



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Department of Foreign Languages

Notification of meeting Programme board meeting for the bachelor's program in Chinese

Date: 24.02.2023

Time: 14.00-15.30

Place: Seminar room 265, HF building/Zoom

Agenda

1/23 Approval of notification of meeting and today's agenda

2/23 Approval of minutes from the programme board's last meeting (appendix 1)

3/23 Evaluation report for Kin102 and Kin104 from Dr. Xinzheng Wan, external examiner (discussion) (appendix 2)

4/23 Format of student evaluations

Following up discussion from our previous programme board meeting (decision/recommendation)



Minutes from the programme board meeting Chinese programme

Date: 21.09.22

Time: 14.15-16.00

Place: seminar room 301, HF building

Present: Shouhui Zhao, Guowen Shang, Helen Zhang, Julia Marinaccio, Jens Karlsson, Tuva Aareskjold, Marit Skaatan

13/22 Approval of notification of meeting and today's agenda

Approved

14/22 Approval of minutes from the programme board's last meeting (appendix 1)

Approved

15/22 Courses taught in the spring semester: student feedback and ways to improve (appendices 2-5)

The programme coordinator gave a summary of the four courses taught during spring 2022. Student evaluations and teacher's self-assessment were conducted for all four courses.

KIN101 and KIN102 were taught by Guowen Shang and Shouhui Zhao.

KIN101

The survey results show that the students feel generally happy about the course. 31 students did the final exam in KIN101.

KIN102

Teaching

The teachers think this batch of students did not seem motivated. Oral participation in class was low. It was hard to get the students motivated to speak in class.

The student representative explains that students were not motivated because the course was not their number one choice. Motivation in class overall was dropped because students were influenced by the students who lacked motivation. This was driving the motivation down overall. Student groups did not work well. Pace was an issue. Many had difficulties with raising their hand. It was also a problem that the less motivated students only joined one course. The student representative suggest that we put up an announcement in the system if students only register for one course or inform the students ahead that KIN101 and KIN102 should be taken the same semester.



Exam

23 students did the exam in KIN102. 7 failed. The failure rate is a bit high. Many students had difficulties writing Chinese characters. Many did not complete the hand-written requirements.

The student representative also stated that many students complained about too little time to answer all the tasks in the exam. The student representative herself felt that time was ample. Time management is one of the generic skills that the exam is supposed to test. Students were inexperienced with the written exam format. The student representative suggests a more mock exams ahead of the actual exam to help students practice time management. During the mock exam, the students can be guided in what to prioritize.

KIN201

KIN201 was taught by Jens Karlsson and Helen Zhang.

The student feedback was predominantly positive. There were some drop-out issues this semester: 5-7 students failed or did not take the exam.

Jens Karlsson and Helen Zhang made some suggestions on how to improve further this time: Make an explicit study plan to hand out when the course commences. Jens and Helen will go over the material and cut out some parts and focus on vocabulary, Chinese characters, and grammar. Jens pointed out: At some point the students reach the level which is more open-ended. At this level, they will not get the grammar points explained, instead the students will start using your own resources. KIN201 is an intermediate step between beginner's level and the advanced level. Textbooks are not ideal in the long run, but the teachers will do their best to bridge the gap. KIN201 is meant to be harder than the 100-level courses.

EAS251

EAS251 was taught by Julia Marinaccio (partly joint teaching with EAS250 taught by Nathan Hopson).

There were several issues with EAS251. The students responded that the teaching needs to start earlier in the semester. Technical issues in Mitt UiB need to be improved. They responded that there was a missing link between what Julia told them and what exercises were done. EAS251 is a mix of a crash course in research methodology and academic writing, and a bachelor's colloquium. Nathan and Julia attended each other's lectures, but it was still not ideal. One person should teach the course and give theoretical input.



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

Institutt for fremmedspråk (IF)

The teaching should start from the beginning of the term. We will terminate the co-teaching with the Japanese programme. We could do six individual lectures in a shorter time span of 3-4 weeks. This could enable to students to pick a thesis topic earlier.

Julia stated that some students responded that the lectures did not make sense to some students. They did not decide a topic based on the lectures.

A good solution could be to give input with closer connection to the actual course; do the six lectures, focus more on relevant methodology within the different areas, and show them *how* can they do the research.

The programme coordinator thinks these lectures can still be helpful. We can keep this. But for the research methodology part, we start from the beginning.

16/22 Format of student evaluations – how can we conduct them to increase respondent rates? (Discussion)

The student representatives think the survey questions are so open. It makes it hard to remember. Students are not motivated to answer.

The student advisor said that we see the tendency that response rates on these surveys are low overall. The students who are very dissatisfied often respond, the ones who are happy or neutral do not respond. This results in an uneven impression of the actual satisfaction level.

We specify that all comments in its entirety will be forwarded to all the teaching staff. We urge the students to keep the feedback civil and constructive. It's happened on occasion that students use the opportunity an anonymous survey provides to lash out in the comments section. The administration is obligated to forward this to the teacher when this happens, as we cannot keep information from them which regards them.

The format we have used up until this point is a standard template for student surveys. We can choose to do it differently if we want. We need to have some sort of student feedback as it's a requirement in the student quality system and provides data for the teachers to write the course self-assessments. It's up to the course coordinator to decide on a format to receive the feedback.

Some suggestions from the student advisor:

- 1) Set aside 15 minutes in a lecture or seminar in the second half of the term. The students give oral feedback on questions provided, as well as general feedback. Student advisor takes notes and hands over to the course coordinator.



- 2) Include the student representative and let them collect oral feedback and take notes.
- 3) Keep the same template, but let the students respond with full name, and stress that that their full name will be linked to their full response.
- 4) Set aside time during a lecture or seminar, for instance before the break. Urge them to respond. Set aside time well before the exam period starts.

Helen thinks reflection is important. Make a new template as a compromise, where we ask 1-2 core questions. The student representative thinks the boxes are a bad idea – her peers see a box and opt out. Helen thinks a warm-up discussion will make it easier to write more in-depth.

Julia thinks it's a good idea to do it in class. Not in the very last lecture, but 2-3 meetings earlier. It's also possible to do another kind of evaluation: leave the students alone in class and let them write their comments on the blackboard. She thinks UiB should have a quality assessment centre with standardized surveys, where the centre does the analysis.

Jens thinks it's an idea to let the students reflect upon their learning process. We could establish a system to lure the students into reflection mode if we devise the questions smartly and let the students engage in a running self-reflection process. For instance: Where are you now compared to the beginning of term? Where did you feel like you absorbed a lot, or absorbed less? It's more likely to get a good response rate at the end, when most students have reflected already. We could try this in KIN201.

Student representative: Norwegian students are timid. Discussions in groups first will make it easier to answer.

17/22 Statement from the programme board on ekstern fagfellerapport by Xinzheng Wan (Discussion) (appendix 6)

The programme board has read the external examiner's report with great interest.

In the last year we have had 'kollokvie' groups organized by the teachers. This was helpful to the students, but a bit complicated for the teachers. This year we did not organize 'kollokvie' groups.

18/22 EAS251 - change of course description: add "±10 %" to the word count and "excluding references, appendix, etc."

<https://www.uib.no/en/course/EAS251>



UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

Institutt for fremmedspråk (IF)

<https://www.uib.no/emne/EAS251>

The programme board passed the suggestions. Marit will make the changes in the course descriptions online.

19/22 Possibility of swapping the instructional semesters of KIN101 and KIN100?

The programme coordinator has consulted the head of studies Benedicte Irgens on this matter. Irgens responded that the courses cannot be switched because:

- The standard number of credits for a full-time term is 30 credits.
- The teaching hours do not match.

The student representative wanted to know if this has been suggested by the students or the teachers. It has been discussed among the teachers based on their general impression. The teachers responded that KIN100 is regarded as a heavy theoretical course among students. Some start to question their motivation when the first Chinese language course is in the second term. Helen suggests putting more Chinese words into the KIN100 lectures. She has already started doing this (keywords and practice). KIN100 is now more focused.

Conclusion: We will not swap the instructional semesters but continue to make improvements to KIN100 instead.

20/22 Status for exchange studies to China, Taiwan or other places (Discussion)

The situation in China has not changed. It was possible to apply for NCCU for the spring semester 2023. Two students are now in Taiwan. The student advisor hasn't been contacted by anyone who has applied for the spring term.

21/22 Reminder: Helen will take over as programme coordinator October 1st 2022.

Evaluation of KIN 102 and KIN 104

Report prepared by **Xinzheng Wan**

Date of the report: 5 February 2023

Before this evaluation, I received documents from the two courses, KIN102 and KIN104, from Professor Shang Guowen and Dr. Jens Carlsson, including course information, slides and instructional materials, homework, the final written exams, and the student's course evaluations, which cover the teaching process of the two courses wholly. I also received a sample report of an earlier assessment, which gave me a glimpse of the development in related courses. In addition, professor Shang provided me with an account for the course KIN104 when it started, allowing me to log in to the learning platform of the University of Bergen as an observer and keep me updated with the course information. All the above materials have laid a good ground for my evaluation.

1. The syllabuses

KIN102 builds on KIN101 and is the second level of the Chinese courses, offering students a further introduction to modern Mandarin. After completing the study, the students should have acquired basic grammar, a vocabulary of 300 words related to everyday life, and 160 new Chinese characters. They are also supposed to be able to read and write simple texts and hold conversations about familiar topics in Mandarin.

KIN104 builds on KIN103 and offers students who wish to learn modern Mandarin above the basic level, emphasizing language structure, written language, and everyday polite speech. After finishing the course, the students must acquire practical skills and learn to express their points of view on various topics. They will also master a vocabulary of 300 words linked to everyday and social life, as well as 160 characters.

Generally speaking, the learning objectives and requirements of the syllabuses mentioned above are concise and meet the corresponding provisions of the respective levels. Both courses emphasize learning basic vocabulary, grammar, and Chinese characters, laying a solid foundation for further study. In addition, these and the other two courses, KIN101 and KIN103 of the Chinese program, are logically related.

2. Textbooks

Both courses use the new textbook *Integrated Chinese* (the 4th edition, produced by Cheng & Tsui Company), respectively, the first volume (second half of the book) and the second volume (second half of the book). As mentioned in the earlier evaluation report, the textbook is well-acclaimed. It helps learners develop real-life communicative skills using context-based tasks, which is witnessed by the student in the course- evaluation (KIN104), "*we learned vocabulary that is useful in Chinese.*"

A significant feature of this textbook is that it provides many diversified exercises in its "textbook" and accompanying "workbook," which teachers can use flexibly. The two courses' classroom exercises and homework show that many are directly adopted from the textbook. At the same time, we also saw that teachers adjusted the number of practices according to actual needs and made specific changes in content, such as adding some local vocabulary and adjusting some contexts to the Norwegian social life familiar to the students. As a result, it increases the pertinence and interest in the exercises.

It is worth noting that the textbook in Chinese at the University of Bergen has now completely changed from the earlier "*Contemporary Chinese*" to "*Integrated Chinese*" of higher quality. The four Chinese courses use the four units of this textbook in sequence. In terms of content, the four units of the book correspond precisely to the syllabuses of the four courses. The chapters of the textbook and the number of teaching weeks also happen to be a clever matching (see the table below):

<i>Integrated Chinese</i>	Sections	Teaching time	Levels of courses
Volume 1	Chapters 1-5, plus a review	Six weeks	KIN101
	Chapters 6-10, plus a review	Six weeks	KIN102
Volume 2	Chapters 11-15, plus a review	Six weeks	KIN103
	Chapters 16-20, plus a review	Six weeks	KIN104

3. Teaching hours and schedules

Both KIN102 and KIN 104 offered 10 hours of teaching per week for six weeks in the second half of the semester. The instruction in both courses was given as lectures and seminars. Because the teaching content is rich and the progress is intensive, students must be fully

prepared beforehand to complete the learning tasks efficiently. Therefore, in the course information, the learning items and the pages of the reading/using materials have been listed in advance, clearly informing students so they can prepare in advance, which is very positive.

It is evident in the schedules that after completing the two courses, there are still more than two weeks left before the exam. Students can use this time for review and preparation, which naturally helps reduce anxiety and study stress.

4. Teaching procedures

The teachers and the teaching forms

KIN102 was taught by two professors, Zhao Shouhui and Shang Guowen, whose mother tongue is Chinese, and KIN104 was in charge by Dr. Jens, Ph.D. in Chinese Linguistics. The teachers' solid academic knowledge warrants the quality of the courses.

It is reasonable to divide the courses into two subcategories, lectures and workshops because the lectures focus on the theoretical analysis and explanation of "Chinese characters," "vocabulary," "grammar," and "text." In contrast, the workshops strengthen the review and development of language skills.

The provided slides show that both courses attach importance to grammar teaching. The usual process is: to explain the rules concisely and then give 3 to 4 example sentences to illustrate them concretely. For some grammatical items, there are exercises and intensive training so that students can master the rules in practice. In selecting the example sentences, the professors adopted the following measures: adding localized vocabulary reflecting the society of Norway or Bergen; adding Chinese social and historical words; some examples are even direct quotations of actor lines from famous Chinese movies. Such methods are inspiringly creative in cultivating the students' interest in the target language and its culture.

Comparative analysis was also employed to highlight the similarities and differences between Chinese and Nordic languages (Norwegian)/English, which is conducive to positive transfer. However, such comparative analyses seem slightly limited in number.

KIN102 paid close attention to teaching Chinese characters. In each chapter, some characters were selected and analyzed structurally, helping the students to learn the Chinese characters systematically. In addition, the students were provided with practice sheets, which is very good because they can use them for handwriting, an indispensable part of learning Chinese characters. However, it would be more convenient if structural analysis and stroke order of the characters could be added to these exercises.

As mentioned above, the central function of the workshops is to guide students through various exercises to consolidate the new knowledge learned in the lectures and develop their language communication skills. To this end, KIN102 uses a variety of classroom activities, including dialogues in pairs, group conversations and role-playings, and games such as word choice, Quizlet, Kahoot, etc., which effectively increase the entertainment of language learning. On the other hand, KIN104 usually adopts mainly ready-made written exercises in the exercise book and pays attention to the translation and discussion of sentences. With fewer interactive activities, the training method in the course seems a little less diversified.

In short, the lectures and workshops of the two courses have clear objectives and focus, fulfilling the courses' goals. However, the number of exercises is significant, and completing them within the limited time in class seems challenging. Therefore, some assignments can be given to the students in advance so they can prepare them at home instead of doing them in class. This way, class time can be spared for analysis and discussion to improve teaching efficiency.

The exercises and presentations

Both courses have five compulsory assignments and one oral presentation during the semester, and the student must get 4 out of 5 homework plus the presentation approved to present themselves for assessment.

The written assignments of KIN102 generally include translation and essay writing. Students are required to do at least one task, and preferably both. In terms of translation, they usually translate English conversation sentences into Chinese. Such exercises help develop students' communicative ability. Essay writing requires students to write on familiar topics of about 80 words. All of the above assignments require handwriting of Chinese characters, which is, in a way, demanding. Unsurprisingly, some less advanced students may give up essay writing,

negatively affecting their writing skills (which is an essential part of the written test). A possible solution is to make both parts of the exercise mandatory while changing "handwriting Chinese characters" to "typewriting on the computer."

In KIN104, the students must submit five assignments, mainly to translate (usually eight) sentences based on the content of the text from Norwegian/English to Chinese. We have noticed that there is also essay writing in the written examination of this course. It may be ideal if similar practices could be included in the assignments so the students can get training before the exam.

Both courses require students to make an oral presentation on a topic with which they are familiar and have been trained in the course. The presentation of KIN102 is carried out in dialogues in groups, during which listening, speaking, and interactive abilities can be demonstrated. On the other hand, the presentation of KIN104 is carried out on an individual level, which can thoroughly test each student's pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.

Be it obligatory homework or presentation, the teachers always provide the students with detailed information on the contents and a list of needed grammatical structures, facilitating them to complete the assignments.

5. The exams

The final exams for both courses were four-hour written exams checking vocabulary, grammar, reading & comprehension, and writing competence. Both exams took place digitally.

I read the two courses' exams, which thoroughly covered the main content of the two courses. As a result, the focus of the tests is clear, and the question types can highlight the characteristics of the different levels. For example, KIN102 stresses vocabulary and basic grammar, while KIN104 has more reading and comprehension questions.

The difficulty of the exams is moderate, and the questions are closely related to other teaching activities under the courses. For example, the writing questions in the KIN102 exam have already appeared in the required assignments. The writing topics of KIN104 are the same as the oral presentation topics.

It is worth noting that there is a test for each chapter of KIN102, while KIN104 has a mock exam before the actual exam, through which the students can familiarize themselves with the types of questions in the final exam in advance.

Both exams can generally be divided into objective and subjective questions. The first type of question has only one answer and is mainly automatically reviewed. The answers to the second type of question are varied, so teachers must manually check them. The teacher has prepared detailed scoring criteria in advance, considering the diversity of answers and the student's actual level, with a certain degree of flexibility. The composition scoring in KIN104 is remarkably nuanced, involving the richness of vocabulary, the accuracy and diversity of grammatical structure, and also considering the coherence and logic of the text. In actual operation, a comprehensive investigation of the above aspects means a huge workload for teachers, but the objectivity of evaluation can, on the other hand, be guaranteed.

See the results of KIN102 and 104, respectively, as follows:

Scales	KIN102	KIN104
A	5 (21,7%)	5 (23%)
B	4 (17,4%)	5 (23%)
C	3 (13%)	8 (36%)
D	1 (4,3%)	1 (4.5%)
E	3 (13%)	1 (4.5%)
F (failing)	7 (30,4%)	2 (9%)

As seen from the table, overall, the grades are evenly distributed. However, the number of students who failed the KIN102 exam is slightly high. Based on a close examination of the answered papers, the teacher, in his self-analysis, points out:

"...for these seven failed students, whereas they had low marks for all questions, an obvious common pattern is that they all particularly performance poor for producing output or Chinese character handwriting as reflected in Task Five for translation from English to Chinese and Task Nine for essay writing ... One resolution could be taken in order to avoid this would be, while we should emphasize more on output, measures should be taken to motivate the students who find Chinese character difficult. "

Here the teacher hits the nail on the head. Writing essays in Chinese is relatively difficult for students at this level because their vocabulary is limited. To handwrite characters makes it even more demanding. One possible solution is to change "handwriting Chinese characters" to "typewriting Chinese characters with the computer." Because it is an electronic test, this change can be implemented conveniently. Moreover, by using Pinyin, the students may fully demonstrate their communicative skills that are otherwise tricky to judge when they have entirely given up. Of course, homework should require handwriting, but we can also encourage the students to become skilled in typewriting characters, which is a critical competence nowadays.

Such adjustment in the final exam may help students overcome the fear of writing characters. In addition, giving full play to the tool value of Pinyin can cultivate students' interest in Chinese characters and enhance their confidence in moving to a higher level of Chinese learning.

6. Course evaluation and teachers' self-reflection

Evaluations were sent to 26 students in KIN 102, and the received feedback was five (11%). While in KIN104, evaluations were distributed to 23 students, and three feedbacks (11%) were received. The number of feedbacks was relatively small, but the participants answered all the questions, providing an overall picture of the two courses.

The students gave many positive comments: the courses have appropriate syllabuses and rich content; the teachers are good at adjusting the difficulty to meet the level, and the required assignments benefit them. Students were also delighted with the teachers' timely feedback and practical course information (deadlines, teaching plans, etc.).

For class activities, some students hoped to have more entertaining activities to engage all the students in the lectures. To this end, the students also suggested increasing games, calligraphy workshops, and other exciting language and cultural activities. In addition, students wanted to have more opportunities to have extended conversations in Chinese.

It is worth noting that I have also received KIN102 teacher's self-reflection, in which the teacher deeply analyzed and discussed possible adjustments. (See analysis in the "Exams" section.)

In general, students were satisfied with the teaching of the two courses. In particular, they were happy with the teachers' commitment and thought they had significantly benefited from these two courses.

7. Conclusions

Generally speaking, the two courses at the University of Bergen have appropriate syllabuses, clear teaching plans, excellent teaching materials, and practical teaching activities. Furthermore, the examinations fully match the content of the syllabuses with detailed evaluation criteria.

There are only two issues that are worth further consideration:

1. In the written test of KIN102, the number of students that failed the test was slightly higher than before. As discussed above, this mainly lies in the students' limited knowledge of Chinese characters. Therefore, one possible solution is to allow the students to typewrite the Chinese characters on computers instead of writing with their hands. In this way, we can give full play to the auxiliary role of Pinyin in acquiring Chinese at the primary level and encourage the students to continue to learn Chinese at a higher level.
2. The lectures and seminars of KIN104 are rich in content, but the training method appears less varied. The teacher may consider increasing some communicative exercises and adding some engaging exercises, such as Kahoot and Quizlet, to diversify classroom activities, as suggested by the students in the course evaluation.

That being said, the two courses at the University of Bergen were successfully conducted with good quality, which witnessed the teachers' academic merits, rich experience, and high engagement in teaching.