



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

**MASTER OF ARTS
LALS 515 LANGUAGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

**TRIMESTER 2 2012
16 July to 17 November 2012**

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 23 July to 14 October 2012

Mid-trimester break: 27 August to 9 September 2012

Study week: 22–26 October 2012

Examination/Assessment Period: 26 October to 17 November 2012

Withdrawal dates

The date for withdrawal from second trimester courses without a fee penalty is 27 July 2012.

Further information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Lecturer

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Class Representative

There is a class representative for the MA programme. Details are posted on Blackboard.

Class times and locations

Mondays 4-6 p.m., 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 101

Teaching learning summary

For students enrolled in the on-campus course, there will be a weekly seminar-style meeting in 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 101 on Mondays 4-6p.m. For students enrolled in the distance programme, there will be weekly Discussion Boards on *Blackboard*. These Discussion Boards are equivalent and parallel to the weekly on-campus meetings. See the Course Schedule below for further details and feel free to contact the lecturer directly by e-mail for individual meetings as needed. Skype is also available for distance students for individual consultation.

Course access

The course is run in two modes: on campus and by distance. For all students, the weekly readings and notes are available through Blackboard on <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system. For distance students, Blackboard is also the medium by which group discussions are held. Further information about Blackboard is available under Frequently Asked Questions, under the Study tab of the School website.

Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

Course prescription

The aim of this course is to familiarise students with the processes, issues and options of language course design and evaluation.

Course content and schedule

The course offers a critical study of the practice and principles of developing curricula for second language learning. It treats curriculum development as a complex problem-solving process in specific educational contexts.

The course will be organised as opportunities for analysis and interpretation through reading, discussion and assignment work. The reading in the course is based on a number of set readings for each topic. These readings are available on-line as pdf files. You are expected to read beyond the set texts using the range of resources available through the University library or elsewhere.

The following topics will be covered.

1 Introduction

1.1 Curriculum as problem-solving

Focus: Exploring examples of curriculum development as problems of individual learning and of group teaching, including examples from your own teaching and learning experience. The notion of a 'transformation' as a way of describing the problem to be solved and distinguishing the goals or ends, that we want to aim at from the means to achieve those ends.

2 Ends and means of learning

2.1 Setting learning goals to motivate and guide.

Focus: ENDS: How learning goals can represent complex communicative performance and motivate learners towards achieving that performance.

2.2 Identifying learning opportunities

Focus: MEANS: Identifying the general learning conditions under which complex communicative performance is slowly developed and thus goals achieved. Expressing those learning conditions as learning opportunities.

3 The social element of the problem

3.1 The role of the teacher and the learner

Focus: A curriculum can be seen as a social organisation of learning events to achieve certain outcomes. The way in which the ends and the means of the curriculum are managed and played out will be influenced by the beliefs and the motivations of the actors in different cultural contexts.

4 Managing learning and teaching

4.1 Self-management by learners

Focus: The extent to which learners can be 'trained' within the language curriculum to manage their own learning. In particular we shall look at the notion of strategy training to deal with specific problems that arise in language learning and how strategic behaviour is built into the curriculum.

4.2 Evaluating curricula

Focus: Evaluation is an integral part of problem solving. A curriculum 'solution' to achieving the desired transformation is always a hypothesis that needs evaluating for effectiveness. How do you evaluate whether or not the transformation has been achieved, whether something unexpected was achieved and what has contributed to whatever achievement has occurred.

4.3 Fostering learner autonomy

Focus: Examining the broader meaning and implications of the notion of learner autonomy and how the notion can have an impact on many different aspects of the curriculum. (This links to the specialised MA course on learner autonomy.)

4.4 Reprise – curriculum as problem-solving

Focus: Returning to an overview of the curriculum problem solving process, drawing on the notions of transformation, goal, learning opportunity, social roles, evaluation.

The scheduled input and interaction on the course will occur in the first 8 class meetings or Blackboard discussions. The remaining period will be available for individual consultation in the lead-up to the second assignment.

1 INTRODUCTION		
23 July	1.1 Curriculum design as problem-solving	<i>Case study:</i> Coleman 1988, 1992 Allwright 2003 <i>See also:</i> Tajino and Smith 2005)

2 ENDS AND MEANS OF LEARNING		
30 July	2.1 Setting learning goals to motivate and guide	Locke and Latham 2002 Little 2006 Cumming 1986 <i>See also:</i> Dörnyei 2003, Kornos et al 2011.
6 August	2.2 Identifying learning opportunities	Crabbe 2007 Swain 2000 <i>See also:</i> Crabbe 2003, Allwright 2005.
3 THE SOCIAL ELEMENT OF THE PROBLEM		
13 August	3.1 The role of the learner and the teacher.	Guilloteaux and Dörnyei 2008 Rowland 2011 <i>See also:</i> Benesch 1996; Haneda 2006; Tsui 2007
4 MANAGING LEARNING AND TEACHING		
20 August 24 August: Task 1 due	4.1 Self-management by learners	Rose 2012 Lam 2009 Huang 2006 <i>See also:</i> Rees-Miller 1993
27 August	University mid-term break	
3 September	University mid-term break	
10 September 12 Sept: Task 2 proposal due	4.2 Evaluating curricula	Beretta 1990 (+Prabhu's reply) Kiely 2002 Elder 2009
17 September	4.3 Fostering autonomy in language learning	Gremmo and Riley 1995 Littlewood 1999 Chu 2007
24 September 10 Oct: Task2 due	4.4 Reprise – curriculum as problem solving	Discussion of problems selected for assignments

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide opportunities for participants to develop the skills and knowledge to manage the complexity and effectiveness of organised language learning in specific contexts. The specific learning objectives for this course are listed below and are intended to encourage critical thinking, good communication and addressing real world problems in an enquiry-focused way. The course will provide standard opportunities including readings, guided discussion, feedback on assignments, or on specific questions you raise. You are expected to create and manage further opportunities, such as those outlined below.

Learning objective <i>What you should be able to do</i>	Learning opportunities <i>What you can do to achieve the objective</i>	Assessment <i>How you demonstrate you have achieved the objective</i>
<p>1 Critically assess current and historical claims about language curriculum development in context and indicate types of evidence to support the claims. (All topics)</p> <p>2 Justify a set of learning goals and linked learning opportunities for specific learners. (Topics 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to how research questions are formulated in published research. • Read relevant published material and course notes on trends in language teaching. • Become practised at identifying claims in paragraphs from articles and establish whether they are empirical or evaluative in nature. • Relate your own experience to various trends in language teaching. • Explore ways of establishing evidence for the claims. • Clarify information by: making verbal or diagrammatic summaries, raising questions in class or on Blackboard • Seek feedback from peers and tutors on your understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read relevant published material and course notes about needs analysis, motivation and goal theory. • Practise describing the learning needs of individual learners and how goals might capture these needs. • Practise analysis of goals including their specificity, relevance and measurement. 	<p>This is a general objective and will be assessed in Tasks 1 and 2</p> <p>Task 1 (40%)</p>
<p>3 Fully represent a curriculum problem in a specific context, identify a potential solution together with a procedure for evaluating the process and outcome of the solution (all topics).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read relevant published case studies of curriculum design. • Keep a notebook of reflections on your own curriculum, identifying important variables influencing the curriculum in action • Work with a framework of learning outcomes and opportunities to analyse case studies of curricular problems to identify all the dimensions and suggest possible solutions. • Read relevant case studies of the evaluation of language curricula. • Practise identifying answers to wh- questions in relation to specific instances of curriculum, including ones from your own experience. 	<p>Task 2 (60%)</p>

Expected workload

The total workload on this 15-point course is assumed to be 150 hours including course meetings or time logged on to Blackboard. This equates to an average of 10-11 hours a week over 14 weeks.

Readings

There is no set text for this course but there are books on curriculum development that are a useful reference (see under References in *Blackboard*). There are preliminary notes for each topic and a list of set readings (see the attached schedule). Both the notes and the readings will be available in pdf format on the Blackboard site under Course Notes and Course Readings.

You should be proactive in exploring further readings yourself from the beginning of the course. *Language Teaching* is an abstracting journal that is an invaluable guide to the literature. You should also become familiar with the ERIC and LLBA databases available on-line through the library at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/research/databases/index.aspx>. There are useful survey articles in each issue of *Language Teaching*. Other journals that have articles relating to language learning and teaching include *TESOL Quarterly*, *Language Teaching Research*, *Applied Linguistics*. Note that you generally need to be logged on through the Student Portal in order to have free access to articles in e-journals at the VUW library.

Assessment requirements

This course is internally assessed; there is no final examination. The assessment tasks for this course are outlined below. If you have a problem with meeting the deadlines, please talk with the course lecturer as early as possible.

In all assignments, the assessment will recognise core qualities of critical thinking (how would you know a claim was valid?) and communication (how well do you communicate your arguments and supporting information?) and significance (how would you demonstrate that your ideas will have an impact on the context within which you are or might be working?)

The two assignments are on the next two pages.

Assessment Task 1 (40% of final grade)

Due date 24 August 2012
Length 2000 words

This assignment asks you to engage in initial problem-solving by setting language learning goals for your own learning. The outcome of the task is a report which is graded. You should pay particular attention to the quality of your discussion and the support for your arguments from published literature on goals.

The problem solving task:

1. Choose a personal experience of second language learning, preferably a real experience, you have had, or are currently having. If this experience is lacking, it can also be learning that might happen in the future. Think about the context in which you will be learning.
2. Make introspective notes about your language learning covering themes such as: motivation, communicative needs, time available, learning style, past experience, expectations of success, difficulties that you might encounter. You should make these notes over a period of several days in order to give yourself a chance to reflect in depth.
3. Write three learning goals that would be appropriate for your learning task. Justify those goals with reference to the reflective data you have collected about your learning and with reference to the literature on goals. How specific should the goals be. Would they be motivating? Are they at the right level of specificity? Would it be possible to measure your progress towards them?
4. Decide in general terms what learning opportunities are needed in order to achieve each goal.
5. Identify the claims or assumptions that you have made in your decision making and decide what evidence you would look for to evaluate those claims or assumptions.

The report (to be handed in for assessment):

Summarise the outcome of the task above by writing a report organised under the following headings:

1. The context of learning (brief)
2. A summary of your introspective data (clear and comprehensive).
3. The goals (a short list)
4. Discussion of the goals (a clear and well developed justification for the choice of goals with reference to literature on goals).
5. Indicative learning opportunities (a brief statement of which learning opportunities would be appropriate to achieve the goals).
6. A summary of the claims or assumptions you have made and how they would be tested (a critical discussion).

Assessment Task 2 (60% of final grade)

Due date 10 October 2012
Length 2500 words

The topic for this larger assignment will be established by negotiation with individual course members. An informal topic proposal of about 150 words is due on 12 September 2012. The proposal is not assessed – it is simply a way for you to get feedback and approval for the topic. In choosing a topic, you must avoid replication of previous assignment material from this or other courses. It is useful to focus on an area of language curriculum development that relates to your past or intended experience.

You should think of this assignment as a ‘real-world’ curriculum problem for which you are seeking a solution. A good way to think of this is to focus on a transformation you would like to bring about. For example, you might decide to transform the quality of teaching in an institution to a high and consistent standard. This is the sort of problem that a Director of Studies has. You would discuss the context of the problem (facts about the teachers, the students, the time available for learning and teaching, attitudes etc.) and then propose an approach to addressing the problem, of bringing about the transformation. You might, for instance, take the view that a set of opportunity standards would be one useful strategy amongst others. You would discuss that approach with regard to the specific context, pointing out potential advantages and disadvantages. It would be useful to illustrate your approach (some examples of opportunity standards in this case) and describe a procedure for evaluating whether or not that strategy had addressed the problem. Thus your assignment would typically consist of a report organised broadly as:

- the problem (or the ‘transformation’ to be achieved) and the context
- the proposed strategy with some specific examples
- a plan for evaluating whether or not the strategy has in fact addressed the problem.

Each section would refer to published literature to support your discussion and decisions, as appropriate.

Submitting Assignments

Whether you are studying at a distance or on-campus, you should submit your assignments through the Blackboard (BB) system. Instructions on how to use the BB assignment tool are on the BB website. As backup only, assignments may be submitted as e-mail attachments to lals-ma@vuw.ac.nz. A standard cover sheet is provided at the end of this course outline that includes a helpful checklist.

Penalties

In line with school policy, handing in your assignments after the due date without prior arrangement, may affect your grade. The length requirement for each assignment should be followed. If an assignment exceeds the word limit by a substantial amount, this may also affect the grade.

Mandatory course requirements

The mandatory course requirements in this course are to participate in all of the class meetings or blackboard discussions (by making at least one substantive contribution to the discussion) and to complete all set work.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>. Student work may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Where to find more detailed information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.