Course descriptor: Language and Communication
Course code: EDUA11240

Course coordinator: Rachel O’Neill
SCOTCAT rating: 20 Scottish Master Credits

Short description of course
This course will introduce participants to key issues in relation to language learning and deafness. It should enable participants to take an informed view of what remains a controversial area within Deaf Education. The course will focus on the deaf individual’s linguistic potential and the practical ways of enabling linguistic access. The course will examine the nature and acquisition of both signed and spoken language and their use within Deaf Education, with a focus on early years.

Prior learning
Courses in the programme can be taken in any order

Learning outcomes
At the end of this course, course members should be able to demonstrate:

1. An awareness of the linguistic potential of deaf pupils and the possible barriers to linguistic access.
2. An understanding of key differences and similarities between spoken and signed language.
3. An understanding of the processes of signed and spoken language acquisition.
4. An informed understanding of the different approaches to language within Deaf Education, including monolingual and bi/multi-lingual approaches.
5. A critical awareness of different types of linguistic assessment; the ability to interpret the results of such assessments and an ability to carry out some forms of assessment and to make use of linguistic observations.
6. A familiarity with approaches, techniques and resources, including technological resources, which can support the deaf child’s language use.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies
Class Contact
20 hours on campus
This will involve lectures, seminars and workshops, which will include presentations from visiting presenters, including d/Deaf presenters and a parent. There will also be short in-class presentations on key texts and/or specific subjects.

Self-directed Study (176 hours)
- Academic reading, starting with the key recommended readings.
- Interactions with d/Deaf people to learn about their experience of language learning; their use of language; their views on language approaches within deaf education;
Discussions with parents of younger and older deaf individuals about their own language usage with their children and whether they would like to see other approaches exploited;

Discussions with fellow professionals, particularly including other teachers, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists regarding language issues;

Critical exploration of internet resources in relation to language and deafness.

Indicative content

- Aspects of the structure of spoken and signed language, more specifically of English and British Sign Language (BSL);
- Stages in the development of signed and spoken language; theoretical explanations of language acquisition; the role of adult-child interaction;
- Different approaches to language within deaf education, including monolingual and bilingual approaches;
- Types of linguistic assessment, such as STASS and the City University Test of BSL Comprehension;
- Techniques and resources to support the deaf child’s language use and the development of spoken and signed language including apps and digital resources.

Assessment tasks and contexts

Course members will produce one assignment of 4,000 words which will be a case study of a deaf pupil or student. The case study will make use of a range of observational and assessment evidence, some of which ideally should be collected or administered by the teacher. The evidence is also likely to include reports from speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, classroom teachers and/or teachers of deaf children. Each account will evaluate individual’s current level of communicative competence (including both comprehension and production) and suggest actions which may be taken to support future linguistic development. The written assignments will be supported by appropriate reference to theoretical perspectives and principles identified in research and literature. Course members are expected to access research and literature beyond the given course reading pack in relation to their chosen assessment topic/focus.

Students who are not currently teaching deaf students, e.g. taking the course as an option on the MSc Inclusive and Special Education programme, have an alternative assignment investigating early years interventions with deaf children in a particular country.

Assessment performance criteria

Course members will comply with the Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme criteria. In addition, course, members will demonstrate:

- A general understanding of current theories and descriptions of language and language acquisition;
- An awareness of the barriers to language acquisition which may be faced by deaf learners;
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- A critical awareness of the different types of linguistic assessments which may be used with deaf children and an ability to interpret the outcomes of such assessments;
- A familiarity with approaches, methods and techniques which may be used to support language development;

Indicative reading
All these readings are available via Learn or the University Library in electronic form.

All the readings will be on the Learn course site. The symbol § means you need to find the article through the University Library website in an ejournal or ebook. There are additional readings available on the Learn site for your interest and to help you start to explore this large area of study.


BATOD / Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Position Paper (2007) (LO6)


Powers, S., Gregory, S., Lynas, W., McCracken, W., Watson, L., Boulton,


Smith, S. & Cormier, K. (2014) In or out?: Spatial scale and enactment in narratives of native and nonnative signing deaf children acquiring British Sign *Sign Language Studies*, 14 (3) 275 – 301. (LO3) [go in via ProQuest not Project Muse].


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Examples of Key Journals
American Annals of the Deaf
Bilingualism
Deafness and Education International
Early Child Development and Care
Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education
Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research
Language Acquisition
Language and Education
Language and Speech
Language, speech and hearing services in schools
Psychology of language and communication
Sign Language and Linguistics
Sign Language Studies

All journals are available electronically through the UoE library website.