

Gordon Academic College of Education – Reply to the Recommendations of the International Committee for Quality Assurance for the English Department

Dear committee members,

Thank you for your insightful comments.

Following your evaluation report, Gordon College and especially the English Department have gathered and reexamined the issues mentioned below. Below are our conclusions and the steps we have taken to follow your recommendations.

We believe these will further enhance our ability to educate and train future English teachers.

Committee Recommendation	<u>Steps toward implementation (including time table)</u>
Overall Curriculum	
<p>1. The program should strongly encourage students to take a culture course for a culture other than their own in addition to a course focused on their own culture.</p>	<p>Gordon Academic College has a diverse Multiculturalism center, headed by Dr. Rhonda Sofer. The center promotes several initiatives every year across the departments.</p> <p>In the English department, 4th year students are required to take a seminar course <i>Education in Multicultural Society</i>. The course presents the students with educational situations which emerge from the multicultural nature of Israeli society, for example, Arab students in Jewish schools, new immigrants' assimilation processes into the veteran Israeli society, and women's status within the Druze society.</p> <p>Also, we are considering adding a segment on other religions in the religion and culture courses, so students are exposed to all religions and cultures. (October 2019)</p>

Individual Courses	
<p>2. The syllabi of courses should be coordinated among teachers to make sure that there is no unnecessary overlap of subject-matter.</p>	<p>Following the report, we reviewed our syllabi and believe there is no unnecessary overlap of subject matter. The following courses do not overlap: <i>Introduction to Teaching and Didactics of EFL</i>, <i>Didactics in Teaching English in the Elementary school</i> (previously called <i>Didactics in Teaching English</i>), <i>Didactics in Teaching English in Junior High School</i> (previously called <i>Teaching Heterogeneous Classes</i>), <i>Long Term Planning</i>, and <i>Planning and Teaching a Content Based Unit</i> (previously called <i>Planning a Teaching Unit</i>).</p> <p>The Israeli National Curriculum (NC) for Teaching English as a Foreign Language is a substantial document which includes a wealth of terminology and significant information. It covers teaching English from the pre-foundational level to proficiency level, stipulating the standards, benchmarks, domains and progression criteria.</p> <p>Since we believe that our students should be familiar with the NC, we include learning the NC in our syllabi. Though it may seem as needless repetition of the same topic each year, the contrary is true. Each year we introduce and use different sections of the document and expect different levels of performance from our students.</p> <p>In the first year, students are exposed to the NC in the second semester. They learn about the structure of the document and its rationale. The students focus on the Pre-Foundation and Foundation level, recognizing and comprehending its organization</p>

and key concepts of domains and benchmarks. At the end of the year students are expected to be able to match their given lesson objectives to their respective section in the curriculum.

In the second year, students are expected to apply their knowledge of the Pre Foundation and Foundation level of the NC to their lesson plans in Elementary school. They analyze the different teaching materials and instructions in light of the NC. At the end of the year students are expected to create a mini unit which represents their ability to use the NC as Elementary teachers.

In the third year, students become familiar with the benchmarks and standards for the Intermediate and Proficiency levels in all four domains, while practicing teaching in JHS. By the end of the year, the students should be able to create lessons for the higher levels, specifying their connection to the NC, and evaluate them.

Moreover, throughout the third year, students learn how to plan at the unit level, creating 4-6 lesson plans where the sum is bigger than its parts. This is taught in the course *Planning and Teaching a Content Based Unit*.

In the 4th year, this ability is extended to whole year planning. Using back planning, students are asked to plan units which utilize the textbooks effectively, while taking into account the bigger goals presented in the NC. This is taught in the course *Long term Planning*.

	<p>To sum up, we believe that this gradual and spiral work with the NC helps our students become well familiar with its principles and terminology. (exists)</p>
<p>3. Care should be taken to ensure that the title of each course accurately represents its content.</p>	<p>In preparation for the review process, we have become aware of this and have already made the following changes:</p> <p><i>Didactics in Teaching English</i> is now named <i>Didactics in Teaching English in the Elementary School</i>.</p> <p><i>Teaching Heterogeneous Classes</i> is now named <i>Didactics in Teaching English in Junior High School</i>.</p> <p><i>Planning a Teaching Unit</i>, is now named <i>Planning and Teaching a Content Based Unit</i>". (October 2018)</p>
<p>4. The number of hours and choice of topics associated with teaching reading to LD children should be reconsidered in light of minimal coverage of other essential topics, e.g., oral proficiency.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that in our syllabi the number of hours and choice of topics gives the impression that the emphasis of the courses in the LD track seems to cover exclusively reading and writing. However, all three courses which focus on the reading of LD students actually address oral proficiency as a key element in both reading instruction and language proficiency. In addition, in light of the committee's comments, we fine-tuned these points making them a stronger part of the courses' syllabi.</p>

In the course *Remedial Teaching*, the Hickey method is taught throughout the first semester. One of the primary components of the Hickey method is development of oral proficiency skills. Each lesson begins with speaking and listening practice which is recycled from lesson to lesson before adding additional oral vocabulary items. Throughout the program the learners gain proficiency by actively participating in this success-oriented, systematic method. Students participating in this course learn how to execute the Hickey method for individual, small group and whole class teaching. They are trained on how to efficiently develop oral proficiency in elementary school learners. One adaptation in the syllabus is in lesson three where students specifically focus on how to exploit the Hickey method for developing oral proficiency in elementary LD school learners (highlighted in yellow).

In the second semester of the *Remedial Teaching* course, the first five lessons are devoted to the examination of elementary school text books, to raise the awareness of the students as to what the text books cover. Among the components examined are listening and speaking activities. Following the analysis, the students present their findings in class and are taught what they need to do as teachers to compensate for what is lacking in the textbooks. Activities for developing oral proficiency are discussed (highlighted in yellow).

In addition, the second semester includes teaching of the Multi-Sensory Differential Teaching

method (MDT). The MDT method is based on teaching in small groups differentially, in a mainstream classroom, while the other learners work independently in multisensory corners, in small groups as well. These corners include: shop, stage show, puppet show, communication, listening, writing, reading, video, art and games. ALL of these corner activities promote development of oral proficiency since the learners must interact in English amongst themselves in order to complete the tasks. The students participating in this course learn how to create multisensory activities, actually create them and then participate in a simulation of using these activities in a mainstream classroom (highlighted in yellow).

In the course, listening comprehension skills are assessed with the tool Understanding Instructions, specifically vocabulary items that relate to instructions. The students participating in this course learn how to assess and recommend effective practices for development of listening comprehension of oral instructions (second semester lesson 1, highlighted in yellow). The same is done for oral expression skills in lesson 5 (highlighted in yellow). In lessons 7-9 listening comprehension skills are used to assess vocabulary, syntax, and morphology. The students participating in this course learn how to recommend practices which enhance LD learners' ability to utilize their vocabulary, syntax and

	<p>morphology knowledge in listening comprehension (highlighted in yellow).</p> <p>In the third- year workshop of <i>Didactic Assessment</i> the above mentioned oral elements are practiced with LD children from neighboring schools.</p>
<p>Literature</p>	
<p>5. Mandatory literature courses should address issues of different approaches to interpretation of literary texts, genre, cultural and historical context, and the multicultural dimension of Anglophone literatures (including majority and minority perspectives expressed in literary texts and methods of analysis).</p>	<p>In relation to addressing issues of different approaches to the interpretation of literary texts, genres, etc., there is currently no specific course that explicitly teaches these topics. However, all mandatory literature courses address the theoretical aspects pertaining to the different critical approaches to studying literature including new criticism, feminism, psychoanalysis, post-colonialism, modernism, post-modernism, deconstruction, and more (see syllabi in appendices. Literary theories are marked in yellow).</p> <p>In addition, the multicultural dimension is emphasized in several courses, such as <i>20th Century Literature</i> and <i>The Construction of Identity in Literature</i>. However, attempts will be made to expand coverage of this issue in the courses (see syllabi in appendices. Multi-cultural elements are marked in green).</p> <p>We recognize that there is room for additional focus in the various courses on adding more specific and directed instruction and application of the various critical approaches. Moreover, the</p>

inclusion of majority and minority perspectives in literary texts and methods of analysis will be addressed in future lesson plans.

With regard to the lack of historical survey courses, the course 20th Century Literature is currently taught to 3rd year students. However, a 19th Century survey course will be added in the upcoming 2019 academic year, and we will also consider additional survey courses in the future.

In terms of the number of texts and works included in the courses, we agree that additional reading material should be required, and plan to adapt the syllabi accordingly.

Work on the syllabi will be carried out during the summer 2018 and adapted syllabi will be reading for the October 2018 academic year.
(October 2018)

6. Students should be required to read more literary works in the literature courses.

We take note and will add reading materials to our courses. These will appear in our new syllabi.
(October 2018)

<p>Proficiency Assessment</p>	
<p>7. There should be general yearly proficiency assessments in addition to assessments within courses.</p>	<p>We were already in the process of devising such tests. However, beyond the cooperation of the department staff, these require a change in program regulations which demands various college level approvals and a trial period. Therefore, we expect the process to take approximately two more years. (October 2020)</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	
<p>8. Faculty should incorporate references to the journals in courses and students required to read relevant articles.</p>	<p>Following your visit to the college, the head of the department has started addressing this point in the Winter staff meeting and in individual meetings. The recommended changes will be made in the various syllabi. (October 2018)</p>
<p>9. Work with city officials to make all facilities in the College are accessible should be continued.</p>	<p>The college administration is well aware of the need to make sure all facilities are accessible for students.</p> <p>During the summer of 2017, the existing elevator shaft was renovated and expanded allowing for a larger and more accessible elevator service for college staff, students, personnel and guests.</p> <p>In addition, further renovations are being made in the present compound in order to improve passageways and lavatories that until now were not suitable for persons with disabilities. Various devices and equipment to facilitate the visually and hearing impaired have been installed throughout</p>

	<p>the college complex (attached are invoice forms for purchases). (exist and October 2018)</p> <p>The college has submitted plans with the Haifa Municipality for an additional floor to the present compound and an additional elevator (attached are the building plans). (October 2019)</p>
<p>10. The library should subscribe or renew subscriptions to key journals for English teachers that include full-text access. These include <i>ELT Journal</i>, <i>TESOL Journal</i>, <i>Language Teaching</i>, <i>English Teaching Professional</i>, <i>The English Teaching Forum</i>.</p>	<p>Since the visit of the CHE Committee, the library has completed the installation of a new library management system <i>Alma</i> and a new user discovery tool <i>Primo</i>. This change allows access to all the library's resources.</p> <p>Access to full electronic texts of the following journals is available:</p> <p>TESOL Journal</p> <p>Language Teaching</p> <p>English Teaching Professional</p> <p>English Teaching Forum</p> <p>A subscription to the Journal TESOL Quarterly has been purchased with access to full electronic texts (see invoice attached).</p> <p>ELT Journal – subscription under renewal process (see attached)</p> <p>In addition to these journals the library purchased subscription to the following journals at lecturers' request:</p> <p>Applied Linguistics</p> <p>MLA- Modern Language Association</p>

	The library has sent a letter to all faculty members with the list of relevant journals and new books with instructions on how to access them.
11. Faculty should be encouraged to use the journals for their own research	The faculty members received a letter from the library informing them of all the pre-existing and newly purchased resources. This was mentioned following the committee's visit and will be discussed in the upcoming department staff meeting. (Existing and Ongoing)

y.



Appendices

The appendix includes documents and syllabi mentioned in the table above in the following order:

Recommendation 4a: Remedial Teaching syllabus with yellow highlights

Recommendation 4b: Didactic Assessment syllabus with yellow highlights

Recommendation 5: Literature syllabi with yellow and green highlights.

Recommendation 9a: Invoices forms for purchases

Recommendation 9b: Building Plans

Recommendation 10a: TESOL Package Invoice

Recommendation 10b: Subscription under renewal