

# Designing language course curriculum: Impacts of international internship programs

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## Abstract

The role of international internship programs in fostering global collaboration, cultural exchange, and human development is crucial. The "500 Scholars by Bolashaq" is the best program in Kazakhstan for scientists to develop research experience. Being awarded the Bolashaq scholarship is a great pleasure for Kazakhstani scholars to conduct research in the USA, at the University of Minnesota with the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Visiting Scholars Program: Research, Pedagogy, and Leadership. My research work aims to study the approaches used in the Minnesota English Language Program (MELP) at the University of Minnesota in designing foreign language teaching curricula in diverse contexts, and based on the findings create a new course curriculum for teaching the Kazakh language to non-Kazakh speakers in multicultural settings. This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach to comprehensively explore the research objectives. Specifically, a survey was administered to a representative sample of students and educators from Narxoz University and Kazakh-British Technical University to gather quantitative data on perceptions of the existing curriculum. The analysis of interview data provided certain evidence to qualify identified gaps and shortcomings in the curriculum, contributing to a deeper understanding of the research questions.

## Introduction

In 1993, the Kazakhstani government presented the Bolashaq scholarship program, aimed at developing the skills and knowledge of Kazakhstani students by providing them with scholarships for study abroad, particularly in countries with a reputation as global centers of excellence (Sagintayeva & Jumakulov, 2015). One notable aspect of this program is its emphasis on promoting linguistic diversity and proficiency among its participants (Bokayev et al., 2020). Bolashaq's international internship program has been increasingly recognized in recent years as a means of integrating the international experience into the language curriculum. As Kazakhstan continues to position itself as a key player on the international stage, the importance of language proficiency, particularly in the Kazakh language, cannot be overstated. The Kazakh language is being taught across the country and abroad in diverse cultural settings and more people are learning the language to better understand Kazakh culture. The Kazakh language serves not only as a symbol of national identity but also as a medium through which cultural heritage and values are preserved and transmitted to future generations (Zhumay et al., 2021).

## Research design:

Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design:

Quantitative Survey and Qualitative Comparison of Course Syllabi

## Research Question:

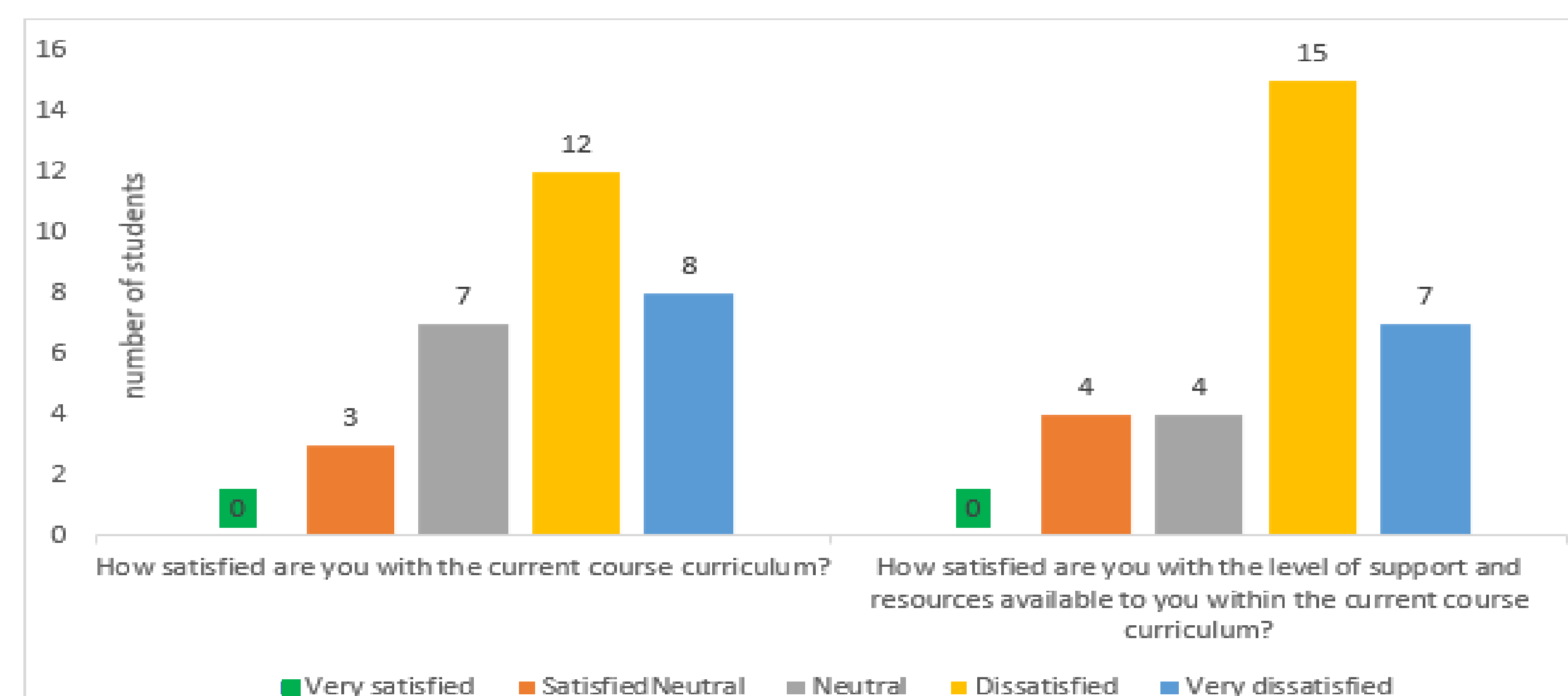
How do international internship programs contribute to designing a course curriculum?

## Research Objectives:

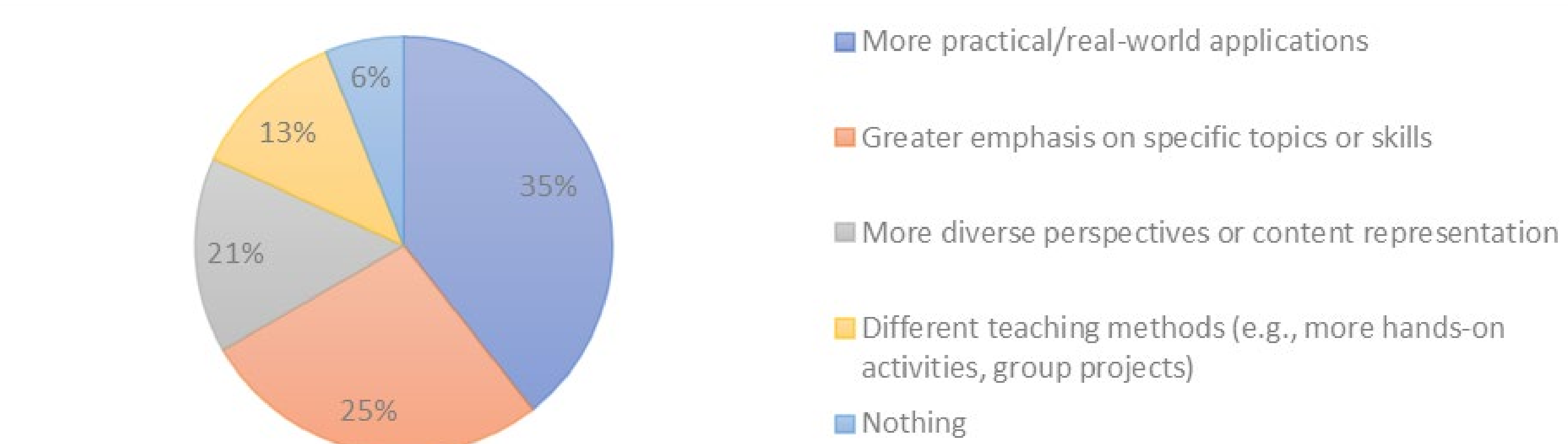
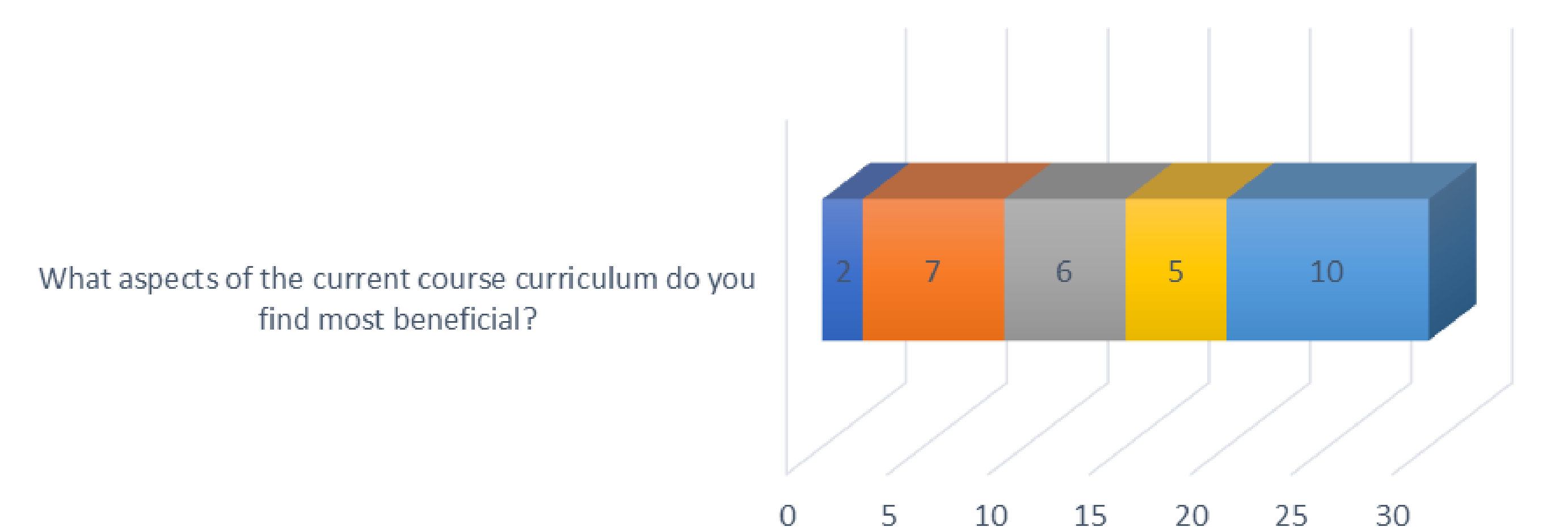
- to analyze the gaps in the existing Kazakh language course curriculum for non-Kazakh speakers, its merits and shortcomings, and what can be improved by comparing it with the University of Minnesota language course curricula.
- to study the approaches taken at the University of Minnesota in designing foreign language teaching curricula in multicultural settings;

## Quantitative Data and Analysis

Survey of Current and Former Students (30 respondents)



Content coverage Teaching methods Assessment methods Relevance to real-world applications Nothing



## Qualitative Data and Analysis

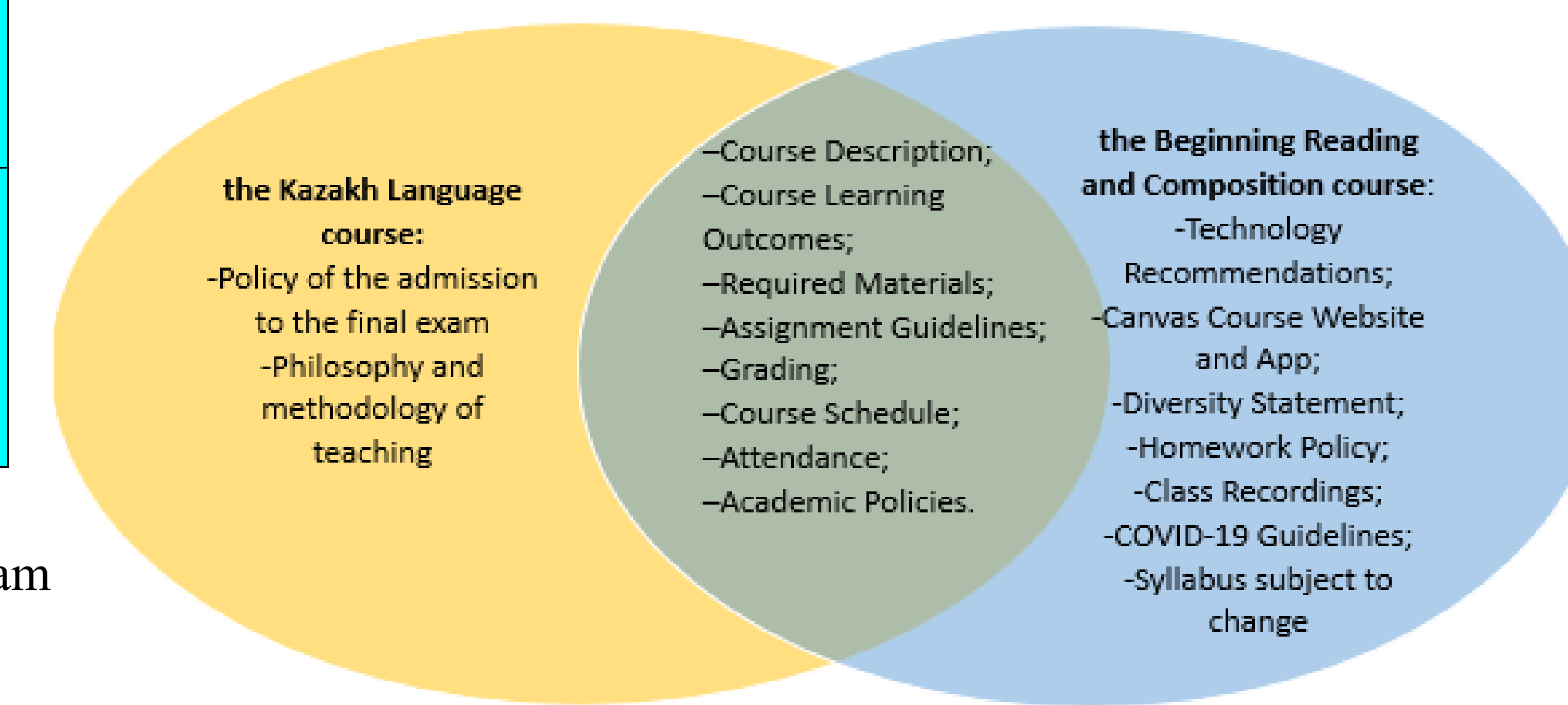
Table 2. Graded activities and assessments of the courses.

Grade	the Kazakh Language course for Beginners by Narxoz University	the Beginning Reading and Composition course by MELP University of Minnesota
AA – Excellent	A 4.0 (GPA) 95-100% A- 3.67 (GPA) 90-94% Student is active in class, communicates well with others and completes homework/assignments on time, has a high personal interest.	90 to 100% score Excellent Student has demonstrated superior achievement of the student learning outcomes for the course.
A – Good	B+ 3.33 (GPA) 85-89% B 3.0 (GPA) 80-84% B- 2.67 (GPA) 75-79% C+ 2.33 (GPA) 70-74% Student is interested and ready to work hard in class, but sometimes does not do homework on time.	80 to 89% score Good Student has demonstrated a high level of achievement of the student learning outcomes for the course.
B+/B-/C – Adequate	C 2.0 (GPA) 65-69% C- 1.67 (GPA) 60-64% D+ 1.33 (GPA) 55-59% D- 1.0 (GPA) 50-54% It is rare for a student to complete an assignment in class. Student is not willing to attend classes.	70 to 79% score Adequate Student has demonstrated adequate achievement of student learning outcomes for the course.
F/F- Failed	EX 0.5 (GPA) 25-49% F 0 (GPA) 0-24% Student cannot be graded because he/she is absent or almost absent or does not participate in the class. Classwork and homework is never done on time.	0 to 69% Not passing Student has demonstrated some achievement of the student learning outcomes but not sufficient to pass the course.

Midterm 1 (Week 1-8)	the Kazakh Language course for Beginners by Narxoz University		the Beginning Reading and Composition course by MELP University of Minnesota	
	Assessment	Grade	Assessment	Grade
Midterm 1 (Week 1-8)	Writing 1	30%	Reading Tests (6-8)	35%
	Speaking 1	20%	Writing Assignments (6)	25%
	Participation 1	40%	Personal Vocabulary Project and Quizzes	10%
	Attendance 1	10%	Timed Writing Tests (2)	10%
	Midterm 1 = Summative Assessment 1 (SA1)	100% (30%)	Reading Lab (Extensive Reading Club)	10%
Midterm 2 (Week 8-15)	Writing 2	30%	MyELT, Journal Writing, and other assigned work	10%
	Speaking 2	20%		
	Participation 2	40%		
	Attendance 2	10%		
	Midterm 2 = Summative Assessment (SA2)	100% (30%)		
Exam		40%	Final	100%
Final = SA1 (30%)+ SA2(30%)+Exam(40%)		100%		

Syllabus structure of the courses via Venn diagram



## Findings

**Determined the gaps in the Kazakh language course curriculum for non-Kazakh speakers, its merits and shortenings:**

- The components (textbook, syllabus, multimedia resources) of the current Kazakh course curriculum were not shaped to satisfy the multicultural and diverse language backgrounds;
- Learners' first language (L1) competence was not taken into consideration;
- The curriculum was primarily designed for Russian-speaking environments;
- The actual curriculum is found to be outdated and does not meet the current trends and needs of society.

### Implications for Future Research

- Focus on conducting a thorough analysis of the current curriculum model to identify its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- By examining factors such as learner needs, educational trends, and language proficiency goals, it was determined the necessity to develop a new course model. A new course model can be developed and piloted with a group of Kazakh language learners.
- Other language program curricula (such as Arabic, French, Chinese, Russian, etc.) at the University of Minnesota can also be compared to determine trends across foreign language programs.

## Conclusion

Visiting scholars from Kazakhstan at CEHD have the opportunity to study and observe educational practices at the University of Minnesota. By integrating insights gained from international experiences I have an opportunity to enrich the Kazakh language curriculum with real-world relevance and global perspectives by studying MELP language course curricula, models, innovative teaching methods, and educational technologies. By bringing these best practices back home, I can contribute to the improvement of course curriculum and instructional quality.

## Reference

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