



School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies Course Outline

LALS 516: Learner Autonomy and Learner Strategies Trimester 3, 2008

1. Course Coordinator:

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2. Staff: Peter Gu

3. Class times and rooms: Tuesday 4-6 pm, 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 201

The class meets on the following ten dates:

November 18, 25, December 2, 9, 16 [Break], January 6, 13, 20, 27, February 3.

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-hda@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/scs/services/services.aspx> and <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/scs/>. If you are an international student the following site could be useful for you <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international/>.

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

Online enrolment is now available for students wanting to study at Victoria University in 2009. The website is <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/>

4. Announcements: MA notice board Level 2 Von Zedlitz

Some additional information relevant to this course can be found in the School MA Handbook for 2008. The handbook is available on the web.
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/degrees/docs/MA%20Handbook%202008.pdf>

5. LALS main office: VZ 210, 2nd floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

6. LALS 516 Course Administrator: Rachel Scholes, Postgraduate administration
 Tel: 463 5600/463 5255/472 1000 ext 8386
 Web contact: www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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	17-23 Nov 2008	Learner autonomy: An overview	(Benson, 2007; Littlewood, 1996; Smith, 2008)
Wk 2	24-30 Nov 2008	Learner autonomy in self-directed learning	(Clemente, 2001; Hyland, 2004; White, 1995)
Wk 3	1-7 Dec 2008	Learner autonomy in the classroom	(Crabbe, 1993; Little, 1995)
Wk 4	8-14 Dec 2008	Learner autonomy and its promotion	(Cotterall, 2000; Hand, 2006; Smith, 2003)
Wk 5	15-21 Dec 2008	Social autonomy and critical perspectives	(Holliday, 2003; Pennycook, 1997; Schmenk, 2005)
Break 24 Dec 08-4 Jan 09			
Wk 6	5-11 Jan 2009	Learner strategies: An overview	(McDonough, 1999)

Wk 7	12-18 Jan 2009	Learner strategies for the four skills	(Macaro, Graham, & Vanderplank, 2007; Manchon & Murphy, 2007)
Wk 8	19-25 Jan 2009	Learner strategies for grammar and vocabulary	(Gu, 2003; Oxford & Lee, 2007)
Wk 9	26 Jan- 1 Feb 2009	Strategy-based instruction	(Chamot, 2005; Gu, 2007; Macaro & Erler, 2008)
Wk 10	2-8 Feb 2009	Learner autonomy and learner strategies	(Macaro, 2006; Oxford, 2003)

10. Texts: There are two recommended books and one set text.

The set readings *LALS 516 Set Readings* are available from the Student Notes Distribution Centre.

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.

11. Assessment: The course will be assessed by two assignments.

Assignment 1	due Tue 23 December	40%	2000 words	Course objectives 1, 2, and 3
Assignment 2	due Tue 3 February	60%	3000 words	Course objectives 1, 2, and 3

Assignments can be submitted as e-mail attachments. Please submit each one (including cover sheet) as a single document in MS WORD format, and e-mail them to LALS-516@vuw.ac.nz. If you send them by post, please include **two** copies of each assignment/task. One will be returned to you with comments on it. The other will be retained for external examining. The postal address is on page 1 of this outline. You can also hand them in through the Assignments slot by the door to the School Office (VZ 210). The assignment topics are described in this course outline.

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.

Assignment 1 (2000 words) (due Tuesday 23 December)

Review relevant theories and research on 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 (3000 words) (due Tuesday 3 February)

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 language learner strategies into your own teaching practice.

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 language 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 a possible alternative as early as possible.

Option 2 focuses on classroom integration of language learner strategies. You should be aware of the main research findings on a specific aspect of language 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 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.

12. 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 tasks. Assignments and tasks which are plagiarised will not receive a grade and cannot be resubmitted.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. Mandatory Course Requirements (Terms): 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 2 assignments, and

- attend all the ten classes or participate at least once in each of the ten web-based discussions.

16. 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.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

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* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support