

SYLLABUS DESIGN

Master I Course Content



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Full Course Description

- **Instructor:** Aggoun Imen, an assistant professor at Khenchela University. Specialised in Applied Linguistics and TEFL.
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- **Course:** Syllabus Design for Master I Students (Didactics)/ Two “90 minutes” Lectures per week at the department of English.

Course Description:

The Syllabus Design course is designed to explore the critical components of syllabus design in English language education and providing the distinctions between syllabuses and curricula, various approaches to syllabus design, and the types of syllabuses used in educational settings. Students, mainly, will learn how to articulate clear and specific course learning objectives and outcomes, develop syllabuses, and implement effective assessment strategies. Further, this course emphasizes the importance of evaluating existing syllabuses, discussing various models, dimensions, and approaches to syllabus evaluation. Finally, through a combination of theoretical insights and practical applications, students will gain the skills necessary to create and critique syllabuses that enhance teaching and learning in diverse educational contexts

Course Structure

Weekly Sessions: 2 sessions (3 hours), divided as follows:

- **Session 1 Course (90 minutes): Theory=** Interactive lectures covering theoretical foundations of syllabus design.
- **Session 2 TD (90 minutes): Practice=** Group activities where students apply concepts learned through exercises using their smart phones and other resources.

Prerequisite Knowledge:

Students are expected to possess a solid foundational knowledge of language aspects and

didactic principles.

Main Aim of the Course:

These lectures are primarily designed to develop students' skills in syllabus design, guiding them from conducting needs analysis and data collection to selecting and developing appropriate materials.

Specific Objectives of the course: this course aims at helping students to:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of syllabus design as a systematic process.
- Recognize and apply the different stages involved in designing syllabi for EFL contexts.
- Consider the various criteria and influencing factors that shape effective syllabus design.
- Formulate well-structured course descriptions and appreciate their pedagogical significance.
- Highlight the role of needs analysis/situation analysis and clearly defined objectives in guiding syllabus design.
- Select, adapt, and create appropriate instructional materials and learning content.
- Explore and apply diverse techniques of assessment and evaluation within syllabus and curriculum development.
- Critically analyze and reflect on the features, strengths, and limitations of different types of syllabi

Course Policies:

Throughout the academic year, students are required to maintain the highest standards of ethical and academic conduct. They are fully responsible for their attendance, and any absence will be considered their own responsibility regardless of the justification. Electronic devices and other resources are not allowed but may be used exclusively for educational purposes.



Master I Syllabus

Syllabus Design

Lecture One: Introduction

- Overview
- Definitions of Curriculum VS Syllabus
- Syllabus Design
- Syllabus Design Criteria
- Approaches to Syllabus Design

Lecture Two: Syllabus Design Process

- Needs Analysis/Situation Analysis
- Syllabus Objectives & Outcomes

Lecture Three: Syllabus Components & Content Selection and Organization

- General Course Info
- Entry and Exit Levels
- Content Selection and Organization
- Learning Resources
- Scope and Sequences
- Course Calendar
- Creating user-friendly syllabus

Lecture Four: Types of Syllabi

- Syllabus Framework Selection
- Syllabus Types
- Best Syllabus

Lecture Five: Assessment Strategies and grading rubrics

- Evaluation versus Assessment
- Grading & Rubrics

Lecture One: Introduction

- **Overview**
- **Definition of Curriculum VS Syllabus**
- **Syllabus Design**
- **Syllabus Design Criteria**
- **Approaches to Syllabus Design**

Part One: Syllabus & Curriculum

Introduction:

Curriculum and Syllabus are two main documents widely used in the education process. The general purpose of both is to organize the proper relationship between professors and students and define both sides' responsibilities and requirements.

In a simple explanation, the two documents **are formal written descriptions** of the studying units: a curriculum is global and a Syllabus is smaller and specific.

Anyone who plans to be involved in the education process, either as a professor or a student, understanding the Curriculum and Syllabus structure is essential. These two terms are usually referred to as very similar or sometimes the same at the amateur level or in different countries. However, in practice, there are core differences, which are described further in this work.

But first, let's discuss each separately.

1. Definitions

a- The syllabus

The term *syllabus* (pl. syllabuses or syllabi) has been defined in various ways, with differences stemming from scholars' experiences, perspectives, and objectives. Despite this diversity, a generally accepted definition has emerged, incorporating agreed-upon criteria and components that characterize a syllabus.

A syllabus is typically understood as **a structured outline** of topics to be covered in an educational or training course within a specific timeframe, guided by established policies. These topics may be determined by a board of examiners or designed by an individual

instructor, and are delivered through handouts, online platforms, or other means. In essence, a syllabus serves as a formal statement of the core content that students are expected to learn throughout the course.

Syllabus describes the whole academic content covered in a particular subject. It might be explained as a curriculum's practical implementation plan. It is provided to students at the beginning of the study process as a **detailed outline** of everything they will learn and submit within the subject. For students, syllabuses of different subjects help to schedule their time in advance to have enough time to submit all assignments and grasp the new information successfully. In terms of ESL/EFL teaching, a syllabus is defined as:

A description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught. Language-teaching syllabuses may be based on different criteria such as (a) grammatical items and (b) the language needed for different types of situations (c) the meanings and communicative functions, which the learner needs to express in the target language (d) the skills underlying different language behaviour or (e) the text types learners need to master.

(Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) adopt a content-oriented perspective, defining a syllabus as “a statement of what is to be learnt,” emphasizing its reflection of language and linguistic performance. Yalden (1987), however, highlights outcomes rather than content or procedures. He defines a syllabus as “a summary of the content to which learners will be exposed,” while stressing that what is taught does not necessarily or accurately predict what will be learnt.

From another angle, Nunan (1988) underscores the importance of accuracy in content selection as a defining feature of syllabi. He argues that a syllabus involves the careful selection of items to be learned and the organization of those items into an appropriate sequence.

The Syllabus usually contains the following sections: Instructor and subject information, Topics, Objectives and policies, Grading and Evaluation system, Learning resources, Assignment descriptions and deadlines.

A syllabus:

- 1- Consists of a comprehensive list of
 - content items (words, structures, topics)
 - process items (tasks, methods)
- 2- Is ordered (easier, more essential items first)
- 3- Has explicit document
- 4- Is a public document
- 5- May indicate a time schedule
- 6- May indicate preferred methodology or approach
- 7- May recommend materials

Figure1: Syllabus Characteristics

In summary, the syllabus is a vital educational tool that reinforces the intentions, attitudes, skills, roles, and strategies employed by the teacher or researcher to foster active, purposeful, and effective learning. While various definitions exist regarding the nature and components of a syllabus, it is essential to acknowledge the value of each. Taken together, these perspectives offer a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the syllabus as a pedagogical concept

b- The curriculum:

A curriculum can be defined as the overall framework that outlines the chapters, subjects, and academic content to be covered in a specific course or program. In theory, it refers to what a school, college, or university offers; in practice, however, it encompasses a much broader scope. A curriculum not only includes knowledge but also attitudes, behaviours, skills, and values that are instilled in students. It covers teaching methods, lessons, assignments, projects, study materials, presentations, assessments, and learning objectives, all aimed at fostering both intellectual and personal growth.

The curriculum is carefully planned, designed, and approved by educational authorities, such as government bodies in public institutions or higher administration in private

universities. It serves as a set of structured guidelines that indicate what professors should teach, how they should teach it, and for what purpose. In this sense, the curriculum represents a formalized combination of rules, techniques, and learning strategies intended to achieve the educational goals of a course. Its primary purpose is to ensure the holistic development of students, intellectual, physical, and emotional, through a balanced set of instructional content, resources, activities, and evaluation methods.

c- Syllabus VS curriculum

Within a number of dictionaries, syllabus is defined alongside curriculum; in other words, they are considered as synonymous notions. However, there is little consensus on this matter. Scholars consider curriculum as a wider terms and concept in comparison to syllabus. Curriculum, according to them consists of a wide range of subjects, activities and projects arranged for one institution. Richards (2001) notes that, in the UK, the curriculum represents the broader framework encompassing course planning, materials, methods, and evaluation, while a syllabus outlines specific content and structure within this framework. In the United States, the terms are often used interchangeably. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) emphasize that syllabi not only structure content into manageable units but also guide material selection, provide moral support for teachers and students, and serve as a basis for evaluation.

• Main Differences

1. The curriculum is a **general**, standardized description for the main study units of the educational institution. Beyond the study program or course, It may even relate to the whole university. On the contrary, Syllabus is a detailed content plan for a particular subject.
2. The curriculum is **mandatory**. It's more like a global strategy, with almost no space for alterations in implementation. The Syllabus is highly flexible and may even change during the study process based on professor-student verbal agreements.
3. The university authorities created the curriculum as a result of deeper analysis and discussions compared to Syllabus. The latter is designed based on the professor's creativity, preferences, and approaches.
4. The curriculum doesn't follow the personalized approach. It's the same for all the teachers and students. The curriculum may be changed to adopt a more personalized approach if there is an urgent need to refresh the old policy due to technology changes, and generation mentality. The Syllabus reflects the personal approach of the professor. Also, year-to-year

student review evaluations have an impact on students' individual preferences on Syllabus.

5. The level of seriousness of the curriculum assumes that it's created once for a significantly long-term period. The Syllabus is designed for a certain period of a class studying a subject.

6. The curriculum is mainly designed for teachers to plan their work, and there is usually no point in sharing it with students. On the opposite, Syllabus is given to students from the very beginning of their studies. It is mainly purposed to understand their benefits and responsibilities for the subject.

As a sum up, curriculum is a very general concept that involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors, which contribute to the planning of an educational program, while syllabus refers to the subpart of curriculum which is concerned with specification of what units will be taught.

Part Two: Syllabus Design

Introduction

Syllabus design is a fundamental component of curriculum development and language teaching. It refers to the process of planning, organizing, and sequencing the content, skills, and activities that learners are expected to acquire during a course of study. A well-designed syllabus not only outlines what is to be taught but also provides a roadmap that connects learners' needs, learning objectives, teaching methodologies, and assessment procedures. In the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), syllabus design plays a crucial role in ensuring that instruction is purposeful, coherent, and responsive to learners' linguistic and communicative needs. Ultimately, an effective syllabus serves as both a guide for teachers and a contract with students, clarifying expectations and shaping the overall learning experience.

a- Definition of Syllabus design

In designing a syllabus, the teacher/researcher must first consider the underlying methodological approach, as this determines both what to teach and the sequence in which it should be taught. A syllabus, serves as a shared framework that guides the teaching–learning process throughout the course. Robinson (2011) defines syllabus design as a set of decisions concerning the selection and sequencing of instructional units. Similarly, Nunan (1988, p. 5) views it as primarily concerned with the choice and grading of content. Harmer (2001, p. 295) further emphasizes that any type of syllabus should be developed with reference to

specific criteria, such as *learnability* and *frequency*, which help inform decisions about what content to include and how to organize it

b- Syllabus Design Criteria

Harmer (2001) came out with the belief that when syllabus designers put syllabuses together they have to think about each item for inclusion on the basis of a number of criteria. The criteria he came out with are described below.

-Learnability: Some structural or lexical items are easier for students to learn than others. Consequently, simpler language items are to be taught at first place then increase the level of difficulty as the learners' language level improves. Learnability implies that, at beginner levels, it is simpler to deal with the uses of *was* and *were* right after teaching *is* and *are*, rather than presenting the third conditional after *is* and *are*.

-Frequency: The inclusion of items which are more frequent in language, than those which are occasionally used by native speakers seems to have more sense especially at beginning levels. For instance, the verb *see* is less commonly used to indicate physical vision than it is to mean understand (eg. Oh, I see). Therefore, it is more logical to introduce learners first to this frequent, figurative meaning rather than the less common literal one.

-Coverage: Some words and structures have greater coverage (scope for use) than others. Thus it might be decided, on the basis of coverage, to introduce the going to future before the present continuous with future reference, if it could be shown that going to could be used in more situations than the present continuous.

-Usefulness: The reason that words like *book* and *pen* figure so highly in classroom (in spite of the fact that they might not be used so frequently in real language use) is due to their usefulness in that situation. Similarly, words related to family members take place early in a pupil's learning life because they are useful in the context of what pupils are linguistically able to talk about.

Tip: Things to consider when designing a syllabus

Designing a syllabus requires more than simply outlining topics and activities; it involves making informed decisions that shape the learning experience. A well-planned syllabus reflects the goals of the course, the needs of the learners, and the methodological approach of the teacher. It should balance clarity, flexibility, and relevance, ensuring that both instructors and students have a clear roadmap to follow. The following tips highlight key aspects to keep in mind when developing a syllabus.

1. The Students: When designing a syllabus, learners are the starting point. Their age, language proficiency, level of competence, goals, interests, and potential contributions must be considered. These factors influence content selection, learning pace, and the methods best suited to engage them.

2. The Task: Tasks represent what learners will do with the language. They include communication tasks (e.g., role-plays, discussions, problem-solving) and the development of language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Tasks should be meaningful, achievable, and linked to learners' real-life or academic needs.

3. The Text: Texts are the linguistic input provided to students. They may be written, spoken, or multimodal, and should be appropriate to learners' levels while also offering opportunities for challenge and growth. Texts are central to exposing learners to authentic language use.

4. External Constraints: These are factors beyond the teacher's direct control, such as time limitations, available resources, institutional requirements, terminal exams, and societal or parental expectations. They play a key role in shaping the scope and sequence of the syllabus.

5. Syllabus Format: The syllabus must be presented in a clear and organized format. This includes outlining course goals and objectives, specifying topics, activities, and skills to be covered, setting a realistic time frame, describing teaching and learning strategies, and clarifying requirements, expectations, and materials. The format serves as a roadmap for both teacher and students

c- Course Designers

Course designers occupy a central position within the teaching and learning environment, acting as strategic decision-makers who influence the quality and direction of education. Their work extends beyond the simple organization of content; it involves a deep understanding of how knowledge is structured, delivered, and evaluated. Recognizing the crucial role of course and content developers is therefore fundamental to ensuring that educational programs remain relevant, coherent, and aligned with learners' needs and institutional goals.

Syllabus designers embody multiple professional identities: they are teachers who understand learners' realities, researchers who base their decisions on evidence, evaluators who assess the effectiveness of their designs, artists who bring creativity into the learning experience, and critical thinkers who question, refine, and innovate. The design of a syllabus, therefore, is not a mechanical task but an intellectual and creative process that requires expertise, reflection, and sensitivity.

To fulfill their role effectively, syllabus designers should have:

- A broad understanding of linguistics and a deep familiarity with language acquisition theories, teaching methodologies, and learning psychology. This knowledge enables them to make informed decisions about content selection, task design, and sequencing.
- A well-defined theoretical foundation helps avoid misapplication or oversimplification of educational theories. Designers must be able to interpret and translate these concepts into practical, pedagogically sound decisions that meet learners' cognitive and communicative needs.
- Transparency and honesty are indispensable, particularly when conducting needs analysis, collecting data, or evaluating course outcomes. Any lack of rigor or bias may distort the course rationale and undermine the credibility of the entire syllabus.
- Demands commitment and careful planning by allocating sufficient time to research, consultation, and revision, ensuring that the resulting document is feasible, credible, and original.
- Engagement with experienced colleagues and other course designers which promotes reflection and innovation. Through sharing insights and feedback, designers can refine their ability to transform theoretical principles into meaningful classroom activities and ensure that chosen topics resonate with learners' interests and experiences.
- Materials, whether selected, adapted, or created, that reflect real-world language use and expose learners to different language varieties. This promotes communicative competence and prepares learners for diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.
- A syllabus that not only teach language but also represent culture as an integral dimension of learning. Designers must ensure that the materials and topics included promote gender balance and respect for social, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic

diversity. Culture should be presented as a dynamic concept that fosters intercultural understanding and critical awareness among learners.

d- Approaches to Syllabus Design

Syllabus design is thought to be based essentially on a decision about the 'units' of classroom activity, and the sequence in which they are to be performed (Robinson, 1998). Syllabi can be divided into two different types: Product-Oriented Syllabi and Process Oriented Syllabi (Long & Crookes, 1992; Long & Robinson, 1998). The following figure categorises the different types:

Different Approaches to Syllabus Design	
<i>Product-Oriented Syllabuses</i>	<i>Process-Oriented Syllabuses</i>
The Structural/Grammatical Syllabus	The Skill-Based Syllabus
The Notional/Functional Syllabus	The Content-Based Syllabus
The Situational Syllabus	The Task-Based Syllabus
The Lexical Syllabus	

Figure2: Approaches to Syllabus Design

Product oriented syllabi focus on what learners will know as a result of instruction and they typically list a selection of graded items to be 'learnt' by the learners. Nunan (1988) explains that product oriented syllabuses focus mainly on the skills and knowledge the learner is supposed to gain after the instructional period. While Rabbini (2002) believes that product oriented syllabuses focus more on what the learner will know at the end of a given instruction session. We can deduct from these two viewpoints that this approach takes into account the assessment and evaluation more seriously and it is strongly based on the pre- stated objectives.

On the other hand, the focus in Process-Oriented Syllabi is on the pedagogic processes of how outcomes of teaching and learning can be achieved. Brown (1995) lists seven basic syllabus types: “structural, situational, topical, functional, notional, skills-based and task-based and these can be linked to specific teaching approaches and methods.” (p.7). Process oriented syllabuses according to Nunan (1988) focus more on the learning experience themselves. This approach is analytical in nature. In other words, it is developed as a result of an expected or unexpected failure in a given product oriented course to remedy the negative results and enhance communicative language skills. Thus, it is a process and not a product.

To elaborate, the course will no more focus on what students will be able to do, but on the specification of learning tasks, exercises, and activities that the students will be taking during the course.

A good and valid syllabus is that covers more or less all aspects of both process and product oriented syllabi; therefore, proper and appropriate implementation of syllabus in language teaching is undeniable. Without proper implementation of syllabus, on the one hand, desired objectives will be hard to obtain and on the other hand students will suffer from the lack of appropriate syllabus which could fulfil their immediate pedagogical requirements and sharpen their abilities in different areas of language.

Activity1:

Task: Based on the curriculum goal and the information in the table, list down the syllabus objectives, specific course objectives, and the specific learning outcomes of the same course (Make sure to use Bloom's verbs) .

Target Audience: English Language Learners (Intermediate level)

Curriculum Goal:

To provide English language learners with the practical language skills and cultural understanding needed to confidently communicate in a variety of everyday situations.

Syllabus Title: Functional English

Sequence	Topics	Skills Focus
1- Introductions and Personal Information	-Greeting, -Introducing yourself, -Personal details, -Family, -Relationships	- Speaking: Role-play introductions - Writing: Filling forms - Reading: Short bios - Listening: Conversations between strangers
2- Daily Life and Routines	-Daily activities, -Schedules, -Habits,	- Speaking: Describing routines - Writing: A paragraph about a typical day

	-Time expressions	- Reading: Timetables - Listening: Audio about daily activities
3- Food and Eating Out	-Food vocabulary, -Ordering, favorite dishes, -Recipes	- Speaking: Role-play ordering food - Writing: A recipe or review - Reading: Menus - Listening: Conversations in restaurants
4-Travel and Transportation	-Asking/giving directions, -Booking tickets, -Travel experiences	- Speaking: Giving directions - Writing: Travel itinerary - Reading: Maps/travel brochures - Listening: Station/airport announcements
5-Shopping and Money	-Clothes, -Groceries, -Prices, -Preferences, -Comparing items	- Speaking: Store dialogues - Writing: Shopping list/comparison - Reading: Ads/product descriptions - Listening: Customer service interactions
6-Free Time and Hobbies	-Leisure activities, -Likes/dislikes, -Planning with friends	- Speaking: Discussing hobbies - Writing: Diary entry - Reading: Magazine articles - Listening: Planning activities
7-Technology and Communication	-Social media, -Online communication, -Technology's impact	- Speaking: Explaining devices - Writing: Emails/messages - Reading: Blog posts/reviews - Listening: Tutorials/tech conversations
8- Celebrations and Traditions	-Holidays, -Festivals,	- Speaking: Sharing about holidays

	-Cultural traditions, -Global celebrations	- Writing: Paragraph about a festival - Reading: Articles on traditions - Listening: Stories about celebrations
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Activity2:

Using the information in the box, students are asked to design two different basic syllabi one is product and the other is process

<p><u>EFL Curriculum Aim</u></p> <p>The overall goal of this EFL curriculum is <u>to develop L1 students' English language proficiency to a level where they can use English confidently and accurately in academic, professional, and everyday settings.</u> The curriculum <u>will focus on enhancing listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary,</u> with particular emphasis on academic language skills.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Subjects (modules) to be taught are:</u></p> <p>Grammar & Structure, Vocabulary Development, Listening & Speaking, Reading & Critical Analysis, Writing & Composition, Research Skills...</p>
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Samples provided to the students of “Grammar & Composition Syllabus” and “Listening & Speaking Syllabus”

Feature	Grammar Syllabus	Listening and Speaking Syllabus
Syllabus Objectives	1. Develop precise and accurate grammar skills for academic writing.	1. Enhance students' listening comprehension and speaking fluency.
	2. Enable students to produce structured, coherent, and grammatically correct written texts.	2. Encourage active participation and interaction in spoken communication.
	3. Prepare students to produce polished, publication-quality academic writing.	3. Build confidence in expressing ideas verbally in various contexts.

	4. Foster self-editing and revision skills to improve writing quality.	4. Develop effective listening strategies to infer meaning and respond.
Topics	- Basic Sentence Construction	- Everyday Conversations
	- Paragraph Development	- Listening for Main Ideas
	- Essay Structure	- Listening for Details
	- Grammar for Academic Writing	- Role Plays and Simulations
	- Argumentative Writing	- Discussions and Debates
	- Summarizing and Paraphrasing	- Presentations and Public Speaking
	- Research-Based Writing	- Listening to Authentic Materials
	- Advanced Composition	- Giving and Receiving Feedback
Types of Activities	- Portfolio creation of structured sentences and paragraphs	- Group discussions and pair work
	- Peer review of essays for grammatical accuracy	- Role-playing scenarios
	- Drafting, revising, and editing essays	- Listening exercises using audio clips and video
	- Workshops on thesis statements and argument structure	- Presentations with audience interaction
	- Grammar quizzes and assessments	- Listening to various accents and dialects
	- Writing workshops focused on specific genres (e.g., research, argumentative)	- Feedback sessions to enhance speaking skills
	- Final submission of polished written products	- Reflective journals on speaking experiences
Assessment Method	Evaluation based on the quality of final written products <u>Feedback mechanisms:</u> Written feedback on essays and assignments	Assessment based on participation, fluency, and comprehension in speaking tasks <u>Feedback mechanisms:</u> Verbal feedback during activities and

		discussions
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References

Richards, J.C (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Essex, England: Longman.

Nunan, D. (1988) *Syllabus Design*. Oxford University Press.

Lecture Two: Planning for Syllabus Design Process

- Needs Analysis/Situation Analysis
- Setting Syllabus Objectives/Outcomes

Part One: Needs Analysis/Situation Analysis

Introduction

When designing a language course, it's important to understand who your learners are and the context in which the learning is going to take place; this is done through conducting needs and situation analyses, respectively. These will form the foundation of course design.

a- Needs analysis

Assessing the needs of prospective learners is deemed the initial stage of planning a language course; the process involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data from learners using a number of methods. The result of needs analysis is a representative list of language **items, ideas or skills** that will be covered in the course.

✓ Defining Needs

The term *need* underlies three concepts as suggested by Macalister & Nation (2011): **necessities, wants, and lacks**. Other synonyms can be used to refer to the same concept, such as desires, demands, expectations, motivations, constraints, and requirements.

Berwick (1989, p. 52) identifies the term *need* as “a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state.” So, a need is the gap existing between

the level or situation of learners before being exposed to a given content, and what they are expected to be as a result of instruction

✓ **Defining Needs Analysis**

Performing an informative analysis of the needs of learners is at the heart of syllabus design for it facilitates the task of choosing a suitable content for learners. According to Graves (2000), a needs analysis is “a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students’ needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making course decisions based on the interpretations in order to meet the needs” (p. 98). Through a needs analysis we seek to discover the learners’ abilities, needs, and purposes for learning.

A popular model for assessing learner needs was proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) who famously categorised needs into “necessities”, “lacks”, and “wants”.

1-Necessities: What the learner has to know to function effectively in the L2

2-Lacks: What the learner knows and does not already know about the L2

3-Wants: What the learner thinks they need from learning the L2

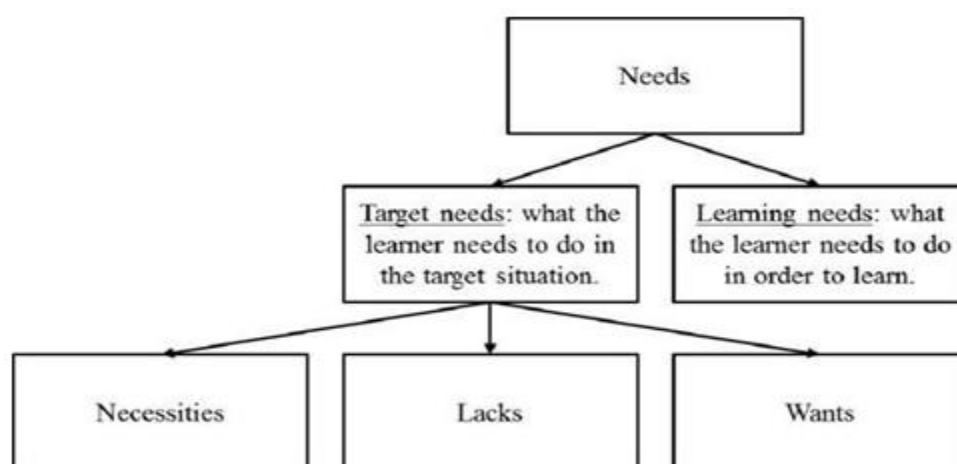


Figure3: Types of Needs

We can discover the learners’ necessities, lacks, and wants through testing, interviewing, recalling past performance, consulting involved parties such as teachers, analysing samples

of texts, and investigating the situation where the L2 will be used.

The **task of collecting information** about the needs of learners involves the participation of the following stakeholders: policy makers, ministry of education officials, teachers, students, academics, specialists, employers, parents, influential individuals

As for the **methods** of data collection, they include the following: questionnaires, interviews, meetings, observation, learners' language samples, task analysis, case studies, and analysis of available information, learner's diaries or journals, discussions.

✓ **The Process**

The process of needs assessment involves a set of decisions, actions, and reflections, that are cyclical in nature:

- Deciding what information to gather and why;
- Deciding the best way to gather it: when, how and from whom; – Gathering the information;
- Interpreting the information;
- Acting on the information;
- Evaluating the effect and effectiveness of the action;

As regards the different types of information that can be gathered about prospective learners, they include the following:

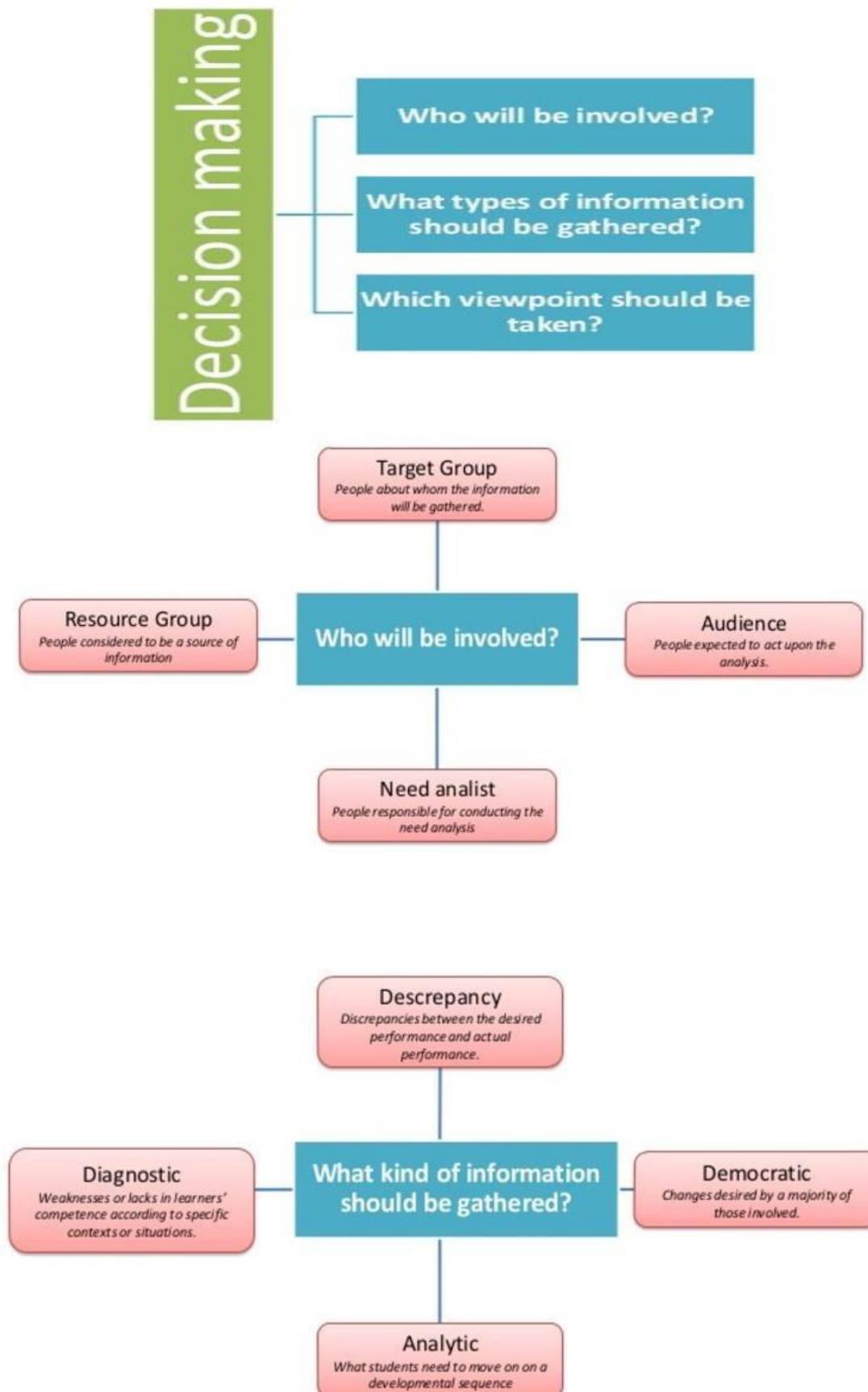
- Who are the learners?
- Learners' level of language proficiency
- Learners' level of intercultural competence
- Their interests, learning preferences, and attitudes
- Their goals and expectations
- The target contexts: situations, roles, topics, and content
- Types of communicative skills they will need and tasks they will perform
- Language modalities (speaking, reading, listening, writing) they will use in the target language (Graves, 2000)

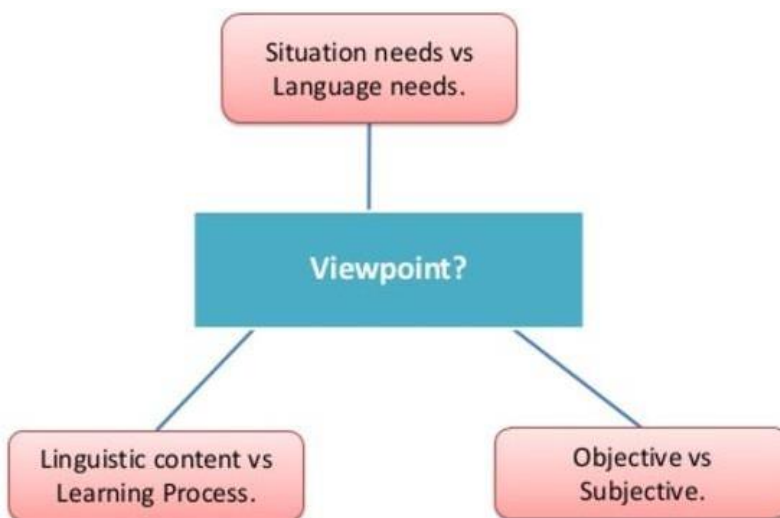
Brown (1995), also, states the following as the basic procedures for needs analysis:

- Making basic decisions
- Gathering information
- Using the gathered information.

We illustrate each step (previously mentioned) using diagrams for more clarification.

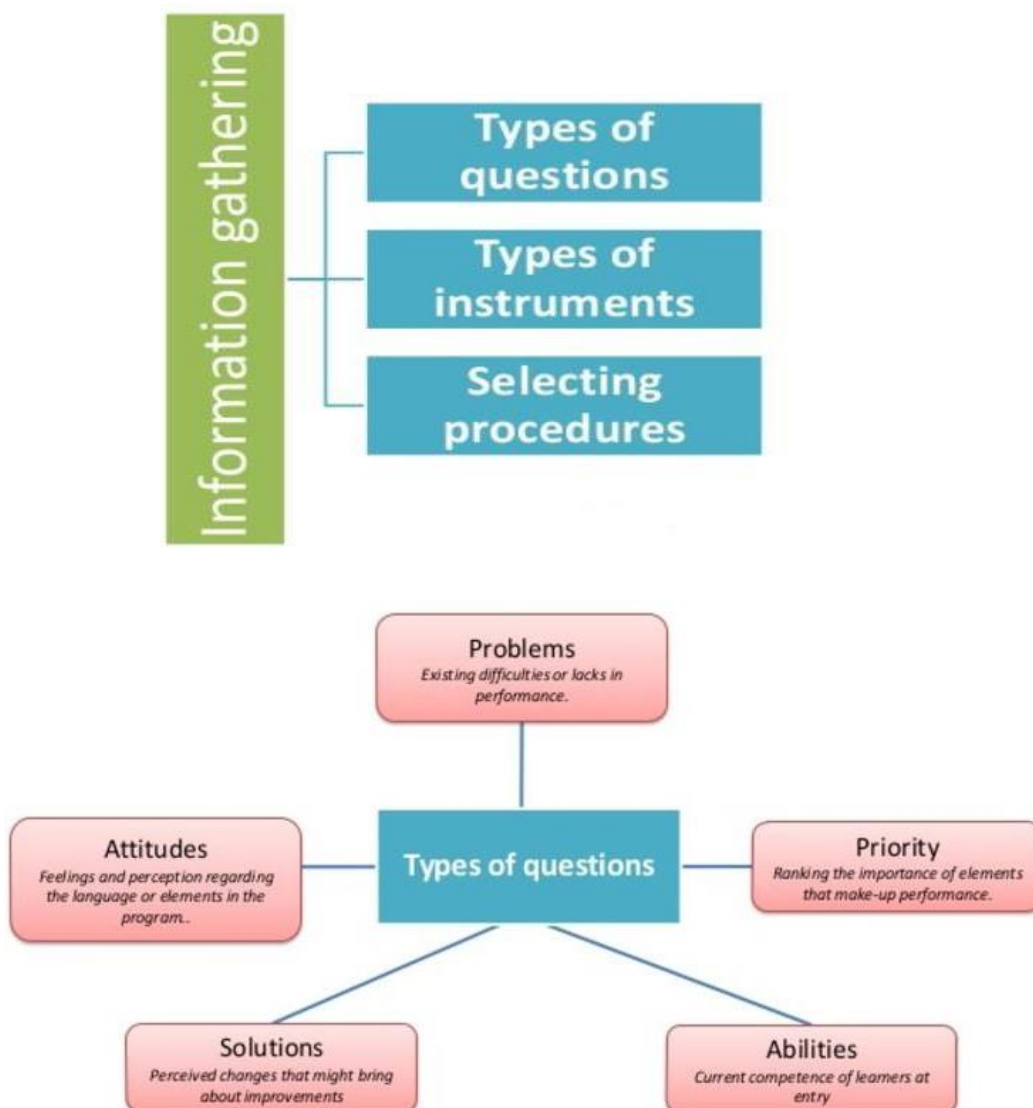
1- Making Basic Decisions





Brown (1995, p. 38-39)

2- Gathering Information



According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), sources of information during the needs analysis procedure are as follows:

- Learners
- People working/studying in the field
- Ex-Students
- Documents in the field
- Stakeholders (clients, employers)
- ESP research.

On the other hand, Brown (1995) considers the following elements as sources of information in needs analysis:

- Learners
- Teachers, administrators, and native speakers in the target context
- Documents in the field
- Content teachers
- ESP research (literature)
- Existing information (records).

3- Instruments and Procedures

It is essential for researchers and designers to rely on organised instruments that help them categorise the information stated on the last section and ensure the feasibility and validity of their questions and the outcomes that come after. Here is a list of data gathering tools, which the designer can rely on (Dudley-Evans and St John , 1998):

- Questionnaire
- Discourse analysis
- Discussion
- Structured interview

- Observations
- Assessments.

Another list provided by Brown (1995):

- Tests
- Observations
- Interviews
- Meetings
- Questionnaires

b- The Purpose of Needs Analysis

The emergence of needs analysis was due to the high demand of courses for specialized language. However, needs analysis in language teaching in general serves particular purposes, according to Richards (2001) he states the following:

- To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student;
- To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students;
- To determine which students from a group are most in need of a training in particular language skill;
- To identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important;
- To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do;
- To collect information about a particular situation or a problem.

C-Situation analysis

✓ **Defining Situation Analysis**

One of the initial stages of course design is the analysis of the context, otherwise known as *situation analysis* (Richards, 2001) or *environment analysis* (Nation & Macalister, 2010). It

is sometimes known as *SWOT analysis* as it is concerned with examining internal **strengths** and **weaknesses** as well as external **opportunities** and **threats** to the implementation of a language program

It is “The identification of key factors that might positively or negatively affect the implementation of a curriculum plan and the study of the direct and indirect effects a proposed curriculum will have on the students, on other programs, on other people in and outside the institution. Such factors could be political, social, economic, institutional, administrative, etc.”

When conducting a situation analysis, we can ask the question what social, economic, political, educational, and institutional factor impact the curriculum? Through conducting a situation analysis we can make sure that the course is suitable, practical, and realistic.

d- A situation analysis model (Dubin and Olshtain’s, 1986)

There are four external factors, the language setting, patterns of language use in society, the political and national context, and group and individual attitudes, that help us to determine who the learners are, who the teachers are, why the course is necessary, where the course will be implemented, and how the course will be implemented.

- ✓ **Factors that can facilitate or hinder the implementation of an educational curriculum:**
 - **Societal factors:** to determine the impact that certain groups in society have on a language program, such as policy makers, parents, educational officials, educational organizations, employers, and associations of civil society.
 - **Institutional factors:** to check the school’s physical resources (including classroom facilities, technological resources, and library resources), administrative support within the school, and communication between teachers and the administration.
 - **Teacher factors:** Training, qualifications, teaching experience, beliefs, teaching style, skill and expertise, morale and motivation of the teaching staff.
 - **Learner factors:** Background, expectations, beliefs, and preferred learning styles of learners.
 - **Classroom factors:** classroom factors such as class size, teacher availability, time, and learner motivation. These factors can either lead to favouring (positive) or disfavouring (negative) conditions that we must factor into our course design. For example, if it is known that class sizes are going to be large then this would be reflected in the materials design with

for example a large amount of group work and use of special large class techniques such as think, pair, share. On the contrary, if it is known that class sizes will be small, activities such as individual presentations can be factored into the course design.

<i>People</i>	<i>Physical setting</i>
students how many, age, gender, culture(s), other language(s), purpose(s), education, profession, experience,	location of school: convenience, setting classroom: size, furniture light, noise always same classroom?
other stakeholders school administrators parents funders community	
<i>Nature of course and institution</i>	<i>Teaching Resources</i>
type/purpose of course mandatory, open enrollment relation to current/previous courses prescribed curriculum or not required tests or not	materials available required text? develop own materials? equipment: cassettes, video, photocopying clerical support
<i>Time</i>	
how many hours total over what span of time how often class meets for how long each time day of week, time of day where fits in schedule of students students' timeliness	

Figure4: Factors to consider

✓ The process

As regards the process of gathering information about the above factors, it involves the same procedures employed in needs analysis:

- Consultations with parents, students, teachers, administrators, and government officials;
- Study and analysis of relevant documents, such as government reports, ministry of education guidelines, teaching materials, and curriculum documents;
- Classroom observation of teachers and students in relevant settings;
- Surveys of opinions of relevant parties;
- Review of available literature related to the subject matter (Richards, 2001)

Activity1

Search for online samples of Needs analysis questionnaires/research papers for EFL. What types of needs do you think they seek to identify? How can the results influence course design (syllabus, materials, teaching methodology)?

Activity2: A scenario

If an overseas teacher (from the UK) who had never been to your country (Algeria) before was hired to teach English at the department of English language at The University of Abbes Laghrour, what are the things he or she should consider about the students of English before designing their language course?

Part Two: Setting Objectives and Outcomes

Introduction

When designing a syllabus, it is crucial to distinguish between goals, objectives, and outcomes, as each plays a different role in structuring the teaching and learning process. Making this distinction allows instructors to plan more effectively, ensuring that what they intend to teach (goals and objectives) is clearly aligned with what students are expected to achieve (outcomes). Without this clarity, courses risk becoming vague or unfocused, leaving learners unsure of what is expected of them and teachers uncertain about how to measure progress. By differentiating between these elements, teachers can create coherent and purposeful syllabi that guide instruction and support meaningful learning experiences.

a- Definitions

The terms objectives and outcomes are often used interchangeably and they are all related to the teaching and learning that is expected to take place in the classroom. However, the difference between goals or objectives and outcomes lies in the emphasis on **who will be performing the activities**. Learning goals and objectives generally **describe what an instructor or institution aims to do**, whereas, a learning outcome describes in **observable and measurable terms what a student is able to do as a result of completing a learning experience** (e.g., course, project, or unit).

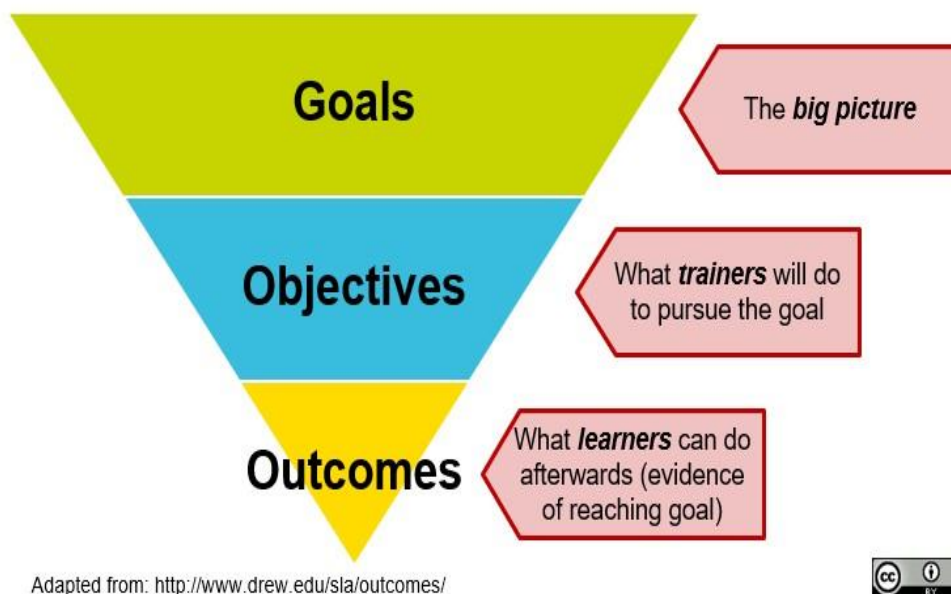


Figure5: From Goals to Outcomes

1- A goal is a broad definition of **student competence**. In Brown’s words (1995, p. 71), goals are “general statements concerning desirable and attainable program purposes and aims.” Goals are rather broadly based aims and purposes in an educational context, and are therefore more appropriately associated with whole programs, courses, or perhaps sizable modules within a course (Brown & Lee, 2015).

It is noteworthy that both *aims* and *goals* are used interchangeably in pedagogical literature (Richards, 2001).

For example, a goal of a writing class is being able to write a short paragraph about summer holidays. Learners are supposed to achieve that goal after a series of lessons about writing and combining simple sentences, among others.

Other examples of goals include:

Example1- Students will be competent in critical questioning and analysis.

Example2- Students will have an appreciation of the necessity and difficulty of making ethnical choices.

Example3- Students will know how to make connections among apparently disparate forms of knowledge.

• Goal, Purpose & Characteristics

- ✓ Are general statements of the program's purposes;
- ✓ Focus on what the program hopes to accomplish in the future ... what the students should be able to do when they leave the program;
- ✓ Serve as one basis for developing more precise and observable objectives;
- ✓ Should never be viewed as permanent. (Brown, 1995, p. 71-72)

2- Objectives

Specific statements that describe the particular knowledge, behaviours, and/or skills that the learner will be expected to know or perform at the end of a course or program (Brown, 1995, p. 73). Also, specifications of "what the learners should be able to do as a result of instruction" (Nunan & Lamb, 2001, p. 41)



a- A course objective describes what a teacher will cover in each course (lecture).

Examples of objectives include:

Example 1- Teach students the use of present simple and past simple tenses for describing routines and past events.

Example2 -Provide practice in listening for main ideas in short, conversational dialogues.

Example3 -Introduce vocabulary related to common social interactions, such as greetings, ordering food, and asking for directions.

b- Syllabus objectives describe what a teacher will cover in a whole syllabus

Example1-Introduce students to the fundamental grammar structures of English and reinforce understanding through practice.

Example2 -Develop students' ability to comprehend spoken English through listening exercises.

Example3-Increase vocabulary to enable students to discuss a range of everyday topics.

Workable objectives are usually thought of as being SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based.

• **Advantages of Objectives**

According to Brown (1995), there are advantages that can be derived from the use of objectives in planning lessons:

- Objectives help teachers to convert the perceived needs of the students into teaching points.
- They help teachers to clarify and organize their teaching points.
- They help teachers to think through the skills and sub-skills underlying different instructional points.
- They help teachers to decide on what they want the students to be able to do at the end of instruction.
- They help teachers to decide on the appropriate level of specificity for the teaching activities that will be used.
- Objectives help teachers by providing a blueprint for the development of tests and other evaluation instruments.
- They help teachers to adopt, develop, or adapt teaching materials that maximally match the students' needs.
- They help teachers to develop professionally by letting them focus on just what it is that they are trying to accomplish in the classroom.
- They help teachers to evaluate each learner's progress, as well as overall program effectiveness, by permitting the systematic study, modification, and improvement of their perceptions of students' needs, course objectives, tests, materials, teaching, and evaluation procedures.
- Objectives help teachers to contribute to and learn from an ongoing process of curriculum development that draws on the collective energy and strengths of all of the teachers in a program to lessen the load of each individual (p. 96)

• **From Needs to Objectives**

The following diagram is designed based on different sources (Brown, 1995; Nunan, 1998,

Nunan & Lamb, 2001); it helps novice designers to revise collected knowledge on the subject matter into one simple source of input.

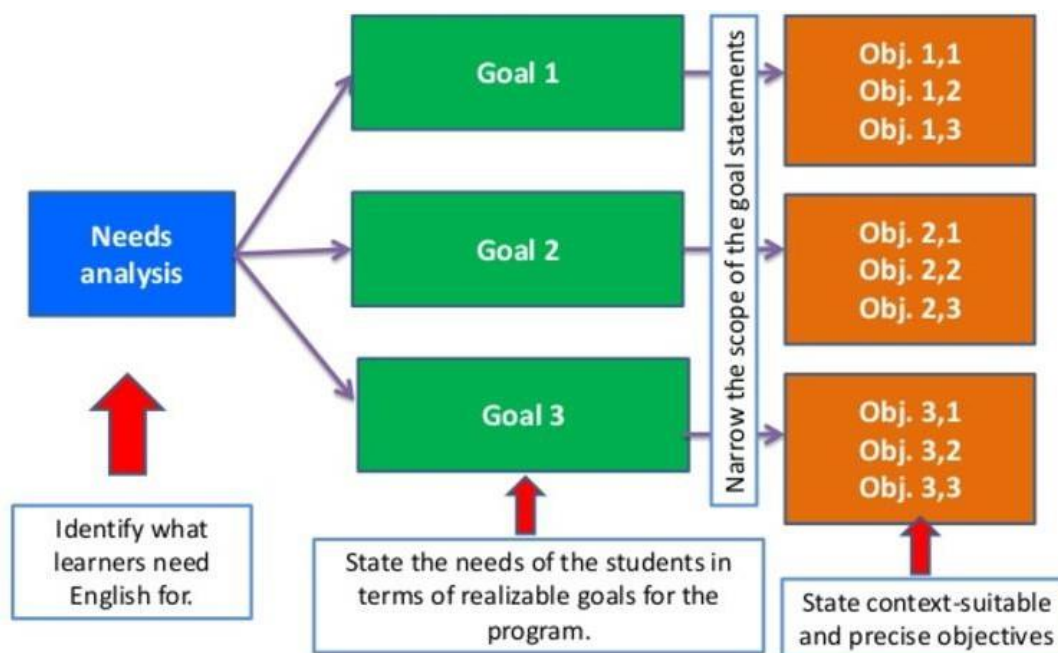


Figure6: From needs to objectives

3- Learning Outcomes

Sometimes referred to as **Exit levels**, an exit level is a brief statement that describes an expected outcome by the end of instruction.

a- Course outcomes: they describe the measurable skills, abilities, knowledge or values that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of completing a course. **They are student-centered** rather than teacher-centered, in that they describe what **the students will do**, not what the instructor will teach. Examples:

Example1 -By the end of this course, students will be able to introduce themselves and others using simple sentences.”

Example2 -Students will be able to understand and use basic grammar structures, including subject-verb agreement in the present tense.”

Example3 -Students will be able to write a short paragraph describing a routine or event using basic vocabulary and structures.

b- Curriculum Outcomes:

Example1- Upon completing the EFL program, students will be able to engage in conversations on familiar topics using appropriate grammar and vocabulary.

Example2- Students will demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to simple spoken English in everyday contexts.

Example 3- Students will be able to read and understand short, factual texts in English.

The figure below shows the expected exit levels (outcomes) of Algerian learners of English in middle schools for the academic year 2020-2021.

YEAR	STATEMENT OF THE EXIT LEVEL/PROFILE
MS1	At the end of level 1 (1st year middle school), the learner will be able to interact, interpret and produce short oral and written messages texts of descriptive type, using written, visual or oral supports, in meaningful situations of communication related to his environment and interests.
MS2	At the end of MS2, the learner will be able to interact, interpret and produce short oral and written messages / texts of descriptive, and prescriptive type, using written, visual or oral support, in meaningful situations of communication related to his environment and interests.
MS3	By the end of Key Stage 2 (end of MS3), the learner will be able to interact, interpret and produce oral and written messages/ texts of average complexity, of a descriptive, narrative, argumentative or prescriptive type, using verbal or non-verbal supports (written texts, audio and visual aids) and in meaningful situations related to his environment and interests.
MS4	By the end of the middle school cycle (end of Key Stage 3), the learner will be able to interact, interpret and produce oral and written messages/ texts of average complexity, of a descriptive, narrative, argumentative or prescriptive type, using verbal or non-verbal supports (written texts, audio and visual aids) and in meaningful situations related to his environment and interests.

Figure7: Learning Outcomes of Middle School Learners

The following Figure shows the expected outcomes of Algerian learners of English in secondary schools for the academic year 2020-2021.

YEAR	STREAM	STATEMENT OF THE EXIT LEVEL/PROFILE
SE1	Lit	At the end of SE1, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages / texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 120 words using written or oral support.
	Sc & Tech	At the end of SE1, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages / texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 120 words using written or oral support.
SE2	Lit	At the end of SE2, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages/texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 15 lines, using written or oral support.
	FL	At the end of SE2, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages/texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 150 words, using written or oral support.
	Sc	At the end of SE2, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages/texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 150 words, using written or oral support.
	Eco	At the end of SE2, the learner will be able to produce oral/written messages/texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 150 words, using written or oral support.
SE3	Lit & FL	At the end of SE3, the learner must produce written messages/texts of descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository and prescriptive types of about 20 lines, using written or oral support.

Figure8: Expected Outcomes

The outcomes of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* scales the learners' achievements in foreign languages in six levels as shown in figure 9.

The different expected outcomes of each level are presented in the table below:

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding,

		longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express himself/ herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography,

		employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where s/he lives, people s/he knows and things s/he has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Table1: Common Reference Levels: Global Scale (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 2)

Course Tip!

Remember Bloom's taxonomy Verbs.

When creating outcomes you can use verbs that map to different levels of learning. Also think about how a learner could demonstrate they have achieved the outcome - this is linked to evaluation and assessment. Using **SMART objectives** can also help - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant, time-based.

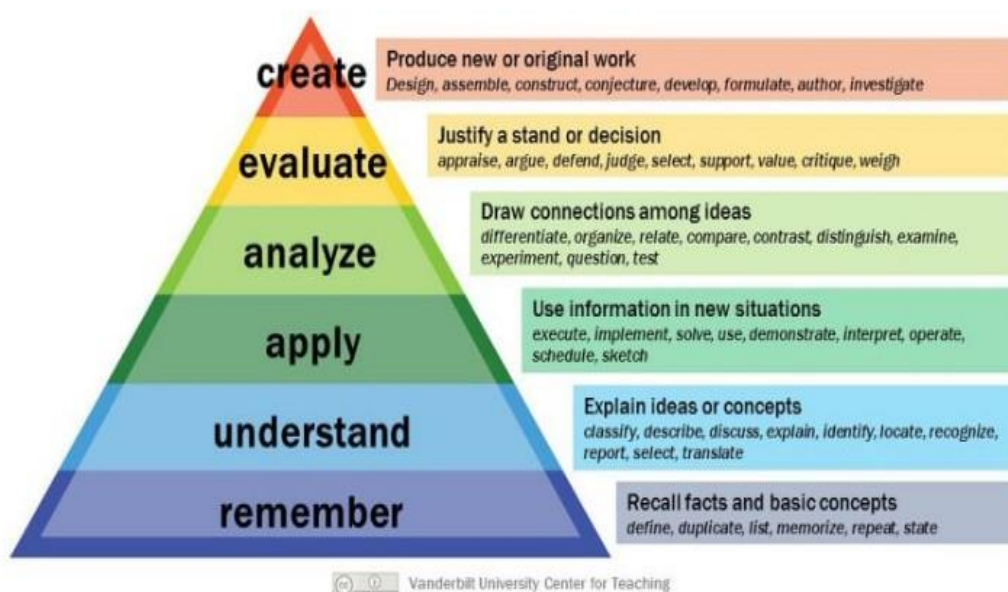


Figure10: Bloom's Taxonomy verbs

References:

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Lecture Three: Syllabus Components & Content Selection and Organization

- Syllabus Components
- General Course Info
- Entry and Exit Levels
- Course Content Selection and Design
- Learning Resources
- Scope and Sequences
- Course Calendar
- Creating user-friendly syllabus

Quotes to discuss

“Information on the learner’s language needs will help in drawing up a profile to establish coherent objectives and take subsequent decisions on course content.”

McDonough (1984, p. 29)

“The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don’t tell you what to see”.

Alexandra K. Trenfor

Part One: Syllabus Components

Introduction

A well-structured syllabus is built on key components that provide both teachers and students with a clear framework for the learning process. These components typically outline the course content, teaching methods, materials, assessment procedures, and policies, ensuring that all aspects of the course are transparent and organized. Understanding the role of each component is essential, as together they form a roadmap that guides classroom activities, supports learning objectives, and sets expectations for both instructors and learners.

The form and content of a syllabus vary widely by discipline, department, course and instructor. However, there are common components that most successful syllabi contain. These components communicate to your students an accurate description of the course including the topics that will be covered, assignments and assessments students will be responsible for, as well as a clear source for policies and expectations.

➤ **General Course Information**

The **general information** section of a course represents the foundation upon which the entire syllabus is built. It provides a comprehensive overview of the course's essential components and ensures transparency between the instructor and the learners. For syllabus designers, it is crucial to include this information clearly and systematically, as it helps students understand the course structure, expectations, and learning pathways from the outset.

While the specific format and presentation may vary according to the designer's preferences or institutional requirements, the general course information typically includes the following key elements:

- **Table of Contents:** A structured overview of the syllabus components and their order, allowing students to easily navigate the document.
- **Type of Instruction, Learning, and Interaction:** A description of how the course will be delivered, whether through lectures, discussions, workshops, online activities, or blended learning, and how interaction will take place between students and the instructor.
- **Instructor Information:** Essential details about the course instructor, including name, academic title, office hours, contact information, and preferred communication channels.
- **Letter to the Students:** A brief introductory message from the instructor that welcomes learners, establishes rapport, and outlines the instructor's vision, expectations, and teaching philosophy.
- **Purpose of the Course:** A concise statement explaining the general aim of the course and how it fits within the broader program or curriculum.
- **Course Description:** A summary that provides an overview of the course content, main themes, and the skills or knowledge learners are expected to develop.

- **Course and Unit Objectives:** Clearly defined goals and measurable learning outcomes, both at the overall course level and for each instructional unit or module.
- **Course Calendar:** A detailed schedule outlining the sequence of topics, key activities, due dates for assignments, and assessment timelines.
- **Course Requirements and Tools:** Specifies the assignments, projects, and examinations that students must complete. These should directly reflect the course objectives and promote various skill areas such as communication, research, writing, conflict resolution, and academic literacy. Also, lists the supplementary materials and digital tools that support student learning, such as online platforms, dictionaries, note-taking apps, and collaborative tools.
- **Evaluation Methods & Grading Procedures:** Describes the types of assessment to be used (e.g., formative, summative, self-assessment, peer review) and how they measure learning outcomes. Explains how grades will be calculated, the weight of each assessment component, and the types of feedback students will receive to support improvement.
- **Resources and Instructional Technologies:** A list of required and recommended materials such as textbooks, articles, online platforms, software, and technological tools that support learning.

Together, these elements serve as a **roadmap** for both instructors and students, ensuring that the teaching/learning process is coherent, organized, and aligned with the intended educational outcomes.

➤ **Course Description**

The course description serves as a concise yet comprehensive overview of the course. It introduces students to the key themes, objectives, and learning experiences they will encounter, while also situating the course within the broader context of the discipline. An effective course description provides learners with a clear understanding of **what the course covers, why it matters, and what they can expect to achieve** by the end of the term.

1. Course Content: This section outlines the core topics and themes that the course will explore. It explains the importance, relevance, and potential applications of the content, helping students see how it connects to their academic program, professional interests, or real-world issues. The description should highlight what makes the course engaging and meaningful, emphasizing how it contributes to the overall curriculum or discipline.

2. Learning Objectives: Learning objectives specify the expected outcomes of the course in measurable terms. They describe what students should be able to know, do, or demonstrate by the end of the course. Effective objectives focus on observable and assessable skills, such as the ability to identify, analyze, compare, apply, or produce, rather than vague abilities like appreciate or understand. These objectives serve as a guide for both teaching and assessment, ensuring alignment between instruction, learning activities, and evaluation.

3. Characteristics of Class Meetings: This part clarifies the instructional methods and learning formats that will be used throughout the course. It informs students about the nature of classroom interactions and what kind of participation is expected. For example, will the course involve lectures, seminar-style discussions, small-group activities, presentations, workshops, or practical **sessions**?

4. Logistics: The logistical details provide practical information essential for course participation. This includes the instructor's and teaching assistants' names, their contact information (email, office hours, and office location), and preferred modes of communication. It should also specify where and when the class meets, how course materials (textbooks, readings, or online resources) can be accessed, and any necessary digital platforms or tools students will use (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom, Teams)

➤ **Instructor Information**

On the first page, or in the form of an introductory information card, the syllabus should include a section dedicated to instructor information. This element is essential for establishing clear communication between students and the teacher from the outset. By providing accurate and accessible contact details, the syllabus helps students know how and when they can reach their instructor for questions, feedback, or academic support.

The information presented in this section may vary depending on institutional policy or the instructor's preferences. At minimum, it should include key details such as:

- The instructor's full name and academic title
- Department or program affiliation
- Office location and office hours
- Email address (and preferred times or conditions for contact)
- Phone number (if appropriate for professional communication)
- Class meeting times and location

To enhance accessibility and student engagement, the instructor may also choose to include additional resources or personal academic links, such as:

- A link to their professional webpage, blog, or learning platform (e.g., Google Classroom, Moodle, Teams)
- Links to academic profiles used for educational purposes (e.g., ResearchGate, LinkedIn...etc)
- A list of recommended readings, texts, or reference materials that reflect the instructor's scholarly interests and teaching philosophy

Including this information not only humanizes the instructor but also fosters a sense of approachability and openness. It signals to students that communication and collaboration are valued components of the learning process. Moreover, making this section visually clear, through a boxed layout, color coding, or an instructor profile card, enhances readability and professional presentation within the syllabus

A sample: Language Didactics Syllabus Card (L1)

Course Title: Language Didactics	Number of Credit Hours: 3
Semester and Year of Offering: Fall 2024	
Class Meeting Days and Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	
Class Meeting Location: Room 203, Humanities Building	
Instructor: Dr. Emily Hart	
Contact Information:	
Phone: (123) 456-7890	Email: emily.hart@university.edu
Office Location: Room 314, Department of Language Studies	
Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM, or by appointment	

Figure4: Instructor Information on a Syllabus Card

➤ **Course Policies**

Course policies refer to the set of rules, expectations, and behavioral guidelines mutually understood by both the teacher and the learners to ensure a smooth, respectful, and effective teaching–learning experience. These policies establish the framework for classroom conduct, academic integrity, attendance, participation, and assessment procedures.

Typically, the instructor presents the course policies in a written section of the syllabus and takes time to explain and discuss them with students during the first class session. This open discussion allows learners to ask questions, seek clarification, and acknowledge their responsibility to comply with the established guidelines. A well-defined policy section helps prevent misunderstandings and fosters a sense of fairness, accountability, and mutual respect.

Below are key areas and example questions that help guide the formulation of course policies:

1. Attendance and Participation Policies

- Do you have a specific attendance policy? If so, what are its requirements and limits (e.g., maximum number of absences allowed)?
- How will attendance be recorded, and how does it affect the final grade?
- What are your expectations regarding punctuality, participation, and engagement in classroom or online discussions?

- Are students expected to notify the instructor in advance of absences, and how should they do so (e.g., by email or through the learning platform)?

2. Submission and Deadlines

- How are late submissions handled? Are there penalties or grace periods?
- What is the policy regarding missed assignments, projects, tests, or exams?
- Under what conditions can students request extensions or make-up work (e.g., illness, emergencies, justified absences)?
- What format and submission methods are required (e.g., online upload, printed copy, email submission)?

3. Use of Technology and Devices

- What are the expectations for the use of laptops, tablets, and mobile phones during class sessions?
- Are there restrictions on recording lectures, taking photos, or using digital tools?
- Are students encouraged to use their devices for academic purposes (e.g., research, online exercises, and dictionary use)?
- What guidelines ensure that technology supports rather than distracts from the learning process?

Additional Policy Areas (optional but recommended):

- **Academic Integrity:** Expectations regarding plagiarism, collaboration, and citation practices.
- **Feedback and Communication:** How and when students can expect responses to emails, assignments, or evaluations.

➤ Assignments

When designing assignments, the instructor should consider how each task aligns with the course objectives and learning outcomes. Assignments should not only assess knowledge but also help students internalize the material, connect theory to practice, and reflect on their own learning process.

Assignments and learning activities may take a variety of forms, depending on the nature of the course:

- **Written Papers and Essays:** Allow students to explore topics in depth, organize ideas coherently, and demonstrate analytical and academic writing skills.
- **Problem Sets and Practical Tasks:** Help learners apply theoretical knowledge to real-world or discipline-specific problems, promoting accuracy, reasoning, and methodological thinking.
- **Projects and Research Work:** Encourage independent inquiry, creativity, and the ability to synthesize information from various sources.
- **Class Discussions and Debates:** Develop communication, argumentation, and critical reflection skills while promoting active engagement with course materials.
- **Collaborative and Group Activities:** Foster teamwork, peer learning, and social interaction, helping students learn to communicate and negotiate meaning effectively.

When introducing assignments, teachers should clearly specify:

- The **purpose** of each task and its relation to course objectives;
- The **instructions, format, and submission procedures**;
- The **evaluation criteria and grading weight**;
- The **deadlines** and expected time commitment;
- Opportunities for **feedback and revision** (e.g., peer review, instructor comments).

➤ **Course Calendar**

A course calendar is an important instrument on which the designer relies to guarantee a smooth flow of his course throughout the academic/educational year. The designer deliberates all regional, national, international and even religious holidays in order to have an accurate time-count of the teaching procedure and to avoid any inconvenience in finishing the programme.

The following are the main elements found in different course calendars in relation to important dates that must be set:

- First/last day of class
- General assignments and due dates
- Deadlines for submissions
- Group and individual tests
- The general/collective exam
- The time/content distribution of teaching units.

➤ **Learning Resources**

It is essential to expand the understanding of *learning resources* beyond the traditional notion of classroom textbooks. According to the Association of American Publishers (AAP, 2015), *“For many people, the words educational materials invoke images of large, print, classroom textbooks with small type, outdated information, and content that covers the breadth but not depth of a subject. But learning resources are more than that. They are any tool that helps teachers teach and students learn.”*

In light of this, both learners and novice syllabus designers must adopt a broader and more flexible perspective regarding the use of teaching and learning materials. Educational resources should be viewed as any medium, tool, or content that facilitates the teaching process and supports learners in achieving course objectives.

Beyond printed textbooks, instructional materials can include a wide range of digital, visual, and interactive tools that enhance engagement and understanding. Examples include applications, posters, flashcards, study guides, films, webcasts, podcasts, maps, magazines, websites, worksheets, workbooks, journals, newspapers, novels, and graphic materials, among others.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of these resources lies not in their format, but in how appropriately they are selected, adapted, and integrated into the learning process to meet the pedagogical goals of the course.

Part Two: Content Selection & Organization

Introduction

A well-structured course is not simply a collection of topics or activities, but a coherent sequence of learning experiences that align with clear goals and outcomes. Effective content organization ensures that what students learn, how they learn it, and how their learning is assessed all work together to support meaningful progress. In order to achieve this, course designers must consider who their learners are, the context in which learning takes place, and the pedagogical strategies most suitable for their objectives. The following key steps outline the essential components in the process of designing and teaching a course

Procedure & Steps:

Once the overall purpose of the course is defined, the instructor must determine what content is most relevant, how it will be taught, and in what sequence to best support student learning. This process requires balancing theoretical knowledge with practical application, aligning content with learning outcomes, and ensuring a logical and engaging progression of topics throughout the term. The following stages outline key considerations for designing and structuring an effective course.

1- Design & Teach a Course: To design an effective course, you need to:

- a- Recognize who your students are
- b- Identify the situational constraints
- c- Articulate your learning objectives
- d- Identify potential assessments
- e- Identify appropriate instructional strategies
- f- Plan your course content and schedule

2- Plan Your Course Content and Schedule

The three primary components of a course are the learning objectives, assessments and instructional strategies. Once these three components are identified, at least provisionally, the next task is to organize them into a coherent, dynamic whole. This involves:

- a- Develop a Course rationale
- b- Deciding on a course structure
- c- Selecting a teaching strategy to support learning goals
- d- Creating a schedule

a- The Course Rationale

The course rationale is also defined as the nature and reasons for designing the course. Richards (2001) presents three questions rationale seeks to answer:

- Who is this course for?
- What is the course about?
- What kind of teaching and learning will take place in the course? (p.145)

The course rationale answers and serves these aspects:

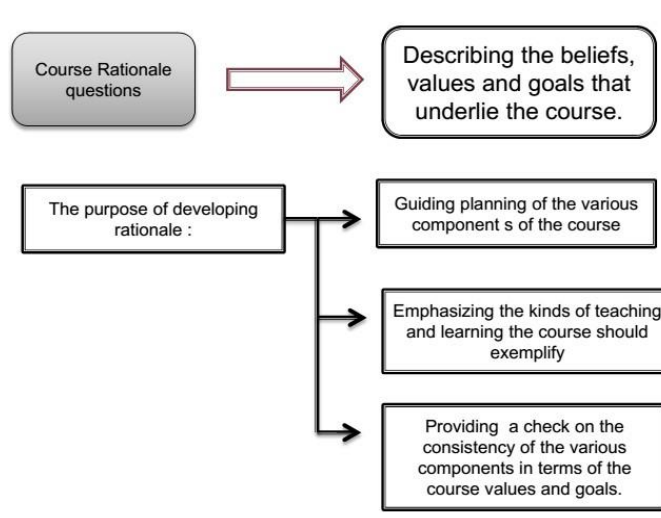


Figure10: The Course Rationale

The course rationale is a brief description of the reasons for the course and the nature of

it; it seeks to answer the following questions:

- Who is this course for?
- What is the course about?
- What kind of teaching and learning will take place in the course?

By answering these questions, the course rationale describes the beliefs, values and goals that underlie the course. It also provides a statement of the course philosophy for anyone who may need such information including teachers or potential users (Richards, 2001, p. 145).

To sum up, course rationale must be developed through taking into consideration the course's goals, the exemplification of the type of teaching and learning, teachers and learners roles in the course and the reflection of course's beliefs and principles.

b- Deciding on a course structure

The course structure refers to the choice of topics and the organization and sequencing of course content. Remember that the choice of topics and their organization should always support the learning objectives for the course.

- **Topics**

It is important to determine a reasonable scope for your course, that includes essential content but which also provides opportunities for students to engage actively with this content so that deeper learning occurs.

To develop a reasonable set of topics, Davis (1993) recommends creating a list of all the content areas you *could* cover that are relevant to the subject of the course, and then “severely” paring down the topics you have listed, distinguishing what you consider absolutely essential from the rest (p. 5). Build your course around these essential topics, choosing materials (books, articles, films, speakers, etc.) that will speak to these topics and help you accomplish your learning goals.

- **Organization and sequencing**

There are many – often equally effective -- ways to organize a course to accomplish a particular set of objectives. For example, a course could be arranged in any one of the following ways: **chronologically, from concrete to abstract** (or vice versa), from theory to application (or vice versa), around a set of questions, around a set of practical

problems or case studies, according to disciplinary classifications and categories, etc. However we choose to organize the course, the goal should be to create a structure that supports the learning objectives we have identified.

- **Simple-to-complex** learning indicates that content is optimally organized in a sequence proceeding from simple components to complex components, highlighting interrelationships among components. Optimal learning results when individuals are presented with easy (often concrete) content and then with more difficult (often abstract) content.
- **Prerequisite** learning is similar to **part-to-whole** learning. It works on the assumption that bits of information must be grasped before other bits can be comprehended.
- **Whole-to-part** learning receives support from cognitive psychologists. They have urged that the curriculum be arranged so that the content or experience is first presented in an overview that provides students with a general idea of the information or situation.
- **Chronological** learning refers to content whose sequence reflects the times of real-world occurrences. History, political science, and world events frequently are organized chronologically (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).

In general, courses should build towards greater **complexity**, starting with component pieces and working towards synthesis and integration. As Fink (2003) puts it: “The goal is to sequence the topics so that they build on one another in a way that allows students to integrate each new idea, topic, or theme with the preceding ones as the course proceeds” (p. 128). Another way to think about it is that **the course should tell a story** and thus have a beginning (that introduces the key issues, tensions, and players), a middle (that develops and explores these issues), and an end (in which the various threads come together or relevant new questions are introduced).

c-Selecting a teaching strategy

A teaching strategy involves combining and sequencing a number of different instructional activities to help students accomplish the learning goals of the class.

Having identified the broad learning objectives, work backwards, asking yourself: What particular skills and knowledge will students need in order to accomplish these objectives? Then address the following questions:

- What kinds of activities will students need to engage in to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge?
- How can you organize these activities to provide sufficient practice?
- How can you sequence them so that skills build upon one another?

For example, if one of your course objectives is for students to be able to identify the key theoretical positions in a topic area, discuss them critically, and apply them to particular issues, the teaching strategy might combine lecture (to introduce the theories and their proponents), discussion (to critique the theories and discuss their applications), and a writing assignment (to apply them to a specific problem or topic.) If one of the course objectives is for students to compare different approaches to theatrical costume design, then a teaching strategy might combine mini-lectures to identify key issues in costume design, student observations of different theatrical productions, group discussion, and an individual written assessment.

d- Creating a Schedule

After determining the main topics to be covered, the organizational scheme, and an appropriate teaching strategy for accomplishing our objectives, we must create a schedule for the course. Here it is important to gauge the amount of time necessary for the activities we have in mind, both in and outside of class time, and to map this structure onto the academic calendar.

- Course Requirements (Assignments and Tests Reflecting Course Objectives)
(Communicative, research, Writing, Conflict resolution, Literacy Skills)
- Evaluation (Types)
- Grading Procedures (Final Grading, Feedback Types “self-assessment, peer review”)
- How to Use the Syllabus?
- How to Study for the Course (How to be most successful in this course)
(Online Quiz Generators, Guest speakers, Lecture Notes)
- Content Information
- Learning Tools

2- Criteria in Course content selection

Selecting course content is one of the most demanding and complex tasks in syllabus design. It requires the designer to create a meaningful connection between the specific needs of the learners and the objectives of the course, ensuring that each selected item contributes to the intended learning outcomes. As Richards (2001) explains, the planner's decisions reflect their *“assumptions about the nature of language, language use, and language learning; what the most essential elements or units of language are, and how these can be organized as an essential basis for second language learning”* (p. 148).

To illustrate this, Richards provides examples of how course content may be organized depending on the nature of the course and the skills being taught. For instance, a writing course may be structured around grammar (e.g., using the present tense in descriptions), functions (e.g., describing likes and dislikes), topics (e.g., writing about world issues), skills (e.g., developing topic sentences), processes (e.g., using prewriting strategies), or texts (e.g., writing a business letter). Similarly, a speaking course can be designed around functions (e.g., expressing opinions), interaction skills (e.g., opening and closing conversations, turn-taking), and topics (e.g., current affairs or business-related discussions).

While these categories may seem familiar to most syllabus designers, the real challenge lies in choosing an appropriate approach to content selection. As discussed in previous sections, needs analysis remains the primary source of information for the entire syllabus design process. It helps designers accurately determine the relevance and scope of topics, skills, and materials. However, Richards (2001) also suggests that course planners consult additional sources to strengthen their design decisions, such as:

- Existing literature and published materials on the topic
- Reviews of similar courses offered elsewhere
- Analysis of tests and exams in the area
- Identification of common student difficulties
- Consultations with experienced teachers or subject specialists

The final choice of approach depends on multiple factors, including the designer's subject-matter expertise, students' proficiency levels, current theories of second

language learning, and practical considerations such as time and resources (Richards, 2001).

During this process, planners must constantly refer back to the established objectives, which are refined and adjusted as the course content takes shape. Typically, groups of designers or teachers brainstorm initial lists of topics, skills, materials, and objectives. These preliminary ideas are then discussed, revised, and validated against current literature and empirical research.

Richards (2001) provides an example of an initial list of ideas for a listening and speaking course for intermediate learners, which may include: asking questions, opening and closing conversations, expressing opinions, dealing with misunderstandings, describing experiences, engaging in social talk, developing telephone skills, using situation-specific language (e.g., at the bank), describing daily routines, and employing communication strategies.

Before finalizing the course content, planners must ask several critical questions to ensure the appropriateness and feasibility of their selection:

- Are all the suggested topics necessary?
- Have any important topics been omitted?
- Is there sufficient time to cover each topic?
- Has adequate emphasis been given to the most essential areas?
- Will the selected content enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

➤ **Scope and Sequence of Course Content**

The scope and sequence determine how the course content is distributed and organized across the duration of the course. The scope refers to the breadth and depth of topics covered, while the *sequence* defines the order in which these topics are presented. Designers must consider both to ensure logical progression and sustained engagement.

Two essential questions guide decisions about scope:

1. What range of content will be covered?

2. To what extent should each topic be studied?

For example, if the course includes the topic “*Describing Experiences*”, the designer must decide how much time and detail this topic requires, two sessions, four, or more, and how it fits within the overall learning progression.

According to Richards (2001), the sequencing of content can follow several key **criteria**:

- **From Simple to Complex:** Topics are arranged from basic to advanced in terms of difficulty, such as teaching literal comprehension before inferencing.
- **Chronology:** Content follows the natural order of real-life or procedural steps, for example, organizing writing instruction from brainstorming to editing.
- **Need:** Topics are prioritized based on learners’ immediate communicative or professional needs, such as learning vocabulary for daily interactions before academic writing.
- **Prerequisite Learning:** Concepts are sequenced to ensure that earlier lessons build a foundation for later, more complex skills.
- **Whole to Part / Part to Whole:** Depending on the approach, instruction may begin with a complete text or concept before analyzing its components, or vice versa.
- **Spiral Sequencing:** Key topics or skills are revisited periodically throughout the course to reinforce and deepen understanding.

Mrowicki (1986) provides a useful example of need-based sequencing in a social survival curriculum, where topics are arranged according to relevance, contextualization, and learners’ everyday experiences: Food and restaurants → Work and professions → Education → Weather and seasons → Leisure and hobbies → Travel and tourism → Family and relationships → Technology → Environment → Culture and traditions

Task

Students will work individually or in pairs to design a mini syllabus (2–4 weeks of instruction) based on a clearly identified learner group. This task allows them to demonstrate their understanding of key syllabus design components such as needs

analysis, objectives formulation, content selection, sequencing, and assessment planning.

Instructions:

1. **Identify the Target Learners:** Describe the learners' age, level of English proficiency, learning context (academic, professional, general), and their main language learning needs.
2. **Define the Course Purpose and Rationale:** Explain why this course is needed and how it fits within a larger educational or institutional context.
3. **Set Learning Objectives:** Write 3–5 specific, measurable learning objectives that describe what learners should be able to do by the end of the course.
4. **Select and Sequence Content:** Choose relevant topics, language functions, and skills. Organize them following appropriate sequencing principles (e.g., simple to complex, need-based, spiral).
5. **Design Learning Activities and Materials:** Suggest suitable classroom activities, materials, and technologies that align with your objectives and learners' needs.
6. **Plan Assessment and Evaluation:** Specify how learners will demonstrate achievement of objectives (e.g., quizzes, presentations, portfolios, peer evaluations).
7. **Reflect on Your Design:** In 200–300 words, justify your main design decisions by linking them to syllabus design theories (Richards, Nunan, or others studied in class).

Deliverable: A 3–5 page document (plus appendices if necessary) that presents the mini syllabus and includes a brief rationale.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Relevance of course rationale and learner profile
- Clarity and measurability of objectives
- Coherence of content sequencing
- Creativity and appropriateness of materials/activities
- Alignment between objectives, content, and assessment
- Theoretical grounding and reflection

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Lecture Four: Types of Syllabi

Introduction

In terms of specifying the exact number of syllabi types, it is worth mentioning that there are different studies, which overlap in terms of categorisation, and labelling; what we chose to discuss here are what is agreed upon among leading scholars as we have found there is a noticeable and strong consensus on these following types of syllabi Krahnke (1987) and Nunan (1988) are two of those scholars:

Types of syllabuses

In what follows, we present a brief account of a number of syllabus types.

1. Grammatical (Structural) Syllabuses

One of the early assumptions about designing language programs was the fact that vocabulary and grammar are the basic units of language (Richards, 2001). Accordingly, grammatical content has been used as the main building block of the syllabus with the goal of drilling grammatical structures to achieve competence in language. Since a syllabus is about selection of content and then arranging (sequencing) that content according to the learners' level, we ask the question: Is it feasible to select a number of grammatical structures and grade them according to the learners' levels? The answer is definitely yes. Usually, deciding about the order of grammatical structures is decided by frequency, difficulty, usefulness, or a combination of these.

In spite of criticism, grammar-based courses are still popular all over the world for the following reasons:

- Traditionally, many language teachers base their courses around grammar.
- Learners expect grammar lessons to be included in the syllabus, and their absence might confuse them and makes the content less appealing.
- As part of communicative competence, grammar deserves a place in language courses.
- Students need grammatical knowledge to pass exams.

Although the grammar syllabus still dominates the way that many people think about language learning ... syllabus designers have become increasingly aware of the need to focus on vocabulary and the way that words cluster and chunk together, and on the purpose of these chunks within an act of communication. (Harmer, 2015, p. 49)

2- Lexical Syllabuses

This syllabus is centred around teaching lexical items which are arranged in frequency-based vocabulary lists. The rationale behind such syllabus reflects the importance of vocabulary in language learning; it is argued that “the 700 most frequent words of English account for around 70% of all English text” (Willis, 1990, as cited in Richards, 2001, p. 154). Similarly, it is asserted that “87% of words in English texts are among the 2,000 most frequent words in the language” (Nation, 1990, as cited in Alderson, 2007, pp. 384-5). Such pieces of statistics clearly demonstrate the utility of teaching vocabulary and of designing lexical syllabuses. Examples of word lists include the General Service List of English Words which contains 2,000 high-frequency word families. Such list is considered a good source for courses at the beginner and intermediate levels. Another example is the Academic Word List containing 570 word families (apart from the 2000 most frequent words) which is used to design courses in English for Academic Purposes.

A recent word list is the Oxford 3000 list that contains 3,000 of the most basic and familiar English words that are essential for the majority of EFL learners; the list also includes basic phrases, but not proper names and numbers. The words of the list have been carefully selected by a group of language experts based on three criteria: frequency, usage range, and familiarity.

3. Functional Syllabuses (Notional)

This syllabus is organized around communicative functions or speech acts together with the language items needed for them, such as requesting, apologising, complaining, suggesting, agreeing/disagreeing, etc. Functions are described by Nunan (1988) as “the communicative purposes for which we use language” (p. 35).

Functional syllabuses provided the first serious alternative to grammatical syllabuses as a basis for general-purpose course design. They were first introduced in the 1970s as part of the communicative language teaching movement. “They were one of the first proposals for a communicative syllabus, that is, one that addresses communicative competence rather than linguistic competence” (Richards, 2001, p. 155).

4. Situational Syllabuses

A situational syllabus is organised around the language needed for different situations such as, at the airport, at a hotel, at the doctor’s, in a restaurant, at the post office, in a bank, at the cinema, in a travel agency, etc. A *situation* is a setting in which particular communicative acts typically occur. A situational syllabus identifies the situations in which the learner will use the language as well as the typical communicative acts and

language used in that setting (Richards, 2001, p. 156).

Situational syllabuses have the advantage of presenting language in context and teaching language of immediate practical use. They have been familiar in language teaching textbooks for years, especially with tourists.

5. Topic-based Syllabuses (Content-based Syllabuses)

A content-based syllabus or a topical syllabus is derived from the content-based instruction method in language teaching. A topic-based curriculum has three characteristics:

- It is based on a subject-matter core;
- It uses authentic language and texts, and
- It is appropriate to the needs of specific groups of learners.

The fundamental organization of the curriculum is derived from the subject matter, rather than from forms, functions, situations, or skills. Communicative competence is acquired during the process of learning about specific topics such as math, science, art, social studies, culture, business, history, political systems, international affairs, or economics. (Stryker & Leaver, 1997, p. 6)

Although quite motivating to learners, there are some issues that arise with topical syllabuses. The selection of relevant topics that correspond to the level and interests of learners is not an easy task; the same thing applies to grading those topics.

Also, there are concerns about the balance between content and grammar in the syllabus, the ability of teachers to understand topics pertaining to different fields of knowledge, and the basis for assessment being learning the content or learning the language (Richards, 2001).

6. Skill-based Syllabuses

Skills are things learners must be able to do to be competent in a language. Thus, the skills-based syllabus is organised around the macro-skills (receptive and productive skills) as well as the underlying micro-skills of language. The idea of approaching a language through skills is based on the belief that learning a complex activity, such as writing a paragraph, involves the mastery of a number of individual skills or micro-skills that together make up the activity.

7. Task-based Syllabuses (Procedural Syllabuses)

This type takes its name from the *Task-Based Language Teaching* approach which is a manifestation of Communicative Language Approach. This syllabus is built around tasks or activities to be performed by the learners with no pre-determined grammatical

We can think of an eclectic approach if we assemble working parts from different methods. Prabhu (1990, pp. 174-5) explained, “perhaps the best method varies from one teacher to another, but only in the sense that it is best for each teacher to operate with his/her own sense of plausibility at any given time.” We consider that the same thing applies to answering the question about the best syllabus.

Ur (1991, p. 178) referred to a mixed or a multi-strand syllabus that combines a number of language components to maximally serve the needs of both teachers and learners: “modern syllabuses are combining different aspects in order to be maximally comprehensive and helpful to teachers and learners; in these you may find specification of topics, tasks, functions and notions, as well as grammar and vocabulary.” Likewise, Richards (2001, p. 164) suggested an *integrated* syllabus that incorporates a number of language strands: “In most courses there will generally be a number of different syllabus strands, such as grammar linked to skills and texts, tasks linked to topics and functions, or skills linked to topics and texts.” In brief, the local environment decides which is the best method or syllabus for learners. The following table summarizes all the types of syllabi.

Syllabus Type	Explanation
Grammatical	Focuses on grammar rules and structures, which are treated as items to be learned in a specific sequence.
Lexical	Emphasizes vocabulary (lexical items) as building blocks of language, organizing learning around the acquisition of vocabulary items.
Topical	Organized around specific topics or themes, with content and vocabulary focused on the topic, usually with a set outcome in mind.
Situational	Based on language use in specific situations (e.g., "at the bank"), treating each situation as a context for learning language items associated with that setting.
Functional	Organized around functions of language (e.g., requesting,

	apologizing), focusing on teaching set expressions or phrases needed for specific functions.
Task-based	Focuses on using language to complete meaningful tasks, allowing learners to develop language through active use rather than following a predefined structure.
Skill-based	Emphasizes skills (e.g., listening, reading) rather than content, helping learners develop competencies over memorizing specific language items.
Multi-syllabus	Combines elements from various syllabi types, allowing for both structured learning (product) and adaptability (process) to meet different learning needs.

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Lecture Five: Assessment Strategies and grading rubrics

- Evaluation versus Assessment
- Grading and Rubrics

Introduction

Evaluation and assessment are two essential elements of the syllabus design and teaching process. They both serve as tools to measure effectiveness, but they differ in scope and purpose.

According to Brown (1989, p. 223), evaluation is “the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants’ attitudes within the context of the particular institutions involved.”

In contrast, assessment focuses more narrowly on measuring individual learner performance. Nunan (1992, p. 185) highlights this difference by stating:

“Assessments and evaluations, like apples and oranges, have many differences. Assessments diagnose learning gaps and progress, while evaluations are judgmental, emphasizing the quality of outcomes.”

In simpler terms:

- **Assessment** is *student-centered* — it focuses on learners’ progress, understanding, and achievement.
- **Evaluation** is *program-centered* — it examines the overall success and effectiveness of a course, program, or teaching method.

2. The Purpose of Assessment

Assessment allows teachers to make informed decisions about teaching and learning. It helps answer essential questions such as:

- Do students understand the course content?
- Are students ready for the next stage of learning?

- How effective are my teaching strategies?
- How can I adjust instruction to better support all learners?

Through assessment, instructors can identify learning gaps, measure achievement, and provide constructive feedback that enhances student learning and motivation.

3. Evaluation: Perspectives and Purposes

Evaluation can be viewed from three complementary perspectives: formative, illuminative, and summative (Richards, 2001). Each serves a unique purpose in the course development and review cycle.

Evaluator's Role	Categories	Procedures
Outsider looking in	Existing Records	Records analysis Systems analysis Literature review Letter writing
	Tests	Proficiency testing Placement testing Diagnostic testing Achievement testing
	Observations	Case studies Diary studies Behaviour observation Interactional analyses Inventories
Facilitator drawing out information	Interviews	Individual Group
	Meetings	Delphi technique Advisory Interest group Review
	Questionnaires	Biodata surveys Opinion surveys Self-ratings Judgmental ratings Q sort

Figure11: Categories of Procedures for Evaluation (Brown and Pennington, 1991:6)

3.1. Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is ongoing. It focuses on continuous improvement and provides feedback for course enhancement during implementation.

Typical questions include:

- Is sufficient time allocated for key objectives?
- Are students placed at the correct level?
- Are teaching materials appropriate and engaging?

- Are teaching methods effective?
- Are students motivated and enjoying the course?

Example:

If students consistently struggle with writing tasks, a formative evaluation might suggest simplifying instructions, providing writing models, or incorporating peer feedback sessions.

3.2. Illuminative Evaluation

Illuminative evaluation aims to *understand* how the course operates in practice without necessarily changing it. It explores how teaching and learning interact in real contexts.

Key questions include:

- How do students collaborate during group work?
- What error correction strategies do teachers use?
- Which students participate most actively in class?

Example:

An illuminative evaluation in a speaking course might reveal that group tasks promote fluency for advanced learners but intimidate beginners, insight that helps refine task design in future courses.

3.3. Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation is conducted at the *end* of a course or program to assess its overall effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. It measures whether course objectives were met and identifies strengths and weaknesses.

Questions to consider:

- Did the course achieve its stated aims?
- What did students learn?
- Were the materials and teaching methods appropriate?
- What problems were encountered?

4. Criteria for Course Effectiveness (Richards, 2001)

To measure how effective a course has been, several criteria can be used:

a. Mastery of Objectives

Assess to what extent students achieved the learning outcomes.

Example:

If an objective states, “Students will respond appropriately in group discussions,” the teacher may evaluate participation and interaction during discussions using observation checklists.

b. Performance on Tests

Tests and quizzes serve as measurable indicators of achievement.

Example:

Low scores on listening tests might reveal a need to adjust materials or provide more practice opportunities (see Weir, 1995, on the *washback effect* of testing).

c. Measures of Acceptability

This reflects the satisfaction of both students and teachers.

Example:

Even if objectives are met, negative feedback about class timing, class size, or teaching style may indicate dissatisfaction.

d. Retention or Re-enrolment Rates

High re-enrolment suggests that the course is perceived as successful and beneficial, while high dropout rates may signal problems in motivation or course design.

e. Course Efficiency

Efficiency concerns the practicality of course delivery—availability of materials, teacher training needs, and time required for planning and administration.

5. Types of Assessment

Assessment can be classified as **formative** or **summative**, depending on its purpose and timing.

5.1. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment occurs throughout the learning process and aims to provide ongoing feedback to improve teaching and learning. It helps diagnose learning difficulties and guide student progress.

Examples of formative assessment tools:

- Reflective journals or learning logs
- Self-assessment and peer-assessment activities
- Oral questioning and informal discussions
- Short quizzes or quick polls
- Concept maps or visual representations of learning

Example:

After a group presentation, students use a peer-assessment checklist to provide feedback on delivery, structure, and content. The instructor uses this to plan targeted speaking support for the next session.

5.2. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a unit or course and is designed to measure learning outcomes against stated objectives. It contributes to the final grade and provides an overall evaluation of student achievement.

Examples include:

- Final examinations
- Research papers
- Portfolios
- Group or individual projects

Example:

At the end of a writing course, students submit a portfolio containing drafts and final

versions of essays, which demonstrates their progress and mastery of writing conventions.

6. Grading and Rubrics

Grading is one of the most visible aspects of assessment and often carries significant weight for students. It is therefore essential to establish *clear, consistent, and transparent* grading criteria.

A **rubric** is a scoring tool that outlines the criteria for evaluating an assignment and describes different levels of performance for each criterion. Rubrics help both teachers and students understand what quality work looks like.

Why Use Rubrics?

For Instructors:

Benefit	Description
Grading consistency	Ensures fairness and stability across time and classes.
Time efficiency	Reduces grading time by providing ready-made criteria.
Focus and clarity	Keeps attention on learning outcomes rather than subjective impressions.
Coordination	Facilitates shared understanding among teachers, especially in large or team-taught courses.

For Students:

Benefit	Description
Self-monitoring	Students can assess their own progress and understand expectations.
Feedback clarity	Rubrics show exactly where improvement is needed.
Motivation	Students know what to aim for and how to achieve higher grades.

Example of a Rubric (for an Oral Presentation)

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Content	Clear, insightful, and well-organized ideas	Good organization, minor lapses	Some clarity, but lacks depth	Disorganized or unclear
Delivery	Confident, engaging, fluent	Clear but less confident	Uneven delivery	Difficult to follow
Language Use	Accurate grammar, varied vocabulary	Minor errors	Frequent errors	Serious language problems
Visual Aids	Creative and supportive	Useful and relevant	Minimal support	Absent or confusing

Task:

1. Work in small groups; each group takes one of the three evaluation types.
2. Using a given course scenario (provided by the teacher, find it below)

Course Scenario: “English for Academic Communication”**Context**

The Department of Letters and English Language offers a semester-long course titled English for Academic Communication for 2nd-year License students. The course aims to help students develop academic speaking and writing skills needed in other modules and future research work.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Deliver short, well-organized academic presentations.
2. Participate effectively in group discussions and debates.
3. Write coherent paragraphs summarizing and responding to academic texts.
4. Use academic vocabulary and expressions appropriately.

Course Components

- **Duration:** 12 weeks (2 hours/week)
- **Teaching materials:**
 - Teacher-created handouts and PowerPoint slides
 - Short academic articles and TED Talk videos
- **Activities:**
 - Individual presentations
 - Group discussions
 - Peer feedback sessions
 - Writing tasks (summaries, short reflections)

Assessment Methods

- **Formative:**
 - Peer feedback on presentations
 - In-class participation marks
 - Teacher comments on drafts
- **Summative:**
 - Final oral presentation (20%)
 - End-of-term written task (30%)
 - Continuous assessment (participation + homework = 50%)

Observed Issues

The course has been running for two years, but some challenges have emerged:

- Students feel **unclear about grading criteria**.
- Teachers report **uneven participation** in group work.
- Some students focus more on **grammar accuracy** than content or organization.
- A few students find oral tasks **stressful and demotivating**.

Your Task

As syllabus designers and evaluators:

1. Decide which type of evaluation (formative, illuminative, or summative) you will conduct.
2. Formulate evaluation questions based on Richards' framework (2001).
3. Suggest methods of data collection (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, observation, test analysis).
4. Present your conclusions and recommendations to improve the course

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Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Essex, England: Longman.

Recommended readings

- Anderson, J. (2020). *The TATE model: A curriculum design framework for language teaching*. [PDF]. <https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/id/eprint/169526/7/WRAP-The-TATE-model-curriculum-design-framework-language-teaching-Anderson-2020.pdf> WRAP
- Erkir, S., & Alkhaldi, A. (2025). ELT textbook development: Bridging the gap between theory and practice. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(2), 346–351. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388621820> [ELT Textbook Development Bridging the Gap ResearchGate](#)
- “Syllabus design: a brief history” (2021). In *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/curriculum-development-in-language-teaching/syllabus-design-a-brief-history/22A92C72527A27E7819992212239FBEF> [Cambridge University Press & Assessment](#)
- “Exploring Curriculum Alignment through Syllabus Document Analysis: From National Language Policy to Local ELT Practice” (n.d.). [PDF]. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352901437> [Exploring Curriculum Alignment through Syllabus Document Analysis From National Language Policy to Local ELT Practice ResearchGate](#)
- *Language Curriculum Design* (2nd ed.). (n.d.). Routledge. (Disponible en ligne) <https://dokumen.pub/language-curriculum-design-2nbsped-9780367196462-9780367196509-9780429203763.html>

Appendices

Appendix One

University of Abbes Laghrour

Subject: **Syllabus Design**

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Level: **Master1 Didactics**

Department of English Language

Instructor: Dr. Aggoun Imen

Student's name:.....

Group:.....

First Term Exam

Syllabus is “an instrument by which the teacher,..., can achieve a certain coincidence between the needs and the aims of the learners, and the activities that will take place in the classroom” (Yalden 1987, p.86), that is to say that the syllabus is aimed to organise classroom activities according to learners aims and requirements after the process of needs analysis.

Question:

Based on Yalden's definition of a syllabus, explain how **needs analysis** serves as the foundation for **aligning learners' aims with classroom activities**. Provide examples to support your answer.

Appendix Two

[A sample: Language Didactics Syllabus Card \(L1\)](#)

Course Title: Language Didactics

Number of Credit Hours: 3

Semester and Year of Offering: Fall 2024

Class Meeting Days and Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Class Meeting Location: Room 203, Humanities Building

Instructor: Dr. Emily Hart

Contact Information:

Phone: (123) 456-7890

Email: emily.hart@university.edu

Office Location: Room 314, Department of Language Studies

Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM, or by appointment

Course Description

The Language Didactics course is designed for L1 students specializing in language education. The course explores various approaches and methods in teaching foreign languages, such as communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and content-based instruction. Students will engage with key concepts in language acquisition, language assessment, and curriculum design. Practical applications include lesson planning, creating materials, and evaluating teaching effectiveness.

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain major theories of language acquisition and teaching.
- Analyze and apply different teaching methods and approaches to language education.
- Design lesson plans and instructional materials based on learner needs and context.
- Evaluate language teaching strategies through observation and reflection.
- Understand assessment techniques and their role in language education.

Instructional Methods:

- Lectures
- Group discussions
- Classroom observations and peer reviews
- Microteaching sessions
- Case studies and analysis

Course Communication and Feedback:

- Communication will be primarily through the university's learning management system (LMS), email, and in-person during office hours.
- Feedback on assignments will be provided within two weeks of submission via LMS.

Content and Course Calendar:

Week	Topic	Assignments	
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1	Introduction to Language Didactics	--	
2	Theories of Language Acquisition	Reading: Richards & Rodgers, Ch. 1-2	
3	Traditional Approaches to Language Teaching	Reflection Assignment (due Week 4)	
4	Modern Approaches (CLT, TBL, etc.)	Group Discussion	
5	Lesson Planning	Lesson Plan Draft (due Week 6)	
6	Curriculum Design	Peer Review	
7	Classroom Management Strategies	--	
8	Assessment in Language Learning	Midterm Exam (Week 8)	
9	Technology in Language Education	Reading: Harmer, Ch. 5	
10	Developing Materials	Microteaching (starts Week 11)	
11	Microteaching Sessions	Microteaching Presentations	
12	Reflective Teaching	Reflection Report (due Week 13)	
13	Case Study Analysis	--	
14	Final Project Presentations	Final Project Due Week 14	
15	Review for Final Exam	Final Exam Preparation	
16	Final Exam	December 15, 2024	

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy:

- **Participation and Attendance (10%):** Active participation in class discussions, group work, and attendance.
- **Lesson Plan Project (20%):** Students will design a detailed lesson plan using a specific teaching approach and submit a report explaining its relevance to language acquisition theories.
- **Microteaching Session (20%):** Each student will conduct a 15-minute teaching session based on their lesson plan, followed by peer feedback.
- **Midterm Exam (20%):** A written exam covering theoretical concepts of language didactics and their practical applications.
- **Final Project (30%):** A research paper (2,000 words) on a chosen topic related to language didactics, involving a case study or critical analysis of teaching methods.

Required Textbooks or Materials:

- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Pearson Longman.
- Additional readings and resources will be provided via LMS.

Technology Requirements:

- A reliable computer or laptop
- Internet access to use the LMS for course materials, submitting assignments, and receiving feedback
- A webcam and microphone for online classes or virtual meetings

Minimal Student Technical Requirements/Skills:

- Basic computer literacy (e.g., using word processors, navigating LMS, sending emails)
- Ability to participate in video conferencing using Zoom or a similar platform
- Familiarity with Microsoft Word or Google Docs for submitting assignments

Final Exam:

- Date: December, 2024
- Format: Written exam covering the full course material, including both theoretical concepts and practical applications in language teaching.



Syllabus Design

Aggoun Imen
Faculty of Letters & languages
Department of English Language

Master 1 Syllabus of Syllabus Design

