



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

MASTER OF ARTS

LALS 520 LEARNERS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1, 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 3 March to 2 July 2014

Teaching dates: 3 March to 6 June 2014

Easter/Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 4 May 2014

Last assessment item due: 3 June 2014

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Class times and locations

Thursdays 4.10-6.00 pm, VZ 204 (Resource Room)

Names and contact details

Course coordinator

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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 announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

Prescription

This course looks at the role of the learner and the effect of individual differences on second language learning. Issues such as learner motivation, affect, aptitude and learner response to feedback are explored.

Course content

LALS 520 explores the role of learner characteristics and other determinants in language acquisition as well as current issues of interest in instructed SLA. In particular, the course addresses selected issues in linguistics, psychology, and education that bear on the abilities of children and adults to understand and use second languages, especially in educational settings. The topics provide analyses of how acquisition problems are solved by learners and of the factors that constrain or facilitate second language development. Finally, the applications of language acquisition research are considered in the field of second language pedagogy.

LALS 520 provides students with opportunities to study:

- a. The influence of cognitive processes on language learning
- b. Individual variables and their influence on language acquisition
- c. Connections between SLA research and language teaching.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. Identify variables (including learner traits) that have been found to influence the pace and nature of second language acquisition.
2. Advise others on language education issues by drawing from research findings.
3. Recognise gaps in the SLA research and propose avenues for further research in SLA.
4. Apply SLA research findings to critically appraise classroom practices.

Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as 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.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. Submit all three assignments
2. Attend all the ten classes (on-campus)*
3. Participate each week in each of the ten web-based discussions (distance)

*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 of the ten Discussion Boards in the week of each module.

Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes / contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard, reading the essential and recommended texts, and preparing the assessment items. Probably around 90 hours should be allocated to assessment on the course. Of this, around 20-25 hours may be required for each of assignments 1 and 2, and around 40 hours for assignment 3.

Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 520:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	Learning objectives
1.	Advising on an issue in language education	30%	1500	Friday 4 April	2, 3
2.	A case study report, comparing two learners	30%	1500	Monday 5 May	1, 3
3.	A critical appraisal of a classroom practice	40%	2000	Tuesday 3 June	4, 3, 2

The purpose of these assessment components is to allow you to investigate in depth topics of your choosing from the course, and to explore the pedagogical implications of the research findings discussed in the course. Details of the assessments will be given out in the first class on campus and posted on Blackboard at the beginning of the course.

The assignment details and marking criteria will be made available on Blackboard in the first week of class.

Submission and return of work

All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard, both by distance and face-to-face students. Feedback on each assignment will be sent back via email within two weeks after due date. Instructions on how to use the Blackboard assignment tool are on the Blackboard website. As a backup measure only, assignments may be submitted as email attachments to lals-ma@vuw.ac.nz

Penalties

No specific penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission to submit an assignment before the due date. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also, consult the course coordinator in case your text exceeds the word limit. Without prior arrangements in that regard, the course coordinator maintains the right to give only minimal feedback on the text.

Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

No specific materials are needed for LALS 520, but regular access to the internet is important.

Set text

Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder. Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Textbooks and student notes can be ordered online at www.vicbooks.co.nz

Recommended reading

Recommended articles to supplement Ortega (2009) will be made available on Blackboard.

Class representative

There is one class representative for the MA programme. Details are posted on Blackboard.

Student feedback

Enhancements made to the course based on the feedback of previous students will be covered during the course. 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/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz