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## Chapter 4 THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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# **1. CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS**

**Curriculum** is the name given to any educational programme which states:

- a) The objectives of the programme, its educational purpose.
- b) The means used to achieve these ends, that is: the content, teaching procedures and learning experiences which are necessary to achieve this purpose.
- c) The means used to assess whether or not the educational ends have been achieved.

**Syllabus** is a more restricted concept and usually refers to a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught.

The **FL curriculum** is thus concerned with the planning, implementation, management, administration and evaluation of the foreign language programme, whereas the **FL syllabus** has a narrower scope and focuses on the selection and grading (if any) of contents.

## 2. FACTORS AFFECTING THE FL CURRICULUM

Designing an FL curriculum for TEFL in a classroom setting involves combining the principles of language teaching and learning with the elements that learners bring to the classroom: knowledge, needs, interests, personal experiences, etc. As the literature about SLL or FLL is so vast and there are so many options, each country adopts specific policies and favours certain curricular principles. So a country's educational policy is also an important integral factor. In addition, there are other sociocultural, geographic, economic and technological factors that influence the TEFL context (see Spolsky *et al.* 1974, Mackey 1970).

In sum, the varied factors that should be considered when designing an EFL curriculum/course will include the following (Stern 1983: 276-280):

1. *Linguistic factors:*
  - Linguistic uniformity and diversity in the community
  - Relationship between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>
2. *Social and cultural factors:*
  - Attitudes of learners towards L<sub>2</sub>
  - Language differences and social groups
3. *Historical setting and the national political situation*
  - Choice of particular L<sub>2</sub>
  - Political relations with the L<sub>2</sub> country

- 4. *Geographical aspects*
  - Geographical distance between the communities
- 5. *Economic and technological development*
  - Need of L<sub>2</sub> for economic development
- 6. *Educational framework in the region/Autonomous Community*
  - Starting age
  - Time allocated for L<sub>2</sub> weekly
  - Introduction of other foreign languages

### 3. CURRICULAR STAGES

Johnson (1989) presents a framework for the second language curriculum that is divided into several stages (1989:2-12):

#### 3.1. Curricular design

This involves policy making decisions, national language policies and adjustments made by the local communities. It is concerned with the determination of overall aims to satisfy national and local social needs and interests.

#### 3.2. Determining aims

In this stage, the general objectives and specific objectives to be achieved are set up by schools in their curricular projects.

#### 3.3. Programme preparation:

This involves a development of teaching and learning resources by means of:

- The planning and preparation of *teaching units* according to
  - a) overall aims
  - b) specific objectives and
  - c) desirable methodology.
- The development of teaching and learning *materials*.

#### 3.4. Classroom implementation:

Applying the curriculum in the classroom involves the interaction of teachers, students and programme resources in a school setting, working to achieve the aims and objectives established in 3.1. and 3.2. It includes:

- *Teaching acts*: They depend on the interpretation of the official curriculum, the teacher's sympathy with it, the teacher's beliefs and his or her professional capacity to perform in certain ways.
- *Learning acts*: They depend on the students' needs and interests, motivations, capabilities. According to Johnson (1989), SL curricula should include "learner

training" as a component. That would imply "teaching students how to be effective learners in a given curriculum" (1989:11).

During this stage the students' roles differ depending on the curricular approach adopted:

- *A specialist approach*: with only one direction of information, from experts (policy makers, teachers, etc.) to students.
- *A learner-centred approach*, with the students involved in the decision making process (stages 2, 3 & 4).
- *An eclectic approach*: the students know about the decisions made at stage b) and c) and make certain contributions.

### 3.5. Evaluation

This involves the appraisal of the curricular process (stages 3.1. to 3.4.) and the curricular results obtained: the final "product".

#### DISCUSSION 1

- a) Give a definition of curriculum.
- b) What is a syllabus?
- c) Mention some factors that affect the foreign language curriculum.
- d) Give an example of linguistic factors affecting the FL curriculum orientation in an Autonomous Community.
- e) Give examples of the geographical influence in the FL curriculum.
- f) What's the difference between the educational framework for languages in Britain and Spain?
- g) What are the main curricular stages according to Johnson (1989)?
- h) Who is involved in the *curricular design* stage?
- i) What does the *programme preparation* stage include?
- j) What are the three most common curricular approaches in class? What student roles are implied in each one?

## 4. PRODUCT-ORIENTED SYLLABUSES

As we will see, over the years the foreign language syllabus has been organized in different ways, influenced by different theories of proficiency. Product syllabuses are oriented towards expected outcomes. They share some characteristics in common:

- These syllabuses are *goal-centred*.
- There is a rational *planning* of goals and objectives.
- Objectives are centred on the student's *expected performance* (performance, instructional, behavioural objectives)
- Teachers usually take the initiative and are conceived as models to be imitated. So the EFL class is

often *teacher-directed*.

- Assessment is *criterion referenced*. The student's performance is measured by tests that provide information on the "final product", on the final objectives achieved.

The structural-grammatical and the notional-functional syllabuses are examples of product-oriented programmes.

#### 4.1. The structural-grammatical syllabus

This syllabus consists of an inventory of grammatical, phonological and lexical items, graded throughout the school period according to difficulty. It is assumed that the learner's role was to gain proficiency in the mastery of these linguistic elements. Example (Madrid and McLaren 1995: 12):

UNIT	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	PHONETICS
1	- Nouns & articles a desk, the door	- The classroom	- /o/ /o:/ - Intonation of statements
2	- Possessives Whose is this? It's ...	- Toys	- /w/ /v/ - Diphthongs
3	- Verb "to be" - Pronouns - Questions "tags" You're English, aren't you?	- Adjectives of nationality	- Intonation of questions tags  .....
...	.....	.....	

#### 4.2. The notional-functional syllabus

In the seventies, more emphasis was put on the semantic component of language, on the notions and functions that we realize when we communicate through language. Syllabuses were organized not only in terms of structures, but also around the notions and functions that learners might need to use in order to communicate successfully. These syllabuses were termed notional-functional and communicative. This is an example (Madrid and McLaren 1995:13):

UNIT	NOTIONS AND FUNCTIONS	EXPONENTS
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1	- Introducing your family - Expressing possession	- This is my ... - What's your father's name? - My father's name is...
2	- Expressing existence - Counting	- What is there in your bag? - There's a... - There are... - Numbers: 1-20

Some of the main differences between structural and communication-oriented syllabuses can be summarized as follows (Finnochiaro and Brumfit 1983: 90-94):

STRUCTURAL SYLLABUS	COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aims to develop the student's <b>linguistic competence</b>.</li> <li>- Organized around <b>structural, lexical &amp; phonetical</b> items.</li> <li>- Based on the <b>structural paradigm</b>: sentences are the basic units for learning.</li> <li>- Influenced by the <b>behaviourist theory</b> of learning (stimulus, response, reinforcement).</li> <li>- Places more emphasis on <b>accuracy</b> than fluency.</li> <li>- Contents are carefully <b>graded</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aims to develop the student's <b>communicative competence</b>.</li> <li>- Organized around <b>notional &amp; functional items</b>.</li> <li>- Based on the <b>discourse paradigm</b>: discourse, texts are the basis for learning.</li> <li>- Influenced by cognitive theories and <b>theories of communication</b> (speech acts, communicative functions, etc.)</li> <li>- Places more emphasis on <b>fluency</b> than accuracy.</li> <li>- Gradation is not so rigid.</li> </ul>

Despite the above differences, the *structural-grammatical* and *communicative* syllabuses usually focus on the outcomes that the students achieve as a result of instruction, that is, on the final "product", hence their inclusion in the group of *product-oriented* syllabuses.

### Critique of product-oriented syllabuses

#### *Grammatical syllabuses*

- These syllabuses focus only on one aspect of proficiency, that is, on the grammatical component. They neglect other important factors, such as the social dimension of language and its functional value.
- The grammatical grading of content has also been criticized on several grounds:
  - a) It is artificial and distorts natural and authentic language.
  - b) Grammatical items are usually graded according to difficulty but rarely follow the natural order of acquisition established by research work (e.g.

Pieneman and Johnston 1987, Dulay, Burt & Krashen 1982, Long 1987).

#### *Functional-notional syllabuses*

- The selection and grading of items is complex, especially at elementary levels.
- The functional grading of contents does not reflect authentic daily language either. So, there is also an element of distortion and artificiality in the language studied.

In general, both syllabuses are sometimes criticized for offering predetermined objectives, planned outside the classroom, which do not take into account the student's contribution, nor their "inbuilt syllabuses" and individuality.

#### DISCUSSION 2

- What are product-oriented syllabuses?
- What are the main characteristics that product-oriented syllabuses share?
- Explain the following terms referring to a syllabus: *goal-centred, teacher-directed, performance objectives, criterion referenced assessment*.
- Give other synonyms for *performance objectives*.
- What language areas are structural syllabuses organised around?
- What is the main focus of the notional-functional approach?
- How are structural syllabuses organised?
- Explain the following terms and relate them to the appropriate syllabus approach: *linguistic competence, communicative competence, discourse paradigm, structural paradigm, behaviourist theory, speech act theory, accuracy, fluency*.
- On what grounds have grammatical syllabuses been criticised?
- Why have functional-notional syllabuses been criticised?

#### 5. PROCESS-ORIENTED SYLLABUSES

More recently, the FL syllabus has been organised around certain learning tasks or activities that students perform. These syllabuses concentrate mainly on the learning process rather than on the end. This implies an important shift: instead of focusing on the outcomes of instruction, attention is paid to the process of instruction:

- learning of contents,
- development of skills and strategies,
- levels of motivation, etc.

In general, these syllabuses share some common characteristics (Madrid and McLaren 1995:15):

- They aim to develop efficient *learning strategies*.
- They are concerned with the *individual learning style*.



- Students *negotiate* curricular activities with teachers.
- Special attention is given to *affective factors*: the student's feelings, emotions and values.
- Students are often *involved* in the *learning process*: in the way learning takes place and in its evaluation (*metacognition*).

## 5.1. Procedural syllabuses

These syllabuses consist of a set of tasks and activities to be carried out in class and/or at home. These tasks require the use of meaningful language with different purposes according to the tasks proposed, but not primarily for the learning of certain linguistic forms. The accomplishment of the activities involves three kinds of tasks (Prabhu 1987: 46-47):

- a) *Information gap activity*: transference of unknown information from one student to another.
- b) *Reasoning-gap activity*: through processes of interference, deduction, practical reasoning, etc.
- c) *Opinion-gap activity*: personal feelings or attitudes towards given situations.

## 5.2. Task-based syllabus

A *task* is an activity or action which is carried out with meaningful language (not with the intention of using the language for its own sake). Tasks are considered an effective way of learning with a purpose other than learning language items to achieve pedagogical objectives. Frequent tasks can be: filling in a form, writing down telephone messages, writing letters and postcards to friends, writing reports, describing/narrating events, etc.

Some of the benefits suggested by Candlin (1987) and implied in task-based syllabuses are (Nunan 1988: 45-46):

- Tasks promote attention to *meaning*.
- They encourage attention to *relevant data*.
- They develop different *procedures* and modes of participation and involve learner contributions.
- They promote *risk-taking*.
- They encourage *knowledge, skills*, participation.
- They involve the use of language for the purpose of solving the task and promote learner training for *problem-solving*.

- They promote *sharing of information* and allow for different solutions..
- They encourage the learner's consciousness of the learning process and reflection (*metacognition*).

### 5.3 The natural approach:

This approach aims to develop basic personal oral and written communication skills. Its basic premises (Krashen & Terrell 1983) are:

- The general goal is *communication* skills.
- *Comprehension* precedes production.
- Production emerges without forcing it, after a *silent period*.
- Learning activities must promote *subconscious* acquisition rather than conscious learning.

### Criticising the process-oriented syllabuses

- The motivation of students, their intellectual capabilities and responsibility are not always strong enough to control and direct the learning processes, particularly at the initial stages of Primary Education.
- The learning of a foreign language cannot be limited exclusively to the encouragement of unconscious acquisition as the natural approach assumes. Many authors have admitted the need of some level of deliberate learning and conscious study of the language (Chihara and Oller 1978, Brière 1978) to have an explicit linguistic knowledge. The learning of a foreign language aims not only to develop the communicative capacity but also certain *language awareness*. This is what Stern calls *the general language education syllabus* (1992: 243-273), which also includes a language component: phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse and sociosemantic functions. For further criticism of the task-based syllabus, see, e.g. Bruton (2002).

### DISCUSSION 3

- What are process-oriented syllabuses? What are their main characteristics?
- Explain the following terms: *learning strategies, learning style, curricular negotiation, affective factors, metacognition*.
- What is an information-gap activity?
- What processes are implied in reasoning-gap and opinion-gap activities?
- What is a *task*?
- What are the main characteristics of *tasks*?
- What are the main premises of the natural approach/method? (Krashen & Terrell 1983)?
- Why have process-oriented syllabuses been criticised?

## 6. A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULAR DESIGN

The Council of Europe has provided a *Common European Framework for Languages* (2001) that is an indispensable reference for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes what language learners have to learn, the knowledge and skills they have to develop to be able to act effectively when communicating with a foreign language. In addition to that, each European country offers curricular designs that set the objectives, contents and methodological principles to be followed locally. FL teachers should be fully conversant with both frameworks.

### 6.1. The Common European Framework

The *Common European Framework for Languages* (CEF) (2001) describes what learners have to learn and the skills they have to develop to communicate effectively. It adopts an action-oriented approach, as it considers users and learners of a language primarily as social agents. Language use and language learning is described as follows:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of *competences*, both *general* and in particular *communicative language competences*. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various *constraints* to engage in *language activities* involving *language processes* to produce and/or receive *texts* in relation to *themes* in specific *domains*, activating those *strategies* which seem most appropriate for carrying out the *tasks* to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences (2001:9).

The terms in italics can be defined as follows:

*Competences* are the sum of knowledge and skills that allow a person to perform actions. There are two types of competences:

- 1) *General competences*, which intervene when performing actions of all kind. They include:
  - *Knowledge*, facts, concepts, principles, rules, etc (declarative knowledge). This competence includes the learners' *knowledge about the world*, their *sociocultural* knowledge and *intercultural* awareness.
  - *Skills*, procedures and strategies (procedural knowledge: knowing how to use declarative knowledge).
  - *Attitudes and values* (existential competence, "savoir-être", individual characteristics, personality, etc.

- *Ability to learn* (“savoir-apprendre”, learning to learn). It includes language and communication awareness, general *phonetic* awareness, *study* skills and *heuristic* skills.
- 2) *Communicative language competences* empower a person to act using linguistic means. These are the following:
- *Linguistic competences*, which include lexical, semantic, phonological, syntactic knowledge and skills.
  - *Sociolinguistic competences*: to do with the social conditions of language use: rules of politeness, gender, social groups, etc.
  - *Pragmatic competences*: these are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources. They refer to language functions and speech acts.

*Language activities* involve the exercise of one’s communicative language competence in a specific domain in processing either receptively or productively. They involve *reception* (listening, reading), *production* (speaking, writing) and *interaction* (e.g. listening-speaking; reading-writing). In both, the receptive and productive modes, the written or oral activities of *mediation* are often used. Translation, interpretation, paraphrasing or summarizing are mediating activities.

*The context of language use* refers to the events and situational factors in which communicative acts are embedded. Each act of language use is set in the context of a particular situation within one domain.

*Domains* are spheres of action that contextualize language activities. They may be public, personal, educational and occupational.

Learning to communicate and language practice involve the performance of *language tasks*. When performing these tasks, the use of *strategies* is needed. Language tasks involve the reception, production, interaction or mediation of oral or written *texts*.

In each domain, *situations* may be described in terms of the locations and times at which they occur, the persons involved, the events that take place, the actions performed by the persons involved and the texts used in each situation.

The *Common European Framework for Languages* (2001) establishes six broad levels of proficiency (2001:23):

- A1 (*Breakthrough*): introductory level
- A2 (*Waystage*): preintermediate level
- B1 (*Threshold*): intermediate level
- B2 (*Vantage*): adequate response to situations normally encountered

- C1 (*Effective proficiency*): advanced level
- C2 (*Mastery*): level achieved by language professionals

## **6.2. The Spanish Context**

The Spanish Curricular Design is based on a set of principles that have been adopted by the Spanish Autonomous Communities. Some of these are the following (Madrid and McLaren 1995:18-20:

### **a) Language as communication**

Language is conceived as a dynamic phenomenon, not simply as a system of forms structures and words, but basically as a system of communicative acts and situations. Consequently, learning a foreign language implies not only the manipulation of linguistic structures and the knowledge of vocabulary and phonetic features, it involves learning how to communicate in the language effectively, correctly and appropriately. The new plurilingual European context demands this communicative approach.

### **b) Communicative competence**

The concept of proficiency underlying the general goals that we have stated is the development of the student's *communicative competence* defined as a set of subcompetences (see Canale 1983):

- a) linguistic or grammatical competence
- b) sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence
- c) sociocultural competence
- d) discourse competence
- e) strategic competence

### **c) The role of the L<sub>1</sub>**

The mother language is not considered an obstacle to learning the foreign language that causes interference but a useful resource at the learner's disposal that aids learning:

*The L<sub>1</sub> is a resource of knowledge which learners will use both consciously and subconsciously to help them sift the L<sub>2</sub> data in the input and to perform as best as they can in the L<sub>2</sub>. (Ellis 1986:40)*

### **d) The importance of contextualization and discourse**

Traditionally, the FL elements were frequently presented in isolation, with little or no social context, in separate sentences which did not form a complete discourse. Present

day curricular activities tend to present the language contextualized, in more realistic and natural situations. So the paradigm of structuralism is abandoned in favour of the pragmatic and discourse paradigm which focuses on language use as the result of acts of communication. A special emphasis is placed on speech acts, linking devices, text structure, social contexts and communicative situations.

#### **e) The Learner-centred curriculum**

The students are considered the centre of the teaching and learning processes. Consequently, the communicative situations proposed must satisfy their needs and interests and should be related to their personal experiences. Thus, connections are established between what is taught and the linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge that the students already possess. This interconnection is believed to favour the integration of the new elements in the student's cognitive network and produce meaningful learning.

#### **f) Constructivism and autonomous learning**

The previous goals also assume that students build up their own competence quite autonomously and independently, not necessarily following the stages and steps established by the FL syllabus. In this long process, it is vital to promote learning strategies that help the students to learn how to learn, learn autonomously, control and become responsible for their own learning.

#### **g) Cooperative learning**

Great emphasis is placed on pair work and group work in order to encourage collaborative working habits and promote socialization in the classroom. The student is not only supposed to learn from the teacher or by him/herself, but also from the contribution of the other students.

#### **h) Concepts, procedures and attitudes**

Traditionally, FL curricular goals were set up around linguistic principles and *concepts* that were taught for the students to learn and apply. At present, and in consonance with the Common European Framework, FL goals are oriented towards the development not only of concepts, principles and facts (declarative knowledge), but also of *procedures*, techniques, actions and strategies that favour the FL learning process (procedural knowledge). In addition, constant emphasis is placed on the development of *attitudes* and values designed to regulate the learning processes (existential competence, "savoir être"), to promote collaborative work and to create a favourable attitude towards the FL and its culture.

### g) Cross-curricular activities

The teaching and learning of the FL is considered to provide excellent opportunities to introduce other curricular contents and contribute to a more comprehensive education. Areas that can receive attention in the FL class include the student's *civic education, health, promotion of equality between races, environmental studies, geography, sexual education, etc.*

To summarize, some of the fundamental principles of the Autonomous Communities' curricula are the following ( Madrid and McLaren 1995:20):

- Language is fundamentally an instrument of communication.
- The final aim of the FL instruction is the development of the student's communicative competence.
- The L<sub>1</sub> can be beneficial for SLL and the L<sub>2</sub> may contribute to a better knowledge of the L<sub>1</sub>.
- Pragmatics (language in use and in context) becomes more relevant than grammar.
- Goals are learner-centred. The learner's needs and interests are paramount.
- Constructivism is the predominant learning theory.
- Great importance is given to the student's strategic competence and to the development of the student's autonomous learning.
- The scope of the FL curriculum is broader. It also includes the learning of concepts, procedures and attitudes.
- great emphasis is placed on collaborative learning.
- The syllabus should be cross-curricular in nature.

#### DISCUSSION 4

- a) Define the following terms according to the Common European Framework:
- general competences
  - declarative knowledge
  - pragmatic competence
  - communicative language competences
  - procedural knowledge
  - domains
- b) What components do the following competences include?
- declarative knowledge
  - ability to learn
  - sociolinguistic competence
  - existential competence
  - linguistic competence
  - pragmatic competence
- c) What are the six levels of proficiency established by the CEF?
- d) According to the Spanish Curricular Design, what are the implications of the following principles for language teaching and learning?
- language as communication
  - role of L1
  - discourse paradigm
  - constructivism
  - communicative competence
  - contextualization
  - learner-centred curriculum
  - autonomous learning

- cooperative learning

- cross-curricular activities

## 7. ANALYZING NEEDS AND ESTABLISHING GOALS

Before setting up the curricular objectives to be achieved in the EFL classroom, an analysis of the students' needs should be undertaken to avoid a serious mismatch between the English class and the students' expectations. Well known models have been developed in order to facilitate needs analysis. Munby (1978) proposes collecting data related to:

- *The participants*: age, command of the language, etc.
- *Purpose domain*: what the FL is needed for.
- *Setting*, where the activity will be carried out.
- *Interaction*: potential participants in the interactive process.
- *Instrumentality*: skills needed.
- *Communicative events*: prediction of communicative situations.

Nunan presents a similar model to establish the student's learning preferences and needs that provides information on (1988:50):

- *Communicative situations* and tasks that the students wish to learn English for.
- *Learning activities* preferred by students (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, textbook tasks,...?)
- Most important *skills* for students (speaking, listening, writing, reading?).
- The kind of *group work* preferred (small groups, working in pairs, individual work, etc.?).
- Etc.

### 7.1. Aims and objectives for Primary Education:

Once teachers have obtained information about their students possible needs they can establish the goals to be achieved according to those needs. Following the needs analysis carried out by the Spanish Educational Reform and the major guidelines (R.D. 1006/1991, BOE 26-6-91) we have proposed the following goals for an elementary and intermediate level (Madrid & McLaren 1993:10), which imply:

1. Appreciating the communicative value of the foreign language and the student's own capacity to use it, showing a positive attitude, understanding and respect towards other foreign languages and other cultures.



2. Understanding oral texts related to familiar situations and events (e.g. the students' personal life, classmates, habitual and daily routines, classroom and school items, etc.) and transferring that general and specific information to other situations.
3. Relating the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of words and becoming familiar with the phonetic features of English: sounds, rhythm, intonation patterns, etc.
4. Using the foreign language for communication with the teacher and the other students in the classroom, following the basic rules of interpersonal communication (e.g. asking for one's turn, letting people speak without interrupting, etc.) and respecting other student's ideas.
5. Using non-verbal communication (paralanguage): gestures, body language, movements, drawings, etc. to facilitate oral communication.
6. Understanding and using the basic communicative functions (e.g. greetings, apologies, requests,...) in appropriate situations.
7. Learning authentic and prefabricated/block language through rhymes, songs, jokes, riddles, slogans and other rhythmic units.
8. Comprehensive reading of texts (adapted to the student's proficiency level) related to the student's personal life, needs and interests: school and community life, fiction, etc.
9. Writing texts (e.g. written messages, postcards, letters, etc.) following the formal conventions of written language (e.g. correct spelling, punctuation, word order, text structure, etc.).
10. Using the student's cognitive development, knowledge and previous experiences with the L<sub>1</sub>, to aid in learning the foreign language and developing learning strategies which promote independent and autonomous learning.
11. Improving the students' general and basic education by introducing cross-curricular contents and activities through the FL syllabus.

#### **DISCUSSION 5**

- a) What are the types of data that needs analysis aims to collect according to Munby (1978)?
- b) What does the needs analyses proposed by Nunan (1988) provide information on?
- c) What aspects do the eleven objectives set by the Spanish Administration refer to?

#### **8. THE PLURIDIMENSIONAL SYLLABUS**

We believe that the plurality of goals and competences mentioned above and the underlying multifaceted concept of proficiency described in the previous sections are of such diversity that they cannot be covered in a one-dimensional syllabus but require a pluridimensional one that includes several (sub)syllabuses.

#### **CONCEPTS: DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE**

In order to improve the students' cognitive competence, that is their knowledge about the

world and about the language through concepts, principles and facts (declarative knowledge), the following (sub)syllabuses are often included in English courses:

### **8.1. The language syllabus:**

This covers:

- The knowledge of and ability to use rules that govern the combination of linguistic units to produce words, phrases, sentences and texts:
- *Grammar*: construction of sentences and texts.
- *Lexical* fields, vocabulary.
- *Phonetics* and *spelling* elements: sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation, connected speech, etc.

### **8.2. The sociolinguistic, pragmatic and discourse syllabus**

This includes the social dimension of language, that is the sociolinguistic component. It refers to an appropriate understanding and production of utterances and texts in different contents and situations. It focuses on contextual factors: status of participants, purposes of the communication, proper use of communicative functions (or speech acts), attitudes, etc. All these aspects are currently included under the headings:

- *Functions* and speech acts
- Communicative *situations (texts)*

### **8.3. The sociocultural syllabus**

This includes the knowledge and appreciation of cultural aspects: customs, social habits, beliefs, attitudes, art forms, etc. These contents are covered under the heading:

- *Culture*

### **8.4. The cross-curricular syllabus**

As we have said, some areas of contents are not covered by the school curricular subjects in a systematic way and need to receive attention throughout the curriculum. These aspects include the student's civic education, health, promotion of equality between races, environmental studies, geography, sexual education, etc.

## **PROCEDURES, SKILLS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

### **8.5. The procedural syllabus**

To encourage the students to use their declarative knowledge and develop a variety of skills and strategies, English courses also incorporate a *procedural syllabus*. This comprises the actions, techniques and strategies which are considered necessary to learn and use the foreign language. Traditionally, these aspects have been treated in an implicit and subconscious way, but some present day psycholinguists recommend that they should be learned and developed consciously and explicitly (see also O'Malley *et al.* 1985, O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Nisbet and Schucksmith 1986, Jiménez 1993). A procedural syllabus includes (MEC, 1992):

<b>Receptive procedures (listening and reading):</b>	<b>Productive procedures (speaking and writing)</b>
<p>The main strategies involved are the following:</p> <p><i>Selective attention:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perception, recognition and identification of linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural elements.</li> </ul> <p><i>Relating, conceptualizing and memorizing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relating elements</li> <li>- Establishing contrasts</li> <li>- Classifying elements</li> </ul> <p><i>Analyzing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skimming for gist</li> <li>- Scanning for specific information</li> <li>- Organizing texts</li> <li>- Analyzing discourse features</li> </ul> <p><i>Inferring meaning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interpreting meanings: intentions, purposes, opinions,...</li> <li>- Inferring rules</li> </ul>	<p>Some of the strategies involved include the following:</p> <p><i>Reproducing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reproducing words and messages</li> </ul> <p><i>Practising</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meaningful interaction</li> <li>- Producing guided texts</li> <li>- Summarizing</li> </ul> <p><i>Transferring</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transferring the language studied to other situations.</li> </ul>

The following are examples of procedures:

**In relation to oral communication**

- Listening to texts carefully in order to understand the main idea and/or specific data.
- Asking and answering questions.
- Asking for explanations (orally).
- Listening to sequences of recorded texts and repeating them.
- Speaking about pictures and illustrated situations.
- Telling stories with visual support
- Reproducing communicative situations following models
- Planning and organizing information to be communicated, following given models.
- Recognizing some components of a communicative situation
- Interacting with others, using various communicative resources
- Taking part in guided simulations

#### **In relation to written communication**

- Identifying different text types
- Reading texts carefully in order to understand the main idea.
- Using the dictionary to discover the meaning of new words
- Completing incomplete texts choosing the missing elements
- Willingness to read while listening.
- Describing or narrating events.

#### **Procedures designed to promote reflection on language (language awareness)**

- Identifying and discriminating between phonological elements
- Identifying semantic, morphosyntactic elements, punctuation, communicative roles, intentions, etc.
- Grouping and sequencing linguistic elements in order to form simple texts
- Associating meanings with words, phrases, functions, etc.
- Using grammar rules inductively and testing their effectiveness in production.
- Forming new words from patterns observed in acquired lexis
- Relating linguistic and paralinguistic elements
- Identifying some of the elements involved in descriptions and dialogues.

### **8.6. IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDES**

In addition to the *concepts* included in the linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and cross-curricular syllabuses, and the *procedures* outlined above, special attention must be paid to the development of the students' *attitudes* and values in relation to the language programme, the learning process, the language which is being taught and learned, etc. (existential competence, "savoir-etre"). This syllabus component includes attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality factors. For example:

- Becoming convinced that comprehension does not necessarily involve understanding all the elements of a given text.
- Developing attitudes which do not inhibit learning, including the acceptance of the inevitability of errors and their part in the whole learning process.
- Acquiring a positive attitude towards the learning of linguistic elements: grammar, phonetics, lexical items, etc.
- Acquiring favourable attitudes towards the use of English as a means of communication, both inside the class and outside.
- Showing respect and consideration towards aspects of the foreign culture.
- Developing attitudes which lead to the conservation of our own culture.

### **8.7. LEARNING TO LEARN**

According to the Common European Framework (CEF) (2001), this course component aims to "develop the students' ability to observe and participate in new experiences and

to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge.” Obviously, these learning abilities are developed throughout the school years and are also included in the procedural competence (section 8.5). These learning strategies enable the learners to learn by themselves. For the CEF, the ability to learn has several components: language and communication awareness, general phonetic skills, study skills, heuristic skills, metacognition, etc.

A pluridimensional syllabus, then, aims to develop some general competences and specific communicative language competences by focusing on four areas:

- a) *Concepts*: principles, facts, rules,... (declarative knowledge)
- b) *Procedures*: learning techniques and cognitive strategies that influence the student's mental processes and help to develop the learner's autonomy (procedural knowledge).
- c) *Attitudes*: values, norms and affective factors (existential competence).
- d) *Learning to learn*.

It is important to notice that the components of the multidimensional syllabus we are proposing should be integrated as much as possible in each unit.

#### DISCUSSION 6

- a) What do the following (sub)syllabuses cover?
  - To increase the student's declarative knowledge:
    - The linguistic syllabus
    - The sociolinguistic and pragmatic syllabus
    - The sociocultural syllabus
    - The cross-curricular syllabus
  - To develop the procedural competence/knowledge:
    - The procedural syllabus:
  - To develop the existential competence:
    - Attitudes and values
  - To encourage the ability to learn:
    - The learning strategies syllabus
- b) Give examples of concepts, procedures and attitudes.
- c) What strategies are involved in receptive and productive procedures?

## 9 APPLYING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

If we take into account the Common European Framework and the guidelines proposed by the Spanish Administration, a multidimensional framework can integrate the

following types of knowledge and competences:

1) CONCEPTS (that is, *declarative knowledge*: knowing about the world and about the language). This is considered a general *cognitive competence* that includes facts, concepts and principles. Within this general competence, we can include other (sub)competences:

**a) Linguistic competence:**

- Grammar: morphology and syntax
- Vocabulary, lexicon
- Phonetics
- Spelling

**b) Sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence:** linguistic markers and social relations, politeness conventions, register differences, dialects and accents.

- Functions/Speech acts and exponents

**c) Discourse competence:** organization of texts, cohesion and coherence, text design, etc.

- Discursive devices

**d) Sociocultural competence:** sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, ...

- Culture

**e) Cross-curricular aspects:** connection with the other curricular areas

2) PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE (knowing how to use the declarative knowledge): procedures, skills, learning techniques and strategies.

**Oral communication** (listening-speaking)

**Written communication** (reading,-writing)

**Other skills**

3) EXISTENTIAL COMPETENCE (*savoir-être*): attitudes and values, motivations, personality factors,

4) LEARNING TO LEARN: language awareness, study skills, heuristic skills

These points can be applied in a lesson plan and developed in a teaching unit. What follows may serve as an example,

## 10. LESSON PLANNING

This includes stages 3.2. and 3.3., which were outlined in section 3. Each lesson aims to develop the *general competences* and *communicative language competences* that have been outlined above and that may be integrated as follows:

## UNIT 4

Stage: **PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Age: **7-8**

Topic: **Parks**

Duration: **2 weeks**

### 1) CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES (declarative knowledge, cognitive competence)

#### 1.1. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE:

##### - Vocabulary:

PARKS: *trees, pond, ducks, bench, grass, swings, show.*

IDIOMS: *Tired, quick!, up the tree, I'm fine*

OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS: *fountain, kite, puppets, wood*

##### - Grammar:

*Let's ... (go/play...)*

*Where? To the park*

##### - Phonetics (pronunciation)

- Pronunciation of the vocabulary presented about parks.

#### 1.2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE:

##### - Communicative functions and exponents:

- Suggestions: *Let's go, let's play,...*

- Greetings: *How are you? I'm...*

##### - Communicative situations (texts):

- *In the park*

- *The dog and the cats*

- *Come on, let's play*

#### 1.3. DISCOURSE COMPETENCE:

- Repetitions in the texts presented in class.

- Sequences of questions and their corresponding answers:

- *Let's go!*

- *But where?*

- *To the park!*

- *Let's play*

- *But what?*

- *Football!*

#### 1.4. SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE:

- British parks: general characteristics, shows and social activities

### 2) PROCEDURES, SKILLS (procedural knowledge: knowing how to use the declarative knowledge)

#### 2.1. ORAL COMMUNICATION (listening-speaking)

- Listening comprehension of short rhymes similar to *Come on, let's go; Come on, let's play.*

- Developing oral comprehension in communicative situations about parks.

- Oral comprehension of short dialogues similar to *The dog and the cats.*

- Acting out brief dialogues about parks (e.g. *The dog and the cats*).

- Identifying and naming some common elements found in parks.

- Greeting people by using *How are you?* and responding with *I'm...*

## 2.2. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (reading-writing)

- Reading comprehension of short rhymes about parks (e.g.: *In the park, Come on, Let's play*)
- Reading aloud and reciting the rhymes studied in class (orthographic competence).
- Reading comprehension of the expressions and utterances presented in class.
- Associating the vocabulary studied about parks with illustrations.
- Writing the meaning of the illustrations which represent the vocabulary presented in this unit in relation to parks.
- Doing crosswords with vocabulary about parks.

## 2.3. OTHER SKILLS

- Singing songs.
- Drawing and colouring pictures.
- Cutting out illustrations and realia (for wallcharts).
- Using Internet.

## 3) ATTITUDES AND VALUES (existential competence: beliefs, motivations, ...)

- Understanding and appreciating some of the characteristics of British parks: social activities, sports, etc.
- Showing respect for parks and the environment in general.
- Developing positive attitudes towards parks: maintenance, cleanliness, care, etc.
- Appreciation of the British people's sociocultural behaviour in parks.

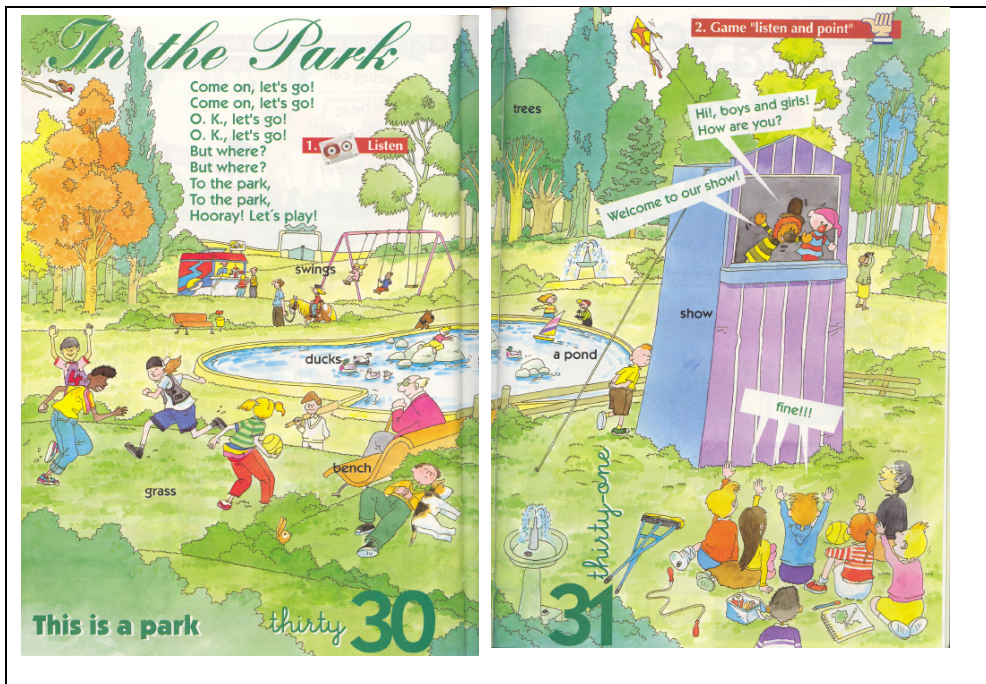
## 4) LEARNING TO LEARN (study and heuristic skills, language awareness, ...)

- Reflection on the language used with the rhymes and texts presented in this unit and awareness of some discourse elements to encourage independent listening and reading.
- Using Internet to find information.

## 10.1. EXAMPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities aim to develop the general competences and the communicative language competences that have been outlined above (from Madrid and McLaren: *Juniors 1*, pp.: 30-33. Ed. La Calesa, Valladolid):





#### DISCUSSION 7

- How is the topic of parks introduced? Is it right to proceed this way? Why/Why not?
- What procedures are involved in activity 1 (Listen)?
- What discursive elements would you emphasise with the rhyme *Come on, let's go*?
- What linguistic aspects would you teach?
- What cultural and intercultural aspects can you introduce?
- What functions can you teach with a) the rhyme and b) the mini-dialogue
- What attitudes and values can you emphasise in relation to a) the children playing in the park and b) the park.
- In what exercise can you apply the use of physical response techniques?
- What learning techniques can the students develop with activities 1 and 2?

**3a Listen** **The dog and the cats**

Hi! How are you? Tired! Why? That dog over there! Wow-wow! What a stupid dog! Quick! Up the tree! Yes! How! Wow-wow!

**4 Act out**

**DISCUSSION 8**

- Is this dialogue appropriate for 7-8 year old children?
- What principles of children's developmental psychology are applied in this activity?
- What procedures (skills) are implied in activity 3(Listen) and 4 (Act out)?
- What functional and pragmatic aspects can you teach?
- What linguistic aspects would you emphasise?

**5 Listen and read** MyEnglish Book

An English park A show in the park

thirty-two 39

**DISCUSSION 9**

- What procedures are developed in activity 5?
- What's the main objective of activity 5?
- What do you know about British parks? What information would you give eight-year old children?
- What cross-cultural aspects can you introduce in activity 5?
- What procedures are developed in activity 6 (Remember)?
- What's the main purpose of activity 6 (Remember)?
- What's the psychological implication of activity 6?
- How could you exploit activity 6?

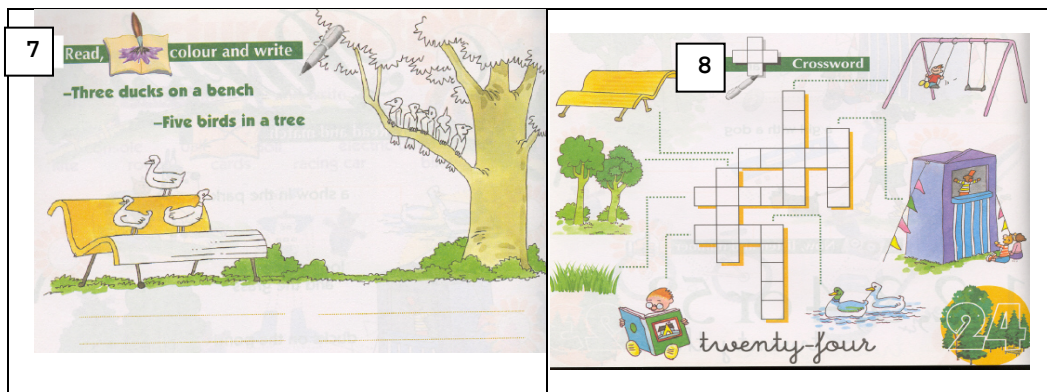
**6 Listen and repeat Remember**

Parks

trees park bench grass swings pond ducks show

-Tired!  
-Stupid dog!  
-Quick!  
-Up the tree!

How are you? I'm fine



#### DISCUSSION 10

- What procedures are used in act. 7 and act. 8?
- What linguistic aspects are consolidated in act. 7?
- Which activity is more motivating? Why?
- Are act. 7 and 8 presentation activities or exploitation activities? How do you know?

### 11. SOME GUIDELINES FOR THE CLASSROOM

In the previous section we have offered a model for the preparation of teaching units and for the development of teaching and learning materials. The next step is the classroom implementation of the lesson plan. We must now think about the methodological treatment in the classroom, that is, how the teaching and learning acts are going to be conducted, integrating the contributions of the *specialist* and *learner centred* approaches (see section 3.4).

#### 11.1 Adapting the FL syllabus

Even though we have established certain objectives and selected certain contents to be developed through specific learning tasks, each teacher may need to alter the distribution of contents to satisfy the students' needs and interests, adapting the syllabus to his/her group of students and taking into account:

- Their previous learning experiences.
- Their proficiency level, cognitive development and learning style.

- The complexity of the learning activities.
- The length and density of dialogues and texts.

### **11.2. Integrating the components of the multidimensional syllabus**

There must be an interrelation between all the *syllabuses* through the teaching of concepts, procedures and attitudes planned for each teaching units. This integration of components is relatively easy when we are presenting or exploiting texts. An integral exploitation should include:

- *Grammatical analysis*: sentence formation, word formation, connection of sentences, new vocabulary, relations among different meanings.
- *Phonetic and spelling revision*: teaching the pronunciation and spelling of the language.
- *Sociolinguistic analysis* : identification of characters, context and situation, purposes and intentions, register formal-informal), attitudes, communicative functions (speech acts), etc.
- *Cultural comments*: analysis of cultural referents: the characters' behaviour, cultural connotations of the language they use, geographical references, social habits, attitudes and beliefs,...
- *Cross-curricular* references, aiming to reinforce other curricular contents outside the FL domain.

### **11.3. Negotiating the FL syllabus and promoting autonomous learning**

The implementation of a pre-planned and pre-determined syllabus should not impede the negotiation of certain learning tasks with the students and the introduction of some methodological changes to satisfy certain students' needs and interests. These negotiations bring the FL syllabus close to the students' interest's, may contribute to their taking responsibility for their learning tasks and increase their motivational level. These adjustments and negotiations are necessary if we wish to prepare the students for a self-regulated autonomous learning, for them to work independently.

### **11.4. Balance in oral and written communication**

It is important to keep a balance between oral and written learning tasks. At the present time, written work predominates, quite often around 75% of the time, leaving a bare 25% for oral interaction. Oral communication includes the listening and speaking exercises and written communication involves the reading and writing tasks. As we will see, there is a considerable variety of techniques at the teacher's and student's disposal to facilitate

the learner's becoming equally competent in oral and written language.

### **11.5. Classroom interaction**

In a TEFL context, we assume that the setting where most of the FL teaching and learning takes place is the classroom; the natural environment has little or no effect, since there is no contact with English speakers. Consequently, efforts have to be made to intensify the communicative interaction between students and teacher while carrying out the learning tasks. The current teacher-fronted teaching paradigm should be made more flexible, so as to leave more room for small-group work, pairwork, individual work and learner autonomy.

### **11.6. Variety of didactic procedures and learning tasks**

The procedures established for the teaching and learning of the sample unit and the learning tasks proposed involve a considerable variety of techniques and learning experiences that are fundamental in the implementation of any FL syllabus. These predetermined activities leave some room for the teacher's initiative and imagination and may be adapted to the students' interests by introducing some changes. Some of the contents may need extra work at home. The assignment of brief projects to consolidate certain aspects of the teaching units may bring variety too and may contribute to developing the habit of working in teams or individually in an autonomous way.

#### **DISCUSSION 11**

- a) What do teachers do when they adapt the curricular activities to their students?
- b) How can you adapt activities 1, 2, 3 & 4 for low ability and high ability children?
- c) In what activities do you see a higher integration of competences? (Go through act. 1-7 and check).
- d) Which of the previous seven activities allow teachers to promote autonomous learning? Why?
- e) Is there a balance in these seven activities between oral and written work? Why?
- f) Which of the seven activities involve a greater variety of didactic procedures and learning tasks?  
Give reasons.

## **12. EVALUATION**

The final stage of the curricular process is *evaluation*, which implies a revision of the main stages:

- Adequacy of the national language policies for the specific school context.
- To what extent the general aims and the specific objectives have been and/or can be achieved in specific groups of students.
- Appropriateness of the teaching and learning resources and materials

available.

- Evaluation of didactic treatment and classroom methodology: adequacy of contents and procedures, attitudes developed, the teacher's teaching style, etc.

As we will see in chapter 13, the evaluation of all the curricular stages requires the involvement of all the participants in the curricular process, that is, the teacher and the students by means of:

- Self-evaluation forms for teachers and student.
- Continuous evaluation of the curricular process.
- Evaluation of outcomes (final results).

### **13. SUMMARY**

In this chapter an introduction to the foreign language curriculum has been provided.

*Curriculum* has been defined as an educational programme that states the ends (objectives), the means (contents & procedures) and the evaluation criteria.

The term *syllabus* refers only to the list of contents and the order in which they will be taught.

Among the factors affecting the FL curriculum we have mentioned the following:

- Linguistic, social and cultural factors.
- Historical setting and the national political situation.
- Geographical aspects.
- Economic and technical development
- Educational framework in the community.

Five curricular stages have been determined and described briefly:

- Curricular design
- Determination of aims
- Programme preparation
- Classroom implementation
- Evaluation

Among the syllabuses oriented towards the expected outcomes (the product) we have mentioned:

- The structural-grammatical syllabus
- The notional-functional syllabus

Nowadays, there is a movement towards process-oriented syllabuses. A good example is the task-based approach. Some of its more relevant features are:

- Attention to meaning and to relevant data.
- Development of a variety of procedures.
- Promotion of the learners' contribution, risk-taking, participation, problem-

solving, the sharing of information and the learners' metacognition about the learning process.

Some relevant aspects of the *Common European Framework* (CEF) and the Spanish Curricular Design have also been introduced. Among them we have studied the following:

- Language as an instrument of communication.
- The importance of developing the student's communicative competence.
- The possible benefit of the L<sub>1</sub>.
- The importance of pragmatics (language in use and in context).
- The learner-centred approach.
- Constructivism as the predominant learning theory.
- The importance of the student's strategic competence and autonomous learning.
- The development of general competences (cognitive, procedural, existential & learning) and communicative language competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic & pragmatic)
- The cross-curricular dimension.

The objectives proposed by the Spanish autonomous communities are related to the following aspects:

- Obj. 1: Positives attitudes and values → FL and its culture
- Obj. 2: Listening comprehension.
- Obj. 3: Spelling, pronunciation and meaning.
- Obj. 4: Oral production.
- Obj. 5: Non-verbal communication.
- Obj. 6: Communicative functions.
- Obj. 7: Authentic and prefabricated language.
- Obj. 8: Reading comprehension
- Obj. 9: Writing
- Obj. 10: Learning strategies
- Obj. 11: Cross-curricular aspects

We have presented a framework of the basic general competences and communicative language competences which can be applied when planning lessons, teaching units, analysing textbooks and evaluating the students' proficiency. It includes the following points:

1) DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE (cognitive competence):

**c) Linguistic competence:**

- Grammar: morphology and syntax
- Vocabulary, lexicon
- Phonetics
- Spelling

**d) Sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence:**

- Functions/Speech acts and exponents

**c) Discourse competence**

- Discursive devices

**d) Sociocultural competence**

- Culture

**e) Cross-curricular aspects**

2) PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE/COMPETECE

**Oral communication** (listening- speaking,)

**Written communication** (reading-writing)

**Other skills**

3) EXISTENTIAL COMPETENCE (savoir-être)

4) LEARNING TO LEARN: language awareness, study skills, heuristic skills

Finally, some examples of teaching and learning activities for young children have been presented and analysed using criteria based on the previous chart.

## 14. FURTHER READING

**Dubbin, F. and Olshtain, E. (1986):** *Course Design: Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The authors describe the factors which must be considered in constructing courses and materials. They cover: the fact-finding stage, establishing realistic goals, surveying existing programs, realizing goals through instructional plans, selecting the shape of the syllabus, and considerations involved in constructing communicative curricula and syllabuses. All of these aspects are considered in the light of current theories of language learning.

**Yalden, J. (1987):** *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book outlines theoretical issues relevant to the preparation and teaching of second language courses, the taking of decisions in response to learner needs, the choice of textbooks and the preparation of classroom materials. In addition to the theoretical background, teachers can find suggestions on how to devise classroom procedures and materials that best fit the learners' linguistic and communicative needs. Procedures for developing main or supplementary units in new or existing courses are also described in detail.



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

The book includes a description of the different approaches to syllabus design, followed by a section including practical examples and a third section on how to apply the ideas developed in previous sections. The book offers teachers the means to develop an ability to evaluate, modify, and adapt the syllabuses with which they work. There is also a sequencing of tasks in each section, with the purpose of developing critical thinking.

**Johnson, R. K. (ed.) (1989):** *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book presents a collection of authoritative papers which deal with curriculum planning, specification of ends and means, programme implementation, and classroom implementation. Evaluation is also considered relevant at each stage. The curriculum is taken to mean all the factors which contribute to the teaching and learning situation and the emphasis of the book is on the interdependence of these factors. The contributors are leading practitioners and researchers with experience in various parts of the world. This collection is of interest to teachers, teacher-trainers, course directors and designers concerned with implementing language programmes.

**Council of Europe (2001):** *A Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Learning, teaching, assessment). Strasbourg.

(See: [http://www.culture2.coe.int/portfolio/documents\\_intro/common\\_framework.html](http://www.culture2.coe.int/portfolio/documents_intro/common_framework.html))

The Framework is a document which describes in a comprehensive manner the competences necessary for communication, the related knowledge and skills, and the situations and domains of communication. It facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. It is of particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers - in fact to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing. It is the result of extensive research and ongoing work on communicative objectives, as exemplified by the popular 'Threshold level' concept. The Framework has become a key reference document and a valuable tool for educational and professional mobility.

## 15. TASKS FOR PAPERS

1. Find a textbook which develops a *product-oriented syllabus* (look at the references given in section 4). Copy the sequence of objectives and contents proposed by the course book.
2. Look for a course book that presents a *process-oriented syllabus* (see the references given in section 5). Analyze the interrelationship between objectives, contents and tasks. Draw some conclusions.
3. Read the criteria given in section 6 for *needs analysis* and see the bibliography mentioned. Write a questionnaire to find out the learner's needs and interests, give it to a group of students to be filled in, collect the protocols, analyze the results and draw some conclusions.
4. Do you agree with the general principles for the foreign language curriculum given in section 7? Which principles do you consider realistic? Which ones can be considered utopian in certain teaching

contexts? Write a brief paper.

6. What do you think about the development of *procedures* and *attitudes*? Is it enough to wait for implicit development or you think that explicit study is necessary to become more proficient? Do you think that an objective evaluation of the student's attitudes and values is possible? How?
7. Prepare a *lesson plan* for Primary Education. Indicate: the topic, the students' age, the time-scheme, concepts and principles, procedures, attitudes and learning techniques. Use the guidelines in section 9 and 10.
8. Which orientations for classroom implementation (see section 12) are most important and which are less relevant? Give reasons for your answer.
9. Use a textbook for Primary Education. Select one teaching unit and analyse all the teaching and learning activities contained in the lesson (in the student's book and workbook). Indicate all the competences that are developed in each activity by ticking  in the right squares. You can use the following table or develop a similar one. Notice that you may need several copies so that all the activities in both handbook and workbook can be analysed.

	STUDENT'S BOOK ACTIVITIES									WORKBOOK ACTIVITIES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1) DECLARATIVE KNOWLEDGE:																	
<b>Linguistic competence:</b>																	
Grammar																	
Vocabulary																	
Phonetics																	
Spelling																	
<b>Sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence:</b>																	
Functions/Speech acts and exponents																	
<b>Discourse competence</b>																	
Discursive devices																	
<b>Sociocultural competence</b>																	
Culture																	
<b>Cross-curricular aspects</b>																	
2) PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE																	
<b>Oral communication:</b>																	
listening																	
speaking																	
interaction: listening-speaking																	
listening and reading																	
Speaking and reading																	
.....																	
<b>Written communication</b>																	
reading																	
writing																	
Interaction: reading-writing																	
reading and speaking																	

