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## Strategies And Techniques In Second Language Teaching: Review Of Syllabus Designing

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### Abstract:

In the context of non-native countries, where English is taught as a second language, the selection of English syllabus requires a cavernous understanding, a comprehensive knowledge about various syllabuses designs as also a mature insight into the learning process. The syllabus presents the entire programme/plan of study to show academic content during a specific period of time. To attain the utmost benefits of the syllabus during a limited time, it's imperative that the syllabus must be designed taking into consideration the learners 'needs and objectives'. The teachers have, traditionally, the mark of authority to implement the syllabus. They are concerned with the achievement of ends, often, related to the pursuance of particular means. In other words, a syllabus is an expression of opinion on the character of language and learning; it acts as a guide for both teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained. At its simplest level, a syllabus is often described as a press release of what's to be learnt and it reflects the utilization of language with linguistic performance. This article explains the different strategies and techniques that can be added in English language teaching.

### Introduction:

A good and valid syllabus is that concentrates more or less all features of language learning, therefore, appropriate implementation of the syllabus in language teaching is undeniable. In this perspective, the characteristics of each syllabus are discussed in detail. All these syllabuses will prove beneficial if carefully implemented.

The syllabus can be divided into two different types:

1. Product-Oriented Syllabi
2. Process Oriented Syllabi.

**I. Product–Oriented Syllabus:** Product-oriented syllabus focuses on what the learners will know as a result at the end of the instruction session. The Grammatical, Situational, Lexical and Notional-Functional are the best examples of the product-oriented syllabus.

**a) Grammatical Syllabus:** This type of syllabus is designed specially to fulfill the purpose of teaching the graded grammatical structures. Learners are exposed to these systematic structures and it is expected that they will enhance their grammar knowledge and understanding by memorizing different grammar rules. The internalization of those rules is taken into account as a prerequisite to understanding the procedures of a language.

The grammatical syllabus has been defined together which consists of an inventory of grammatical items selected and graded in terms of simplicity and complexity (Nunan, 1988). The structures are generally introduced to learners one by one, usually, but not always, in contrasting pairs, for example, and simple present versus simple past or singular nouns versus plural nouns (Long & Crookes, 1993). In his seminal work Notional Syllabuses, Wilkins (1976: 2) defined this type of approach to syllabus design as synthetic.

**b). Situational Syllabus:** The prime objective of this type of syllabus is to teach the language that occurs in real-life situations. Here, the emphasis is on the learner, who is expected to participate actively in different situations where the language is being spoken. One advantage of the Situational Approach is that motivation will be heightened since it is learn-centered rather than subject-centered. The situational syllabus is closely related to the topical syllabus. According to Yalden (1987:35), The situational model will comprise units indicating specific situations, such as 'At the Post Office', 'Buying an Airline Ticket', or 'The Job Interview'.

**c) Lexical Syllabus:** The lexical syllabus is based on vocabulary and lexical units. There are many linguistic issues that can be applied to the lexical syllabus.

The term Lexical Approach was introduced in 1997 by Michael Lewis, who observed that "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (The Lexical Approach, 1997). The Lexical Approach is not a single, clearly defined method of language instruction. It's a commonly used term that is poorly understood by most of all. Studies of literature on the subject often show that it's used in contradictory ways. It is largely based on the assumption that certain words will elicit a response with a specific set of words. Students would be able to learn which words are connected in this way. Students are expected to learn the grammar of languages based on recognizing patterns in words.

**d). Notional–Functional Syllabus:** A notional-functional syllabus is a real-world/practical way of organizing language-learning syllabus, rather than an approach or method to teach. In this method the instructions are organized in terms of notions and functions. In addition to that a ‘notion’ is a particular context in which people used to communicate. Whereas a ‘function’ is for a specific purpose in a given context. For example, the notion of buying dresses requires numerous language functions, like enquiring about the prices or features of a product and bargaining. An important point regarding notional-functional syllabus is that the needs of the students have to be analysed and explored by different types of interaction and communication. The learner may be involved in, hence, needs analysis become a central to design such syllabuses patterns. When dealing with this type of syllabus, it is important to clarify the definitions of the terms used in the name. According to Finocchiaro and Brumfit the term "function" refers to the communicative purpose of the speaker (1983:15). These functions can be personal, interpersonal, directive, referential or imaginative and they can either be expressed through fixed formulae in the language or communicative expressions (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983 :28). Thus, the functions to be expressed depend solely on the speaker.

**II. Process-Oriented Syllabus:** Process-Oriented Syllabus focuses, leading to language outcomes, on the pedagogical processes. The task-based, skill-based and content-based types of syllabus are included in it.

**a). Task-Based Syllabus:** This syllabus is designed when the purpose is to complete some complex and meaningful tasks. Even though, the primary purpose is to complete tasks, however, language competence is developed through the very process of performing of the task. The language learnt comes out of the linguistic demands of the activity. Learners perform various tasks together in a co-operative environment. Task-based syllabus promotes and encourages collaborative learning. Since language learning is considered subordinate to task performance, therefore, language teaching also occurs as the need arises during the performance of the particular task.

According to Task-Based Syllabus, a task is an activity that should adhere to the following criteria:

1. Meaning is primary.
2. There is a goal which needs to be worked towards.
3. The activity is outcome-: evaluated.
4. There is a real-world relationship.

From these criteria, it becomes apparent, therefore, that activities are not chosen in order to teach a specific lexical form, but that meaning is far more important. Furthermore, activities focused on language itself are not tasks, as they need to have a real-world relationship. According to Skehan (1998:268), "What counts, in task-based approaches, is the way meaning is brought into prominence by the emphasis on goals and activities".

Skehan (1996b:39) also distinguishes between two forms of the task-based approach, namely a strong and a weak form. The strong form of task-based syllabus regards the task as the unit of instruction. This means that everything else that forms part of instruction is secondary. On the other hand, Skehan (1996b:39) states that, in the weak form "tasks are a vital part of language instruction, but that they are embedded in a more complex pedagogic context". This means that tasks form an equal part with other teaching components in the whole process of focused instruction. In its weak form, then (as in the case of a functional-notional syllabus), the Task-Based Syllabus allows the teacher to adopt an eclectic approach.

**b). Skill-Based Syllabus:** With today's digitally savvy and social-media oriented generation, there is a dire need for online-based learning to keep students engaged and focused on their goals. The concept of e-learning holds a great significance in defining the future of education and therefore, universities prefer skill-based learning and knowledge-oriented teaching. The concept of knowledge-based learning aims to develop an understanding of the theoretical concepts in a linear framework of delivering facts; however, the skill-based learning methodology is more of practical learning.

Skill-based learning is about planning, implementing and analysing skills gained through knowledge-based learning method. Students are motivated to think logically, analyse concepts and apply their insights. The idea behind this innovative and most in-demand learning method is to develop learners into independent thinkers and prepare them for the challenges in the future. Here are the reasons to implement the idea of skill-based education in universities.

**Sparks creativity** – Helps students in learning how to be independent and approach problems in a creative way. It gives a way to move beyond traditional methods and think innovatively.

**Develops critical thinking** – Enables students to hone analytical and critical thinking skills in all the courses.

**Enhances collaborative problem solving** – Students learn how to work in a constructive manner to solve problems in a collaborative manner.

**Builds effective written and oral communication** –It engaging the students in articulate discussion, active listening and presentation skills help in exercising their communication skills.

**Hones leadership** – Another benefit of introducing skill-based learning in classrooms is to develop effective leadership skills in students and help them see beyond their self-interests. Language activities and events will help the students to build the skills like listening, organising and inspiring the team members.

**c). Content-Based Syllabus:** This syllabus helps the learners to enhance their language through different contents and/or in the context of various types of information. Although the subject matter is of primary and vital importance, language learning occurs concurrently with content learning. There are a variety of strategies and techniques used in content-centered second language instruction:

### **i). Cooperative learning**

In this method, students of different linguistic and educational backgrounds and different skill levels work together on a common task for a common goal in either the language or the content classroom. Cooperative groups encourage students to communicate, to share insights, test hypotheses, and jointly construct knowledge. Depending on their language proficiency, students can be assigned various roles as facilitator, recorder, reporter, or illustrator. Other grouping strategies involve peer tutoring or pairing a second language learner with a more English-proficient peer (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Crandall, 1994).

### **ii). Whole language approach**

Crandall (1994) referring to the three following studies states that the philosophy of whole language is based on the concept that students need to experience language as an integrated whole. It focuses on the need for an integrated approach to language instruction within a context that is meaningful to students. The approach is consistent with integrated language and content instruction as both emphasize meaningful engagement and authentic language use, and both link oral and written language development. Whole language strategies that have been implemented in content-centered language classes include dialogue journals, reading response journals, learning logs, process-based writing, and language experience stories.

### **iii). Graphic organizers**

These provide a "means for organizing and presenting information so that it can be understood, remembered, and applied". Graphs, realia, tables, maps, flow charts, timelines, and Venn diagrams are used to help students place information in a comprehensible context. They enable students to organize information obtained from written or oral texts, develop reading strategies, increase retention, activate schema as a pre-reading or pre-listening activity, and organize ideas during the prewriting stage (Crandall, 1992, cited in Crandall, 1994).

### **iv). Project work**

Project work is viewed by most of its advocates "not as a replacement for other teaching methods" but rather as "an approach to learning which complements mainstream methods and which can be used with almost all levels, ages and abilities of students" (Haines 1989, p. 1, cited in Stoller, 2002). Project work is particularly effective because it represents a natural extension of what is already taking place in class. In various forms it shares the following features (Stoller, 2002): a) project work focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets. Real-world subject matter and topics of interest to students can become central to projects, b) project work is student centered, though the teacher plays a major role in offering support and guidance throughout the process, c) project work is cooperative rather than competitive. Students can work on their own, in small groups, or as a class to complete a project, sharing resources, ideas, and expertise along the way, d) project work leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from varied sources, mirroring real-life tasks, e) project work culminates in an end product (e.g., an oral presentation, a poster session, a bulletin board display, a

report, or a stage performance) that can be shared with others, giving the project a real purpose. The value of the project, however, lies not just in the final product but in the process of working towards the end point.

## V. WebQuests

Marco (2002) has proposed that the Web-Quest can be used in a content-based syllabus for English language learners. This activity involves the use of authentic material from different Internet sources and engages students in reading extensively on a topic related to their discipline, performing tasks of increasing complexity, and creating oral or written texts to present the results of their online work. WebQuests fit well in a learner-centered curriculum that seeks to help students develop autonomous learning. The use of technology with a content-based curriculum results in a learning environment in which students take more control of their learning. The role of the teacher is not to transmit knowledge, but to provide resources, help students develop learning strategies, guide the learning process, and offer support throughout the process. The use of Web Quests to learn languages integrates the pedagogical benefits of project work, content-based instruction, and language learning via the Internet. English Language learners become more motivated because they are using new technologies and authentic texts to complete authentic tasks related to their disciplines.

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