



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Special Education

Syllabus

Cognitive and special education perspectives on language, reading, and writing development

Course Code:	SPAKL1
Course Title:	Cognitive and special education perspectives on language, reading, and writing development <i>Kognitiva och specialpedagogiska perspektiv på språk-, läs- och skrivutveckling</i>
Credits:	7.5
Degree Level:	Master's level
Progressive Specialisation:	Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (A1N)

Major Field of Study:
SQA (Special Education)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2026-01-28, and is valid from the Autumn semester 2026 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

A teaching qualification comprising at least 180 credits, or 30 credits in Social Sciences or Behavioural Science at G2F level or higher.

Upper secondary level Swedish course B/3 or Swedish as a second language course B/3, and English course A/6. An equivalence assessment can be made.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

1. critically reflect upon language, reading, and writing development, as well as cognitive and special education perspectives on teaching and learning,
2. identify and analyse children's and pupils' language, reading, and writing difficulties, and critically reflect upon special education approaches and interventions at the individual, group, and school levels,
3. critically reflect upon the teacher's role in creating inclusive and accessible learning environments,
4. independently plan and apply methods for observing, mapping, documenting, and supporting children's language, reading, and writing development, and
5. apply and critically evaluate methods and tools for language, reading, and writing instruction, including both digital and analogue strategies.

Content

The aim of the course is for students to acquire in-depth knowledge of children's and pupils' language, reading, and writing development from cognitive and special education perspectives. The course provides students with the opportunity to deepen their ability to critically analyse, prevent, and address difficulties, as well as to promote inclusive practices and accessible learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of pupils in both regular compulsory school and compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities. The course includes field studies.

The course covers:

- Current research on language, reading, and writing development, as well as cognitive and special education perspectives on learning.
- Theories of reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia: definitions, causes, consequences, and links to

neurodevelopmental disorders and intellectual disability.

- Research-based teaching practices, special education approaches and interventions for preventing and addressing difficulties.
- Planning and use of observation, mapping, analysis of learning environments, and pedagogical documentation.
- Teaching methods for early reading and writing instruction: phonics-based approaches versus whole-word methods.
- Analogue and digital tools, assistive technology, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

Learning outcomes 1, 4 and 5 are assessed through an individual written assignment and an individual oral presentation.

Learning outcomes 2 and 3 are assessed through an individual oral presentation in a seminar.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

Grades

One of the grades Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor's and Master's levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.