

Innovations in English Language Teacher Education: Preparing Student Teachers for the Multilingual Reality of Contemporary Classrooms

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The increasingly diverse makeup of contemporary societies, and subsequently of classroom settings, necessitates a paradigm shift in teaching. This shift encourages the use of the students' entire linguistic repertoires as tools that can contribute to optimizing the learning experience. For traditionally monolingual classrooms, however, this shift has proved particularly challenging. The following practice-based account reports on the innovations to an English language teacher curriculum that have recently been implemented at a large public university in Norway. The objective was to ensure that student teachers embrace multilingualism as an asset and that they possess the knowledge and skills needed to implement multilingual teaching practices.

1. Context and issue

For a considerable number of years, an English-only approach has been perceived as the ideal classroom environment for learners of English as an additional language (EAL) (Hall & Cook, 2012; Shin et al., 2020). Teachers following this approach strive to plan and conduct lessons that prompt their students to maximize their use of the target language, while teachers themselves aim to teach grammar and vocabulary, answer questions, and provide instructions through the medium of English. This monolingual approach to teaching often stems from the assumption but also the classroom reality that teachers and students share the same majority language. To ensure comprehension, comparisons and references between the target and the majority language are used to clarify or elaborate on complex grammar structures or challenging lexis (Hall & Cook, 2012; Shin et al., 2022).

In the recent decades, the changing demographics and composition of students have caused EAL classrooms to become more diverse in nature (Lorenz et al., 2021). Nowadays, EAL classrooms are composed of students who speak different home languages and have highly varied linguistic repertoires. For this reason, multilingualism, understood as the use of more than one language by an individual (Franceschini, 2011), is gradually becoming embraced as the new linguistic dispensation in the globalized world (Aronin & Singleton, 2012; Krulatz et al., 2023; May, 2019). EAL learners are considered emergent multilingual speakers that make recourse to their entire linguistic repertoires, which can optimize the process of learning the target language (Cummins, 2017). In other words, students are encouraged to make use of their linguistic resources and EAL teachers are expected to embrace the increasingly multilingual nature of their classrooms. There are many benefits associated with using EAL learners' other known languages for the purpose of instruction. Learners' cultural and linguistic resources are legitimized as valuable bridges to new learning, and instructional practices such as translation and translanguaging are encouraged (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). The notion of an ideal, monolingual native speaker has been replaced with

that of a competent multilingual user, and strict language separation has been abandoned in favor of softer language boundaries (Blommaert, 2010; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Yet, despite a growing body of research on multilingualism and multilingual education, EAL national policies and classroom practices often continue to be monolingual and characterized by strict separation of languages (Cheshire, 2002). In fact, some educational approaches perceive immigrant and minority language students' multilingualism and multiculturalism to be an obstacle to teaching and learning. Consequently, they implement policies and practices that are exclusionary and marginalizing (Barakos & Selleck, 2019). Elaborating on this idea, Gorter and Cenoz (2011) stated that "[e]ven when multilingualism is promoted, there can be an underlying monolingual view of multilingualism that focuses on only one language at a time, and in most cases, there is an implicit preference for a national language" (p. 444).

For traditionally monolingual environments, such as the case in Norway, however, adapting to the current multilingual realities has been a challenge as multilingualism remains a relatively novice concept in education. The changing demographics and composition of students have altered Norwegian EAL classroom settings from traditionally homogenous to more diverse in nature (Haukås et al., 2021; Lorenz et al., 2021). According to the latest reports, Norwegian classrooms have become linguistically diverse with more than 200 languages and about 18.9% of the students using a language other than Norwegian at home (Språkrådet, 2018; Statistics Norway, 2022). The updated Norwegian curriculum for the subject of English in primary education (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020) states that the students' available linguistic resources should have a role in the classroom, particularly in identifying linguistic similarities and differences among different languages that learners know and learn. However, the curriculum does not state the classroom purposes and functions for which the students' home languages (HLs) can be employed in the EAL classroom.

Research suggests that while teachers are increasingly positively predisposed to multilingualism, they lack preparation, including knowledge and skills, to implement pedagogical practices that draw on learners' linguistic repertoires and support the development of multilingual proficiency (Alisaari et al., 2019; De Angelis, 2011; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020). In Norway, too, despite the latest version of the curriculum acknowledging the value of linguistic diversity, there is little evidence suggesting planned and consistent implementation of multilingual pedagogies in the EAL classroom (Benediktsson, 2022; Burner & Carlsen, 2019; Krulatz & Dahl, 2016). A recent review suggested that the focus on multilingualism and diversity in schools is limited to "a simple introduction of cultures, placing them in a historical, and societal context" (Benediktsson, 2022, p. 237) with multilingual education-related topics being described as "supplementary" (p. 236). After a thorough review of key reports on the topic, Benediktsson (2022) concluded that multilingual and multicultural pedagogies do not constitute priorities for the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

Further, recent studies report that Norwegian EAL teachers do not integrate multilingual pedagogies because of either insufficient teacher training or lack of knowledge and adequate teaching materials (Krulatz & Christison, 2023; Vikøy & Haukås, 2023). Research has also revealed the negative connotations associated with the Norwegian equivalent of the word *multilingual* (flerspråklig) as teachers and others often attribute the term to immigrant- and refugee-background learners who are not fluent in the majority language (Haukås et al., 2021; Lorenz et al., 2021). More recently, Norwegian teachers have been found to believe that multilingualism could be beneficial only once students have mastered Norwegian (Krulatz & Christison, 2023; Sevinç et al., 2022; Xu & Krulatz, 2023), which may reflect some Norwegian teachers' fractional understanding of multilingualism. With multilingualism gradually becoming the norm even in traditionally monolingual environments, such as Norway, EAL teachers are instructed to implement multilingual pedagogies that enable students to make recourse to their entire linguistic repertoire. As the concept of multilingualism is relatively novice in Norwegian settings, teacher-training courses need to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to cater to the needs of

increasingly multilingual EAL classrooms. This idea is further mirrored in recent studies from Norwegian educational settings that underlined the need for more concrete and practical multilingual training (Krulatz & Christison, 2023; Lorenz et al., 2021; Tavares, 2023; Vikøy & Haukås, 2023).–

2. Intervention

2.1. Redesigning EAL teacher education curriculum

Because of the increasingly diverse makeup of contemporary societies, and subsequently of classroom settings, institutional discourses, and official documents (European Commission, 2007; Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020) advocate the implementation of pedagogies that cultivate the prospects of linguistic diversity in the classroom to foster an inclusive environment. The current Norwegian curriculum stresses for the first time that Norwegian schools must raise learners' awareness of their own linguistic and cultural resources and of multilingualism as an asset (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020). Recent research conducted in Norway (Lorenz et al., 2021; Neokleous et al., 2022, 2023; Tavares, 2023; Vikøy & Haukås, 2023) revealed that despite teachers embracing the linguistic diversity of their classrooms and their willingness to implement multilingual pedagogies, their unfamiliarity with such environments renders the process challenging. To enable teachers to fully embrace multilingual approaches to language education, it is important to recognize teachers as central agents of change. Teachers should be able to decide to what degree they want to implement existing language policies and consequently either support or suppress multilingual practices (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

To ensure that EAL student teachers embrace multilingualism as an asset and that they possess the knowledge and skills needed to implement multilingual teaching practices, teacher education programs must revise their curricula and incorporate research-based findings that would help student teachers develop an identity as multilinguals and teachers of multilinguals, but also equip them with the knowledge and skills to implement multilingual pedagogies. While teacher education programs are slowly starting to integrate perspectives on multilingualism (e.g., Angelovska et al., 2020; Uro & Barrio, 2013), it is budding work that has scarcely been addressed in literature. In this paper, we describe one ongoing effort at a large public university in Norway to revise the EAL teacher education curriculum to address these current concerns. The following paragraphs outline the novel course sequence that was developed to adequately prepare student teachers to face linguistically diverse classrooms.

During a recent curriculum revision at our institution in Norway, it was agreed that the linguistic focus of the master courses of the five-year Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education for Years 1–7 and Years 5-10 should be on providing a solid understanding of key theoretical and practical issues in increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse educational settings. This need was supported with findings from current research outlined above that underline the need to equip teachers with relevant theoretical and practical knowledge that would enable them to adopt multilingual pedagogies and embrace the linguistic diversity of their classrooms. Therefore, the course design process evaluated and assessed the different findings from the studies on fostering and implementing multilingual pedagogies in Norwegian settings and the pedagogical implications that transpired from them. In addition, the process also considered the objectives and expected outcomes of the National curriculum to pinpoint efficient learning strategies in multilingual settings and to facilitate the sharing and transmission of best practices in the field.

The aim of the course design process was to create course materials, objectives, assessment, projects, and syllabi. The process was conducted using a backwards design approach. As a result, we initiated planning by deciding on a set of outcomes. The knowledge and skills we wanted the student teachers to acquire in the course were specified through a consideration of the content

they had already covered but also the content they would cover in their fifth year. In other words, we intended the two courses to have a sequential and logical order. The fourth-year course has a more theoretical base as it introduces student teachers to key theoretical underpinning that support multilingual education. The fifth-year course has a more practical focus as it places emphasis on the ways in which these theories can be applied through pedagogical strategies and innovative learning approaches. The next step, sequencing the learning, constituted the most difficult part of planning as it demanded careful consideration of the logical organization of topics in a way that would lead to the best attainment of the course objectives. The efficient ordering of the content aimed at helping student teachers to attain a rich understanding of the topics covered in the courses. The rationale behind the choice of the content was to provide student teachers with a firm theoretical and practical grounding needed to teach EAL in multilingual classrooms. Planning towards these goals also required building on and introducing new theories and concepts in a way that built upon student teachers' prior knowledge to assist student teachers in forming new cognitive schemata to acquire new knowledge. We then proceeded to select adequate assessment strategies. Determining the individual objectives for each course session and topics, readings, and activities that would be used to assist student teachers in achieving the objectives constituted the final part of the design and planning process. As explained in the assessment section, we wanted student teachers to demonstrate their learning and expertise using a tool which they could also use as a resource in the classroom. In both courses, lectures, individual and group work, discussions, projects, and oral presentations were integrated as core activities. In the sections that follow, we first give a detailed description of both courses, followed by example activities in each, and finally, a summary of assessment.

2.2. The 4th-year course

2.2.1. Course description

The course, Linguistic Perspectives on English Language Acquisition in Multicultural and Multilingual Settings, was first implemented in the fall of 2020. The course introduces student teachers to the current key theoretical and methodological perspectives on English language development in multicultural and multilingual settings. The purpose is to cultivate advanced and solid insight into current issues on English language acquisition in diverse multilingual contexts to meet the on-going societal developments. The course places special emphasis on developing critical engagement with theory through the application of critical thinking and problem-solving techniques to address new issues and new data. Through gaining a thorough understanding of current research trends in the field, student teachers are expected to integrate them into their practice to optimize the learning experience for linguistically and culturally diverse EAL learners. The objective is for the student teachers to acquire in-depth understanding of the increasingly multicultural and multilingual situation in Norway and the implications for Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education.

The course is guided by objectives relative to knowledge and skills that student teachers are expected to develop. The knowledge and skills objectives are described in the two tables below.

Table 1: Knowledge objectives student teachers are expected to have

Type of Objective	Student-teachers are expected to have:
Knowledge Objectives	(a) advanced knowledge of current linguistic methodologies, trends, and approaches to English language development in multicultural and multilingual settings (b) extensive knowledge of the key phenomena and factors in English language acquisition in multilingual settings from a theoretical and cognitive perspective (c) broadened knowledge of how to support the literacy and

English language learning development of students from multilingual backgrounds
(d) in-depth understanding of the multicultural and multilingual situation in Norway and the implications for primary and lower secondary teacher education

Table 2: Skills objectives student-teachers are expected to meet

Type of Objective	Student-teachers are expected to be able to:
Skills Objectives	(a) appreciate and engage with existing theories and methods in research on English language development in multicultural and multilingual settings (b) critically assess national and international research on key issues and approaches to English language acquisition and apply this knowledge into their professional practice

2.2.2. Example activity

The course strived to increase student teachers' understanding of multilingualism in increasingly multilingual and multicultural contexts by exploring key theoretical concepts and support from research. While the focus of the course is on familiarizing students with key concepts that would further contribute to their understanding of how multilingualism works, the instructor also wished to assist student teachers in fostering their own multilingual identity. As instructors, we believe that EAL learners are by default emergent multilinguals, and we believe it is important for future EAL teachers to also identify as such. Therefore, the course helps student teachers reflect on languages or dialects spoken at home, languages learned in school, or other languages or forms of communication they are exposed to elsewhere. For this reason, one of the topics that the 4th year course covers is the concept of multilingual identity (Norton, 2010). With the activity, we wanted the student teachers to understand how examining their own multilingual identity could contribute to the appreciation and exploration of the role of identity in language learning and teaching. Developing a multilingual identity could lead to (a) higher language learning motivation as students are able to navigate through identifying and pinpointing differences and similarities between languages in their linguistic repertoire and language(s) being learnt, (b) maintenance of linguistic diversity as students become more aware of the different values of the different languages that are part of their linguistic repertoire, and (c) a richer sense of self as multilingual that moves beyond strictly associating it with students with migration backgrounds (Fisher et al., 2020; Forbes et al., 2021). Activities that foster the notion of identity could not only provide increasingly nuanced insights into the complex construct of identity in a range of settings. Additionally, activities that focus on multilingual identity offer teachers an opportunity to create inclusive, respectful, multilingual learning environments that help learners find better connections with their languages.

Our goal was to invite student teachers to reflect on the dynamic, multiple, and shifting nature of identity, including their linguistic practices and preferences, and to sharpen their language consciousness. To help student teachers understand these, we decided to integrate the language portrait silhouette activity as a form of symbolic expression of identity (Krumm & Jenkins, 2001). Through a visualization of their entire linguistic repertoire, student teachers (and by extension, language learners) are encouraged to explore nuanced ways in which each language forms a part of their identity. The activity employed a handout with empty whole-body silhouettes which student teachers were asked to color and/or fill with names of languages, language variants, or other aspects or modalities of communication. The aim was to connect the parts of the body with languages which they speak or languages to which, for some reason, they have a special connection. Student teachers

were also asked to accompany their coloring of their language portrait silhouette with a narrative that explained or elaborated on their individual portraits.

The activities design followed the principles of loop input (Woodward, 2003), in which student teachers experience a pedagogical practice that embodies the methodological design they are learning about (i.e., promoting the notion of multilingual identity) using academic-level content from the course they are taking (i.e., working in multilingual pedagogical context). The language portrait silhouette activity allowed the student teachers to not only enhance and apply their knowledge of pedagogical practices that promote identity, but also to experiment with their own exploration of identity. Loop input methodology also includes a decompression stage (Woodward, 2003), in which student teachers reflect on the task they just completed and consider how they could modify the design and the content to apply it in their own teaching. As a final stage in the activity, the student teachers were invited to reflect on the activity and envision ways this activity could be used with multilingual English learners but also whether it corresponds to any of the learning objectives in the English curriculum.

2.3. The 5th-year course

2.3.1. Course description

The 5th-year course, Advanced/Innovative Teaching Approaches in the English Classroom, was first taught in the fall of 2021 to the cohort of student teachers who had completed the 4th-year course, Linguistic Perspectives on English Language Acquisition in Multicultural and Multilingual Settings, in 2020. The aim of the course is to extend the theoretical and research principles covered in the first course in the sequence to practical classroom applications. The course covers current novel approaches to teaching English in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. In addition to giving an overview of the existing models that promote multilingualism as a core resource, the course gives a rationale for the implementation of seven key principles of language instruction that draws upon and facilitates multilingualism, namely: (a) classrooms and schools as multilingual spaces, (b) developing and using teaching materials, (c) interaction and grouping configurations, (d) language and culture attitudes, (e) metacognition and metalinguistic awareness, (f) multiliteracy, and (g) teacher and learner language use. The principles are based on the Multilingual Approach to Diversity in Education (MADE), which consists of seven indicators, each with a set of distinct features that can be used for planning and delivery of instruction in multilingual classrooms (Krulatz & Christison, 2023).

The course objectives are specified in terms of knowledge and skills that student teachers are expected to develop. Taken together, these aims intend to provide the student teachers with an extensive theoretical background relative to implementing pedagogies appropriate for multilingual EAL classrooms. The knowledge and skills objectives are described in the two tables below.

Table 3: Knowledge objectives student teachers are expected to have

Type of Objective	Student-teachers are expected to have:
Knowledge Objectives	(a) advanced knowledge of current research findings and pedagogical approaches to teaching EAL in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms (b) in-depth understanding of the effect of multilingualism on additional language acquisition

(c) broadened knowledge of how teaching can be differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learner populations

(d) extensive knowledge of pedagogical implications of research on multilingualism for teaching English

Table 4: Skills objectives student-teachers are expected to meet

Type of Objective	Student-teachers are expected to be able to:
Skills Objectives	<p>(a) use relevant information from research and professional development to conduct teaching and research in a multilingual classroom</p> <p>(b) analyze and relate critically to sources of knowledge, including professional and research literature, and apply this knowledge to formulate critical reasoning</p> <p>(c) develop lesson plans and teaching materials for teaching of English in multilingual settings based on up-to-date research</p> <p>(d) assess student learning and collect empirical data in diverse learner classrooms.</p>

By reaching these goals, student teachers are expected to develop a practical ability to teach in multilingual EAL contexts and to become life-long learners who independently seek opportunities to hone their professional skills.

2.3.2. Example activity

One of the topics in the course is multiliteracy, which can be defined as “communication in two or more languages or language varieties, practiced in a multitude of modes (including written, audio, visual, spatial, and digital), developed through a multitude of paths, and enacted through various combinations of the resources from linguistic repertoires” (Krulatz & Christison, 2023, p. 185). Multilingual EAL learners may have literacy skills in other languages they know, and research suggests that maintaining and developing literacy skills in home languages can support the development of literacy skills in additional languages (Cummins, 2008; Dworin, 2003). Multiliteracy is also considered to include digital skills (Christison & Murray, 2020; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006). Therefore, our goal was to help student teachers experience first-hand how digital literacy skills could be facilitated and developed in a multilingual classroom. Working in small groups, the student teachers were instructed to choose a grade and proficiency level and then to examine the [Literacy Ideas website](#) to identify one idea that could be used to promote multilingualism with their chosen group of learners. Next, they were told to create a short promotional video that would encourage other teachers to use this idea in their own teaching practice. The student teachers had to assume roles as producers, scriptwriters, and actors. They also had to select and use an appropriate digital tool (e.g., a phone camera, Zoom) to record their infomercial. They then shared their video during a film festival that followed.

Similar to the 4th-year activity described above, the multiliteracy activity design followed the principles of *loop input* (Woodward, 2003). Student teachers experienced a pedagogical practice that

embodied the methodological design they were learning about (i.e., promoting multiliteracy) using academic-level content from the course they were taking (i.e., working in multilingual pedagogical context). The activity allowed the student teachers to not only enhance and apply their knowledge of pedagogical practices that promote multiliteracy, but also to experiment with their own digital literacy. In the decompression stage, student teachers reflected on the task they had just completed and considered how they could modify the design and the content to apply it in their own teaching.

2.4. Assessment

The outcomes of both courses were assessed on the basis of an individual home exam in which student teachers designed a 90-minute lesson plan for a group of EAL multilingual learners and wrote an essay that explains and justifies their pedagogical choices. The specific format (i.e., a home exam) was imposed from above (i.e., by the university authorities). The content of the assignment (i.e., designing a lesson plan) was selected to give the student teachers an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired in the courses in a creative way. We also wanted them to exit the course sequence with pedagogical materials on hand that they could potentially use in their future teaching. The student teachers were instructed to include the following elements in the lesson plan: (a) age and proficiency level of EAL learners, (b) between two and three clear and specific learning objectives, (c) a list of needed materials, and (d) a sequence of three to six activities, with clear links to each other and to the learning objectives. Each activity had to be described in detail, including information about how much time is needed to complete it, whether learners work individually, in pairs, or in groups, what materials/sources are needed, and what is the expected outcome of each activity (i.e., Why are the learners doing it? What are they learning from it?). In addition, the lesson plan had to incorporate at least one feature of each of the seven MADE indicators covered in the 5th-year course. The text in which student teachers explained and justified their pedagogical design was expected to be about 2000 words long and follow the conventions of an academic essay with an introduction, main body, and a conclusion. The rationale behind this component of the assignment was to give the student teachers an opportunity to engage with the course content in a reflected, in-depth way, and to provide evidence that they are able to make conscious pedagogical choices and support these choices with references to current theory and research. The student teachers were instructed to make at least five references to the required readings from both the 4th-year course and the 5th-year course. As a key guideline, the student teachers were told to carefully consider how the lesson plan they designed promoted an inclusive learning environment for multilingual learners.

The course assignment was submitted to the online assessment platform, which automatically anonymized submissions. Each submission was assessed by two graders using an assessment rubric with specific grading criteria. An average score based on the two independent assessments was then calculated for each student, and a grade on a scale from F (fail) to A (excellent) was assigned. The overall grade distribution suggests that most students attained the course objectives to a high degree – over half of all grades ($N=35$) constituted As and Bs. 25.7% of the students received a C, and 14.3% of the students received a D. There were no Es, and only one student failed. The grade distribution, in percentages, is presented in Figure 1.

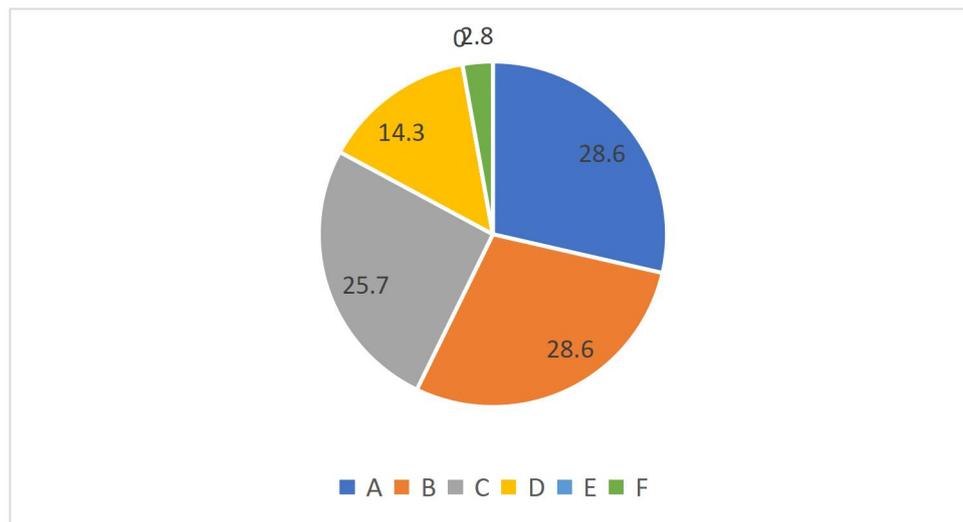


Figure 1: Grade distribution on a scale from A to F (in percentages).

3. How did it go?

To contribute to a better understanding of key concepts of multilingualism and to better prepare student teachers to optimize the learning experience of an increasingly linguistically diverse generation of young EAL learners in Norway, we deemed it important to develop new teaching methods that align with new technologies and approaches in education to introduce student teachers to the current theories on multilingualism (Krulatz et al., 2023; Lorenz et al., 2021; Tavares, 2023; Vikøy & Haukås, 2023). The student course evaluations assisted in further refining the courses in subsequent years as we maintained that it was important to consider what worked and what did not for the student teachers, but also the topics and instructional strategies that could potentially be used or altered to optimize the learning experience.

Based on the first round of feedback, student teachers articulated that the course “is highly relevant for those who are going to become English teachers, and it is therefore easy to see the usefulness of the theories that are presented”. During the past couple of years, the feedback highlighted the value that student teachers saw in the course while they also appreciated the work that has been put into developing and delivering the course. The following excerpts are representative: “I am very pleased with my teacher. His lectures are interesting, and there is a good balance between discussion, lecturing and student work. He is very good at his field, and his engagement is motivating for us students”. Student teachers also cited the activities that were introduced in class as “useful” that they could then use in their own classrooms themselves. As one student pointed out, “My teacher has also tried to make the lessons interesting by presenting information through relevant activities”. Furthermore, the student teachers noted that they would have liked the instructors to use more contextualized examples from their own experience during the semester as the basis for discussion and exemplification. As the student teachers elaborated, they would have liked to bring to the classroom experiences from their teaching practicum and revisit them by discussing in class the ways in which the implementation of multilingual pedagogies would have optimized the learning experiences of linguistically diverse students. To address this concern, in subsequent years, student teachers were invited to share and reflect on their experiences. The provided examples were then used as models to introduce multilingual teaching practices. Student teachers were also asked to plan a teaching demonstration in which they exemplified how to create an environment where linguistically diverse students feel comfortable, appreciated, engaged, and ready to learn. This adjustment generated more engagement and a deeper level of reflection.

The lesson plans and essays submitted by the student teachers at the end of the second course in the sequence illustrated the degree to which the participants attained the learning objectives in both courses. The students were able to successfully design lesson plans for linguistically and culturally diverse EAL classrooms. The lesson plans employed a range of activities suitable for multilingual EAL contexts, including a range of pedagogical practices that were modeled in either the 4th or 5th-year course. The student teachers were also able to support their pedagogical choices with references to relevant research and professional literature discussed in both courses. Although some areas of relative weakness were identified (e.g., practices that support the development of multiliteracy and working with metacognition and metalinguistic awareness), overall, the quality of the submitted assignments testified to good attainment of the learning objectives in both courses.

4. Critical Reflections

With multilingualism being increasingly recognized as an asset, there has been a call to redesign teacher education programs, including EAL teacher education, to include a focus on multilingualism and MTPs (Alisaari et al., 2019; De Angelis, 2011; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020). In increasingly multicultural and multilingual classroom environments, such as is the case in Norway, the demand for the innovation presented in this paper was called for in studies that examined the perspective of in-and pre-service teachers (Benediktsson, 2022; Burner & Carlsen, 2019; Krulatz & Dahl, 2016). These studies reported that teachers in Norway expressed the need for a more prominent and guided focus on topics relative multilingualism and MTPs that would adequately prepare them to meet the challenges that today's EAL classrooms pose. The participants in these studies expressed uncertainty and doubt over their classroom practices, which they ascribed to lack of knowledge and preparation in their teacher education. Our institution undertook a curriculum revision process to address this objective and contribute toward ensuring a school environment that embraces learners' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A sequence of two courses was selected to attain this purpose: (1) Linguistic Perspectives on English Language Acquisition in Multicultural and Multilingual Settings and (2) Advanced/Innovative Teaching Approaches in the English Classroom.

Our main objective for both courses was to help student teachers deepen their understanding and expertise in the area of multilingualism and diversity, but also to succeed in applying the new knowledge to real-world experiences. Consequently, we placed more emphasis on experiential learning, focusing on using real and authentic classroom situations to help student teachers learn through learning by doing (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010), which in the two example activities was accomplished through loop input (Woodward, 2003). Based on the feedback obtained at the end of the course sequence and on the assignment submitted as part of course assessment, the student teachers were motivated and engaged about learning and valued the twofold role they assumed in the classroom. As students, they were able to experience the knowledge and information with the instructor creating opportunities for them to perform a hands-on minds-on experience of content they were learning (Young, 2002). In this way, students "purposefully engage...in direct experience and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values" (Association for Experiential Education, n.d., para. 2). As teachers, using these experiences, they were able to spend time discussing, analyzing, and reflecting about them and the ways in which it optimizes learning but also whether it can be further refined to work towards this goal but also how specific challenges that might emerge can be addressed. Overall, the two courses strived to close the gap between the education of student teachers enrolled in teacher education programs and the demands that novice teachers face as soon as they enter the teaching profession. As exemplified earlier, recent studies conducted in the Norwegian EAL context underline the unpreparedness of the teachers to accommodate the needs of linguistically diverse settings (Tavares, 2023; Vikøy & Haukås, 2023). This unpreparedness could not only decrease the quality of instruction, but also culminate in lack of

confidence in teacher ability. Most significantly, however, it could potentially lead to a decrease in student motivation. For this reason, we believe that when developing a course for a teacher education program on a topic with which students are not quite familiar, it is important to take into consideration their expectations, anticipations, questions, struggles, and ideas. The process has been challenging but also eminently rewarding for us as we were working on designing the course. Based on our experience, when planning and designing future courses, we would like to have the student teachers more actively involved in the process and design it collaboratively to create optimal conditions for learning, reflection, and formation of teacher identity.

5. Conclusion

For a smooth implementation of multilingual pedagogies in the increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse EAL classrooms, adequate training and coverage in teacher training programs should take place. The emergence of linguistically diverse classrooms requires careful planning and competent teachers who would optimize the learning experience of the students. Increasing numbers of teacher education programs include some coursework with a focus on multilingualism (e.g., Angelovska et al., 2020; Uro & Barrio, 2013). Some teacher education and professional development programs have had positive outcomes (e.g., Fischer & Lahmann, 2020; Gorter & Arocena, 2020). Therefore, our role as teacher educators is to better prepare prospective teachers for the multilingual reality of their classrooms (e.g., Alisaari et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020). Teacher education programs need to acknowledge the central role teachers play in implementing the multilingual turn and help student teachers “critically negotiate, challenge and deconstruct” monolingual views and approaches to language education (Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020, p. 9).

Further, with multilingual classrooms becoming the norm, it is of paramount importance that future research would contribute toward ensuring a school environment that embraces students’ diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Such environment would also take advantage of the students’ HLs in a way that would enable them to develop advanced EAL skills. As a result, such pedagogical applications could contribute to the alleviation of the negative attitude that surrounds HL use in Norway and elsewhere so that language learning can become not only more inclusive and flexible but also more effective.

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