



On creating a framework for teaching children's literature in ELTE TÓK's international pre-school programme

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This study discusses pre-school teacher training of an exceptional kind in Hungary while additionally providing an overview of the underlying situation. In the light of current thinking in teacher education with a special focus on teaching literature for undergraduate students, a framework for the children's literature course shall be introduced. The proposed framework takes the course requirements into consideration adapts the course material to the background knowledge and future needs of the English language Pre-School Education Programme students. Such a course had not existed earlier. The operative course documents and requirements had exclusively been written in Hungarian and specifically designed for the Hungarian Pre-School Education Programme students and context.

Keywords: teacher training, pre-school, course design, children's literature, international course, interculturality

Introduction

In 2019, the Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education at ELTE University (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, henceforth referred to as ELTE TÓK), in Budapest, Hungary implemented a new Pre-School Education Programme for international students from all around the world. Given the different backgrounds of the students in terms of education and previous knowledge, the available Hungary- and Hungarian language-oriented course descriptions put the educator into a rather difficult but at the same time challenging situation: both a solution and a match had to be found to support teacher education and prepare students to be able to conduct literature sessions in the kindergarten classroom.

A vast amount of literature has been written recently focusing on and analysing teacher training and teacher development. An abundance of studies examines the theory of teacher training and teacher development in various circumstances. However, there still seems to be uncertainty in this field of study. There appear to be too many approaches and aims which all consider themselves to be the only right way. The implementation of the various teacher training programmes especially designed for better results are brought forth and theory does not seem to be applied as our knowledge concerning how learning teaching takes place is rather limited.

Still, practising teacher educators should have an understanding of the learning teaching process in order to be able to assist and help their trainees to embark on their never-ending learning teaching 'journey' thus enabling them to design fitting courses for the trainees and at the same time fulfil the requirements of the courses. Trainers cannot prepare their students for every single aspect since all teaching situations are different and unique, but some basic underlying issues, useful tips, acting as a role model and the trainers' own experience can be conveyed.

An ideal training programme should provide trainees with subject knowledge – which builds a firm foundation for teaching – and also survival strategies, i.e. methodology, which are thought provoking and can (and should) ideally be not only adjusted, but constantly improved by the trainees while always keeping their own teaching situations and circumstances in mind. A training programme (and especially the specific courses) should reflect the above view: however, this is only the beginning. The more teachers teach, the more aware they become of the fact that teaching, in reality, is a maze from which the exit appears elusive. As such, it is also true that teaching provides such a complex profession that there will never be end of learning teaching. There are so many tools of the trade to be mastered that one's lifetime does not seem to be enough for it only some parts can be learned during one's training, the rest comes in and with practice.

This paper outlines the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology I* course taught at ELTE TÓK. The aim of the course is to improve and facilitate learning teaching as well as provide both theoretical and practical subject knowledge for the future careers of trainees who possess international backgrounds and will teach in pre-schools all around the world.

In the first section of the paper, the scene shall be set by giving a brief overview of the kindergarten teacher training programme with a focus on the course, *Children's Literature and Its Methodology*. In the second section, teaching literature for undergraduate students and its relevance to the Hungarian context shall be examined with a view to its practical application in the proposed children's literature course. In the third section, the rationale behind the course and the training materials together with some thoughts and ideas for developing a framework for the course will be compiled. It is intended that the framework will essentially be practical so as to meet the content requirements of the university, the pre-school classroom conditions, and the expectations of the trainees. Last, the course's implications shall be elaborated upon and a conclusion drawn.

Pre-service pre-school teacher-training in Hungary

This section gives a brief overview of pre-service pre-school teacher-training in Hungary with a special focus on the kindergarten teacher training programme specialising in bilingual kindergarten education. It also focuses on areas which are important to consider when designing the Children's Literature and Its Methodology course which spans over three semesters for the international group of students.

The Hungarian context

In Hungary, children go to kindergarten after they have turned three and continue on to school around the age of six. However, going to school may come later and slight differences may occur based upon when a child becomes mature enough for school. Children must have turned six before starting school. Kindergarten teachers in Hungary are trained at universities or colleges offering Pre-School Education Programmes, which are – at the moment – available at thirteen different higher education institutions in the country.

Pre-School teacher training programmes last for three years and total six semesters. During their training the students study various modules in pedagogy, psychology, education, music and its methodology, native language and its methodology, children's literature and its methodology, mathematics and its methodology, environmental studies and its methodology, physical education and its methodology, and, last but not least, visual skills and its methodology. Their training also has a practical part starting from the very first semester (see detailed plan of the training in Appendix 1). The programme document describes exactly what courses/modules and how many credits (altogether 180 credits) students need to accomplish throughout their studies to obtain a BA degree in pre-school education. In the document it is also stated that the mandatory courses taken as a part of the B.A. programme are combined with elective specialisation courses. These specialisation courses allow students to explore a chosen area in more depth. These specialisations vary from institution to institution in Hungary. In this paper the specialisations offered at ELTE TÓK shall be described.

Pre-school education programmes at ELTE TÓK

In the previous section, the structure of pre-school education programmes in Hungary was briefly discussed. Now let us turn our attention to the specialisations offered at ELTE TÓK. The Faculty provides specialisations within its Pre-School Education Programmes, such as *'Aiding Pre-School-School Transition'*, *'Education of Young Children'*, *'Education for Sustainability'*, *'Diversity and Acceptance in Pre-School'* or *'Complex Motor Skills Development'*. As was mentioned before, this encompasses access to a special training within the main programme that is, all in all, worth twenty-four credits. Among the different specialisations we also find the *English-Hungarian Bilingual Specialisation*. This bilingual pre-school education specialisation is an option exclusively taught at ELTE TÓK. The specialisation was implemented in 2006 and can be studied in either full-time or long-distance courses.

ELTE TÓK offers two Pre-School Education Programmes differing in one salient detail: one programme in which the language of instruction is Hungarian (except for the English specialist courses) and one where the language of instruction is entirely English welcoming students from all over the world (henceforth referred to as the international programme).

Students opting for the Hungarian-English bilingual specialisation are selected from those applicants who have already been admitted to the Faculty's

Pre-School Education Programme at ELTE TÓK. These students are filtered based on their language merits. If they do not fulfil the requirements, they can still opt for other specialisations. It is the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature who organises both the oral and the written admission tests. Thus, only the best English-speaking students are accepted to the Hungarian-English Bilingual programme. According to the six reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages¹, the students who are granted a place in the bilingual specialisation are required to speak English at least at a B2 level. Students are therefore at an upper-intermediate level and are confident speakers of English. The international group students undertaking the Pre-School Education Programme entirely in English also take an entrance examination and are screened on the basis of their English language skills and completed secondary school studies, however this process takes place before they are admitted to the Faculty. After having been accepted to the programme for the international group students, the bilingual specialisation is the only option for them concerning specialisations.

The students either opting for the Hungarian-English Bilingual Specialisation or starting the Bilingual Education Specialisation in the case of the international group both attend the same courses and study the following three modules:

1. *'English-Language Preparation for Bilingual Education Module'*
2. *'The Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education Module'*
3. *'The Methodology of Bilingual Preschool Education Module'*

(See Appendix 1 for the Hungarian-English Bilingual Specialisation and Appendix 2 for the Bilingual Education Specialisation). The English bilingual training starts in the first semester with language development ('English-Language Preparation for Bilingual Education Module') grounding training and practice ('The Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education Module'). Only after having gained basic knowledge in bilingualism and improvement in their English skills is the methodology component introduced ('The Methodology of Bilingual Preschool Education Module'). The bilingual arts (1x45) and PE (1x45 min) courses in the fourth semester comprise two lessons (2x45 min) per week and in the fifth semester include four lessons (2x90 min) of science (1x90 min) and music (1x90 min) per week.

The international programme was implemented in 2019 and in 2020 September a second group commenced the programme. Beginning in autumn 2021, the Faculty also offers an international long-distance course. (Such courses already exist in the programme for which the language of instruction is Hungarian). Recruitment has already begun for the 2021/2022 academic year.

In this part of the paper specific modules of the Kindergarten Education Programmes have been discussed with a special focus on the bilingual specialisation only offered at ELTE TÓK.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

2019 September: Redesigning the Children's Literature Course

In September 2019, as was mentioned earlier, the international students commenced their Pre-School Education Programme. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literature was given the opportunity to first teach the *Native Language Children's Literature and Its Methodology I* course as a part of the international programme. The module is part of the mandatory training that students undertake. The opportunity was given because the educators at the department had already had both experience in teaching children's literature in English and the necessary qualifications.

It was clear from the very first lesson that the course description provided in Hungarian would not work with the international group. Some alterations in the course content needed to be done to suit both the general requirements of ELTE TÓK and the students' background knowledge and future needs alike, i.e., to enable them to integrate theory and practice in their future kindergarten teacher career.

Before redesigning the course an attempt to review current thinking in teaching literature with a special focus on teaching literature for undergraduate students had to be made in order to incorporate the knowledge gained into the redesigning process of the new course.

Current thinking in teaching children's literature

This section reviews current thinking in teaching children's literature and therefore shall focus on areas which are important to weigh when redesigning the children's literature course. In the recent years the quality of education worldwide has been put under a magnifying glass and evaluated. This means not only governmental tests or competitions in different subjects where representatives of several countries match their strength in their subject knowledge, but also students' evaluations of university courses at the end of the semesters. This immediately focuses attention on the methods used and consequently on the mediators of the knowledge: teachers. Last but not least, these evaluations focus attention on the training they have undergone. In 1987, Calderhead added an important factor to the description of teacher training when he said that concern had been expressed about the adequacy of the teachers' preparation for the classroom and for their ongoing development. This means that not only the training itself is crucial, but continuously updating and developing our teaching also plays an important role in the educational process.

Before having a thorough look at current thinking in teaching children's literature the term itself needs to be defined. Regarding children's literature, there appear to be an abundance of definitions (Hunt, 1994; Harris & Leung, 2006; Nodelman, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Ewers Grenby & Immel, 2013) in the research literature. A rather narrow definition defines children's literature as a collection of books written, read by children or about children. Different authors describe what children's literature is according to how broadly the term

is perceived by them, and what different theoretical position the particular authors take. Children's literature, however, appears to be far more than books simply being written for or about children. In their definition, Glazer (1986) and Schneider (2016) add that nobody would deny that books for children only comprising illustrations are also pieces of children's literature (e.g., Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman*). The term children's literature undoubtedly comprises a good range of genres such as poems, nursery rhymes, chants, jingles, tongue-twisters, stories, fairy tales, folktales, etc. This range also contains a lot of different kinds of books concerning their format from toy and board books, through wordless picture books to picture books, etc (Glazer, 1986). Hunt (1994) gives a very detailed introduction to the different perceptions of the term. Ewers (2012) states that his work does not intend to discuss the term itself but the way it is investigated in order to be able to define the term, children's literature. Ewers finally comes to the conclusion that children's literature is literature suitable for children and young people (Ewers, 2012, p. 139), but this is only one aspect of this multifaceted term. Hunt (1994), Pearson (2011), and Grenby & Immel (2013) suggest that children's literature should be defined by its intended audience. However neither childhood nor the child is easy to define (Grenby & Immel, 2013, p. xiii). Harris and Leung (2006) take a different position and approach the question from the language teachers' point of view and give a definition of children's literature in the English primary classroom as what texts to use for shaping and sharing experiences and 'to create vital patterns of language without any prior intent to control vocabulary or grammar structures' (2006, p. 74).

At the Faculty children's literature is taught in two senses. Firstly, as native language, secondly as English children's literature where the basic aims appear to be the same but in the case of English children's literature an additional focus is added: it has to aid second language acquisition as well, that is vocabulary, pronunciation and language development beyond the main aims of using literary pieces such as children's psychological, cognitive, social and language development, with the ultimate aim to support children to become readers. For our purposes a definition is needed that is broad enough to comprise all the elements. For this reason, I turned to Schneider (2016, p. 24) as a starting point, who defines children's literature as a 'collection of texts that are specifically written and/or illustrated for and/or about youth as well as texts that are not specifically written and/or illustrated for and/or about youth but which youth choose to read, view, and/or write. Adults are welcome to read children's literature too-many do.' To this definition I would also add that, besides reading, viewing and/or writing they may also choose listening to and telling or chanting various genres of children's literature to develop socially, psychologically cognitively, to improve their language skills both native and second language with the underlying aim to later become readers. To sum it up, children's literature appears to be a complex term and a multifaceted entity which comprises different genres, illustrations, the audience and actions taken.

Teaching literature

It is a widely shared opinion that encountering children's literature in early childhood is inevitable and has several advantages on the development of children. Besides building bonds between the parent(s) and the child(ren), improving children's imagination and creativity, developing problem solving skills, it has several therapeutic values as well (Boldizsár, 2019, p. 318–319). With the help of rhymes, chants, jingles, lullabies and tales, children can also learn a lot about their mother tongue. Children's first encounters are with songs, rhymes and simple poems which are short, and complex texts (Kovács & Trentinné Benkő, 2008, p. 117) with the help of which they are introduced to rhymes and rhyming words and can play with and manipulate the language. Later, while listening to tales' expressions, proverbs can be acquired developing their vocabulary in consequence of which enabling them to express feelings, emotions, and their thoughts in a better, more sophisticated way. When going to kindergarten children all get exposed to children's literature in forms of rhymes, songs, poems and to the different types of stories from fables, fairy tales to folk tales etc. with the help of which their knowledge of their mother tongue besides various cognitive skills will develop.

During the learning teaching process, students not only study the different genres of children's literature, but also the methodology of how to approach children's literary texts in the kindergarten and assist children in becoming readers. According to the Faculty documents, the subject content of the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology* Module should include rhymes, jingles, children's poems, folk tales, fairy tales, picture books, children's stories, and authors of the literary pieces Hungarian and international (mostly European) alike. The aims of the three courses are to make students aware of the contribution of children's literature to educational aims and also to equip students with the necessary methodology needed for both designing and implementing session plans in the kindergarten classroom. There are, however, no procedures stated of how to deliver the course in the faculty documents. There are two lessons per week: one lecture and one seminar. The lecturer-educator decided to deliver the course in an interactive, workshop-like form.

With the knowledge gained, let us turn our attention to the implementation of the children's literature and its methodology course for the international group.

The Children's Literature and Its Methodology Course

On implementing the international Pre-School Education Programme – to which students from all over the world who have graduated from secondary school and speak English at least at a B2 level are welcome – some organisational issues and questions regarding the content of the course were faced.

In the first international group starting their course in September 2019, there are seventeen students: five Chinese, one Ukrainian, one Persian, one who is half Hungarian and half Italian, and nine students of Hungarian background.

One student with Hungarian background was brought up in Luxembourg, thus did not go through the Hungarian education system. We can state that nearly half of the group had a different background concerning their studies and knowledge, especially knowledge in literature. The general training course descriptions for the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology* courses work perfectly well in a programme intended for Hungarian students. The students all share common knowledge not only of kindergarten, elementary school but of secondary school literature studies where there is substantial focus on literary terms and concepts. Students have heard and read more or less the same pieces of literature and have been asked to perform literary analyses, which mean examining all the parts of a novel, play, or poem, such as characters, setting, tone or message and to see how the author uses these elements to create a certain effect on the reader. We can conclude that the Hungarian-background students come to the Faculty with a well-founded and shared knowledge, that is, a common ground that the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology* course can start off from.

In the very first lesson it became clear that the international group could not by all means be treated the same as an average homogeneous, Hungarian group. The course had to be replanned, reconstructed, and a totally new approach had to be adopted based on understanding, empathy, and patience. First of all, steps needed to be taken to explore what the international students had brought with them to the course: a common ground, from where the course could be started had to be established. Basic literary terms and the expressions required to be able to talk about literature needed to be taught. The core curriculum (see Appendix 1) clearly shows that the children's literature module is divided into three courses in the general part of their training as opposed to the bilingual module where only two semesters are devoted to bilingual English children's literature. By the end of the general children's literature course, students are expected to have a well-grounded knowledge of children's literature genres, the culture of childhood, and the aesthetic features of the language of literature. They also learn the basics of the psychology of children's literature interest and learn the methodology of how to keep children's curiosity alive by raising attention, the sustenance of attention, and motivation. Furthermore, they learn the connection between children's literature education, language and communication and cognitive development, and, last, but not least, the methodology of how to help children become readers. By the end of the module they are to have obtained all the methodology and skills necessary to plan children's literature sessions in the kindergarten, formulate the aims of the activities, and adapt them to age of the children. During the courses, a wide range of genres from poems, nursery rhymes, chants, jingles, fairy tales, folk tales, and tales are discussed and as stated in the Hungarian requirements by the end of the first semester twenty poems, rhymes and stories are to be learnt by heart.

Bearing in mind all the background information and the requirements from the side of the Faculty and the cognition, the culture, and circumstances (henceforth referred to as CCC) from the side of the students the *Children's*

Literature and Its Methodology I course had to be redesigned and adapted to make the match. The premises of the educator's planning were the following:

1. The material and the requirements of the module are officially stated: the international group students are to study exactly the same modules of the so-called mandatory training modules as the Hungarian students;
2. The Hungarian and Hungarian-related materials found in the previous course descriptions of the Children's Literature Modules for Hungarian students can only be used if the literary pieces stated have an English translation/ or translation in the mother tongue of all the students in the group. In our case four additional languages (Ukrainian, Chinese, Italian, and Persian).
3. At home these students would study children's literature and its methodology in their mother tongue;
4. The studies at home to some extent would be mother tongue-related in their content;
5. The students are young adults who are far away from their homes, full of worries and anxiety;
6. As an educator the lecturer also serves a mission. A mission to transmit Hungarian culture, in this case Hungarian children's literature despite the difficulties of not having too many children's literary works translated into English. The training of the students takes place in Hungary, thus Hungary-related topics need to be discussed as well;
7. The course was to be delivered in an interactive and workshop-like form. Yet another aim was to provide experiential learning situations for the students in the lessons and for the educator to provide a model of how to deal with literary pieces in the kindergarten;

When designing their course, the lecturer had the seven premises listed above in mind, which worked as the framework of the course. First of all, the main question was what steps were to be taken to fulfil the requirements of the course designed and used by the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature in the case of students from so many different backgrounds. Also, if the students were to study this course in their homeland, they would most probably do this in their mother tongue. For that reason, during the preparatory stage (when basic concepts and literary terms were discussed) students were also asked to compile a glossary with the English literary expressions, a definition in English plus a mother-tongue equivalent for the terms. At this stage of their studies, mother-tongue support was necessary to relieve anxiety and frustration of not knowing how to express themselves in the world of children's literature. By using this method, a firm language foundation was built up for the literature course. A starting point from where the course could commence as Swales describes discourse community: 'a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursal expertise' (Swales, 1990).

One must not forget that by being admitted to ELTE TÓK or any university, students enter a new discourse community, the language of which they need to learn. This not only refers to the language of literature courses, but to that used in all subjects. This takes time and the fact must not be forgotten that

the international students are not only entering a new discourse community, but they are doing it in a foreign language. Instructors need to be patient, understanding, and provide a good deal of support. This is also true in the case of the students who are Hungarian for whom a programme of this type is also very difficult as they face hardships in studying all the subjects in English at a university level. However, it is not only the discourse community the students have to enter, there is the anxiety and worry factor as well. They are very young, in most of the cases it is their first time that they are a long way away from their families and not only learning teaching, but also learning everyday survival strategies as well. An amicable atmosphere needed to be created based upon empathy and understanding to help them get through this beginning period. This view is supported by Tomlinson when writing about what a teacher sees in class is a bare tip of what is really there: Students have their own background story and life: 'I really understand for the first time that if I think I'm preparing lessons for the faces in front of me. I'm making a costly mistake. My students live beneath the surface, and I have to do whatever I can to see beneath that surface so I am prepared to reach them where they live' (Tomlinson, 2017–2018, p. 89). The further the students progressed in the literature course, the more their anxiety was relieved.

Since we are talking about the mandatory training of their kindergarten education programme which was designed by the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature, a significant part of the course focuses mainly on mother tongue-related literature, i.e., Hungarian children's literature in our case. A lot of material for the international literary content of the course, that is, authors and their pieces of work, can be found in English which was a great help.

The literary texts, writers, poets in the previously taught Hungary-related children's literature courses could only be transferred to this course if translated into English or into all the languages of the students. The lecturer decided to rely merely on the material found in English. In addition, the educator also finds it very important to transmit Hungarian culture since the course takes place in Hungary and this cultural transfer can be done with the help of children's literature. There appear to be a good number of enthusiastic bilingual kindergarten and primary school teachers in Hungary who have translated an abundance of rhymes from Hungarian to English, the translation of which make them citable as well², or English rhymes to Hungarian. However, there is a collection of Hungarian songs and rhymes written and compiled by Mama Lisa by the title *Hungarian Kids Songs & Rhymes Ebook*. It is a beautiful collection of Hungarian children's rhymes and songs translated into English. Sadly, they can neither be sung or cited in English, but is a very useful and beautiful piece of material. Children's poems by Hungarian well-known authors can also be tracked on the Internet³, like the famous Brambleberry by Weöres Sándor, some poems by Ágnes Nemes

² <https://www.rhymetime.hu/our-favorite-hungarian-rhymes-in-english-1/>
<https://www.rhymetime.hu/our-favorite-hungarian-rhymes-in-english-2/>

³ https://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/We%C3%B6res_S%C3%A1ndor-1913/Galagonya/en/24302-The_brambleberry

Nagy or Károly Tamkó Sirató⁴, who are highly recommended authors in the course description designed by the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature. With the help of the description and the available materials an insight into Hungarian children's literature authors, their literary works and children's poetry could also be presented. However, the focus of the course was children's literature of all kinds.

Based on the fact that the international students would have studied the course in their mother tongue at home in their home countries, it was also assumed that their course contents would have comprised, to some extent, mother tongue-related children's literature, that is, learning about all the poems, stories, nursery rhymes, etc. in their own language. To find the match, the educator (while providing both theory and practice elements) came to the conclusion that some time had to be devoted to Persian, Ukrainian, and Chinese traditional and contemporary children's literary pieces and authors. To mention some children's literature writers in a list that is by no means complete who were discussed in the course: the children's book authors writing in Farsi, Samad Behrangi, Nazanin Mirsadeghi, and Mahmud Kianush, regarded as the founder of children's poetry in Iran, were a part of the course. Vsevolod Nestayko, a modern Ukrainian children's writer who is considered the country's best-known and best loved Ukrainian children's literature writer, 'joined' the course as well. From the Chinese children's literature authors some works by Luo Binwang (駱賓王 or 骆宾王) and Li Bai (太白) were examined. As one of the requirements, students had to compile a file with fifty mother-tongue poems, jingles, lullabies, etc. to be learned exclusively in their mother tongue.

A basic foundation of knowledge of children's literature (genres, authors, etc.) was combined with an introduction to very young learner methodology of how to deal with poems, jingles, lullabies, rhymes, i.e. children's poetry in the kindergarten classroom. (The methodology of using stories in the kindergarten is the content of the following children's literature course). The course was carried out in an interactive, workshop-like way where students could do presentations on compulsory readings in the research literature and the lives of authors in forms of PPT presentations. They were also asked to provide quizzes for the presentations to test their peers' competencies in the readings. After having been provided with several practical presentations of how to lead children's literature sessions in the kindergarten, the trainees were asked to lead micro-teaching sessions where they taught rhymes to their peers with all the necessary stages, visuals and instructions needed. With the help of experiential learning, the students underwent the lecturer-trainer promoted the process of learning and also learning teaching.

One of the final requirements was also to create a children's literature poster (displayed in the methodology classroom at the Faculty) where the background, the history of a mother-tongue nursery rhymes, the stages of how to present them and use them with kindergarten children, and an idea of an art activity closely related to the nursery rhyme with all the stages and instructions. The

⁴ https://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/Tamk%C3%B3_Sirat%C3%B3_K%C3%A1roly-1905/Vir%C3%A1g%C3%A9nek/en/23812-Love_Song

piece of art accompanying the nursery rhyme had to be made and the poster presented in front of the class. At the end of the course, before the examination, as a revision of the course, a group poster (see Appendix 4) had to be created in groups of four (three groups of four and one group of five) during the last lesson based on all the material covered in the course. The key words, terms, concepts, and some pictures related to the course content were provided by the lecturer. The students were asked to add their own thoughts and ideas to synthesise everything learnt and formulate a general message of the course. By completing the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology I* course the students took one step in learning teaching and the learning continuum.

Conclusion

When introducing the International Kindergarten Education Programme, the educator teaching on the programme had to face not only the fact that courses are entirely taught in English, a common language for all the students enrolled on the course, but also the different backgrounds, different educational systems, and most of all, the different knowledge of literature the students had brought to class. The factors of CCC therefore had a large impact on the redesigning of the course. The courses originally designed for the Hungarian students needed to be reconstructed and adapted to the faculty requirements, the CCC and the needs of the students as the original course descriptions could not be used. With the help of the course, a basic foundation for using children's literature literary pieces in kindergarten were laid. By working on different literary texts, students' language skills had also been improved, thus two of the elements of the content knowledge needed for a bilingual kindergarten career were improved.

Due to limited space, the background of '*Children's Literature and Its Methodology 1*' course of the international pre-service kindergarten education programme has barely been presented. Yet, even this short paper has managed to highlight its complex nature and the hardships faced when re-designing the children's literature course. After having taught the course, it seems useful to draw a conclusion and make some recommendations. Unfortunately, before the course there were no inter-departmental meetings during which the experience of previous children's literature courses held as a part of the mandatory training could have been shared, the details carefully worked out and the content of the course agreed upon. The students opting for the bilingual specialisation have a total of five semesters of children's literature, with three held during their mandatory training and two in their bilingual modules. In the future the five courses could be redesigned for the needs of the international courses and the material adjusted. Nevertheless, collaboration between the two departments would be needed to design a logically constructed, five-semester-long, spiral curriculum (Drew, 2019) in which key concepts are presented repeatedly, but with deepening layers of complexity.

As a further recommendation, it would also be desirable to spend the whole first semester (of the six) on improving academic skills and the students' language skills

in order to relieve anxiety and prepare them for studying the programme entirely in English. This could be done by rescheduling those courses which improve their English language skills and introducing academic skills as a new module.

To conclude, apart from the CCC and the related hardships, the course appeared to be successful based on the feedback received from the students. They liked the *Children's Literature and Its Methodology I* course and enjoyed the syllabus. The students also found the content relevant and useful for their future pre-school teaching career. However, this course was only the first of the five children's literature courses they are to study, and the course only allowed them to engage with the subject matter to a minimal degree. In conclusion, it must have been the educational content, the subject matter, and its cross-international, intercultural features that spoke to all nationalities in the group that engendered the relative success of the course.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

https://www.tok.elte.hu/dstore/document/1434/NOK_taj_2020.pdf

Appendix 2

https://www.tok.elte.hu/dstore/document/457/stipendium_programme_structure.pdf

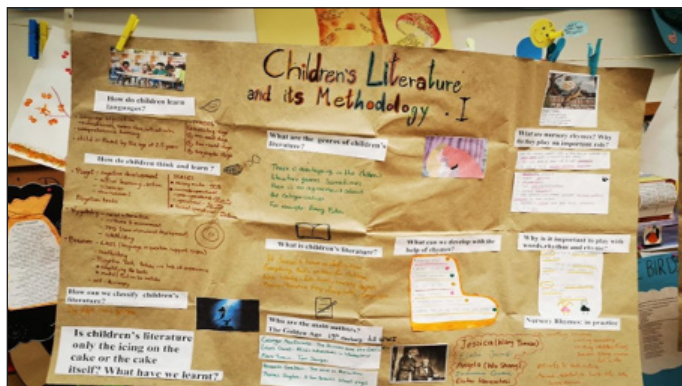
Appendix 3

Students' Posters (A, B, C, D)

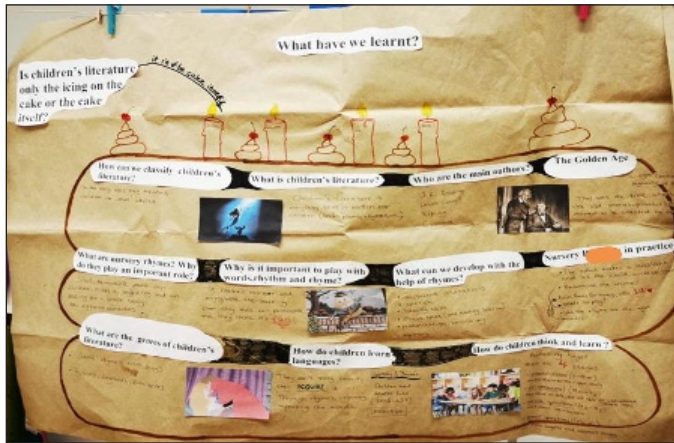
A



B



C



D

