

For the learner variables module, I am proposing a college level course possibly called “language learning therapy package” that aims to direct students’ attention to the strategic approach to language learning. This 12 week long course comprises four components of learner variables: learner beliefs, strategies, learning style and anxiety. Incorporating these factors, four steps are proposed: (1) raising awareness, (2) assessment, (3) application, and (4) masterplan. For the assessment, the course will bring up learners’ beliefs to assist make a better understanding of nature of language learning, have them reflect their learning practice and have them diagnose their own strategies and styles through questionnaires. For the application step, students employ strategies that they have learned in the course through class discussion, classroom exercises for task-specific strategies, interview with a successful learner to their actual English learning context and marinate it to see what works and what doesn’t work for each individual. In third step, students propose their master plan that meets their short-term goal and long-term goal of English learning based on their learning during the application stage. To put it simple, the course is separate, explicit language therapy course that raises students’ consciousness in their language learning practice and assist them to grow as self-help learners who can diagnose themselves as learners and locate the resources and strategies to accommodate their individual differences.

Strategic Approach to Language Learning Fall 2009

Instructor

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Course Description & Goals

This course aims to help you become a better self-language learner - by encouraging conscious exploration into your language learning, expanding your strategy repertoire, applying the learned strategies to your learning context and planning the blueprint for your effective language learning. The course deals with getting a better handle on language learning, assisting you to have a better sense of your own learning style preferences, language strategy repertoire, motivation for learning and using a second language in general. The course will make you more aware of yourself as a learner and better equipped to succeed at dealing with language now and in the future outside the classroom

We will consider a wide range of issues concerning how we can self-help to become a better learner-- from adjusting our beliefs about English learning, understanding the nature of language learning, diagnosis of learning styles and strategies, collaborative research for learning tools and resources, dealing with the emotional struggles, to technological tools for language learning. For all, we will use the following questions (as well as any you offer) to our approach to becoming an active and independent language learner.

- What assumptions or beliefs about language learning do we have (either explicitly or implicitly)?
- What have I done to facilitate English learning and what other successful learner have done for it?
- What unique learner am I as a learner? What are my learning style preference and strategy preference?
- What language learning opportunities, resources, tools, strategies are available to enhance my effectiveness and joy of language learning?
- How, if any, can I manage my emotional struggle in learning and using English?
- What are my language learning goals (both short-term and long-term) and how does the new perspectives, learned strategies in the course fit with my goals and learning context?
- How do I want to design my master plan for English learning?

Course goals include:

- raising the consciousness on your beliefs about language learning and how they impact on your approach to the learning
- providing you a chance to reflect your language learning history
- engaging you fully in diagnosing your own learning style preferences and language strategy preferences (through completing a series of inventories)
- expanding your general language learning strategy repertoire (through conducting interview with successful language learners of your choice, group discussion, lectures and so on)
- having you participate in a language skill-specific strategy training through classroom exercises.
- Assisting you to better deal with the language anxiety

Course Web Page

The website for this course will use online community at Freechal.com:
<http://home.freechal.com/languagetherapy> (proposed)

Course Structure

Required Book

Course packet (No required textbook)

Class Sessions and Attendance

Class sessions occur face-to-face and attendance counts as important component of the course achievement.

Course Requirements

Performance Outcome

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|--|------|
| 1. Class Participation | 30 % |
| a. Individual online postings (5%) | |
| b. Group online postings (5 %) | |
| c. Online counseling for classmates (10%) | |
| d. Class discussion & film role activity (10%) | |
| 2. Learner Presentation | 30% |
| a. Story of successful learner | |
| 3. Individual Portfolio for Language Learning | 40 % |

Assignment Descriptions

1. Class Participation

a. Individual online postings (5%)

1) Learning difficulties (Week1): Upon reflection of your language learning experience, make a list of your difficulties in English learning in details and your current language learning situation and post it on Freechal discussion board *anonymously*. Read your classmates postings. We will visit these issues at the end of semester to look at it from the different perspectives and give advice.

2) Learning goals (Week2): Reflecting what you have learned about the nature of language learning, set your short-term goal and long-term goal for your English learning in details. Post your writing on the Freechal discussion board as a response to your previous posting about difficulties *anonymously*.

3) Reflection on self-strategy and style assessment (Week 4): Write analysis of strategy use assessment and learning style assessment (diagnosis by questionnaires) and reflect how your actual learning practice is parallel with the diagnosis.

4) Internet-based resources (Week11) : Upload the link to websites for English learning that you have found useful and your brief description. This includes web-based language learning contents, language learning community, Internet-based software and tools.

b. Group online postings (5%)

1) Strategy collection (week 5): Post a list of suggested strategies from the group discussion during the class on week 4

c. Online counseling for classmates (10%)

For the first three weeks, everyone posts his/her learning difficulties, goals, strategy and style analysis anonymously but in a consistent manner as a personalized profile. Each person needs to choose one person on the discussion board for online counseling. Based on the learned knowledge throughout the course, think about what suggestions would best fit your partner's need. Respond to your partner's profile with the suggestions by the end of the semester.

d. Class discussion & film character activity(10%)

You are required to participate actively in the class discussions and activities. For the film character activity, select your favorite film character. Any English-medium films are acceptable. Select a scene that you want to perform and analyze the character in terms of his or her intonation, rate of speech, tone, accent, nonverbal expressions. Prepare a 3 minute long language performance mimicking the character. As it is supposed to be fun and stress-free activity, your language itself is not going to be evaluated but your general performance and how carefully you observed and analyzed the character are. This work can be done individually or in pairs. Whole class will guess who you are as you perform. Remember! This is for fun:)

2. Learner Presentation (15 min presentation)**a. Story of successful learner**

Find a successful language learner around you for your role model and interview him/her about his/her English learning history. Focus on his motivation, attitude toward language learning, general strategies, planning, resources, and tools that he has used. Introduce your learner to the whole class in a 15-minute presentation. "Successful" does not imply absolute standard for his/her language achievement. If the person enjoys the language learning process to the full and you define it as success, he is legitimate for your interview. As long as you think the person is successful, he or she is welcome. Possible learners include your friends, family, your language teacher, and public figures who are publicly recognized as successful learners. If your role model is a public figure, do some research about his learning history. The presentation ends with your analysis of what makes the person successful. This assignment is not to direct you to indiscriminately follow your interviewee's learning strategies, but to enrich your language learning strategy repertoire for your selective application.

3. Individual Portfolio for Language Learning

Portfolio is a collection of written documents, that is your personalized profile of language learning reflection, analysis of your language learning behaviors and master plan for future learning. It should include your online posting of learning difficulties (W1), learning goals(W2), reflection on the strategy use assessment and learning style assessment (W4), your journal of self-monitoring and evaluation of personal strategy use in real language learning context. Use strategy to see how it works for your learning context so that it becomes part of your learning schema. Finally, include the detailed, personalized master plan that meets your short-term and long-term goals. The master plan should not be intuitively stated, rather it should reflect your analysis of strategies and learning styles and incorporate the resources shared in the course.

Relevant Policies**Grading**

The grading for this course is credit/non-credit basis. However, letter grade and feedback can be sent to you via email upon request. You are more than welcome to make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your work or evaluation at any time. Individual counseling for your language learning is possible as well.

The grading for this course is as follows

- A 95 – 100%
- A- 90 – 94%
- B+ 87 – 89%
- B 84 – 86%
- B- 80 – 83%
- C+ 77 – 79%
- C 74 – 76%
- C- 70 – 73%
- D+ 67 – 69%
- D 64 – 66%

- D- 60-63%
F Below 60%

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Topics and Activities:

- Introductions and class overview/syllabus
- Mini workshop about how to use Freechal online community
- **Concept map: How do you conceptualize the language learning?** As a group, create a concept map to capture a glimpse of your knowledge and experience with the English learning. What is the language learning all about? What would be the most important components in language learning? What makes struggling language learner and successful language learner? How have you learned English? How do you evaluate Korean students approach to language learning?

Homework

- **Learning difficulties:** Upon reflection of your language learning experience, make a list of your difficulties in English learning in details and your current language learning situation and post it on Freechal discussion board anonymously. Read your classmates postings. We will visit these issues at the end of semester to look at it from different perspectives and with advice.

Week 2: Beliefs about Language Learning: Any Misconception about Language Learning?

Topics and Activities:

- Completing **BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory)** <Appendix 7>
- Whole class discussion about the survey results: common Korean learners' beliefs, how beliefs are connected to the strategy choice
- Watching videos: beliefs about Foreign Language Learning <7:34>
<http://dotsub.com/view/9f955732-0cee-45ee-81bf-08f83fc9506c>

Homework:

- **Learning goals:** Reflecting what you have learned about the nature of language learning, set your short-term goal and long-term goal for your English learning in details. Post your writing on the Freechal discussion board as a response to your previous posting about difficulties *anonymously*.
- Completing SILL: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Week 3: Self-Assessment: Language Learning Strategy

Topics and Activities:

- **Self-analysis of strategy use (Strategy Inventory of Language Learning :SILL)** : Graph of SILL average, identifying the most effective personal strategies <Appendix 8>
- Whole class discussion: the implication of SILL results, students' perception of useful strategies

Homework:

- Completing the **Style Analysis Survey(SAS)** <Appendix 9>

Week 4: Self-Assessment: Learning Style

Topics and Activities:

- Group discussion: with the group members of the similar learning style.
- Whole class discussion and lecture: (1) Implication of the learning style survey (2) Discussion of other factors influencing strategy choice: motivation, age, beliefs, gender, cultural backgrounds, attitudes task types and L2 stages.
- 3 Learner presentations

Homework:

- **Reflection on the strategy and style assessment:** Write analysis of strategy use assessment and learning style assessment (diagnosis by questionnaires) and reflect how your actual learning practice is parallel with the diagnosis.

Week 5: General Strategies for Language Learning Opportunities

Topics and Activities:

- Group discussion: Analysis of biography of successful language learner provided by the instructor
Story of the most famous English educator in Korea: case of Boyoung Lee who has never been to English-speaking countries.
- Group discussion to compile all the recommended learning resources, material, opportunities, events, courses, institute, strategies, workshop etc.
- 3 Learner presentation

Homework:

- **Strategy collection:** Post a list of suggested opportunities for English learning from the class group discussion today on the Freechal discussion board.

Week 6: Skill-specific Strategies: Listening/Reading

Topics and Activities:

- Completing the **listening and reading section only in Language Strategy Use Inventory:** language skill-specific strategies <Appendix 1>
- Classroom exercises for listening/reading strategies
- 3 Learner presentation

Homework:

- None

Week 7: Skill-Specific Strategies: Speaking/Writing

Topics and Activities:

- Completing the **speaking and writing section only in Language Strategy Use Inventory:** language skill-specific strategies <Appendix 1>
- Classroom exercises for speaking/ writing strategies
- 3 Learner presentations

Homework:

- None

Week 8: Skill-Specific Strategies: Vocabulary

Topics and Activities:

- Watching video of BBC Documentary excerpt at youtube: "World memory champion Andi Bell explains the memory technique, 'link method'
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NROegsMqNc&feature=related>
- Classroom exercise 1: learning Aymara vocabulary <Appendix 2>
- Classroom exercise 2: Using association techniques <Appendix 3>
- 3 Learner presentations

Week 9: Maximizing the studying abroad: Culture Learning

Topics and Activities:

- Completing **the Culture-Learning Strategies Inventory and Index** <Appendix 4>
- Group discussion: the source of culture shock, understanding the cultural differences, strategies to deal with the hard time in a new culture.
- Lecture: stages of cultural adjustment
- **Panel discussion: maximizing study abroad**

Guest speakers: Korean exchange students who completed their exchange program in English speaking counties recently

Week 10: Emotion Management Strategy: Language Anxiety

Topics and Activities:

- Completing **FLCAS(Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)** <Appendix 10>
- Group discussions: experience of language anxiety/sources of anxiety/suggestions for reducing anxiety/revisiting the emotion management section in SILL
- **Rolling paper**: remedy for individual anxious language learning or using situation

Homework:

- Prepare: Favorite film character activity

Week 11: Activities for Speaking Anxiety

Topics and Activities:

- More speaking strategies <Appendix 5>
- **Favorite film character activity** : experience alternative identity and take advantage of it
- **Impromptu speech activity**: strategy application to the real context and getting over the stage fright.
Each student writes 2 interesting questions for the activity on a piece of paper. The instructor pulls together all the questions. Each student takes turn drawing question and answer the questions to the whole class. 30 sec of preparation time for 2 min speech. Everybody gets two times of public speaking opportunities. In fact, you will find that the public speaking is not as dreadful as you have thought.

Homework:

- **Internet-based resources**: Upload the link to websites for English learning that you have found useful and your brief description. This includes web-based language learning contents, language learning community, Internet-based software and tools.
- **Online counseling** for your classmates is due next week
- **Individual portfolio** is due next week

Week 12: Technological Tools for Language Learning

Topics and Activities:

- Brief summary of students' collection of useful technology-enhanced learning resources in the Freechal discussion board
- Introduction to **useful websites for language learning**: <http://www.Livemocha.com>, <http://www.ello.org> etc. <Appendix 6>
- Whole class experiment in **synchronous CMC session** and introduction to **pod-casting**.
- **Showcase of social-networking tools**: facebook, blogging, Second Life

[Note: this class will be conducted in the computer lab – more information will be provided.]