

Language and Learning: Educational Challenges in a Multilingual Society

20/30 ECTS credits

A course offered by the Faculty of Education, Oslo University College. The course is taught in English.

Approved by the Faculty Board (“Avdelingsstyret”) on 8 October, 2004.

Introduction

With the language situation in Norway as a case in point and a frame of reference, this course will sensitize students to the role of languages in young people’s lives, in relation to their identity, their multicultural context, their learning process in and out of school. How does school cater for the various voices of young people? This course will take up the interrelationship of language (with culture as an inalienable aspect) and learning from a theoretical and practical point of view. Students will be able to make a comparative study based on the Norwegian setting and their own linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds.

Target Group

This course is part of the Faculty’s drive for increased internationalisation, and is designed mainly for students of languages and teacher education programmes, but students from other academic areas are also free to apply. The course can also be seen as a potential elective for Norwegian students in the second part of the new teacher education programme. To be accepted on the course, students must have completed at least one year of their undergraduate degree studies at their home institutions. Students can either take 20 credits in the course of a 3-month period of study, or they may choose an extended version of the course, 4 months, to earn 30 credits. As the working language is English, students should have a reasonable command of both spoken and written English.

Course Objectives

This course aims to

- offer students an opportunity to focus on the role of languages in the lives of young learners
- give students an introduction to recent research on dialogical approaches to learning as a basis for their work with languages in school
- give students first-hand experience of the Norwegian language situation as it is evidenced in practice schools
- offer students an insight into linguistic rights and national and international language education policies
- promote interpersonal and intercultural understanding, dialogue and cooperation
- give students an opportunity to focus on, compare and contrast an aspect of their own linguistic and educational background with the Norwegian situation
- discuss the role of English as a lingua franca.

Content

The course has four main components: language and learning as a general area of study, comparative education, the Norwegian language situation as a case in point, and the role of English as an international language. In relation to these overall areas, the study has the following elements:

Language and learning

- Dialogical approaches to learning
- Language awareness
- Majority and minority cultures and genres
- Linguistic rights

The Norwegian language situation

- Aspects of Norwegian from a contrastive point of view
- Norwegian language education policy
- Linguistic minorities in Norway
- Norwegian as a second language

Comparative education

- Students' own background and experience as a resource
- Relevant national and international language education policies
- Fieldwork based on a comparison of a relevant Norwegian topic and the student's own regional/national background

English as an international language

- English as a lingua franca
- New perspectives on English as taught in school
- Optional practical course in English as a case in point

Each topic will be dealt with in both a theoretical and a practical way.

Organisation

This is a full-time study programme for 3 (or alternatively, 4) months, with regular contact hours with the course tutors. The various topics will be taken up in a variety of ways, ranging from expert lectures and presentations, seminars, group tasks, student presentations to plenary discussions. A majority of the work on the course requires active student participation. Intensive individual fieldwork will take place towards the end of the course, lasting for 4 weeks. Students will select a topic which falls within their area of professional interest, in consultation with the course tutors, who will offer guidance in the writing process. The final product will be a written presentation of 3000-4000 words. In addition, students will give an oral presentation of their work to the tutors and fellow students.

Students will get a chance to visit practice schools and observe daily routines at the level they find most relevant for their own educational purposes. They will also be given a chance to interact with Norwegian language students, and a variety of excursions to places of cultural interest.

The course will make use of the Faculty's learning management system for the organisation and distribution of course material, and as a communication channel.

A crash course in practical English will be offered to students whose aim in choosing an international course is partly to improve their command of English.

Assessment

Applicable to Norwegian students only: Suitability

Student participation in course work is assessed in relation to suitability for the teaching profession. Assessment of suitability will be a part of the overall evaluation of the students' subject-specific, pedagogical and personal qualifications for work as a teacher. (Cf. regulations pertaining to suitability assessment in teacher education, from the Ministry of Education, 1999).

Course Requirements

The right to take the examination depends on the successful fulfilment of course requirements. Obligatory course assignments which are not completed by the agreed closing date will not be accepted, and the students lose their right to take the examination. Students are responsible themselves for keeping informed about relevant deadlines. In cases of illness or other inconveniences, students must make an appointment with their tutors for an extension, within the time limit of the course requirement. Requirements which have been handed in at the right time but which have not been accepted, will be given a new deadline. In cases where course requirements are on time but are not accepted, students are entitled to at least one and maximum two new attempts. Students who have lost their right to take the examination because of unaccepted course requirements, must get in touch with their tutors to make another appointment about completing the requirement the following term/study year.

Requirements for all students, 20/30 ECTS credits:

- Active participation in class (minimum 80% attendance)
- 4 course assignments:
 - oral presentation of the student's own linguistic and cultural background
 - oral presentation of fieldwork (20-30 minutes)
 - written paper
 - participation in at least one forum discussion

Additional requirements for the 30-credit option:

- Oral presentation and discussion in class of additional individual paper

Final Assessment

The final evaluation on this course is based on the assessment of a fieldwork report (3000-4000 words) for the 20 credits.

For the 30-credit course, the final assessment is based on the fieldwork report and an additional individual paper.

The exam texts will be assessed on a pass/fail basis by internal examiners.

Criteria

Pass	The candidate has handed in a fieldwork report of the required length which demonstrates a satisfactory level of competence and insights in relation to the
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	aims of the course. In addition, for 30 credits, the student has written a satisfactory paper, demonstrated the ability to give an oral presentation of and take part in a discussion about his/her paper in a satisfactory way.
Fail	The candidate's fieldwork report does not demonstrate a satisfactory level of competence and skills. It does not fulfill the minimum requirements in relations to the aims of the course. In addition, for 30 credits, one of the points above is not satisfied.

Literature

For 20 ECTS credits, ca. 1100 pages are required, 200 of which are elective.

For the 30 credit course, ca. 1500 pages are required, of which 300 will be chosen by the student.

The list of required literature is not complete at this early stage

- Dunbar, R.: "Regulation of a language from a cultural diversity perspective".
- Dysthe, O. (1996): "The multi-voiced classroom", in *Written Communication*, Vol 13, No. 3, p. 385-425.
- Kramsch, C. (2001): "Intercultural communication", in R. Carter and D. Nunan (eds) *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Koritzinsky, T. (2001): "Educational Reforms in Norway in the 1990s: Civic Pluralism and National Unity in Decision-Making and Curriculum Contents".
- Lie, S. and A. H. Wold, (1991): "Linguistic minority children's comprehension of language in the classroom and teachers' adjustment to their pupils' performance: A Norwegian case study", in *Journal of Multilingual and Multi-cultural Development*, 12, 363-381.
- Miramontes, O. B., A. Nadeau, and N. L. Commins (1997): "Restructuring Schools For Linguistic Diversity".
- Nystrand, M., with A. Gamoran, R. Kachur, and C. Prendergast (1997): *Opening Dialogue: Understanding the Dynamics of Language and Learning in the English Classroom*.

Various online resources:

English as a lingua franca:

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/pron/global_english.shtml

<http://www.tesol-spain.org/newsletter/jenkins.pdf>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/GWeekly/Story/0,3939,475315,00.html>

Norwegian language situation:

<http://www.sprakrad.no/trudgill.htm>

<http://www.aasentunet.no/?previewpage=go%2Ecfm%3Fid%3D3085%26type%3Dtext%2526lang%3Den%26path%3D>

<http://odin.dep.no/kkd/engelsk/international/043041-220003/index-dok000-b-n-a.html>

http://www.antirasistisk-senter.no/nyheter/european_commission.html

Kramsch, C. and S.L. Thorne (2001), "Foreign language learning as global communicative practice":

<http://language.la.psu.edu/~thorne/KramschThorne.html>

Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Policy_development_activities/Guide/LongEGuide.pdf?L=E

The list of Literature may be subject to revision upon approval of Head of Studies.