Pedagogical Projects for the MA in Italian
General Guidelines and Criteria

The Project:
The pedagogical project is a research-based study, focusing on a particular issue, challenge, or theory in the teaching of Italian or foreign languages in genera. Though the project can range significantly in scope and design, it must respond to the same general set of guidelines and criteria.

A faculty member will provide direction, support, and feedback over the course of the two semesters (one for planning, one for implementation and writing). However, due to the fact that the final thesis is due two-to-three weeks before the end of the second of these semesters, the thesis project will typically begin one year before with preliminary discussions, outline, working thesis and working bibliography. From the start, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to take initiative and research independently.

Objectives:
Students will produce a thesis that displays competence at understanding of the subject matter and in carrying out research in the field of foreign language pedagogy, applied linguistics, or second language acquisition.

Specifically, they will be expected to (some bullets may not apply or may be added, depending on the nature of the project):

- Choose a research topic that is feasible to investigate
- Outline a project that is possible to complete within the two-semester time frame
- Identify key research questions that are challenging, but useful, somewhat novel, and realistic
- Find and review relevant literature and theories of teaching and learning
- Choose appropriate materials and methods to investigate the main research questions
- Employ appropriate modes of implementation (if there is an applied experiment) (with consultation)
- Employ appropriate modes of analysis (to be decided in consultation with director)
- Obtain permission from the research office if the project involves an applied experiment
- Apply, discuss, analyze your work vis-a-vis research in the chosen field
- Write a systematic report of the project that includes an introduction, an overview of the field/literature, methodology, experiment design (if applicable), results, analytical discussion, and conclusion/recommendations.
- Include a bibliography (working bibliography created, annotated briefly during the summer before the project year begins. This will facilitate early research discussions)
- Include illustrations when appropriate (charts, tables, photos, screen shots, etc.)

Criteria for Evaluation:

Concept

- Interest and innovation: The main concept or idea proposed by the project must be of general interest and demonstrate a certain level of depth, breadth, and potential for innovation.

- Appropriateness and utility: The main concept of the project must be appropriate for the researcher's
level of preparation and be potentially useful to practitioners in the field. -innovation/interest

**Experiment Design**

- Organization of experiment: The experiment must be well delineated according to a calendar and to be implemented within realistic time frames. All of the necessary steps, permissions, and materials should be obtained/created before the experimental semester.

- Scope of experiment: The scope needs to be big enough to have potentially interesting/usable results, but at the same time realistic for the time limits of the MA program.

- Coherence and clarity of experiment or study: The goal of the project, study, experiment must be crystal clear. Any ambiguities that arise in the process, should be resolved through regular, thorough discussions with faculty director and rendered clear in the final written discussion section of the thesis.

- Feasibility of experiment: As with the scope of the project, the nature of the experiment (the amount of class time or subjects or preparation/analysis it requires) must be feasible with respect to the time limits of the MA program.

**Research**

- Appropriateness of approach/context
- Quality/Quantity of primary and secondary resources
- Contextualization of problem vis-à-vis current research in the field
- Depth and breadth of research given dimensions/scope of project

**Pedagogical materials**

- organization and preparation of materials
- coherence/clarity in preparation and implementation of materials
- innovation/creativity in preparation and implementation of materials (if appropriate)

**Analysis and Discussions**

- organization of argument
- coherence and clarity of analysis, argument, discussion
- supporting evidence from the literature and/or empirical evidence
- persuasiveness of conclusion

**Delivery**

- writing style
- writing form (and accuracy if in Italian)
- punctuality throughout all different phases of the project and final presentation (turning in) to faculty.