

# Second Language Acquisition

Fall/Winter 2015-2016

Bill Snyder

**Course Description:** The content of this course focuses on areas of second language research regarding learner differences that have an immediate impact on teacher practices. We will focus on aspects of cognition (aptitude, working memory, multiple intelligences), motivation, affective (anxiety) and personality (beliefs) factors that can affect learning with the goal of helping teachers explore their learners and their practices in relation to each of these areas.

**Course Objectives:** After completing this course, students will have a better understanding of factors influencing their students' learning. They will be aware of ways in which they can adjust their practices in relation to these factors in order to positively influence learning. And in exploring one aspect of their practice and their students' learning in more detail, they will gain greater control over their ability to research, write, and share about their practices.

## Course Requirements:

Participation in weekly online discussion: 25%

Completion of mini-projects for discussion in class: 25%

Final Paper: 50%

## Readings:

**Textbook:** Gregersen, T., MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). Capitalizing on language learners' individuality: From premise to practice. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

**Other readings:** Selected articles to be provided by the instructor

## Course Schedule

### Nov 8: First Class Meeting:

Introduction

Language Learner Histories: What we can learn from our own experiences?

Language Teaching Questions: What do we want to know about our students' learning?

Some basic foundations in SLA: Age effects; Developmental sequences and teachability

**Nov 29: Second Class Meeting:**

Read: G & M: Introduction, Ch. 3; Robinson article; Christison article

Aptitude/Working Memory and Teaching: Aptitude Complexes  
Multiple Intelligences

Ask Your Students

**Dec 13: Third Class Meeting:**

Read: G & M: Chs. 4, 7; Yashima article; Sakai & Kikuchi article; Ryan & Irie article

Motivation in the classroom: Self-Determination; Self Theory; Dynamic Systems Theory  
Willingness-to-Communicate and International Posture in Japan

Ask Your Students

**Jan 24: Fourth Class Meeting:**

Read: G & M, Chs. 2, 5; TBA

Learner Beliefs: About self; about teachers; about language learning; about learning English  
Learner Strategies:

Ask Your Students

**Feb 14: Fifth Class Meeting:**

Read G & M, Chs. 1, 6; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope article; TBA

Anxiety: Types of Anxiety and Sources  
Learning Styles

Ask Your Students