SELF-REGULATED LANGUAGE LEARNING: A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Research-Oriented Paper – On Demand

This study explored self-regulated learning (SRL) in the language classroom. Using data from novice-level community college language learners, a model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling. Most paths were significant; however, unlike prior studies with different populations, the paths from SRL to L2 learning outcomes were not significant.

View Proposal (index.cfm?do=abs.viewAbs&abs=2032)

Researcher

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Co-Presenter

Tiffany Koszalka, Syracuse University

Applicable Language

Non-language specific

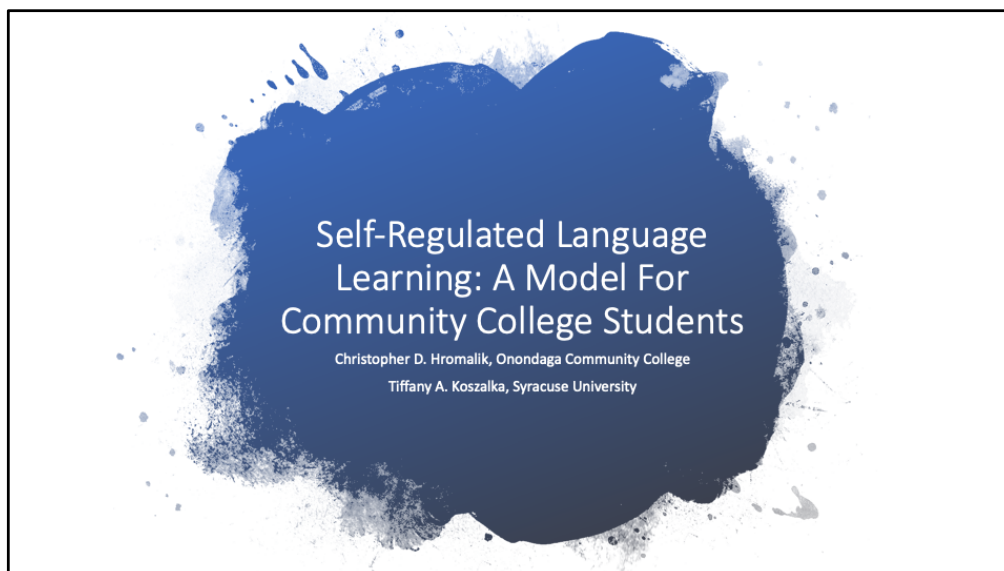## Audience Level

Post-Secondary

Keywords

Research

Language of Presentation

English

Partner/ACTFL SIG

Not Applicable (N/A)

- [CHRISTOPHER] My name is Christopher Hromalik and I'm a professor of Spanish at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, NY. I'm also the Chair of the ACTFL Distance Learning Special Interest Group.

- [TIFFANY] My name is Tiffany A. Koszalka and I am a professor in Instructional Design, Development and Evaluation at Syracuse University specializing in the intersections among learning, instruction, and technology.

- We will be sharing with you the results of this collaborative research that was performed with other specialists to study self-regulated language learning at a community college.

- [TIFFANY] Degree completion rates at community colleges tend to be lower than at four-year colleges and universities. Less than 50% of students that start a degree will earn a degree or transfer.

- Community college language courses are no exception and rates of success are not as high as at four-year colleges and universities.

- Since there have been declines in enrollment in language courses nationwide, especially at community colleges, it is important to keep in mind how we can help students in community college language courses be more successful.

- We believe that self-regulated learning is an important factor in language learning. We investigated if self-regulated learning, an individual difference, affected language learner success.

Cited References on this slide:

[1] (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2012)

[2] (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015)

[3] (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Hromalik & Koszalka, 2018)

Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Goldberg, D., Looney, D., & Lusin, N. (2015). *Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 2013*. Retrieved from https://www.mla.org/content/download/31180/1452509/EMB_enrllmnts_nonEngl_2013.pdf.

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2010). Challenges and opportunities for improving community college student success. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(3), 437-469. doi:10.3102/0034654310370163.

Hromalik, C. D., & Koszalka, T. A. (2018). Self-regulation of the use of digital resources in an online language learning course improves learning outcomes. *Distance Education, 39*(4), 528-547. doi:10.1080/01587919.2018.1520044.

Knapp, L. G., Kelly-Reid, J. E., & Ginder, S. A. (2012). Enrollment in postsecondary institutions, fall 2010; financial statistics, fiscal year 2010; and graduation rates, selected cohorts, 2002-07. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012280.pdf.
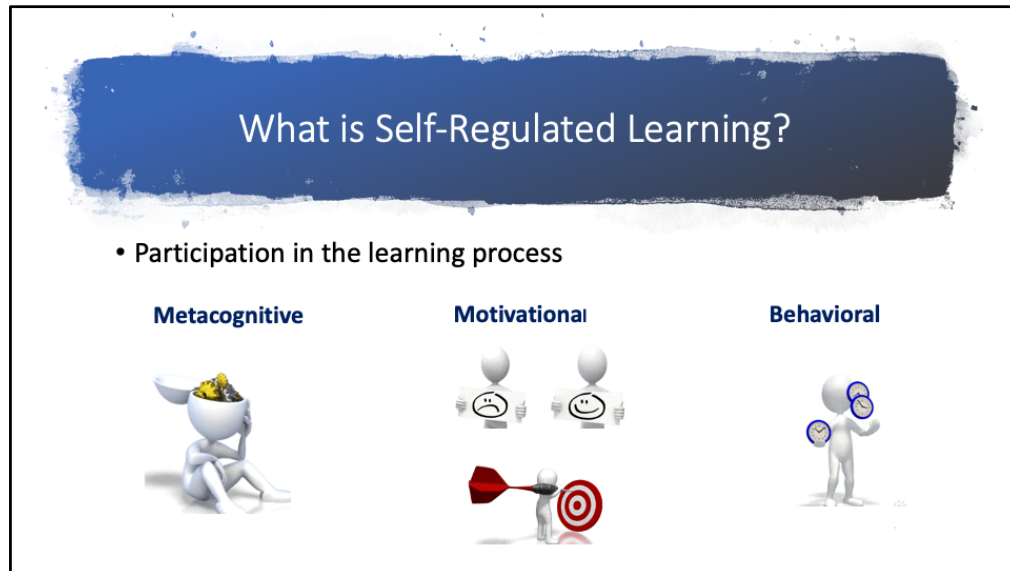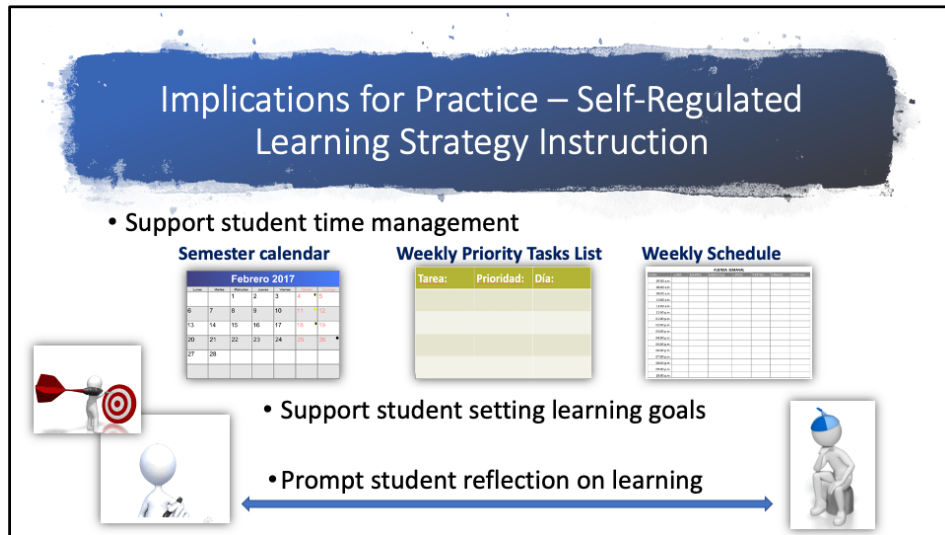
- [TIFFANY] What is self-regulated learning? Self-regulated learning refers to the extent to which a learner participates in the learning process.

- This may include metacognitive participation, which involves monitoring cognition and selecting appropriate strategies. **For example, it involves comparing one's progress to the goals they have set for themselves, seeing if they are meeting their learning goals, and then choosing learning and study strategies to improve their performance.**

- However, self-regulated learning is more than just choosing learning strategies. It also includes motivational participation, such as setting **LEARNING goals** and sustaining effort to **monitor and reach those goals**.

- Finally, an important part of self-regulated learning is behavioral participation in the learning. This includes **managing time**, as well as managing one's **physical and social environment**.
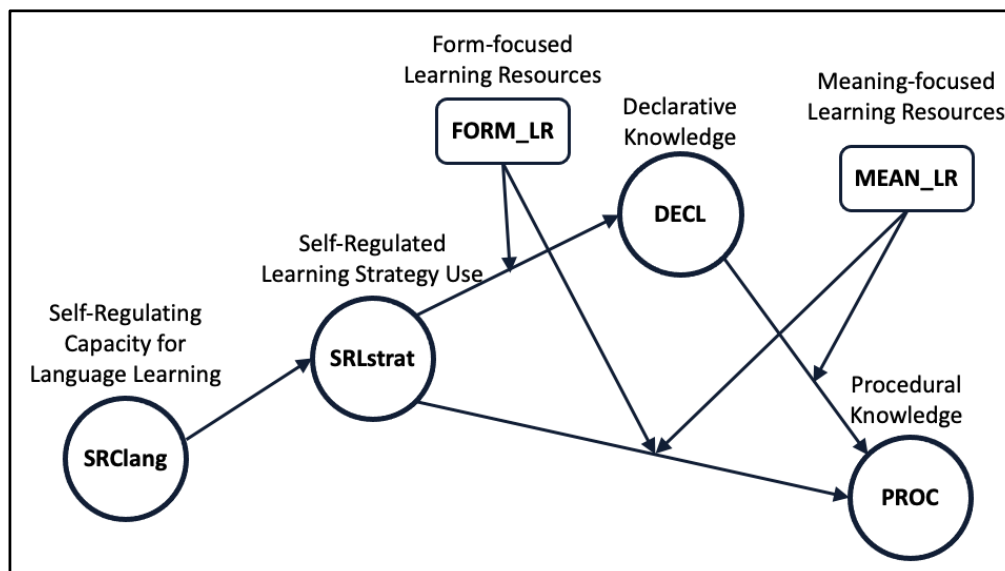
- [CHRISTOPHER] We started with a review of the literature. From there, we proposed a model that was a hybrid of theory and prior studies. We hypothesized a direct and positive relationship between Self-regulating capacity for language learning…

- and Self-regulated learning strategy use. In other words, we believed that students who were more aware of how to self-regulate their learning would be more likely to take part in self-regulated learning behavior. For example, a student who had a greater knowledge of how to sustain effort to reach a goal might be more likely to use strategies, such as time management and effort regulation, to reach that goal.

- From there, it was hypothesized that a greater level of self-regulated learning strategy use would directly and positively influence students' declarative and procedural knowledge of the language. An example of this is that students who use a variety of strategies, such as organization, time management, and effort regulation, are more likely to perform better on a test of vocabulary or grammatical structures, or to be able to communicate and use proceduralized declarative knowledge, such as on a test of listening that must be completed in a limited amount of time.

- The relationship between Declarative and Procedural knowledge was also hypothesized to be direct and positive. In other words, it was hypothesized that, based on Skill Acquisition Theory (SAT), students who had acquired a greater amount of declarative knowledge would be more likely to have proceduralized that knowledge, such that it could be recalled and used easily. A classroom example of this might be that a student who performs well on a test of AR verbs in Spanish may be more likely to, as a result of practice, use these verbs to communicate. The issue of practice was important. According to SAT, declarative knowledge is proceduralized and automatized as a result of practice.

- Therefore, two variables representing the use of form-focused learning resources and meaning-focused learning resources were added as moderating variables to the model. A classroom example of this might be the following: students who use self-regulated learning strategies would be more likely to demonstrate knowledge of how to conjugate AR verbs, and this relationship is strengthened when the students have completed structured grammar assignments for homework. In addition, students who are better able to conjugate AR verbs are more likely to use these verbs in conversation, and this relationship is strengthened when they have completed activities that focus on meaning instead of form, such as activities for communication.

- [TIFFANY] Data were collected from required course assignments in an introductory-level Spanish course at a community college over two semesters. 177 complete cases of data were collected and analyzed. The models were tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The results of the study indicated that not all of these hypothesized relationships were supported by the data.

Christopher D. Hromalik, Onondaga Community College
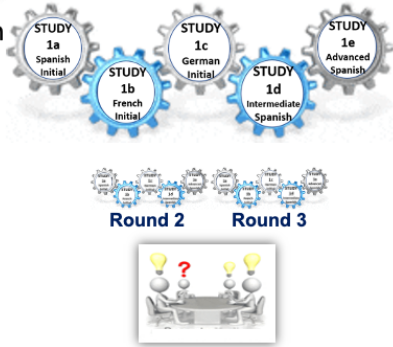Tiffany A. Koszalka, Syracuse University
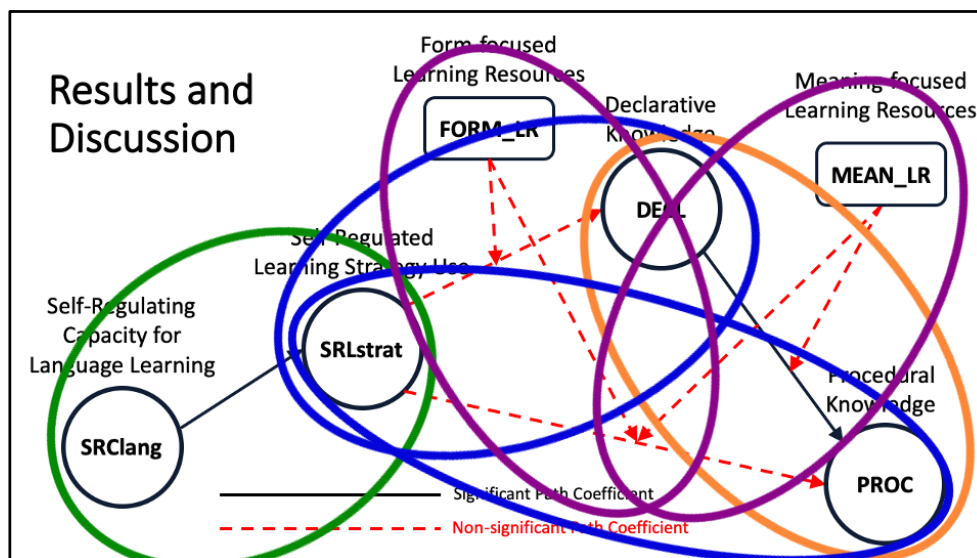
- [CHRISTOPHER] As can be seen in this image, self-regulating capacity for language learning was found to have a statistically significant direct and positive effect on self-regulated learning strategy use (green circle). This is represented by the solid black line from SRClang to SRLstrat. This means that as students are more aware of how to study, they will be more likely to study better.

- Declarative knowledge of a language was found to have a statistically significant direct and positive effect on procedural knowledge of a language (orange circle). This means that students who have greater declarative knowledge, such as vocabulary and grammatical structures, would be more likely to use this information to communicate.

- However, as represented by the dashed red line, the path coefficients between self-regulated learning strategy use and both declarative and procedural knowledge of a language were not found to be statistically significant (blue circles). This means that students who demonstrate better study habits may not necessarily perform better in a language course.

- Furthermore, form-focused learning resources and meaning-focused learning resources were not found to be statistically significant moderators in the model (purple circles).

- What does this mean?

- First, the statistically significant path coefficient from Self-regulating capacity for language learning to Self-regulated learning strategy use in this study aligns with prior research. This provides further evidence that students who have a knowledge of, or the capacity to, self-regulate their learning are more likely to engage in self-regulated learning behavior. In short, as a teacher, you may find that novice-level language learners may become better students if you teach them how.

- The statistically significant path coefficient between declarative and procedural knowledge of a language provides some additional support for Skill Acquisition Theory. According to Skill Acquisition Theory, learners first acquire declarative knowledge of a language, which is then proceduralized and automatized. As a teacher, you might find that your novice-level students who have a greater knowledge of vocabulary and grammar may perform better on tasks that require them to apply that knowledge.

- In the middle of the model, the non-significant paths from self-regulated learning strategy use to both declarative and procedural knowledge of a language does not align with prior theory and research. One possible explanation for this is that less proficient language learners may not use strategies as effectively as those who are more proficient. This study chose to work with an understudied population in the self-regulated language learning literature: community college students studying at the novice level. As language teachers, you may find that students who are just beginning to learn a language may need to be taught how to be a better language learner. However, even though it's very important to help students be better learners, it's possible the results won't be seen right away in your course.

Christopher D. Hromalik, Onondaga Community College
Tiffany A. Koszalka, Syracuse University

- [TIFFANY] What does this mean for you, as a language teacher? This study provided evidence that learners who are aware of how to self-regulate their learning may be more likely to engage in these behaviors, even if it does not immediately translate into greater language learning outcomes. If you want to teach your students some basic strategies for self-regulation, you may want to try some of the following ideas. Time management is an important part of being a self-regulated learner.

- [CHRISTOPHER] We often use scheduling activities in the target language with novice-level learners to help them learn days of the week, months, dates, numbers. If you teach students to use a three-calendar system composed of a semester calendar, weekly priority tasks list, and a weekly schedule – in the target language – they will be learning time management while also using the new language concepts you taught them.

- [TIFFANY] You can support your students in setting learning goals, such as helping them to determine what goals might be appropriate for them. This could be in the first or second language, depending on the level of the students. You can help them set short-term, manageable goals at the start of the year or the semester and then help students plan how they will manage and evaluate progress on their learning goals.

- [CHRISTOPHER] Finally, reflection on the learning process is important. My SPA 101 and 102 students complete weekly guided reflections in English every week. In the first week of class, I prompt them to set goals for the semester. A few weeks later, after they take their first speaking and writing exam, they look back at those goals to see how they are progressing toward them. Based on the results of their first test, they consider what they need to change in how they study in order to reach their goal. Reflection is an important part of the learning process.

- [TIFFANY] We collected data from many participants, but more research on self-regulated learning and its effect on the acquisition of a language is needed. This includes more research with community college students and with novice-level language learners in order to better understand their needs and to provide support for their success in the language classroom. It also means working with community college students studying other languages and with intermediate- and advanced-level learners.

- We should keep in mind that this is one study and few studies have been conducted with this unique population of learners. Replication is important. We are continuing to collect data for this study to see if we can replicate the results.

- [CHRISTOPHER] We encourage each of you to consider getting involved in research – whether you want to work with K-12, community college, or four-year college and university students. Community college learners are especially understudied in the literature and we need all the help we can get to learn how to support them. You don't have to be a researcher in the traditional sense to use data to better understand the needs of your students. This study used an advanced statistical analysis technique, but there are many ways to measure self-regulated learning and analyze data. Please contact me, Christopher Hromalik, if you're interested in learning more or if you would be interested in collaborating somehow, such as allowing us to work with you and your students as we continue this work.

Questions / Further Reading

- Please contact Christopher Hromalik with questions
  - hromalic@sunyocc.edu or cdhromal@syr.edu
- Self-regulated learning – online CC novice-level course
  - Hromalik, C. D., & Koszalka, T. A. (2018). Self-regulation of the use of digital resources in an online language learning course improves learning outcomes. *Distance Education*, 39(4), 528-547. doi:10.1080/01587919.2018.1520044.
- Classroom-based research:
  - Bailey, K. M. (2014). Classroom research, teacher research, and action research in language teaching. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 601-612). Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.

- [CHRISTOPHER] We would be happy to share more information with you about this study or continue this discussion. Please contact Christopher Hromalik with any questions you have. We also have manuscripts in preparation that we hope to submit for publication soon. In addition, here are some resources to help you learn more.

- Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing from you.