

Denmark

Ministry of Education

Department for Primary and Lower Secondary School and International Affairs

Centre for the Development of Primary and Lower Secondary School

Primary and lower secondary school

The Danish Parliament has recently adopted a new reform of primary and lower secondary school, which includes earlier foreign language learning. Students will now take English from 1st grade (formerly 3rd) and German or French from the 5th grade (now mandatory to choose one of the two, previously one language could be chosen from the 7th grade). A third foreign language might be chosen by the student from the 7th grade. This shift will come into effect as of the 2014/15 school year. The reform also means a change to learning outcomes based on targets.

Our challenges are: early language learning didactics and target-based teaching. Especially activities aimed directly at teaching staff would be welcome.

Higher education

The Danish Government recently launched an action plan for strengthening the internationalization of higher education in Denmark: "Enhanced insight through global outlook", June 2013. The action plan identifies three areas of vital interest – one of them being better foreign language skills for graduates from Higher Education. The action plan underlines the importance of graduates mastering another second language besides English. The goal shall be obtained through more attractive language education programmes, better recognition of students' language skills and stronger co-operation in the field.

High quality language education – high priority

It is important that graduates from higher education command both English and a second foreign language. This concerns language students, as well as students from other fields of study within Higher Education.

But how do we make language education and language learning more attractive and more effective to students in higher education?

The quality of language education can be increased by building strong academic environments based on co-operation and transfer of knowledge, both nationally and internationally.

Evidently, Internationalization contributes to increased quality in language education. International study programmes (e.g. double degrees) or virtual mobility can be ways to establish attractive HE programmes which can enhance the students' language learning. Another way of developing language education is to explore new modes of teaching language, for example by the use of ICT.

Higher education in languages – towards a broader employment-perspective – high priority

It is important that higher education programs in languages are organized in a way that makes students direct their choice of education towards career goals or to establish a defined career perspective within their program. Career goals might be directed towards research and teaching or towards economy and politics.

How do we support the transition from upper secondary education to higher education and how do we improve bachelor- and candidate degrees, in order to make them attractive to students as well as the public and private labor market?

How do we offer the best language learning, didactics, practical experience, and knowledge of other subjects? The combination of language learning with learning another subject. One example is double degrees, where an education in for example economics is combined with a language degree, that is adding a language profile to an ordinary degree of any kind. Another example could be the development of language educations with a combination to subjects such as economics and politics, teaching and didactics or other subjects.

The ECML could facilitate transfer of good practice between the countries on these topics.