People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mentouri Brothers University/ Constantine1

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language

A Course in Educational Systems

For Second Year Master Students / Foreign Language Didactics

Semester Three

Designed by: Dr Fatima-Zohra SEMAKDJI

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General Course Information

- **Course title:** Educational Systems (ES)
- **Target audience:** Second year Master students of English majoring in "Foreign Language Didactics"
- **Coefficient:** 02
- **Credits:** 05
- **Average teaching hours:** Approximately 42 hours (14 weeks), over only one semester (S3 / a semestrial course)
- **Number of sessions per week:** 02 sessions, 90 minutes each
- **Course delivery modality:** Lecture-Workshop ("Cours-TD")
- **Evaluation modality:** It is twofold:
  - ✓ **Formative (continuous):** through a series of regular weekly working sessions (workshops / TD) and students' oral/written productions (See the ***assignments / tasks*** given at the end of every chapter).
  - ✓ **Summative:** through a ***final writing-based examination*** (See Appendix 02 and Appendix 03: Final Examination Models).

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General Introduction

An educational system is a large and multifaceted organization which involves the coordination of many components: personnel, students, parents, curriculum, and learning materials directed to a common purpose. None of the factors involved in the system is static. The size of the child population may grow or shrink, and ideas on educational goals or curriculum may change. The preparation of curricula, syllabuses, pedagogical materials and the training of language teachers cannot be done at short notice. A combination of language program and educational planning can properly be applied to language teaching.

Language pedagogy is a complex undertaking. It is an enterprise that is shaped by views of the nature of language, of teaching and learning a language specifically, of teaching and learning in general, and by the sociocultural settings in which the enterprise takes place. Applied linguistics has contributed to research that has helped to shape such views and promote understanding of the diversity and commonalities of the settings.

Description of the Course

"Educational Systems" is a **semestrial** course designed for *second year Master* students of English majoring in "Foreign Language Didactics". This course has been introduced recently into the curriculum, specifically in the academic year **2017-2018** at the Department of Letters and English Language, Mentouri Brothers University/ Constantine1 (See Appendix 01: "Procès Verbal", an official descriptive account of the introduced course in terms of *objectives*, *prior knowledge*, *contents* and *evaluation* modality. Such descriptive account was produced by the postgraduate staff of professors in charge of the speciality of "Foreign Language Didactics" during the academic year 2017-2018).

The present course seeks to initially build up students' awareness of the educational process in general, equip them with the necessary key knowledge of educational systems (such as theories, assumptions, elements, phases and various practices), and eventually help them demonstrate an ability to put such knowledge into practice. The course is made up of six chapters to be covered in **Semester Three** (it is a semestrial course), over a period of approximately 12 to 14 weeks. The course is delivered twice a week in **two sessions**, each lasts for 90 minutes (a total of approximately 36 to 42 hours). The two sessions are managed in the form of **lecture-workshop** ("Cours-TD"), and are delivered in the form of teacher-student interaction.

Through a **series of assignments** or **tasks** carried out during the semester as part of **formative assessment** of the progress achieved in teaching/ learning, students' analytical skills, class discussion, critical thinking and problem solving are enhanced (See the assignments / tasks given to the students at the end of *every* chapter). At the end of the five chapters, a number of **students' presentations** are done (See Chapter Six) with the purpose of checking whether,

and to what extent, the students can demonstrate an ability to use the knowledge acquired in the lectures through working on **realistic models** of what they have studied (curriculum, course, syllabus and textbook models). At the end of the course, a **final writing-based examination** is arranged for the students as part of **summative assessment** (See Appendix 02 and Appendix 03: two models of examination that students had in the previous years).

As regards the structure of the course, it is organized into **six chapters**, namely Introduction into Education, Curriculum Development, Course Design, Syllabus Design, Textbook in the Language Classroom, and last, Students' Presentations.

❖ **Chapter One: Introduction into Education**

It draws a broad definition of the term *education*, describes its philosophies and casts light on the various aspects of its development: the spiritual, moral, social and cultural ones.

❖ **Chapter Two: Curriculum Development**

It tackles key concepts in the educational system, namely *curriculum* and *curriculum development*/ *design*. It also identifies the types as well as the elements involved in the development of a language curriculum.

❖ **Chapter Three: Course Design**

It is devoted to course design, focusing on its constituents and the three stages it goes through: planning, development and evaluation in its two forms: formative and summative. The processes involved in every stage of course design are equally described.

❖ **Chapter Four: Syllabus Design**

It deals with the basic notions of syllabus, its components and properties, identifies the types of syllabus and puts forward some views on this pedagogical material source. In addition, it sheds a great deal of light on the three phases of

syllabus design: the preliminary, development and review phase, and emphasizes teacher roles during such processes/phases.

❖ **Chapter Five: Textbook in the Language Classroom**

It highlights the significance of using textbooks in the language classroom as well as some reservations about the use of such pedagogical instrument. It also provides insight into how evaluation of textbooks is undertaken, with a special focus on a number of evaluation criteria, models and content selection.

❖ **Chapter Six: Students' Presentations**

This final chapter provides an opportunity to check whether the students can demonstrate an ability to use the knowledge acquired in the lectures (the previous five chapters) through working on *realistic models* of what they have studied (curriculum, course, syllabus and textbook models). The chapter presents the instructions for students' presentations, describes the procedure and methodology, and finally, highlights the evaluation criteria on which the students' presentations can be assessed.

Objectives of the Course

In this course, you are expected to be able to:

- ❖ develop an awareness of what education is in its broad sense as well as its various aspects of development;
- ❖ build up an understanding of what makes an educational system in terms of constituents;
- ❖ develop an understanding of key principles, values, theories and frameworks which the systems of education are based on;
- ❖ be acquainted with basic concepts in the educational system, namely *education*, *curriculum*, *course*, *syllabus design*/ *development* and *textbook selection* and *evaluation*;
- ❖ develop an understanding of what makes an educational system in terms of decision- making (planning), practices (implementation) and reviewing (evaluation); end eventually,
- ❖ demonstrate an ability to use the knowledge acquired in the lectures through the ***students' presentations***, done at the end of the five chapters.

Prior Knowledge: The Pre-test

1. Pre-requisites:

Students need to have been acquainted with the basic notions, principles and practices in methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The latter is delivered to the students as a course, namely **TEFL**, in the two previous years: third year "Licence" and first year Master.

2. The Student Questionnaire:

A student questionnaire is done in the first session (contact session). The questionnaire can be summed up in two brief steps: self-introduction followed by two questions:

- The first question is intended to evaluate the students' speaking ability and readiness to speak out in the classroom:
  "What is your general impression about your experience as a student of English?"

- The second question is *writing-based* and is meant to get insight into the students' expectations of what to study in this course (Educational Systems):
  "What do you expect to learn in this module?"

3. The Pre-test

- Explain with adequate illustration what makes the teaching process effective.

3.1 Guidelines / Instructions for the Pre-test

- ❖ An essay is required: the students select three salient aspects and discuss them in three developmental paragraphs.

- ❖ The three selected aspects can be related to:
  - The planning phase / decision- making (such as decisions on approaches, methods and techniques of teaching);
  - The implementation phase / teaching practices (such as classroom management and teaching activities/tools);
  - The evaluation phase (such as types of testing and criteria of sound tests); or
  - Administrative factors (such as orientation or allocation of students to groups, teaching/ learning time and teaching/ learning equipment).

- ❖ Illustration of the three discussed aspects is required.

3.2 Evaluation of the Pre-test

The evaluation of the pre-test is carried out in terms of three criteria:

- ✓ The students' use of information: to what extent the content is informative and the information used is correct;
- ✓ The students' organisation of the discussion: to what extent the content is well presented; and
- ✓ The students' writing ability: to what extent the writing techniques and language forms and style are used accurately and appropriately.

Chapter One:

Introduction into Education

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you are expected to be able to:

- ✓ Draw a broad definition for the term *education*;
- ✓ Get insight into the theoretical framework of education, most notably its major philosophies; and last,
- ✓ Develop an awareness of the various aspects or forms of development that education often results is.

Introduction

Education is the network of social relationships in and outside the classroom and a preparation for life. The latter involves the capacity to earn a living, to enrich one's life through enjoyment of the cultural heritage and of one's inner resources, to function efficiently and constructively as a member of society and a citizen of the country. Education also involves mastery of the tools of learning, such as reading, writing and speaking properly, mastery of our relationship with our inner self, our neighbors and the universe.

1.1 Education as a Narrow and Broad Concept

Education is interpreted into two senses: narrow and broad. In a narrow sense, education is limited to the classroom. It is a planned, organized and formalised process. It is imparted at a particular place (schools or universities) and at a definite time, with a formal curriculum. However, in a broad sense, education is not only related to teaching/ learning in a classroom, but extends to learning from birth to death. Education, in a broad sense, is used for the purpose of teaching individuals the necessary characteristics which will enable them to successfully adapt in society as efficient members (Harris & Chrispeels 2006).

It is commonly held that the concept of education derives from the Latin *education* (to educate = *"educare")* which refers, in general, to the process of acquiring knowledge, especially during childhood and adolescence. On the other hand, *to educate* is to impart knowledge or to develop from a potential. Manheim & Stewart (1962: 15) continue to explain that from a much broader perspective, it is "the bringing-up of children physically and mentally; it is a word of such a wide reference that at times it is, of necessity, vague." For example, it is concerned with all the qualities which are acquired through individual instruction and social training. Education has for its aims not merely to supply a certain amount of knowledge, but also to modify the nature of the learner. It is noticeable that in the history of the institution of school, we have been moving steadily away from the narrower concept of school instruction, of training in specific knowledge or techniques, towards the notion of the school and other educational institutions as part of an educative society. This is to be detected in the shift and enrichment of the word "education" itself.

Education is the planful activity of grown-ups to shape the mind of younger generation. One personality acts upon another in order to modify the development of the other (Hodges 1952, cited in Lakehal-Ayat 2008). In other words, the process is not only conscious, but also deliberate, for the educator has the clearly realized intention of shaping and modifying the development of the learner. There are two means by which this process operates:

- first, by the presentation of certain kinds of knowledge (in its various forms), selected and ordered by the educator, and
- second, through the direct and indirect relationship of the two personalities. It is of the greatest importance psychologically to recognize that only at a relatively late stage, and not always then, can a learner

separate out the ideas that are presented to him/her from his/her response to the personality of the teacher who is presenting them.

Education exhibits the influence of a person on another, in which the older generation tends to prepare the younger generation in terms of ideas, knowledge and attitudes. In the foreground of this activity stands the school as an institution in which there is the purpose of presenting knowledge deliberately and on the basis of a consciously planned programme. Only relatively recently, the ideas of emotional factors in learning have taken some importance in educational thought.

From a sociological point of view, according to Manheim & Stewart (1962), education represents the organisation of forces and influences that are to lead to a higher standard of behaviour and values. Education can only arise out of a social institution. If the need for education arises out of people living together, one of its aims in socio-psychological thought is to enable them to live together more successfully in the widest senses of these terms. The influence which one person has upon another is only one form which the educational process may take. It is true that this influence may be very complex, subtle and lasting. One has only to consider the importance which is attached to infantile experience as a factor in the form taken by adult personality to see one very significant aspect of this influence, or again, the lasting effect made upon us through having met and worked with a sympathetic and cultured teacher.

There are other forms of education which have to be taken into account. While we know that school is only one among the multi-faceted educational environments in which a child grows up, we have now to take more cognizance of the fact that in the school not only the teacher is important but also the nature of the organization to be found there, the kind of discipline which prevails, and

the environment in which it is set. In the mainstream of sociological studies, Young (1971: 24) gives another definition: “Education is not a product like cars and bread, but a selection and organization from the available knowledge at a particular time which involves conscious or unconscious choices.” Bailyn (1960: 14) called for a complete redefinition of education from the narrow focus on schools, policy, and institutions to include “the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across generations.” For Cremin (1976), education as a historical (and contemporary) phenomenon was only partly occurring in schools, but also in social and cultural agencies. He defines education as “any deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcome to that effort” (p. viii).

1.2 Philosophies of Education

The twentieth century has seen the conflict between two main paradigms employed in researching educational problems. The one is modelled on the ***natural sciences*** with an emphasis on ***empirical*** quantifiable observations which lend themselves to analyses by means of mathematical tools. Within such a paradigm, the task of research is to explain, i.e. to establish causal relationships. The other paradigm is derived from the ***humanities*** with an emphasis on holistic ***qualitative*** information and interpretive approaches. The two paradigms developed historically as follows (Husèn 1997).

1.2.1 The Scientific Paradigm

By the mid-nineteenth century, when ***Auguste Comte*** developed positivism in sociology and ***John Stuart Mill*** empiricism in psychology, there was a major breakthrough in the natural sciences at the universities with the development of experiments and hypothesis testing. They, therefore, came to serve as models, and their prevailing paradigm was taken over by social

scientists, particularly in the ***Anglo-Saxon countries***. However, Husèn (1997) goes on to explain, on the European continent, there was another tradition from German idealism and Hegelianism (Absolute idealism). The Galilean, mechanistic conception became the dominant one, particularly with mathematical physics as the methodological ideal. Positivism was characterized by methodological monism. Philosophers at the University of Vienna, such as **Neurath**, referred to as the 'Vienna Circle', developed what is called "Neopositivism" or *logical empiricism*. Around 1950, they founded a series of publications devoted to the study of what they called "a unified science". Positivism saw the main task for the social sciences as being the making of causal explanations and the prediction of future behaviour. Neopositivism emanated from the strong influence of analytical philosophy, represented at the beginning of the 20th century by ***Russell*** and ***Whitehead*** in their major work "*Principio Mathematica*" in 1910.

1.2.2 The Humanistic Paradigm

Husèn (1997:17-18) identifies three major strands for the other main paradigm in educational research (the humanistic one). The Continental idealism, the first strand, of the early 19th century has been introduced. Around the turn of the century, it had a dominant influence with philosophers such as **Wilhelm Dilthey**, who in the 1890s published a classical treatise in which he distinguished between *Verstehen* (to understand) and *Erklären* (to explain). Dilthey strongly rejected using a model formed exclusively from the natural sciences and instead proposed developing a separate model for the human sciences. His argument centered around the idea that in the natural sciences, we seek to *explain* phenomena in terms of cause and effect, or the general and the particular; in contrast, in the human sciences, we seek to *understand* in terms of the relations of the part and the whole. He maintained that the humanities had their own logic of research. He also distinguished two kinds of psychology, the

one which attempted to generalize and predict by means of experimental methods, and the one that tried to understand the unique individual in his/her entire, concrete setting. Another personality was the French ***Henri Bergson*** who asserted that the intellect was unable to grasp the living reality which could only be approached by means of *intuition.*

A second strand was represented by the phenomenological philosophy developed by ***Edmund Husserl*** in Germany. It emphasized the importance of taking a widened perspective and of trying to "get to the roots" of human activity. The phenomenological approach is holistic: it tries by means of empathy to understand the motives behind human reactions by widening the perspective and trying to understand human beings as individuals in their entirety and in their proper context It also tries to avoid the fragmentation caused by the positivistic and experimental approach that takes out a small slice which it subjects to closer scrutiny.

The third strand in the humanistic paradigm consists of the critical philosophy, principally the one of the ***Frankfurt School*** which developed with a certain amount of neo-Marxism. ***Marx*** himself would probably have felt rather ambivalent in an encounter between the two main philosophies. On the one hand, he felt attracted to the Positivism the Behaviourist Approach (Pavlov). On the other hand, Marx also belonged to the German philosophical tradition.

The paradigm determines how a problem is formulated and methodologically tackled. According to the traditional positivist conception, both a micro and a macro analysis of what is going on in the classroom should be available. Husèn (1997) provides an example for the micro analysis of either the pupils, who might be neurotic, or the teacher, who might be ill-prepared for

his/her job. The other conception, according to her, is a macro analysis which leads to the concern of the society in general.

1.3 Aspects of Education

Education plays a vital role in any society. It is a necessity from a simple society to modern complex society. The function of education is multidimensional within the school system and outside it. Under optimal circumstances, education results in various aspects or forms of development: *spiritual, moral, social* and *cultural* (Bigger & Brown 2013).

1.3.1 The Spiritual Aspect

Spiritual, also referred to as *personal*, development is the development of the non-material aspects of life, focusing on personal insight, meaning, purpose and general perspective on life. Learners should develop the courage and ability to persevere overcoming any inner resistance when approaching obstacles. They must develop the desire to use and extend what they learn. Student's perspective may, or may not be informed by a religious belief. Education plays an important role in the development of personality. The object of education is to awaken and develop in the child those physical, intellectual and moral states which are required of him both by his society as a whole and by the milieu for which he is specially designed. Education helps the development of the qualities of an individual, temperament and character.

1.3.2 The Moral Aspect

Moral development involves supporting students to make considered choices about their behavior and the values that provide a framework for how they choose to live. Moral development is also learning about society's values:

understanding the reasons for them, how they are derived and change, and how disagreements are resolved. Students must consider the consequences of personal moral decisions on the wider community, local and global, and on the environment and future generations.

1.3.3 The Social Aspect

Social development helps students to work effectively together, developing the interpersonal skills required to relate positively with their peers and people of all ages. Students must also understand how to participate productively in a diverse society and learn how to effectively engage with social institutions and processes. They should understand that a person may have different roles and responsibilities within a society; for example, a parent, employer or a citizen. Skills and values learned in education are directly related to the way to which the economy and the occupational structure operate. Education trains the individuals in skills that are required by the economy. In modern planned economy, the output of skilled people must be consciously geared to the economic and social priorities of the society. This explains the vital role of education in social development.

1.3.4 The Cultural Aspect

Cultural development helps students to understand, feel comfortable with, value and appreciate the potential enrichment of cultural diversity. They should challenge discrimination, whether based on cultural or racial difference. Students should also experience cultural traditions embedded in arts, crafts, language, literature, theatre, songs, music, folklore dance, sport and science. Students should develop an appreciation of beauty, both in experiencing artistic expression and exploring their own creative skills.

Conclusion

Educational institutions are concerned with more than the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge itself tends to be problematic, constantly revised in the light of new data and perspectives. Learners need certain skills to understand the issues and develop a breadth of vision to ask "*what*" and "*why*". They need to be able to reflect on the meaning and significance of knowledge- the significance for one's understanding of themselves, potential, moral system, relationships, responsibilities and cultural identity.

Education is a continuous process; it begins at birth and ends with death. It is much more than learning/ teaching in formal institutions such as schools or universities. The individual goes on reconstructing their experiences throughout their whole life. Instruction ends in the classroom, but education ends only with life.

❖ **Assignments:**

Task 1:

1. In your point of view, what is education? Is it:

a. the process of imparting and acquiring general knowledge and developing the skills of reasoning and judgment?

b. the act of imparting and acquiring specific knowledge, as for a profession?

c. the preparation of oneself or others intellectually for mature life?

d. a degree, level or form of schooling such as a university education?

e. the outcome produced by instruction, training or studying in a certain institution?

f. the science or practice of teaching, i.e. pedagogy?

g. Another matter? Specify it!

2. Whatever option or a combination of options you choose, justify your answers.

Task 2:

"Education is not an easy process to acquire or impart. It involves mastery of the tools of learning (such as reading, writing and reasoning), mastery of our relationship with our inner self, with each other and with the universe."

1. Discuss this statement with reference to the broad sense of education.

2. Provide examples of your own.

Task 3:

Under optimal circumstances, education often results in various forms of development.

1. What are these forms about?

2. Are they related? How?

3. Illustrate every form of development.

List of References Used in Chapter One

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Chapter Two:

Curriculum Development

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you are expected to be able to:

- ✓ Identify basic concepts in education, namely "curriculum" and "curriculum development/ design";
- ✓ Identify the salient types of curriculum; and
- ✓ Build up an understanding of the various elements which constitute a language curriculum.

Introduction

Successful language programs depend upon the use of educational approaches. This often involves the adoption of what has come to be known as the *systematic* development of language curriculum, i.e. a curriculum development approach that views language teaching and program development as a dynamic system of interrelated elements. The systematic approach focuses on the planning, implementation and evaluation of language teaching, and has been widely adopted in many areas of the educational field.

2.1 Definition of Curriculum

Issues of curriculum and curriculum change have been of interest to educators, philosophers, and social critics. Formal studies on curriculum issues go back to 1918 when Bobbitt published *The Curriculum* (Pratt & Short 1994). Curriculum has evolved much from that period, often being at the centre of polemics (the practice of making arguments or controversies) surrounding its political debate, both inside and outside the school community. Being as such, many definitions have been proposed. Pratt & Short (1994: 1320) define it as "a plan for a sustained process of teaching and learning." Allwright (1981: 09) relates curriculum to the "fostering of learning processes". Clarke (1989: 133-134) gives a rather broader definition including the learner's *cognitive,*

emotional, and *pragmatic* needs. Because of widespread reliance on textbooks as a basic teaching resource, textbooks often constitute the *"de facto"* content of the curriculum (i.e. exercising power *as if* legally constituted or authorized, or being in effect though not formally recognized), hence giving publishers a powerful role in curriculum development.

Brown (1995) points out that a sequence of potential experiences is set up in an educational institution for the purpose of disciplining learners in certain ways of thinking and acting. This set of experiences is usually referred to as a *curriculum.* The latter consists of what teachers and learners attend to together, recognize as significant goals to achieve and contents to study, as well as the manner in which such aspects are organized in relationship to one another, the other elements in the immediate educational situation, as well as time and space.

2.2 Definition of Curriculum Development / Design

The terms *curriculum development* and *curriculum design* are often used interchangeably to refer to the processes and decisions involved in specifying a curriculum plan. Pratt & Short (1994) identify the aspects usually regarded as important in the process of curriculum development: overall aims of the instruction, the characteristics of the learners, assessment of learning, instructional content and strategies, and instructional resources.

Lewy (1977, cited in Van Bruggen 1994: 1274) suggests a six-phase curriculum development sequence:

- Decision about general aims and the school structure;
- Development work, including definition of learning objectives, writing program outlines, selecting topics for instruction, preparing instructional materials;

- Monitoring teaching in “try-out” classes, observing classroom processes, and, if necessary, modifying materials;
- Field trial: determining optimal conditions for the program;
- Implementation: in-service training for teachers, links with supervisors, the examination system and pre-service teacher training institutions; and
- Quality control: examining the quality of implemental curricula and a continual monitoring of the program.

2.3 Types of Curriculum

The primary focus of a curriculum is on *what* is to be taught and *when*, leaving to the teaching profession decisions as to *how* this should be done. In practice, however, there is no clear distinction between curriculum content and methodology, in that how a topic is taught often determines what is taught. For this reason, there is a need to distinguish the official or planned curriculum, the formally approved program of study, from the “***de facto”*** (or ***hidden***) curriculum, i.e. the "lessons" that are actually learned, not necessarily the formal planned ones (Nunan 1988).

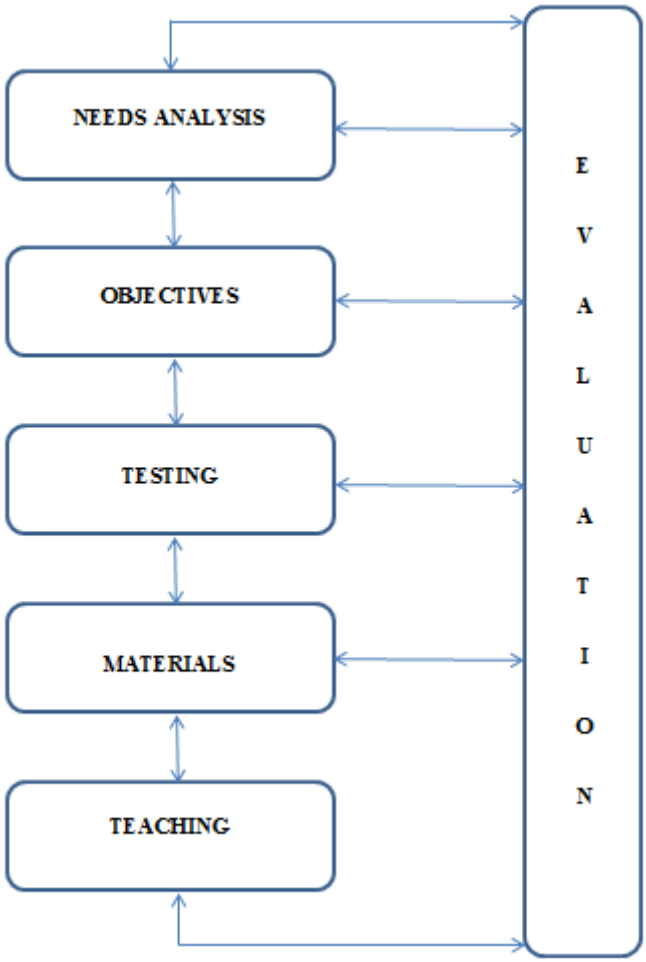
Defining the term *curriculum* is problematic, but the working definition adopted by Marsh and Willis (1995) seems to be more practical. According to them, a curriculum is “an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school” (p.10). They distinguish between three types of curriculum:

- the ***planned*** (or intended) curriculum, which is the product of design and development by various agencies, such as educational bureaus at the State level or educational publishers;
- the ***enacted*** curriculum, which refers to the educational content and activities that are provided in a classroom; and

- the ***experienced*** curriculum, which is what individual learners actually gain from the process.

2.4 Elements of Language Curriculum Development

A curriculum is composed of certain specific elements. From Brown's (1995) perspective, a curriculum usually contains a general statement of ***goals and specific objectives*** based on learners' ***needs***. Besides, it indicates a certain selection and organization of ***contents/ materials***, as well as the appropriate ***methodology*** and ***testing tools*** required to achieve the intended goals/objectives. A curriculum also requires an overall ***program evaluation*** of the entire outcomes, as illustrated in the following figure.



Systematic Approach to Designing and Maintaining Language Curriculum (Brown 1995: 20)

2.4.1 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis in language programs is often viewed simply as identification of the language forms or skills that the student will need to use in the target language when they are required to understand and produce the language. The analytical focus is on the learners, and their needs are viewed in linguistic terms. Students have needs and concerns other than linguistic ones. Thus, the learner's human needs must also be acknowledged alongside their purely language-related ones. This in turn means that the definition of needs analysis should be broadened to include this wider view of needs. Needs analysis can be defined as the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to satisfy the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institutions involved in the learning situation.

2.4.2 Goals and Objectives

A logical outcome of determining the needs of a group of language students is the specification of ***goals***: general statements about what must be accomplished in order to attain and satisfy students' needs. ***Objectives***, on the other hand, are precise statements about what content or skills the students must master in order to attain a particular goal. The specification of objectives and the process of thinking through what is involved in achieving the program goals will lead to analyzing, synthesizing and clarifying the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the students' language needs. Since the difference between goals and objectives has to do with the level of specificity, the dividing line between the two is not always clear. Nonetheless, the distinction will prove useful in planning and maintaining language programs. Any discussion in a program about how to meet and satisfy students' language needs can only be as clear and precise as the objectives that result. Objectives come in many forms and may differ in degree of specificity, even within a given program primarily

because they can serve different students' needs that themselves vary in level of specificity.

2.4.3 Language Testing

The next logical step in curriculum development is the development of tests based on a program's goals and objectives. The goals and objectives of a program may require extensive test development for widely different purposes within a program; for example, language proficiency testing, diagnostic testing and achievement testing, all of which can be very complex to develop. Investigating resources, time and energy for the development of a sound testing program is necessary and worthwhile in the long run. By learning as much as possible about needs and objectives early in the process, planners can minimize waste in the crucial, and often expensive, materials development stage that follows. Sound tests can be used to unify a curriculum and give it a sense of cohesion, purpose and control. Tests can be used to drive a program by shaping the expectations of the students and their teachers.

2.4.4 Materials Development

With at least preliminary sets of needs analyses, objectives and tests in hand, curriculum planners can be ready to start dealing rationally with the problem of materials. It is relatively easy to adopt, develop or adapt materials for a program that is well defined in terms of needs analyses, objectives and tests. The decision as to which strategy to use (adopt, develop or adapt) in putting materials in place is itself made easier, especially if we consider the following questions:

- Can already existing materials be adopted to fulfill the needs of the students?
- If there are no ready-made materials available, should they be created from scratch?

- Should existing materials be adapted to meet the students' needs and the program's objectives?
- If adaptation must take place, will the process be a minor or major undertaking?

Having clear-cut needs analyses, objectives and tests will be of considerable help to planners in the materials development process. Generally speaking, decisions regarding the approaches, methods, techniques and syllabuses should better be left up to the individuals (teachers) who are on site and know the situation best (the level of their students, time limits, etc.).

2.4.5 Language Teaching

The teachers and students should be aware of what the objectives for a given course are and how the testing will be conducted at the end of the course. To those ends, teachers need support and also need to be involved in the process of curriculum development and revision. Each teacher can be helped by the fact that other teachers, administrators and students are drawn into defining students' needs and course objectives. This process has traditionally fallen solely on the teacher's shoulders. Teachers have also been responsible for selecting or developing course tests and materials.

Given a reasonably high level of program support, the teacher can concentrate on the most effective means for teaching the courses at hand. The teacher, and only the teacher, should make judgments about the particular students in a given class. These judgments can be very important when the teacher deals with the cognitive, affective and personal variables that will be interacting for the particular students at a particular time to form the unique characteristics of a given class. By sorting through all of this complexity, whether consciously or not, and modifying the approaches, methods, techniques and syllabuses in general, the teacher can adapt and maximize the learning of the

class as a whole, as well as the learning of most of its individual members. These are such demanding tasks that teachers should not be expected to do on their own (needs analyses, setting objectives, creating tasks, adopting, developing and adapting materials). Teachers must be supported in their profession (by mainly curriculum designers) to whatever degree that is possible.

2.4.6 Program Evaluation

Evaluation might be defined as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum and to assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved" (Brown 1995: 24). Such a definition would be very similar to that given earlier for needs analysis. Indeed, the evaluation process should be a sort of ongoing needs assessment, but one based on considerably more and better information. A needs analysis is typically conducted in the initial stages of curriculum development and must rely on interview procedures, questionnaires, linguistic analyses (tests), and a good deal of professional judgment. Evaluation, on the other hand, can take advantage of all the above information and tools to assess the effectiveness of a program, but can also utilize all the information gathered in the processes of (a) developing objectives; (b) writing and using tests; (c) adopting, developing or adapting materials; and (d) teaching.

Program evaluation, then, might be defined as the "ongoing process of information gathering, analysis and synthesis, the entire purpose of which is to constantly ***improve*** each element of a curriculum on the basis of what is known about all the other elements, separately as well as collectively" (Brown 1995: 24). Such a continuing process of evaluation makes possible the assessment of the quality of a curriculum once it is put in place as well as the maintenance of that curriculum on an ongoing basis. Curriculum that is viewed as a *product* is inflexible once finished. Curriculum that is viewed as a *process* can change and adapt to new conditions, whether these conditions are new types of students,

changes in language theory, new political exigencies within the institution or something else.

According to Bloom et al. (1956), evaluation is the highest, most complex, and valuable level of learning. Evaluation is not carried out only to make value judgments, but also to draw conclusions and learn lessons which may inform future action. Curriculum evaluation, for example, might involve examining the impact of the curriculum on student performance, and readjusting the curriculum accordingly. It might also involve assessing the process by which the curriculum was developed, the quality of the product itself without measuring its impact, or the use of the product with respect to various purposes. A curriculum evaluation is undertaken in order to:

- Examine its impact on students' results, public satisfaction, employment opportunities, economic development, etc. and to take action accordingly;
- Update its content and design according to recent social, technological, economic or scientific changes;
- Update its content and design according to recent advances in educational research and educational paradigms;
- Re-assess learning objectives, for example to develop professional learning skills;
- Attract funding;
- Make international comparisons; and
- Report back to a donor.

(Bloom 1956)

In regard to the Algerian context, for example, an evaluation of the educational system was undertaken by a national commission in 2001. It is maintained that the grounds of the evaluation are the first four points developed earlier (in the previous paragraph). The former system, which lasted more than

twenty years, had to be updated and eventually changed. Of the three last points (listed in the previous paragraph), the comparison to international standards is the most plausible, given the fact that the financial aspects come within the Ministry of Education (Lakehal-Ayat 2008).

Conclusion

Often, there are difficulties in bridging the gap between theoretical and normative descriptions of curriculum development on the one hand, and practice, on the other. There is usually lack of sufficient time, financial and human resources. The pressure on curriculum centers to produce curricula quickly and inexpensively for the benefit of educational institutions and governments is often considerable.

❖ Assignments:

"Developing a language curriculum is a multidimensional process that requires taking into account a number of decisions."

1. Discuss this statement referring to the *framework* of curriculum development as well as its major *constituents.*

2. Provide illustration for every constituent.

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Chapter Three:

Course Design

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you are expected to:

- ✓ Identify the key constituents of a language course;
- ✓ Develop an awareness of what makes a course in terms of phases: the planning, development and evaluation phases; and
- ✓ Get insight into the processes involved in every stage (of the three) of course design.

Introduction

Course planning is one of the required skills that a teacher needs to develop and keep working on. It involves being able to imagine or anticipate what is going to happen in the classroom, and thus make choices based on this anticipated experience. The process of course design, in general, involves the ability to zoom out, i.e. to see the bigger picture and figure out how a lesson of an hour or two fits into a hundred-hour course. It equally involves the ability to zoom in by working out the techniques and skills of how a fifteen-minute activity will work best.

3.1 Definition of a Course

A course can be roughly defined as a set of classes or a plan of study on a particular subject, usually leading to an exam or qualification at the end of it (Cambridge dictionary). Richards (2001) states that course design is the process and methodology of creating a quality learning environment and experiences for students studying a specific subject matter (besides other subject matters included in the curriculum). Course design involves structured development or selection of instructional materials, including syllabus and textbook(s), approaches, methods and techniques (such as activities), as well as considering the time and space allocated for teaching/learning that particular course.

Using research-based teaching/ learning frameworks, teachers can develop courses aligned with student learning outcomes. It is key to determine from the start the intended learning outcomes, contents and materials in general, including syllabus design and textbook selection/use, instructional methodology as well as assessment required to effectively teach a certain course.

3.2 Course Planning

A number of various steps or levels of planning are involved in course design based on the goals and objectives that have been established for a language programme/curriculum. The major two steps to consider when setting grounds for a course are describing the course rationale and describing the entry and exit level (Richards 2001).

3.2.1 Describing the Course Rationale

A starting point in course design is a description of the course rationale. This is a brief written description of the *reasons* and *nature* of the course. The course rationale seeks to answer the following questions:

- Who is this course for? (i.e. the audience)
- What is the course designed to achieve? (i.e. the objectives)
- What kind of teaching and learning will take place in the course?

The course rationale answers these questions by describing the beliefs, values and goals/objectives that underlie the course. It is usually a two- or three paragraph statement that has been developed by those involved in planning and teaching a course and that serves to provide the justification for the type of teaching and learning that will take place in the course. It provides a concise statement of the course philosophy for anyone who may need such information,

including learners and teachers. Developing a rationale also helps provide focus and direction to some of the deliberations involved in course planning. The rationale, thus, serves the purposes of:

- Guiding the planning of the various components of the course;
- Emphasizing the kinds of teaching and learning the course should exemplify; and
- Providing a check on the consistency of the various course components in terms of the course values and goals.

The following is an example of a course rationale:

"This course is designed for *working adults* who wish to improve their *communication skills* in English in order to improve their *employment prospects*. It teaches the basic communication skills needed to communicate in a variety of different work settings. The course seeks to enable participants to recognize their strengths and needs in language learning, and to give them the confidence to use English more effectively to achieve their own goals. It also seeks to develop the participants' skills in independent learning outside the classroom."

In order to develop a course rationale, the course planners need to give careful consideration to the objectives of the course, the kind of teaching and learning they want the course to exemplify, the roles of teachers and learners in the course, and the beliefs and principles the course will reflect.

3.2.2 Describing the Entry and Exit level

In order to plan a language course, it is necessary to determine the level of the learners at the start of the course and the level they are expected to reach at the end of the course. Language programs and commercial materials typically distinguish between elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels, but these

categories are very broad for the kind of detailed planning that course and material development involves. For such purposes, more detailed descriptions are needed of students' proficiency levels before they start a course and targeted proficiency levels at the end of it. Information may be available on students' entry level from their results on ***specially-designed tests*** (such as ***proficiency tests***). Information from such tests enables the target level of the course to be assessed and may require adjustment of the course objectives if they appear to be aimed at a "very high" or "very low" level.

An approach that has been widely used in language course planning is to identify different levels of performance or proficiency in the form of ***band levels*** or points on a ***proficiency scale***. These levels describe what a student is able to do at different stages in a language course. An example of the use of proficiency descriptions in large-scale course planning is the one used in the *Australian Migrant Education On-Arrival* course, as illustrated in the following:

"In order to ensure that a language course is coherent, and systematically moves learners along the path towards that level of proficiency they require, some overall perspective of the development path is required. This resulted in the development of the **A**ustralian **S**econd **L**anguage **P**roficiency **R**atings (ASLPR). The ASLPR defines levels of second language proficiency as nine (potentially 12) points along the path from zero to native-like proficiency. The definitions provide detailed descriptions of language behavior in all four macro-skills, and allow the course developer to perceive how a course at any level fits into the overall pattern of proficiency development" (Ingram 1982, cited in Richards 2001).

3.3 Course Development

This stage is equally based on the goals and objectives set for a language programme. There are four basic steps to be taken into a careful consideration

when developing a certain course, as highlighted by Richards (2001): developing course content, determining the scope and sequence, developing the course structure, and developing the scope and sequence plan.

3.3.1 Developing Course Content

The question of course content is a key issue in course design. Given that a course has to be developed to address a specific set of needs and to attain a given set of objectives, the question raised is "what will the content of the course look like?" Decisions on course content reflect the planners' assumptions about the nature of language, language use, language learning, what the most essential elements or units of language are, and how these can be organized as an efficient basis for foreign language learning. For example, a **writing course** could potentially be planned around any of the following types of content:

- Topics (e.g. writing about world issues, moral dilemmas, psychological matters, etc)
- Sub-skills (e.g. developing thesis statements, topic sentences, supporting ideas)
- Language use (e.g. accuracy of grammar, appropriacy of style)
- Processes (e.g. using prewriting or reviewing strategies/ steps)
- Texts (e.g. writing a business letter, a formal newspaper article)

Similarly, a **speaking course** could be organized around:

- Functions (expressing opinions, agreeing/ disagreeing, apologizing)
- Interaction skills (opening and closing conversations, turn taking)
- Topics (political, social, environmental or business topics)

The choice of a particular approach to content selection depends on subject-matter knowledge, the learners' proficiency levels, current views on second/

foreign language learning and teaching, conventional wisdom and convenience. Information gathered through a needs analysis (as explained in the previous stage of planning) contributes to the planning, then development of course content, as do additional ideas from the following sources:

- Available literature on the topic, especially on the Internet (reliable data);
- Published materials on the topic;
- Review of similar courses offered elsewhere;
- Review of tests or exams in the area;
- Analysis of students' problems;
- Consultation with teachers familiar with the topic; and
- Consultation with specialists in the area.

A list of possible topics, units, skills, and other units of course organization is generated. A teacher may suggest an idea that can fit into the course, and other teachers, on the same teaching team, add their ideas so that such ideas are compared with other sources of information until final ideas about the content of the course are agreed on. Throughout this process, the statements of objectives are continually referred to, and both course content suggestions and the objectives themselves are revised and fine-tuned as the course content is being developed. For example, a group of teachers listed the following initial ideas about what they would include in a course on *listening and speaking skills* for a group of intermediate-level learners:

- Asking questions
- Opening and closing conversations
- Expressing opinions
- Correcting misunderstandings
- Describing experiences
- Social talk (or chit-chat)

- Telephone interactive skills
- Situation-specific language, such as at a restaurant/ bank/ airport, etc.
- Describing daily routines
- Using communication strategies

These listed topics, then, have to be carefully reviewed and refined, and the questions asked about them may include the following:

- ✓ Are all the suggested topics necessary?
- ✓ Have any important topics been omitted?
- ✓ Is there sufficient time to cover them?
- ✓ Has sufficient priority been given to the most important areas?
- ✓ Has enough emphasis been put on the different aspects of the areas identified?
- ✓ Will the areas covered enable students to attain the learning outcomes?

Developing ideas for course content often takes place simultaneously with syllabus planning, because the content of a course will often depend on the type of *syllabus framework* that will be used as the basis for the course ("Types of Syllabus" will be discussed in more details in the next chapter: "Syllabus Design").

3.3.2 Determining the Scope and Sequence

Decisions on course content need to address the distribution of content throughout the course. This involves determining the scope and sequence of the course. ***Scope*** is concerned with the breadth and depth of coverage of items in the course. Two questions could be helpful:

- What range of content will be covered?
- To what extent should each topic be studied?

For example, in relation to the course on *listening and speaking skills* referred to previously, one area of potential content identified was "Describing experiences." The questions raised are: Sow much will be included in relation to this topic? and Should two, four, or sessions be devoted to it?

The ***sequencing*** of content in the course also needs to be determined. This involves deciding which content is needed early in the course, and which provides a basis for things that will be learned later. Sequencing of content may be based on the following criteria.

- **Simple to Complex:**

One of the commonest ways of sequencing material is by difficulty level. Content presented at earlier stages is expected to be simpler than later items. This is typically the case in language-based courses such as grammar content, but any type of course content can be graded in terms of difficulty. For example, in a reading course, reading texts may be simplified at the beginning of the course and unsimplified at later levels. Alternatively, simple skills such as "literal comprehension" may be required early on, and more complex skills such as "inferencing" may be taught at a later stage in the course.

- **Chronology:**

Content may be sequenced according to the order in which events occur in the real world. For example, in a writing course, the organization might be based on the sequence writers are assumed to employ when composing: (1) brainstorming; (2) drafting; (3) revising; (4) editing. In a proficiency course, skills might be sequenced according to the sequence in which they are normally acquired: (1) listening; (2) speaking; (3) reading; (4) writing.

❖ **Need:**

Content may be sequenced according to when learners are most likely to need it outside the classroom. For example, the reason for the sequencing of content in a social skills-based course is given as follows: "The topics and cross-topics in the curriculum are sequenced "in order of importance to students' lives, ease of contextualization and their relationship to other topics and cross-topics." The sequence is:

- Basic literacy skills
- Personal identification
- Money
- Shopping
- Time and dates
- Telephone
- Health
- Emergencies
- Directions
- Transportation
- Housing
- Post-office
- Banking/bills
- Social language
- Clarification

❖ **Pre-requisite Learning:**

The sequence of content may reflect what is necessary at one point as a foundation for the next step in the learning process. For example, a certain set of grammar aspects (such as tenses, prepositions and the passive) may be taught as a pre-requisite to paragraph writing. In an oral/aural production course, as

another example, the various phonological sounds and places of articulation can be taught to learners as a pre-requisite to speaking English.

- **Whole-to-Part or Part-to-Whole:**

In some cases, materials at the beginning of a course may focus on the overall structure or organization of a topic before considering the individual components that make it up. Alternatively, the course might focus on practising the "parts" before the "whole". For example, students might read short stories and react to them as whole texts before going on to consider the elements that constitute an effective short story. In a writing course, students might study first how to write paragraphs before going on to practise putting paragraphs together to produce an essay.

- **Spiral Sequencing:**

This type of sequencing course content involves the recycling of items. It is done to ensure that learners have repeated opportunities to learn them. For example, in a Grammar course, learners may learn tenses and practise using them in one lesson. Later on, when they deal with another lesson, such as the passive or conditional sentences and their types, the teacher may ask some questions about tenses to reinforce information, check if students still remember how to use the taught aspects, or even provide other opportunities to use those tenses.

3.3.3 Developing the Course Structure

The next process or step in course development involves mapping the course structure into a form and sequence that provide a suitable basis for teaching. Two aspects of this process, however, require more detailed planning: **selecting a syllabus framework** and **developing instructional blocks**. These

issues are closely related and sometimes inseparable, but also involve different kinds of decisions.

3.3.3.1 Developing a Syllabus Framework

A syllabus describes the major elements that will be used in a language course and provides the basis for its instructional focus and contents. For example, for a speaking skills course, the syllabus could be:

- **Situational**: organized around different situations and the oral skills needed in those situations; for instance, At a restaurant, At the airport, In England, etc.
- **Topical:** organized around different topics and how to talk about them in English; for instance, global warming, freedom of opinion, social relationships, etc.
- **Functional:** organized around the functions most commonly needed in speaking; for instance, apologizing, agreeing/ disagreeing, re-phrasing oneself, correcting misunderstandings, etc.
- **Task-based:** organized around different tasks or activities that the learners would carry out in English; for instance, describing something to a classmate in order to accomplish a puzzle, giving directions to a classmate so that s/he draws a map or figure based on those directions, etc.

(N.B: Types of syllabus are described and exemplified in the next chapter: Syllabus Design.)

In choosing a particular syllabus framework for a course, teachers are influenced by the following factors:

- **Knowledge and beliefs about the subject area:** a syllabus reflects ideas and beliefs about the nature of speaking, reading, writing, or listening.

- **Research and theories:** research on language use and learning as well as applied linguistics theories sometimes leads to proposals in favor of particular syllabus types.
- **Common practice:** the language teaching profession has built up considerable practical experience in developing language courses, and this often serves as the basis for different syllabus types.
- **Trends:** approaches to syllabus design come and go and reflect national or international trends.

3.3.3.2 Developing Instructional Blocks/ Sections

So far, we have described the processes used in order to help develop the content of a course as well as its syllabus framework. A course also needs to be mapped out in terms of instructional blocks or sections. An *instructional block* is a learning sequence that has its own particular objectives and that also reflects the overall objectives of the course. Instructional blocks represent the instructional focus of the course and may be very specific (for instance, a single lesson) or more general (such as a unit consisting of several lessons).

Developing the organizational structure in a course involves selecting appropriate blocks and deciding on the sequence in which these blocks will appear. In organizing a course into teaching blocks, the following points need to be attended to:

- Making the course more teachable and learnable,
- Providing a progression in level of difficulty, and
- Creating overall coherence and structure for the course.

Two commonly used instructional blocks are **modules** and **units** (or chapters):

- **Modules:** This is a self-contained and independent learning sequence with its own objectives. For example, a 120-hour course might be divided

into four modules of 30 hours each. Assessment is carried out at the end of each module. Modules allow for flexible organization of a course and can give learners a sense of achievement because objectives are more immediate and specific. Care needs to be taken, however, to ensure that the course does not appear fragmented and unstructured.

❖ **Units / Chapters:** This teaching block is normally longer than a single lesson, but shorter than a module, and is the most common way of organizing courses and teaching materials. It is normally a group of lessons that is planned around a single instructional focus. A units is also referred to as a *scheme of work.* A unit seeks to provide a structured sequence of activities that lead toward a learning outcome. The factors that account for a successful unit include:

- **Length:** A unit should be sufficient, but not much material is included.
- **Development:** One activity leads effectively into the next. The unit does not consist of a random sequence of activities.
- **Coherence:** A unit should have an overall sense of coherence.
- **Pacing:** Each activity within the unit moves at a reasonable pace. For example, if there are five activities in the unit, one does not require four times as much time to complete as the others.
- **Outcome:** At the end of a unit, students should be able to answer a set of questions or do a number of tasks that are related to that particular unit/ chapter.

The issue of unit structure is also crucial in developing instructional materials. For example, in developing an upper-intermediate-level course with a topical organization of units and an integrated syllabus, the following solutions can be reached with respect to unit structure:

- ❖ The course has 12 units.
- ❖ Each unit consists of 15 pages, divided between lessons (smaller sections)
- ❖ Each unit is organized around a general theme such as creativity, communication, education and learning.
- ❖ Each lesson focuses on a topic related to the unit theme. For example:

- Unit theme: *Creativity*
- Lesson 1: *Creativity and Jobs*
- Lesson 2: *Creative Products*

Within each four-page lesson, each page has a distinct focus in terms of topic treatment and language focus. For example:

In Lesson 1:

Page 1: Fluency activities introduce the topic of the first lesson through listening and oral work.

Page 2: Grammar exercises pick up an item that appears on page 1. Exercises provide controlled practice of grammar items leading to communicative practice.

Page 3: Fluency activities provide further listening and oral work on a topic related to the unit theme.

Page 4: Writing exercises on topics linked to the unit theme teach practical writing and composition skills.

In Lesson 2:

Page 1: Fluency activities introduce the topic of the second lesson through listening and oral work.

Page 2: Grammar exercises provide controlled practice of grammar items leading to communicative practice.

Page 3*:* Fluency activities provide further listening and oral work.

Page 4: Reading activities develop reading skills and serve to initiate discussion.

With this unit structure, two types of coherence are provided: horizontal and vertical. **Horizontal coherence** for a unit is created through the linked sequence of activities within each unit. **Vertical coherence** is created through the sequence that runs from the top of each page to the bottom with each page culminating in an appropriate activity to bring the page to closure.

3.3.4 Developing the Scope and Sequence Plan

One form in which the course can be described is as a scope and sequence plan. This might consist of a listing of the ***module*s** or ***units*** and their contents and an indication of how much teaching ***time*** each block in the course will require. In the case of a **textbook,** it usually consists of a unit-by-unit description of the course cross-referenced to the **syllabus** items included.

3.4 Course Evaluation

Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress achieved throughout the course. There are two major **forms** of course evaluation: formative and summative. In addition, five **elements** must be considered in any course evaluation: the course objectives, the syllabus of the course, the textbook(s) used in the course, the methodology put into practice, and the testing tools employed.

3.4.1 Forms of Course Evaluation

Kurt (2020) emphasizes that being thoughtful about the entire teaching experience when a certain course is going on and when it comes to an end can help the teacher make better decisions when the course is taught next time. Evaluation of a course has two forms:

❖ **Formative Evaluation**:

It is carried out at the end of every lesson or unit to check understanding and the extent to which the unit, chapter or lesson objectives have been attained (*specific objectives*). An example of formative evaluation of a course is the *assignments* given to learners at the beginning or during the course, such as problem-solving-tasks or quick quizzes.

❖ **Summative Evaluation**:

It is undertaken in order to check the extent to which the course objectives have been achieved (*overall objectives*). A typical example of this form of course evaluation is *final examinations* done at the end of the course.

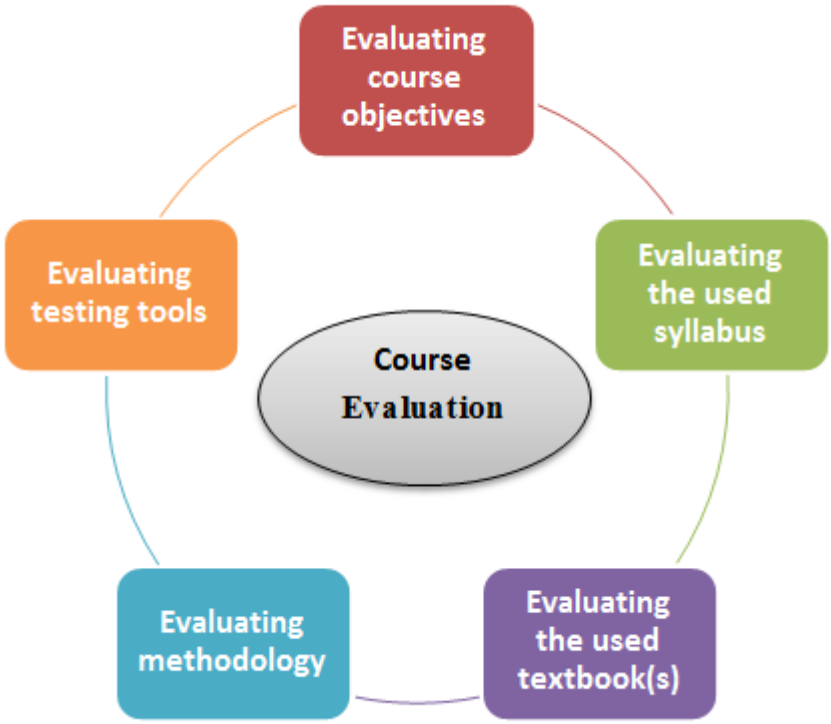
There are a number of steps that need to be followed in designing a course, as seen previously in this lesson (See 3.2 Planning a Course and 3.3 Developing a Course). These steps are interrelated. Each step is made with the other steps in mind. Likewise, each step is **refined** every time the course is taught.

3.4.2 Elements of Course Evaluation

It is an inevitable step to reflect on and assess **what** (contents) and **how** (methodology) the teacher has taught and tested students. A course is a continuous process, rather than a product, that leads to the enhancement of teaching and learning, if time and efforts are given to reflecting on and assessing the results of that process. The aim of evaluation is to examine information that indicates the extent to which the teaching and learning practices have led to the learning outcomes outlined by the teacher (course objectives), and why such practices worked well or did not. This last step involves consideration of a whole range of issues, including assumptions about teaching and learning, as

well as issues related to the results of the decisions made at each of the previous stages of course design: planning and development. The various processes in the three stages of course design (planning, development and evaluation) do not necessarily occur in a linear order. Some may take place simultaneously, and many aspects of a course are subject to ongoing revision each time the course is taught (Richards 2001).

Evaluation of a course has to consider five elements, as illustrated by the following figure:



Elements of Course Evaluation

- **Course objectives:** the extent to which the overall objectives of the entire course, set at the beginning, have been attained.

- **Syllabus:** the extent to which the syllabus content (selection of material) as well as the order of such content (sequencing of lessons) have been well handled, and then achieved the intended specific objectives of every lesson at a time, and the general objectives of the entire course.

- **Textbook(s):** whether the textbook(s) used in the course match with the overall objectives, and the extent to which such textbook(s) have helped attain those objectives.

- **Methodology:** the extent to which the approach which the course is based on, as well as the teaching methods and techniques implemented have been effective enough in achieving the outlined course objectives. Any pedagogical practices that take place in the teaching and learning situations fall within the methodology framework, and thus need to be carefully evaluated in terms of efficiency and feasibility.

- **Testing tools:** the extent to which the testing tools have been efficient in assessing whether, and to what degree, the provided instruction and learner assessment have been successful in attaining the overall course objectives. The testing tools used must enable the teacher to carry out a formative and summative evaluation of the course. When evaluating the course testing tools, it is important to take into account the suitability of the types of testing: diagnostic, achievement, proficiency or placement. Three basic criteria have to be considered in any type of assessment: validity, reliability and practicality (or usability).

Conclusion

Careful planning of a course is more likely to make teaching easier and more enjoyable. It is worthwhile to allow enough time to carefully plan, develop

and eventually evaluate the course. It is of equal importance to get in touch with other teachers who have taught a similar course and discuss various strategies as well as student overall reactions to that course. In the case of team-teaching, meeting with the entire staff who teach the same course is necessary in order to talk about the course goals, contents, methodology, testing and other factors.

If the course is designed appropriately, based on research insights and frameworks, students will be able to access information faster and more efficiently. They will also develop more skills and practise higher levels of thinking such as critical thinking, analyzing and evaluating, rather than merely understanding, memorizing and applying information in a restricted manner.

❖ **Assignments:**

Task 1:

1. Provide your own definition of a language course.

2. What are the basic constituents of a course?

3. Describe every constituent/element.

Task 2:

1. Look back at the definition you wrote in Task 1 (Q1) and rewrite it in the light of the definitions presented in the lecture.

2. In what ways, does your revised (rewritten) definition differ from the first one you wrote?

3. Correct the inaccurate information in your first definition, and back it up with more enlightening insights from the definitions given by theorists (in the lecture).

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Chapter Four:

Syllabus Design

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you are expected to:

- ✓ Develop an understanding of the term *syllabus*;
- ✓ Distinguish between a syllabus and a curriculum;
- ✓ Be introduced to the components, properties, views as well as the most common types of syllabus;
- ✓ Be well acquainted with the three phases of syllabus design: the preliminary, development and review phase; and last,
- ✓ Recognize the various roles of the teacher in syllabus design.

Introduction

Materials are resources for whatever procedures are used in the FL classroom. They provide a backbone for classroom activity, but in themselves they cannot dictate a particular methodology for they can only offer learning opportunities. When change is called for in the type of learning opportunity, it is usually the materials that are employed to announce such change. Materials provide the actual ***syllabus*** of the intended course, specify the major work of the teaching/ learning activities, state student and teacher roles through instrumental texts (for both students and teachers), dictate the techniques to use, mainly in the teacher's materials, regulate the patterns of interaction, and even provide the means for teaching as well as learning assessment.

4.1 Definition of Syllabus

Generally, teachers either design their own syllabuses or have to adopt a previously established syllabus which serves the educational institution they work in. A syllabus, as defined by Breen (1984: 47), is typically "a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching". Teachers are probably familiar with plans which are intended to be predictive. Such plans are constructed before the actual teaching-learning process to provide an ordered framework of achievable

objectives. In order to facilitate teaching and learning, the plan identifies and divides up what is to be achieved according to certain principles of organization. A syllabus usually functions as a list of what will be taught and in what order.

White (1988) points out that a ***syllabus*** refers to the content or subject matter of an individual subject, whereas the term ***curriculum*** refers to the totality of contents to be taught in various subjects as well as goals and objectives to be realised within one educational programme. In other words, a syllabus is not concerned with philosophies and the processes of planning, implementing and evaluating an educational programme, but rather with the specification and ordering of content of a certain course in that programme.

Allen (1984: 61, cited in Nunan 1988: 06) argues that ***curriculum*** is a very general concept which involves "consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational programme." ***Syllabus***, on the other hand, refers to "that subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught (as distinct from how they will be taught, which is a matter of methodology)."

4.2 Components of Syllabus

Van Ek (1975, cited in Nunan 1988) lists a number of salient components of a language syllabus:

- The ***objectives***: what learners will be able to do with regard to each topic;
- The ***topics,*** or ***Units*** or ***lessons***, which will be dealt with in the syllabus;
- The language ***activities*** in which the learner will engage;
- The language ***functions*** which the learner will fulfill; and
- The ***skills*** which the learner will be able to perform.

4.3 Properties of Syllabus

Syllabuses have a number of properties, as put forward by Wilkins (1976):

- A syllabus must be related to a broader curriculum and a larger social context reflected in the hidden curriculum which may be either supported or criticised through the syllabus;
- It is a device for planning, but for teaching not learning. Thus, it operates as a means of control and must be administratively workable. Planning may be limited to a broad curriculum level;
- It involves initial specification with discrete items which must be selected, defined and graded with an appropriate starting point and ending point, or at least a goal. There will be sequencing which is intrinsic to the language or content system, and extrinsic, administratively determined, sequencing for items which do not fit into a certain system, and the items taught should not be explicitly linked to time;
- It generates a set of units of work and implies particular methodologies. The latter can be considered as part of the syllabus specification;
- It should be negotiable during and after use, but constraints will be needed as support for some students. However, it may be considered a retrospective record rather than a prospective plan;
- It can lead to many courses of study, and should produce general competence, unconscious automatic abilities and conscious metalinguistic capacities;
- The language syllabus will interact with other syllabuses, but will be the fundamental one. Others will include cultural or communicative activity, or it can be viewed partially in terms of items of content, skills of behaviour and values of ideology;

- It must be evaluated by a range of procedures as part of teachers' responsibility to be democratically accountable.

4.4 Types of Syllabus

A syllabus describes the major elements that will be used in planning a language course and provides the basis for its instructional focus and content. Every particular course calls for (a) certain type(s) of syllabus. Basically, there are seven common types of syllabus: the *Grammatical / Structural* Syllabus, the *Notional/ Lexical* Syllabus, the *Functional* Syllabus and the *Situational* Syllabus (Dubin & Olshtain 1986). Later on, other types of syllabus came on the scene: the *skills-based* syllabus, the *task-based* syllabus and the *competency-based* syllabus (Yassi & Kaharuddin 2018).

Grammatical / Structural Syllabus

This type is also known as the *Linguistic* syllabus**.** It is centred around linguistic items such as *tenses, articles, prepositions, connectors, adverbials, nouns* and *verb patterns.*

Notional / Lexical Syllabus

It emerged in the early seventies and placed the semantic unit in the center of syllabus organization. This syllabus type is organized around *themes* relating to broad areas of meaning such as *time, space* and *obligation*.

Functional Syllabus

It developed alongside the notional syllabus with various attempts to combine the two. Such a type focuses on the social *functions* of language as the central unit of organization. Therefore, it is concerned with aspects such as *self-introduction, invitations, suggestions, apologies* and *refusals.*

Situational Syllabus

Although it is less widespread that the other types, it has been known in language learning for hundreds of years as "the tourist phrase book". This syllabus type focuses on the language needed for different situations such as "*At the dentist's, On the train, In Britain, At the airport* or *At the hotel*". In other words, a situation is a setting in which particular communicative acts typically occur. Situational syllabuses identifiy the situations in which the learner will use the language.

Skills-based Syllabus

It is organised around the different abilities that are involved in using a language for purposes such as reading, writing, listening or speaking. The idea of approaching a language through skills is based on the belief that learning a complex activity such as listening to a lecture involves mastery of a number of individual skills or micro-skills that make up the activity.

Task-based Syllabus

It is organised around *tasks* that students will accomplish in the target language. A task is an activity that is carried out using language such as *finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions,* or *reading a set of instructions to someone so that s/he does something.* The task-based syllabus is built on tasks that have been specially designed to facilitate foreign language learning in which tasks are the basic units of syllabus design. When carrying out these tasks, learners receive comprehensive input and modified output, which are considered very essential for learning the foreign language.

Competency-based Syllabus

It is based on a specification of the competencies learners are expected to master in relation to specific situations and activities. It is an alternative to the use of

objectives in planning a programme. It describes learning outcomes in terms of competencies.

4.5 Views on Syllabus

The first trend is represented by Candlin and Breen (Cited in Brumfit 1984): the "Lancaster School". This school of thought has strongly reacted against the notion of a fixed syllabus which can be planned, pre-ordained (agreed on by the Ministry/ administration), and imposed on teachers and students. For this group, it is not a choice between structural and functional syllabuses. The principle of any fixed inventory of language items, such as the Council of Europe syllabuses, is unacceptable to them. They regard the syllabus as open and negotiable. They believe that the curriculum would be negotiated by the teacher with a given group of learners.

Breen (Cited in Brumfit 1984) acknowledges that one has to set out from a plan (a "predesigned syllabus"). However, such a syllabus is inevitably interpreted and reconstructed by the teacher; equally, the learner creates his own curriculum. Consequently, the predesigned syllabus by itself is a paradox. It only makes sense if it is used for the creation of three other syllabuses: the teacher's, the individual student's, and that one of the entire class. Good syllabus design, therefore, takes these other syllabus realities into account from the outset. Breen's ideal syllabus focuses on the learning process and assists learners to draw "their own route maps."

Candlin (Cited in Brumfit 1984), even more radically, rejects a syllabus which requires learners to "bank received knowledge", and to attain predetermined states of knowledge. He proposes a syllabus which encourages learners to explore ways of knowing, to interpret knowledge, and to engage in discussion. Such a syllabus is interactive and problem-solving. He views

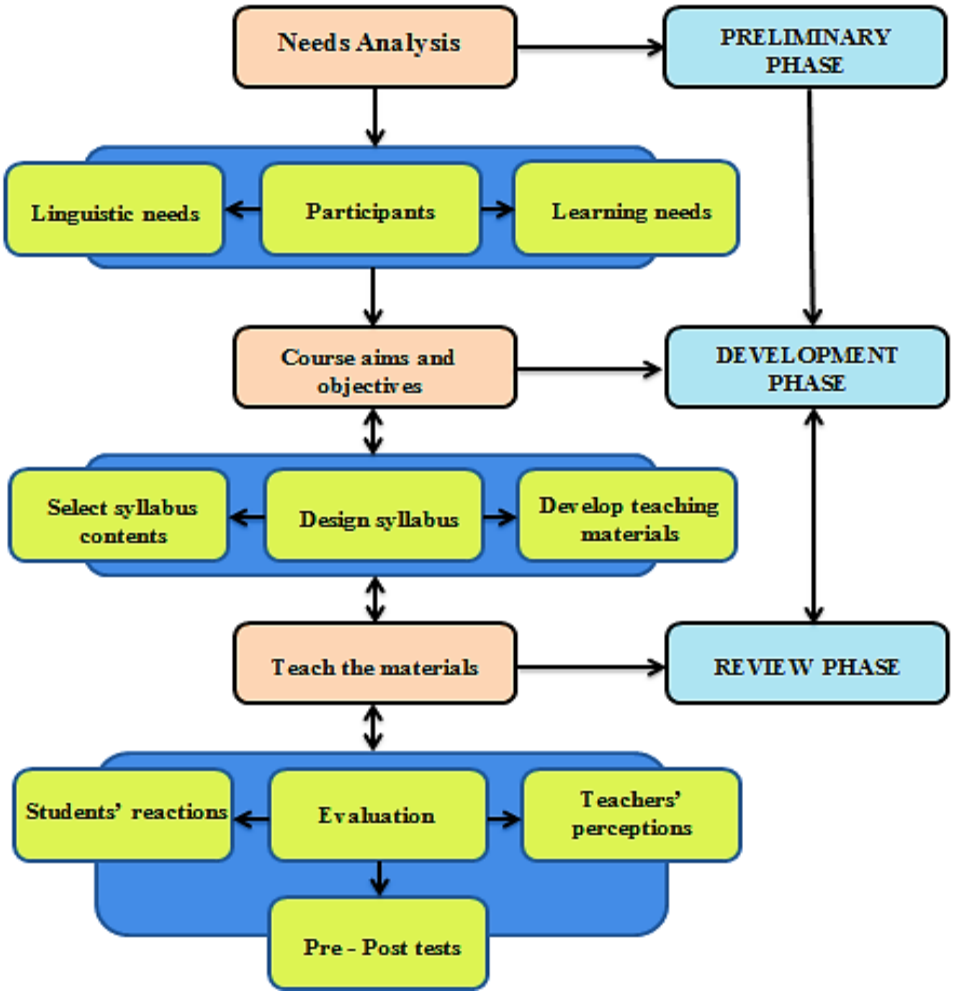
syllabuses as social constructs, produced interdependently in classrooms by teachers and learners. This way, syllabuses become retrospective records, rather than prospective plans. In brief, Candlin (Cited in Brumfit 1984) seems to clearly reject the idea of a "fixed plan" which imposes objectives, a content and a teaching methodology on the teacher who, in turn, imposes this syllabus on learners.

Widdowson (Cited in Brumfit 1984), representing another school of thought, called the "London School", find the Lancaster view (explained in the previous paragraph) "extreme" and "unrealistic". He suggests, instead, an alternative which is a "more realistic" view. He argues that a syllabus is necessary: it is economical and useful. This does not imply that Widdowson advocates a narrow, specific prescription for teaching. Like Candlin and Breen (Cited in Brumfit 1984), he equally supports the idea of giving freedom to the teacher, but he draws a condition. To achieve this idea, without losing the benefits of a well designed syllabus, Widdowson makes a conceptual distinction between ***syllabus*** and ***teaching methodology***. The syllabus provides the framework with a good deal of freedom or choice for teaching-learning activities because Widdowson separates the concept of syllabus which is confined to content specification from teaching methodology (which is not part of his syllabus concept). He suggests that a syllabus should be structural, while the methodology should be communicative.

Syllabus design is viewed in a narrow and broad sense. The narrow view draws a clear distinction between ***syllabus design*** and ***methodology***. Syllabus design is regarded as being concerned primarily with the selection and grading of content, whereas methodology is concerned with the selection of learning tasks and activities. Theorists who adopt a broader view question such separation, arguing that with the advent with communicative language teaching, the distinction between *content* and *task* is difficult to sustain (Nunan 1988).

4.6 Phases of Syllabus Design

In syllabus design, there are three major phases, as demonstrated by Richards (2001, cited in Yassi & Kaharuddin 2018), namely the ***preliminary phase***, the ***development phase*** and the ***review phase***. The following figure indicates that each phase has a set of *input* which must be carried out and then analysed in order to produce the *output* from the phase. The output from one phase serves as part of the input to the later phase. Nevertheless, the process is not entirely linear for a highly interactive interaction takes place between the development and review phases.



Phases and Methodology for Syllabus Design
Richards (2001, cited in Yassi & Kaharuddin 2018: 68)

4.6.1 The Preliminary Phase

The main **input** to the preliminary phase is a needs analysis: an essential activity used to gather necessary information for a syllabus content and methodology. This study suggests taking into account three aspects before carrying a needs analysis for a syllabus design, i.e. deciding on *participants* and identifying *linguistic* as well as *learning needs*.

4.6.1.1 Participants:

They refer to the learners who are involved in the needs analysis as sources of information. The main condition that the participants must possess is that they are clearly aware of the information required in the needs analysis. In other words, they must exactly know the required information. So, participants may be identified as:

- Students/ the target group: a group of people who are studying a particular course.

- Teachers/ the audience: a group of people who teach and see how the target group is studying a particular course.

- Graduates/ the source group: a group of people from whom a needs analyst obtains information about the advantages of a particular course, for example graduates who already work or pursue advanced studies due to their good proficiency in speaking English.

4.6.1.2 Linguistic Needs:

These needs refer to gathering information associated with types of language components, functions as well as topics which are necessary to be available in the syllabus design. The needs are found out through the identification of the students' learning ability and learning priority. ***Learning ability*** gives information about the students' entry level in the language areas

such as in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. This information can be used to decide on which language component needs more attention in the syllabus design. ***Learning priority*** provides information about the most preferred materials in syllabus design. This information is very useful to decide on the most appropriate topics for students to learn.

4.6.1.3 Learning Needs:

The information gathered from learning needs can be used to determine the most appropriate methodology (selection of learning tasks and activities) in the syllabus design. Learning needs can be identified by analysing the students' learning problems and learning attitudes. ***Learning problems*** give information about the problems that learners are facing in learning a subject. From this information, teachers are required to help their students to reduce the effects of the identified problems and to maximize their learning efforts by selecting the most appropriate approaches, methods and techniques in teaching as possible solutions to overcome the problems detected.

Learning attitudes, on the other hand, provide information about how students feel about studying in a program. To describe this, it is important to identify the students' learning preferences and learning styles. A ***learning preference*** refers to the way students tend to learn the best, while a ***learning style*** refers to the educational conditions under which students are most likely to learn well. Therefore, learning preferences are concerned with what learners need to learn in order to learn (tasks or activities), and learning styles are associated with how students need to learn in order to learn (teaching methods).

The **output** from Phase One, the preliminary phase, is summarized in the following points:

- The questionnaire of needs analysis,

- The needs analysis gathered from the results of linguistic and learning needs analysis, and
- The formulation of course goals and objectives derived from the needs analysis.

4.6.2 The Development Phase

The **input** to the second phase is the ***course aims*** and ***objectives*** which are formulated from the needs analysis in Phase One. In the context of syllabus design, the term "aim" refers to a general statement reflecting the underlying ideology of the curriculum. On the other hand, ***objectives*** are more specific than ***aims***. They break down aims into smaller units, and typically describe learning outcomes in terms of what the learner will be able to do by the end of each unit. The course aims and objectives formulation will enable syllabus designers to follow three major steps in this phase, i.e. selecting syllabus contents, designing syllabus and developing teaching materials.

4.6.2.1 Selection of Syllabus Content:

This process is carried out to select the major topics/lessons/units and to determine the order in which the topics will be presented in the classroom. Information from linguistic needs and consultation with teachers can be used to obtain an initial list of course topics/ lessons that will be included in the syllabus content.

4.6.2.2 Design of Syllabus:

This stage is conducted to map the logical sequence of the course structure into a syllabus design as a fundamental instrument for teaching effectively. Therefore, designing syllabus requires selecting a syllabus

framework, for example topical or content-based/ structural/ competency-based or a mixed syllabus since it combines two or more types of syllabus frameworks.

4.6.2.3 Development of Teaching Materials:

This step is about mapping out the course content in terms of sections, instructional units or blocks by using the syllabus framework as a guideline. An instructional block presents the instructional focus of the course which may be very specific in a single lesson, or more general in a unit of work consisting of several lessons. The representation of the instructional block can be initially made by writing a lesson plan before composing the instructional materials of textbooks for the course. A *lesson plan* is certainly required since it serves as a "road map" for a session (lecture).

The **output** from Phase Two is summed up in the subsequent three points:

- A syllabus framework which is used as a guideline to write the lesson plans for a course,
- Lesson plans for the course in all units and topics, and
- A set of instructional materials which are normally concerned with both lessons to be learnt and skills or abilities to be developed.

4.6.3 The Review phase

The **input** to the final stage is a set of syllabus framework, lesson plans and teaching materials which are going to be implemented and evaluated in this phase. The review phase is associated with the process of describing the outcomes of trying out the developed course content (for example, syllabus and teaching materials). Therefore, this phase must be initiated by teaching the

instructional materials in the classroom, record the students' progress and evaluate the outcomes of learning.

Teaching the materials is an activity conducted by a teacher to facilitate the learning of a language, to inform learners about the language, to provide experience of language in use and to help learners discover the language by themselves. Teaching the instructional materials aims at examining the effects of the instructional materials on increasing the target students' language skills. To find out about the effects of teaching instructional materials, a summative evaluation is undertaken.

Summative evaluation refers to checking what has been learned at a specific point in time, i.e. at the end of a unit or course. It is based on cumulative learning experiences, tests for achievement, and mastery of specific performance objectives. The evaluation procedures are adapted from Kirkpatrick's (1996 cited in Yassi & Kaharuddin 2018) model of summative evaluation: *students' reactions, pre-test and post-test,* and *teachers' perceptions*.

4.6.3.1 Students' Reactions:

This first level of evaluation is conducted by assessing the students' reactions or attitudes after learning with the teaching materials. The instruments used in this level can be questionnaires with Likert Scale and open-ended questions.

4.6.3.2 Pre-test and Post-test

This second level of evaluation is intended to measure what students have learnt from the presented materials by comparing their performance *before* and *after* receiving the intended instruction. Giving tests is considered to be very effective to demonstrate that learning has occurred as a result of the instruction. Therefore, the effectiveness of the course content try-out can be measured by

comparing the students' gain scores in the test given at the beginning of the course (pre-test) with their scores in the test given at the end (post-test).

4.6.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions:

This type of evaluation requires teachers to be involved in determining that students really can use all what they have learnt from the delivered teaching materials. Teachers take part in reviewing the learning outcomes by judging students' performance and skills after teaching students with the instructional materials.

After going through the review phase, the syllabus design and the developed teaching materials can be transformed into an in-use syllabus design and teaching materials which are ready to be implemented in the real educational context. Consequently, this syllabus design proposal can be used as a formal real example to design a syllabus and develop a course content for English courses such as speaking, listening, reading and writing courses. This recommendation is given for some reasons:

- This design covers needs analysis that is very helpful to gain information about the students' linguistic and learning needs.
- The framework of this design is clear, simple and practical to follow, especially for teachers who lack experience in developing a programme, since the elements in the design process are described simply and practically with specific illustration on how to apply the elements in developing a certain language skill in a language programme.
- The elements of the syllabus design are adequately explained, which can ease teachers to implement the elements when designing a syllabus; for instance, in needs analysis, there is an obvious explanation of formal procedures of administering a needs analysis,

specification about types of information which are normally required in needs analysis of a language programme. In an evaluation task, there is a specific explanation of what kind of evaluation should be used in the design among the three kinds of evaluation, i.e. formative or summative evaluation.

4.7 Roles of the Teacher in the Language Syllabus

While some teachers tend to design their own syllabuses on which their teaching will be based, others choose to adopt other teachers' syllabuses. In either case, teachers have certain roles to fulfill in the syllabus, as demonstrated by Bell (1983, cited in Nunan 1988):

- Identifying students' communicative needs;
- Identifying the objectives;
- Selecting and grading syllabus content;
- Adapting or creating materials and activities;
- Grouping learners into different classes or arrangements;
- Monitoring and assessing learner progress; and
- Evaluating the syllabus in terms of objectives, content selection and order.

Conclusion

A syllabus is an indispensable component in a language programme. It serves to establish an early point of contact and connection between students and teachers, set the tone for the course, describe available teaching/ learning resources and describe basic beliefs about educational purposes or policies. While it is realised that few teachers are able to design their own syllabuses by themselves, it is recommended that all teachers adjust the syllabuses they work with to their specific teaching situation and group of learners. Once teachers are aware of the basic aspects, views and options available for syllabus design, they

can develop the necessary knowledge and skills for evaluating it and even adapting certain parts in it whenever needed. It is worth noting that before implementing any teaching materials, the latter need to be well reviewed. The review is carried out to ensure that the teaching materials have been well developed and ready to use for pedagogical purposes.

❖ Assignments:

Task 1: Adapted from Nunan (1988: 05-06)

1. Read the following quotes and identify whether the view on syllabus design advocated in each quote is narrow or broad.

2. Justify your answers.

- ***Quote 1:*** *(Stern 1984: 10-11)*

"I would like to draw attention to a distinction between curriculum or syllabus, that is its content, structure, parts and organization, and what in curriculum theory is often called curriculum processes, that is curriculum development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation. The former is concerned with the WHAT of curriculum: what the curriculum is like or should be like; the latter is concerned with the WHO and HOW of establishing the curriculum."

- ***Quote 2:*** *(Yalden 1984: 14)*

"The Syllabus replaces the concept of 'Method', and the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner (as social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom."

- ***Quote 3:*** *(Widdowson 1984: 26)*

"The syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning. It only becomes a threat to pedagogy when it is regarded as absolute rules for determining what is to be learned rather than points of reference from which bearings can be taken."

- ***Quote 4:*** *(Candlin 1984: 32)*

"We might ask whether it is possible to separate so easily what we have been calling content from what we have been calling method or procedure, or indeed whether we can avoid bringing evaluation into the debate?"

- ***Quote 5:*** *(Breen 1984: 49)*

"Any syllabus will express –however indirectly– certain assumptions about language, about the psychological process of learning, and about the pedagogic and social processes within a classroom."

Task 2: Adapted from Nunan (1988: 10)

1. Think of ways in which your views and beliefs about the nature of language and learning might influence decision-making on what to incorporate into the syllabus (i.e. contents) and how to grade it (i.e. order of contents).

2. Provide justification for your answers.

List of References Used in Chapter Four

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Chapter Five:

Textbook in the Language Classroom

Objectives:

By the end of this chapter, you are expected to be able to:

- ✓ Understand what a textbook is;
- ✓ Distinguish it from a course and syllabus;
- ✓ Recognize the significance of using textbooks in the language classroom as well as some reservations about the use of such pedagogical material; and
- ✓ Get insight into how evaluation of textbooks is undertaken, with a special focus on a number of evaluation criteria, models and content selection.

Introduction

Textbooks are designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students. Textbooks usually provide learners with exposure to language in use, and have often provided the syllabus for language programmes that have taken learners from beginner to advanced levels. Generally speaking, textbooks have provided non- native speaker teachers with the necessary support and security. Therefore, they have had a major effect on teachers as well as students, and have shaped the English language curricula in many educational institutions.

5.1 Definition of Textbook

A textbook, according to Richards & Schmidt (2002: 550) is "a book on a specific subject used as a teaching/learning guide." For EFL teaching/learning, textbooks are usually part of a graded series covering multiple *skills*: listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as language *components*: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The term "textbook", also referred to as

"coursebook", is used in its broad sense as an organised and pre-packaged set of teaching/ learning material.

Cunnigsworth (1984) holds that published materials should only provide the initial framework which must be adapted by each individual teacher to match the needs of their particular students. Similarly, Allwright (1990) views textbooks as resource books for ideas and activities, rather than instructional materials. Many teachers tend to slavishly follow the text's sequence, methodology, pacing and vocabulary for various reasons, as highlighted by Skierso (1991): ease of organisation of lessons, provision with stability for students and assurance that comparable instruction is being presented. Only few experts, he further comments, would advocate extreme adherence to any coursebook. Textbooks may meet students' needs although they are not specifically designed for any particular group of students, and therefore, can be of great use to both the teacher and the student. Although the beliefs on textbook use may be as dichotomous as never bringing them into the classroom to using every page each day, the middle ground between the two ways of use is the sound decision to be made by teachers.

5.2 Significance of Textbook in the EFL Classroom

Generally, the textbook is viewed as a tool in realising the goals which have already been set regarding learners' needs, thus it is an important component of a course. However, its role should not be overemphasised. The role of a textbook in language teaching/ learning has been summed up by Cunningsworth (1995) and Richards (1998) as follows:

- A resource for presentation of material, spoken or written;

A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction;

- A reference source;
- A syllabus;

- A resource for self-directed learning or self-access work;
- A major support for novice, less experienced teachers; and
- A reflection of certain salient issues concerning the current language program.

5.3 The Case for / against Textbook Use

English language teaching has many important components, but the essential constituents of many EFL programmes are textbooks that are often used by teachers. Hutchinson & Torres (1994: 315) state that "the textbook is an almost universal element of English language teaching; millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in many countries." They claim that no teaching/learning situation is complete until it has its relevant textbook, advocating the use of textbooks on the grounds that they can support teachers through potentially disturbing change processes, demonstrate new untried methodologies and introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own.

Likewise, Sheldon (1988: 237) stresses the fact that textbooks "do not only represent the visible heart of any ELT program," but also offer considerable advantages for both the student and the teacher when they are being used in the EFL classrooms. Other theorists such as Haycroft (1998) suggest that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and measurement can be judged concretely when used. O'Neill (1982) points out that textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them. They are efficient in terms of time and money, and can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation.

On the other hand, there are some theorists who hold reservations on textbook use such as Allwright (1981) who explains that textbooks are too inflexible and generally reflect the pedagogic, psychological and linguistic preferences and bias of their authors. Subsequently, the educational methodology that a textbook promotes can influence the classroom setting by indirectly imposing external language objectives and learning constituents on students as well as unintended instructional paradigms on the teachers who use them. Therefore, textbooks essentially determine and control the methods, processes and procedures of language teaching/ learning. Furthermore, the pedagogic principles that are often displayed in many textbooks may also be conflicting, contradictory or even outdated.

Many textbooks have been criticized for their inherent social and cultural bias especially. Researchers such as Florent & Walter (1989) demonstrate that many EFL/ESL textbooks contain examples of gender bias (sexism). Such findings have led researchers to believe that the continuing prevalence of sexism and gender stereotypes in many EFL/ESL textbooks may reflect the unequal power relationships that still exist between the genders in many cultures and misrepresentations of writers with social attitudes that are not in line with with the current realities of the target language culture and the goals of teaching it.

In Algeria, for instance, the problem of culturally-biased textbooks, in the sense that the foreign culture is presented in a way that may "upset" the learners, does not clearly arise. English and other languages (Arabic and French) are taught as a purely instrumental tool, nothing more than a linguistic means to certain ends. Probably, because the country's history of French colonialism, where the French language was forced upon the Algerians, authorities tend to be suspicious of the issue of linguistic imperialism (Lakehal-Ayat 2008).

Some proponents of authentic classroom language models argue that the problems with many textbooks are not necessarily the fact that they are culturally or socially biased, but that they are very contrived and artificial in their presentation of the target language. They explain that it is crucial to introduce learners to the fundamental characteristics of authentic real-life examples of both spoken and written discourse. The language presented to students in textbooks, they add, is a poor representation of the real situation, far away from the real informal kind of English which is used more frequently than any other during a normal speaking lifetime (Gilmore 2007).

5.4 Textbook Evaluation

Textbook evaluation involves measuring the value of a coursebook by making judgments about the effect of such material on the teaching/ learning situation. It is significant to spot light on some major ***reasons*** for textbook evaluation as well as a few ***models of coursebook evaluation criteria***.

5.4.1 Reasons for Textbook Evaluation

Whether textbooks are believed to be very inflexible and biased to be used directly as instructional material, or that they rather help teaching and learning, there is no doubt that textbooks still maintain enormous popularity. It is important to mention, however, that since the 1970s, there has been a movement to make learners the center of language instruction, and it is probably best to view textbooks as resources in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs. Moreover, textbooks should not necessarily determine the aims themselves (components of teaching and learning) or be the aims, but they should always be at the service of the teachers and learners (Brown 1995).

Sheldon (1988) offers several other reasons for textbook evaluation. He suggests that the selection of an ELT textbook often signals an important administrative and educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial, or even political investment. A thorough evaluation, therefore, enables the managerial and teaching staff of a specific institution to discriminate between all of the available textbooks on the market. Moreover, it provides a sense of familiarity with the textbook contents, hence assisting educators in identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use. This ultimately assists teachers with making use of the worthwhile materials in the textbook, and equally recognising the shortcomings of certain exercises, tasks or texts in it.

A further reason for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very useful in teacher professional development. Cunningsworth (1995) & Ellis (1997) suggest that textbook evaluation aids teachers to move beyond impressionistic assessments for it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation, therefore, can potentially be a particularly worthwhile means of conducting research as well as a form of professional empowerment and improvement. Similarly, textbook evaluation can be a valuable component of teacher training programmes for it serves the dual purpose of making both students and teachers aware of important features to look for in textbooks while familiarizing them with a wide range of published language teaching materials.

5.4.2 Models of Textbook Evaluation Criteria

Although no general list of criteria can be applied to all teaching and learning contexts without considerable modification, most of these standardised evaluation checklists contain similar components that can be used as helpful starting points for ELT practitioners in a wide variety of situations. Whatever

form ELT scholars opt for, a framework, checklist, model or evaluation sheet, they all ask essential questions concerning the issue of assessing a textbook. These questions serve as guidance for material evaluators when they scrutinize a particular textbook they are using or on the way to use (Sheldon 1988).

5.4.2.1 Morrow's (1977) Model

The first model is that of Morrow (1977) who puts forward four basic criteria to be considered in the evaluation of textbooks:

- *What* is my material about?
- *Why* was my material produced?
- *Who* was my material produced for?
- *How* was my material produced? i.e. is the language in an appropriate mode (written or spoken, formal or informal?

5.4.2.2 Breen & Candlin's (1987) Model

Breen & Candlin (1987) provide a more structured model in terms of its procedure in *two phases*, focusing firstly on the materials and secondly on the learner.

Phase 1 investigates:

- what the aims and content of the materials are,
- what they require learners to do,
- what they require the teacher to do, and
- what function they have as a classroom resource.

Phase 2 considers:

- learner needs,
- learner approaches to language learning, and
- the teaching/learning processes in the classroom.

5.4.2.3 Sheldon's (1988) Model

This model is student-centred in nature. Sheldon (1988) presents nine common-core factors that should be taken into a careful consideration in the evaluation of a textbook:

- The *rationale* factor considers the needs analysis, examining all student background information (level, learning preferences and culture).
- The *layout/graphics* factor addresses appearance and instructions for self-study.
- The *selection/grading* factor considers the depth to which the language is taught.
- The *physical characteristics* factor looks at the space on the material for note-taking.
- The *sufficiency* factor requires of the teacher to consider the quantity of material.
- The *cultural bias* factor assesses the textbook's suitability for students' backgrounds and expectations.
- The *stimulus/practice/revision* factor raises questions on whether the material is interactive, allowing the students to use the language enough for eventual storage.
- The *flexibility* factor fundamentally considers whether the material is very demanding of the teacher for preparation and the students for homework.
- The *guidance* factor investigates the clarity and depth of the instructions.

5.4.2.4 Cunningsworth's (1984) and (1995) Models

Cunningsworth (1984) considers more linguistic factors of the materials in terms of ***language content***: *form* (phonology, vocabulary, grammar, discourse features), *functions* (such as obligations), *appropriateness* (where the language

is suited for the situation), *varieties* (for example, dialect, style, register and the medium of communication) and ***language skills*** (receptive, productive, integrated or translations). These are valid criteria and are thought to complement the macro features in Morrow's (1977) model, the details and focus on the learner in Sheldon's (1988) model, and the procedural considerations in Breen &Candlin's (1987) model.

Later, Cunningsworth (1995) proposes four basic criteria for evaluating textbooks:

- Textbooks should correspond to learners' needs and match the aims and objectives of the language learning program.
- They should reflect the uses (present and future) which learners will make of the language. Textbooks must be well selected in a way that helps students to use language effectively for their own purposes.
- They should facilitate the teaching and learning processes without dogmatically imposing a rigid method.
- They should have a clear role, as a support for learning.

5.4.2.5 Tomlinson's (2003) Model

Tomlinson (2003) specifies several criteria that materials should meet by following certain principles that contribute to successful EFL teaching/ learning. He points out that materials, including textbooks, should:

- Achieve impact through novelty, variety, attractive presentation and appealing content;
- Help learners to feel at ease;
- Help learners to feel confident;
- Be perceived by learners as relevant and useful;
- Require and facilitate learner's self-investment;

- Expose the learner to language in authentic use;
- Draw learners' attention to linguistic features of the input;
- Provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes;
- Take into account that the positive effects of instruction are often delayed;
- Consider the fact that learners differ in learning styles;
- Take into consideration that learners differ in affective attitudes;
- Allow for a silent period at the beginning of instruction or whenever necessary;
- Maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional involvement;
- Not rely much on controlled practice; and
- Provide opportunities for outcome feedback.

5.5 Textbook Contents

Littlejohn & Windeatt (1989) list **six** main areas related to textbook contents: general or subject knowledge, views of "what" and "how" knowledge is acquired, views of the nature of language learning, roles in the classroom, opportunities for the development of cognitive abilities, and last, values and attitudes.

- **General or Subject Knowledge:**

- Another academic subject/content
- Student-contributed content
- Language itself
- Literature
- Culture
- Interesting facts

- Learning itself (integrate learning to learn to learning English)
- Specialist content (learners have a reasonable background knowledge in addition to an unusual slant to it which push learners to work with both the language and the content).

- **Views of "What" and "How" Knowledge Is Acquired:**

Why EFL material contents seem to lack interest or stimulation is the result of the boundaries held between subjects and the relative weighting given to subjects. The organization of the materials themselves, the kinds of activities and tasks found within them would contribute to forming the learners' perceptions of the nature of school knowledge and how this knowledge is arrived at.

- **Views of the Nature of Language Learning:**

They refer to the perceptions that learners have of the activities they are involved in: interesting or boring, easy or difficult, challenging enough or not. This depends on what they are required to do in each subsection. A useful way to get a picture of what view of language learning a set of materials may project is to read through the sub-section headings in each unit, and to look closely at the kind of aspects which learners are required to do.

- **Roles in the Classroom:**

The construction of textbooks is an attempt to bring about certain kinds of classroom instruction and teacher/learner interaction: drills, for example, are clear indication that the learner is considered passive. Language teaching materials mirror what education is, and how it should be carried out in order to develop learner's autonomy.

- **Opportunities for the Development of Cognitive Abilities:**

In order to provide opportunities for the development of leaner cognitive abilities, language teaching textbook contents should contain activities that require the learner to consider a number of factors at the same time. Textbook contents should also move away from the reproductive and mechanical tasks.

- **Values and Attitudes:**

Significant questions that need to be raised in respect to values and attitudes presented in the textbook contents include: "what social values and attitudes are promoted by the language materials?" and "to what extent do the learners support the values and attitudes expressed in their textbooks?" Some studies on gender bias claim a direct relationship between them, where girls were seen as *stupid*, *dependent*, *whining* and *fearful* and boys as *active* and *aggressive*.

5.6 Matching the Textbook to the Curriculum

Prior to selecting a textbook, Garinger (2004) explains, educators should thoroughly examine the program curriculum. If the goals and curriculum of the program are clear and well defined, the parallels with certain textbooks may become obvious. For example, if one of the goals of the program is to give students an opportunity to interact with authentic texts, textbooks that use articles written for native English speakers would be appropriate. If the program focuses on developing reading fluency, textbooks designed to support the development of reading skills would be appropriate.

At this point, another decision needs to be made: whether to choose a textbook series or to use individual texts for each course. Either choice exhibits advantages and disadvantages: a series has the advantage of having one approach and contents for across levels guaranteeing a progression in the skills. However, he comments, this regularity may turn to monotony and could cause a

loss of interest on the part of the learner. The other choice (using individual texts for each course) enables more precise matching with the objectives and varied contents and design.

The following questions, raised by Garinger (2004), are about the correlation between the textbook objectives and the curriculum ones. Focus is on a specific element of content as an example: *exercises*.

- **Balance:**

The question raised is: Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice? Controlled exercises guide students to a single correct answer such as a fill-in -the-blank grammar activity, whereas free practice involves exercises in which the answers are limited only by the students' creativity and knowledge. This type includes open-ended discussion questions. At times, students will require more guidance with an activity, especially when practicing a structure or function for the first time. For this purpose, controlled exercises are effective. However, students should also be given the chance to extend their experience with the language through free exercises which allow for this opportunity.

- **Progression:**

It might be helpful to ask the question: Are the exercises progressive as the students move through the textbook? Exercises should build on and reinforce what students have already learned and should progress from simple, both linguistically and cognitively, to more complex and demanding. A textbook should require more of students as their language skills develop so that they are continually stimulated and challenged.

- **Variety and challenge:**

The question that can be raised here is: Are the exercises varied and challenging enough to this particular group of learners? Keeping students motivated and

interested as they work through a textbook is much easier if the students see something new in each chapter. Familiarity and routine can be comforting, but much familiarity can lead to disinterest and boredom. The textbook should fulfill its role as a stimulus for communication, and not be simply an organizational tool for the teacher.

Conclusion

Considerable efforts need to be made in order to establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for the evaluation of textbooks used in the EFL classroom. Specialists in the field should also ensure that careful selection of contents and methodologies is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect the specific needs of specific learners and the aims, methods, and values of the entire teaching programme. An evaluation tool, regardless of its form (a checklist, questionnaire or a model), and whether it is adopted from another author or created by oneself, serves to ensures that significant factors will not be missed, and that the language learning experience is enhanced, rather than impeded, by the use of the textbook.

❖ **Assignments:**

- Based on what you have dealt with in the lectures, develop a ***criteria checklist*** of your own to evaluate a certain textbook.
- Choose the elements / criteria you see as significant for your evaluation.

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Chapter Six:

Students' Presentations

Objectives:

The students' presentations, done at the end of the delivered lectures (the six chapters), are intended to:

- ✓ Ensure that the basic concepts and issues covered in the lectures have been well grasped as well as illustrated in **realistic models**, not only in theory;
- ✓ Build up an awareness of what makes an educational system in terms of decision-making (the **planning** stage), practices (the **implementation** stage) and reviewing (the **evaluation** stage);
- ✓ Help the students learn how to work in groups as **future teachers** who will find themselves, when they start teaching, faced with the necessity of decision-making over such critical issues as curriculum, course, syllabus design and textbook selection and evaluation.

6.1 Instructions for Students' Presentations

- ❖ The students form groups of three members.
- ❖ Every group chooses a specific model of a **curriculum**, **course**, **syllabus** or **textbook** to work on.
- ❖ Each group is required to present their selected model to the class by describing the salient **constituents** which their curriculum/ course/ syllabus or textbook model is made up of.
- ❖ The students are also expected to explain the **way** their selected model can be **planned**, **implemented** and eventually **evaluated**.

6.2 Procedure and Methodology of Students' Presentations

- ❖ The presentations are done in an **interactive**, rather than one-way, manner, allowing the entire class to take part in them.
- ❖ The students' **analytical skills**, **class discussion**, **critical thinking** and **problem solving** are called for;
- ❖ Teacher intervention is required whenever necessary. **Teacher roles** could be summed up as follows:
  - facilitating and guiding the process within the time limits;
  - correcting information or drawing attention to certain inaccurate aspects that need to be addressed;
  - asking for clarification, if felt necessary;
  - making reference to certain significant points that have been dealt with in the lectures, yet skipped by the group presenting; and
  - directing questions to the students or the entire class in order to ensure that the basic concepts and issues have been well grasped as well as illustrated in **realistic** models, not only in theory.

6.3 Evaluation of the Students' Presentations

Evaluation of the presentations is carried out in terms of the **oral** performance as well as the **written** account submitted to the teacher.

6.3.1 Evaluation Criteria of the Oral Form

Major focus is on the following points:

- the extent to which the students have covered the required aspects in their oral presentation;
- the extent to which the students have interacted with the class through discussion, explanation or question answering;
- the students' oral skills, and particularly language use;
- time management and turn-taking between the group members; and
- the means or ways used to hold and maintain the class' interest throughout the presentation.

6.3.2 Evaluation Criteria of the Written Form

Major focus is on:

- The extent to which the students have covered the required aspects in their written presentation/ account;
- The students' writing ability, most notably writing techniques, language accuracy and clarity as well as style (academic);
- The students' research skills, particularly respecting research ethics, referencing, outlining, selection and organization of the incorporated contents, quoting/ paraphrasing/ summarizing strategies; and
- The overall presentation form of the written account.

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Appendices:

Appendix 01:

Procès Verbal

Descriptive Account of the Educational Systems Course

2017-2018

Intitulé du Master: Didactique des Langues Etrangères

Semestre: 3 Intitulé de l'UE:

Unité Fondamentale 2 Intitulé de la matière: Educational Systems

Crédits: 5 / Coefficients: 2

– **Objectifs de l'enseignement** (*Décrire ce que l'étudiant est censé avoir acquis comme compétences après le succès à cette matière – maximum 3 lignes).*

Analysis of how the different systems of Education in the world and in particular in the Anglo Saxon countries have been developed. Special focus is on the principles, values and approaches which the systems of Education are based on.

– **Connaissances préalables recommandées** (*descriptif succinct des connaissances requises pour pouvoir suivre cet enseignement – Maximum 2 lignes) :*

Course in Methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Licence + Master S1+S2)

– **Contenu de la matière** *(indiquer obligatoirement le contenu détaillé du programme en présentiel et du travail personnel) :*

- Philosophies of Education
- Approaches to Curriculum Development
- Theories of Syllabus Design
- Course Development

– **Mode d'évaluation :** *Contrôle continu, examen, etc…(La pondération est laissée à l'appréciation de l'équipe de formation):*

Contrôle continu et examen.

– **Références** *(Livres et polycopiés, sites internet, etc) :*

1. Audrey and Howard Nicholls. (2000). *Developing a Curriculum: A Practical Guide.* Unwin Education Books.

2. Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials Development in Language Course Materials*. 2nd Edition.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Appendix 02:

Examination Model N°1 in Educational Systems

- In an essay, explain the differences between a **curriculum**, **course** and **syllabus.**
- Provide adequate **illustration** for each one of the three.

Appendix 03:

Examination Model N°2 in Educational Systems

"Education is a preparation for life. It involves the capacity to earn a living, to enrich one's own beliefs and life through enjoyment of one's inner resources as well as the cultural heritage, and to function efficiently and constructively as a member of the small and larger society."

- **Discuss this broad definition of education.**
- **Illustration is required.**