, e.g., reading and reviewing, doing assignments, takes about 130 hours.

Assessment

The course will be assessed by two assignments:

Assignment 1	due Fri 18 December	50%	2500 words	Learning objectives 1, 2, and 3
Assignment 2	due Fri 12 February	50%	2500 words	Learning objectives 1, 2, and 3

The assignment topics are described below.

Assignment 1 (2500 words) (due Friday 18 December 2015, 23:59) (50%)

There are *three options* for Assignment 1. You can 1) *design a study* that looks into one aspect of learner autonomy, or 2) *design a lesson* that shows your ability to integrate current research findings on learner autonomy into your own teaching practice, or 3) *design an assessment scheme* that captures learner autonomy for the English Proficiency Programme (EPP) at Victoria University of Wellington. Options 1 and 2 are for all course members, while option 3 is for on-campus members only.

Option 1 should include all elements of *an empirical study*. In other words, you should contextualise your study and your own research questions by foregrounding them with relevant theories and research on learner autonomy. 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. You should be aware of the main research findings on a specific aspect of learner autonomy, 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 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.

Option 3 involves the *assessment of learner autonomy* for a specific programme. Your task is to design an assessment scheme for EPP students at VUW. This may involve an on-going assessment system that captures potential growth of learner autonomy during their studies at EPP, or an exit learner autonomy measure that shows each student's readiness for autonomous learning at a New Zealand university. Outline your rationale for the scheme, specify the construct and operationalise it, and discuss the extent to which your scheme may help EPP teachers and learners in fostering learner autonomy.

Assignment 2 (2500 words) (due Fri 12 February 2016, 23:59) (50%)

There are *two options* for Assignment 2. You can either *design a study* that looks into one aspect of learner strategies or *design a lesson* that shows your ability to integrate current research findings on learner strategies into your own teaching practice.

Option 1 should include all elements of *an empirical study*. In other words, you should contextualise your study and your own research questions by foregrounding them with relevant theories and research on 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 strategies. You should be aware of the main research findings on a specific aspect of 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 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.

Marking criteria

A marking sheet listing detailed criteria under both content and presentation can be downloaded from Blackboard.

Submission and return of work

All course members should submit your assignments through the Blackboard (BB) system. This means that on-campus students will now need to submit an electronic copy to BB so that their papers are analysed with Turnitin, and a hard copy either in class or in the drop box outside the School Office. Please submit each assignment (including cover sheet) as a single document in MS WORD format. **DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN PDF FORMAT.**

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 given through Blackboard or through email. Marked assignments are normally returned to you in two to three weeks.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Assignments and tasks should be submitted by the due date. There is no penalty for late submission but permission must be sought and a good reason given. Please note that there is not much room for extension for the last assignment, because Trimester 1 2016 will soon begin.

Penalties

Try to keep within the word limits. No credit will be given for work beyond the word limits. *Assignments which are plagiarised will not receive a grade and cannot be resubmitted.* In serious cases where Turnitin similarity index exceeds 40%, VUW disciplinary procedures will have to be started.

Set texts

The set text, *LALS 525 Set Readings*, is available from Vicbooks: www.vicbooks.co.nz. All readings in this set will also be downloadable in pdf format on Blackboard. Other additional readings will be posted on Blackboard when needed.

Recommended reading

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

Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Longman.

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

Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman.

All textbooks and student notes for the third trimester will be available from Vicbooks: www.vicbooks.co.nz

Class representative

The MA programme has a student representative whose name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Student feedback

LALS 525 has been receiving very positive feedback from past students. Changes this year based on previous feedback include an assignment option that makes the course directly relevant to the English Proficiency Programme (EPP) at Victoria University of Wellington. Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz