



NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY ♦ FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES
PROGRAMME OF STUDIES REFORM PROJECT (PEDYAS)

PEDYAS PROJECT EVALUATOR FORM

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<i>Note: Please attach CV in English <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or Greek <input type="checkbox"/> and check in the appropriate box.</i>	
Your comments about the curriculum reform	
The rationale and the changes introduced to the curriculum:	<p>The curriculum reforms proposed and instituted through the PEDYAS project have been extremely well-focused to achieve a number of impressive and wide-ranging improvements for undergraduate education. Notable among these changes are key innovations in both teaching and learning techniques that utilize information and communication technologies. An increase in the number of seminars to provide students with a more concentrated classroom experience and choice of coherent course offerings is of equal importance for developing the advanced offerings for majors in both Departments within English Studies. Establishing outlets for student writing now provides students with a forum to share their work beyond the classroom. And creating multiple forms of student assessment to replace the former emphasis on a final examination greatly advances a process-oriented approach to learning.</p> <p>These reform goals were increasingly necessary for students in English Studies to be adequately prepared to meet the challenges of today's globally-connected societies and are in keeping with curricular aims specified by the European Union. The changes are notable in their emphasis on progressive skill-building, knowledgeable citizenship, and enhanced professionalism.</p> <p>Both the Department of Language and Linguistics and the Department of Literature and Culture have benefited significantly from the reorganization into Disciplinary Clusters at both the Basic and Specialized Studies levels. The Basic Studies reform into 6 Disciplinary Clusters gives students the necessary breadth of knowledge to prepare them for advanced courses in their major. The Specialized Studies reform then provides students with greater depth in their chosen major and also allows them further concentration in related areas of knowledge.</p> <p>For the Department of Literature and Culture, the shift away from Survey courses in American and British Literature to Anglophone Literature and Culture, along with more electives on film and media, updates the curriculum for the twenty-first century. The new curricular emphasis on literary and cinematic works from a variety of English-speaking countries gives students a clearer</p>

	<p>understanding of the multiculturalism of our time. So too, the introduction of more courses in academic and creative writing better prepares students for post-graduate education and future teaching careers.</p> <p>In terms of outcome, the proposed reforms have been insightfully designed and effectively institutionalized during the period in which funding for the Project has been available. The PEDYAS team is to be most highly commended for the work it has accomplished.</p>
<p>How the curriculum compares to those of other similar English Studies Faculties in Europe (excluding the UK):</p>	<p>Since my expertise involves curricular design and reform within the United States, this section will be addressed more fully by the other evaluators in terms of the European Union. I provide comments based on comparison with US pedagogy and curricular design.</p> <p>Although it is not customary in the United States for Departments of Language and Literature to include teacher education within them, individual Departments of Education are similarly involved in curricular reforms that include an increased access to technology and an enhanced awareness of the educational needs of multicultural societies. The PEDYAS project's focus on technological access and self-directed learning is also a central one for US pedagogy. In addition to providing opportunities for research and self-guided training, facility with information and communication technology is seen as a crucial form of education for students who will be expected to be technologically proficient in their future careers.</p> <p>Many US colleges and universities are currently engaged in transforming departments of language, literature, and cultural studies in ways that parallel the reforms undertaken by the PEDYAS project. The PEDYAS model of disciplinary clusters that emphasize concentrations of knowledge, bolstered by interdisciplinary courses that bring differing perspectives to a given topic, is the leading one for reform in the US as well.</p> <p>Writing courses of all kinds have been steadily rising in the number of offerings over the past decade. Within English and/or Rhetoric Departments, the demand for such courses has often been student-generated. They are aware of the importance of clear communication for both academic and creative purposes. Again, the PEDYAS project has provided the Department of English Studies with an exemplary curricular design.</p>
<p>A component of the curriculum that impressed you positively and/or negatively:</p>	<p>For both Departments, the curricular re-organization around Basic Studies and Specialized Studies is especially well-designed to encourage progressive skill-building and the development of coherent concentrations of knowledge. The requirement of 20 Basic Studies courses establishes foundations of knowledge for students so that they are better able to grasp the ways in which individual disciplines frame objects of study. The organization into Clusters then enables students not only to see the merit of combining their disciplinary focus with interdisciplinary points of</p>

	<p>comparison but also to experience the value of collaborative expansions of knowledge.</p> <p>The division into Basic and Specialized Studies is also effective for enabling students to take their courses in Greek as part of their foundational framework and subsequently to focus on English Studies, in either Linguistics or Literature, for their last two years. This change is more effective for honing their skills in which ever of these areas they choose as their major. Students will be better prepared for further study at the post-graduate level and for their future professional lives.</p> <p>Smaller classes and/or discussion sections are a key element of the success of this enterprise. The intimate setting and greater demand on student discussion that seminars foster place important emphases on the participatory nature of learning. More direct student involvement in their own learning is reinforced through the Centre for Self-access Learning.</p>
<p>An aspect of the reformed curriculum that might be reinforced or altered in the future:</p>	<p>Ongoing faculty development initiatives would be a welcome component of this (or any) curriculum. Workshops that allow faculty to explore new techniques of teaching as well as recent trends in scholarship are beneficial for renewing the work of established faculty and for mentoring and integrating new faculty members. This has been instituted in part through the PEDYAS project's reforms at hand, primarily by way of conferences that have been held throughout the period. While conferences are invaluable for bringing scholars and other professionals into the existing community, they are limited in time. Follow-up workshops would thus allow the faculty to continue the dialogue inaugurated at these events. Such arenas of discussion also provide opportunities for faculty to collaborate on future scholarship and course design.</p> <p>In terms of specific suggestions about faculty development, it would be valuable for the course offerings in Anglophone literature and culture to include African, Australian, and New Zealand works in English, in addition to the now expanded offerings in other postcolonial areas. This might also be accomplished through new hires, if funding for new faculty comes available or if new positions are made available following retirements.</p>
<p>Your comments about the various actions of the PEDYAS project</p>	
<p>The PEDYAS project has many components that deserve the highest praise. Foremost among these is the Centre for Self-access Learning (specific comments below). So too, the interdepartmental Discourse and Gender cluster allows students in both Departments to gain awareness of how crucial a role gender has played in the production of knowledge and social arrangements in general. This interdisciplinary cluster was made possible by yet another far-reaching curricular reform: the Gender Studies Programme of the UOA. Integration of these two efforts underscores for students how far-reaching gender awareness is in understanding the ideology of language and systems of knowledge in general.</p> <p>Another feature of the PEDYAS project to be singled out for special commendation</p>	

includes the new online electronic journals Synthesis, devoted to discussions of Anglophone Literature and Culture, and Directions, which focuses on English language teaching and testing. In each case, these new journals provide means by which ongoing conversation among scholars at UOA and other institutions is facilitated. This is important for establishing global networks of knowledge and up-to-date dialogue among scholars. The new student journal A-Formes, which reproduces creative writing efforts, is yet another excellent innovation to celebrate student accomplishments.

Additions to the Library and purchases of computer software were also an important dimension of the PEDYAS project.

Conferences held periodically are yet another insightful way to further the goal of reforming the English Studies Programme by bringing together English Studies faculty, post-graduate students, and invited speakers. Contacts made among scholars continue far beyond the Conference itself and foster crucial dialogue on the issues at hand.

These, and the various actions of curricular reform discussed above represent the exceptional planning and well-thought out process of implementation undertaken by the PEDYAS project team.

Your comments regarding the Centre for Self-access Learning

<p>How it has been organised</p>	<p>My visit to the Centre for Self-access Learning on 9 June 2008 allowed observation of the many ways in which students may take advantage of this flagship reform instituted by the PEDYAS project. The Centre is a particularly noteworthy addition to the English Studies Programme, one that serves the University as a whole.</p> <p>The space itself is remarkably inviting, a quiet and pleasant oasis for students to work. Framed posters of past Conferences are a reminder of the impressive intellectual life of the English Studies Programme. Its architectural design allows good lighting and air circulation. It has been equally well organized to foster its goals of self-directed learning. The furniture is comfortable and the arrangement of chairs, desks, and aisles allows movement without interference with those at work at the individual stations. Headphones and fast internet connection are available. Additional equipment, such as printers and scanners further provide necessary features for students to complete their work.</p> <p>Individual work stations with 25 networked multimedia computers enable students to work alone or collaboratively with their colleagues and I observed both kinds of work underway during my visit.</p> <p>In addition to alleviating the practical difficulty of the English Studies Programme serving a growing number of students each year, the Centre performs its greatest service in empowering students to be more active in their own learning. Through self-direction and interactive materials, students are able to work at an individualized pace. They become familiar with electronic modes of instruction and self-evaluation that will provide a basis for ongoing education beyond attaining their degree.</p>
<p>Its function</p>	<p>The function of the Centre is to provide teachers and students with an electronic means to get students who need remedial work to a satisfactory level; to encourage all students toward self-directed activity; and to create and maintain an archive of</p>

	<p>materials from courses taught thus far. It achieves all of these goals impressively.</p> <p>The provisions for English language instruction are extensive, including a wide-range of types, from academic lectures to worksheets, that help students see their progress underway.</p> <p>The Centre also helps students become increasingly familiar and comfortable using computer technology, clearly a necessary component of education today.</p> <p>The newly established micro-site insures that all these offerings are clearly designated and, in a user-friendly way, indicates how to link to them.</p> <p>The well-executed design and inclusion of fast internet connection of the Centre makes it an ideal model of reform for the University as a whole.</p>
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Your comments regarding the Faculty portal

The Website of the Faculty of English Studies is aesthetically pleasing and admirably easy to use. I have perused the Greek version (but cannot read Greek) and have read carefully through the English version.

The latter provides a valuable overview of information via clearly-designated links to the Teaching and Research Staff, etc., and these links, in turn, describe each category effectively. The amount of information supplied under each category is ample but not burdensome.

It is easy to find faculty listings and email addresses and other sources of information regarding upcoming events and resources in English Studies and UOA. The portal is highly functional and of pleasing appearance and provides an exemplary electronic entry to the UOA.

Overall assessment of what has been achieved

The PEDYAS project, from its initial stages to the implementation of the reforms, has achieved its laudable goals with outstanding success. This is in no small part due to the exceptional working relationship among the members of the PEDYAS team. Discussions with each of them individually and with the group as a whole demonstrated the collective good will that energized their several years of hard work. It is also clear that the PEDYAS team is held in the highest respect by the Faculty of English Studies.

The priorities worked out in the initial stages, in particular regarding funding allotments for technology enhancement, were admirably-conceived to move the project along so that the results could be evaluated at each stage of development. Such planning was clearly effective in getting the Centre for Self-access Learning underway with University funding, since the overall reform involved construction of the room itself so that PEDYAS funds could be judiciously allotted for purchases of furniture and equipment and the other reforms.

The re-organization of the curriculum at the Basic and Specialized levels and its implementation and enhancement through a number of features discussed above, including hiring non-tenure track teaching staff, is commendably forward-looking and worthily student-centered. A more forceful emphasis on self-directed learning for students in English Studies is a key component of the reform, serving a double purpose: it allows more efficient use of faculty time and provides students with necessary skills

and interest in developing their knowledge beyond their years at OUA.

Establishment of the new electronic journals and the Centre for Self-access Learning give both the teaching faculty and the students in the English Studies Programme a means to participate fully as members not just of the European Union but of the larger global educational network available today through information and communications technologies.

The PEDYAS reform project is a superb accomplishment: sophisticated in conception, innovative in implementation, and resourceful in application.

Date: 11 June 2008

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(Evaluator's signature)