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Self-Regulation in Transition: A Case Study of Three English Language
Learners at an IEP

Allison Wallace Baker

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Self-Regulation in Transition: A Case Study of Three English Language Learners at an IEP

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Master of Arts

This longitudinal qualitative research case study analyzed how international students in their first semester at an intensive English program (IEP) managed their English language learning experiences while transitioning to a new academic learning environment. Their experiences of cultural and educational transition were viewed through the lens of self-regulatory learning habits and behavior. Three linguistically and internationally diverse students who identified as highly self-regulated learners through Likert-scale questionnaire responses were interviewed at the beginning, middle, and end of their first semester at a large university-affiliated IEP in the western part of the US. The three students came from Central America (Spanish speaking), Sub-Saharan Africa (Malagasy & French speaking), and Asia (Mandarin Chinese speaking). Semi-structured interviews yielded data about what self-regulated learning (SRL) principles and practices the students brought with them to the IEP and which SRL principles and practices were maintained, newly developed, or not used throughout their first semester. Data collected from the semi-structured interviews about their transition experiences were organized and analyzed within a six-dimensional model of SRL that included how students managed their motives, in-class and out-of-class learning methods, time, physical environments, social environments, and language performance. Implications for researchers, administrators, and teachers are discussed, including the role of resilience as an important self-regulated learning practice for language learners.

Keywords: self-regulated learning, dimensions of self-regulated learning, resilience, qualitative case study, intensive English program, transitional education experience, cross cultural transition, international student, international higher education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Literature Review.....	2
Cross-Cultural Educational Transition	2
Intensive English Programs (IEP)	3
Research in International, Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences.....	4
Self-Regulated Learning	5
Self-Regulated Learning in a Transitional Context.....	7
Methodology.....	8
Research Setting	8
Self-Regulated Learning Inventory (SRLI).....	9
Compensated Semi-Structured Interviews	9
Qualitative Assessment of Trustworthiness	10
Participants	11
Discourse Analysis	12
Results	13
Research Question 1	13
Amanda	13
Timothy.....	16
Cathy.....	18
Research Question 2	21
Amanda	21
Timothy.....	23
Cathy.....	25
Research Question Results.....	27

Discussion.....	28
Implications	30
Limitations	32
Future Research	33
Conclusion.....	34
References	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.....	12
Table 2.....	15
Table 3.....	18
Table 4.....	20
Table 5.....	22
Table 6.....	24
Table 7.....	26

PREFACE

In accordance with TESOL MA guidelines, this thesis was prepared as a manuscript to be submitted to the *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*. This journal was selected because of its broad focus on research in language learning. The *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning* publishes interdisciplinary studies that promotes cross-national and international comparative educational research relevant to a scholarly audience of practitioners, educators, and learners.

Manuscripts that are submitted to the target journal should (1) be prepared according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th Edition and (2) generally contain between 6,000 and 8,000 words, excluding references, tables, and figures, however no maximum word length is prescribed. This manuscript was prepared with both of these requirements. The final draft of the manuscript has 9,351 words. References, tables, and figures have 2,072 words for an inclusive total of 11,423 words.

Alternative target journals include *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* and *Journal of Studies in International Education*. Length requirements vary between these two journals. Articles submitted to *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* must contain less than 8,000 words, excluding tables, figures, & references. Articles submitted to *Journal of Studies in International Education* should be no longer than 7,000 words, including references, tables, and figures.

Introduction

English has become the *lingua franca* of science, medicine, business, information technology, entertainment and diplomacy and the number of people using a functional level of English has grown to 1.75 billion people worldwide (British Council, 2013). As the use of English around the globe expands, more students than ever before are seeking advanced degrees using English as a second or third language (Institute on International Enrollment [IIE], 2017). But, when English proficiency is not adequate for full university matriculation, international students often enroll in intensive English programs (IEP) to increase their language skills. This adds time, energy, and expense to an international educational experience.

As international educational experiences become more common, students, parents, educators, administrators, policy makers, and governments are keen to make these cross-cultural experiences as efficacious to all parties as possible. Researchers in higher education, international education, counseling psychology and intercultural relations are examining how international students navigate these cross-cultural educational experiences, both in IEPs and in traditional higher education settings, from multiple perspectives. However, educational psychologists have not fully analyzed how self-regulated learners navigate these experiences (see Volet & Jones, 2012).

Self-regulated learning is a “dynamic construct that connects strategic capacity, intent, and learning within the self-regulative learner” (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 169) and is an important field of research in educational psychology (Boekaerts & Cascallar, 2006; Panadero, 2017; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011) and second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Oxford, 2017). Applying a broad lens of SRL principles and practice to cross-cultural educational learners could have important theoretical and pedagogical implications to multiple

academic fields. Self-regulated language learners understand their motives, and can manage their methods of learning, time, social environments, physical environments, and performance to maximize language learning (Andrade & Evans, 2015; Griffiths, 2008). Could self-regulated language learning skills also help students manage the psychologically demanding, cross-cultural, transitional nature of an international educational experience?

The case study detailed in this paper revealed that three international language learners used different self-regulated learning skills to help them manage both the language acquisition and sociocultural aspects of their first semester at an intensive English program. The purpose of these language learners acquiring academic English was to continue their education at a degree-seeking institution in the United States after they raised their English proficiency to the required levels of admittance. A relevant review of literature will be followed by the methodology used in the case study. Results, implications, and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Literature Review

Cross-Cultural Educational Transition

The idea that studying abroad is beneficial to a students' educational and personal growth is an enduring belief, despite the often physical and emotional discomforts of a cross-cultural educational experience. Students working towards acquiring academic proficiency in a second language (L2) especially view traveling to the target language country a highly sought-after experience (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995). A cross-cultural educational experience could be a short, but intensive, weeks-long study of language, a semester-long cultural and language-focused study abroad, or a multiyear degree-seeking endeavor at a foreign university. As the world becomes more globalized, these types of international student exchanges have steadily

become more common and students are staying in international contexts for educational purposes for longer periods of stay (IIE, 2017; Rizvi, 2011).

In addition to the expected education and economic gains, it is also normal to assume that international students will experience expansive and transitional ideas about themselves, about the world around them, and about the educational process itself during a cross-cultural educational experience (Gu, Schweisfurth, & Day, 2010; Kim, 2008). But, transition in any psychological context can be a fundamentally challenging experience. As both an adaptational and transformational concept, transition is rooted in change and can be defined as an “event or non-event” that “results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behavior and relationships” (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 5), as well as “significant life events that call for reconsideration of how one thinks of oneself and the world” (Volet & Jones, 2012, p. 244). Transitions are an integral part of the education process (Mezirow, 2006) and “are woven into the fabric of students’ school experiences” (Karabenick & Urdan, 2012, p. ix).

While gaining an international education is viewed by many as a highly sought-after commodity in a global economy (Rizvi, 2011), the process of navigating the transitions of living and studying in a different culture and country can be a monumental undertaking. Certainly, an international, cross-cultural educational experience would be a deeply transitional event in a students’ life, yet the broadened perspectives gained from such an experience position these students as members of a global community.

Intensive English Programs (IEP)

To facilitate the acquisition of an international higher education degree, academic proficiency in the target language must be reached. Acquiring the necessary language was

deemed the number one problem of international students' ability to adjust to an international educational experience (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009). As the average time needed to acquire academic proficiency in a second language (L2) is typically 4 to 8 years (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 2008), reaching full proficiency in the target language represents a considerable amount of time, energy, and oftentimes, expense.

When students do not have the language proficiency necessary to start their higher education studies, they often enroll in intense language programs to help them bridge their language deficiencies. In English speaking countries, intensive English programs (IEP) can be part of the institute of higher learning or can be separate stand-alone entities. If the IEP is associated with a college or university, language students at the IEP are often not fully matriculated until language proficiency standards are met. In general, students studying English at an IEP only intend to enroll there as a stopgap before starting their degree-seeking education (Andrade, 2006; Zhang, 2015). IEPs, then, can be a hyper-transitory part of an already transitional educational experience.

Research in International, Cross-Cultural Educational Experiences

How a student navigates this transition between cultures and languages is of increasing interest to researchers in higher education, counseling psychology, and applied linguistics. What researchers have not fully focused on, however, is how a student might holistically use self-regulated learning (SRL) skills to manage the emotional and environmental demands of a cross-cultural educational experience. Volet and Jones (2012), in a comprehensive look at the research literature in psychology, counseling psychology, higher education, international education, and intercultural relations publications on cross-cultural educational transitions, found that there was little research being done by educational psychologists to analyze how

international students use SRL in transitional contexts. They stated there was “limited attention given to students’ goals, motivation and strategic approaches to learning in the literature on international students’ sociocultural adaptation from a cultural learning perspective,” and that this was “surprising, given the prominent place of self-regulation theory in the general learning literature” (p. 254).

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning (SRL) theory helps researchers explain and explore how learners create, manage, and manipulate ideal learning environments for themselves. SRL “is not a mental ability or academic performance skill; rather it is the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills” (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 65). Not only are self-regulated learners able to manage individualized learning, but they are also adept at “self-initiated forms of social learning, such as seeking help from peers, coaches, and teachers” (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011, p. 1). A self-regulated learner has a clear idea of their motives for learning and is able to maintain motivation or re-motivate themselves, choose appropriate learning strategies, manage their time for learning tasks, identify and create ideal physical learning environments (which include monitoring their physical, mental, and emotional health), maximize social learning interactions, and monitor and adjust their performance in an active, personal feedback loop (Dembo & Seli, 2008; Zimmerman, 1998, 2002).

Additionally, SRL has important implications in the field of language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Oxford, 2017). SRL skills are vital for language learners because acquiring academic proficiency in a second language (L2) is a process that spans multiple years (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 2008), can be fraught with anxiety and learning setbacks (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2003; MacIntyre, 2007), and necessarily involves interaction between

interlocutors in a variety of situations (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998). Learners must be able to manage communication anxiety (Bailey et. al., 2003) and navigate changing learning situations and environments as they advance in age, proficiency, or as they encounter new learning contexts. “Good language learners have often been described as self-regulated learners” (Oxford & Lee, 2008, p. 309).

To contextualize these learning processes, educational psychologists, applied linguists, and others have organized the principles and practices of SRL into six broad dimensions (Andrade & Evans, 2015; Dembo & Seli, 2008; Zimmerman, 1998, 2002). These six dimensions include (1) motive, (2) methods of learning, (3) time, (4) physical environment, (5) social environment, and (6) performance. A highly self-regulated language learner will be adept at managing their learning across all six dimensions (Andrade & Evans, 2013; Dembo & Seli, 2013), but will choose unique ways to express which learning strategies and environments work best for themselves as individuals (Oxford, 2017). To summarize, self-regulated learners “are proactive in their pursuit of language learning” (Macaro, 2001, p. 264) and use a broad range of principles and practices, both individual and social, to reach language learning goals.

This wide-ranging and highly personal view of learning makes it difficult for researchers to generate quantitative, outcome-driven, generalizable research results. Research in SRL is more suited to qualitative, case study research because it allows the researcher a “flexible but comprehensive inquiry strategy well matched to the study of SRL as a multi-componential, dynamic, recursive, and situated activity” (Butler, 2011, p. 358). However, case study data on SRL has not been comprehensive in nature. Researchers have studied how teachers are instructing students in SRL principles and practices (Slayton, 2014), how students manage language learning strategies (Alhaisoni, 2012; Ardesheva, Wang, Adesope, & Valentine, 2017;

Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002; Oxford, 2017), and how differing language and culture influence student's learning experiences while studying in an IEP (Hong-nam & Leavell, 2006; Oxford, 1999). What researchers have not considered is how and in what ways students use the multifaceted dimensions of SRL in the intense learning environment of an IEP.

Self-Regulated Learning in a Transitional Context

In Volet and Jones' 2012 review of inter-disciplinary literature, they were surprised at the lack of research connecting the transitions of international students seeking cross-cultural education with self-regulated learning. They said:

We expected to find studies using longitudinal designs, and combining questionnaire data collected with reliable and valid instruments, in-depth interviews, aimed at providing a sound empirical basis to understand students' motivations and engagement in cultural transitions. We were looking for person-based analyses that would reveal the motivational profile of students who are more or less inclined to engage in cultural transitions...Surprisingly, we found little evidence of such research in the literature (pp. 248-249).

The purpose of this study, then, was to begin the process of inquiry into how SRL might be used by international language learners as they transition within educational contexts from an educational psychology and language acquisition viewpoint. Therefore, an exploratory case study was designed to answer two fundamental research questions:

1. *What self-regulated learning principles and practices do the selected intensive English program students use to manage their English language learning?*

2. *Did the students self-report changes in their self-regulated learning principles and practices over the course of their first semester? If so, what changes did they make and why?*

Using a longitudinal design, questionnaire data combined with in-depth semi-structured interviews, and person-based analyses, it is hoped that the answers to these two research questions yield rich data for additional qualitative and quantitative studies in multiple interdisciplinary fields of research.

Methodology

Research Setting

The purpose of the study was to determine what self-reported SRL principles and practices the selected participants brought with them to an IEP, and then to analyze if those principles and practices changed over the course of their first semester. After approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, three participants were recruited from a heterogeneous group of newly admitted students at an intensive English program (IEP) affiliated with a large university in the western United States. Students at this IEP are not fully matriculated at the university and do not receive degree-seeking credit for their language studies. However, most students are enrolled to improve academic English proficiency with the intent to attend a U.S. university for advanced degree-seeking education. Most of the students enrolled at this IEP come from the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of North, Central, and South America and from the Asian countries of China, Japan, and Korea. A smaller percentage of students come from the European, Asian, or African continents. Students range in age from 18 to 35, with some older students. There is an almost equal distribution of female and male students at the IEP.

Self-Regulated Learning Inventory (SRLI)

All new students entering the IEP were administered the Self-Regulated Learning Inventory (SRLI) questionnaire (Nuttall, 2016), that was designed specifically to establish how self-regulated a language learner is according to a six-dimensional model of SRL. The six-dimensional model considers the language learners' self-awareness of (1) motive, (2) methods of learning, and (3) time management, as well as their personal monitoring of (4) physical environments (which includes physical and mental health), (5) social environments, and language learning (6) performance (Andrade & Evans, 2013; Dembo & Seli, 2013; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). The SRLI is written in English and asks respondents to make a self-report judgement from a 1- to 6-point Likert-scale. Although currently only partially validated, the SRLI was determined to successfully rank students into broad ranges of high, mid, and low SRL awareness and was chosen because of its unique focus on the six-dimensions of SRL.

Of the 83 incoming students with varying levels of English proficiency that took the SRLI, 26 students returned responses that indicated they were highly self-regulated. The top three scorers with high English proficiency were approached to participate in this case study. The participants who agreed to participate were chosen because of their SRLI responses. However, their diverse ethnographic background, educational experiences, and personalities added richness and depth of experience to the case study.

Compensated Semi-Structured Interviews

After being approached to participate, the three participants were informed of the longitudinal scope of the case study and signed appropriate consent forms. The semi-structured interviews were guided by the framework of a six-dimensional model of SRL. Two interviews at the beginning of the semester identified what SRL principles and practices the participants

brought with them to the IEP and confirmed the results of the SRLI. An interview in the middle of the semester and an interview at the end of the semester ascertained what SRL principles and practices were maintained, adjusted, discarded, or newly developed. Mid- and end-of-semester interview questions were guided by previous responses and were also framed within the 6-dimensional SRL framework. All interview questions sought to elicit rich description (Geertz, 1973) about the participants thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and experiences and to determine how the participants used their SRL skills to manage their transitional IEP experience. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. At each stage of the study, participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, appreciated, and would be compensated for however long they chose to participate. All three participants chose to complete the case study and were monetarily compensated for their participation.

Qualitative Assessment of Trustworthiness

Multiple efforts were made to establish the trustworthiness of the qualitative data (Guba, 1981) used in this case study. Participants were interviewed multiple times across a longitudinal time frame in a location that was convenient and comfortable to them. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Participants were given the opportunity to check their transcribed responses and provide feedback on researcher interpretations of their experiences. Peer examination and arbitration by impartial and qualitative research-trained colleagues helped shape the creation of the semi-structured interview questions and confirm the interpretation of the data results. The lead researcher kept a field journal that detailed the scheduling and logistics of the case study, methodology rationales and decisions, and personal reflections on the entire research process. The three participants chosen for the case study were first identified by impartial questionnaire results, yet they offered diverse cultural, linguistic, and gender

perspectives from their unique learning experiences. The participant names used in this study are pseudonyms.

Participants

“Amanda” was an unmarried, Spanish-speaking young woman from Central America. Her English learning experiences before coming to the IEP consisted of limited academic English instruction in high-school in her home country and an 18-month, English-speaking, Christian proselyting mission in the United States. Her purpose in attending the IEP was to improve her reading, writing, and grammar skills in order to pass the TOEFL and enroll in a business college in the United States. Amanda was self-confident, intense, and socially engaging. She preferred one-on-one learning environments with teachers and tutors.

“Timothy” was an unmarried, French- and Malagasy- speaking young man from sub-Saharan Africa. He had some academic English experience in his home country, but his English proficiency was not high enough to pass the TOEFL in order to attend medical school, which was his intended field of study. Timothy had an intense, but friendly and gregarious personality and was accustomed to group work. He was observant of teachers and peers and thought deeply about and meditated on all his learning and social experiences.

“Cathy” was a married, Mandarin Chinese-speaking young woman from Asia. She had a pronounced speaking stutter in both English and Mandarin. She had the most academic English experience of the three participants, having studied English since grade school, but she was very shy and introverted and lacked confidence in her listening and speaking abilities. Cathy preferred to study on her own, or with a trusted friend, and rarely volunteered in class. She had enrolled at the IEP to improve her English proficiency in order to pass the TOEFL and enter an interior design program at a U.S. college.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Demographic Info	Amanda	Timothy	Cathy
Language(s)	Spanish L1	Malagasy L1, French L2	Mandarin Chinese L1
Gender	Female	Male	Female
Marital Status	Unmarried	Unmarried	Married
Age	Early 20's	Late 20's	Mid 20's
Academic English	Minimal	Moderate	Extensive
Learning Preference	One-on-one	Group interaction	Individual
Personality	Serious, persuasive, determined, extrovert	Detailed, out-going, meditative, extrovert	Serious, verbal stutter, self-effacing, introvert

Discourse Analysis

Participant responses to each of the interviews were transcribed and carefully analyzed, coded, and categorized using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify emerging themes, commonalities, and patterns. Multiple iterative rounds of comparing, coding, and recoding as necessary were completed as additional responses from participants revealed further insights. The six-dimensional mode of SRL provided a loose framework with which the researcher viewed the participants “before” and “after” thoughts, feelings, and experiences, but did not limit the assessment of participant responses. The six SRL categories include motive, methods of learning, time, physical environment, social environment, and performance.

Using a holistic and all-inclusive view from the end of the semester, participants’ interview responses were compared with responses from the beginning of the semester for evidence of change. A rating of ‘no change,’ ‘slight change,’ or ‘significant change’ was applied to the broad SRL dimensions for each participant depending on their responses. Again, each of the end of semester ratings were carefully analyzed by multiple researchers until consensus was reached for a rating. The ratings were used to identify how, why, and in what way the participants utilized self-regulated learning skills across the semester.

Results

The first purpose of this study was to determine what self-regulated learning (SRL) skills three international students possessed as they began an intensive, transitory, and cross-cultural learning experience. All three enrolled at an IEP to improve their English to pursue higher education at a U.S. college or university. The participants' names are pseudonyms and their experiences, thoughts, and attitudes are detailed here. To present a rich description and an authentic representation of the participants' experiences, their words in imperfect English are quoted extensively in this section. As was expected, each participant had unique ways of expressing SRL practices. Culture, previous life experience, personality, and personal preferences all contributed to how each participant managed language learning tasks. Participants displayed varying levels of skill across all six of the dimensions of SRL, and each seemed to rely on, or prefer, some dimensions over others.

Research Question 1

The subjects each participated in two, 45-minute semi-structured interview sessions at the beginning of the semester where they explained the SRL skills they brought with them to the IEP. These beginning interviews helped answer the first research question, which was:

What self-regulated learning principles and practices do the selected IEP students use to manage their English language learning?

Amanda Amanda had a clear vision of how learning English would improve her life. Her primary motivation to learn English was to attend a U.S. business college, but she also said that knowing multiple languages would give her “better opportunities” in life. She was serious and determined and felt that maintaining motivation to learn was her personal responsibility. She had strong intrinsic motivation and if she ever felt dis-motivated, she said it is “your thing to just

motivate yourself again.” When she experienced opposition in pursuit of her goals, she would brainstorm all the things she could think of to overcome the obstacle, then would work systematically down her list. She realized that she may not accomplish everything, but she could feel satisfied at the end of the day if she had kept trying.

She had minimal academic English experience before enrolling at the IEP but had extensive interpersonal speaking and listening skills. Her main methods of learning were listening carefully to conversations and asking teachers and trusted friends for explanations before looking for explanations online or in a dictionary. In fact, she expressed a lack of confidence in finding good explanations in the dictionary and said, “sometimes they say, like, the dictionary don’t tell you exactly the word that you’re, like, in the context. So, more like asking the teacher” was a better method to learn new words. She rarely took notes and relied on aural and visual cues to learn. If she didn’t understand something she was reading, she would slow down and reread. When a teacher or friend was unavailable, Amanda would sometimes look things up on the internet, look for translations in her first language, and use apps like Duolingo, to practice and learn English.

Time management for English study depended on what assignments were given and rarely included a written study plan, but Amanda was self-aware of what time of day worked best for her to study and she worked until her assignments were complete. She felt that her most productive study time was at night. She felt confident she knew how long her English assignments would take to complete and planned extra time for writing assignments.

Amanda was highly self-regulated in managing her physical environment: both her personal study space and her physical and mental well-being. To avoid distractions, she created a clean, sparse workspace with only the needed items for study. She was keenly aware of her need

to maintain a relaxed, positive mental state when working on her English studies. She said, “If I’m stressed, I can not! So, I need to relax for a little bit, just take time for me...like, taking a shower, like, take a nap. Sometimes just relax, and then I just feel like, wow! Alright! I can keep going!” She understood the power of stepping away from a stressful learning situation to relax and calm herself. She was also able to consciously redirect her mind during class to refocus on the teacher if her mind started to wander.

Amanda was highly self-regulated in managing her social environment. She knew exactly who would help her accomplish her language goals and was not shy about utilizing all her available social resources. She preferred a personal, one-on-one approach to learning English and met regularly with her teachers outside of class and maximized her time with IEP-provided tutors after school. She was comfortable raising her hand in class to ask for explanations and would often email, or even text, her teachers while she was trying to finish homework at night.

Finally, Amanda was highly self-regulated in monitoring her performance. She was aware of her strengths, which were listening and speaking, and her weaknesses, which were reading, writing, and grammar. She focused extra effort to improve in areas of weakness and met with her teachers and tutors regularly. To gauge her English proficiency, she analyzed her comprehension and participation level in native-speaker conversations, but she also used test scores and grades to give feedback on her progress.

Table 2

Amanda's Self-Regulated Learning Principles and Practices

SRL Dimension	Beginning of Semester Principles & Practices
Motive	High intrinsic motivation – motivation was a personal responsibility Personal satisfaction comes from her best efforts Enrolled at IEP to raise TOEFL scores to attend U.S. business college Feels that learning English provides opportunities in life
Methods of Learning	One-on-one interaction with teachers, tutors, classmates, & peers Unafraid to ask for clarifications from interlocutors

	Strong aural & visual learner Occasionally uses the internet or a language app for English learning practice
Time	Prefers studying at night Rarely makes study plans
Physical Environment	Needs a clean, sparse study environment Maintains a relaxed, positive mental state when studying Uses mental redirection and refocus if mind wanders during English lessons
Social Environment	Adept at approaching & utilizing social contacts for English study Maximizes teacher and tutor resources
Performance	Aware of English language strengths and weaknesses Focuses effort and attention on areas that need improvement Highly attuned to personal proficiency & comprehension in native-speaker conversations Uses grades & test scores to gauge progress

Timothy Timothy had strong extrinsic motivation and recognized the influence his family, his sponsor, and his peers had on him to learn English. His purpose for learning English was to enroll in medical school in the United States and accomplishing his education goals would bring economic stability to himself, his family, and his extended family. He said he had “promised to many people, and I promised to myself, I committed to God that I make this.” When asked who would be the happiest if he succeeded in his education goals, he said, “I will say first, my family. Yeah, of course! And second, my sponsor.”

Timothy had learned in his home country to take advantage of learning opportunities when they presented themselves. His main method of learning was to try to “understand everything at school at the same moment.” He explained, “For instance, the teacher explain the lesson today and you have to understand that lesson on the same day...[you must] hit the metal during when they’re burning.” For him, it was imperative to strike while the iron was hot to maximize access to teachers, learning materials, and try and learn in the moment of perception. To conserve and extend resources, he met regularly with classmates in low-tech study

environments, often shared textbooks, and took turns teaching each other what they had learned in class.

Time management was Timothy's most highly self-regulated skill. He made detailed daily, weekly, and monthly time management charts that were informed by his short- and long-term learning goals. Blocks of time throughout the day were set aside to accomplish his goals. These charts were color coded and he referred to them often throughout the day and week. His preferred study time was in the morning and said, "I love in the morning because it is fresh, it is clean, my mind is very open," but was willing to adapt in order to take advantage of what time was available in his schedule.

He was also self-regulated in managing his physical environment. He articulated that his preferred place to study was a green environment, surrounded by plants and nature, or in a spot where he could look out onto a green space and noted that, "I like to read a lot, and my eyes, when I look on the green things help me to relax and to concentrate." Sometimes he would listen to unobtrusive background sounds or music while studying and recognized he had to turn off social media, or he could become distracted.

Incorporating social interaction and group work were important, and Timothy was comfortable taking a leadership role among his peers. In his home country he had been chosen as a student delegate to act as a go between his student study group and the administration and teacher. He liked to work in groups during class and he often organized group study sessions after school with classmates.

Finally, Timothy thought deeply about and meditated on how he was progressing in his language study. He used feedback from teachers, classmates, and peers to inform his progress. He set aside time each week to plan, adjust, and if necessary, re-set learning goals, and said,

“Every week I do a self-improvement.” He was finely attuned to interpersonal communication cues and said that he tried to read “the teacher expression, and the feeling of the class, the mood of the class,” to gauge his progress. He humbly acknowledged his weaknesses and made meticulous plans to overcome them.

Table 3

Timothy's Self-Regulated Learning Principles and Practices

SRL Dimension	Beginning of Semester Principles & Practices
Motive	High extrinsic motivation – success directly impacts close & extended family Enrolled at IEP to raise TOEFL scores to attend U.S. medical school
Methods of Learning	Tries to understand concepts in the moment of perception Low-tech group interaction with classmates & peers Teach and share knowledge within groups
Time	Makes detailed daily & weekly time management schedules Schedules informed by short- & long-term personal & education goals Prefers studying in the morning
Physical Environment	Likes a “green” environment to study in Often listens to background music Removes social media distractions
Social Environment	Regularly studies with classmates & peers Not accustomed to approaching teachers directly
Performance	Weekly self-assessment Keenly aware of social cues & feedback Meditates frequently on progress

Cathy Cathy had been studying English since grade school and had the most academic English experience of the three participants, yet because of a speaking stutter and an introverted nature, she did not feel confident in her English proficiency. She was enrolled at the IEP to improve her English to pursue an interior design degree at a U.S. college, which she felt would be a more pleasant experience than trying to obtain a higher education degree in Asia. She had a very supportive network of husband, family, and friends that encouraged her in her language learning efforts. Yet, the language she used to describe her motivation for coming to the US

revealed an inner battle. She hoped that coming to the US would “make” her learn, “force” her to practice, and perhaps then she could “overcome” her fears and “conquer” her challenges to improve. She was drawn to the “strong” North American and British culture where she felt she would have greater access to knowledge, but her natural shyness and reticence to practice English with native speakers represented a huge struggle for her.

She was highly self-regulated in her learning strategies and methods. She used a variety of online websites, apps, and multimedia platforms, and would often chat online with English-speaking friends. She consciously made viewing and listening choices in English over her L1 and kept a very detailed vocabulary notebook of new English words she was learning. When she heard a new word, she would write the word down, paying attention to correct spelling and pronunciation, and would create sample sentences with the new word. Another method of learning she used was to pick up and read children’s books whenever she felt stressed or discouraged to reaffirm her proficiency progress and to reacquaint herself with simple grammar patterns. Although she was rarely comfortable volunteering in class, she paid attention, listened intently, and participated when asked.

Cathy was highly self-regulated with her time. She completed assignments early and quickly, “right after class. If I can finish my homework, I can do what I like to do in the last day. And if I finish my homework right after the class, I can remember the things I learned from the classes. If I have problems, I can email my teacher and they can reply to me earlier.” She was adept at gauging the length and effort required to finish assignments and would set aside additional time to complete assignments in skill areas she felt were her weakness.

She also self-regulated her physical surroundings and internal, mental state when studying. She said, “If I feel happy or I feel confidence to do my homework, so I can be more

effectively. Or, I can learn better. So, I need to make sure I have happy mood or I have motivation to do the assignments.” She liked her study space to be quiet, clean, warm, and private. If she became frustrated or upset while studying, she said she would “take a break, or eat some snacks, or watch some videos that I love so I can relax. Yes. So, I can have more energy to do.”

Cathy preferred studying alone, or with a close, trusted friend. She respected her teachers, but did not approach them for help, “because maybe I’m not familiar with them,” and did not go to tutors because “I don’t have a specific question to ask them, so I will worry that I’ll waste their time.” She was aware that her speaking stutter affected her willingness to communicate. She said, “If I feel nervous or shy and I will not speak smoothly. I will have a little bit stutter. So, that makes me hard to speak smoothly or confidently.” She preferred to study alone, with her husband, or with a close, trusted friend.

Finally, Cathy relied on grades, compliments from other people, reading comprehension, as well as listening comprehension with interlocutors to monitor her language performance. She felt that her natural shyness contributed to a weakness in listening and speaking. She was not confident she knew how to improve her English proficiency but had a strong study and practice ethic.

Table 4

Cathy's Self-Regulated Learning Principles and Practices

SRL Dimension	Beginning of Semester Principles & Practices
Motive	Strong intrinsic motivation, tempered by “struggle” to overcome shyness Enrolled at IEP to raise TOEFL scores to attend U.S. college Enjoys to US and UK culture, news, & media
Methods of Learning	Uses multiple online and print materials for learning Turns everyday activities into learning activities Keeps a detailed English vocabulary notebook with pronunciation & usage examples

	Rarely volunteers in class, but respects the professional skill of teachers
Time	Completes assignments early Adept at gauging study time requirements Sets aside additional time for skill area weaknesses
Physical Environment	Likes a quiet, clean, warm, & private study space Maintains a happy mood when studying
Social Environment	Prefers to study alone, or with a trusted friend Dislikes group dynamics Uses online chat sessions to improve listening & speaking skills
Performance	Relies on grades and test scores to gauge proficiency Sensitive to compliments from friends & interlocutors Strong study & practice ethic to make improvements

Research Question 2

The second purpose of the study was to determine if the participants' SRL principles and practices changed over the course of their first semester, and if so, why. As this was the first semester at an international IEP for each of the participants, and the first time travelling out of their home country for one participant, it was expected that the participants would be making adjustments to their physical and social environments. These adjustments were still noted and categorized. The 45-minute semi-structured interviews conducted in the middle and at the end of the semester revealed how the participants used their SRL skills to manage this transitional period in their lives, which SRL principles and practices were discarded, and which were adopted or adapted. A holistic, overall view from the end of the semester was used to answer the second research question:

Did the students self-report changes in their self-regulated learning principles and practices over the course of their first semester? If so, what changes did they make and why?

Amanda Amanda's main purpose for enrolling at the IEP was to improve her English proficiency and TOEFL scores to enroll in a U.S. business college. Over the course of the

semester, Amanda had slight changes to four SRL dimensions, experienced significant change in the dimension of methods of learning, and used her established SRL skills in the dimension of motivation to help her through a particularly demotivating event in the middle of the semester.

Table 5

Amanda's End of Semester Results

SRL Dimension	End of Semester Results
Motive	No change: (a) Continued to use positive mental framing to maintain motivation; (b) Used perseverance & determination to explore all possible options in overcoming a disappointing TOEFL score
Methods of Learning	Significant change: (a) Acquired new language learning strategies in reading, writing & grammar skill areas; (b) Developed more consistency of practice
Time	Slight change: Completed homework promptly after lessons rather than waiting
Physical Environment	Slight change: Study demands impacted eating & exercise habits negatively
Social Environment	Slight change: (a) Maximized personal interactions with tutors & teachers; (b) Expressed consternation about missing positive benefits of group work
Performance	Slight change: More open to feedback from classmates, tutors & teachers

Amanda experienced significant changes in the area of methods of learning, perhaps because she had minimal experience in an academic English learning environment. She continued to listen carefully to conversations and preferred to ask for clarification from interlocutors as her main method of learning, but developed new skills in reading, writing, and grammar. Specifically, she learned that listening to an audio transcript while reading allowed her to apply her listening strengths to her reading weaknesses. She learned new brainstorming techniques for writing that she applied to her speaking. She also began reading consistently each day, rather than reading a lot, infrequently. She felt that the new methods of learning she acquired helped her pay closer attention to what corrections her teachers were giving and that she was making fewer mistakes.

In the dimensions of time, physical environment, social environment, and performance, Amanda experienced slight changes to her established principles and practices. In the dimension of time, she still rarely made study plans but changed her study time to be earlier in the day because it was a priority for her to get her assignments and homework done early. In the dimension of physical environment, she revealed that her exercise and eating habits had suffered negatively as she tried to manage school, work, and studying intensely for the TOEFL. Amanda had strong self-regulatory practices in the dimension of social environment which she continued to maximize throughout the semester. She met regularly with teachers and tutors throughout the semester but did express consternation that she had not maximized group study sessions with classmates and peers. In the dimension of performance, Amanda felt that she had gained a deeper appreciation for feedback from classmates, teachers, and tutors.

In the middle of the semester, Amanda learned that her score in one of the skill areas of the TOEFL had regressed below pre-semester levels and was too low for admission to her intended college. She was devastated and was understandably “dis-motivated, for sure!” She used her strong intrinsic motivation to design a plan of action. She spoke with friends, classmates, and the student life counselor at the IEP for suggestions and slowly worked through a list of possible alternatives to overcome the setback. Obtaining letters of recommendations from teachers, meeting individually with the admissions director at the college, and completing all the other required paperwork resulted in her being accepted to the college of her choice for the next semester. Her use of positive mental reframing, personal responsibility, and perseverance allowed her to overcome a severely demotivating event.

Timothy Timothy’s main purpose for enrolling at the IEP was to improve his English proficiency and TOEFL scores to attend medical school in the United States. His English

proficiency was not quite as high as the other participants in this study and his arrival at the IEP was the first time he had traveled out of his home country. However, his strong SRL skills in motivation, time management, and social environment helped him adjust to a high-tech learning environment and manage the dramatic differences in his physical environment, while he acquired new ways to monitor his performance.

Table 6

Timothy's End of Semester Results

SRL Dimension	End of Semester Results
Motive	No change: “On fire” for learning English
Methods of Learning	Significant change: Had to learn high-tech, individual methods of learning – steep learning curve was challenging
Time	No change: Short- & long-term learning goals continued to inform time management and study priorities
Physical Environment	Slight change: (a) New climate & money matters affected attention & focus; (b) Experienced some loneliness
Social Environment	No change: (a) Groupwork continued to be energizing; (b) Careful observations and teacher/peer feedback informed learning
Performance	Slight change: (a) Learned new ways to monitor progress; (b) Viewed “failures” as learning opportunities

Timothy was able to maintain strong motivation, with understandable ups and downs, throughout his first semester at the IEP. He said that if he ever felt “lost on my goal or not thinking to attend in it,” he would remember all the people who were praying for his success. This helped him to refocus and keep moving forward. Being in the United States, studying English and pursuing his goals, living out his dreams, made him feel like his motivation was “on fire.” Timothy also maintained his daily, weekly, and monthly time management schedules, which helped him keep moving towards his goals throughout the semester. Another dimension that saw no change was Timothy’s strengths in managing his social environment. He created

classmate study groups, meet regularly with tutors, and thought deeply about the feedback he received from teachers, tutors, classmates, and peers.

The SRL dimension where Timothy experienced the most change was in methods of learning. The IEP expected students to utilize high-tech, individualistic methods of learning to create and track assignments, submit homework, and participate in activities online. This presented a steep learning curve for Timothy, which slowed his proficiency progression. He also had to manage a dramatic change in climate and physical space with his move to the United States. As he learned to adapt to new living arrangements, understand differences in costs of living, and navigate a school where he did not have the luxury of communicating with many people in his L1, he did experience some loneliness. He was not able to recreate his ideal physical learning environment but did his best to adapt.

Timothy also saw a slight change in how he monitored his progress. Part of this change was learning high-tech methods to check his grades and communicate with his teachers. Part of this change was learning to view his failures as opportunities for progress. He did not raise his TOEFL score sufficiently high enough to be admitted to college after one semester but was offered positions at several colleges with merit and need-based scholarships at multiple colleges after two semesters at the IEP.

Cathy Like the other participants, Cathy's main purpose for enrolling at the IEP was to improve her English proficiency and TOEFL scores to enroll at a U.S. college. She had established multiple methods of learning that saw no change over the course of the semester. She continued to prefer studying by herself, or with a close friend. She experienced slight changes to her SRL principles and practices in how she managed her time and monitored her performance. The most significant change for Cathy was in the areas of motivation and physical environment.

Table 7

Cathy's End of Semester Results

SRL Dimension	End of Semester Results
Motive	Significant change: Better understanding of personal intrinsic & extrinsic motivation
Methods of Learning	No change: Maintained established learning methods & strategies
Time	Slight change: Struggled to manage demands of IEP homework and TOEFL prep
Physical Environment	Significant change: (a) Sought out psychological therapy to manage extreme anxiety from speaking stutter; (b) Learned new strategies to manage her willingness to communicate
Social Environment	No change: Maintained her preference to study alone, or with her husband or close friend
Performance	Slight change: Gained greater empathy towards herself & her language efforts

Cathy experienced debilitating anxiety about speaking in English with interlocutors during the semester. She had experienced anxiety before in her L1 in her home country, which aggravated her stutter to the extent that she was unable to manage speaking tasks in Chinese. When she recognized the signs of the same anxiety emerging in her L2. Cathy approached the IEP school administration for help in finding a therapist.

Her therapist suggested several mental imaging strategies that Cathy found some success with. She related that during an end of semester speaking presentation assignment, she imagined her classmates as watermelons and was able to disassociate any negative feelings of judgement from them, which allowed her to relax and finish her presentation. Working with the therapist, Cathy came to have greater empathy towards herself and to view her stutter as a physical limitation, rather than a mental deficiency. She said, "I think it's [her stutter] kind of physical problem because a lot of time I know how to say, but I can't say fluently." She still used vernacular that suggested an inner battle when talking about her willingness to communicate. but by the end of the semester, she was working towards better intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that

was separated from how she perceived others' view of her. She said, "I think the most important thing is that I'm not trying to compare myself to another. Because every time when I do this, I will feel frustrated. Everyone is unique and everyone can be excellent."

Cathy developed new strategies and skills to manage her mental health over the semester. These new ways of thinking positively about herself and her physical limitations lead to greater self-empathy and influenced her intrinsic and extrinsic motives in positive ways.

Research Question Results

Each of the participants reported no change, slight change and significant change to different dimensions of their established SRL principles and practices over the course of their first semester at an IEP. It is important to emphasize that changes within a dimension of SRL for these participants were often, but not always an indication of deficiency, or lack of development, in that dimension. Also, change for the participants was mostly, but not always, in a positive, or skills acquisition direction. SRL is a cyclical and adaptive construct, where the learner demonstrates personal initiative to try new things and adopt different strategies, if necessary, with the aim of bringing about a desired learning outcome (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Each participant displayed these adaptive qualities.

Additionally, no changes within a dimension of SRL was not always an indication that the skills within that dimension were not needed or under-utilized. Each participant exhibited no change to established SRL practices in at least one dimension of SRL. In the case of Cathy, no change to the dimensions of methods of learning and social environment was a demonstration that her acquired skills in these two areas brought a consistency of practice that was a reliable constant. She was willing to try new things, but she returned to what she was comfortable with and what had worked for her in the past. This was also the case for Timothy and his skills in the

area of time and social environment. However, for Amanda and Timothy, skills in the area of motive are what they activated and used to face and overcome their challenges.

Conversely, significant change within a SRL dimension was an indication that a significant amount of growth in skill acquisition happened for the participants in that dimension. Amanda and Timothy acquired new methods of learning English that they had never used before. These new skills helped them advance in proficiency, which was their goal. Cathy saw significant growth as she acquired new mental health skills in the area of physical environment, which then helped her acquire a better understanding of her motives.

Discussion

The ways in which the three participants in this study utilized self-regulated learning (SRL) during their first semester at an intensive English Program (IEP) was uniquely personal. These three students came from different countries, spoke different languages, had different levels of academic English proficiency and experience, and planned to study different subjects for their eventual programs of study. They each relied on different aspects of the six dimensions of SRL for their English language learning and over the course of the semester, their SRL principles and practices were expressed in decidedly different ways. Additionally, all three experienced serious obstacles that could have derailed their progress. Amanda and Timothy relied on SRL skills they brought with them to the IEP to manage these obstacles, and Cathy developed new SRL skills to meet her challenges. Ultimately, each participant reached their goal of being admitted into a U.S. college.

Although the three participants relied on different SRL skills to succeed during their first semester at an IEP, what they all displayed in common was inner reserves of resiliency as they faced their challenges. Resiliency is an aspect of the SRL dimension of motive and is important

because “motivation does not remain constant but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process, characterized by constant (re)appraisal and balancing of the various internal and external influences the individual is exposed to” (Dörnyei, 2000, p. 523). Resiliency is also an important aspect of the SRL dimension of performance as learners assess learning failures or obstacles and make adjustments and plans to overcome those obstacles through a performance feedback loop (Andrade & Evans, 2015). Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, and Reed (2011) define resiliency as “patterns of positive adaptation during or following significant adversity or risk” (p. 118) and certainly each of the participants in this study faced adversity and setbacks with positive adaptation during the semester.

Amanda received news in the middle of the semester that a low TOEFL skill area score threatened her ability to meet the TOEFL score requirements of the college she was hoping to attend the next semester. She explained her thought process as she dealt with this bad news. She said, “Alright. I just feel bad today...Sometimes we just not allow ourselves to just feel that stuff. It’s like, Alright. Just feel sad. And then, what else I do?” Amanda allowed herself to feel sad and disappointed about her score, but then she motivated herself to look for positive, actionable things she could do to change her circumstances. Through persistence and resilience, she achieved a positive outcome from what others may have accepted as the failure of a low TOEFL score.

Timothy also displayed resilience in the face of challenges during the semester. Timothy’s steep learning curve to adopt high-tech and more individual methods of learning at the IEP put him behind his expected progress. He said, “At the beginning I didn’t know the program very well” and “during that time there was a lot of trouble.” He felt a lot of opposition and discouragement. Using his SRL skills in a positive, active, performance feedback loop, Timothy

viewed his mistakes and language shortcomings in a positive light. He said, “when I receive the feedback, it helps me to...know, oh, this is my weakness,” and “I recovered that defeat when I knew my mistakes. Like, this is my mistakes, then I need to focus on this, I need to concentrate on that, yeah.” Through positively looking at his mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow, Timothy showed resiliency in working towards his goals. After two semesters at the IEP, Timothy improved his proficiency and TOEFL scores enough to be accepted at several local colleges with merit and financial scholarships.

Cathy displayed resiliency in seeking psychological help when her anxiety about speaking threatened her willingness to communicate. She felt that her “main problem is that I will focus more on other’s opinions or thoughts. So, when I have stutter or I cannot speak fluently, I will think, ‘Oh, others will judge me!’...so my stutter will become more seriously.” She practiced using the relaxation and mental imagery strategies her therapist suggested and saw some success in her ability to calm herself and think positively when trying to communicate. She said, “I’m trying to be positive and not let the bad thoughts to control me...So, it takes time, but I need to practice, and always be positive, and just do my best to speak and communicate, and not focus on other’s opinion or thoughts.” Cathy’s willingness to seek mental health support is atypical for international students (Mori, 2000) and represents a unique dedication and resilience to reaching her education goals. In fact, Cathy exceeded her proficiency goals with reference to her TOEFL score and was accepted into the interior design program at her college of choice after one semester at the IEP.

Implications

All three participants came to the IEP with a broad range of SRL skills. These skills were vital components in their success at increasing their English proficiency, passing the TOEFL,

and moving toward reaching their international education goals. The importance of having SRL skills in an academic language acquisition context cannot be understated and the experiences of these three students support this. Having SRL skills helped these students as they transitioned from their home country to a new cross-cultural education experience.

Fortunately, SRL strategies and behaviors can be taught to learners who are not naturally self-regulated (Andrade & Evans, 2013; Ardesheva, Wang, Adesope, & Valentine, 2017; Broadbent & Poon, 2015; Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996). Administrators and teachers can present SRL principles and practices in a variety of contexts and give students wide exposure to each of the different dimensions of SRL without taking time away from traditional language instruction. SRL instruction can be woven seamlessly into writing, reading, grammar, listening, and speaking assignments.

Important to understand, however, is that evidence of SRL skills in a learner is not always on display in the classroom. This was true for the participants in this study. In fact, the participants expressed that their schoolwork sometimes suffered, and they lost motivation to attend IEP classes as they intensified their preparations for the TOEFL. They viewed successful test results on their TOEFL as a more important indication of their English proficiency progression than their grades at the IEP. Cathy, especially, struggled to stay motivated to attend IEP classes as the date for her TOEFL neared. Once she learned of her high TOEFL score and the requirements to be accepted into her specific program of study, she continued to set aside IEP class and homework to complete her college application process. It was only after she accomplished her primary goals of being admitted to college that she returned her focus to the IEP.

Yet, layered on top of, and integral to, the SRL skills the participants in this study displayed, were reserves of resiliency that helped the students move in positive directions after they faced challenging circumstances. How can administrators and teachers foster resiliency in their students? In summarizing the guidelines Masten et al. (2011) give to developing resiliency in children, Oxford (2017) suggests several ways to foster resiliency in language learners. (a) Reduce or eliminate risks, such as feelings of embarrassment or failure in the classroom and in the school culture without removing meaningful classroom challenge. (b) Provide assets that help students be successful learners, such as computers, textbooks, tutors, and interesting and exciting lessons. (c) Mobilize protective factors such as attachment relationships with teachers and peers, support cultural connections in the community, and build self-efficacy through mentored mastery exercises. (pp. 87-88) Oxford also adds that it is important to help language learners understand that experiencing difficulties or challenges in life and in language learning should not be a signal to give up.

Along with the above suggestions is the importance of educating transitioning students about where they can go if they need help and eliminating any stigmatism for seeking help. Student should be aware of all their available resources and how to access those resources. They need to be taught explicitly where they can go to access information, resolve conflicts, seek physical or mental health care, or report criminal behavior. In this study, both Amanda and Cathy went to the IEP school student life advisor and received invaluable information that helped them meet and overcome their challenges.

Limitations

The data collected for this study was self-reported data and represents only the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of individual participants in response to the interview

questions within the particular context and time frame of the study. These data results may not be generalized to other contexts or populations, nor was their collection intended for the purpose of generalizability. This study sought to gather rich, descriptive, experiential data to inform future qualitative and quantitative research in the fields of self-regulated learning, self-regulated learning in an intensive language program, self-regulation and language acquisition, language acquisition in times of transition, and international, cross-cultural educational experiences.

It is important to note that all three participants in this study had previously served a volunteer, proselyting mission for their Christian church before coming to the IEP. On their missions they had been exposed to and were likely taught principles of time management, personal responsibility, maintaining a positive mental outlook, resilience in the face of adversity, and goal setting. While at the IEP, they may have received peripheral exposure to SRL instruction by the IEP administration and teachers. Additionally, the interviews at the middle and end of the semester were prescheduled, which meant the participants knew that they would be asked questions about their SRL behaviors, habits, principles, and practices. This may have influenced the choices they made during the semester.

Future Research

More longitudinal research needs to be conducted on how learners use SRL skills over longer periods of time. It would be beneficial to follow participants as they transition from the IEP to college and continue their education. What SRL skills do they use, develop, or discard as they advance in their degree-seeking programs? It would be beneficial to understand more deeply language learners' perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about the SRL skills they are using. What SRL did they find the most useful? Were "useful" SRL skills tied to dimensions they had

strengths in? Were “useful” SRL skills tied to dimensions they had weaknesses in and thought they needed to improve? Did they find certain SRL skills “un-useful”? If so, why?

Another aspect SRL that needs more research is how less-self-regulated language learners manage the transitional nature of an IEP environment. Would less self-regulated learners display the same or different SRL principles and practices? What are the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about SRL for learners that are not as adept? Would a less self-regulated learner be as resilient as a more self-regulated learner?

As all three participants demonstrated resiliency, perseverance, and the benefits of seeking help during their semester at the IEP, future research could include how to best educate transitioning language learners about acquiring resilience. Would teachers be willing to incorporate resiliency teaching into their language lessons? Would it be best to have resiliency education be conducted by professionally trained psychologists rather than language instructors? What is the best way to foster resiliency at each stage of a language learners’ journey towards academic proficiency?

Conclusion

The original scope of this case study was to identify three highly self-regulated language learners that were newly admitted to a U.S. IEP, identify the SRL principles and practices that they brought with them to an international educational experience, and determine if their SRL principles and practices changed as they completed their first semester. The methods employed involved identifying and choosing the participants through their responses to the Self-Regulated Learning Inventory. This inventory asked students to self-report through Likert-scale responses how self-regulated they were according to a six-dimensional model of SRL, which analyzed student motive, methods of learning, time, physical environment, social environment, and

performance. Three students who reported themselves as highly self-regulated completed four semi-structured interviews which spanned the entire semester. Amanda, Timothy, and Cathy's responses provided rich qualitative data and thick description (Geertz, 1973; Ponterotto, 2006) about how they used a broad range of self-regulatory skills, including resilience, to weather the ups and downs of their first semester studying in the United States.

It is also apparent that these three participants used their SRL learning skills as adaptive, transition skills. They demonstrated a willingness to adjust, seek help when needed, and maintain motivation to reach their educational goals. Certainly, more research is needed in how the students managed this transition from a psychological standpoint, but it seems clear that SRL learning skills are important skills when managing a cross-cultural educational transition. The experiences of these students were deeply instructional and inspiring to the researchers involved in the study. It is hoped that these data will also be instructional and inspiring to researchers, administrators, teachers, and language learners.

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