EDCP 585E 951 Assignment #2: Proposal

Part A: Title: Integrating Self-Regulated Learning Practices as a means to enhance student engagement, motivation and agency in a college-level language course

Part B: Introduction: What Matters and Why?
What is the problem and context that your project addresses?
Self-regulation, defined as "the process whereby students activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours, and affects, which are systematically oriented toward attainment of their goals" (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994, cited by Boekaerts, 1997, p. 171), is an essential skill transferable to all subjects. When students have control over their learning, they can develop the competence they need to succeed in their chosen paths. In our world full of uncertainty, rapid change in technology and society, as well as economic and job instability, high levels of stress are rampant. At the post-secondary level, institutions have seen the need to address mental health issues and talk about mental wellness through college-wide activities. Self-regulated learning (SRL) can be a means for developing a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) that can foster the development of lifelong learners.

Self-regulation may also be an antidote for learner apathy, lack of engagement and a sense of entitlement, negative traits about which many instructors are concerned. A study in 2009 (Riuhoniemi & Lindblom-Yläne, 2009, cited by Nilson, 2013, p. 2) asked 132 professional veterinary students to name the factors that contributed to their learning. In their list of factors, they seldom referred to study methods, learning abilities or their personal effort: "As they perceived it, learning was something that was happening to them, and the faculty's job was to make it happen. These learners were not at all intentional, independent, or self-directed." A little closer to home, based statistics from the 2018 fall and 2019 spring terms, about 7% of students dropped beginner's French courses at Langara College before the end of the semester, and about 8% of students completed most of the course but did not write the final exam. At the start of the semester, I always ask students why they chose to take a French course. The most common responses are: "for transfer credit," "it is a requirement for my program," and "it is one of Canada's official languages." Startlingly few students have more personal objectives, such as to travel to Quebec, to read Francophone literature, or to understand Francophone
music and films. Not that the first objectives are unimportant, but it seems that learners are accustomed to following a set, pre-determined path. If students had time to consider more deeply why they registered in a course and decide on their own personal goals (and also reflect on their choices during the semester), could they become more invested in their learning? **Yes** deliberately provocative question.

Over the last fifteen years, in my teaching experience, I have seen greater engagement from my students when they are given the opportunity to make choices and invest themselves in projects or topics of their choosing, as well as when they participate in the co-creation of various aspects of the course. Furthermore, I am aware that self-assessment, an element of SRL, is already being implemented in the K-12 school system, and very soon now, we at the post-secondary school level will be teaching students who are accustomed to self-assessment. ✓

As teachers, we have a lot of goals for our students. However, what would be the impact if students set more personal goals within the larger framework of course learning outcomes? Or if instructors and learners could engage more frequently in open dialogues about goals and work together towards common objectives? What effect would giving learners more time and space to take the initiative and take control of their learning have? Such measures could enable students to become less captive in our classrooms and more invested in their learning, and could help improve motivation, engagement and overall mental health. ✓

What is the purpose of my inquiry?

I would like to determine whether devoting class time to SRL strategies will give students the opportunity to develop the self-regulatory skills that will help them succeed in the course and allow them to pursue their interests related to French. Through setting a personal goal, motivation may be increased and students may gain more satisfaction from their efforts. ✓

I would also like to determine which self-reflective questions are the most useful to prompt self-reflection in learners and when and how often students should be given time for self-reflection. Finally, I would like to know whether the implementation of SRL will lower stress levels and give students a greater sense of agency and satisfaction from their learning efforts. ✓

EDCP 585E 951, Assignment #2. Proposal (Mirabelle Tinio)
What are some assumptions that underlie your inquiry?

Self-regulated learning is a fusion of motivation and cognitive skills that contribute to a student’s ability to learn.

By developing SRL strategies, various aspects of one’s learning will be positively affected. SRL activities can easily be taught, and it is important to regularly go through the SRL cycle, e.g. planning, monitoring and reflection (Zimmerman, 2002) in order to make gains.

According to Vygotsky, who developed social development theory (1987) and the notion of private speech, children will use language, first out loud and then silently, to control their behaviour. Language therefore not only mediates one’s relationship to others, but also one’s relationship to oneself and to one’s own learning. By taking time to reflect on one’s own learning, articulating one’s experience of learning, one can develop a deeper relationship with it.

SRL theory claims that students or learners are the subject of learning, and learning is a voluntary action of individual students. In the teaching process, only to fully mobilize the students’ cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physiological and many other factors involved, in order to give full play to the initiative of students, promoting active exploration and development, forming positive in self-efficacy. SRL including thoughts, feelings, strategies and plans in advance and continually adjust a series of actions, and ultimately set their own learning goals (Zimmerman & Bonner, 1996).

When students can focus their attention on a specific goal, they will be more successful. SRL is necessary for lifelong learners: “A major goal of higher education is to create lifelong learners – intentional, independent, self-directed learners who can acquire, retain, and retrieve new knowledge on their own” (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2002, 2007; Wirth, 2008a, cited by Nilson, 2013, p. 1).

The importance of cognition is seen in the revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy, which now includes metacognition:

Metacognitive Knowledge involves knowledge about cognition in general as well as awareness of and knowledge about one’s own cognition (Pintrich, this issue). It is of increasing significance as researchers continue to demonstrate the importance of students being made aware of their metacognitive activity, and then using this knowledge to appropriately adapt the ways in which they think and operate (David R. Krathwohl, 2002).

EDCP 585E 951, Assignment #2. Proposal (Mirabelle Tinio)
During the SRL process, emotional regulation also occurs as students are able to lower their stress levels, researched by Garcia and Pintrich (1993).

Another key aspect of my research would be to give learners the opportunity to share their reflections and learning with their peers. When students share their learning with a community, they learn more deeply, and can gain a sense of belonging. An interesting outcome and also vital for learning.

What are some potential implications of your inquiry?

The various activities I will propose to my students may enhance student motivation, their sense of agency, self-efficacy and engagement in the course. If successful, I would be willing to include SRL strategies in all of my courses.

Opportunities to share their thoughts with a peer and/or with the class can help enhance class cohesion and the collective learning experience.

Researching and testing self-regulated learning activities in class can add new dimensions to conversations with colleagues (departmental as well as interdisciplinary) regarding self-regulated learning, self-reflection and student engagement. The positive outcomes of my research could potentially influence other instructors in the college to adopt self-regulating activities for their courses or I may find colleagues who would like to work further on this project with me.

Part C: A Beginning Review of the Related Literature

Through Albert Bandura's research on children and self-efficacy (1977), he developed the notion of self-regulation, describing it as the continuous process of monitoring, judging and reacting to one's behaviour. More specific to self-regulated learning, Zimmerman (2002), who used "phenomenological, social cognitive, volitional, Vygotskian and cognitive constructivist theories," describes SRL as "the process a student engages in when she takes responsibility for her own learning and applies herself to academic success" (Zimmerman, 2002). SRL is a complex skill that combines many varied abilities, from self-observation, self-control and metacognition to self-reaction, planning and implementation of strategies.
Six models of SRL are described by Panedoro (2017), but I am particularly interested in the model outlined by Zimmerman (2002), comprised of three steps:

1. Planning: The learner plans her task by setting goals, describing strategies and determining a schedule;
2. Monitoring: Next, the learner engages in the task and monitors her progress and performance;
3. Reflection: Lastly, the learner assesses the results of her work and reflects on the outcomes.

I have chosen my French Conversation class to carry out this study as I have most freedom as an instructor in this course and can in turn give my students the freedom to pursue their own interests. By its very nature, conversation classes focus on developing practical skills in real life situations:

Research on the relationship between classroom learning environment and SRL also shows that teachers should be through open, real situation tasks, establish a teaching environment highly characterized by self-regulated learning, to teach students in the field of strategic knowledge, demonstrate effective learning use strategies, organize materials and activities to support the use of strategies, and to provide effective support and practical opportunities through feedback, guidance and help students develop self-regulated learning skills and expertise (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011).

In order to provide sound feedback to students and learn how to facilitate peer generated feedback, I would consult literature on feedback in SRL (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007). In addition, since an important SRL activity will be the use of cognitive wrappers, I will be consulting Lovett (2008) Bowen & Watson (2017) who have written about these exercises that prompt learners to reflect on their learning throughout the semester. Finally, in her book Creating Self-Regulated Learners, Nilson (2013) shares a wealth of ideas on a variety of SRL activities and ways to integrate SRL into course design.

Part D: Statement of the Inquiry Focus or Inquiry Question(s)
In conceiving of teaching and learning as an on-going conversation between students and teachers, between students and their peers, and between the student and herself, my goal is to create a space for these conversations in my class. I would like to give learners opportunities to make choices, and provide them with the tools, time for self-reflection and time and space to develop self-regulatory skills and time for self-reflection.

EDCP 585E 951, Assignment #2. Proposal (Mirabelle Tinio)
Specifically, I would like to inquire about which (if not all) of the selected activities (see table below) suggested by researchers in SRL will increase a learner's sense of engagement, agency and success in learning, while lowering stress levels and increasing a sense of satisfaction from the learning process. Will setting aside time for self-reflection (required for self-regulation) during class sessions increase student motivation and their ability to achieve their personal learning goals? How much time? When and how often should learners engage in self-reflection? What are the best questions to prompt self-reflection in a language course?

Part E: Methods and/or Procedures for the Inquiry
Who/What/Where/When/How

I will conduct this research in my French Conversation Class. There will be a maximum of 24 adult students in this class. The teacher inquiry will occur in the Spring of 2020, from January to April.

At the start of the semester, I will give a mini-lesson on the SRL process, and will continue with mini-lessons on SRL and the growth mindset throughout the term. There will be time set aside for self-reflection as well as discussion; paired and as a class.

The SRL activities, i.e., planning, monitoring and reflection, will be held in the classroom. Most self-regulatory activities will be conducted in class, but the final portfolio will be completed outside of class time.

To get my research started, I will submit my proposal to a colleague who is in charge of processing research proposals. Once it is finalized, I will apply for a grant from my college to hire a student who would help with the compilation of data.

Through action research, my teacher inquiry will focus on the implementation of SRL strategies throughout the semester. I will carry out specific self-regulatory practices, carefully selected as being appropriate for my post-secondary level language course:

- Weekly prompted self-reflection
- Cognitive wrappers for tests/quizzes and assignments
- A final student portfolio on student learning (that students will share with the class), as a synthesis of their term's work
• Conversations around these artefacts will help stimulate group reflection, a necessary element that enhances peer support, group dynamics, and collaboration.

The data I collect will be qualitative and quantitative in nature: student self-reflections, a final portfolio and an end study questionnaire as well as grades and enrolment statistics. At the end of the term, in order to determine which SRL activities were the most helpful to students, I will triangulate the three types of data in order to verify the validity of my conclusions and critically reflect on them. Additionally, I would consider whether, over several years, the number of students who drop the course or do not complete it is reduced and whether there is a correlation with the integration of SRL.

The following is a summary of the SRL activities I would like to test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of Term</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>End of term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre-study Questionnaire</td>
<td>1. Self-Reflection</td>
<td>1. Reflect on personal goal</td>
<td>1. Describe one’s journey (through self-reflection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Personal goal</td>
<td>2. Mini-lesson on SRL or Mindset</td>
<td>2. Class discussion on progress</td>
<td>2. Choose artefacts to show one’s progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discuss with class</td>
<td>3. Paired sharing re: progress</td>
<td>3. Put together a portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Check-ins re: stress levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Share with the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. End study questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part F: Anticipated Conclusions and Impact

Initially, I anticipate that there will be a perceived added workload for students and the teacher. As well, when trying something new, I can imagine there will be many questions (and possibly doubts) about including SRL in the curriculum, during class time.

As the term continues, I anticipate that certain self-regulatory practices will help some students gain a sense of agency and feel more satisfied in their learning. I am hoping all participants will benefit but I am sure I will learn about what works best for my classes. I believe SRL will be beneficial to students, but my students’ experience will let me know whether it is worth it in the end. Through students’ self-reflection entries, I will see which questions are the best prompts for self-reflection.
I anticipate some students will feel more motivated as a result of SRL, however I am interested in finding out the extent to which motivation is increased. In the end, I may find that certain key activities are more effective than others, and I may just keep those ones (e.g., cognitive wrappers or self-reflection logs in D2L/Brightspace, Langara College’s learning management system).

Part G, Sharing: How can I share this information:
After completing my research and writing up the results, I could publish them in the Langara College Academic Innovations Newsletter. Once refined, I could offer a workshop through the Teaching and Curriculum Development Centre at Langara College. I could share my findings with my articulation committee and could present a paper at a future STLHE conference.

Part H: References


Mirabelle, extremely well written and constructed. You have more than enough in here for a study (make sure it doesn't get too big).