

An intensive course prepares students for a subsequent one-week PhD course and train them in empirical data collection.

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Subject, course/other context, study level and number of students: Sociolinguistics, elective course at Master's level in connection with a one-week PhD school, 15 ECTS points, maximum 10 students.

The motivation behind the activity: To introduce the students to sociolinguistics and prepare them for a one-week PhD course in sociolinguistics, at which they met PhD students from all over the world and leading researchers within the field of sociolinguistics.

Key learning outcomes, focussing on the way in which the activity is research-based: To provide the students with a basic introduction to sociolinguistics and ongoing sociolinguistic projects, train them in collecting empirical data and analyse this data using sociolinguistic methodologies. Furthermore, to prepare them for a PhD school in sociolinguistics.

Description of the activity: Because this is a course module at Master's level earning students 15 ECTS points, the official length is 14 three-hour sessions. However, the course differs from other courses by consisting of four sessions in February, a one-week intensive PhD school, as well as two subsequent exam workshops. At the four sessions in February, on the basis of current projects, the students were trained in analysing both oral and written Danish using different sociolinguistic methodologies. Furthermore, they were introduced to papers authored by the five sociolinguistics researchers that took part in the PhD school. A review of the texts and an introduction to key theories and methodologies ensured that the students were prepared for their subsequent participation in the PhD school. The sessions in February moreover prepared them for the exam, and introduced them to data collecting and analysis. In addition to the five researchers, 17 PhD fellows took part in the PhD school. This week was organised with presentations by the PhD students in the morning and presentations and exercises by the five established researchers in the afternoon. In addition to hearing the presentations, the students participated actively in the group work that was planned for the afternoon programme.

Interplay between teaching and exam: The students were required to either take an oral exam based on a synopsis, or prepare a written assignment at home on a free topic. Because of the rather packed programme, which meant the students had to read 14 weeks of curriculum in a single month, one of the greatest challenges was how to plan the course so that there would be a clear relationship between what was taught during sessions and what was expected of the students at the exam. We tried to address this challenge in different ways. At the first sessions, the students were made aware of the exam requirements for the two exam formats, and they were introduced to a model for how to write a good paper (*Den gode opgave*, Rienecker et al. 2012: 31). At the next sessions, we showed the students examples of student assignments and papers within the field of sociolinguistics, and we compared some of

the papers that we had read to the model for how to write a good paper. Furthermore, prior to each session, the students were asked to solve one or two assignments on the basis of data from ongoing research projects. The objective was partly to train the students' analytical skills as well as their oral presentation skills during class, and partly to help them make a qualified choice of data for the exam. Through exercises, the students gained insight into the varied data types that can form the basis for sociolinguistics studies. To ensure the best possible interaction between teaching and exam, two optional exam workshops were offered after the PhD school but before the exams. At the first workshop, the students presented their ideas and received feedback from co-students and teachers based on the model mentioned above for how to write a good paper (*Den gode opgave*, Rienecker et al. 2012: 31) At the second workshop, the students presented their ongoing studies in class, and, again, received feedback based on the above model. After this, the students had the opportunity to receive individual guidance from one of the teachers.

The outcome of the activity for the students: The students were given a unique opportunity to gain insight into national and international sociolinguistic research. They had opportunity to meet both researchers and PhDs within the field, as well as to work on developing research questions. The course helped give them an idea of what being a PhD fellow and a researcher entails.

The outcome for research: Students contributed with constructive input to the PhD school; they asked relevant questions to the PhD students and took active part in the discussions. As teachers, we found that the course appealed to the very dedicated students, who all chipped in with great efforts, and whom it was a real joy to teach. This was evident not only during class sessions and workshops, but also in the form of really good exam papers. The students contributed original research, which even introduced us teachers to new subject areas. Courses such as this one could moreover be used strategically to recruit new researchers.

Strengths and weaknesses of the activity: One of the strengths of this course could also have been a weakness. The intensive first part of the course only worked so well because the students were prepared to invest a lot of time and effort. The course therefore appealed to the very ambitious and dedicated students. The intensive nature of the course meant that, during February, in addition to reading a relatively large curriculum (corresponding to a 14-week-course curriculum), the students had to gain an overview of the history of sociolinguistics and test their own analytical skills in this field. The less dedicated student would not have achieved the same outcome from the sessions in February, and would subsequently have had difficulties following the presentations and teaching in the PhD school.

As a teacher, it was both inspiring and challenging having to give students a very concentrated introduction to sociolinguistics over a period of only four weeks. It was a challenge to plan the course so that there was a connection between the four introductory sessions and the subsequent PhD school, and it was a challenge to ensure alignment between the teaching format and the exam formats. Both challenges placed heavy demands on how the February sessions were taught.

Keywords: Research-based teaching, PhD school, sociolinguistics.