NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PGELT

PAPER 7

Module - 1 & 2

POST GRADUATE

PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that it may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great part of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned. .

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Paper - VII
Module—I

Materials selected, adapted and edited from acknowledged sources
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Module—II

The materials in this module have been selected, adapted, edited and developed
by
Prof. Arpita Banerjee
from
acknowledged sources.

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PAPER-VII

Module-I

COURSE DESIGN

Module-II

ENGLISH

Module I

COURSE DESIGN

Unit 1 □ Historical Perspectives of Course Design

Structure

1.0 Introduction

You have now arrived at that part of your M. A. ELT course which will prepare you for the practical application of all the knowledge and skills acquired in the previous papers. In other words you are now ready to explore what goes into the *content and framework of what you* are going to teach, *who* you going to teach and *how and why* these areas have been included. This is the first unit of the first module of your paper on Course Design.

1.1 Objectives

It is hoped that, having explored and worked through the module, you will:

— be familiar with the notion and definition of a curriculum, syllabus and course or syllabus design

- appreciate the currents and various parameters running through syllabus design

- understand the historical perspectives in syllabus design

- consider the importance of the notion of Needs Analysis while designing a syllabus

- consider creating your own syllabus with specific reference to those based in India and other countries.

1.1.1. Syllabus – A Definition

During the last fifty years alternative syllabus models, particularly in the area of ELT have been purposed and produced involving several approaches and theoretical considerations. But before we proceed investigating into the history of syllabus design, answer the question below :

** *How would you define a syllabus? Write your definition in the space below.*

_____

_____

_____

* *Look at the following syllabus statements and say which of these you agree with and why–*

* *Are there any statements with which you disagree?*

* *Would you like to add anything new?* (Adapted – Hedge, 2002)

a) A syllabus specifies what is to be taught.

b) A syllabus is a plan of what the students will learn.

c) A syllabus is a way of breaking down the learning task into manageable units.

d) A syllabus makes teachers accountable to planners and educational authorities.

e) A syllabus does not cater for the needs of individual learners.

f) A syllabus sets up goals for language learning.

g) A syllabus provides a basis for assessing learners.

h) A syllabus is a public document.

i) A syllabus must take into account the environment in which it is to be used.

j) A syllabus cannot organize learning because the process is too complex, personal and organic.

● *Do you think should revise, modify and refine your earlier definition of a syllabus? Write it out including some of the points you have agreed with.*

● *Her are a few more definitions of a syllabus. Read them carefully and consider the points of similarity or difference.*

A syllabus is a expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning; it acts as a guide for both teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987 : 80) define syllabus as follows :

At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects a language and linguistic performance.

This is a rather traditional interpretation of 'syllabus' focusing as it does on *outcomes* rather than *process.*

According to *Janice Yalden (1987 : 87)* however, a syllabus can also be seen as a **"summary of the content to which learners will be exposed"**

It is seen as an approximation of what will be taught and that it cannot accurately predict what will be learnt.

Syllabus Design, therefore, involves the appropriate choices of goals, courses, materials and methods. As **Candlin (1984)** has rightly said,

"A syllabus reveals itself as a window on a particular set of social, educational, moral and subject matter. Syllabuses seen in this perspective stand, then, for particular ideologies."

These views naturally lead us to believe that a language syllabus is not merely an ordered sequence of selected, innocuous items of content, timeless and obscure in origin and separated from the world as it was viewed in the past.

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Note that a syllabus may consist of an independent pulblication – a book or booklet–if it is intended to cover all the courses in a particular context regardless of the actual materials used : a country's national syllabus for schools, for example, or the syllabus of a group of language colleges. However, a textbook that is designed to cover an entire course should also provide its own syllabus through the introduction and contents page or index. This section relates mostly to the first kind: an 'official' and comprehensive document that usually includes the word 'syllabus' in its title.

1.1.2 Common characteristics of a syllabus

A syllabus is a document which consists, essentially, of a list. This list specifies all the things that are to be taught in the course(s) for which the syllabus was designed (a beginner's course, for example, or a six-year-secondary-school programme): it is therefore *comprehensive*.

The actual components of the list may be either content items (Words structures, topics), or process ones (task, methods). The items are ordered, usually from those considered easier or more essential to more difficult and less important ones. This ordering may be fairly detailed and rigid, or general and flexible.

The syllabus generally has explicit objectives, usually declared at the beginning of the document, on the basis of which the components of the list are *selected* and *ordered*.

Another characteristic of the syllabus is that it is a public document. It is available for scrutiny not only by the teachers who are expected to implement it, but also by the consumers (the learners or their parents or employers), by representatives of the relevant authorities (inspectors, school boards), by other interested members of the public (researchers, teacher trainers or textbook writers), Underlying this characteristic is the principle of accountability ; the composers of the syllabus are answerable to their target audience for the quality of their document.

There are other, optional, features, displayed by some syllabuses and not others, A time schedule is one; some syllabuses delimit the time framework of their components, prescribing, for example, that these items should be dealt within the first month, those in the second; the class should have completed this much by the end of the year.

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A particular preferred approach or methodology to be used may also be defined, even in a syllabus that is essentially content-based. It may list recommended materials – coursebooks, visual materials or supplementary materials–either in general, or where relevant to certain items or sections.

Here is a summary of the items listed in this section. Which of these apply to your own syllabus (or one that is commonly used locally)? Put a tick by ones that apply, a cross by ones that do not.

· Characteristics of a syllabus

1. Consists of a comprehensive list of :

   – content items (words, structures, topics) ;

   – process items (takes, methods).

2. Is orderer (easier, more essential items first)

3. Has explicit objectives (usually expressed in the introduction).

4. Is a public document.

5. May indicate a time schedule.

6. · May indicate a preferred methodology or approach.

7. May recommend materials.

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1.1.3 Different types of language syllabuses

According to Penny Ur (2003) a number of different kinds of syllabuses are used in foreign language teaching. A list of these is provided below. There are the main types one comes across in practice.

Types of syllabuses (Ref. A Course in language Teaching. CUP Penny Ur. 1991)

1. **Grammatical**

A list of grammatical structures, such as the present tense, comparison of

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adjectives, relative clauses, usually divided into sections grade according to difficulty and/or importance.

2. Lexical

A list of lexical items (*girl, boy, go away* ...) with associated collocations of idioms, usually into graded sections. One such syllabus, based on corpus (a computerized collection of samples of authentic language) is developed in Willis, 1990.

3. Grammatical-lexical

A very common kind of syllabus ; both structures and lexis are specified together, in sections that correspond to the units of a course, or in two separate exist lists.

4. Situational

These syllabuses take the real-life contexts of language uses as their basis; sections would be headed by names of situations or locations such as 'Eating a meal' or 'In the street'.

5. Topic-based

This is rather like the situational syllabus, except that the headings are broadly topic-based, including things like 'Food' or 'The family'; these usually include fairly clear set of vocabulary items, which may be specified.

6. Notional

Notions are concepts that language can express. General notions may include 'number', for example or 'time', 'place', 'colour'; specific notions look more like vocabulary items; 'man', 'woman', 'afternoon', for an introduction to the topic of notional syllabuses see Wilkins. 1976.

7. Functional-notional

Functions are things you can do with language, as distinct from notions you can express examples are 'identifying', 'denying', 'promising'. Purely functional syllabuses are rare; usually both fuctions and notions are combined, as for example in Van Ek, 1990.

8. Mixed or 'multi-strand'

Incresinglym modern syllabuses are combining different aspects in order to be maximally comprehensive and helpful to teachers and learners ; in these you

may find specification of topics, tasks, fuctions and notions, as well as grammar and vocabulary.

9. Procedural

These syllabuses specify the learning tasks to be done rather than the language itself or even its meanings. Examples of tasks might be; map reading, doing scientific experiments, story-writing. The most well-known procedural syllabus is that associated with the Bangalore Project (Prabhu, 1987)

10. Process

This is the only syllabus which is not pre-set. The content of the course is negotiated with the learners at the beginning of the course and during it, and actually listed only retrospectively (Candlin, 1984; Clarke, 1991)

Classifying syllabuses—REVIEW EXERCISE

Look at the syllabuses of two or three coursebooks, not necessarily those used locally. (Coursebook syllabuses are normally defined in the introduction and/or in a listing of the content provided at the front or back of the book.) Which of the types listed above do they belong to? [Ur, 2003]

1.1.4   Principles of Vocabulary Selection

Vocabulary is one of the most obvious components of language and one of the first things applied linguists turned their attention to. What words should be taught in a second language? This depends on the objectives of the course and the amount of time available for teaching. Educated native speakers are thought to have a recognition vocabulary of some 17,000 words, but this is a much larger number of words than can be taught in a language course. Not all the words the native speakers know are necessarily useful for second language learners who have only a limited time available for learning.

Should they set out to learn 500, 1000 or 5000 words? And if so, which ones?

This is the issue of vocabulary selection in language teaching.

Is selection something that should be left entirely to the intutions of textbook writers and course planners or are there principles that can be used to produce a more objective and rational approach?

Leaving selection issues to the intuitions of textbook writers can lead to very unreliable results. For example, Li and Richards (1995) examined five introductory textbooks used for teaching Cantonese (the language spoken in Hong Kong) in order to determine what words the textbook compilers considered essential for foreigners to learn and the extent to which textbook writers agreed on what constitutes the basic vocabulary of Cantonese as a second language.

The conclusion that could be drawn was that a student studying from any of the books in this study would spend a large amount of time trying to understand and use vocabulary that is probably of little importance. It was to avoid this kind of problem with regard to English that applied linguists in the first few decades of the twentieth century turned to the issue of vocabulary selection.

The goals of early approaches to selection are described in the foreword to West (1953).

A language is so complex that selection from it is always one of the first and most difficult problems of anyone who wishes to teach it systematically. It has come to be more and more generally realized that random selection is a wasteful approach, and only a complete system capable of continuous enlargement can form a satisfactory objective for the first stage in any attempt to grasp it.

Early Approaches to vocabulary selection – Word Frequency Counts

Some of the earliest approaches to vocabulary selection involved counting large collections of texts to determine the frequency with which words occurred, since it would seem obvious that words if highest frequency should be taught first. But what kinds of material should be analyzed? Obviously, a frequency count based on children's books might identify a different set of words than an analysis of words used in *Time Magazine*. The earliest frequency counts undertaken for language teaching were based on analysis of popular reading materials and resulted in a *word frequency list*. (This was in the days before type recorders made possible the analysis of words used in the spoken language and before computers could be used to analyze the words used in printed sources.)

Word frequencies are important in planning word lists for language teaching. But frequency is not necessarily the same thing as usefulness because the frequeny of words depends on the types of language samples that are analyzed. The most

frequent words occurring in samples of sports writing will not be the same as those occurring in fiction. In order to ensure that the frequency of occurrence of words in a corpus corresponds to their relative importance for language learners. the texts or language samples chosen as the basis for the corpus must be relevant to the **needs of target learners** and words must be frequent in a wide range of different language samples.

Other criteria for selection

It was soon realized, however that frequency and range were not sufficient as a basis for developing word lists, because words with high frequency and wide range in written texts are not necessarily the most teachable words in an introductory language course. Words such as *book, pen, desk, dictionary,* for example, are not frequent words yet might be needed early on in a language course. Other criteria were therefore also used in determining word lists. These included:

Teachability : In a course taught following the Direct Method or a method such as Total Physical Response, concrete vocabulary is taught early on because it can easily be illustrated through pictures or by demonstratioon., e.g., *comb, clean, wash, walk, write* etc.

Similarity : Some items may be selected because they are similar to words in the native language. For example, English and French have many cognates such as *table, page* and *nation,* and this may justify their inclusion in a word list for French speaking learners.

Availability : Some words may not be frequent but are readily "available" in the sense that they come quickly to mind when certain topics are thought of For example, *classroom* calls to mind *desk, chair, teacher,* and *pupil,* and these words might therefore be worth teaching early in a course.

Coverage : Words that cover or include the meaning of other words may also be useful. For example, *seat* might be taught because it includes the meanings of *stool, bench* and *chair.*

Defining power : Some words could be selected because they are used in defining other words, even though they are not among the most frequent words in language. For example, *container* might be useful because it can help define *bucket, jar* and *carton.*

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Word frequency research has been an active area of language research since the 1920s and continues to be so because of the case with which word frequencies and patterns of word distribution can be identified using computers. One of the most important lexical syllabuses in language teaching was Michael West's A *General Service List of English Words* (1953), which contains a list of some 2,000 "general service words considered suitable as the basis for learning English as a foreign language." (See App. 1)

The *General Service List* was for many years a standard reference in making decisions about what words to use in course books, graded readers, and other teaching material. Hindmarsh (1980) is another important vocabulary list and contains 4,500 words grouped into 7 levels, (See App. 2)

1.1.5   Grammar Selection and Gradation

The need for a systematic approach to selecting grammar for teaching purposes was also a priority for applied linguists from the 1920s. The number of syntactic structures in a language is large, as is seen from the contents of any grammar book, and a number of attempts have been made to develop basic structure lists for language teaching (e.g., *Fries 1952 : Hornby 1954 : Alexander, Allen, Close, and O' Neill 1975*).

The need for grammatical selection is seen in the following examples from Wilkins (1976, 59), which are some of the structures that can be used for the speech act of *"Asking permission"*.

> *Can/May I use your telephone, please?*
>
> *Please, let me use your telephone.*
>
> *Is it all right to use your telephone?*
>
> *If it's all right with you, I'll use your telephone.*
>
> *Am I allowed to use your telephone?*
>
> *Do you mind if I use your telephone?*
>
> *Do you mind me using your telephone?*
>
> *Would you mind if I used your telephone?*
>
> *You don't mind if I use your telephone (do you)?*
>
> *I wonder if you have any objection to me using your telephone?*

Would you permit me to use your telephone?

Would you be so kind as to allow me to use your telephone?

Would it be possible for me to use your telephone?

Do you think you could let me use your telephone?

● **How can one determine which of these structures would be useful to teach?** Traditionally the grammar items included in a course were determined by the teaching method in use and there was consequently a great deal of variation in what items were taught and when.

Grammatical syllabuses have generally been developed from different principles based not on the frequency of occurrence of grammatical items in texts but on intuitive criteria of **simplicity** and **learnability.** The goal has been to develop a list of structures, graded into a logical progression, which would provide an accessible and gradual introduction to the grammar of English. The approach used has been **analytic.** The following principles have been used or suggested as a basis for developing grammatical syllabuses.

● *Simplicity and centrality* : This recommeds choosing structures that are simple and more central to the basic structure of the language than those that are complex and peripheral. By these criteria the following would occur in an introductory-level English course :

The train arrived. (Subject Verb)

She is a journalist. (Subject Verb Complement)

The children are in the bedroom. (Subject Verb Adverb)

We ate the fruit. (Subject Verb Object)

I put the book in the bag. (Subject Verb Object Adverb)]

The following would be excluded by the same criteria :

Having neither money nor time, we decided buying a ticket to the opera was out of the question.

For her to speak to us like that was something we had never anticipated.

● *Frequency* : Frequency of occurrence has also been proposed in developing grammatical syllabuses, but relatively little progress was made in this area for some time because of the difficulty of deciding on appropriate grammatical units to count and the difficulty of coding grammatical structures for analysis. It is only recently

that computer corpuses have enabled the distribution of structures in real language to be examined. Not surprisingly, there are often significant differences between the lists of grammatical structures developed intuitively by adapted linguists and the information revealed in analyses of corpuses of real language. McCarthy and Carter (1995), for example, report on data taken from a corpus of conversational language and identify a number of features of spoken grammar, not typically included in standard teaching syllabuses : For example :

— *Subject and verb ellipsis,* such as "Don't know" instead of "I don't know". *Topic highlighting,* such as "That house on the corner, is that where you live?"

— *Tails,* such as the following phrases at the end of sentences : "you know", "don't they?"

— *Reporting verbs.* such as "I was saying." "They were telling me."

● *Learnability* : It has sometimes been argued that grammatial syllabuses should take into account **the order in which grammatical items are acquired** in second language learning. For example, **Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974)** proposed the following order of development of grammatical items. based on data elicited during interviews with second language learners at different proficiency levels :

1.	nouns	11.	*wh*-questions
2.	verbs	12.	present continuous
3.	adjectives	13.	directions
4.	verb *be*	14.	possessive adjectives
5.	possessive pronouns	15.	comparatives
6.	personal pronouns	16.	offers
7.	adverbs of time	17.	simple future
8.	requests	18.	simple past
9.	simple present	19.	infinitives/gerunds
10.	futures	20.	first conditional

current views : The following approaches to gradation are also possible :

● *Linguistic distance* : Lado (1957) proposed that structures that are similar to those in the native language should be taught first. Those elements that are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him and those elements that

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are different will be difficult" (Lado 1957, 2). This assumption underlay the approach to language comparison known as *contrastive analysis.*

● *Intrinsic difficulty* : This principle argues that simple structures should be taught before complex ones and is the commonest criterion used to justify the sequence of grammatical items in a syllabus.

● *Communicative needs* : Some structures will be needed early on and cannot be postponed, despite their difficulty, such as the simple past in English, since it is difficult to avoid making reference to past events for very long in a course.

● *Frequencey* : The frequency of occurrence of structures and grammatical items in the target language may also affect the order in which they appear in a syllabus, although as we noted, little information of this sort is available to syllabus planners. Frequency may also compete with other criteria. The present continuous is not one of the most frequent verb forms in English, yet it is often introduced early in a language course because it is relatively easy to demonstrate and practice in a classroom context.

In addition to these factors, in designing a course one is also faced with a choice between two approaches to the sequencing of items in the course, namely, a *linear* or a *cyclical* or *spiral* gradation. With a linear gradation, the items are introduced one at a time and practised intensively before the next items appears. With a cyclical gradation, items are reintroduced throughout the course.

● *Early course books in the U.S. and Britain* :

In the 1940s, beginners's courses in English began to appear in which principles of vocabulary and grammatical control were evident and in which grammatical structures were organized into graded sequences. The methods in use at the time placed a major emphasis on the learning of "structures". The U.S. linguist Fries outlined the major structures he thought foreign students needed to learn in his books *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1946) and *The Structure of English* (1952) and these formed the grammar component for courses and materials developed at the influential English Language Institute of the University of Michigan. The Michigan materials with their focus on the core grammatical structures of English soon came to influence all materials developed in the United States for teaching ESL students and became the dominant methodology in the United States for more than 20 years (Darian 1972).

In Britain Hornby built on the previous efforts of Palmer on the grading

of sentence patterns and developed a compreshensive grammatical syllabus (together with a structural approach to teaching English) in his books *Guides to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954) and *The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentences Patterns* (1959). These set out the basic grammatical structures needed in English-language syllabuses and courses at different levels. The resulting pedagogical grammar of English (or variation on it) formed the basis for the grammatical syllabus of most teaching materials produced at that time (*see Appendix 3*). Since then other language teaching specialists have refined and further developed grammatical syllabus specifications as a bais for course design and materials development (e.g., Alexander et al. 1975)

Although both lexical and gramatical syllabuses have provided important guidelines for the development of language teaching textbooks and materials since the first such syllabuses appeared in the 1920s, it is grammar syllabuses that have been regarded as the core of a language course or program.

● **Assumptions and Limitations underlying early approaches to syllabus design**

We can now examine the assumptions behind the approaches to syllabus design, that emerged in the first part of the twentieth century and in the process reveal the **limitations** that subsequent directions in syllabus design sought to address.

1. *The basic units of language are vocabulary and grammar*

Those working in the traditions discussed earlier approached the teaching of Enlish through its vocabulary and grammar. Although the role of speaking and pronunciation were not ignored during the actual teaching of the language the priority in planning was vocabulary and grammar and these were seen as the main building blocks of language development. Once some system and order could be introduced into these areas through careful syllbus planning and specification it **was believed that language teaching could be put on a more rational and sound basis.**

2. *Learners everywhere have the same needs*

The focus in language teaching was on "general" English, hence the title of West's word list. It was believed that the core vocabulary of the *General Service List* together with a grammatical syllabus of the type Hornby elaborated would serve as the basis for almost all language courses.

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3. *Learners' needs are identified exclusively in terms of language needs*

No matter who the learners are or the circumstances of their learning, it is assumed that mastery of English will solve their problems. The goal of English teaching is to teach them English- not to teach them how to solve their problems through English.

The process of learning a language is largely determined by the textbook.

The primary input learners received to the language learning process was the textbook, hence the importance of the principles of selection and gradation as ways of controlling the content of the textbook and facilitating language learning.

4. *The context to teaching is English as a foreign language*

Most of the early work by Palmer, West and Hornby on the development of laxical and grammatical syllabuses was done in contexts where English was a foreign language, that is, where *students studied English as a formal subject in school but had no immediate need for it outside of the classroom.* The classroom and the textbook provided the primary input to the language learning process, hence the goal of syllabus developers was to simplify and rationalize this input as far as possible through the processes of selection and gradation.

● **Changes in Approaches to Course Design**

Changes in the status of English around the world and in the purposes for which English was studied from the 1940s on led to the next phase in the development of language curriculum development. These changes and the approaches to language curriculum development that resulted from them are the focus of the next section.

Roberto Rabbini (2001) discusses the various types of approaches available to course designers and the language assumptions they make.

These kinds of syllabuses emphasize the product of language learning and are prone to intervention from an authority. The structural syllabus is an appropriate example of a product-oriented syllabus. The approach, as you know, is synthetic.

The Structural Approach

Historically, the most prevalent of syllabus types is perhaps the **grammatical syllabus** in which the selection and grading of the content is based on the

complexity and simplicity of grammatical items . The learner is expected to master each structural step and add it to her grammar collection. As such the focus is on the outcomes or the product.

One problem facing the syllabus designer pursuing a grammatical order to sequencing input is that the ties connecting the structural items may be rather feeble. A more fundamental criticism is that the grammatical syllabus focuses on only one aspect of language, namely grammar, whereas in truth there exist many more aspects to language. Finally, recent corpus based research suggests there is a divergence between the grammar of the spoken and of the written language ; raising implications for the grading of content in grammar based syllabuses.

The Situational Approach

These limitations led to an alternative approach where the point of departure became **situational needs** rather than grammatical units. Here, the principal organizing characteristic is a list of situations which reflects the way language and behaviour are used everyday outside the classroom. Thus, by linking structural theory to situations the learner is able to induce the meaning from a relevant context.

One advantage of the situational approach is that motivation will be heightened since it is *"learner*-rather than *subject*-centered" (**Wilkins. 1976 : 16**). However, a situational syllabus will be limited for students whose needs were not encompassed by the situations in the syllabus. The dissatisfaction led Wilkins to describe **notional** and **Communicative** categories which had a significant impact on syllabus design.

The Notional /Functional Approach

Wilkins' criticism of structural and situational approaches lies in the fact that they answer only the 'how' or 'when' and 'where' of language (**Brumfit and Johnson, 1979 : 84**). Instead, he enquires "**What it is they communicate through language**" (Op. Cit. : 18). Thus, the starting point for a syllabus is the **communicative purpose and conceptual meaning** of language i.e. **notions** and **functions,** as opposed to grammatical items and situational elements which remain but are relegated to a subsidiary role.

● **The Concept of Learner Needs**

In order to establish objectives, the needs of the learners will have to be analyzed by the various types of comunicaion in which the learner has to confront Consequently, **needs analysis** has an associations with notional-functional syllabuses.

Although needs analysis implies a focus on the learner, critics of this approach suggest that a new list has replaced the old one. Where one structural/situational items were used a new list consisting of notions and functions has become the main focus in a syllabus. White (1988 : 77) claims that *"language functions do not usually occur in isolation"* and there are also difficulties of selecting and grading function and form. Clearly, the task of deciding whether a given function (i.e. *persuading*), is easier or more difficult than another (i.e. *approving*), makes the task harder to approach.

The above approaches belong to the *product-oriented category* of syllabuses. An alternative path to curriculum design would be to adopt process oriented principles, which assume that *language can be learnt experientially* as opposed to the step-by-step procedure of the synthetic approach.

Process-Oriented Syllabuses

Process-Oriented Syllabuses, or the **analytical approach,** developed as a result of a sense of failure in product -oriented courses to enhance communicative language skills. It is a **process rather than a product.** That is, *focus is not on what the student will have accomplished on completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that she will undertake during the course.*

Procedural/Task-Based Approaches

Prabhu's (1979) 'Bangalore Project' is a classic example of **procedural syllabus.** Here, the question concerning **'what'** becomes subordinate to the question concerning **'how'.** The focus shifts from the linguistic element to the pedagogical with an emphasis on learning or learner.

Within such a framework the selection, ordering and grading of content is no longer wholly significant for the syllabus designer. Arranging the program around *tasks* such as information - and opinion-gap activities, it was hoped that the learner would perceive the language subconsciously whilst consciously concentrating on solving the meaning behind the tasks. There appears to be an indistinct boundary between this approach and that of language methodology, and evaluating the merits of the former remain complicated.

A **task-based approach** assumes that speaking a language is a skill best perfected through practice and interaction, and uses tasks and activities to encourage learners to use the language communicatively in order to achieve a purpose. Tasks must be relevant to the **real world language needs** of the student. That is the

underlying learning theory of task based and communicative language teaching seems to suggest that activities in which language is employed to complete meaningful tasks, enhances learning.

Learner-Led Syllabuses

The notion of basing an approach on how learners learn was proposed by Breen and Candlin (1984). Here the emphasis lays with the learner, who it is hoped will be involved in the implementation of the syllabus design as far as that is practically possible. By being fully aware of the course they are studying it is believed that their interest and motivation will increase, coupled with the positive effect of nurturing the skills required to learn.

However, as suggested earlier, a predetermined syllabus provides support and guidance for the teacher and should not be so easily dismissed. Critics have suggested that a learner-led syllabus seems radical and utopian in that it will be difficult to track as the direction of the syllabus will be largely the responsibility of the learners. Moreove, without the mainstay of a course book, a lack of aims may come about. This leads to the final syllabus design to be examined ; the proportional approach as propounded by Yalden (1987).

The Proportional Approach

The proportional syllabus basically attempts to develop an "overall competence"(Op. Cit. : 97). It consists if a number of elements with theme playing a linking role through the units. This theme is designated by the learners. It is expected initially that form will be of central value, but later, the focus will veer towards interactional components; the syllabus is designed to be dynamic. not static, with ample opportunity for feedback and flexibility (ibid : 100).

The shift from form to interaction can occur at any time and is not limited to a particular stratum of learner ability. As Yalden (ibid : 87) observes, it is important for a syllabus to indicate explicity **what will be taught, "not what will be learned"**.

This practical approach with its focus on flexibility and spiral method of language sequencing leading to the recycling of language, seems relevant for learners, who lack exposure to the target language beyond the classroom. But how can an EFL teacher pinpoint the salient features of the approaches discussed above? This can be best done by following cutain principles of Syllabus survey which will be the focus of the next unit.

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SUMMING-UP What is Syllabus Design?

Syllabus design is concerned with the selection, sequencing and justification of the *content* of the curriculum.

Traditional approaches to syllabus design are concerned with selecting lists of linguistic features such as *Grammar, pronunciation* and *vocabulary* as well as experiential content such as *Topics and themes*. These sequenced and intergrated lists were then presented to the *methodologist* whose task it was to develop *teaching learning activities* to facilitate the learning of the prescribed content.

Once a consensus had emerged concerning the principles underlying as oralbased methodology, applied linguists then turned attention to issues of the content and syllabus design underlying the Method. Initial steps in this direction centered on approaches to determining the vocabulary and grammatical content of a language course. This led to procedures that were known as *selection* and *gradation*.

What should be selected from the total corpus of the language and incorporated in textbooks and teaching materials? This came to be known as the problem of *selection*. Mackey (1965 : 161) comments : "Selection is an inherent characteristic of all methods. Since it is impossible to teach the whole of a language, all methods must in some way or other, whether intentionally or not, select the part of it they intend to teach. The field of selection in language teaching deals with the choice of appropriate units of the language for teaching purposes and with the development of techniques and procedures by which the language can be reduced to that which is most useful to the learner (Macky 1965).

Two aspects of selection received primary attention in the first few decades of the twentieth century : *Vocabulary selection* and *grammar selection*. Approaches to these two aspects of selection laid the foundations for syllabus design in language teaching.

1.2 Applied Linguistics and Recent Development s in Curriculum and Course Design

In the past few years the focus of syllabuses has shifted from *structure* to situations, *functions* and *notions* to *topics* and *tasks*. In fact, as Nunan (1988 : 52)

suggests, with the development of the latter it is palpable that *"the traditional distinction between syllabus design and methodology has become blurred."* In other words the implementation of a syllabus assumes prime importance even in the initial stages of its design. It would perhaps be imperative to revise the notions of *curriculum and syllabus* design. *Curriculum Development* focuses on the entire framework of teaching and learning. It includes

— What knowledge, skills and values students should learn

— What experiences should be provided to bring about expected learning outcomes

— how teaching and learning in schools should be planned, executed, measured and evaluated.

> **THINK !** *In what ways does Applied Linguistics contribute to Language Curriculum Development?*

Syllabus Design is one aspect of Curriculum Development but is not identical with it. It is the process of designing a syllabus.

Curriculum Development is a more comprehensive process that syllabus design. It includes the processes involved in determining the *needs* of a *group* of learners, the *aims* and *objectives* for a programme to address those needs, to determine the *methods, materials and techniques* needed to implement the programme.

The history of Curriculum Development starts with the notion of Syllabus Design. In Language Teaching the process really began in 1960s though issues of Syllabus Design emerged as a major factor much earlier.

Let's once again look at the approaches to Syllabus Design that emerged in the first part of the twentieth century. These approaches laid the foundation for the curriculum approaches that are in use today.

History shows that whatever change we notice in Teaching methods is actually the result of change of Curriculum design.

Many methods have been introduced, tried out and modified or even rejected in the last hundred years. There has always been and will be a quest for the *best* method.

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Some of the frequently mentioned methods, as you will recall are :

- Grammar translation Method   (1800 - 1900)
- Direct Method   (1890 - 1930)
- Structural Method   (1930 - 1960)
- Reading Method   (1920 - 1950)
- Audio Lingual Method   (1950 - 1970)
- Situational Method   (1950 - 1970)
- Communicative Approach   (1970 - present)
  Method

Although there has been a preference, at some point of time, of one method over another, methods often continue in some form or another long after they have fallen out of favour. (*Mackey, 1965 : 151*)

> **THINK!** *What is the relation, then, between a Method and the syllabus? Jot down a few points that come to your mind, Then read on ....*

Methods are not only the specification for the process of Language Teaching i.e., of the HOW of language teaching but also of the WHAT ... i.e., of what should go into the Content of instruction.

For eg. The Direct Method assumes a particular type of syllabus with an emphasis on the exclusive use of the target language, intensive *question – answer* teaching techniques, and *demonstration* and *dramatization* to communicate *meanings of words*, it also prescribes the *vocabulary and grammar* to be taught and the *order* in which it should be presented.

When new methods arrive the initial concern is not always with the syllabus but with the approaches to teaching and methodological principles that could be used to support the apropriate language-driven methodology.

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Discussion questions and activities

1. This unit is about planning and implementing language courses and materials. What are three aspects of these processes that are of greatest interest to you? List these in the form of questions and compare with others.

2. What is the difference between syllabus design and curriculum development?

3. How are syllabuses developed in language programs you are familiar with?

4. What are the characteristics of a language teaching method? In what ways do methods raise issues related to curriculum development?

5. How relevant are the issues of selection and gradation to language teaching today? What factors influence current views of selection and gradation?

6. Examine a low-level language teaching text. What factors influence the selection and gradation of grammatical items in the text?

7. Are the concepts of selection and gradation compatible with the use of authentic texts or sources in language teaching?

8. How useful are word lists such as those illustrated in Appendixes 1 and 2 today?

APPENDIX 1
Entries from A General Service List of English Words

The list (from West 1953) identifies a core 2,000 word vocabulary and also the frequency of different meaning of each word.

FLOWER	605e			
flower, n.		(1a)	(*pant of a plant*)	
			Pick flowers	
		(1b)	(*a flowering plant*)	
			Flowers and vegetables	86%
	Phrase :			
			In flower (= *in bloom*)	1%
		(2)	(*figurative*)	
			The flower of (= best *specimens*)	4%
			In the flower of his youth (= *best part*)	1%
flower-1			Flower-garden, *etc.*	0.7%
flower, v			The roses are flowering	4%
FLY	805e			
fly, v.		(1)	(*travel through the air*)	
			Birds fly ; aeroplanes fly	
			Fly an aeroplane, a kite	39%
	Special use :			
			Fly a flag	3.5%
		(2)	(*go quickly*)	
			Time flies	
			He flew to the rescue	14%
		(3)	(*Phrases implying sudden rapid motion*)	14%
			Fly to arms ; fly at : fly in the face of	4.8%
			Fly into a rage ; [fly out at]	1.3%
			Sent it flying : the door flew open	1.6%

flying. adj.   Flying-boat, -fish, -jump ; flying column   14%

*(= fler. 6.3%, The wonl Flee, fled,
202c is not included in the Report,
but fled is rather necessary for narrative]*

---

fly.n.   *(flying insect, especially housefly)*   11%

FOLD   196e

   flod, v.   Fold a piece of paper
                 Fold up one's clothes
                 Fold it up in paper
                 Fold one's arms   43%

APPENDIX 2

Entries from Cambridge English Lexicon

A 4,500-word vocabular list grouped into 7 levels (Hindmarsh 1980)

1. baby
   1. *n.* a young child
   6. *n.* youngest : *which of you is the baby?*
   7. *adj.* not fully developed : *baby marrows*

4 baby-sitter *n.*

1 back
   1 *adv.* towards the rear : *head winds drove them back*

   1 *n.* part of the body or of an object. opposite of front : *the back of his head*
   2 *adv.* to a former state : *back to life*
   2 *adv.* in return : *to have the money back*
   3 *adv.* of time: *back in the Middle Ages*
   4 *adv.* in retaliation: *answer back*: hit back

   4. *v.* reverse: *he backed the car away*
   6 *v.* gamble on: back a cause

5. back out of *v.* withdraw
   1 badly
   1 *adv.* roughly, unlidily : *leadly made*
   2 *adv.* much : *badly in need of repair*

5. *adv.* very much : *she wants it badly*
   6. *adv.* poor : *badly off*

5. badge *n.* sign of occupation. office membership

1 bag
   1. *n.* container for carrying solid things
   7 *n.* lots of : *bags of money*
   7 *v.* get by hunting : *bag some duck*

3 baggage *n.* luggage
2 bake
   2 *v. cook*
   3 *v.* harden : *these pots were baked in our kiln*
   7 *v.* warm one's body : *baking in the sun at the resort*

2 bakere *n.*
3 balance
   3 *v.* cause to be steady: *balance a ruler on one finger*
   5 *n.* instrument for weighing
   6 *v.* equate: *balance the accounts*
   6 *n.* state of equilibrium: *balance of power*
   7 *n.* outstanding amount : *hand in the balance*

5 balcony
   5 *n.* platform on exterior of building

7   *n.* raised level of seating in theatre

4   bald *adj.* without hair on head

1   ball

    4   *n.* round object: *cricket ball; meatball; a bal of wool*

    6   *n.* dance: *May Ball*

5   ballet *n.*

2   ballon *n.* bag or envelope filled with air

4   ballpoint *n.*

1   banana *n.*

3   bank

    3   *n.* group of persons generally musicians

    4   *n.* connecting piece: rubber bands

    6   *v.* join together

    6   *n.* strip: *a band of colour*

5   bandge *n.*

5   back up *v.* support

5   backbone

    5   *n.* spine

    7   *n.* main strength: *backbone of the crew*

4   background

    4   *n.* part of a view

    7   *n.* setting: *the background to the report*

5   backwards

    5   *adv.* away from front: *go back wards*

    5   *adv.* reverse order : *say the letters backwards*

5   backyard *n.*

1   bad

    1   *adj.* useless : *a had worker*

    1   *adj.* unpleasant. incorrect : *bad manners.*

    1   *adj.* immoral; *a bad man. bad behaviour*

    2   *adj.* painful: *I've got a bad head*

    4   *adj.* rotten : *go bad*

5   bang

    5   *n.* sudden loud noise

    6   *n.* a violent blow

    6   *v.* strike: *bang in that nail with a hammer*

2   bank

    2.   *n.* establishment for handling money

    5   *n.* a ridge : *bank of earth*

    6   *v.* place securely: *to bank one's money*

3   Bank Holiday *n.*

5   banker *n.*

5   bankrupt *adj.*

2   bar

    2   *n.* a drinking place

    4   *n.* a rod of wood or metal: *a bar of gold*

    5   *v.* obstruct : *to bar the door*

    5   *n.* obstacle : *a bar across the road*

    7   *n.* place in court: *prisoner at the bar*

4   barber *n.*

3 bare
  3 *adj.* naked: *bare skin : bare head*
  6 *adj.* mere : *kill with your bare hands.*
  6 *adj.* very slight : *a bare majority*
  7 *v.* make naked: *bare one's head*
3 bargain
  3 *v.* negotiate by argument: *you have to bargain in a Persian bazaar*
  5 *n.* thing bought cheaply
  5 *n.* agreement: *strike a bargain*
3 bark
  3 *v.* ery (dogs, foxes)
  3 *v.* cry so made

6 *v.* shout sharply, *he barked his orders*
5 barman *n.*
4 barrel
  4 *n.* round container: *a barrel of beer*
  7 *n.* tube : *barrel of a rifle*
4 base
  4 *n.* foundation: *base of a pillar*
  5 *v.* establish on foundation: *base the argument*
  6 *n.* headquarters main office: *go back to base for supplies*
  7 *adj.* dishonourable: *acting from base motives*
4 basement *n.*

Part of an English grammatical syllabus (from Hornby 1959)

		John (Mary) Mr. (Mrs. Miss)	Brown (Green, White)
This			
	is	a	stone (cow, horse, desk, book)
		an	apple (egg, inkpot umbrella).
That		my (your)	bag (desk, pen, head, mouth)

These				stones (cows, trees, desks, books eggs, umbrellas).
Those	are	my (your)		books (pens, pencils)
This	is	my	left	hand (eye, ear)
That	is	your	right	

What is	this?
What is	that?
What are	these?
	those?

It is	a	book
	my	pen
It's	your	pencil
	(–)	books
They are	my	pens
They're	your	pencils

Is	this that	a pen or a pencil? a bag or a box? my book or your book?
Are	these those	pens or pencils? bags or boxes? my books or your books?

Is	this that	a	cow? bird? horse?	Yes, it's	a	cow bird horse
	it	my your	book? box?	No, it isn't	my your	book box
Are	these those		cows? birds? horses?	Yes, they're		cow bird horses
	they	my your	books? boxes?	No, they aren't	my your	books boxes

Unit 2 ◻ Needs Analysis

2.0 Objectives

Read and explore this unit. By the end of your study it is expected you will

- understand the notion of language needs
- have a clear conception of analysing needs for syllabus designing.
- be able to design your own form for analysing needs.
- use the information collected for designing a syllabus.

2.1 What are Needs?

The term *needs* is not as straightforward as it might appear, and hence the term is sometimes used to refer to wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations.

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lacks, constraints and requirements (*Brindley 1984, 28*). Needs are often described in terms of a linguistic deficiency, that is, as describing the difference between what a learner can presently do in a language and what he or she should be able to do. This suggestes that needs have objective reality and are simply there wating to be identified and analyzed. Porcher (1977, in Brindley 1984, 29) offers a different perspective: *"Need is not a thing that exists and might be encountered ready-made on the street. It is a thing that is constructed, the center of conceptual networks and the product of a number of epistemological choices (which are not innocent themselves, of course). What is identified as a need is dependent on judgement and reflects the interests and values of those making such a judgement. Teachers, learners, employers, parents, and other stakeholders (discussed in the next section) may thus all have different views as to what needs are."*

Needs are often described in terms of languages needs, that is, as the languages skills needed to survive in an English-dominant society. But as Auerbach (1995) and others have pointed out, in many cases, particularly that of immigrant, minorities in English-dominant societies, such persons also have other kinds of needs. These relate to housing, health care, access to schooling for their children, access to community agencies and services, and ways of addressing exploitation and discrimination in the workplace.

● The users of needs analysis

A 'needs analysis' may be conducted for a variety of different users. For example, in conducting a needs analysis to help revise the secondary school English curriculum in a country, the end users include :

- curriculum officers in the ministry of education, who may wish to use the information to evaluate the adequacy of existing syllabus, curiculum and materials.

- teachers who will teach from the new curriculum

- learners who will be taught from the curriculum

- Writers, who are preparing new textbooks.

- testing personnel, who are involved in developing end-of-school assessments

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- staff of tertiary institutions, who are interested in knowing what the expected level will be of students exiting the schools and what problems they face.

In the case of a need analysis conducted by a private institute of language needs of trainee accountants in international accounting firms, the target users might be :

- trainers responsible for designing programs and materials.

- a funding body, such as the local professional society for accountants who are interested in seeing a concrete product as an outcome of them funding

- employers who are interested in improving the job performance of new staff

With small-scale needs analysis such as that carried out by a single teacher on his or her class, the audience might consist of the teacher, other teachers, and the program coordinator. In cases of large-scale needs analysis, there will be multiple audiences for the results of a needs analysis. Determining the likely audiences is an important first step in planning a needs analysis in order to ensure that the information they need is obtained and that the needs analysis will have the impact it is designed to have.

2.1.1 The introduction and development of the concept of Need Analysis

One of the basic assumptions of curriculum development is that a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs. Procedures used to collect information about learners' needs are known as needs analysis. Needs analysis as a distinct and necessary phase in planning educational programs emerged in the 1960s as part of the systems approach to curriculum development and was part of the prevalent philosophy of educational accountability (*Stufflebeam, McCormich, Brinkerhoff, and Nelson 1985*). If providers of training programs wanted public or other sources of funding in order to provide different kinds of training programs, they were required to demonstrate that a proposed program was a response to a genuine need (*Pratt 1980*).

Needs analysis was introduced into language teaching through the ESP movement. From the 1960s, the demand for specialized language programs grew and applied linguists increasingly began to employ needs analysis procedures in language teaching. By the 1980s, in many parts of the world a "needs-based philosophy" emerged in language teaching, particularly in relation to ESP and vocationally oriented program design (Brindley 1984)

In this unit we will examine approaches to needs analysis and consider the purposes of needs. analysis, the nature of needs, who needs analysis is intended for, who the target popultion is, who collects information, what procedures can be used and how the information collected can be used. (Examples of two different needs analysis are given at the end of the unit.

2.2 The Purpose of Needs Analysis

According to David Nunan (1998)

Need analysis in language teaching may be used for a number of different purposes, for example:

- to find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student

- to help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students

- to determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills

- to identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important

- to identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do

- to collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.

According to **John Munby** (1978) it is important for the syllabus designer to collect information on each of the following components :

1. **Participant** (Age, Sex, MT, proficiency in L_2)

2. **Purposive Domain** (Why L_2 is needed)

3. **Setting** (environment in which the target language will be employed)

4. **Nature of interaction** (with whom?)

5. **Instrumentality** (face to face / indirect)

6. **Target level** (degree of mastery)

7. **Communicative event** (productive / receptive skills needed)

8. **Communicative key** (attitude / tone)

● **REVIEW**

> ● How important is it for a teacher to be aware of these components?
>
> ● Why is it important / not important?
>
> ● Discuss and make notes.

The most sophisticated application of needs analysis to language syllabus design is to be found in the work of **John Munby (1978)**. The model developed by Munby contains nine elements. According to Munby, it is important for the syllabus designer to collect information on each of these components:

1. *Participant*

    Under this component is specified information relating to the learner's identity and language skills. These will include age, sex, nationality, mother tongue, command of target language, other languages, etc. It is therefore similar in some respects to the learner analysis which has already been described.

2. *Purposive domain*

    This category refers to the purposes for which the target language is required.

3. *Setting*

    Under this parameter, the syllabus designer must consider the environments in which the target language will be employed.

4. *Interaction*

    Here, the syllabus designer needs to consider the people with whom the learner will be interacting.

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5. **Instrumentality**

Instrumentality refers to the *medium* (whether the language is spoken or written, receptive or productive), the *mode* (whether the communication is monologue or dialogue, written or spoken, to be heard or read), and the *channel* (whether the communication is face-to-face or indirect).

6. **Dialect**

Here the variety and/or dialect us specified.

7. **Target level**

Here us stated the degree of mastery which the learner will need to gain over the target language.

8. **Communicative event**

This refers to the productive and receptive skills the learner will need to master.

9. **Communicative key**

Here, the syllabus designer needs to specify the interpersonal attitudes and tones the learner will be required to master.

TASK 1

> Do you think that the Munby approach is principally concerned with the collection of objective or subjective information?

The Munby approach has received criticism from many quarters for being too mechanistic, and for paying too little attention to the perceptions of the learner. As it is also developed with reference to individual learners, it may ultimately be self defeating for classroom teaching.

Criticisms of early needs analysis work led to a change of emphasis, with a greater focus on the collection and utilization of *subjective* information in syllabus design. This chage in emphasis reflected a trend towards *a more humanistic approach* to education in general.

Humanistic education is based on the belief that learners should have a say in *what* they should be learning and *how* they should learn it, and reflects the notion that *education should be concerned with the development of autonomy in the learner.*

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Apart from philosophical reasons for weaning learners from dependence on teacher and educational systems, it is felt, particularly in systems where there are insufficient resources to provide a complete education, that learners should be taught independent learning skills so they may continue their education after the completion of formal instruction.

Like most other aspects of language syllabus design, needs analysis procedure have attracted criticism from a variety of sources—from teachers who feel learner independence detracts from their own authority and status in the classroom, from some education authorities who feel that syllabus decisions should be made by experts not learners, and by some learners themselves who feel that, if a teacher or institution asks for the learner's opinion, it is a sign that they do not know what they are doing.

The discussion relating to the role of the learner in syllabus design illustrates the point made earlier, that most decisions are underpinned by value judgement derived from the planner's belief system. Al syllabuses, indeed, all aspects of the curriculum, including methodology, and learner assessment and evaluation are underpinned by beliefs about the nature of language and language learning.

TASK 2

> What views on the nature of language and language learning do you think underly the Munby view of needs-based syllabus design as this has been described above?

The approach to syllabus design promoted by Munby has led, in some instances, to syllabuses with a narrow focus such as *'English for Nurses'* and *'English for Medical Science'*. The assumption behind the development of some such syllabuses is that there are certain aspects of language which are peculiar to the contexts in which it is used and the purposes for which it is used. For example, it is assumed that there are certain *structures, functions, topics, vocabulary* items conceptual meanings, and so on that are peculiar to the world of *nursing* and which are not found in *'general'* English.

It is also assumed that different areas of use will require different *communication skills* from the learner, and that these need to be specifically taught for the area of use in question.

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TASK 3

| What are your thoughts on these views? |

For most people, the idea that a given language is divided into lots of subordinate and discrete *'universes of discourse'* or *'mini-languages'* is unsatisfactory. It does not seem to be consistent with their own experience of language. Analysis of the language used in different domains sems to indicate that, apart from certain technical terms, linguistic elements are remarkably similar. It is argued that, whatever learner's final communicative purposes are, they should be taught those elements that represent a *'common core'* of language. (Adapted Nunan, 1988)

Any ESL programme (e.g., for ESL students in public schools) **Linse (1993)** identifies the following purposes for needs analysis :

- to compile a demographic profile of all the languages and language groups represented by the students

- to assess their level of language acquisition in their native language and in English.

- to determine their communicative abilities in English

- to determine their formal knowledge of English

- to find out how students use language on a daily basis

- to determine what English language skills are necessary to enable students to participate in all school and community activities in English

- to find out what prior experiences students have had with formal education

- to determine the attitudes of the students and their families toward formal schooling and education

- to find out what preliteracy and literacy skills the students possess

- to ascertain the students' level of cognitive development and acquisition of academic skills in their native language(s)

- to ascertain what cognitive and academic skills students have acquired in English

- to determine the cultural, political and personal characteristics of students.

2.3   Conducting a Needs Analysis

The first step in conducting a needs analysis is therefore to decide exactly what its **purpose or purposes** are. For example, when a needs analysis of **restaurant employees** is conducted, the purposes might be :

- to determine current levels of language proficiency of employees
- to determine how many employees are in need of the language training
- to identify senior restaurant staff's perception of language problems employees have on the job
- to identify employees' perception of language difficulties they face on the job
- to ascertain the types of transactions employees typically perform in English
- to determine the language characteristics of those transactions
- to assess the extent to which employees' needs are met by currently available programs and textbooks.

In many cases, learners' language needs may be relatively easy to determine, particularly if learners need to learn a language for *very specific purposes,* for example, employment in fields such as tourism, media, or the hotel industry. In this case the tasks employees typically carry out in English can be observed and the language needs of those tasks determined. The information obtained can then serve as a basis for planning a training program. In some cases, "**needs**" also includes students' right. Linse comments :

It is the school's responsibility to take into account the cultural, political, and personal characteristics of students as the curriculum is developed in order to plan activities and objectives that are realistic and purposeful. It is not the responsibility of the school to act on political matters but it is the school's responsibility to provide equal access to school opportunities and to validate the experiences of all students, regardless of their political and/or cultural backgrounds (*Linse, in Hudelson 1993, 46*).

In other cases, learner's needs may not be so immediate—fo example, students learning English as a secondary school subject in an EFL context. Here English may be a compulsory subject that is considered an important part of a child's general education. However, even though the students may not have any immediate perceptions of needs, curriculum planners will generally have consulted employers, parents, and others to find out what knowledge of English they expect high school leavers to achieve. In many countries, the introduction of English or another foreign language in elementary or secondary school is based on what curriculum planners consider best for students to study at school in the same way that math, history, and physical education are included in the school curriculum illegible analysis of students studying foreign languages at a New Zealand university (Richards and Gravatt 1998), the following categories of students were included to help determine students' motivations for selecting a language course, dropping a language course, or choosing not to take a language course.

- students currently enrolled in a foreign language course.

- students previously enrolled but no longer studying a language

- students who have never studied a foreign language

In determining the target population, an important issue is that of **sampling**. In some cases, the population is small enough for every learners to be included in the sample. In other cases, this approach is not feasible and so decisions must be made about the size of the sample to be included in a need analysis. Sampling involves asking a portion of the potential porpulation instead of the total population and seeks to create a sample that is representative of the total population. Elley (1984) points out that a number of factors influence the approach to sampling, such as the homogeneity of the population in terms of the kinds of skills, attitudes, or knowledge being sought or the need to study subgroup within the sample.

2.3.1 Administering the needs analysis

Planning a needs analysis involves deciding who will administer the needs analysis and collect and analyze the results. Needs analysis vary in their scope and demands, from a survey of a whole school population in a country to a study of a group of thirty learners in a single institution. Sometimes a team of personnel is assembled specifically for the purpose of doing the analysis at other times two

or three intersted teachers may be the only ones involved. For example, in a needs analysis of the language needs of non-English-background students studying at a New Zealand university (see Appeldix 1), the following were involved :

- the research team made up to two academics and a research assistant

- colleagues in different deapartments who discussed the project and reviewed sample questionnaires

- students who piloted the questionnaire

- academic staff of the university who administered some of the question-naires

- secretarial support involved in reparing questionnaires and tabulating data

In some language programs informal needs analysis is part of a teacher's ongoing responsibility. Shaw and Dowsett (1986) describe this approach in the Australian Adult Migrant Education Program:

Informal needs assessment deals with the informal negotiations that take place between class teachers and students in the form of chats with either individual students, groups of students, or the whole class in order to select a focus for the class and create group cohesion by establishing a coincidence of learning needs.

... Informal needs assessment is normally the main task of the classroom teacher during week one of the course .... [it] is necessary component of information retrieval on students' learning needs and should be recorded. It can subsequently be used as an input for aims and objectives setting and for devising course outlines. (Shaw and Dowsett 1986, 47-49)

Information collected in this way may complement information collected through more formal means.

2.4 Procedures for Conducting Needs Analysis

Instruments and Sources for gathering information

A variety of procedures can be used in conducting needs analysis and the kind of information obtained is often dependent on the type of procedure selected.

Since any one source of information is likely to be incomplete or partial, a *triangular approach* (i.e., collecting information from two or more sources) is advisable. Many different sources of information should be sought. For example, when a needs analysis of the writing problems encountered by foreign students enrolled in Indian universities is conducted, information could be obtained from the following sources:

- samples of student writing
- test data on student performance
- reports by teachers on typical problems students face
- opinions of experts
- information from students via interviews and questionnaires
- analysis of textbooks teaching academic writing
- survey or related literature
- examples of writing programs from other institutions
- examples of writing assignments given to first-year university students.

Procedures for collecting information during a needs analysis can be selected from among the following.

1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects, and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities, and attitudes and beliefs.

Questionnaires are either based on a set of structured items (in which the respondent chooses from a limited number of responses) or unstructured (in which open-ended questions are given that the respondent can answer as he or she chooses). Structured items are much easier to analyze and are hence normally preferred. A questionnaire designed as a basis for planning courses in Cantonese for non-Chinese residents of Hong Kong seeks information on the following.

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- situation on which Cantonese could be used

- self-assessment of curent proficiency level in Cantonese

- previous experience of Cantonese courses

- views on textbooks for learning Cantonese

- views on approaches to teaching Cantonese

- learning-style preferences

- views on Cantonese as a language

A disadvantage of questionnaires, however, is that the information obtained may be fairly superficial or imprecise and will often need follow-up to gain a fuller understanding of what respondents intend. It should also be recognized that there are many badly designed questionnaires is educational research, and it is advisable to become familiar with the principles of good questionnaire design to ensure that the information obtained is reliable. Piloting of questionnaires is essential to identify ambiguities and other problems before the questionnaire is administered. Some issues involved in the design of questionnaires are given in Appendix 2 which provides a sample needs analysis survey form.

2. Self ratings

These consist of scales that students or others use to rate their knowledge or abilities. (Self-ratings might also be included as part of a questionnaire.) For example, a-student might rate how well he or she can handle a job interview in English. The disadvantage of such and instrument is that it provides only impressionistic information and information that is not very precise.

3. Interviews

Interviews allow for a more in-depth exploration of issues than is possible with a questionnaire, though they take longer to administer and are only feasible for smaller groups. An interview may often be useful at the preliminary stage or designing a questionnaire, since it will help the designer get a sense of what topics and issues can be focussed on in the questionnaire. A structured interview in which a set series of questions is used allows more consistency across responses to be obtained. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone.

4. Meetings

A meeting allows a large amount of information to be collected in a fairly short time. For example, a meeting of teachers on the topic "students" problems with listening comprehension might generate a wide range of ideas. However, information obtained in this way may be impressionistic and subjective and reflect the ideas of more outspoken members of a group.

5. Observation

Observations of learners' behavior in a target situation is another way of assessing their needs. For example, observing clerks performing their jobs in a bank will enable the observer to arrive at certain conclusions about their language needs.

However, people often do not perform well when they are being observed, so this has to be taken into account. In addition, observation is a specialized skill. Knowing how to observe, what to look for and how to make use of the information obtained generally requires specialized training.

6. Collecting learner language samples

Collecting data on how well learners on different language tasks (e.g., business loans, interviews, telephone calls) and documenting the typical problems they have is a useful and direct source of information about learners' language needs. Language samples may be collected through the following means :

- *written or oral tasks* : Examples of students written or oral work are collected.

- *simulations or role plays* : Students are given simulations to carry out and their performance is observed or recorded.

- *achievement tests* : Students are tested for their abilities in different domains of language use.

- *Performance tests* : Students are tested on job-related or task-related behaviors, such as "how well a job interview can be carried out in English."

7. Task analysis

This refers to analysis of the kinds of tasks the learners will have to carry out in English in a future occupational or educational setting and assessment of

the linguistic characteristics and demands of the tasks. For example, a hotel employee might have to perform the following tasks in English :

- greet hotel guests
- inquire about their accommodation needs
- inform them of accommodation available at the hotel.
- help them make a suitable choice of accommodation.
- handle check-in procedures.

2.4.1 Designing the needs analysis

Designing needs analysis involves choosing from among the various options discussed above and selecting those that are likely to give a comprehensive view of learners' needs and that represent the interests of the different stakeholders involved. Decisions have to be made on the practical procedures involved in collecting, organizing, analyzing, and reporting the information collected. It is important to make sure that the needs analysis does not produce an information overload. There needs to be a clear reason for collecting different kinds of information so as to ensure that only infomation that will actually be used is collected. In investigating the language needs of non-English-background students at a New Zealand university (Gravatt. Richards, and Lewis 1997), the following procedures were used.

1. literature survey
2. analysis of a wide range of survey questionnaires
3. contact with others who had conducted similar surveys
4. interviews with teachers to determine goals
5. identification of participating departments
6. Presentation of projec⁺ proposal to participating departments and identification of personel in each department
7. development of a pilot student and staff questionnaire
8. review of the questionnaires by colleagues
9. piloting of the questionnaires
10. selection of staff and student subjects.

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11. developing a schedule for collecting data

12. administration of questionnaires

13. follow-up interviews with selected participants

14. tabulation of responses

15. analysis of responses

16. writing up of report and recommendations.

In smaller-scale needs analysis such as that of a teacher or group of teachers assessing the needs of new groups of students in a language program, needs analysis procedures may consist of :

● initial questionnaire

● follow-up individual and group interviews

● meetings with students

● meetings with other teachers

● ongoing classroom observation

● tests.

2.5 Using the information collected

The results of a needs analysis will generally consist of information taken from several different sources and summarized in the form of ranked lists of different kinds. For example, it might result in lists of the following kind.

● situations in which English is frequently used

● situations in which difficulties are encountered

● comments most often made by people on learners' performance

● frequencies with which different transactions are carried out

● perceived dificulties with different aspects of language use

● preferences for different kinds of activities in teaching.

- frequencies of errors made in different types of situations or activities.

- common communication problems in different situations

- suggestions and opinions about different aspects of learners' problems

- frequencies of linguistic items or units in different texts or situations.

In the course of carrying out a needs analysis, a large number of potential needs may be identified. However, these needs will have to be prioritized because not all of them may be practical to address in a language program, or perhaps the time frame available in the program is suitable for needs analysis produces information that can be used in different ways.

For example :

- If may provide the basis of the evaluation of an existing program or a component of a program.

- It may provide the basis for planning goals and objectives for a future program.

- It may assist with developing tests and other assessment procedures.

- It can help with the selection of appropriate teaching methods in a program.

- It may provide the basis for developing a syllabus and teaching material for a course.

- It may provide information that can be used as part of a course or program report to an external body or organization.

In none of these cases, however, is there a direct route from needs analysis to application. Some of these application will be discussed in the units that follow. Although a major application of needs analysis is in the design of language programmes, before a progrmme can be designed additional information is needed on factors that can have an impact on the programme. The identification of the these factors and the assessment of their likely impact form the focus of the next few units.

2.6 Review questions and actitvities

1. Needs analysis is applicable in situations where students have very specific language needs. However, it can be used in situation where learner's needs are not so specific, as in the case of students learning English as a second language in a school setting. What might the focus of a needs analysis be in this situation?

2. If you were planning a needs analysis for the situation in which you teach, what information would you seek to obtain?

3. Discuss the concept of "*Stakeholders*" in planning a needs analysis in relation to a context you are familiar with. How can the concerns of different stakeholders be addressed?

4. If you were designing a needs analysis for **secretaries** working in business offices, what target population would you include in the needs analysis? What kind of information would you need from each member of the target population?

5. Suggest four different needs analysis procedures that could be used to collect information about the language needs of **hotel receptionists.** What are the advantages and limitations of each procedure?

6. Suggest situations in which a case study would provide useful information during a needs analysis.

7. Design a short questionnaire designed to investigate the language needs of **tour guides.** What issues will the questionnaire address? What type of items will you include in the questionnaire?

8. Prepare a set of questions to be used in a structured interview for use in a needs analysis of the language needs of **radio jockeys** or **call centre personnel.**

9. Choose an occupation that you are familiar with or that you would be able to observe and prepare a task analysis of the tasks typically carried out by people in that occupation. Suggest the language requirements of each task.

2.7 Needs Analysis – A Revies Workshop

1. Can you think of any of the ways in which our beliefs about the nature of language and language learning might influence our decision-making on what to put into the syllabus?

2. How do we grade it?

3. Do we want the learner to gain mastery over the grammatical, phonological and vocabulary elements of the target language?

4. Do we want the learner to be able to do what he needs/wants to do in/with the target language?

5. Can we design a syllabus without any information about the learners?

6. What are the factors that help in deciding what to include in the syllabus.

7. What techniques and procedures are available for collecting information about learners?

TASK : 1. Most of the literature on NEEDS ANALYSIS is concerned with the LEARNER. Can you think of any other areas of information that need to be collected? Discuss in groups.

2. Study the sample of a Needs Analysis survey. Which of the information included is likely to be useful for planning purposes?

3. Study the model suggested by John Munby (1978). Do you think it is relevant in your situation?

4. Study the framework below and design a tentative syllabus for your students.

ELEMENTS	EXPONETS
Real World learning goals	
Functions	
Grammatical items	
Situations	
Topics and themes	
Learning tasks & activities	
Management procedures	

[Adapted from Syllabus Design, David Nunal, 1998]

2.8   Appendix 1, 2

Appendix 1

Needs analysis of non-English-background students and their English language needs at the University of Auckland (Adapted : Numan, 1998)

This is an example of needs analysis conducted in order to evaluate whether currently available language courses meet the needs of non-English-background learners at the university.

Context

The University of Aucklandd, Auckland, New Zealand. The largest of New Zealand's seven universities with a student propulation of some 26,000 in 1997,.

Background

The number of students for whom English is a second language has increased steadily since 1990, and continues to do so. In some faculties as many as 30 percent of the students are ESL students.

- The English competence of these students on entry varies considerably.

- A previous small-scale report within the university, addressing the issue of English-language skills of students and entrance requirements, strongly indicated that more data were needed regarding the problems experienced by ESL students.

- This prompted a needs analysis initiated to assess these problems, using two questionnaires to survey staff and ESL, students perceptions across the university.

- The study looked at the language demands placed on ESL students, problems, experiences, and suggestions for improving the situation.

Method

Staff questionnaire : This included some questions from similar instruments developed in other institutions as well as others specific to issues at the university. The questions were organized into the following sections.

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- background information concerning the course or paper the lecturer was describing.

- overview of problems experienced by ESL students in the course/paper.

- linguistic demand of the course/paper in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, as well as the difficulties experienced by the students in these areas.

- suggestions as which language skills should be focussed on in courses for ESL students.

- modification made in teaching or in examinations is a result of the difficulties experienced by ESL student.

The questionnaire was piloted and revised before it was distributed. Respondent there identified by the heads of all fifty-one departments at the university. The results were analyzed overall and by faculty.

Student questionnaire : The student questionnaire was a modified version of the staff questionnaire. The structure was similar but with less emphasis on language expectations and greater emphasis on problems being encountered. The questionnaire was piloted before distribution. The questionnaire was distributed to students enrolled in all courses that were identified in the staff questionnaire as having a high proportion of ELS students. In all, 302 student questionnaires were completed.

Product

A fifty-seven page reoport was produced that described the results of the two survey questonnaires together with a series of recommendations.

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Appendix 2

Needs analysis questionnaire for non-English-background students

Student questionnaire used at the University of Auckland, New Zealand (from Gravatt, Richards, and Lewis 1997)

Institute of Language Teaching and Learning

NEED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENT -STUDENT VERSION

This questionnaire is part of a project being carried out by the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning to determine what the language needs of students whose first or dominant language is not English (ESL students) attending the University are, whether these are being adequately met and, if not, what can be done better. For this purpose the opinions of both staff and students in a variety of departments are being surveyed. It would be appreciated if you could complete this questionnaire. Which should take approximately 20 minutes.

The term 'N/A' is used in this questionnaire. It means 'Not applicable' and is the appropriate response if a question does not apply to you.

With which of the following groups do you identify? (Please tick the appropriate box):

☐ Pacific Island – Which?

☐ Asian – Which country?

☐ Other (please specify):

How many years have you been studying at Auckland University (including 1977)?

What is your current course of study?

Please complete this questionnair with regard to the course you have specified here.

A. Overview of Skills Needed and Difficulties Encountered

In your course of study, how often are you expected to use the following skilled (please circle)

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5

How often do you have difficulty with each of these skills? (please circle).

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5

B. General Statements

Please circle the appropriate response :

How important to succeed in your course of study are the following abilities?

		High		Moderate		Low
1.	Listening to English	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Speaking English	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Writing English	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Reading English	1	2	3	4	5

How important to succeed in your field after graduation are the following abilities?

		High		Moderate		Low
1.	Listening to English	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Speaking English	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Writing English	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Reading English	1	2	3	4	5

C. *Speaking and Listening Skills*

How often do you following happen to you

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1.	Receive low garden in tasks involving class participation	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Have difficulty working in small groups during class	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Have difficulty working with other students on out-of-class projects	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Have trouble leading class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Have difficulty participating in large group discussions or in debates	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Have difficulty interacting with student demonstrators in labs, tutorials, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Struggle with out-of-class assignments which require interaction with native speaker of Enlish	1	2	3	4	5

D. *Speaking Skills*

How often do you following happen to you?

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1.	Have difficulty giving oral presentations.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Have trouble wording what you want to say quickly enough	1	2	3	4	5

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
3.	Worry about saying something in case you make a mistake in your English	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Not know how to say something in English	1	2	3	4	5.
5.	Not know the best way to say something in English	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Have difficulty with your pronunciation of words.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Find it difficult to enter discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Other (please specify) :	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

E. *Listening Skills*

How often do you following happen to you?

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1.	Have trouble undertaking lectures.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Have trouble taking effective notes	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Have to ask staff questions to clarify material you have been taught	1	2	3	.4	5
4.	Have trouble under standing lengthy descriptions in English	1	2	3	4	5

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
5.	Have trouble under-standing spoken instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Have trouble under-standing informal language	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Have trouble under-standing the subject matter of a talk. i.e., what is being talked about.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I also have difficulty with (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

I have problems understanding lecturers or other student because :

		Often	Sometimes	Never
9.	They talk very fast	1	2	3
10.	They talk very quietly	1	2	3
11.	Their accents or pronun-ciation are different from what I am used to.	1	2	3
12.	More than one person is speaking, e.g., in group discussions.	1	2	3
13.	Other (please specify) :	1	2	3

_____

_____

_____

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E. Writing Skills

With regard to written assignments, please indicate for each of the following :

1. How important the skill is, and
2. How often you have problems with the skill :

Importance

Frequency of problems

Very important	Important	Not important	Not sure		often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1	2	3	4	Using correct punctuation and spelling	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Structuring sentences	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Using appropriate vocabulary	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Organising paragraphs.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Organising the overall assignment.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Expressing ideas appropriately.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Developing ideas.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Expressing what you want to say clearly.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Addressing topic.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Adopting appropriate tone and style.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Following and revising your writing.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Overall writing ability.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Completing written tasks (e.g., exams. tests) within the time available.	1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4	Other (please specity) : _____	1	2	3	4

_____

_____

G. Reading Skills

The following questions concern the reading tasks required of you during the course. Please indicate.

a)   which of the following types if material you are expected to read, and

b)   how often you have difficulty doing so (please circle) :

		Expected to read?	Frequency of difficulties		
			Often	Sometimes	Never
1.	Journal articles	Yes/No	1	2	3
2.	Newspaper articles	Yes/No	1	2	3
3.	Works of friction	Yes/No	1	2	3
4.	Entire reference or text books	Yes/No	1	2	3
5.	Selected chapters of books	Yes/No	1	2	3
6.	Photocopied notes	Yes/No	1	2	3
7.	Workbook or laboratory instructions	Yes/No	1	2	3
8.	Computer-presented reading materials	Yes/No	1	2	3
9.	Other (please specify) :	Yes/No	1	2	3

_____

_____

_____

Indicate how often you have difficulty with each of the following:

		Very Often		Sometimes		Never
10.	Understanding the main points of text	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Reading a text quickly in order to establish a general idea of the content (skimming).	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Reading a text slowly and carefully in order to understand the details of the text.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Looking through a text quickly in order to locate specific information (scanning).	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Guessing unknown words in a text.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Understanding text organisation	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Often		Sometimes		Never
16.	Understanding specialist vocabulary in a text.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Reading speed	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Reading in order to respond critically	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Understanding a writer's attitude and purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	General comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Other (Please specify) : _____	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

H. *Skills You Would Like to Improve*

If you were to take a course to improve your English skills, which of the following would be useful to you? Rate the importance of each (please circle):

		High		Moderate		Low
1.	Listening to pronunciation/intonation stress patterns of New Zealand English	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Lecture notetaking	1	2	3	4	5
3.	General listening comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Giving formal speeches/presentations	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Participating effectively in discussions	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, collaborative projects, or out-of-class study groups	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Communicating effectively with staff in or out of class	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Library skills	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Essay writing	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Lab report writing	1	2	3	4	5

		High		Moderate		Low
11.	Creative writing	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Writing case studies	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Describing objects or procedures	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Writing introductions and conclusions	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Writing references and quotations	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Formulating coherent arguments	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Summarising factual informations	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Synthesizing information from more than one source	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Analysing written materials.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Knowledge of vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Reading quickly	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Reading critically	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Reading for author's viewpoint	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Summarizing material	1	2	3	4	5
25.	General reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Other (Please specify and rate) : ___	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

I. Assistance Available

Are you aware of the course available at the Student Learning Centre for students for whom English is a second language? (please circle) : Yes/No

If you have taken any of these courses, please state which you have taken and how useful they were :

Course	Very useful				No use at all
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

J. Catering for ESL Students

Do you believe any changes should be made to your course or the way it is taught as a result of difficulties students such as yourself have with English?

(Please circle) : Yes/No

If you have answered Yes, please tick the modification which should be made.

☐ Using overheads more in lectures   ☐ Having more multiple choice tests

☐ Simplifying the material covered   ☐ Providing summaries of important materials

☐ Having less class involvement during lectures   ☐ Reducing the amount of reading

☐ Providing more photocopied notes   ☐ Giving additional tutorials

☐ Other (please specify) : _____

K. Additional Comments

Do you have any other comments which might be helpful is assessing what English skills are expected of you by the University, what specific difficulties you encountered in this paper, how English courses could better prepare students such as yourself for this paper, or anything else relating to your English language skills and needs? If so, please write them here :

_____

_____

_____

_____

L. Additional Information

If we should like more information from you, would you be prepared to be interviewed? Yes/No

If so, please give your :

Name : _____

Contact telephone number : _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

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Unit 3 □ Needs, Goals & Objectives

Structure

3.0 Objectives

This unit help you to—

—relate the various aspects of Needs Analysis with its application Syllabus Design.

—develop course goals from learner goals.

—specify various types of objectives in language teaching.

3.1 Introduction

In this section we shall look at some of the ways in which the concepts and processes introduced in the previous units have been applied.

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3.2 Needs Analysis and Data Collection

In Unit 2 we saw that needs analysis refers to a family of procedures for gathering information about learners and about communication tasks for use in syllabus design.

The following sets of data, extracted and adapted from Munby (1978) show the sorts of information which can be collected through needs analysis. (Adapted Nunan, 1992)

Student A

Participant : Thirty-five-year-old : Spanish-speaking male. Present command of English very elementary. Very elementary command of German.

Purposive domain : Occupational–to facilitate duties as head waiter and relief receptionist in hotel.

Interaction : Principally with customers, hotel residents and reservation seekers.

Instrumentality : Spoken and written, productive and receptive language. Face-to-face and telephone encounters.

Dialect : Understand and produce standard English ; understand Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American.

Communicative event : Head waiter attending to customers in restaurant ; receptionist dealing with residents' / customers' enquiries / reservations, answering correspondence on room reservations.

Cummunicative key : Official to member of the public, server to customer. Formal, courteous.

Student B

Participant : Twenty-year-old Venezuelan male. Elementary command of target language. No other languages.

Purposive domain : Educational–to study agriculture and cattle breeding.

Setting : Educational Institution in Venezuela. Intellectual, quasi-professional psycho-social setting.

Interaction : Principally with teachers and other students.

Instrumentality : Spoken and written, receptive and productive, Face-to-face and print channels.

Dialect : Understand and produce Standard English dialect, understand General Americal and RP accent.

Communicative event : Studying reference material in English, reading current literature, taking lessons to develop ability to understand agricultural science material.

Communicative key : Learner to instructor.

TASK

— In what ways is this second learner similar to or different from the first learner?

— Are there enough similarities for both learners to be placed in the same programme?

— Choose any learner. In designing or adapting a syllabus for the learner, which information would you utilize and which would you ignore?

3.3 Statement of Objectives

TASK (adapted from Nunan, 1998)

Study the following lists of objectives and see if you can identify what distinguishes one list from another. Make your own notes.

List 1

— to complete the first ten units of 'Learning English'

— to teach the difference between the present prefect and the simple past tenses.

— to provide learners with the opportunity of comprehending authentic language.

List 2

— Students will take part in a role play between a shopkeeper and a customer.

— Students will read a simplified version of a newspaper article and answer comprehension questions on the content.

— Students will complete the pattern practice exercise on page 50 of Beginner's English.

List 3

— Learners will obtain information on train departure times from a railway information office.

— Learners will provide personal details to a government official in a formal interview.

— Learners will listen to and comprehend the main points in a radio news bulletin.

The curriculum model of Tyler (1949) is based on the use of objectives, and his book was very influential in promoting their use. Tyler suggested that there were four ways of stating objectives :

1   specify the things that the *teacher or* instructor is *to do*

2   specify *course content* (topics, concepts, generalizations, etc)

3   specify generalized *patterns of behaviour* (e.g. 'to develop critical thinking').

4   specify the kinds of behaviour which *learners will be able to exhibit after instruction*

● **Now compare your own notes with Tyler's ways of stating objectives. Then move on and world out the tasks that follow.**

TASK

— **Which of these ways of stating objectives do you think is likely to be most useful? Why?**

- What criticsms, if any, would you make of the other methods?
- Can you think of any other methods of stating objectives?
- Which data do you think a syllabus designer with a product orientation might focus on?
- Which data do you think a syllabus designer with a process orientation might focus on ? What additional data might such a person require?

3.4 From Needs to Goals and Objectives

As we have seen in the previous unit, goals come in many shapes and forms. They can refer to *cognitive* and *affective* aspects of the learner's development, what the teacher hopes to achieve in the classroom, what the teacher hopes the learners will achieve in the classroom, the real-world communicative tasks the learners should be able to perform as a result of instruction, and so on.

Product-oriented goals can be derived directly from the learners themselves. that is, by asking the learners why they are learning the language. Alternatively, they can be derived by syllabus designers through a process of introspecting on the sorts of communicative purpose for which language is used. These can either relate to a restricted domain (as in ESP) or to the more general purposes for which language is used. The lists of functional items developed by people such as Wilkins and Van Ek were the result to attempts of describe and categorize all the different things that users of a language might want to do with that language.

In considering needs and goals, we should keep in mind that the teacher's syllabus and the learner's syllabus or 'agenda' might differ. One of the purposes of subjective needs analysis is to involve learners and teachers in exchanging information so that the agendas of the teacher and the learner may be more closely aligned. This can happen in two ways. In the first place, information provided by learners can be used to guide the selection of content and learning activities. Secondly, by providing learners with detailed information about goals, objectives, and learning activities.

Learners may come to have a greater appreciation and acceptance of the learning experience they are undertaking or about to undertake. It may be that learners

have different goals from those of the teacher simply because they have not been informed in my meaningful way what the teacher's goals are.

Some of the purposes which learners, teachers, and syllabus planners in the Australian Adult Migrant Education Program have articulated are as follws:

-   to develop skills in learning how to learn
-   to develop the skill necessary to take part in academic study
-   to develop an appreciation of the target society and culture
-   to develop sufficient oral and written skills to obtain a promotion from unskilled worker to site supervisor
-   to communicate socially with members of the target or host community
-   to develop the survival skills necessary to function in the host community
-   to establish and maintain social relationships
-   to be able to read and appreciate the literature of the target culture.
-   to comprehend items of news and information on current affairs from the electronic media.

TASK

—   *To what extent do you think it possible for information such as this to be used to modify a syllabus which has been set by an outside authority?*

—   *Would it be possible to develop a common syllabus to meet all of the communicative needs incorporated in the above statements?*

—   *If not, what are some of the syllabus elements which might be similar, and which might be different?*

—   *Which of the statements could be accommodated by a single syllabus?*

TASK

●   *Suggest a goal statement could cover these three learning purposes.*
  - *to communicate socially with members of the target of host community*
  - *to develop the survival skills necessary to function in the host community*
  - *to establish and maintain social relationships.*

● The following nine general communicative goals were developed as part of a curriculum for students learning second and foreign languages at the school level. The goals were not derived directly from learners, but from an analysis carried out by syllabus planners, experienced teachers, and educational authorities.

Instruction should enable learners to :

1   participate in conversation related to the pursuit of common activites with others

2   obtain goods and services through conversation or correspondence.

3   establish and maintain relationships through exchanging information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, experiences, and plans.

4   make social arrangements, solve problems, and come to conclusions together

5   discuss topics of interest

6   search for specific information for a given purpose, process it, and use it in some way

7   listen to or read, information, process it and use it in some way

8   give information in spoken or written form on the basis of personal experience

9   listen to, or read or view, a story, poem, play, feature, etc., and respond to it personally in some way

Thes have been adapted from the Australian Languages Levels (ALL) Project. For a detailed description of the project. see Clark (1987 : 186 - 237)

TASK

—   *To what extent do these statements represent the sorts of things which learners might wish to do in real life?*

—   *How comprehensive is the list?*

—   *Are there any omissions or areas of overlap?*

—   *Match the All Project goal statements with the units from The Cambridge English Course, Book I or from any other coursebook you are familiar with.*

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3.4 Types of Objectives

Whether one moves from a specification of objectives to content and activities or the other way round will depend on the type of syllabus being developed, and the role which the objectives are made to play. In some 'rational' curriculum processes (Tyler 1949), objectives are specified before content and activities because their principal role is to act as a guide to the selection of the other elements in the curriculum. In the more interactive approaches to curriculum and syllabus design which have replaced the 'rational' approach, objectives can be useful, not only to guide the selection of *structures, functions, notions, tasks,* and so on, but also to provide a sharper focus for teachers, to give learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a language programme, to help in developing means of assessment and evaluation, and so on.

In units 1 & 2 we looked at some of the starting points in syllabus design and at the relationship between learner purpose and syllabus goals.

Goal statements are relatively imprecise. While they can act as general signposts, they need to be stated in detail in order to provide information for course and programme planners. This can be achieved through the **specification of objectives.** In this unit, we shall see that there is no conflict or opposition between objectives, linguistic and experiential content, and learning activities, In fact, objectives are really nothing more than a particular way of formulating or stating content and activities.

> ● **Write your own definition of course objectives before you read on.**

3.5 Specification of Objectives

The term **objective** is a loaded one which has caused a lot of debate within the educational community. There is disagreement about the nature of objectives and also about the precision with which they should be formulated. Some curriculum specialists maintain that no sound instructional system could possibly hope to emerge from a syllabus in which content is not stated in the form of objectives. Others

argue that the process of specifying content in terms of objectives leads to the trivialization or that content. There are, of course, different types of objectives and some of the controversy surrounding their use could well be a result of a lack of clarity about just what is meant by the term itself.

Tyler criticized the specification of objective **in terms of what the teachers is to do** on the grounds that teacher activity is not the ultimate purpose of an educational programme. He also regarded the **listing of content as unsatisfactory** because such lists give no indication of what learners are to do with such content. While he felt that the third alternative was on the right track in that it focussed **on student behaviour,** he felt that the specification was rather vague.

He therefore suggested that the preferred method of stating objectives was in terms of what **the learner should be able to do as a result of instruction.** The statement be so clear and precise that an independent observer could recognize such behaviour if he saw it.

Other proponents of an **'objectives approach'** to language syllabus design argue that specifying objectives in terms of teacher activity could result in courses in which the objectives are achieved but the learners learn nothing and that, with objectives specified in terms of classroom activities, the rationale is not always clear (in other words, the links between the instructional goals and the classroom objectives are not always explicit)

TASK   Consider the data collected from students A and B on Pages 61 and 63

— *How useful do you think these data might be for syllabus design? Which information might be most useful in syllabus design and how might it be used?*

— *Do the participants have anything in common?*

— *If these students were studying at the same language centre, would it be possible for them to share part of a language programme?*

— *Would the Munby approach lead to process-oriented or product-oriented syllabuses? Can you explain your conclusion?*

Here is a rather different set of data.

Name : (Deleted)

Age: 26

Time in target country ? 18 months

Nationality : Vietnamese

Education: Completed primary education

Occupation: Dressmaker

Proficiency: Elementary

Communicative needs: Basic oral communication skills : form filling : reading signs, short public notices and timetable;

LI Resources: Family; home tutor

Learning goals: Communicate with parents of children's friends

Preferred learning activities: Traditional, teacher-directed classroom instruction

Availability : 2-3 x week (mornings only)

Motivation : Brought in by family

Pace: Average

(Adapted from Nunan and Burton 1985)

TASK Use information about the Vietnamese student and answer the questions below

— *In what ways does the information provided here differ from that provided in the Munby data?*

— *Which do you think might be more useful? Why?*

— *When might the information contained in the table be collected? By whom?*

— *Which of this information might usefully be collected by teachers working in an institution with a set syllabus?*

How might the information be used to modify aspects of the syllabus?

What additional information, if any, would you want to collect?

Here is some additional data extracted from the same source. This time it is about a Russian student. Study it and answer the same questions.

Name: (Deleted)

Age: 62

Time in target country ? 12 years

Nationality : Russian

Education: Completed primary education

Occupation: Home duties

Proficiency: Beginner

Communicative needs: Basic oral communication skills : wants to understand radio and TV; wants to learn vocabulary and grammar; has difficulty with Roman script

LI Resources: Grammar books; magazines

Learning goals: Wants to mix with native speakers

Preferred learning activities: Traditional, teacher-directed classroom instruction

Availability : Mornings

Motivation : Referred by family doctor

Pace: Slow

(Adapted from Nunan and Burton 1985)

3.6   Performance Objectives in Language Teaching

Objectives which specify what learners should do as a result of instruction are sometimes called 'perfomance objectives'. A good deal has been written for and against the use of such objectives.

In 1972, a book on the use of performance objectives in language teaching was published by Valette and Disick. In the book, arguments similar to those already outlined are advanced for the use of an objectives approach to syllabus design. In particular, it emphasizes the importance of stating objectives in terms of student rather than teacher behaviour, and of specifying *input* rather than *output*.

TASK

Complete the following tasks which have been adapted from Valette and Disick (1972 : 12).

The following are examples of either *student* or *teacher* behaviours. Identify the four *student* behaviours by making S next to them.

— 1   to present rules of subject-verb agreement

— 2   to explain the differences between direct and indirect object pronouns

— 3   to write answers to questions on a reading selection

— 4   to model the pronunciation of dialogue sentences

— 5   to repeat after the speakers on a tape

— 6   to mark whether a statement heard is true or false

— 7   to review the numbers from one to a hundred

— 8   to describe in German a picture cut from a magazine.

The following are examples *of student input* and *output behaviours.* Write an O next to the four *output* behaviours.

— 1   to pay attention in class

— 2   to recite a dialogue from memory

— 3   to study Lesson Twelve

— 4   to learn the rules for the agreement of the past participle

— 5   to look at foreign magazines

— 6   to attend a make-up lab period

— 7   to write a brief composition about a picture

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— 8   to read a paragraph aloud with no mistakes

— 9   to watch a film on Spain

— 10 to answer questions about a taped conversation

Most syllabus planners who advocate the use of performance objectives suggest that they should contain three components. The first of these, the **performance component**, describes what the learner is to be able to do, the second, the **conditions component**, specifies the conditions under which the learner will perform, and the final component, **the standards component**, indicates how well the learner is to perform.

Consider the following three-part performance objective :

In a classroom simulation, learners will exchange personal details. All utterances will be comprehensible to someone unused to dealing with non-native speakers.

The different components of the objective are as follows:

Performance: exchange personal details.

Conditions : In a classroom simulation

Standard : all utterances to be comprehensible to someone unused to dealing with non-native speakers.

TASK

What do you see as the advantages for language syllabus design of specifying objectives in performance terms?

We have already considered some of the advantages of specifying objectives in perfomance terms. Mager (1975), a influential proponent of performance objectives, sees them as curriculum *'signposts'* which indicate our destination, He rather acidly asks how we are to know when we have reached our destination if we do not know where we are going. A counter-question might be: *'How do we know where we are when we end?*

3.7 Process and Product Objectives

A distinction which is not always observed by curriculum specialists is that between real-world objectives and pedagogic objective. (See also the distinction

between real-world and pedagogic tasks.)

A real-world objective describes a task which learners might wish to carry out outside the classroom. While a pedagogic objective is one which describes a task which the learner might be required to carry out inside the classroom. Examples of both types of objective follow.

Read-world objective

In a shop, or department store, learners will ask for the price of a given item of items. Questions will be comprehensible to shop assistants who are unused to dealing with non-native speakers.

Pedagogic objective

The learner will listen to a conversation between a shopper and a shop assistant and will identify which of three shopping lists belongs to the shopper in question.

TASK

- **What is the difference between these two objectives?**

- **Rewrite the real-world objective as pedagogic objective.**

Another distinction which needs to be observed is between objectives which describes what learner will be able to do as a result of instruction (**product objectives**) and those which describe activities designed to develop the skills needed to carry out the product objective (these might be called **process objectives**).

Process objectives differ from product objectives in that they describe, not what learners will do as a result of instruction, but the experiences that the learner will undergo in the classroom. These experiences will not necessarily involve the in-class rehearsal of final performance, although they may do so. The form that the objective takes will reveal the attitude of the syllabus designer towards the nature of language and language learning.

TASK

- Study the objectives that follow. What do they reveal about their authors' beliefs on the nature of language and language learning?

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- What are the similarities and/or differences between these objectives and the real- world and pedagogic objectives already described? (Is there, in fact, a difference, or are real-world objectives the same thing as product objectives, and pedagogic objectives the same thing as process objectives?)

1   Students will study the picture sequence in the student's book and ask and answer *wh*-questions regarding location and time.

(Adapted from Hobbs 1986 : 27a)

2   Students will study a railway timetable and solve a series of problems relating to departure and arrival times of specified train services.

(Adapted from Prabhu 1987 : 32)

The specifications of process and product objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One type specifies the means, the other the ends. It could be argued that any comprehensive syllabus needs to specify both process and product objectives.

TASK

Can you think of any teaching contexts in which it would be unnecessary to specify product objectives?

Which type of objective is likely to be most useful to you as a classroom teacher?

3.8 Conclusion

In this unit we have explored the issue of objectives setting in syllabus design, focusing in particular on performance objectives. Some of the arguments for and against an objectives approach were taken from general educational theory and presented within a language teaching context. In hte final part, a distinction was drawn between process and product objectives. In the next unit, we shall see how these have been applied.

Unit 4A □ Content in Course Design

Structure

4A.0 Introduction

A thorough study of this unit will help you to

–develop awareness of what is meant by 'content'

–understand the classification of content areas, their selection

–get a clear idea of the grading and development of content in a textbook

–critically examine textbooks and their contents

4A.1 Introduction

Syllabus design is concerned with the selection, sequencing and justification of the content of the curriculum. Traditional approaches to any syllabus developed were concerned with seleting lists of linguistic features such as **grammar, pronunciation,** and **vocabulary** as well as **experiential content** such as **topics** and

themes. These sequence and integrated lists were then presented to the methodologist, whose task it was to develop learning to facilitate the learning of the prespecified content. – (*David Nunan, 2001*).

In the last twenty years or so a range of alternative syllabus models have been proposed, including *a task-based approach*. In this unit we will look at some of the elements that a syllabus designers needs to take into consideration when he or she embraces various approaches to creating syllabuses and pedagogical materials.

What is content as specified in any syllabus?

Here we shall be looking at some of the different ways in which the ideas discussed already have been applied. We shall examine a number of different syllabuses, and explore the ways in which *grammatical, fuctional,* and *notional* items are selected, graded, and interrelated.

The aim of this unit is to familiarize you with the ways in which these different elements are conventionally treated. This should provide you with the skills and knowledge you need to analyse the selection and grading of content in your own syllabuses.

4A.2 Selecting Grammatical Components

We have looked at the distinction between *synthetic* and *analytic* syllabuses. Synthetic syllabuses were described as those in which content is selected and graded according to discrete point principles. Wilkins assumed that these would be grammatical, but Widdowson has argued that any syllabus which consists of inventories of discrete point items, be they grammatial functional, or notional, is basically synthetic.

These days, few syllabus designers who adopt a synthetic orientation would be prepared to defend a syllabus based entirely on grammatical forms. Most attempt some sort of synthesis between grammatical, functional, and notional items. Later we shall look at some of the ways in which syllabus planners have tried to integrate these various components.

We have already noted that there is a lack of any direct one-to-one relationship between linguistic functions, notions, and grammatical forms. Which this leads to

certain amount of arbitrary decision-making about which forms to introduce with which functions, some form/function relationships naturally suggest themselves, particularly at lower proficiency levels (For example), 'taking about oneself and others' hardly seems feasible without some knowledge of personal pronouns, copula 'be', and predicative adjective relating to such things as nationality.'

At these lower levels (from beginner through to lower intermediate) most general coursebooks cover items such as the following

–	basic sentence forms	–	quantifiers
–	verb morphology	–	demonstratives
–	noun morphology	–	definite and indefinite articles
–	tense forms	–	prepositions
–	questions	–	connectors
–	negation	–	noun phrases, including modification
–	modal verbs	–	adverbials
–	pronouns		

TASK 1

Match the above grammatical categories with the following items from The Cambridge English Course, Book 1

1   present of *to be* ; possessive adjectives

2   *A/an* with jobs; subject pronouns

3   noun plurals; 's for possession; present of *to be* (plura); *have got* ; adjectives; adverbs of degree

4   *A/an* contrasted with *the;* adjectives before nouns ; *on/ in /at* with places ; *Isn't that .... ?*

5   *there is/there are ;* simple present affirmative, *this/that; Can/Could I ... ?; tell* + object + *that* clause ; formation of noun plurals

6   simple present; omission of article; *like* + ing; *neither ... nor,* object pronouns ; *at* with times; *by* (bus); *from ... unit*

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7   countables and uncountables; expressions of quantity; omission of article, *was/were : some* and *any ; much* and *many*

8   *for* + expressions of distance ; *to be* with *hungry, thirst,* etc

9   complex sentences ; text building ; frequency advers, impersonal *it*

10   *Have got ; both* and *all; look alike ; What (a) ... ?*

4A.3 Selecting Functional and Notional Components

In recent years, any number of functional and/or notional typologies have made their appearance in the market place. While there are similarities amongst these, as one might expect, there are also differences. This reflects the fact that the typologies have been produced largely through intuition. The following category headings give some idea of the diversity which is possible :

van Ek (1975)

– imparting and seeking factual information

– expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes

– expressing and finding out emotional attitudes

– expressing and finding out moral attitude

– geting things done

– socializing

Wilkins (1976)

– modality	– rational enquiry and exposition
– suasion	– personal emotions
– argument	– emotional relations

Finocchiaro (in Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983)

– personal	– referential
– interpersonal	– imaginative
– directive	

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ALL Project (Clark 1987)

- establishing and maintaining relationships and discussing topics of interest
- problem-solving
- searching for specific information for some given purpose, processing it, and using it
- listening to or reading information, processing it, and using it
- giving information in spoken or written form on the basis of personal experience
- listening to, reading, or viewing and responding to a stimulus
- creating an imaginative text

(Adapted from Clark 1987 : 227-8)

The authors of these lists imply that they incorporate all of the possible uses to which language can be put.

TASK 2

What are the similarities and differences between these lists?

Which of the above lists do you think most satisfctorily captures the various real-world uses to which your learners might put language? Why?

Are there any omissions? If so, what are they?

4A.4   Relating Grammatical, Functional, and Notional Components

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As we have already seen, the link between grammatical, functional, and notional components is not entirely predictable, although there are certain components which are consistently linked together by syllabus designers and coursebook writers.

TASK 3

The list below contains the functional content from the first ten units of Checkpoint English in jumble order. Suggest the grammatical items which might be taught in each unit.

List A

1   describing houses
reminding
contradicting
asking for directions

2   giving your full name
apologizing
asking for help

3   interrupting politely
asking for help
describing oneself
telling the time

4   identifying
asking for possessions

5   well-wishing
inviting, offering
accepting, declining

6   describing present and future events, activities
complaining

7   giving your name
giving personal information

8   offering, inviting, accepting, declining
checking quantity and quality

9   giving instructions
expressing possession
warning

10   making suggestions
asking leading questions
making leading statements

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TASK 4

The list below contains the grammatical items taught in the first ten units of Checkpoint English. Match these with the functional contents listed in Task 5.

List B

A　Be present affirmative

　　Subject pronouns

　　Here, there : this, that; these ; those; my; your

　　Indefinite article

　　Definite article

B　*Be : present, interrogative , affirmative*

　　Possessive adjectives

C　*Be :* negative, interrogative

　　Question words

　　Subject, object pronouns

　　These is (are)

D　Simple present

　　Adverbs of frequency

E　Have

　　At, in, on, next to

　　Noun plurals,

F　*Have got*

　　In, on, under, near

　　Noun plurals

G   *Be :* past

     Noun plurals

     Only

     Noun + 's

H   *Some, any, a lot of, many, much*

     Noun plurals

     Nouns indicating gender

I   Regular past simple

     Possessive pronouns and adjectives

     Noun plurals

     Who, who is, who's whose

J   Present progressive affirmative, negative

     Irregular past

Which, of any of these, did you find comparatively easy to link together? Which seemed to be arbitrary?

Many of the coursebooks currently available attempt to integrate topical and notional elements as well as grammatical and functional ones.

TASK 5

The following lists of functional components (*List A*) and notional topical components (*List B*) have been taken from *The Cambridge English Course, Book 1.* Match the items in List A with those in List B.

List A

Students will learn to :

1   Ask and give names; say hello; ask and tell where people are from.

2   Say hello formally and informally ; ask about and give personal information

3   Describe people; tell the time

4   Describe places; give compliments; express uncertainty ; confirm and correct information.

5   Describe houses and flats; make and answer telephone calls.

6   Express likes and dislikes; ask about and describe habits and routines

7   Ask and tell about quantity

8   Ask for and give directions; ask for and tell about physical and emotional states.

9   Express degrees of certainty; talk about frequency.

10   Describe people'sappearances, give compliments ; write simple letters

List B

Students will learn to talk about:

1   Hom: furniture; addressess; telephones.

2   Food and drink; shopping; quantification

3   How people live; how animals live; weather and climate

4   Jobs; age.

5   Colours ; parts of the body ; clothing, resemblances

6   Finding your way in a town

7   Family relationships

8   Geography ; numbers to 1,000,000

9   Habits and routines.

10   Numbers

Which of these did you find comparatively easu to match?

Which were difficult? Why?

In which of the above coursebook units do you think the following sentences apeared.

1   Joe and Ann have got there children

2   I like the Greek bronze very much

3   I don't think that cats eat insects.

4   There is a fridge in the kitchen.

5   Sheila has got long dark hair and brown eyes.

6   Where's the nearest post office, please?

7   What do you do?

8   There are seven calories in tomatoes.

9   Dundee is a town in the east of Scotland.

10   Where do you come from?

Which of these did you find comparatively easy to match?

Which, if any, were difficult? Why?

Which could have appeared in more than one unit? What does this say about the relationship between form and function?

Which grammatical items could these sentences be used to exemplify?

The following extract is taken from the Graded levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning Syllabus Guidelines.

D1 Tasks : conversation and correspondence

Event	Functions and Notions likely to be involved	Examples of Tasks
D1.1. Identifying a person or object Conversation in pairs or in groups	**Functions** Describing Seeking information Seeking confirmation **Notions** Size, colour, shape, position, parts of body, clothes, possessions, actions, contents of handbag, etc. + Physical and psychological characteristics	Pupil A has a picture of a thief. Pupil B has several pictures and must identify the one described by pupil A as the thief. Pupil A has a picture of his lost bicycle. Pupil B has several pictures of bicycles and must identify the one described by pupil A as the lost one.
D1.2 Identifying whether objects are the same	**Functions** Seeking information Describing Seeking confirmation **Notions**	Pupil A has a picture of someone he/she knows. Pupil B has a picture of someone he/she knows. Is is the same person?

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Conversation in pairs or in group	Size, colour, shape, position, clothes, parts of body, possessions, actions, contents of handbag or suitcase etc + Physical or psychological characteristis	**Pupil A** has a picture of handbag she has lost. **Pupil B** has a picture of a handbag she has found. Are they the same ?
D1.3 Spottings differeces	**Functions** Describing Seeking information Seeking confirmation	**Pupil A** has picture. **Pupil B** has same picture, with several alterations. Pupils must find the differences without showing each other the pictures,.
Conversation in pairs or in groups	**Notions** Objects, people, shapes, position, clothes, actions etc.	
D1.4 Discovering what's missing	**Functions** Seeking information Giving information Seeking confirmations	**Pupil A** has a card :
Conversation in pairs or in groups	Suggesting Giving opinions. Agreeing/disagreeing Asking for explanation Explaining **Notions** Content of squares (as appropriate) Position Sequence Casual relationships.	(see cards below)

Pupil A has a card :

Bus		
	Airport	
	Air	

Pupil B has a card:

Bus Stop		Port
		Water

They must discuss what they have on their cards and on the basis of this fill in the blanks.

Pupil A has a simple map with plans on it. **Pupil B** has a blank map and must put in the plant according to pupils A's instructions.

D1.5 Drawing as instructed	**Functions** Giving instruction Seeking informations	
Conversation in pairs or groups	**Notions** Relevant objects and people shapes colours, spatial positions, size, sequence	

(*Clark and Hamilton 1984 : 30*)

TASK 6

From the above extract does it appears to you that events, functions, notions, and tasks have been integrated in a principled way, or do the relationships between these element appear to be arbitrary?

4A.5 Grading Content

In teh previous units, we saw that, traditionally, items in a grammatical syllabus are graded largely according to whether they are easy or difficult, and that difficulty is defined in grammatical terms. We also saw that grammatical difficulty is not necessarily the same as learning difficulty.

The two lists which follow set out the order in which verb and tense forms appears in two popular coursebooks.

Cambridge English		*Checkpoint English*	
1	Present of *be* (singular)	1	*Be:* Present affirm
2	*	2	*Be:* Present interrog. neg
3	Present of *be* (plural) *have got*	3	*Be:* neg. interrog, *There is (are)*
4	*	4	Simple present
5	*There is/there are*	5	*Have*
6	Simple present	6	*Have got*
7	*Was/were*	7	*Be: past*
8.	*	8	*
9	*	9	Regular past simple
10	*Have got*	10	Present progressive affirm, neg. irregular past
11	*Be* contrasted with *have*	11	Irregular present Irregular past
12	Simple past	12	*Be going to* Present past Irregular past

* These sections focus on grammatical items other than verb tenses.

TASK 7

How much agreement is there between these two coursebooks on the order of presentation of verb and tense forms?

What conclusions would you come to about the level of ease or difficulty of different verb and tense forms?

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TASK 8

List and compare the ordering of other grammatical items in coursebooks such as Checkpoint English. The Cambridge English Course, or Contemporary English or Learning English.

What similarities or differences are there?

What generalizations would you make about the ease or difficulty of different grammatical items?

Earlier we looked at the work of several researchers in the field of SLA. These researchers claims that the order in which learners actually acquire grammatical items is very often different from the order of difficulty suggested by linguists. Researchers such as Pienemann and Johnston (1987) claim that it is *learning difficulty,* determined by such things as short-term memory, *rather than grammatical difficulty,* which determines those items students will be capable of learning at a given stage.

Pienemann and Johnston's theories predict that learners will acquire question forms in the order in which they are listed below.

1.   What's the time?

      What's your name?

2.   How do you spell X?

      Are you tired?

      Have you got an X?

      Would you like an X?

3   Where are you from?

4   Do you like X?

TASK 9

Compare this order with the order in which the items are taught in the coursebooks you have examined.

What similarities and differences are there?

Would it be possible to recorder the items in the coursebooks you have examined to fit in with this developmental order?

Would it be desirable to do so? (If you think it undesirable, give your reasons.)

The following lists of functions have been taken from the syllabus guide to *English Today!* Books 1—3.

What do they listen to or read, and what do they talk or write about?

A number of options are available and teachers will need to decide the suitability of each their own learners.

Communicative functions

Greetings, response to
  greeting, forewell : 1–6, 47
  Introducing themselves : 2–5, 26
  27, 30, 32, 34
Asking and telling the time : 48, 49,
  50, 51
Counting up to twelve : 36–41, 48–
  51 Saying the letters of the
  alphabet and spellings:
  throughout
Identifying and describing simple
  objects : 8–23, 40–43, 52–55,
  58–64
Simple description of themselves

and others : 30, 32, 34, 44-46,
  56-61
Questions and answers about
  personal possessions: 54-61
Asking what things are in English
  9–11, 16–23,   42, 43, 64
Asking a person's name and making
  simple enquiries : 46, 47
Expressing thanks : 47, 59
Responding to instructions:
  throughout
Giving instructions : 7, 30, 31, 33
  59
Inability to respond, asking for
  information : 58

Communicative functions

Greetings, response to greeting, forewell: 1–5, 40, 41

Introducing themselves : 2, 3, 26

Asking and telling the time : 23, 31

Counting : 1–100, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 64–68, 72, 73

Saying the letters of the alphabet and spelling throughout

Identifying and describing simple objects : throughout

Simple description of themselves and others: 23, 24–27, 37, 43, 52, 54, 55, 63, 78, 84

What people are doing 56–63, 76, 77

Asking and answering questions about location: 45–47, 62, 72, 71
personal possessions : 32–35, 38, 43

Asking what things are in English 9–15, 32, 33, 38, 40, 41, 82, 83

An apology or excuse : 56

Thanks 35, 75

Responding to instructions throughout; giving instructions: 43, 48, 49, 56, 57

Communicative functions

Greetings, response to greetings, farewell: 1–3, 19, 34, 94

The time: 3, 71, 73; the day and the date: 78–81

Counting: 13
Saying the letters of the alphabet and spelling : throughout

The weather: 82–84, 86

Identifying and describing simple objects : throughout

Simple descriptions of themselves and others 6–8, 29–31, 63, 67, 73–77, 79, 80

What people are doing: 3, 10, 14, 34, 43, 62

Asking and answering questions about locations 9, 11, 14, 70-33

Asking and answering questions about personal possessions : 15, 39, 62, 63

Asking what things are in English : 37–39, 74, 75

Making simple enquiries about a person: 1–3, 15, 74–77

Asking permission to do simple things: 34, 56

Requesting things needed: 23, 24, 44, 56,62

Making and responding to an apology or excuse : 3, 21, 23, 62

Thanks : 2, 62

Likes, dislikes, needs and wants: 19–21, 40, 42, 66, 67

Responding to instructions: throughout ; giving instructions: 3, 5, 6, 32, 33, 35

Inability to respond : 45

Oral and written prohibition and injunctions. 32–33, 35, 52–55, 65

Comprehending simple narratives; 19–21, 23–24, 32–34, 40–42, 62–63, 89, 91–92

Recognizing common signs: 52–55

English names of important places 70, 73

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TASK 10

What evidence is there of grading throughout the series?

What principles seem to have informed the selection and grading of items?

(For example, has grading been influenced by linguistic, cognitive maturational, or practical considerations?

As we have seen, the issue of *grading* is a critical one, which will be taken up again later.

The choice of organize principle also determines the degree of flexibility in the sequence of course units. A structural syllabus builds in a *linear* way, with careful grading which needs to be followed learners in the set sequence. This is also true of some coursebooks which describe themselves as functional.

Careful persual can show that the functions are a cosmetic addition to an underlying graded structural syllabus. A topic-based syllabus, in constrast, can take a *modular* format. each module consisting of self-contained materials which can be worked within the order preferred by teacher and students. However, another determinant of flexibility in the use of units will be the organization of the **content** which is the vehicle for presenting language.

4A.6 What 'Content' Does a Course Offer to Learners?

I shall use 'content' here to refer not to the language content but to the characters who people a book, their backgrounds, their experiences and opinions, and the events in which they participate. In other words, **in structural materials** presenting the past simple tense *'Who went where with whom to do what?'*, or in a functional course, *'Who is disagreeing with whome about what?'* Similarly, in a skills-based course, *'What do students listen to or read, and what do they talk or write about?"*

A number of options are available and teachers will need to decide the suitability of each for their own learners.

Summing Up

Every Syllabus needs some unit around which lessons and teaching materials can be organised. These units, as we have discussed can be *words structures, topics notions, functions etc.* In sum, whatever the unit of analysis, synthetic, syllabuses suffer from generic problems, most obviously their product orientation. Syllabus content is ultimately based on an analysis of the language to be learned.

Unit 4B □ Materials and Methods in Course Design

Structure

4B.0 Objectives

This unit will help you to—

— understand the principles of coursebook assessment

— critically examine the features of a coursebook

— ascertain the components that provide opportunities for learning

— evaluate materials prescribed for both language and literature teaching.

Materials and Methods

This unit has been adapted from 'A Course in Language Teaching : Practice and theory by Penny Ur, 2003

Note : The term 'coursebook' is used here to mean a textbook of which the teacher and, usually, each student has a copy, and which is in principle to be followed systematically as the basis for a language course. The coursebook is usually a collection of teaching/learning materials supported by exercises and tasks.

4B.1 Is a Coursebook Necessary?

Question : Look at the section title–Is a Coursebook necessary? Try answering this before reading on. *What would be your argument for and against the need for a coursebook?*

In some places coursebooks are taken for granted. In others they may not be used at all: the teacher works according to a syllabus, or according to his or her own programme, using textbooks and supplementary materials as the need arises. A third, 'compromise', situation is where a coursebook is used selectively, not necessarily in sequence, and is extensively supplemented by other materials.

TASK : What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a coursebook?

> Look at the boxes below and on the next page. Some arguments for and against the use of a coursebook have been listed. Read through them, ticking off those you agree with, nothing your criticisms of those you disagree with or have reservations about.
>
> *Question :* Are there any new ideas in the boxes? If there are if they seem acceptable, would you now modify at all your answer to the question asked at the beginning of this unit as a result? Do you find your previous opinion unchanged or reinforced?

Comment – According to Penny Ur. you may, of course, find that you agree with some of the *'against'* point while overall supporting the *'for' position,* or vice versa. The question then arises. Having established your own position in principle, what will you do to compensate for problems or disadvantages you have perceived?

> **BOX A In Favour of Using A Coursebook**
>
> **1. Framework**
>
> A coursebook provides a clear framework; teacher and learners know where they are going and what is coming next, so that there is a sense of structure and progress.
>
> **2. Syllabus**
>
> In many places the coursebook serves as a syllabus: if it is followed systematically, carefully planned and balanced selection of language content will be covered.

3. Ready-made texts and tasks

The coursebook provides texts and learning tasks which are likely to be of an appropriate level for most of the class. This of course saves time for the teacher who would otherwise have to prepare his or her own.

4. Economy

A book is the cheapest way of providing learning material for each learner, alternatively, such as kits, sets of photocopied papers or computer software, are likely to be more expensive relative to the amount of material provided.

5. Convenience

A book is a convenient package. It is bound, so that its components stick together and stay in order, it is light and small enough to carry around easily; it is of a shape that is easily packed and stacked; it does not depend for its use on hardware or a supply of electricity.

6. Guidance

For teachers who are inexperienced or occasionally unsure of their knowledge of the language, the coursebook can provide useful guidance and support.

7. Autonomy

The learner can use the coursebook to learn new material, review and monitor progress with some degree of autonomy. a learner without a coursebook is more teacher-dependent.

@   *Cambridge University Press 1996*

4B.2 Coursebook Assessment

Whether or not you elect to base your course on a coursebook, it is worth thinking about how you recognize a good one when you see it, and on what grounds you might reject or criticize it; in other words, **what the main criteria are for coursebook assessment.** Such criteria may be general, applicable to any language teaching coursebook, or specific, relating to the appropriateness of the book for a certain course or learner population. An example of a general criterion might be:

'clear layout and print', or 'provides periodic review or test sections' : whereas a specific one might be : 'attractive and colourful illustrations (if it is meant for younger learners), or 'vocabulary and texts relevant to topic (if it is for students of science or technology). (Ur. 1996)

Box B   Against Using a Coursebook

1.   Inadequacy

Every class–in fact, every learner–has their own learning needs: no one coursebook can possibly supply these satisfactorily.

2.   Irrelevance, lack of interest

The topics dealt within the coursebook may not necessarily be relevant or interesting for your class.

3.   Limitation

A coursebook is confining: its set structure and sequence may inhibit a teacher's initiative and creativity, and lead to boredom and lack of motivation on the part of the learners.

4.   Homogeneity

Coursebooks have their rationale and chosen teaching/learning approach. They do not usually cater for the variety of levels of ability and knowledge, or of learning styles and strategies that exist in most classes.

5.   Over-easiness

Teachers find it too easy to follow the coursebook uncritically instead of using their initiative; they may find themselves functioning merely as mediators of its content instead of as teachers in their own right.

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The general; criteria suggested in Box B have been selected from ideas given in a number of books and article on the subject.

TASK : Assessing a coursebook

Stage 1 : Deciding on criteria–How would you assess a coursebook?

Study the list of criteria for assessing language-learning coursebooks shown in Box C. In the left-hand column, note how *important* you think each criterion is : a double tick for 'very important', and a single tick for 'fairly important'; a question mark for 'not sure'; and a cross or double cross for 'not important'; or 'totally' unimportant' respectively. Then add any further criteria you feel are significant (either general, or specific to your own context) in the spaces left at the end, and mark in their importance. Ignore the extreme right-hand column for the moment.

Before you rate each item, ask yourself; if this quality were missing, would I therefore not use the book? If so, then you obviously think the quality essential or very important. If, however, the quality is desirable, but its absence would not necessarily stop you using hte book if all the other criteria were fulfilled, then perhaps a single tick may be enough.

If you are working in a group, compare your ideas with those of colleagues.

BOX C Criteria for Coursebook Assessment

Importance	Criterion
	Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the material'
	Approach educationally and socially acceptable to target community
	Cear attractive layout; print easy to read Appropriate visual materials available
	Interesting topics and tasks
	Varied topics and tasks, so as to provide for different learner levels, learning styles, interests, etc.
	Clear instructions
	Systematic coverage of syllabus

Importance	Criterion	
	Content clearly organized and graded (sequenced by difficulty)	
	Periodic review and test sections	
	Plenty of authentic language	
	Good pronunciation explanation and practice	
	Good vocabulary explanation and practice	
	Gppd grammar presentation and practice	
	Fluency practice in all four skills	
	Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning	
	Adequate guidance for the teacher; not too heavy preparation load	
	Audio cassettes	
	Readily available locally	

Stage 2 : Appplying criteria for textbook evaluation

Now take a locally-used coursebook and examine it, applying the criteria you have in your list; note your ratings in the extreme right-hand column of the table. You might use a similar code to the one employed in Stage 1 : a single or double tick indicates that the book scores high, or very high, on this criterion; a cross or double cross that it scores low or very low; and a question mark shows that you are not sure, or that the criterion applies only partially.

Again, you might compare notes with colleagues who have looked at the same materials and see if you can come to a consensus on most or all the items.

Can you now make some overall evaluation of the coursebook? Note that for this you need to compare the two columns you have filled ; it is not enough simply to 'add up' the right-hand column. For example, if the book has scored very high on a criterion which you rated unimportant, this is less in its favour than a fairly high rating on a criterion you see as essential.

If you have been working on the same coursebook as other teachers in doing this unit, then it is probably most useful and enjoyable to work on this summary together.

4B.3 Using a Coursebook

A coursebook should be used critically ; we should be aware of its good and bad points in order to make the most of the first and compensate for of neutralize the second. You are already aware of some of the critical questions you can ask. In this one we shall be looking at more specific, detailed aspects; the components of a single unit, or chapter, and what we might need to do in order to make the best use of it.

Below are some critical questions which might be asked about the material, with following comments. These are grouped under the headings : *Coverage, Texts, Tasks (activities, exercises), Administration.*

COVERAGE

Any single unit of a coursebook should cover a fair range of language content and skills. Some categories of content are shown in Box D.

Questions : Which categories in Box D do you think are most important? Does your coursebook cover these satisfactorily? Are there some that are neglected? Are there others that it spends too much time or space on in your opinion? You may need to provide content is missing using supplementary materials; or deliberately omit sections that you feel are redundant.

BOX D Coursebook Coverage

- pronunciation practice
- introduction of new vocabulary and practice
- grammar explanations and practice'
- recordings for listening practice
- listening and speaking communicative tasks
- reading and writing communicative tasks
- mixed-skills communicative tasks
- short and long reading texts
- dictionary work
- review of previously learnt material
- some entertaining or fun activities

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TEXTS

Questions : Are the (reading or listening) texts of an appropriate level? Are they interesting? Varied?

If the texts are too easy, you may need to substitute, or add, further, texts. If, on the other hand, they are too difficult you may still be able to use them: by careful pre-teaching of vocabulary, by introductory discussion of the topic, by preliminary explanation of key sections, by careful omission of difficult bits.

The texts may be unsatisfactory, even if of the right level, because they are boring or trivial in content; or because all the texts, in the book seem to be the same genre, style, and overall topic. Interest may be added by challenging or original tasks. This leads us to the importance of *Methods* in syllabus design.

METHODS

There are two major strands in Language Teaching. One has to do with Syllabus specification and the other with Methodology. The study of language use is the driving force in language learning, with the task itself central to both Syllabus planning and methodology.

Tasks (activities, exercises)

Questions : Select a coursebook and study the tasks that accompany the texts. Do the tasks provide opportunities for plenty of use of the target language? Are they he terogeneous, allowing for responses at different levels? Do they cover a satisfactory range of language items and skills? Are they interesting? Are they relevant and useful for your class (es)? Is there a balance between accuracy and fluency practice : that is to say, activities whose objective is the production of correct language forms, and those whose objective is communicative language use?

Some coursebook exercises are more like tests; brief checks to see whether the learners knows something or not, rather than frameworks for extended and interesting rehearsals of different aspects of language.

If the tasks are too short and do not provide for very much learner activity, they can be extended by, for example, adding further similar items, or by making items open-ended instead of closed-ended so that each can trigger a number of learner responses ; or by simply supplementing with further activities of your own. You may need to supplement also in order to provide more heterogeneous or interesting tasks for your class; or in order to provide material which is more relevent to their individual or group needs.

Questions : Choose a specific component of the coursebook. How would you administer the task? Will the learners work

— individually?

— collaboratively

— in a teacher-directed fashion?

Or use a combination of these strategies? Does the coursebook provide you with guidance on these questions?

When preparing to teach coursebook material, it is worth devoting a little thought as to how best **to activate learners** in a particular task in order to get optimum learning benefit out of it and make it interesting; and this is a point on which may coursebooks fail to provide guidance.

Activity : Select one unit from a coursebook you are familiar with, and make a copy of it. Study it, using the questions and comments suggested in this unit, and note in the margins of your copy which components you might omit, change or supplement , and why; and how you think those you have retained would be most efffectively administered in class, If there is a Teacher's Book, look at what it says after you have done the above, and compare its ideas with your own.

4B.4   Supplementary Materials

> This section has been adapted from **A Course in Language Teaching Practice and Theory by Penny Ur** :

Most language-teaching coursebooks probably need supplementing to some extent, if only in order to tailor them to the needs of a particular clas or to offer richer options. This unit describes briefly various types of supplementary materials, their contribution to language learning, advantages and disadvantages, consider which are most useful important to you.

Task Simulation

Imagine that you are to be given a grant of enough money to buy a package of supplementary materials materials for your institution out of the catalogue given in Box E assuming, for the sake of argument, that each package costs about the same. You will be given a similar grant every half-year, so eventually you will be able to buy all the packages.

The questions is : *In what order will you buy them*, and *how will you decide?* **Work out for yourself an order of priority, or do so together with colleagues, (You may, of course, add further packages if you wish, or alter the contents of the present ones, before beginning the task.)**

It is assumed that the institution has a reasonable supply of standard stationery and office equipment, such as paper, pencils, felt-tipped pens, staplers, scissors, etc., and that classrooms are equipped with black-or white boards.

Some comments on the contents of the packages follow; you may find it helpful to read these before making your decisions about priorities.

Box E Packages of Supplementary Materials

Package 1 : A set of computers for learner's use, with accompanying language. learning programs on floppy disk.

Package 2 : A set of reference books for the teachers, including; grammars, dictionaries; various specialized textbooks; handbooks of activities; and a subscription to a teachers' journal of your choice.

Package 3 : A number of overhead projectors and slide projectors, with all necessary film, slides and markers.

Package 4 : Video equipment, with assorted cassettes, including language-learning material and films in the target language.

Package 5 : Computers and printers for teacher's use ; each computer has a hard disk with the latest word processor and various programs that enable you to compose your own computer tasks for learners.

Package 6 : Several cassette recorders with accompanying earphones. (so that several learners can listen quietly to one machine); a selection of accompanying cassettes for language learning.

Package 7 : A wide variety of posters and sets of coloured pictures, plus board and card games for language learning.

Package 8 : A library of simplified readers in the target language, ranging from very simple to advanced, There would be enough books in this library to enable all students to borrow freely

@ *Cambridge University Press 1996*

Comments

Computers

Computers are seen by many as an important teaching aid. These days learners need to be *'computer literate'.* and since computers use language it would seem logical to take advantage of them for language learning. They enable individual work., since learners can progress at their own pace, and many programs include a self check facility. Also, younger and adolescent learners in particular find the use of computers attractive and motivating. However, it takes time to train both teachers and students in their use; and in practice a lot of time in a computer lesson often goes on setting up programs, getting students into them, and then solving problems with moving from one stage, or one program, to another.

For teachers who are familiar with their use computers can be invaluable for preparing materials such as worksheets or tests.

Books

Books are very user-friendly 'package' of material: they are light, easily scanned, easily stacked and do not need hardware or electricity. They are still the most convenient and popular method of packaging large texts, and a library of them is arguably the best way for learners to acquire a wide experience of foreign language reading.

It is very useful to have a collection of reference books, extra textbooks and teachers handbooks easily available to the teaching staffs and regular reading of a professional journal can inject new ideas and update teachers on current thinking.

Overhead projectors

These are useful for presenting visual or written material to classes ; they are more vivid and attention-catching than the black-or white boards. They also save lesson time, since you can prepare the displays in advance. However, this does mean added work in preparation! Another disadvantage is the need to carry the OHP from class to class, unless each classroom has its own– which is true only of the more affluent institutions. And of course like other electrical equipment. OHPs are vulnerable to breakdowns : electricity failure or bulbs burning out.

Video equipment

Video is an excellent source of authentic spoken language materials, It is also attractive and motivating. It is flexible; you can start and stop it, run forward or back, 'freeze' frames in order to talk about them. And there are many good programmes on the market. A disadvantage is their lack of mobility; few video sets are portable, which means that classes need to be specially scheduled for video rooms; and of course there is the problem of occasional breakdowns and technical problems, When planning a video lesson, always have a 'back-up' alternative lesson ready!

Audio equipment

Cassette recorders and cassettes are relatively cheap, and easy to use; and they are the main sources other than the teacher of spoken language texts in most classrooms, They are more mobile and easier to use than video recorders, but lack, of course, the visual content. Again there may be problems with electricity; on the other hand, most portable casette recorders–unlike video and most computers—

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also work on batteries. When buying cassette recorders, make sure that there is a counter, the then use it to identify the desired entry;-point; otherwise, if you want to replay during the lesson, you may waste valuable time running the tape back and forth to find it.

Posters, pictures, games

Materials of this kind are invaluable particularly for younger learners, and teachers, of children find that they constantly use them, However, if you have time. this type of material can be largely home-made; glossy magazines in particular are an excellent source of pictures.

4B.5 Teacher-made Worksheets and Workcards

Even with an excellent coursebook and a wide variety of other materials available, there comes a point at which many teachers find they have to make their own occasional supplementary workcards or worksheets; because they find what they need nowwhere else, because they want to provide for the needs a specific class, or simply for the sake of variety.

Good teacher-made materials are arguably the best there are: relevant and personalized, answering the needs of the learners in a way no other materials can.

Differences between worksheets and workcards

A worksheet is a page (or two) of tasks, distributed to each student to do either in class or at home, intended to be written on, and usually taken in by the teacher to be checked. Teacher-made tests can be seen as a specific kind of worksheet. Workcards are made in sets, each card offering a different, fairly short task. They are not written on: a student does one card, writing anwers on a separate piece of paper or in a notebook, and then exchanges it another, working through as many of the set as there is time for. Answers are often available for self-checking at some central location in the room, or on back of the card itself. Workcards are permanent and reusable; worksheets disposable–though of course further copies can be made. Workcards taken effort and time to produce, but they are also more attractive to look at and work on (colours and cut-out pictures can be used), and more individualized students have a choice as to which cards they do, and in thich order, and the range

of tasks available can be much more varied. In fact, the workcard leason is a rudimentay self-access session, and can be developed into a fully individualized programme by varying the number and type of tasks provided.

For some examples of sample workcards and worksheets see Teaching observed

TASK

Making Materials

Stage 1 : Preparation

Choose a language point for which you want to make your own learner tasks preferably having in mind a course or class you know. If you wish to make workcards, prepare cards, coloured pens and perhaps magazine pictures, scissors and glue. Worksheets may be written by hand, or on typewriter or word processor.

Stage 2 : First draft

Make a sample worksheet of workcard, preferably for a class you know language they are learning.

Stage 3 : Feedback

If you are working in a group, exchange your resulting materials and discuss, You may find the points listed in Box F helpful as a basis for feedback.

Box F. : Guidelines for Teacher-Made Materials

Worksheets and workcards should:

- be neat : clean, with level lines of neat writing, clear margins, different components well spaced ;

- begin with short and clear instruction (if appropriate, in the learners' mother tongue), usually including an example;

- be clear and attractive to look at; have a balanced and varied layout, using underlining and other forms of emphasis to draw attention to significant items, possibly using colour and graphic illustrations:

- be clearly do-able by the learners on their own;

- (optionally) include a self-check facility.

Stage 4 : Second draft

Remake your worksheet or workcard – or make a totally new one – implementing ideas you received from feedback on the first draft

Notes

(1) *How necessary is a coursebook?*

The answer to this question necessary depends on your own teaching style,. the resources available to you on the accepted way of doing things in your institution.

This is what Ur (2003) has to say. "Personally, I very much prefer to use a coursebook. I find that a set frame work helps me to regulate and time my programme; and perhaps paradoxically, provides a firm jumping -off point for the creation of imaginative supplementary teaching ideas. Moreover, in my experience learners too prefer to have one; those classes which I have tried to teach on the basis of a selection from different sources have complained of a sense of lack of purpose, and interestingly, that they feel that their learning is not taken seriously. It seems that the possession of a coursebook may carry a certain prestige."

(2) *Coursebook assessment*

The following are my ratings of the criteria, relevant, of course, to my own teaching situation.

Importance	Criterion	
✓✓	Objectives are explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the material	
✓	Approach is educationally and socially acceptable to target community	
✓✓	Clear attractive layout; pring is easy to read	
✓	Appropriate visual materials are available	
✓✓	Interesting topics and tasks	
✓✓	Varied topics and tasks, so as to provide for different learner levels, learning styles interests, etc.	

✓✓	Clear instructions	
✓✓	Systematic coverage of syllabus	
✓✓	Content is clearly organized and graded (sequenced by difficulty)	
✓	Periodic review and test sections	
x	Plenty of authentic language	
?	Good pronunciation explanation and practice	
✓✓	Good vocabulary explanation and practice	
✓✓	Good grammar presentation and practice	
✓✓	Fluency practice in all four skills	
✓	Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning	
✓✓	Adequate guidance for the teacher; not too heavy preparation load	
✓	Audio cassettes	
✓✓	Readily available locally	

(3)   *Priorities in acquiring supplementary materials*

To quote Penny Ur, again

"The following is the order in which I would buy the packages; but remember that my decisions are dictated at least party by my specific teaching environment (teaching adolescents a foreign language in a state secondary school), and I might make different choices in a different situation.

I would buy first a library of readers for students (Package 8) ; there is list no substitute for extensive reading of book personally chosen by student enriching language and advancing reading skill. Then I would induce teachers in a library of our own (Package 2); an important professionsl resource.

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Audio materials (Package 6) would come next ; video arguably provides better language data (visual, attractive, etc.), but this is offset by the portability, relative reliability and simple operation of cassette recorders, not to mention their cheapness.

Next on my list would be overhead projectors (Package 3), provided I can buy enough so that teachers have no trouble getting and using one whenever they want OHP displays are attention-catching, the preparation of transparencies saves teacher writing time during a lesson, and the classroom does not have to be darkened in order to use them. This last condition is not true of most slide projectors; also, slides cannot be written on during the course of a lesson. I would therefore prefer to spend most of this budget on OHPs.

I would then buy computers and printers for teachers' use (Package 5) : a computer is an excellent means of preparing neat and professional -looking tests and worksheets and a convenient, space-saving way of storing them later.

Vido equipment (Package 4) would be next on my list ; I think it provides richer and more readily absorbed language data than, say, computers, and can be used very flexiby in a lesson. Computer for leaners (Package 1) –the next item— are fun, but my experience using them in classes has not (yet?) convinced me that they are as cost-effective as audio and visual equipment, in terms of the learning outcomes as against investment in money and time.

The last package (Package 7) would be pictures, posters and games; I use pictures in the form of magazine cut-outs, backed on card, and find these quite adequate for my needs; published materials would be a luxury. However, when I was teaching younger learners I used posters, published sets of picture cards and boards games extensively; if I were in such a situation today, this item would probably come a good deal higher in my list.

4B.6 Selecting Literary Materials

In this sections we focus more specifically on how to select texts and materials which are suitable for use with your students. Of course, you may not have a choice

of either texts or materials. Perhaps you are bound by a syllabus which sets out what literary texts you have to use with your students even though you can design the tasks to exploit these texts yourself. Or the syllabus may lay down both the texts and the exercises and tasks needed to exploit them. If you do have some choice in the selection of texts and materials, then Section 4B.6.1 will help to pinpoint some criteria for selecting literary texts to use with your learners, while Section 3.2 suggests way of evaluating published materials.

4B.6.1 Selecting texts

In choosing a literary text for use with your students, you should think about three main areas. These are: the type of course you are teaching, the type of students who are doing the course and certain factors connected with the text itself. We begin by thinking about the first of these--the type of course you are teaching.

TASK 1

Think about a group of students you have taught in the past, are teaching at the moment or are going to teach in the future. Note down hte information about them which is listed in the boxes on the next page.

Type of course

Level of students :

Student's reasons for learning English :

Kind of English required on the course : (e.g. English for Academic, Purposes, English for Business, General English, etc.)

How intensive is the course? (e.g. five hours a day for three months, four hours a week for a year, etc.

Is there a syllabus?		Yes	No
1.	Is it flexible?	Yes	No
2.	Is literature included	Yes	No

Can you include literary texts on this course? Why/Why not?

What kinds of texts will be most suitable? Extract from novels? Poems? A full-length play? Why?

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TASK 2

Think again of the group of students you had in mind in Task 1 and fill in the following information:

> Type of students
>
> Age of students :
>
> Interests/hobbies of students :
>
> Cultural or ethnic background/nationality of students :
>
> Students previous experience of reading literary texts :

We are now going to connect the information you have just written down with criteria for selecting literary texts to use with your students. But first, read the two texts below.

TEXT A

Rodger said

Teachers–they want it all ways–

You're jumping up and down on a chair

or something

and they grab hold of you and say.

"Would you do that sort of thing in your own home?"

　'So you say, "No"

　And they say,

　"Well can't I do here then".

10　'But if you say, "Yes, I do it at home".

　they say.

　"Well, we don't want that sort of thing

　going on here

　thank you very much"

15   'Teachers--they get you all ways'

Rodger said

TEXT B

Annette now sat down on the dried-out chair and looked the entries in all the ledgers whilst Hussain rummaged about in the store weighing up and measuring out the grain for the birds and the fruit for the monkeys. Madam preferred to check the weight of he fish and the meat herself. so he would only weigh that when she'd finished reading, all the entries of food delivered into the stores that day. It took about forty minutes to get all the food ready and then the two boys who also assisted the head gardener to keep the drying lawns tidy would come to help him feed the animals under the watchful eye of Memsahib;

He wondered about her sometimes. Who she was where she came from and what kind of love of animals this was that brought her out in the afternoon sun when most other women of her class still drowsed in darkened rooms. He knew that he had this job because of her in way. It was common knowledge that the previous superintendent had been sacked because of her intervention. The gate-keeper had told him the story many times ... how she came to visit the zoo about two years ago, saw that the animals looked thin and under-fed and decided to complain. She wrote letters, made approaches and got them to change the super. She was there with a letter from the governer himself the day Hussain took charge saying she had permission from him to inspect' the food before it was given to the animals had a proper diet. To this day she had not been late. Hussain got into a routine of being ready for her, terrified of what might happen if she became angry again. The gate-keeper. Maaja, thought her an interfering busybody. 'Poor Nawaz Sahib who got turned out with his family of eight in such disgrace has still not found a job and was such a good man really!' he always ended with a sigh. At this point in the conversation Hussain would lose interest in the story and walk off remembering something important that needed doing.

(from Rukhsana Ahmad. 'The Gate-Keeper's Wife's in Lakshmi Holstrom (ed.) 1990

The Inner Countryard. Virago Press, pp. 172–173).

TASK 3

Now that you have read Texts A and B, mark the letter A (for Text A) and B (for Text B) on the scales that follow, according to how for you think each text compares against the values of the scale, For example, if now think that Text A is too culturally for removed to be relevant or accessible to the group of learners you described, then you would mark A towards the end of the scale which says 'too remote from text to help comprehension.' But you might decide that Text B should go at the other end of the scale.

Students' Cultural Background

100 remote from	close enough to
text to help	text for easy
comprehension	comprehension

Age of students

too old to enjoy text	too young to enjoy text

Intellectual maturity of students

too developed to find text	too immature to
challenging	to understand text

Students' emotional understanding

too develop	too immature
to find text	to relate to
engaging	text

Students linguistic proficiency

too advanced to	too elementary
be challenged	to cope with
by the text	the text

Student's literary background

too well-developed	insufficient
to be challenged	to cope with
by the text	with the text

And now fill in the two scales below, which are slightly different from the ones you have just looked at

Students interest/hobbies	
for removed from	close to
theme/content of text	themes /content of text
Students' cultural background	
. too remote from	close enough to
text to help	text for easy
comprehension	comprehension

After you have completed the scales, finish these sentences:

I would/might try using Text .... with my students because ....

I'm not sure if I could use/I would not be able to use Text .... with my learners because .... I think my students need a text that ....

But it is sometimes useful to focus more exactly on specific criteria for selection of relation of texts, as we did using the scales above. Using the scales, for example, might have helped you to clarify that, although your learners are at quite an elementary level linguistically, their emotional and intellectual understanding is rather sophisticated. So you need to select texts which are linguistically relatively simple but which challenge them in other ways. In the section below we briefly discuss some of the more complicated criteria mentioned on the scales.

Criteria for selecting texts.

It is probably fairly self-evident what is meant by criteria such as the age of students, their emotional and intellectual maturity and their interests and hobbies. The only difficulty when applying these categories to a whole class is that individual students within a group may vary considerably in their maturity and interests. Obviously, when selecting materials you will need to try to find texts that are suitable for the majority of students in the class. You may also find that developing the

facility for self-access is one way of personalising learning so that you can cater for the range of student development and interests within a group. We may find, however, that consideration of criteria, involving the students' cultural background, linguistic proficiency and literary background is more complicated.

TASK 4

In Tasks 1 and 2 we looked at the nature of the course you had identified and the type of students doing the course. There are other factors as well which can influence our choice of texts. Note down any factors you can think of. Then look at the following questionnaire. Are the points mentioned the same as the ones you have just noted down? What other criteria for selection would you include on the questionnaire?

4B.7 Other Factors to Consider when Selecting Literary Texts

Availability of Texts

1. What kinds of books and texts are available from which you can choose?

2. How easily can you make these texts available to your students?

Length of Text

1. Do you have enough time available to work on the text in class?

2. How much time do students have to work on the text at home?

3. Could you use only part of a text, or an abridged version of it? If so, how much background information will you need to give students to make the text intelligible?

Exploitability

1. What kinds of tasks and activities can you devise to exploit the text?

2.   Are there resources available to help you exploit the text, for example a film of a particular novel the students are studying, recordings of a play or peom, library materials giving information about the life of an author, etc.?

Fit with Syllabus

1.   How do the texts link with the rest of the syllabus? Thematically? In terms of vocabulary, grammar of discourse?

2.   Can you devise tasks and activities for exploiting the text which link with the methodology you have used elsewhere in the syllabus? This often helps to put students at their ease. For example, if your students are used to using. Multiple choice or True/False questions when doing reading comprehension, then you could use similar tasks when exploiting a literary text.

A checklist of criteria for choosing literary texts

In this section we have thought about various criteria for selecting literary texts. The checklist below summarises these criteria. You can consult it as a quick reference when choosing texts, especially if you add any other criteria which you consider to be important

Checklist for choosing literary texts

TYPE OF COURSE	TYPE OF STUDENTS
	Age
Level of students	Intellectual maturity
Students' reasons for learning English	Emotional understanding
Kind of English required	Interests/Hobbies
Length/intensity of course	Cultural background
	Linguistic proficiency
	Literary background

OTHER TEXT-RELATED FACTORS

Availability of texts

Length of text

Exploitability

Fit with syllabus

4B.7 Summing up

We hope you are now aware of the principle guiding the selection methods and materials to be used for a particular course. In the next unit we will take you through various procedures for course Evaluation.

4B.8 Further reading

Allwright, R. L. 1981 'What do we want the teaching materials for?' *ELT Journal* 36, 1, 5–18.

(A challenging, unconventional approach to materials, suggesting needs and purposes other than those implemented by most coursebooks)

Cunningsworth, A. (1984) *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Teaching Materials,* London : Heinemenn.

(Discussion of what we want from a coursebook, with analysis of examples) O'Neill, R. (1982) 'Why use textbooks', *ELT Journal,* 36, 2, 104–11.

(Partly a reply to Allwright, a rationale for the use of the conventional coursebook, and suggestions for improvement of coursebook design and use) Madsen. H. and Bourn, J. D (1978) *Adaptation in Language Teaching.*

Rowley, Mass, : Newbury Hourse.

(See articles by Burden and Tucker on criteria for coursebok evaluation)

Visual Materials

Bowen, B. M. (1982) *Look Here!: Visual Aids in Language Teaching.* London: Macmillan.

(a brief, very practical overview of different kinds of visual materials and their use in language teaching)

Unit 4C □ Course Evaluation

4C.0   Objectives

It is expected that at the end of this unit you will –

–develop a clear idea of what is meant by course evaluation

–be able to focus on the various aspects of an evaluation programme

–be acquainted with the different methods of evaluation

–be able to make choices in Course Design

–have a clear perception of the principles guiding the evaluation of materials for both language and literature teaching.

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4C.1 Assessment of Evaluating Courses

The final stage in Course Design is *'Evaluating '.* The term *'evaluation'* has often been taken to mean the assessment of students at the end of a course, but in recent years its meaning has widened to include all aspects of a programme. Skilbeck (1984) has made a useful distinction between *assessment* and *evaluation:*

> .... *assessment in the curriculum is a process of determining and passing judgements on students' learning potential and performance, evaluation means assembling the evidence on making judgements about the curriculum including the processes of planning, designing, and implementing it.*

> *(Skilbeck 1984 : 238)*

From this perspective, evaluation can relate to courses and learners in a number of ways.

It can try to judge the course as it is planned, for example, in terms of the *appropriateness* of the textbook content to the students or the *coherence of a teacher's scheme of work* for the next six weeks.

It can try to observe, describe, and assess what is actually happening in classrooms as a course progressses.

It can test what learners have learned from a course. Nunan (1988) calls these three aspects of evaluation *'the planned curriculum', 'the implemented curriculum'.* and *'the assessed curriculum'.*

Evaluation can help us to see the complex relationship among these three. For example, it has been acknowledged by second language acquisition researchers for some time that there is no easy one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning, and that a teacher cannot set out learning objectives for a class and expect learners to achieve these uniformly by the end of the lesson. It is more the case that the teacher makes content available to learners, who work on it in different ways and at different rates and with differing degrees of uptake.

Thus, if evaluation of a course is undertaken only by means of end-of-term student assessment, this procedure will give just part of the picture. The full picture will emerge from other sources such as talking to teachers and students, checking

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teachers' work schemes, and observing classes. These procedures can also shed light on those other aspects of classroom learning which have been called the *'hidden curriculum'* (Barnes 1976), for example, the shaping of learners' perceptions and attitude towards other peoples and cultures by the teacher's choice of materials.

If, to use Skilbeck's (1984) definition of evaluation, judgements are to be made about the curriculum at an institutional level, then information needs to be collected from a variety of *'Stakeholders'. i.e.* those interested in its effectiveness, be they learners, teachers, and educational managers, or authorities, parents, governors, sponsors, and funding agencies. And a range of procedures will be needed for the collection of data.

We also need to acknowledge the sensitivity surrounding evaluation: who undertakes it,– how comment is kept confidential, how the information is analysed and–how it is used. Too much or badly managed evaluation can create suspicion, hostility, or *'evaluation fatigue'*. These issues become particularly difficult during periods of retrenchment in education when posts and funding may be at risk.

Nunan (1988), Brown (1989), **Rea-Dickins and Germaine** (1992), and **Weir and Roberts,** (1994) have all provided checklists which are useful for course evaluation in ELT departments and curriculum review at the institutional level. However, even at the level of the individual teacher interested in improving the quality of a course, a rational approach is necessary.

We will now look at the key questions such an approach would need to address.

4C.2 Why Evaluate?

An important distinction here is between evaluation for *accountability* and evaluation for *development* (Weir and Roberts 1994)

- **Accountability**

The first may well involve decisions about **whether a course will be repeated,** whether a textbook will be dropped, or whether a particular resource such as a listening laboratory has been used sufficiently to warrant further investment in self access listening materials.

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This purpose of evaluation makes staff and / or institutions answerable to authorities and/or sponsors. It also makes publishers and textbook writers accountable to teachers and teachers accountable to their students. It often takes place at the *end of a programme* and, when undertaken by an institution, it may be carried out by an external evaluator.

● **Developmental evaluation**

In contrast, *developmental evaluation* aims at **improvement** : it often takes place during a course so that feedback can facilitate immediate improvement to the current programme as well as to future programmes. As feedback can enlighten both teachers and managers about the strengths and weaknesses of course design and professional practice, this kind of evaluation can usefully involve both in co-operative procedures which aim at improving quality of work. The point has been made repeatedly in management literature (Miles 1964, Handy 1978 ; Everard and Morris 1985) that 'healthy' institutions are ones which have regular procedures for reviewing their work and openness of discusion about ways to effect improvements.

Course review can therefore be most usefully perceived as a regular activity with agreed criteria and procedures, and ensuing action plans.

4C.3 Who Evaluates?

One aspect of the agreed procedures which needs careful thought is who carries out course evaluation. If undertaken by a head of department or director of studies, it may well be seen as staff appraisal and regarded by teachers as threatening. Since evaluation for development depends on the willingness of teachers to acknowledge their concerns and problems, a major task for managers will be to avoid suspicion, and to create an ethos of openness, mutual respect, and trust. For this reason, many schools prefer procedures which involve teachers in evaluating their own work and in drawing on institutional resources in order to imporve what they see as their areas of weakness.

4C.4 What Is to BE Assessed?

The precise method of evaluation will relate to what exactly a teacher or course director wants to assess. For example, in order to get feedback from students on the interest-level of textbook content, a simple rating scale from 1 to 5, which students can score against each topic, might be appropriate. However, in order to assess the usefulness of a listening laboratory, the teacher might want to set up a log book in the laboratory with individual sheets for students to complete after each session, recording the work they have done and perceptions of their progress with it.

> List some of these aspects which you might want to investigate and questions you might want to address. The precise choice of focus and range will depend on the age and level of students, the nature of course objectives and content, and whether there are recent innovations to be evaluated.

4C.5 How Do We Evaluate?

In evaluating our own courses PG ELT for e.g.; we can use a variety of procedures. One simple method we often use is to head a set of poster-sized sheets with key issues, for example :

What I have learned from this course

What I liked most about the course

What I liked least about the course

How I think the course could be improved

Table A

Course aspects		Question to address
Student needs	–	What were the students' priority need and to what extent has the course fulfilled them?
	–	Have students become aware of further needs?
Course content	–	To what extent have different content areas of the course been useful?

	– What further topics, situations, etc. would students like to cover?
	– What has been the interest-level of particular texts, discussions, etc.?
Resources	– What do students think are the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks or study materials used?
	– To what extent have students used other resources available?
	– Have students used community resources?
Methodology	– What aspects of methodology do students like/dislike, find useful, interesting, etc?
	– Do students feel that the pace of classes is appropriate?
	– Could students be more involved in choosing texts and designing tasks?
Teaching strategies	– Are there any activities the teacher feels uncomfortable with?
	– Does the teacher perceive any weaknesses in teaching techniques or classroom management?
Learning strategies	– Are there areas in which learner training is needed?
	– How do students help themselves to learn outside the classroom?
	– What are learner's perceptions of the most useful kinds of homework?
Assessment	– Have progress tests or assignments related effectively to course objectives and course content

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- Has the amount of assessment been adequate and well timed?

- Have students gained a clear idea of their progress and been counselled it?

- Have students had opportunities to assess themselves?

- Have adequate records been kept?

4C.5.1 Follow up–Posters or Questionnaires?

The teacher can organize the procedure, appoint a chair, and withdraw from the room to ensure **openness of discussion** and **anonymity of comment**. Students then agree and list comments on the posters and **a tally** is kept of how many students agree with each comment. The teacher, on returning, can discuss the comments and the feasibility or various ways as .... quality. The clear advantages of this procedure are its *simplicity, speed, openness of comment, and opportunity for discussion.*

In contrast, the administration of a questionnaire survey, a popular method, is time-consuming in preparation and processing, and, if set for completion out of class, responses may be difficult to chase up. However, the advantage of this method is that the techer can ask about points of special concern and can ensure coverage of many course elements. One way of engaging students' interest is to ask them to submit questions or prepare parts of the questionnaire in groups as classwork.

The poster session and the questionnaire survey are procedures for gathering feeback from students. Good advice for the design of questionnaires and other ways of eliciting student feedback can be found in Nunal (1992) and Weir and Roberts (1994).

Other methods of evaluating courses involve **observation, review of documents** and **teacher self-report.**

Table B summarizes what is available to the teacher. You will need to decide what is most appropirate for your learners in the context in which you teach, **Diary-keeping,** for example, has become popular in many western contexts where this activity is part of the cultural tradition, but it would need careful consideration in some other contexts and is, in any event, a matter of personal taste and preference.

Table B : Methods of evaluating courses

Method	Examples
Student feedback	— Interview students in groups or individually
	— Ask students to complete questionnaires in class or at home.
	— Ask students to write key comments on posters.
	— Hold an informal discussion.
	— Ask students to make evaluative notes individually on the week's classes to give to the teacher.
Teacher self-report	— Fill in a self-assessement sheet
	— Keep a log book or diary.
Observation	— Make an audio/video recording of groupwork in a classes and analyse the extent to which what happened is what you planned or expected.
	— Observe one student through a week's classes and anlyse interest, attention, strategies, strengths, and weaknesses.
	— Ask a colleague to watch a lesson and observe a particular aspect of your teaching. e.g., explanations, controlled practice, vocabulary work. Ask for critical comment.
Documents	— Review course objectives.
	— Review lesson plans and write evaluative comments. Look for points to improve on.

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-   Review student work and pinpoint issue to work on.

-   Ask students to keep diaries of what they like/dislike, find easy/ hard, interesting/ uninteresting, and review these periodically.

4C.6 When Do We Evaluate?

Two kinds of evaluation can be used in a course. The first is *summative assessment* at the end of a course, a useful point at which to review the whole course in order to pinpoint elements for improvement. The second is *formative assessment* which takes place as the course proceeds.

Ideally, evaluation should be planned from the beginning, as schedule set, participants decided upon, and criteria and procedures agreed by all involved. For example, a teacher may decide to elicit feedback from students by means of a poster session midway through a course and respond immediately on points arising; or a director of studies may co-ordinate the design and administration of a questionnaire survey at the end of a term, the responses to which may be used for further course planning.

4C.7   What should Be done with the Information Gained

If ELT schools and departments are to remain 'healthy', then the *information collected needs to be fed into a review process* which goes beyond the individual teacher and links to wider decisions within the institution regarding *timetabling, choice of learning materials, development of resources, organization of the general curriculum,* and provision of *in-service training.* Consideration, therefore, needs to be given to these questions:

How is the information to be collated?

How is it to be analysed?

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To whom is it to be disseminated (e.g. teachers, managers, sponsors, students)?

How is it to be disseminated (e.g., written report, verbal report, verbal report at a staff meeting)?

When is it to be discussed?

What action plans might arise from the discussion?

4C.7.1 Quality Assurance

The main purpose of the review process is to ensure ongoing quality enhancement and assurance. If we hold informal poster sessions with our classes, these questions are easily dealt with. We can retun to the class, posters can be displayed and points discussd, we can talk about what is feasible among suggested improvements, and make undertakings. Our students can also make undertakings in this discussion and a date for further feedback can be set. The teacher can then contribute information from the evaluation to departmental or school discussion. In the case of a questionnaire survey across a range of course, the director of studies can collate information statistically and present a short report to a staff meeting, and the ensuing discussion can generate action points to be allocated among staff. Such a procedure needs sensitive management, ownership of the data by all involved open discussion, and a focus on issues arising rather than on individual teachers. Only then can evaluation become a force improving quality within an institution.

4C.8   Teacher Choice in Course Design

When departments or individual teacher have the freedom to choose course materials, a critical eye is needed. Two stages can usefully be undertaken in evaluating the relevance of a book to a particular group of students.

The *first stage* is to assess the content of a book in relation to its professed aims, If, for example, book states an underlying principle of its materials to be that cross-cultural understanding is important in language learning, then teachers will need to ask :

Does the book show parallels and contrast between the learners' culture and others?

Is this done in a non-patronizing way?

What aspect of culture are in forcus?

Do these gives a rounded picture?

Does the book present national cultural as monolithic, or does it show awareness of cultural variation?

Similarly, if another stated principle is that students need to establish those learning strategies which will help them make progress independently, then teachers will need to ask:

Does the book deal explicitly with learning strategies and suggest ways of using and developing them?

Is a sufficient range of strategies presented?

This first stage enables evaluation of the extent to which a book fulfils its own aims and is therefore learners.

A *second stage* would then be to assess the book against the needs and context of the intended learners. In other words, are the materials appropriate and are they likely to be effective in helping learners to acquire English? It would be useful to list some key categories for evaluation and then list questions for each category : these would very according to learner factors, institutional setting, and sociocultural context. Table C shows some examples. There are a number of such checklist available for textbook evaluation.'

Initially, several questions must be posed. Do you want a product or process oriented syllabus?

Will the course be teacher or learner led?

What are the goals of the program and the needs of your students?

This leads to an examination of the degree to which the various elements will be integrated, which is of great significance to Write (1988 : 92) who comments:

A complete syllabus specification will include all five aspects : structure, function, situation, topic, skills. The difference between syllabuses will lie in the priority given to each of these aspects.

Eclecticism is a common feature of the majorit of course books under the

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communicative banner currently on offer. Attempting to combine the various aspects of language has also been addressed by Hutchinson and Waters who state:

> *Any teaching material must, in reality, operate several syllabuses at the same time. One of them will probably be used as the principal organizing feature, but the others are still there (op. cit. : 89).*

Table C : Key categories and examples of questions for evaluation

Category	Questions
The view of language	— What levels of language receive attention?
	— How is the language system categorized?
	Are social aspects of language as communication taken into account, e.g. level of formality?
The view of language learning	— Is there explicit reference to grammatical *learning* terms anconcepts?
	— Is there an appropriate balance of accuracy and fluency activities?
	— Is there a balance of modes of language use, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
	— Does the first language have a role in the materials?
Learners	— What age group do the materials have in view?
	— How does the book relate to the needs of learners? Is the content interesting and challenging to the learners?
The view of education	— Does the book have general educational goals?
	— Are these appropriate to the learners?
	— Do they fit the national curriculum?

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The environment of learning	– Do the materials encourage learner independence?
	– Does the teacher's role in the book fit in with local perceptions?
	– Is the cultural content accessible/ appropriate?
	– Is the grading an sequencing appropriate to the amount and intensity of time available?

4C.9 Evaluating Literary Learning Materials

In this section we think about evaluating materials which make use of *literary* texts. You will probably want to use the criteria we establish when choosing a book to use with your students or when selecting a particular unit or section in a book. But you may also find yourself using some of the ideas in this section for thinking about materials produced by yourself or your colleagues.

It is not always easy to make this kind of assessment *'cold'* without actually having used the material with the students, but it is possible to reach a few preliminary conclusions about the books and materials even if these are altered or modified after using them with a class.

In this section, we suggest some criteria for assessing and evaluating books and materials that are literary.

● **Think**

First, let us think about what our needs, and those of other teachers are likely to be. the following are examples of the kinds of comments teachers might make about the type of published materials they feel they need to use with their students. Consider whether any of these comments reflect your own situation.

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A. *My students are very academic and have to pass quite a stiff exam which deals with British literature through the ages. So I need a book which will take them chronologically through British literature and will provide lots of background information about history and literary trends. But since most books of this type seem to encourage students to learn by rote. I'd like to find a book which provides the necessary information but which actively involves the students in thinking for themselves as well.*

B. *I just want a book that I can dip into now and again with my students. with a few nice poems or extracts that I can use to encourage discusion. My students need English for their work but they enjoy a change of activity now and again, and they love a good discussion.*

C. *I need a book that is going to help my students with their reading. This skill really needs improvement, and the students have promised they would be prepared to do some reading for homeworks. They are quite advanced, so I thought a collection of short stores might be suitable. Preferably with tasks or exercises they could to for homework and we could then discuss in class.*

TASK 1

Now think about your own situation and what kind of material you might like to use with your students, Write a short paragraph, or a few notes, describing the students and identifying the kind material you would like to use.

4C.9.1 Examples of evaluation sheets

We will now examine a number of evaluation sheets intended to help you decide whether a book, a piece material from a book or a piece of material esigned by you or a colleague is suitable for the students you have described in Task.

The 'quickie' book evaluation sheet can be used if you only have time to look fairly rapidly through a book or a number of books when trying to evaluate material.

Quick Book Evaluation   **Table C**

Title of book	
Author(s)	
Publisher	
Level	
Overall aims/approach	
Types of text used	
Skill/language area which book will help to improve	
Strengths of material	
Weaknesses of material	
Suitable for my students? Yes/No (please give reasons)	

The detailed book evaluation sheet can be used if you have more time to assess a book in detail. Although you would certainly not expect the book to contain all the features mentioned on this questionnaire, the features do provide some overall guidelines as to what you might hope to find in a book using literature.

The following evaluation sheet can be used if you are evaluating a *piece* of published material fairly quickly, for example a section or unit of a book. If you have more time, you might want to expand your evaluation by giving more detailed reasons for ticking the columns as you did.

I   **Table D**

Detailed Book Evaluation [Ref. H. S. Selections Paper 1 (WBCHSE) or CBSE
Literature Book for +2]

    Title of book   ....
    Author(s)   ....
    Publisher   ....

Aims and organisation

1. What are the overall aims of the book?
2. What approach to using literature seems to have been adopted? Is this approach suitable for your students?
3. How is the book organised? (thematically? according to linguistic difficulty? Chronologically? etc.)
4. Are units/sections self-contained? Can you use some of the material, or do you need to work through it all?

Meterials and activities

1. What kinds of text are used in the book? (poems? short stories? extracts from novels and play? literary and non-literary texts?)
2. Are the texts sufficiently varied, interesting and relevant to students?
3. Are the tasks and activities sufficiently varied, interesting and relevant to students?
4. Are the students given sufficient linguistic guidance with the language of the texts (for example, vocabulary exercises, glossaries, etc.)?
5. Are students given adequate cultural, historical or literary background information to make sense of the texts?
6. Are students encouraged to relate the materials to their own lives and experiences?
7. Is the material challenging enough for the students?
8. Could the material be adapted if necessary?

Instructions and layout

1. Are the instructions in the book clear and easy to follow?
2. Is the layout clear and attractive?
3. Are there visuals (pictures, photos, diagrams, etc.) to supplement the texts?

Accompanying resources

1. Is the teacher given sufficient guidance in how to use the book (either in the book itself or in a teacher's book)?
2. Is there recorded material available to accompany the book?
3. Could the book be used by students working on their own? (Is there a key for example, to help them?)

Suitability for class/group

Would you use this book with your students? Please give reasons.

II Evaluating A piece of Material *(Table E)*

Title of book ....

Author(s) ....

Publisher ....

Page on which relevant maternal is found : ....

Please tick the relevant column

		Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
1.	Suitability of approach for your students				
2.	Suitability of level for you students				
3.	Relevance and interest of texts chosen				
4.	Variety and appropriateness of tasks and activities				
5.	Staging and grading of tasks and activitis				
6.	Opportunities for student participation and personalisation				
7.	Linguistic guidance (glossaries, exercises, etc.)				
8.	Cultural/literary/historical background provided				
9.	Clarity of instructions				
10.	Layout and design				

I would /would not use this material with my students because ....
....

TASK 2

Now that you have looked through or used the forms in this section, you might like to make one of your own, listing all those criteria which you think are important in terms of the group of students, that you yourself will be teaching. You can then use this form as a handy reference when you are assessing or evaluating any materials in the future.

III   Table F

Making decisions about the course

Preview the coursebook carefully and answer the questions. Be ready to discuss your view in class.

A. Yourself

1. Think about your own strengths and weaknesses in writing English. Try to list them.

B. The book

2. How many units are there? Do they all took equally useful in helping you to develop your writing ability?

3. Look at the organization of a unit. Make a. list of the components in it. Decide how each one will help you to develop your English.

4. Make a list of the topics covered in the book. Are any of these irrelevant to your needs or interests? Are there any topics you would like to study which are not here?

5. What is your first impression of the book? Do you think it offers, help with your own problems in writing? Is there anything missing which you would have expected to be included?

6. Are there parts of the book which you think you could study successfully by yourself?

C. The course

.7. Given our limited class-time, which parts of the book would be best studied in class together?

8. Would you prefer to do the essay-writing

 —   at home?

 —   in class, individually, with the teacher to assist?

 —   in class, with some co-operation in pairs and groups at the planning revising and editing stages?

 —   as a mixture of these?

9   How many pieces of written work could you do each week?

10 Do you have any other suggestions/ requests relating to the course?

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10.4 Conclusion

This unit has attempted to set the *status quo* with regard to those options currently available to language teachers, as course designers and as users of textbooks. The model used to describe course design has been influenced by curriculum planning in general education, in which processes of considering th students, establishing goals, choosing a product or process approach to course planning, designing course units, and evaluation, are held to be of importance. At the moment in ELT, our syllabus design and course unit design are based on experience, reflection, and logical reasoning. It is to be hoped that in coming years it will be possible to add the outcomes of evaluative studies to these sources of information on, and insight into, the effective planning of courses.

4C.9.2 Discussion topics and projects

1 Collect a set of textbooks and investigate any goals they state, and also their content pages. Wha do these tell you about their underlying assumptions concerning language and learning?

2. Study the list of evaluation criteria on the next few pages.

    Rationale   —   Why was the book written in the first place, and what gaps is it intended to fill?

    —   Are you give information about the needs analysis or classroom piloting that were undertaken?

    —   Are the objectives spelt out?

    Availability   —   Is it easy to obtain sample copies and support material for inspection?

    —   Can you contact the publisher's representatives in case you want further information about the content, approach, or pedagogical detail of the book?

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User definition —	Is there a clear specification of the target, age range, culture, assumed background, probable learning preferences, and educational expectations?
—	Are entry/exit language levels precisely defined. e.g. by reference to local or country-specific examination requirements?
—	In the case of the ESP textbook, what degree of specialist knowledge is assumed (of both learners and teacher)?
Layout/graphics —	Is there an optimum density and mix of text and grahical maternal on each page, or is the impression one of clutter?
—	Are the artwork and typefaces functional? colourful? appealing?
Accessibility —	Is the maternal clearly organized?
—	Can the student find his or her location in the material at any point, i.e. is it possible to have a clear view of the 'progress' made. and how much still needs to be covered?
—	Are there indexes, vocabulary lists, section headings and other methods of signposting the content that allow the student to use the material - easily. especially for revision of self-study purposes?
—	Is the learner (as opposed to the teacher) given clear advice about how the book

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and its contents could be most effectively exploited?

Linkage —	Do the units and exercises connect in terms of theme, situation, topic, pattern of skill development. or grammatical lexical 'progression'?

—   Is the nature of such connection made obvious, for example by placing input texts and supproting exercise in close proximity?

—   Does the textbook cohere both internally and externally (e.g. with other books in a series)?

Selection/grading —   Does the introduction, practice, and recycling of new linguistic items seem to be shallow/steep enough for your students?

—   Is there a discernible system at work in the selection and grading of these items (e.g. on the basis of frequency counts, or on the basis of useful comparisons between the learner's mother tongue and English)?

—   Is the linguistic inventory. prsented appropriate for your purposes, bearing in mind the LI background(s) of your learners?

Physical characteristics —   Is there space to write in the book?

—   Is the book bound? too large? too heavy?

—   Is the spine labelled?

	Is it a book that could be used more than once, especially if it is marked by previous students?
Appropriacy —	Is the material substantial enough or interesting enough to hold the attention of learners?
—	Is it pitched at the right level of maturity and language, and (particularly in the case of ESP situations), at the right conceptual level?
—	Is it topical?
Authenticity —	Is the content obviously realistic. being taken from L1 material not initially intended for ELT purposes?
—	Do the tasks exploit language in a communicative or 'real-world' way?
—	If not, are the texts unacceptably simplified or artificial (for instance, in the use of whole-sentence dialogues)?
Sufficiency —	Is the book complete enough to stand on its own, or must the teacher produce a lot of ancillary bridging material to make it workable?
—	Can you teach the course using only the student's book, or must all the attendant aids (e.g. cassettes) be deployed?
Cultural bias —	Are different and appropriate religious and social environments catered for, both in terms of the topics/situations presented and of those left out?

	–	Are students expectations in regard to content, methodology; and format successfully accommodated?
	–	If not, would the book be able to wean students away from their preconceived notions?
	–	Is the author's sense of humour or philosophy obvious or appropriate?
	–	Does the coursebook enshrine stereotyped, inaccurate, condescending or offensive images of gender, race, social class, or nationality?
	–	Are accurate or 'sanitized' views of the USA or Britain presented . : are uncomfortable social realities (e.g. unemployment, poverty, family break-downs racism) left out?
Education validity	–	Does the textbook take account of and seem to be in tune with, broader educational concerns (e.g. the nature and role of learning skills, concept development in younger learners, the function of 'knowledge of the world', the exploitation of sensitive issues, the value of metaphor as a powerful congnitive learning device)?
Stimulus/practice/revision	–	Is the course material interactive, and are there sufficient opportunities for the learner to use his or her English so that effective consolidation takes place?

		Is the material likely to be retained rememebered by learners?
	—	Is allowance made for revision, testing, and on-going evaluation/marking of exercises and activities, especially in large-group situations; are ready-made achievement tests provided for the coursebook, or is test development left for the hardpressed teacher? Are 'self-checks' provided?
Flexibility	—	Can the book accommodate the practical constraints with which you must deal. or are assumptions made about such things as the availability of audio-visual equipment, pictorial material, class size; and classroom geography; does the material make to man demands on teachers' preparation time and students' homework time?
	—	Can the material be exploited or modified as required by local circumstances, or is it too rigid in format, structure, and approach?
	—	Is there a full range of supplementary aids available?
Guidance	—	Are the teacher's notes useful and explicit?
	—	Has there been an inordianate delay between the publication of the student's and teacher's books which has meant that teachers have had to fend for themselves in exploiting the material?

	Is there advice about how to supplement the coursebook, or to present the lessons in different ways?
	Is there enough/too much 'hand-holding'?
	Are tapescripts, answer key, 'technical notes' (in the case of ESP textbooks), vocabulary lists, structural/functional inventories, and lesson summaries provided in the teacher's book?
	Is allowance made for the perspectives, exceptions, and preferences of non-native teachers of English?
Overall value for money	Quite simple, is the coursebook cost-effective, easy to use, and successful in your teaching situation, in terms of time, labour, and money?
	To what extent has it realized its stated objectives?

(Sheldon 1988 : 242-5)

(a) Which of these criteria are particularly important to you when you choose books for your own classes?

(b) Would you wish to add or delete any?

(c) Apply the criteria to a textbook currently in use in your institution and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

4. Do you see project work as relevant, desirable, and/or useful in the situation in which you teach? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of introducing it into the ELT curriculum and consider ways of dealing with any constraints you might encounter.

5   Think of a suitable project for your own learners.

   (a)   How would you introduce the topic?

   (b)   What stages would the project follow?

   (c)   What materials and / or guidelines would you need to design for each stage? Design your introductory materials.

6.   To what extent do you use negotiation with your learners? What are its advantages and disadvantages? What are the most effective practical procedures you could use?

7.   Review the examples of evaluation procedures in this unit.

   (a)   What are the advantages and disadvantages of each, and which would be most suitable for your own learners?

   (b)   Decide on the questions you would like to address in relation to a course you have been teaching or pursuing, Then design an evaluating procedure

4C.9.3 Further reading

Breen, M. 1987 'Contemporary paradigms in syllabus design,' *Language Teaching* 20/2 ; 81-92 (Part 1) and 20/3 : 157-74 (Part 2).

This two-part article provides an overview of syllabus design in ELT. It makes a major distinction between the 'propositional syllabus' and the 'process syllabus', and discusses the theoretical underpinings of both and the issues that exist for the syllabus planner. This article is useful reading for those who wish to delve into ideas about language and learning which have influenced the design of course since the 1950s.

Clark, J. L. 1987. *Curriculum Renewal in School Foreign Language Learnings*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Clark's book takes a wide educational perspective on issues of syllabus design. He traces the influence of movements in general education, and those if humanism,

reconstructionism, and progressivism, and discusses the ways in which they have influenced approaches to designing school language syllabuses. He also looks at issuees in curriculum review and planning for change, and gives a detailed account of two projects which demonstrate principles at work and issues arising.

Cunningsworth, A. 1995 *Choosing Your Coursebook.* Oxford : Heinemann. This book gives clear advice on selecting coursebooks according to criteria for careful evaluation. The author provides useful checklists for decision-making. There is discussion of various types of coursebook and suggestions on how to adapt materials to suit particular teaching / learning situations.

Dubin, E and E. Olshtain 1986. *Course Design : Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

This book is intended for teachers who are involved in planning courses for their own learners or who might be involved in the design of programmes and materials on a wider scale. It covers the factors which need to be considered in setting up a course and then looks at the stages of design; setting goals, selecting a type of syllabus, and designing activities. The focus is on communicative approaches and the book offers practical application activities.

McDonough, J and C. Shaw. 1993. *Materials and Methods in ELT.* Oxford : Blackwell.

This book reviews and explores different approaches to ELT methodology, showing how they are realized in materials. There are plenty of practical example of materials and useful study questions.

Nunan, D. 1988a. *Syllabus Design,* Oxford University Press.

Nunan's book is divided into three sections, The first considers general issues in syllabus design such as establishing the needs of learners, selecting and grading materials, and designing tasks, The second section looks at practice and examines a wide range of syllabuses and course materials. The third helps teachers to analyse their own teaching situation, and to apply relevant and useful ideas to their selection of books for learners and to their own efforts at syllabus design.

White, R. V. 1988. *The ELT Curriculum : Design, Innovation and Management* Oxford : Blackwell.

White reviews the development of ideas on the ELT curriculum, the range of syllabus types available, and rationale for each. He goes on to discuss the ethicient introduction an implementation of change in the curriculum and the issues that arise for management. This book provides a particularly useful perspective for those who have, or will have, responsibility for innovation in their institutions.

Unit 1 □ Syllabus Survey

Structure

1.0 Objectives

The module will introduce you to various parameters used in the past and in current times for drawing up different syllabus models for the purpose of English Language Teaching in schools and colleges. It is expected that your experience of working through all the sections and activities will help you :

- to understand the design of different syllabus models used in India and other countries.
- to compare and evaluate the syllabus models explored.
- to relate the text books and study materials within each syllabus.
- to consider methodological principles underlying each syllabus document and
- to explore and focus on the fundamental assumptions guiding the design of each syllabus framework.

1.1 Introduction

Models in the field of ELT syllabus design have moved rapidly since the 1970s, and each model has its underlying rationale in educational thinking, in social trends, and in views of language and learning, as we shall discover in this module. The structural syllabus of the 1960s and 1970s, the communicative syllabus of the 1980s,

and the task-based syllabus of the 1990s, have all made their contribution to course design. Many current communicative textbooks demonstrate all of these strands in the multi-dimensional syllabus, as seen in the 'contents map' of a course. This has dimensions of communicative function, structure, topic, and project, the last including various skills dimensions in the tasks suggested. As the unit titles suggest, it is the functional list which forms the organizing principle as might be seen in lists like 'Greeting', 'Reporting, 'Narrating' etc.

Teachers wishing to design multi-dimensional courses of their own will be faced with the same issues as any textbook designer.

Which aspect of language or of skills work or of content should be the primary organizing criterion for the course?

What implications does this bold for the design and format of a course unit ?

Teachers wishing to combine formal classwork with less formal activities such as projects will be faced with further issues : What is the appropriate balance of time to spend on each, and what are effective ways of integrating the two?

In this module we will look first at a few syllabus models and then explore the decisions confronting teachers and syllabus designers in planning and organizing learning experiences and syllabus documents.

- **Let's begin by revising the various types of syllabus discussed in Module 1. You are already aware that a syllabus can be either Product or Process oriented.**

With regard to general English language education, particularly in the early stages, many teachers take the view that a product syllabus, which presents and practises a formal set of linguistic items, is desirable. If we accept that learners also need a 'process' element of unfocused tasks, the question is how this element can be introduced and integrated into a course.

Brumfit (1980) has suggested a **spiral syllabus**, as shown in the Figure on the next page in which a series of unfocused tasks will enable students to use the language they have acquired while following a basic product syllabus. This type of syllabus can be seen in textbooks where 'extension' units engage learners in less formally focused tasks.

Ellis (1987) suggests a **parallel syllabus** with separate strands, as shown on the right in the same Figure. This might well be seen in a weekly timetable of four sessions where two sessions follow a product syllabus based, say, on structures, with focused tasks, a third session is given to literature with a series of role-play, discussion, and writing tasks, and the fourth session uses project work.

(a) Spiral syllabus   (b) Parallel syllabus
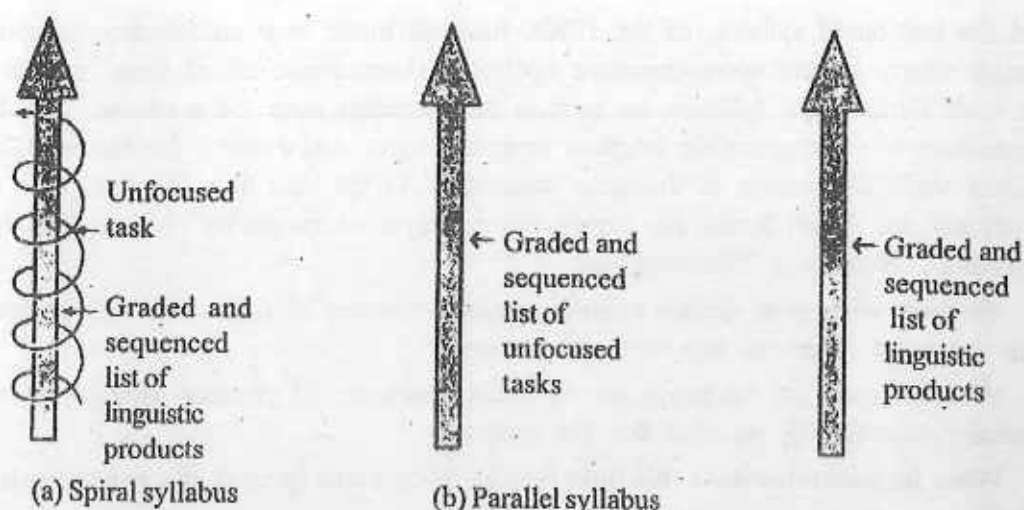
Figure Spiral and parallel syllabuses (Ellis 1987; 188)

Issues of grading and sequencing will still be important to a teacher following separate strands in a course. In the literature sessions, for example, thought will need to be given to how tasks can be graded according to such factors as *length of reading extract, difficulty of cultural background* in the text, complexity of *textual organization*, number of *steps* in the task, number of *students* involved in performing the task, and length of *time* to complete the task.

1.2 Surveying and establishing goals and objectives

Our explorations into the perspectives of goals and objectives will begin to define contextual constraints within which the course must be planned and taught. It is perhaps sufficient to reiterate here the importance of matching course to context. The most efficient course design is one which takes into account specific factors such as *class size, time available,* and the *teacher's own communicative ability, knowledge* of the language system, and *command of methods.*

It should also take into account more general factors concerning educational values, perceptions of the teacher's role, and expectations of classroom procedures.

The distinction between the terms 'goals' and 'objectives' is here taken to be a distinction between the general and the specific. For example, one broader goal for a course might be perceived, from the teacher's perspective, as being :

1. *to develop the students' reading ability more comprehensively and effectively;*
   More specific objectives within the goal could be outcomes for the students :

   (a) *to develop effetive strategies for dealing with unkinown words*

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(b) *to be able to distinguish fact from opinion*

(c) *to build confidence in dealing with a wide range of texts (e.g. news reports, charts, magazine articles, short stories).*

Similarly, another broad goal could be :

2. **to help learners become more independent in their approach to learning; more specific objectives for students could be :**

(a) *to learn ways of monitoring and assessing their own progress*

(b) *to develop effective strategies for using monolingual dictionaries*

(c) *to find ways of exploiting out-of-class resources for learning English.*

Note the difference between the first goal, which is to do with the outcomes of a language learning course, and the second, which is a wider educational goal to do with the process of learning and the development of the individual. Teachers working with school students will have a particular concern for formulating educational goals.

A quick review would immediately suggest some of relevance to ELT, for example

– *to develop enjoyment in reading and good reading habits*

– *to develop appreciation of the link between language and culture and awareness of how languages and cultures differ*

– *to develop a critical stance in listening and reading.*

In many contexts, general goals are set out in a national curriculum or by institutional policy-makers and it is left to teachers to interpret these in specific objectives. It is difficult to know how many teachers actually list the specific objectives.

However, making the stating of objectives a distinct stage in course planning has a number of advantages—it enables us :

to assess the appropriateness of course materials;

to make explicit the aims of the course and how these have been determined; and

to encourage students to develop their own agenda for the course.

It is a stage of course planning in which learners can become involved through consultation and negotiation. A list of objectives also provides one set of criteria for evaluating a course. Students can be invited to assess how far they have been enabled to achieve the objectives of the course.

1.3 Planning the syllabus—A survey

It is typical of contemporary coursebooks to use a **multi-dimensional** syllabus. Johnson (1981) gives a rationale for this kind of syllabus by analogy with a construction plan :

> ... argument as to the relative merits of national, situational, or topic based syllabuses, etc. are no more sensible than arguments as to whether the specifications in a construction contract should cover the foundations, or the steel framework or the concrete or the glass or the interior design etc. The obvious answer is that all of these must be covered. (Johnson 1981 : 34)

His view can be seen as a response to the debate of the 1970s as to what might constitute the most appropriate base for designing a language syllabus. It was during this period that the communicative revolution in syllabus design and classroom methodology took impetus from the work of applied linguists interested in the concept of communicative competence.

Previously, the classical humanist values prevalent in general education (Clark 1987) had influenced language teaching towards content-driven courses, the content consisting of selected and sequenced items from the formal language system. This 'structural syllabus' relied on analyses of language provided by linguists of the time and focused on the systems of phonology, grammar, and lexis. It has prevailed widely as a base for course design on the grounds that it has its clear advantages, i.e. it is amenable to planning and can provide systematicity. For this reason many teachers and learners feel secure and appreciate being able to review what they have covered of the 'building blocks' of the language. The point has also been made that, if a structural syllabus and related course units make explicit use of grammatical concepts and categories, it enables learners to use formal strategies for acquiring language such as analysing the tense system. And many adult and adolescent learners have already developed effective strategies of this kind through previous language learning experiences.

course designers of the 1970s however, were influenced by the **reconstructionist** movement in general education and its arguments for **objectives-driven** courses, together with concurrently emerging perspectives on what communicative ability in a language entails.

A seminal work in this respect was Wilking' *Notional Syllabuses* (1976). He sugested three components for a syllabus based on what he called **'communicative**

capacity'. These derived from the three types of meaning expressed through a sentence or a spoken utterance.

The first component is derived from the kind of meaning conveyed through the grammatical system as we relate information and express perceptions. For example, we express time relationships through tenses and duration through prepositional phrases. This Wilkins calls the 'semantico-grammatical' or 'notional' category.

The second component is **modality**, arising from modal meaning, i.e. the expression of attitude towards the content of what is conveyed, for example certainly, as in 'He must have ....', or disbelief, as in 'I'm astonished that ...'

The third component is that of **communicative function**, i.e. the purpose of using the utterance in conversation or the sentence in a written text, for instance, to advise, to complain, to report, or to persuade.

1.3.1 Basis for Syllabus Design

Wilkins' components of *notions, modality,* and *functions* have been highly influential in attempts to find new bases for syllabus design. The Council of Europe, for example, produced the syllabus specifications **'Threshold Level English'** (van Ek 1975) and **'Waystage English'** (van Ek, Alexander, and Fitzpatrick 1977), which are widely used by ELT textbook writers. These built on Wilkins's work in order to provide a framework for specifying language learning objectives. This framework is as follows :

1. the situations in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics which will be dealt with;

2. the language activities in which the learner will engage;

3. the language functions which the learner will fulfil;

4. what the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic;

5. the general notions which the learner will be able to handle;

6. the specific (topic-related) notions which the learner will be able to handle;

7. the language forms which the learner will be able to use;

8. the degree of skill with which the learner will be able to perform.

   (van Ek 1975 : 8-9)

In these eight elements we can recognize most of the bases now available for ELT course design : *situations, functions, topics, notions, structures,* and *skills.*

These are the elements which the designer integrates into a multi-demensional syllabus. They are considered in detail in Yalden (1983) and Nunan (1988).

Given below is Janice Yalden's basic model of syllabus development. The elements outlined can be integrated into this framework for Syllabus design.

Needs Survey	→	Selection/ Development of Syllabus Type	→	Production of a Proto-Syllabus	→	Production of a Pedagogical Syllabus	→	Development and Implementation of Classroom procedure

                                                                                    ↓
                                                                              | Evaluation |
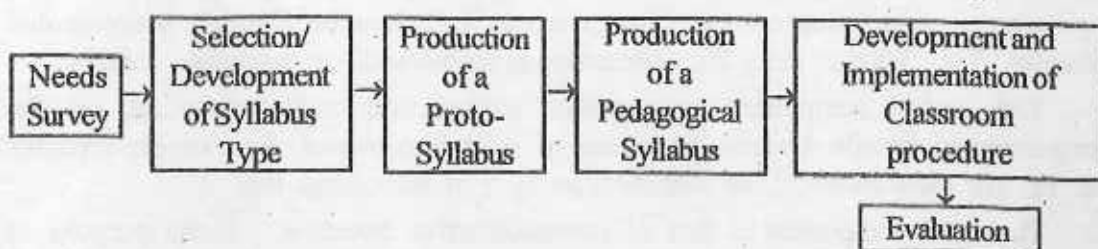
1.4 Syllabus Survey—General Principles

If you wish to make a critique of any syllabus document or any curriculum model, you would first need to study the document very carefully in order to :

– *identify the type of syllabus*

– *ascertain the assumptions underlying the design of the curriculum or syllabus*

– *consider the scope of the syllabus or the extent to which it can be used*

– *find out those areas amenable to modification or adaptation*

– *compare it with any other*

– *explore the relationship between syllabus goals and the goals of language teachers*

– *examine the selection and sequencing of grammatical elements in the syllabus*

● **Let's once again review and revise our notions of Syllabus types. Before you examine any syllabus document you could once again read through the next section which outlines what Vanessa Steels, David Nunan, David Wilkins have to say about :**

– the traditional syllabus

– the holistic syllabus

– the synthetic syllabus

– the analytic syllabus and

– the notional syllabus.

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1.4.1 Determining Syllabus Types

- ● Which syllabus? The traditional or the holistic syllabus?

Vanessa Steels

Traditional and holistic syllabuses reflect different views of language and language learning and teaching. Both viewpoints are quite valid, and most courses nowadays will reflect elements of both. It is the relative emphasis given to language as a body of knowledge to be mastered, or language as a communicative process to be developed, which will determine which of the labels *'traditional'* or *'holistic.'* I would apply to a given syllabus.

The traditional syllabus

In traditional syllabuses and materials, linguistic content is primary. The situational and thematic choices are made once the linguistic content has been established. The selection of the linguistic content itself is based on a particular theoretical view of the nature of language and the way in which we acquire it.

An example

The audiolingual method, for example, emphasised a careful sequencing of grammatical structures, which were presented and then repeated, with gradual memorisation of the dialogue. This approach was developed following research by behaviourist, psychologists, who saw language as a system of building blocks, and language acquisition as a process of habit formation, through imitation and repetition. Such an approach tends to ignore thematic content, and grammar and vocabulary are presented in isolated sentences without any thematic thread.

Advantages

Traditional syllabuses are suited to some types of learners. Breaking the language down into bits and pieces can help to focus students on a particular aspect of the language and avoid the focus being blurred by other problems of a lexical or phonological nature.

Aruguments for a more holistic syllabus

Those who criticise the traditional syllabus argue that it isn't logical to break language into bits and pieces when it is always experienced comprehensively, as a whole. Language consists of more than a stock of objective facts. This means that

a holistic approach uses texts, i.e., whole pieces of language, rather than individual sentences, to prepare the learners for the language they will encounter outside the classroom. Widdowson claims that we must progress from learning about the language (language usage), to considering how language works in a communicative sense, (language use), which, 'requires us to go beyond the sentence and look at longer stretches of language.'

This holistic view has gained prominence in recent years. A holistic syllabus will front texts, topics and tasks, placing great emphasis on meaningful communication from the learner's point of veiw. Texts should be authentic, tasks should be communicative, and learners will be encouraged to respond to the topics and texts, rather than to isolated phonemes and morphemes.

How this works

Whereas traditional syllabuses select language items solely on the basis of linguistic criteria, a holistic syllabus will select the items the learner needs to know in order to get things done, i.e., to complete the task.

Language errors are repaired by the teacher or the class while the students are on the task. Thus grammar is taught reactively, rather than pre-emptively. Such approaches of course throw up their own problems, such as of how to order the tasks and of how to choose the task which learners need. However, adherents of this approach would argue that a focus on function, fluency and use is still more like how learners experience the language outside the classroom, than a focus on form, accuracy and analysis.

A comparison of traditional and holistic approaches

Traditional	Holistic
• Focus on language as a sequence of grammatical patterns.	• Focus is on communication.
• Selects language items on basis of complexity of linguistic criteria.	• Selects on the basis of what language items the learner needs to know.
• Language used tends to be more formal and bookish.	• Genuine everyday language is emphasised.

Traditional	Holistic
• Aim is to have students produce formally correct sentences.	• Aim is to have students communicate effectively in order to complete the task.
• Reading and writing are emphasised.	• Speaking is given at least as much time as reading and writing.
• Tends to be teacher-centred.	• Tends to be student-centred.
• Focus is on the form of expression rather than the content.	• Resembles the natural language learning process by concentrating on the content/meaning of the expression rather than the form.

(Adapted from 'The Learner-Centred Curriculum' David Nunan. CUP 1988.)

1.4.2 Macro-Options in Syllabus Design

Syllabus types can be divided into two superordinate classes, *synthetic* and *analytic* (Wilkins, 1974, 1976), although it may be more accurate to view synthetic and analytic as two points on a continuum rather than as a strict dichotomy (Wilkins, 1976). *Synthetic* syllabuses segment the target language into discrete linguistic items for presentation one at a time : Different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up..... At any one time the learner is being exposed to a deliberately limited sample of language. (Wilkins, 1976, p.2)

Synthetic, that is, refers to the learner's role :

The learner's task is to re-synthesize the language that has been broken down into a large number of small pieces with the aim of making his [sic] learning task easier. (Wilkins, *1976, p. 2*)

The synthetic syllabus relies on learners' assumed ability to learn a language in parts (e.g. structures and functions) which are independent of one another, and also to integrate, or synthesize, the pieces when the time comes to use them for communicative purposes. Lexical, structural, notional, and functional syllabuses are synthetic. Although they need not be, so also are most so-called topical and situational syllabuses, for examination of teaching materials shows that topics and situations have traditionally been used as vehicles for structural syllabuses—a tendency

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which has also begun to occur with some commercially published materials that purport to be task-based, but are not.

Analytic syllabuses offer the learner target language samples which, while they may have been modified in other ways, have not been controlled for structure or lexis in the traditional manner. Users maintain that prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous. Analytic approaches are organised in terms of the purposes for which people are learning a language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes. (Wilkins, *1976, p. 13*)

Alalytic, that is, again refers not to what the syllabus designer does, but to the operations required of the learner. Wilkins (1976) writes :

since we are inviting the learner, directly or indirectly, to recognize the linguistic components of the language behavior he is acquiring, we are in effect basing our approach on the learner's analytic capabilities. (p. 14)

Updating Wilkins' definition a little, analytic syllabuses are those which present the target language whole chunks at a time, without linguistic interference or control. They rely on (a) the learners' assumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and to induce rules (or to form new neutral networks underlying what looks like rule-governed behavior), and/or (b) the continued availability to learners of innate knowledge of linguistic universals and the ways language can vary, knowledge which can be reactivated by exposure to natural samples of the L2. Procedural, process, and task syllabuses are all examples of the analytic syllabus type. Wilkins (1976) classifies situational, notional, and functional syllabuses as analytic. Notions and functions are clearly linguistic units, however, isolation of which in practice always results in a synthetic syllabus, such that exercises practising requests or apologies replace exercises on relative clauses or the present perfect.

The analytic/synthetic distinction is partially reflected in a second classification, R. V. White's (1988) Type A and Type B syllabuses. However, whereas Wilkins' categories turn on differences in the way input and learner interact, White's conceptualization is broader, capturing differences in two general approaches to course design, *instruction, language learning and evaluation.*

Type A syllabuses focus on *what is* to be learned : the L2. They are **interventionist**. Someone preselects and predigests the language to be taught, dividing it up into small pieces, and determining learning objectives in advance of any consideration of who the learners may be or of how languages are learned. Type A syllabuses, White points out, are thus external to the learner, other-directed, determined by authority, set the teacher as decision maker, treat the subject matter of instruction as important, and asesss success and failure in terms of achievement or mastery.

Type B syllabuses, on the other hand, focus on how the language is to be learned. They are **noninterventionist**. They involve no artificial preselection or arrangement of items and allow objectives to be determined by a process of negotiation between teacher and learners after they meet, as a course evolves. They are thus internal to the learner, negotiated between learners and teacher as joint decision makers, emphasize the process of learning rather than the subject matter, and assess accomplishment in relationship to learners' criteria for success. As will become clear, in addition to being analytic, all three taskbased syllabus types focused on in this section are primarily Type B in nature : Each allows both language and task to be negotiated in the classroom. Procedural and task syllabuses do have one Type A characteristic, however, for (via different procedures) each makes an initial specification in substantive terms of the kinds of tasks learners will work on before teachers and students ever meet. That is to say, they specify the *target tasks* learners ultimately need to be able to handle, and then allow the tasks teachers and learners work on in the classroom, that is, the *pedagogic* tasks, to be negotiated. Process syllabuses, conversely, are Type B thoroughbreds; they allow negotiation of language and task and, in theory at least, place no constraints on the tasks chosen.

1.4.3 Let's sum up

Nowadays, many coursebooks opt for a more mixed approach. If you are interested in finding out more about the thinking behind the course book syllabus that you are using, it can be very helpful to read the introduction to the teacher's book, which accompanies your coursebook. This usually reveals the coursebook writer's methodology, selection criteria, and approach to grammar and vocabulary.

As a teacher, it is very useful to know the ideas behind a particular sequence of exercises or tasks, as this can help you to judge whether or not such an approach is suited to your students' needs.

Further reading

'Course Design' by Dubin and Olshtain. CUP 1986

You are now ready to move on to the next unit for application of the knowledge and ideas gathered through the process of surveying various syllabus types, courses and textbooks.

Unit 2 □ Syllabus Evaluation

Structure

2.0   Objectives

2.1   Workshop Activities

2.2   Task 1

2.3   Evaluating Syllabus Models 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

2.4   Evaluating goals, products, content and grading

2.5   Discussion questions and activities

2.0   Objectives

This unit has been specially designed to familiarize you with various syllabus models used in the country and abroad and to help you to :

- identify the different syllabus types used for various purposes
- determine the principles underlying the selection and organisation of the content in each syllabus
- Consider the resources needed and used for proper implementation of the syllabus.
- suggest adaptation and modification of the syllabus examined.

2.1 . Workshop Activities

It is expected that you will work through the various tasks which have been adapted from Nunan (1988, 1989) and develop critical awareness of :

- *the underlying assumptions guiding the design of each syllabus model*
- *the actual framework and*
- *the modalities of implementation of the syllabus models.*

2.2 Task 1

1. *In groups examine in detail the models of syllabus documents given and find answers to the questions on the next page.*

There are six models of syllabus documents on the next few pages. Study them carefully.

a) Are the four components of a curriculum present?
(OBJECTIVES, CONTENT, METHODOLOGY, EVALUATION)

b) How did you identify them? Specify whether the categories of the objectives are *general, specific, attitudinal, behavioural or any other?*

c) Who are the learners? What is their entry level?

d) Has the learner profile in terms of *setting, needs, and resources* been provided?

e) Have the learning outcomes been specified? What are the assumptions underlying the curriculum design? (Beliefs, needs, context)

f) Identify the TYPE of syllabus you are examining. Is it *communicative or non communicative?* Which particular approach underlies this syllabus?

g) Do you find the notion of *eclecticism* present in the syllabus you are examining? Which areas have been considered?

h) What kind of CONTENT has been specified? How effectively does the content reflect the objectives?

i) Have the *topics, skills, functions and the situations* in which language will be used been specified? Is there a gap between *the ideals and the reality?*

j) What kind of materials have been suggested or selected? What is the criteria of selection?

k) What is the principle of organization of the specified content ?

l) Are there any suggestions for actual classroom implementation in terms of :

– *no. of working hours – activities – methodology – techniques and – expectation regarding level of learner performance –* EVALUATION?

m) Do the objectives, materials and techniques match ? Are they compatible?

n) To what extent is it feasible for the teacher to modify or adapt the syllabus you have been examining?

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Review : Let's consider the map of a coursebook below. Is it multidimensional? If so, why?

Model 1. Map of Meanings into words

Unit	Coursebook			Project Resource Book
	Functions Students will learn to :	Grammar/Language	Topics Students will learn to talk/write about :	Authentic materials leading up to a project for the whole class
1. Places (pages 5 to 12)	– describe and ask about places – say where things are – describe and ask about available services/amenities in town	– there is/are – has/has got – location prepositions – non-defining relative clauses	– buildings, rooms, furniture – services, amenities – geographical location	1. Housing (pages 5 to 10) – types of housing – electrical appliances – amenities/services – decorative styles/colours – garden design PROJECT : My ideal home in the year 2020 AD
2. Decisions and intentions (pages 13 to 20)	– Decide to do or not to do things – come to a decision with someone else – verbs expressing intentions – talk about definite arrangements	– I'll for spontaneous decisions – Shall we...?/Let's ... – verbs expressing intentions and plans – present continuous for definite arrangements	– organising a party – arranging an excursion – changes of mind – ordering a meal in a restaurant	2. Holiday Britain (pages 11 to 18) – descriptions of holiday resorts – youth hostels – the Peak District – a cycling tour – interpreting a map PROJECT : Planning a tour Back page : Cat in the Rain
3. Jobs and routine (pages 21 to 29)	– describe people's jobs – talk and ask about daily routine – talk and ask about regular events	– Present simple question forms – frequency adverbs and phrases – Present simple passive with be and get Grammar spot 1 : Gender	– routine at work and at home – jobs – places of work	3. Daily routine (pages 19 to 24) – the average British housewife – Madonna – parodies PROJECT : A life in the day of your school Back Page : The Essay
4. Direction (pages 30 to 39)	– say what directions things and people move in – give instructions for making and doing things – give street directions	– direction prepositions – sequence adverbs Grammar Spot 2 : The article	– streets and public buildings – making puppets	
5. Past events (pages 40 to 47)	– relate and ask about past events – say when events happened	– sequence expressions, e.g. after ...ing – past simple active and passive – past time expressions/ prepositions	– history of people and places – first experiences	4. Schools (pages 25 to 32) – the UK system – the new GCSE exam – prospectus of a comprehensive school – the USA system PROJECT : School prospectus Back page : Bitter-Sweet Dreams : School Days

(Doff, Jones, and Mitchell : Meanings into words (in a version adapted for the Austrian secondary school system by de Waal and Weinhofer 1989). page 3)

Model 2.

Intermediate Level Syllabus Outline

This syllabus provides a general outline proposal for creating courses for intermediate level students. This syllabus can be easily adapted for individual classes while retaining an overall structure aimed at helping students acquire the language they need to communicate.

Duration

120 hours total comprised of :

- 80 hours theoretical
- 30 hours practical applications
- 10 hours of final examination and evaluation

Course Objectives

- Daily life interrogative and discourse capabilities
- Basic person and place descriptive abilities
- Number, time, quantity, and cost use

Daily life receptive understanding skills, Written usage to express situations, give instructions and explanations, communicate opinions, and narrate and comprehend stories, specific terminology use based on students' needs.

Course Structure—80 hours theoretical including

24 hours basic grammatical skills including use of the interrogative and discourse forms covering :	– Verb forms and other grammatical structures Introductions and greetings, – Asking for information
	– Offering, – Requesting – Inviting
6 hours descriptive skills including :	– Comparative language, – Vocabulary building for people and places, – Communicative structures for expression of opinions, – Asking for descriptions
6 hours English numeration including :	– Time, quantity, cost and numbering vocabulary
	– Buying and selling structures – Requesting and giving the time – Various numerical expressions including cardinal numbers, fractions, decimals etc.

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16 hours receptive skills development including :	— Listening comprehension focusing on varying elements of vocabulary and structure
	— Video comprehension developing combined visual-audio receptive skills to deduce meaning from context
	— Reading skills strategies including intensive skimming and scanning development tasks, as well as intensive reading exercises
14 hours written skills development including :	— Development of basic writing skills applying studied grammatical structures — Standard writing formats including formal and informal letters — Expression of opinions in writing — Instruction flow writing skills — Narrative written structures to express past events
14 hours basic terminology based on students' needs	— Identification of equipment required, intensive vocabulary training — Descriptive language development of equipment use and functions — Integrated interrogative and discourse use with targeted vocabulary and functions — Language formation for instruction in, and explanation of basic equipment use

30 hours practical application and self-instruction

14 hours use of "Authentic" materials to extend receptive development including both classroom and self-instruction :	— Reading comprehension of authentic time-tables and schedules — Listening comprehension of authentic radio broadcasts in both British and American English
	— Communicative and decision making activities based on authentic reading materials — Authentic video materials to improve extraction of information from authentic source — Use of the Internet to extract authentic materials on specific areas of interest — Introduction to self-instruction English sites located on the Internet including pen-pals,

quizzes, listening comprehension and idiomatic language development – Written communication tasks for authentic task oriented goals – Self-instruction CD-ROM using various English learning software packages – Self-instruction using listening and video materials from the self access language laboratory with comprehension exercises

10 hours of class communicative activities including :

– Role-plays in various authentic situations – Debating various points of view to strengthen the ability to express points of view – Information gathering activities concerning time, place, cost and personal descriptions – Project development in groups and pairs –

– Group generated narrative written production

6 hours specific targeted vocabulary development :

– Interviewing activities to enhance instruction and explanation processes with specific focus on basic individual vocabulary needs, – Lexis development and extension in appropriate areas, – Role-play to increase active use of targeted language areas, – Group created written reports giving instruction on various aspects of target vocabulary

Model 3.

Grammar items and their sequence in a first-year English course (from Axbey 1997)

Present verb *be*

Subject pronouns

Possessive adjectives

Indefinite article : *a/an*

Plural nouns: *-s, -ies, -es*

Prepositions: *from, in, near, at, with,*
    there is/are

Expressions with go

too + adjective/not + adjective *enough*

When clauses

want + infinitive

Imperatives

countable/uncountable nouns with
    many/few, much/little

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Countable nouns with *some* and *any*
Definite article : *the*
Plural nouns : irregular
Demonstrative pronouns : *this/that,*
    these/those
Adjectives
have/has got
Present simple
Object pronouns
Whose? How often?
enough
can/cannot (can't)
like + *noun/like* + gerund
Adverbs of frequency
Do you like ?
Would you like ?
Past verb *be*
Present continuos for present
    activities
Indefinite pronoun : *everyone,*
    everybody, no one, nobody +
    singular verb
most/some/a few + plural verb
ask/tell + infinitive
Past simple

Comparative adjectives
Superlative adjectives
Prepositions of place
Articles : definite/indefinite/zero
Present continuous for fixed plans
Verbs + prepositions
Expressions with *get*
going to for intentions
would you like + noun/infinitive
can for permission
cannot/can't for prohibition
should/shouldn't for advice about
    polite behavior
Possessive pronouns
Present perfect
Indefinite pronouns
should/shouldn't for giving opinions
will/won't for promises of help
promise/remember/forget + infinitive
have to for obligation
Adverbs of manner
Prepositions
will/won't for predictions
think so/hope so

Model 4.

Threshold level syllabus

From *Threshold* 1990 (Van Ek and Trim 1998).

Language functions for threshold level

    1 Imparting and seeking factual information

      1.1 reporting. (describing and narrating)

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6.4 asking for confirmation of text

6.5 asking for confirmation or understanding

6.6 asking for clarification

6.7 asking someone to spell something

6.8 asking for something to be written down

6.9 expressing ignorance of a word or expression

6.10 appealing for assistance

6.11 asking someone to speak more slowly

6.12 paraphrasing

6.13 repeating what one has said

6.14 asking if you have been understood

6.15 spelling out a word or expression

6.16 supplying a word or expression

Model 5.

Skills syllabus for listening and speaking

From Malaysian Secondary School Syllabus form IV (1989).

1.0 Listening and Speaking

The component on listening and speaking deals with the skills of sound discrimination, extracting information, and prediction, in order to perform specific functions. The skills also include those of determining and using registers to suit different audiences, and for different purposes, so that students are able to express their thoughts clearly and succinctly and be able to fully participate in conversations and discussions.

The sub-skills that follow the main skills in this component are to be taught together with the main skills. These sub-skills are not arranged in a hierarchy and are thus not intended to be followed as a rigid sequence. They need to be repeated in different but meaningful combinations.

Objectives of the component on listening and speaking

Listening to and discriminating : consonant clusters, sentence stress and intonation, diphthongs and homonyms.

Listening to and understanding : work, phrases and sentences; instructions, messages; stories; talks; reports; opinions; poems; dialogues; information in reports, guides, charts, graphs, manuals, forms, and letters; description of scenes, events, places, things, and processes and procedures.

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Speaking with correct pronunciation, intonation, word stress and sentence rhythm.

Asking for and giving: meanings of words, phrases and sentences; instructions; messages; talks; reports; opinions; information in reports, guides, charts, graphs, manuals, forms and letters; descriptions of scenes, events, places, things, and processes and procedures; and

Telling stories

Skill specifications

At the end of the English Language Programme for Form IV, students should be able to :

1.1 Listen to and discriminate between : consonant clusters, diphthongs and homonyms,

1.2 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give meanings of words, phrases and sentences.

1.3 Speak with correct intonation, word stress and sentence rhythm.

1.4 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give instructions on how to fix things, such as a leaking tap.

1.5 Listen to and understand, ask for and give and relay messages received through the mass media, such as the radio and the television.

1.6 Listen to and understand, and tell stories on moral values, such as self-reliance, diligence and public-spiritedness.

1.7 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in talks on current issues, such as consumerism and health care.

1.8 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in reports, such as newspaper reports and book reports.

1.9 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in charts, graphs and manuals.

1.10 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in informal letters, in newspapers and in formal letters of enquiry and complaint.

1.11 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of scenes, such as tourist spots in the ASEAN region.

1.12 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of events, such as the SEA games.

1.13 Listen to and understand, ask for and give opinions on current issues, such as unemployment.

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1.14 Listen to and understand selected poems of writers from ASEAN region.

1.15 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of processes and procedures, such as the recycling of material.

1.16 Listen to and understand, and express displeasure and regret.

1.17 Practice social skills such as interrupting a conversation, and joining in and participating in a conversation.

The following sub-skills need to be combined and taught simultaneously with the above main skills where appropriate.

Sub-skills of listening

    a. Discerning main ideas

    b. Understanding sequence

    c. Noticing specific details

    d. Inferring

    e. Comparing

    f. Predicting

    g. Determining relevance

    h. Distinguishing fact and fiction

    i. Differentiating between fact and oipinon

    j. Generalizing

    k. Classifying

Sub-skills of speaking

    l. Using correct pronunciation

    m. Questioning

    n. Paraphrasing

    o. Supporting and clarifying

    p. Summarizing

    q. Using registers

    r. Speaking coherently

Model 6.

Beginner's Course—The Language Syllabus

Are there any notable ommissions? What are these? Is the sequencing appropriate? If not, could any of the items be re-sequenced?

Unit	Verb Phrase	Noun Phrase	Prepositional Phrase	Sentence	
ONE	is; isn't (is not)	a; an; the; it that; this singular nouns numerals	on; in; near; of	What...? Where...? Is...?	1
TWO	are; aren't	they plurals		Are...? and	7
THREE	can (permission)	very adjectives (colours) (nationality words) he; she article + profession	with; from	be + N + adj? How old...? What colour...? Who...?	13
FIRST REVIEW AND COMPLEMENTATION UNIT I; you; we; these; those 19					
FOUR	am	her; his; my; your (poss. adj.) I; you (months)	under	so What...like?	23
FIVE	present progressive	her; him; them; us postmodification with prep. phrase	to at (the moment)	What...doing?	29
SIX	can; can't (ability)	the time	past; to	What time...? How? but	35
SECOND REVIEW AND COMPLEMENTATION UNIT our; their; possessive pronouns 41					
SEVEN	Present Simple (3rd person singular)		at (time) by (transport)	then Does...?	45
EIGHT	Present Simple (other persons)			Do...? How much...? (price)	51
NINE	has; have never once/twice a week etc.	no (as det.) each		How much...? (quantity) How many...? How often...?	57
TEN	stative verbs present simple with frequency words	another other	on (day) in (part of day) in (season) after; before		63

(*Rossner, Shaw, Shepherd, Taylor, and Davies 1979*)

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2.4 Evaluating syllabus goals, products, content and grading

☐ **Task 2**

Aim

To explore the relationship between **syllabus goals** and the goals of language teachers.

Resources

Syllabus outlines, documents, and statements from your teaching institution and the language goal survey form.

Procedure

Study the syllabus outlines, documents, and statements from you institution, and assign a number from 1 (low) to 5 (high) to each of the goal statements on the form according to their perceived prominence in the syllabus documents.

Ask the teachers in your institution to indicate the importance of the goal statements by rating each from 1 to 5.

Evaluation

Are there any mismatches between the teachers' ratings and those you derived from the syllabus documents?

If there are mismatches, can you think of any ways in which these might be resolved?

Our language program has been designed to achieve the following goals :

1. to contribute to the intellectual, personal, and vocational development of the individual

2. to acquire the competence to use English in real-life situations for the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships, and to take part in interpersonal encounters through the sharing of factual and attitudinal information

3. to develop and maintain a sense of confidence and self-worth

4. to develop the skills needed to acquire, record, and use information from a variety of aural and written sources

5. to develop mastery over English as a written system and to have some knowledge of how it works at the levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax

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6. to increase, through a common language, the possibility of understanding, friendship, and co-operation with people who speak English

7. to foster the development of critical thinking skills, and skills in 'learning how to learn'

8. to develop the skills and attitudes to use English for creative and imaginative purposes

9. to develop the English needed to get a job requiring the use of English

Syllabus products

☐ **Task 3**

Aim

To examine the **selection and sequencing of grammatical elements** in a syllabus you are currently using.

Resources

a) A detailed syllabus outline or list of contents from a coursebook you are currently using for beginning students.

b) The list of contents (opposite) from any beginner's coursebook prescribed by any board for secondary level primary or

c) The list of contents – MODEL 6.

Procedure

Compare the list of contents in Model 6 with the syllabus outline or coursebook you are currently using.

Evaluation

What are the similarities and differences between the two sets of contents ?

☐ **Task 4**

Aim

To critique the selection and presentation of grammatical items in a coursebook you are currently using.

Resources

A coursebook you are currently using or have recently used.

Procedure

Study the **selection and presentation of grammatical items** from a representative selection of units or chapters in the coursebook.

Evaluation

How are the grammatical items introduced?

Is there **adequate contextualization** for the items? (Are they presented and practised within a meaningful or communicative context?)

☐ Task 5

Aim

To examine the **integration of grammatical, functional, and notional** components in a syllabus you are currently using.

Resources

A detailed syllabus outline or coursebook you are currently using or have recently used which incorporates grammatical, functional, and notional elements. (for e.g. Gulmohar series—Orient Longman, 2000)

Procedure

Extract from the syllabus outline or coursebook a list of the grammatical, functional, and/or notional elements which are covered.

Compare these lists and note the ways in which the elements are related and integrated.

Evaluation

How are the elements related?

Are the relationships arbitrary or not?

How well are the elements interrelated from your own perspective?

If there are any elements which are not related in a satisfactory or convincing way, can you think of ways in which this could be improved?

Experiential content

You will recall that experiential content refers to the *topics, themes, situations, settings,* and so on which provide a *context* for the linguistic content. The selection of experiential content is one task where there is potential for negotiation between learners and teachers.

☐ Task 6

Aim

To explore the possibility of **basing the selection of content on the interests of the learners.**

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Resources

A content survey from.

Procedure

Construct a content survey form (see overleaf) containing a range of topics of interest and relevance to your students, for which you have resources, and which you are prepared to teach.

Indicate which of the following topics you would like to study by placing a circle around the appropriate number. (1 = 'I would not like to study this topic at all'; 5 = 'I would like to study this topic very much'.)	
1. Summer holidays in England	1 2 3 4 5
2. Wedding invitations	1 2 3 4 5
3. Bob Dylan	1 2 3 4 5
4. Bus and train timetables	1 2 3 4 5
5. Describing a house	1 2 3 4 5
6. Camera-operating instructions	1 2 3 4 5
7. The Olympic Games	1 2 3 4 5
8. Stamp-dispensing machines	1 2 3 4 5
9. Ernest Hemingway	1 2 3 4 5
10. Recipe – making hamburgers	1 2 3 4 5
11. Apollo moon landing	1 2 3 4 5
12. Cassette player – how to use	1 2 3 4 5
13. Comparing cars	1 2 3 4 5
14. Job advertisements	1 2 3 4 5
15. Motorcycles	1 2 3 4 5
16. Road accident report	1 2 3 4 5
17. The story of tea	1 2 3 4 5

Administer the survey to your students, total the results, and rank the topics from most to least popular.

Discuss the results with your students.

Evaluation

What sort of consensus was there among the students?

Were you surprised by any of the results?

In what ways might you use the information you obtained to modify the syllabus you are currently using?

☐ **Task 7**

Aim

To explore the problem of grading experiential content.

Resources

The survey form and results of the activity in Task 6.

Procedure

It is not immediately apparent how topics such as those listed in the sample survey form can be graded.

Make a list of those criteria which could be used to grade and sequence the experiential content.

2.5 Discussion questions and activities

1. How are different proficiency levels characterized and distinguished in a course or program you are familiar with?

2. Compare two or more texbooks for the same area (e.g., writing, speaking, listening) and for learners of the same level. How similar are the syllabuses in each book? Examine the teacher's books for each course. What justification do the authors of each book provide for the kind of syllabus they employ?

3. Choose three different approaches to syllabus design that are possible for the following types of courses and consider the advantages and limitations of each approach :

   a reading course

   a speaking course

   a writing course

4. Examine three different textbooks in a particular skill area (e.g., reading skills, writing). What approach to the selection and sequencing of content does each book adopt?

5. Do you think that grammar is a relevant component of a language course? If so, for what kind of courses? What would the role of grammar be in such a course? How would the choice of grammatical content be determined?

6. Select two or three related functions from the Threshold Level syllabus (see Model 4) and consider the language that would be needed to teach these functions to lower-intermediate learners in speaking course. What decisions are involved in selecting the language realizations (or exponents) for functions in a functional syllabus?

7. Consider the design of a language course for airline employees working at the check-in counter at an airport. Suggest examples of the following :

    - the transactions they engage in

    - the skills or behaviors involved in each transaction

    - the kinds of oral and written texts that are produced

    - the linguistic features of the texts.

8. How is a situational syllabus related to other syllabus options discussed in this unit?

    Plan a topic-based 4-hour unit of work in a course for a group of learners you are familiar with (or for intermediate-level ESL students in a general English class). Describe how the unit would do the following :

    - integrate different language skills

    - develop grammar from content

9. Compare two units from two course books that are designed for the same area and level. What unit structure does each book employ? How effective is the unit structure for each book?

10. Examine the skills listed in Model 5. How would you define "skills" based on the exami;es given in the syllabus?

11. Give an example of pedagogical tasks and real-world tasks that could be used in designing the following :

    a reading course

    a listening course

12. Examine a few units from textbooks prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and H. S. Council or any other board and find examples of coherence with syllabus specification.

মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

ভারতের একটা *mission* আছে, একটা গৌরবময় ভবিষ্যৎ আছে, সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী আমরাই। নূতন ভারতের মুক্তির ইতিহাস আমরাই রচনা করছি এবং করব। এই বিশ্বাস আছে বলেই আমরা সব দুঃখ কষ্ট সহ্য করতে পারি, অন্ধকারময় বর্তমানকে অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের কঠিন আঘাতে ধূলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

— সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support.

— Subhas Chandra Bose

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