Program & Evaluation

Graduate School of TESOL

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Section 1
Syllabus & Course Overview

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The general goal of this will be to allow teachers-in-training to apply many of the concepts that they have learned regarding curriculum, course and material design and apply them to the evaluation of a hypothetical language learning program. We have been "hired" to evaluate and design an English language program for an English summer camp In the Philippines. The camp is joint venture between a Philippine resort and the Mandela School. The Mandela School is private alternative school here in Korea. It has several campuses, a teacher training center and an international high school in the Philippines.

They have recently concluded their first summer camp and the post-camp evaluations have been disappointing. Although the students thought the activities were fun, they didn't feel that they had been adequately prepared to speak and understand the English to do these activities well. Several students said that learning how to scuba dive in English could have been a lot better if they had learned some of the vocabulary prior to the activity. They also didn't feel that the summer camp adequately reflected the school's mission statement of "learning by choosing;" that is, the students felt that they didn't have very much choice about the activities that they could do.

Although numerous students expressed specific disappoints about the summer camp experience, they, nevertheless, had a generally positive experience. Eighty percent of the students replied "yes" to the survey question: "Would you recommend a friend to come to this camp?" And sixty percent of the students answered "yes" to the survey questions: "Would like to attend the camp again?" If this is accurate, then the camp administrators want us to take this into consideration when we design our curriculum for next summer; that is, the curriculum should be flexible enough so that students who attend the English summer camp more than once will be exposed to more and more English.

One major stipulation is that our program and curriculum recommendations must fit within the school's educational philosophy and mission statement, because thirty percent of the students felt that the camp did not adequately reflect the school's motto: "Learn by choosing. A summary of the Mandela School's educational beliefs follow below:
- create and maintain a respectful learning environment in which learner and teachers are equal partners in the teaching and learning process
- foster student autonomy through choice and flexible assessment
- allow students to have opportunities for self-discovery and self-actualization
- promote reflective practices so that students can learn how to learn
- encourage students to take more responsibility for themselves and for their learning
- facilitate cooperative rather than competitive learning environments so that peer teaching and learning become routine

Included is this summer camp's 2011 schedule, and they have asked us to keep this schedule in mind as we plan the language segment of the summer camp. All extra-curricular activities are

conducted in English by camp faculty and staff, so preparing the learners to participate in those extra-curricular activities needs to be major concern of our curricular development.

Mandela School Philippine Summer Camp 2011
Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00-7:oo	Wake-up/ Clean	Wake-up/ Clean	Wake-up/ Clean	Wake-up/ Clean	Wake-up/ Clean	X	X
7:00-8:00	B'fast	B'fast	B'fast	B'fast	B'fast	Wake-up/ Clean	Wake-up/ Clean
8:00-9:00	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	B'fast	B'fast
9:00-10:00	English	English	English	English	English		
10:00-10:30	Snack-time	Snack-time	Snack-time	Snack-time	Snack-time		
10:30-11:30	English	English	English	English	English		
11:30-12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		
12:30-1:00	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time		
1:00-4:00	Philippine culture	Philippine culture	Philippine culture	Philippine culture	Philippine culture	See Below	See Below
4:00-5:00	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time		
5:00-6:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
6:00-7:00	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time		
7:00-8:00	Team-building Activities	Team-building Activities	Team-building Activities	Team-building Activities	Team-building Activities		
8:00-9:00	Performance Practice	Performance Practice	Performance Practice	Performance Practice	Performance Practice		
9:00-9:30	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time	Free-time		
9:30-10:00	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed	Get ready for bed

Sundays 1&3 Travel day to and from the Philippines
Sunday 2 is intensive scuba
Saturday: 1-3 Fieldtrips and sight seeing. Last Saturday students will have several hours for souvenir shopping

Philippine culture
- Cooking
- Popular Philippine Culture such as B'boy dance and pop music
- Sewing and fashion
- Traditional Philippine music

Performance Practice
- On the last Saturday the whole camp will travel to a local community center and give a performance for the local Philippine community.

Additional Background Information

Student at the camp ranged in age from fifth grade to ninth grade. Language learners were separated into two groups based on their language proficiency; however, this is only descriptive rather than prescriptive, because some learners seemed to think that the learning was too

fragmentary and not related to the extra-curricular activities that they were to engage in at camp, so a two-tier system is not the only way to organize the curriculum.

What it Means for Us

In order for us to complete this task will be reading a selection of articles and additional readings may emerge as the semester progresses based on the needs of our project. Current readings include:
- Needs Analysis from ***Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*** by Jack Richards
- Needs Assessment in Language Programming: From Theory to Practice by Richard Berwick in ***The Second Language Curriculum*** edited by Robert Keith Johnson
- Course Planning and Syllabus Design from ***Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*** by Jack Richards
- Program-defining Evaluation in a Decade of Eclecticism by Steven Ross from ***Evaluating Second Language Education*** edited by J. Charles Alderson.

The readings will be made available through a course packet. You can purchase the course packet at 참글, a 복사실 near the back gate.

Grading and assessments:

20% Attendance (10%) and active participation in class activities (10%)
20% Homework on readings
10% Language Needs Identification
25% Project 1: Needs Analysis Instrument
25% Project 2: Unit Plan with Ends/Means Specification

Attendance [10%] & Participation [10%] (20%)
Attendance is **mandatory**. Participants who arrive to class **10 minutes or more** after the start of class will be **considered late**. Participants who are **late 3 times** will receive **1 absence**. Any participant who **misses ¼ or more** of all class meetings **WILL receive an F** in the course. **More important than attendance is participation**. I expect participants to be active in class discussions and to complete all oral and written assignments **BY THE DUE DATE**. If assignments are handed in late without prior permission from the instructor, **10% for each late day will be deducted from the grade**. Finally, participants in this course will have several opportunities to apply the skills learned in lectures, discussions and workshops by engaging in various "in-class" activities and projects.

Homework on readings (20%)
It is essential to be prepared for each class by completing the required readings. This will provide you with the background knowledge on the topic and allow you to participate actively in the class discussion. In order to ensure that you have read the required readings for class, you will be expected to do a short homework assignment for the reading. This homework assignment involves answering the guiding reading questions presented at the beginning of each reading. These homework assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of class. **Late submissions will NOT be accepted.**

Language Needs Identification (10%)
Students will need to answer the following questions for a specific theme/topic/area of study: *What vocabulary, expressions and grammatical structures will the learners need to be successful in this summer camp?* Students will analyze their theme/topic/area of study and compile a list of possible study points.

Project 1: Creating a Needs Analysis Instrument (25%)
All students will be involved in different aspects of the same needs analysis project. The mid-term project consists of producing a series of Needs Analysis Instruments to be used by the camp administration to help them with the planning and implementation of next year's camp. Instruments to be made include 1) incoming students, 2) English teachers and camp faculty and 3) parents

Project 2: Unit Plan with Ends/Means Specification (25%)
Although the camp administration will be responsible for most of the materials and lesson plans, we have been asked to design a Unit Plan for the three-week camp, and to create a scope and possible sequence of work with suggestions for implementation (means) and learning outcomes (ends).

HUFS grading scale:
A+ = 95-100%
AO = 90-94%
B+=85-89%
BO = 30-84%
C+ = 75=79%
CO = 70-74%
F = 69% or less

Weekly Plan

This weekly plan is a ***tentative*** plan. It will act as a guideline but may not be followed exactly due to the participants' needs, their understanding of the contents, and overall progress.

Week/Date	Readings	In class activities/Assignments
Week 1		Introduction to course
Week 2	"Needs Analysis" from ***Curriculum Development in Language Teaching***	**Discussion/Lecture:** about reading
Week 3	"Needs Assessment in Language Programming: from Theory to Practice" from ***The Second Language Curriculum***	**Discussion/lecture**: about reading **Group Work:** Language Needs Identification
Week 4	The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum from ***New Perspectives on Grammar Teaching in Second Language Classrooms***	**Language Needs Identification Due** **Discussion/lecture**: about reading **Introduce**: Project #1
Week 5		**Workshop:** On creating a needs analysis **Group Work:** Begin designing your groups needs analysis instrument
Week 6	"Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principles for designing language courses" by S Cotterall - ***ELT journal, 2000***	**Discussion/lecture**: about reading
Week 7		**Peer Editing**: Students edit and finalize their needs analysis instruments
Week 8	Formulating Goals and Objectives from ***Designing Language Courses***	**Needs analysis due** **Discussion/lecture**: about reading
Week 9	Defining Learning Objectives for ELT from ***ELT Journal, 1985***	**Discussion/lecture**: about reading
Week 10	Course Planning and Syllabus Design from ***Curriculum Development in Language Teaching***	**Discussion/lecture**: about reading **Introduce**: Project #2
Week 11		**Workshop:** On syllabus design
Week 12		**Group Work**: Ends/Means Specification – course goals and SLOs
Week 13		**Group Work**: Ends/Means Specification – course goals and SLOs
Week 14	The Empirical Evaluation of language teaching materials from ***ELT journal, 1997***	**Discussion/lecture**: about reading
Week 15		**Conferencing**: I will give feedback on project #2 before you submit for evaluation
Week 16		**Project 3 Due** Course Evaluation and Survey

Section 2
Readings & Homework Questions

| Reading 1: "**Needs Analysis**" from |
| *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching* |

Directions: Answers these four questions on a separate sheet of paper. I will collect in next week's class.

1. Who are the stakeholders for our needs analysis project? Why?

2. Who will be the audience be for our needs analysis project? Why?

3. Who will be the target population for our needs analysis project? Why?

4. How will we triangulate our date? What procedures can we/should we use? Why?

3 Needs analysis

One of the basic assumptions of curriculum development is that a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs. Procedures used to collect information about learners' needs are known as needs analysis. Needs analysis as a distinct and necessary phase in planning educational programs emerged in the 1960s as part of the systems approach to curriculum development and was part of the prevalent philosophy of educational accountablity (Stufflebeam, McCormick, Brinkerhoff, and Nelson 1985). If providers of training programs wanted public or other sources of funding in order to provide different kinds of training programs, they were required to demonstrate that a proposed program was a response to a genuine need (Pratt 1980). Subsequently needs analysis developed into something of an industry. Berwick (1989, 51) comments:

> The need for convincing precision in educational needs assessment was also reinforced during this period by the "behavioral objectives" movement in educational planning, particularly in North America, which insisted on specifying in measurable form all goals of importance within an educational system. The emphasis on precision and accountability clearly influenced the appearance of needs assessment as a form of educational technology and its diversification into a collection of educational research methodologies.

Needs analysis was introduced into language teaching through the ESP movement (see Chapter 2). From the 1960s, the demand for specialized language programs grew and applied linguists increasingly began to employ needs analysis procedures in language teaching. By the 1980s, in many parts of the world a "needs-based philosophy" emerged in language teaching, particularly in relation to ESP and vocationally oriented program design (Brindley 1984). In this chapter we will examine approaches to needs analysis and consider the purposes of needs analysis, the nature of needs, who needs analysis is intended for, who the target population is, who collects information, what procedures can be used, and how the information collected can be used. (Examples of two different needs analyses are given on pages 68–71.)

The purposes of needs analysis

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

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

In the case of K–12 ESL programs (e.g., for ESL students in public schools) Linse (1993) identifies the following purposes for needs analysis:

- to compile a demographic profile of all the languages and language groups represented by the students
- to assess their level of language acquisition in their native language and in English
- to determine their communicative abilities in English
- to determine their formal knowledge of English
- to find out how students use language on a daily basis
- to determine what English language skills are necessary to enable students to participate in all school and community activities in English
- to find out what prior experiences students have had with formal education
- to determine the attitudes of the students and their families toward formal schooling and education
- to find out what preliteracy and literacy skills the students possess
- to ascertain the students' level of cognitive development and acquisition of academic skills in their native language(s)
- to ascertain what cognitive and academic skills students have acquired in English
- to determine the cultural, political, and personal characteristics of students

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

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

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

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

In other cases, learners' needs may not be so immediate – for example, students learning English as a secondary school subject in an EFL context. Here English may be a compulsory subject that is considered an important part of a child's general education. However, even though the students may not have any immediate perceptions of needs, curriculum planners will generally have consulted employers, parents, teachers, and others to find out what knowledge of English they expect high school graduates to achieve. In many countries, the introduction of English or another foreign language in elementary or secondary school is based on what curriculum planners consider best for students to study at school in the same way that math, history, and physical education are included in the school curriculum. Learners are not consulted as to whether they perceive a need for such knowledge. Their needs have been decided for them by those concerned with their long-term welfare. Needs analysis thus includes the study of perceived and present needs as well as potential and unrecognized needs.

Needs analysis may take place prior to, during, or after a language program. Much of the literature on needs analysis is based on the assumption that it is part of the planning that takes place as part of the development of a course. It assumes that time and resources are available to plan, collect, and analyze relevant information for a planned program of instruction. This "a priori" approach to needs analysis requires long-term planning and assumes adequate time and resources to devote to needs analysis. Example 1 (pages 68–70) is a needs analysis of this type.

In some cases, however, long-term planning is not an option. Little may be known in detail about a group of learners apart from the fact that a group of forty-five Mexican civil servants will be arriving in 3 weeks' time and want to work on their language skills. In these circumstances, needs analysis has to be carried out as part of the delivery of the course. Goals, content, and the teaching approach are shaped by information collected during the teaching of the course. Example 2 (pages 70–71) is a needs analysis of this kind.

At other times, the bulk of the information that constitutes the needs analysis may be collected after the course is finished. The information collected is then analyzed in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the learners' needs as a basis for evaluating and revising the program (see Chapter 9).

What are needs?

The term *needs* is not as straightforward as it might appear, and hence the term is sometimes used to refer to wants, desires, demands, expectation motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements (Brindley 1984, 28) Needs are often described in terms of a linguistic deficiency, that is, as describing the difference between what a learner can presently do in a language and what he or she should be able to do. This suggests that needs have objective reality and are simply there waiting to be identified and analyzed Porcher (1977, in Brindley 1984, 29) offers a different perspective: "Nee is not a thing that exists and might be encountered ready-made on the stree It is a thing that is constructed, the center of conceptual networks and th product of a number of epistemological choices (which are not innocel themselves, of course)." What is identified as a need is dependent on judg ment and reflects the interests and values of those making such a judgmen Teachers, learners, employers, parents, and other *stakeholders* (discussed i the next section) may thus all have different views as to what needs are. Fc example, in considering the needs of immigrants, representatives of the m; jority population may see the immigrants' needs as achieving cultural an

linguistic assimilation as quickly as possible and hence may want a needs analysis to identify the language skills immigrants require in order to survive, and ultimately, assimilate into the dominant culture. The immigrants themselves, however, may see their goals as concerned with communication for survival and independence, particularly economic survival, but may have no wish to assimilate into the dominant culture (Burnett 1998). Auerbach (1995, 9) has pointed out that English language teaching has often been viewed as a "neutral transfer of skills, knowledge, or competencies" and that such an approach is based on the needs of social institutions, rather than language learners, and ignores questions of power:

Pedagogical choices about curriculum development, content, materials, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional considerations, are in fact inherently ideological in nature, with significant implications for learners' socioeconomic roles. (Auerbach 1995, 9)

Needs are often described in terms of language needs, that is, as the language skills needed to survive in an English-dominant society. But as Auerbach (1995) and others have pointed out, in many cases, particularly that of immigrant minorities in English-dominant societies, such persons also have other kinds of needs. These relate to housing, health care, access to schooling for their children, access to community agencies and services, and ways of addressing exploitation and discrimination in the workplace. How can the curriculum give learners the linguistic and other resources they need to understand and access resources they have the right to make use of in the community and to articulate and defend their own rights and interests? Planning an ESL curriculum in this case not only involves identifying students' language needs, but seeks "to enable them to critically examine [the existing order] and become active in shaping their own roles in it" (Auerbach 1995, 15). This issue will be examined in more detail when we consider alternative curriculum models and their value, in Chapter 5.

The users of needs analysis

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

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

- teachers who will teach from the new curriculum
- learners, who will be taught from the curriculum
- writers, who are preparing new textbooks
- testing personnel, who are involved in developing end-of-school assessments
- staff of tertiary institutions, who are interested in knowing what the expected level will be of students exiting the schools and what problems they face

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

- trainers responsible for designing training programs and materials
- a funding body, such as the local professional society for accountants who are interested in seeing a concrete product as an outcome of their funding
- employers who are interested in improving the job performance of new staff

With small-scale needs analysis such as that carried out by a single teacher on his or her class, the audience might consist of the teacher, other teachers, and the program coordinator. In cases of large-scale needs analysis, there will be multiple audiences for the results of a needs analysis. Determining the likely audiences is an important first step in planning a needs analysis in order to ensure that the information they need is obtained and that the needs analysis will have the impact it is designed to have. Stufflebeam et al. (1985, 25) comment: "It is important to remember that not all key audiences are likely to be identified at the start of a study. Also, it is entirely possible that the relative importance of various audiences will change during the study."

Needs analysis can thus have a political dimension. It can be used to support a particular agenda, for example, by giving priority to one group to the exclusion of others within a population or in order to justify a decision that has already been made on economic or other grounds. For example, an employer might want to use information from a needs analysis to justify replacing certain staff rather than investing in providing for retraining. In any situation where needs analysis is being undertaken, there are thus different stakeholders, that is, those who have a particular interest or involvement in the issues or programs that are being examined, and it is important to try to get a sense of what their different agendas are. Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 124) define a stakeholder as "a person or group of persons with a right to comment on, and have input into, the curriculum process offered

in schools." Different stakeholders will want different things from the curriculum. Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 131–132) suggest that when a group of persons are working on a curriculum committee or trying to solve a curriculum problem they should think of the planning process as a curriculum stakeholder situation and ask the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the curriculum situation?
2. If there is a group, what is the makeup of the group?
3. Who set up the project?
4. How were the group's membership and purpose established?

From the answers to these questions, further questions follow:

1. How accountable am I to this stakeholder?
2. How much will this stakeholder be affected by my decision?
3. How much risk is there in ignoring this stakeholder?
4. How much right has this stakeholder to direct my action?

The target population

The target population in a needs analysis refers to the people about whom information will be collected. Typically, in language programs these will be language learners or potential language learners, but others are also often involved depending on whether they can provide information useful in meeting the purposes of the needs analysis. For example, in conducting a needs analysis to determine the focus of an English program in public secondary schools in an EFL context, the target population might include:

- policy makers
- ministry of education officials
- teachers
- students
- academics
- employers
- vocational training specialists
- parents
- influential individuals and pressure groups
- academic specialists
- community agencies

Within each target group, subcategories of respondents might be needed to provide different perspectives on needs. For example, in conducting a needs

analysis of students studying foreign languages at a New Zealand university (Richards and Gravatt 1998), the following categories of students were included to help determine students' motivations for selecting a language course, dropping a language course, or choosing not to take a language course:

- students currently enrolled in a foreign language course
- students previously enrolled but no longer studying a language
- students who have never studied a foreign language

In determining the target population, an important issue is that of sampling. In some cases, the population is small enough for every learner to be included in the sample. In other cases, this approach is not feasible and so decisions must be made about the size of the sample to be included in a needs analysis. Sampling involves asking a portion of the potential population instead of the total population and seeks to create a sample that is representative of the total population. Elley (1984) points out that a number of factors influence the approach to sampling, such as the homogeneity of the population in terms of the kinds of skills, attitudes, or knowledge being sought or the need to study subgroups within the sample – for example, based on sex, language group, or other factors. Where the target population is large, specialized advice is often needed to determine what approach to sampling best suits the purpose of the study and the sources of information available.

Administering the needs analysis

Planning a needs analysis involves deciding who will administer the needs analysis and collect and analyze the results. Needs analyses vary in their scope and demands, from a survey of a whole school population in a country to a study of a group of thirty learners in a single institution. Sometimes a team of personnel is assembled specifically for the purpose of doing the analysis; at other times two or three interested teachers may be the only ones involved. For example, in a needs analysis of the language needs of non-English-background students studying at a New Zealand university (see Appendix 3), the following were involved:

- the research team made up of two academics and a research assistant
- colleagues in different departments who discussed the project and reviewed sample questionnaires
- students who piloted the questionnaire

- academic staff of the university who administered some of the questionnaires
- secretarial support involved in preparing questionnaires and tabulating data

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

Informal needs assessment deals with the informal negotiations that take place between class teachers and students in the form of chats with either individual students, groups of students, or the whole class in order to select a focus for the class and create group cohesion by establishing a coincidence of learning needs. . . . Informal needs assessment is normally the main task of the classroom teacher during week one of the course. . . . [It] is a necessary component of information retrieval on students' learning needs and should be recorded. It can subsequently be used as an input for aims and objectives setting and for devising course outlines. (Shaw and Dowsett 1986, 47–49)

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

Procedures for conducting needs analysis

A variety of procedures can be used in conducting needs analysis and the kind of information obtained is often dependent on the type of procedure selected. Since any one source of information is likely to be incomplete or partial, a *triangular approach* (i.e., collecting information from two or more sources) is advisable. Many different sources of information should be sought. For example, when a needs analysis of the writing problems encountered by foreign students enrolled in American universities is conducted, information could be obtained from the following sources:

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

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

Questionnaires

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

Questionnaires are either based on a set of structured items (in which the respondent chooses from a limited number of responses) or unstructured (in which open-ended questions are given that the respondent can answer as he or she chooses). Structured items are much easier to analyze and are hence normally preferred. Appendix 2 illustrates a questionnaire designed as a basis for planning courses in Cantonese for non-Chinese residents of Hong Kong. It seeks information on the following:

- situations in which Cantonese could be used
- self-assessment of current proficiency level in Cantonese
- previous experience of Cantonese courses
- views on textbooks for learning Cantonese
- views on approaches to teaching Cantonese
- learning-style preferences
- views on Cantonese as a language

A disadvantage of questionnaires, however, is that the information obtained may be fairly superficial or imprecise and will often need follow-up to gain a fuller understanding of what respondents intend. It should also be recognized that there are many badly designed questionnaires in educational research, and it is advisable to become familiar with the principles of good questionnaire design to ensure that the information obtained is reliable. Piloting of questionnaires is essential to identify ambiguities and other problems before the questionnaire is administered. Some issues involved in the design of questionnaires are given in Appendix 1.

Self-ratings

These consist of scales that students or others use to rate their knowledge or abilities. (Self-ratings might also be included as part of a questionnaire.) For example, a student might rate how well he or she can handle a job in-

terview in English. The disadvantage of such an instrument is that it provides only impressionistic information and information that is not very precise.

Interviews

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

Meetings

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

Observation

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

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

Collecting learner language samples

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

- *written or oral tasks:* Examples of students written or oral work are collected.
- *simulations or role plays:* Students are given simulations to carry out and their performance is observed or recorded.
- *achievement tests:* Students are tested for their abilities in different domains of language use.
- *performance tests:* Students are tested on job-related or task-related behaviors, such as "how well a job interview can be carried out in English."

Task analysis

This refers to analysis of the kinds of tasks the learners will have to carry out in English in a future occupational or educational setting and assessment of the linguistic characteristics and demands of the tasks. For example, a hotel employee might have to perform the following tasks in English:

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

Berwick (1989, 57) observes: "The emphasis of target situation analysis is on the nature and effect of target language communications in particular situations (in offices, on assembly lines, in meeting rooms, in content-area classrooms, for example). Expert analysis of communication establishes standards against which current performance can be gauged." Once target tasks have been identified, their linguistic characteristics are determined as a basis for designing a language course or training materials.

Case studies

With a case study, a single student or a selected group of students is followed through a relevant work or educational experience in order to determine the characteristics of that situation. For example, a newly arrived immigrant might be studied for three months, during which time the student keeps a log of his or her daily language experiences in English, the situations in which the language is used, and the problems he or she encounters. Although it is generally not possible to generalize from a case study, it provides a very rich source of information that may complement information obtained from other sources.

Analysis of available information

In any situation where a needs analysis is needed, a large amount of relevant information is generally available in various sources. These include:

- books
- journal articles
- reports and surveys
- records and files

An analysis of available information is normally the first step in a needs analysis because there are very few problems in language teaching that have not been written about or analyzed somewhere.

Designing the needs analysis

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

1. literature survey
2. analysis of a wide range of survey questionnaires
3. contact with others who had conducted similar surveys
4. interviews with teachers to determine goals
5. identification of participating departments
6. presentation of project proposal to participating departments and identification of liaison person in each department
7. development of a pilot student and staff questionnaire
8. review of the questionnaires by colleagues
9. piloting of the questionnaires
10. selection of staff and student subjects
11. developing a schedule for collecting data
12. administration of questionnaires

13. follow-up interviews with selected participants
14. tabulation of responses
15. analysis of responses
16. writing up of report and recommendations

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

• initial questionnaire
• follow-up individual and group interviews
• meetings with students
• meetings with other teachers
• ongoing classroom observation
• tests

Making use of the information obtained

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

• situations in which English is frequently used
• situations in which difficulties are encountered
• comments most often made by people on learners' performance
• frequencies with which different transactions are carried out
• perceived difficulties with different aspects of language use
• preferences for different kinds of activities in teaching
• frequencies of errors made in different types of situations or activities
• common communication problems in different situations
• suggestions and opinions about different aspects of learners' problems
• frequencies of linguistic items or units in different texts or situations

One of the findings of a needs analysis of problems of ESL students attending university lectures was a list of the frequency with which students experienced difficulties with speaking and listening skills (Gravett et al. 1997, 36). The most common difficulties reported were (by rank):

1. large-group discussions
2. class discussions
3. interactions with native speakers

4. out-of-class projects
5. small-group work
6. demonstrator interactions
7. class participation

However, such a listing provides little useful information about the precise type of problems the learners experience in relation to each event. Even if more detailed information had been provided, the results would still be impressionistic. For example, in relation to event 1 (large-group discussions), more detailed information could have been sought, from which a further listing might have resulted – the most difficult aspects of taking part in group discussions. Johns and Johns (1977) provide such a list based on a needs analysis of problems students have with discussions. The most frequent difficulties were:

1. comprehension of spoken English ('they speak too fast'; 'they mumble'; 'vocabulary is idiomatic')
2. the pressing need to formulate a contribution quickly ('I can't think what to say')
3. shyness about the value of a contribution ('I might say something wrong')
4. inability to formulate an idea in English ('I don't know how to say it in English')
5. awareness that a given function may be realized in different ways ('I don't know the best way to say it')
6. frustration about being unable to enter the discussion ('some students speak too much') (Johns and Johns 1977)

Yet even with this more detailed breakdown no direct application to program design is possible. In order to develop aims and objectives that addressed each problem, more analysis and research would be needed to further understand what is implied by "comprehension of spoken English" and before the information obtained could be used in course planning. The point here is that there is no direct application of the information obtained from needs analysis. Although the information gathered is useful, it still has to be subjected to a great deal of interpretation before it can be usefully applied in program planning.

In the course of carrying out a needs analysis, a large number of potential needs may be identified. However, these needs will have to be prioritized because not all of them may be practical to address in a language program, or perhaps the time frame available in the program is suitable for addressing only a portion of them. And the mere fact that needs have been

identified does not automatically imply that changes will have to be made in the curriculum. First, the existing curriculum (when there is one) has to be examined to see to what extent the needs that have been identified are being met. Decisions will therefore have to be made concerning which of the needs are critical, which are important, and which are merely desirable. In addition, some needs will be immediate and others longer-term. For some, solutions will be feasible; for others, they may be impractical.

It is also important to remember that because needs are not objective facts but subjective interpretations of information from a large variety of sources, a great deal of consultation is needed with the various stakeholders to ensure that the conclusions drawn from a needs analysis are appropriate and relevant. It often happens that some of the information may be contradictory, Stufflebeam et al. (1985, 111) remind us:

The process of analysis [of the results of a needs analysis] involves efforts that are thoughtful, investigatory, systematic, and carefully recorded so that they can be replicated and reviewed. The primary goal of analysis is to bring meaning to the obtained information and to do so in the context of some philosophy, relevant perspectives, and value positions that may be in conflict.

Thus, for example, in a needs analysis as part of curriculum renewal in a state education system, different views of problems in the curriculum emerged. A number of different points of view emerged as to what should be changed:

- *learners' view:* more support for learning needed and reduction of the amount of materials they had to study
- *academics' view:* better preparation for tertiary studies needed in terms of reading and writing skills
- *employers' view:* better preparation for employment required in terms of basic communication skills
- *teachers' view:* better grasp of grammar needed by learners

Brindley (1989) discusses differences between learners' and teachers' views of needs and suggests the need for a negotiation process in order to satisfy and clarify each other's assumptions. The same is true of other stakeholders in the curriculum.

Where there are several different audiences for the needs analysis (e.g., teachers, administrators, a funding body), the information obtained will have to be analyzed – and analyzed in a form that suits each group's interests. One group may require a brief overview of the findings while another may be interested in detailed findings. The format for reporting the findings may also vary. For example, it might include:

- a full written document
- a short summary document
- a meeting
- a group discussion
- a newsletter

Needs analysis thus produces information that can be used in different ways. For example:

- It may provide the basis for the evaluation of an existing program or a component of a program.
- It may provide the basis for planning goals and objectives for a future program.
- It may assist with developing tests and other assessment procedures.
- It can help with the selection of appropriate teaching methods in a program.
- It may provide the basis for developing a syllabus and teaching materials for a course.
- It may provide information that can be used as part of a course or program report to an external body or organization.

In none of these cases, however, is there a direct route from needs analysis to application. Some of these applications will be discussed in the chapters that follow. Although a major application of needs analysis is in the design of language programs, before a program can be designed additional information is needed on factors that can have an impact on the program. The identification of these factors and the assessment of their likely impact form the focus of Chapter 4.

Discussion questions and activities

1. Needs analysis is very applicable in situations where students have very specific language needs. However, it can also be used in situations where learners' needs are not so specific, as in the case of students learning English as a foreign language in a school setting. What might the focus of a needs analysis be in this situation?
2. If you were planning a needs analysis for the situation in which you teach, what information would you seek to obtain?
3. Discuss the concept of "stakeholders" in planning a needs analysis in relation to a context you are familiar with. How can the concerns of different stakeholders be addressed?

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

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

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

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

8. Critique the questionnaires in Appendixes 2 and 3 and suggest any improvements you think could be made to them.

9. Prepare a set of questions to be used in a structured interview for use in a needs analysis of the language needs of immigration officers at an airport.

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

Examples of needs analyses

Example 1: Needs analysis of non-English-background students and their English language needs at the University of Auckland

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

CONTEXT

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

BACKGROUND

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

- The English competence of these students on entry varies considerably.
- A previous small-scale report within the university, addressing the issue of English-language skills of students and entrance requirements, strongly indicated that more data were needed regarding the problems experienced by ESL students.
- This prompted a needs analysis initiated to assess these problems, using two questionnaires to survey staff and ESL students' perceptions across the university.
- The study looked at the language demands placed on ESL students, problems, experiences, and suggestions for improving the situation.

METHOD

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

- background information concerning the course or paper the lecturer was describing
- overview of problems experienced by ESL students in the course/paper
- linguistic demands of the course/paper in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, as well as the difficulties experienced by the students in these areas
- suggestions as to which language skills should be focused on in courses for ESL students
- modifications made in teaching or in examinations as a result of the difficulties experienced by ESL students

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

Student questionnaire (see Appendix 3) The student questionnaire was a modified version of the staff questionnaire. The structure was similar but with less emphasis on language expectations and greater emphasis on problems being encountered. The questionnaire was piloted before distribution. The questionnaire was distributed to students enrolled in all courses that were identified in the staff questionnaire as having a high proportion of ESL students. In all, 302 student questionnaires were completed.

PRODUCT

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

Example 2: A curriculum guide and teaching kit for tutors of English as a second language teaching Vietnamese refugees in London

This is an example of needs analysis "on the run," that is, conducted as part of the process of teaching and developing a course.

CONTEXT

As a result of the arrival of large number of Vietnamese refugees in London, the Kensington Institute in conjunction with the Inner London Education Authority Language and Literacy Unit planned an ESL program for the refugees. Six teachers and a tutor in charge were appointed to manage the program, with time budgeted to plan a syllabus, develop materials, and co-ordinate the program.

METHOD

Syllabus frameworks   On the basis of experience of students with similar needs, ten topic areas were chosen as the basis for the program.

Personal information	Work
Shopping	Services
Health and welfare	Education
House and home	Social
Travel	Food and drink

This was a starting point for the program to be revised in the light of ongoing information about the students' needs identified during the teaching of the program. Situations were then selected from the topic areas and the language needs of each situation predicted. This resulted in provisional syllabus frameworks organized by topic.

Student profiles   In order to develop the program, records were kept of information gathered during teaching, resulting in the building up of student and class profiles. The class profiles documented previous learning experience, strengths and weakness of each student, common areas of interest, individual and group needs, and reflected areas that would be useful to focus on in that class.

Cultural comparisons   Information was also collected through observation, discussions, and interviews on cultural differences between Vietnamese and British people with regard to such things as family relation-

ships, old age, work, and leisure to help identify differences between the social norms in the two cultures. This information then fed into the course content.

PRODUCT

The project resulted in the preparation of a 156-page tutors' kit that contained the following elements:

a) description of the planning process
b) syllabus frameworks
c) discussion of teaching techniques and activities
d) literacy guidelines
e) worksheets
f) aids and materials
g) discussion of problem areas in English for speakers of Vietnamese

Appendix 1   Designing a questionnaire

The following questions need to be considered in designing a questionnaire.

1. Preliminary questions

a) Will it be useful to carry out some interviews before designing the questionnaire, in order to get a sense of appropriate topics and issues?
b) How large will the sample be? Is it representative of the whole population information is needed about?
c) How will the questionnaire be piloted?
d) How will it be administered (e.g., by mail, self-administered, or group-administered)?

2. The types of information asked for

a) Is the question really necessary? How will the information it provides be used?
b) Are other questions needed on this issue?
c) Can the respondents answer this question? Do they have sufficient information (e.g., to answer a question such as "How much English do your students use outside of class?")?
d) Should the question be made more specific and more closely related to the respondents' personal experience?
e) Is the question biased in one direction? (E.g., "Do you agree that a communicative approach is the best way to teach a language?")
f) Will the respondents be willing to give the information asked for? (E.g., "Does your teacher know how to teach English?")
g) Is it appropriate to ask this question? (E.g., "How old are you?")

3. How the questions are worded

a) Can the question be understood? Is the wording unambiguous?
b) Can the question be shortened? (Aim for not more than 20 words.)
c) Does it contain vocabulary likely to be known by the learner?
d) Does the question contain any unstated assumptions? (E.g., "In your college English course, did you. . . ?")
e) Are there any prestige questions, that is, which students are likely to try to answer to give a good impression of themselves? (E.g., "Have you used the things you have been taught out of class?")
f) Is the wording biased or emotionally loaded in any way?

g) Would a more personalized (or less personalized) version of the question be better?

h) Is the answer to the question likely to be influenced by the content of preceding questions?

4. The type of items in the questionnaire

a) Open question: one that can be answered freely and where no kind of choice is required in the answer

b) Closed question: one that is answered by choosing alternatives provided

c) Checklist: a set of terms that describe different attributes or values

d) Rating scale: a value is given on a scale (e.g., between "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree")

e) Ranking: items are ranked (e.g., from 1 to 9) according to some criteria

f) Inventory: a list that the respondents mark or check in some way

Appendix 2 Needs analysis questionnaire for Cantonese learners

Questionnaire used in needs analysis of learners of Cantonese in Hong Kong (from Li and Richards 1995).

Part A

In what situations is Cantonese (or would Cantonese be) useful for you? Please check the appropriate column.

		Very useful	Useful	Not useful
A1.	Buying things in stores and supermarkets.	☐	☐	☐
A2.	Buying things in the market place.	☐	☐	☐
A3.	Getting information about services and goods I want to buy.	☐	☐	☐
A4.	Ordering food in a restaurant/canteen/cafeteria.	☐	☐	☐
A5.	Taking a taxi.	☐	☐	☐
A6.	Taking other public transport.	☐	☐	☐
A7.	Asking for directions.	☐	☐	☐
A8.	Talking to colleagues at work.	☐	☐	☐
A9.	Talking to office personnel at work.	☐	☐	☐
A10.	Talking to neighbours.	☐	☐	☐

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
A11. Talking to children.	☐	☐	☐
A12. Talking to friends.	☐	☐	☐
A13. Having casual conversations with people.	☐	☐	☐
A14. Talking to students.	☐	☐	☐
A15. Talking to a (Cantonese-speaking) domestic helper.	☐	☐	☐
A16. Talking to workers in my place of residence.	☐	☐	☐
A17. Talking to electricians, plumbers, etc.	☐	☐	☐
A18. Receiving telephone calls.	☐	☐	☐
A19. Making telephone calls.	☐	☐	☐
A20. Joining hobby or interest group.	☐	☐	☐
A21. Playing sports and participating in social clubs.	☐	☐	☐
A22. Watching TV or movies.	☐	☐	☐
A23. Listening to the radio.	☐	☐	☐
A24. Listening to Cantonese music.	☐	☐	☐
A25. Visiting friends' homes.	☐	☐	☐
A26. Visiting different parts of the territory.	☐	☐	☐
A27. Visiting Guangdong province.	☐	☐	☐
A28. Making travel arrangements.	☐	☐	☐
A29. Using Cantonese in situations related to my work.	☐	☐	☐

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

_____

Other: _____

_____

_____

_____

Part B
From the list above please choose five that are the most important for you. Write the numbers below.

_____

Part C

If you already speak some Cantonese, please indicate your present level of ability in Cantonese:

C1. Basic (lower): know a few words and fixed expressions; cannot manage conversational exchanges; respond to question and answer exchanges on a few topics; very limited vocabulary, grammar, and knowledge of idioms; pronunciation heavily influenced by mother tongue.

C2. Basic (upper): know a limited number of common words and expressions; able to manage limited, short conversations on a few predictable topics; survival level knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and idioms; pronunciation heavily influenced by mother tongue.

C3. Intermediate (lower): reasonable fluency on a restricted range of topics but difficulty outside a limited range of topics; many problems with words, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation.

C4. Intermediate (upper): can manage comfortably in familiar situations and with familiar topics, though still some difficulty with vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation.

C5. Advanced: able to converse fluently and naturally on most topics; little difficulty with vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and pronunciation.

C6. If you have studied Cantonese, please indicate under what circumstances.
    (a) I took a course.
    (b) I studied with a private tutor.
    (c) I picked up Cantonese informally.

    Other: _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

C7. If you attended a formal course, please indicate the length and frequency of the course (e.g., 6 weeks, 3 hours per week).

    _____

    _____

C8. How useful was the course? (Please circle your choice.)

    Very useful   Somewhat useful   Not useful

    Please explain: _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

C9. If you have used one or more textbooks, please indicate the name of each
     text and how useful or otherwise it was:

Name of text	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
(a) _____	☐	☐	☐
(b) _____	☐	☐	☐
(c) _____	☐	☐	☐
(d) _____	☐	☐	☐

C10. To what would you attribute your present level of ability in Cantonese?

	Very true	Somewhat true	Not true
(a) I attended a useful course.	☐	☐	☐
(b) I studied with a private tutor.	☐	☐	☐
(c) I make every effort to use Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
(d) I enjoy studying Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
(e) I need Cantonese for my job.	☐	☐	☐
(f) I am a good language learner.	☐	☐	☐
(g) I get a lot of help from Cantonese-speaking friends.	☐	☐	☐
(h) I spend a lot of time on Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐

Other: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C11. What activities or experiences were most helpful in your study of
     Cantonese? Please elaborate.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part D
If you have studied Cantonese before, but have since stopped studying Cantonese, please complete Part D below by checking the appropriate box.

I have studied Cantonese before, but I stopped because of the following reason(s):

		Very true	Somewhat true	Not true
D1.	I did not have time to continue.	☐	☐	☐
D2.	I felt that I was not making any progress.	☐	☐	☐
D3.	I was not given any opportunity to use Cantonese outside the classroom.	☐	☐	☐
D4.	The lessons were not useful because:			
	(a) We were not taught things that I could use.	☐	☐	☐
	(b) I found the language too difficult to master.	☐	☐	☐
	(c) I found the pronunciation too difficult to master.	☐	☐	☐
	(d) I found the grammar too difficult to master.	☐	☐	☐
	(e) I found the vocabulary too difficult to master.	☐	☐	☐
D5.	The teacher did not know how to teach Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
D6.	I did not like the teaching methods used.	☐	☐	☐
D7.	The materials were:			
	(a) too difficult.	☐	☐	☐
	(b) not relevant to my needs.	☐	☐	☐
	(c) not interesting.	☐	☐	☐
	(d) not challenging.	☐	☐	☐

Other: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part E

Have you ever used the following activities in studying Cantonese? If you indicate *yes,* how useful were they?

	Very useful	Useful	Not useful
E1. Practising dialogues from a book.	☐	☐	☐
E2. Practising drills on tones, sounds, and grammatical patterns.	☐	☐	☐
E3. Free conversation with native speakers.	☐	☐	☐
E4. Free conversation with other learners of Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E5. Memorizing bilingual vocabulary lists.	☐	☐	☐
E6. Studying Cantonese textbooks at home.	☐	☐	☐
E7. Studying the grammar of Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E8. Studying the tone system of Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E9. Studying the difference between English and Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E10. Doing pair-work exercises.	☐	☐	☐
E11. Doing group-work exercises.	☐	☐	☐
E12. Doing translation exercises.	☐	☐	☐
E13. Writing down Cantonese using a romanized system.	☐	☐	☐
E14. Watching TV in Cantonese at home.	☐	☐	☐
E15. Watching or listening to people speaking Cantonese around me.	☐	☐	☐
E16. Using cassettes at home.	☐	☐	☐
E17. Talking to friends in Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E18. Trying to use Cantonese whenever I have the opportunity.	☐	☐	☐
E19. Putting myself in situations in which I will be forced to speak in Cantonese.	☐	☐	☐
E20. Making myself understood even if I make a lot of mistakes.	☐	☐	☐
E21. Speaking a good Cantonese without making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation.	☐	☐	☐
E22. Studying with a private tutor.	☐	☐	☐

Other: _____

_____

_____

Part F

In class or with a tutor, I would like my teacher to:

F1.	explain new grammar points before practising them.	No	A little	Good	Best
F2.	practise before explaining new grammar points.	No	A little	Good	Best
F3.	correct any mistakes I made in front of others immediately.	No	A little	Good	Best
F4.	correct my mistakes of grammar.	No	A little	Good	Best
F5.	correct my mistakes of pronunciation.	No	A little	Good	Best
F6.	use Cantonese only.	No	A little	Good	Best
F7.	use both English and Cantonese.	No	A little	Good	Best

Part G

What are your feelings about Cantonese as a language?

G1.	Cantonese is a language with a rich vocabulary.	Very true	True	Not true
G2.	Cantonese is made up of many colloquial expressions.	Very true	True	Not true
G3.	Cantonese is made up of many idioms.	Very true	True	Not true
G4.	Cantonese is a very difficult language.	Very true	True	Not true
G5.	Cantonese is a language with a lot of grammar.	Very true	True	Not true
G6.	Cantonese is a language where pronunciation is very important.	Very true	True	Not true
G7.	Cantonese is a language where rhythm and intonation are important.	Very true	True	Not true
G8.	Cantonese is a very useful language in Hong Kong.	Very true	True	Not true
G9.	Cantonese is a fascinating language.	Very true	True	Not true
G10.	Cantonese is a beautiful sounding language.	Very true	True	Not true
G11.	Cantonese is a polite language.	Very true	True	Not true
G12.	The rhythm and intonation of Cantonese are pleasing to my ears.	Very true	True	Not true
G13.	Cantonese is a harsh sounding language.	Very true	True	Not true
G14.	Cantonese is a vulgar sounding language.	Very true	True	Not true

Other: _____

_____

_____

Appendix 3   Needs analysis questionnaire for non-English-background students

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

Institute of Language Teaching and Learning

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
STUDENT – STUDENT VERSION

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

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

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

☐   Pacific Island – which?   [_____]
☐   Asian – which country?   [_____]
☐   Other (please specify):   [_____]

How many years have you been studying at Auckland University (including 1997)?   [_____]

What is your current course of study?   [_____]

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

A. Overview of Skills Needed and Difficulties Encountered

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

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

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

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

B. General Statements

Please circle the appropriate response:

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

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

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

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

C. Speaking and Listening Skills

How often do the following happen to you?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1. Receive low grades in tasks involving class participation.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Have difficulty working in small groups during class.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have difficulty working with other students on out-of-class projects.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Have trouble leading class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have difficulty partici- pating in large group discussions or in debates.	1	2	3	4	5

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
6. Have difficulty interacting with student demonstrators in labs, tutorials, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Struggle with out-of-class assignments which require interaction with native speakers of English.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Speaking Skills

How often do the following happen to you?

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

_____

_____

_____

E. Listening Skills

How often do the following happen to you?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
1. Have trouble understanding lectures.	1	2	3	4	5

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
2. Have trouble taking effective notes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have to ask staff questions to clarify material you have been taught.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Have trouble under-standing lengthy descriptions in English.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have trouble under-standing spoken instructions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Have trouble under-standing informal language.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Have trouble under-standing the subject matter of a talk, i.e., what is being talked about.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I also have difficulty with (please specify):	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

I have problems understanding lecturers or other students because:

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

_____

_____

_____

F. Writing Skills

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

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

Importance   **Frequency of problems**

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

_____

_____

G. Reading Skills

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

a) which of the following types of material you are expected to read, and
b) how often you have difficulty doing so (please circle):

	Expected to read?	Often	Sometimes	Never
		\[Frequency of difficulties\]		
1. Journal articles	Yes / No	1	2	3
2. Newspaper articles	Yes / No	1	2	3

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

_____

_____

_____

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

	Very often		Sometimes		Never
10. Understanding the main points of text.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Reading a text quickly in order to establish a general idea of the content (skimming).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Reading a text slowly and carefully in order to understand the details of the text.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Looking through a text quickly in order to locate specific information (scanning).	1	2	3	4	5
14. Guessing unknown words in a text.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Understanding text organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Understanding specialist vocabulary in a text.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Reading speed.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Reading in order to respond critically.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Understanding a writer's attitude and purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
20. General comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Other (please specify): _____	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

H. Skills You Would Like to Improve

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

	High		Moderate		Low
1. Listening to pronunciation/intonation/ stress patterns of New Zealand English.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Lecture notetaking.	1	2	3	4	5
3. General listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Giving formal speeches/presentations.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Participating effectively in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Communicating effectively with peers in small group discussions, collaborative projects, or out-of-class study groups.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Communicating effectively with staff in or out of class.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Library skills.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Essay writing.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lab report writing.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Creative writing.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Writing case studies.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Describing objects or procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Writing introductions and conclusions.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Writing references and quotations.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Formulating coherent arguments.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Summarising factual information.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Synthesizing information from more than one source.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Analysing written materials.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Knowledge of vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Reading quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Reading critically.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Reading for author's viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Summarizing material.	1	2	3	4	5
25. General reading comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Other (please specify and rate): _____	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

_____

I. Assistance Available

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

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

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

J. Catering for ESL Students

Do you believe any changes should be made to your course or the way it is taught as a result of difficulties students such as yourself have with English?
(please circle):   Yes / No

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

☐ Using overheads more in lectures
☐ Simplifying the material covered
☐ Having less class involvement during lectures.
☐ Providing more photocopied notes
☐ Other (please specify): _____

☐ Having more multiple choice tests
☐ Providing summaries of important materials
☐ Reducing the amount of reading
☐ Giving additional tutorials

K. Additional Comments

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

L. Additional Information

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

If so, please give your:

Name: _____

Contact telephone number: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

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Directions: Answers <u>four of these five</u> questions on a separate sheet of paper. I will collect in next week's class.

1. What are the four basic questions we need to ask before we begin our evaluation and planning process?

2. What are the six design orientations that influence teachers, administrators and curriculum and/or program evaluators who conduct and analyze student needs? Which of the six design orientations (or which combination) seems most appropriate for our project? Why?

3. There are two types of needs "felt" vs. "perceived." Describe them.

4. What are the differences between inductive and deductive methods of needs analysis? Which do you think is best for our project? Why?

5. Why is it important for us to incorporate the Mandela School's philosophy into our needs analysis and into our evaluation of the learners' educational needs?

PART II
ENDS/MEANS SPECIFICATION

4 Needs assessment in language programming: from theory to practice

Richard Berwick

Introduction

This paper is about how teachers and others involved in language programme planning can describe the language needs of prospective learners and about the tools they may employ to fashion their descriptions. It is also about the conceptual baggage planners inevitably bring to the planning situation − often unclarified beliefs and positions about learning and teaching which translate eventually into positions about learners' needs, needs assessment processes and syllabus design.

I want to examine the juncture between theory and practice in language needs assessment first by outlining what I think are some essential concepts in educational planning which do not ordinarily receive the credit they deserve for influencing the ways language programme planners undertake language needs assessment. Next I will try to relate general concepts and methodologies in educational needs assessment to our particular concern with needs assessment in applied linguistics. Finally, in my conclusion, I will try to isolate several key variables in the needs assessment process which planners in institutional situations will want to consider *before* they are overwhelmed by the forces of a large-scale language needs assessment. Throughout the discussion I will stress that language needs assessment is shaped by the local work environment and especially by the commonsense thinking of practising teachers about their work.

Ultimately my goal is to move beyond the aspects of methodology which ordinarily dominate needs assessments and to suggest what factors − largely subjective in nature − influence the interpretation and use of data during the assessment process.

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Theory

Orientations to planning and decision-making

Most modern accounts of the origins of planning in educational systems, particularly in public education, begin with a discussion of purposes and sources of curricula. Although Tyler (1949) was not the earliest advocate of systematic curriculum planning he is perhaps the clearest and arguably the most influential. Even though his name has rarely surfaced in the body of professional literature we are ordinarily exposed to, Tyler's four questions outlining the bases of school curricula will strike a responsive chord in anyone who has had to think seriously about programme planning and syllabus design in applied linguistics:

1 What educational purposes should the [teaching establishment] seek to attain?
2 What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3 How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
4 How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Answers to these questions in the world of educational planning can take a nearly infinite variety of forms. Some of the broad possibilities (see, for example, Eisner, 1985; Elias and Merriam, 1980; Mohan, 1978; Saylor and Alexander, 1974) which have at one time or another found representation in our area of educational practice, applied linguistics, include the following:

Designs based on an organised body of knowledge   This has been the predominant design until relatively recently. It emphasises the direct link between an academic discipline (or other established body of knowledge) and content and procedures used during instruction. The focus in this design is generally on the intellectual development of the learner, although, as in the case of structural or functional syllabuses, the primary point is transfer of a systematic body of knowledge – the essential grammar or communicative functions of a language, for example. The main academic sources for designs in language programming include literature and linguistics.

Designs based on specific competencies   These emphasise performance objectives and learning of skills for particular purposes, although 'skills' can be taken to mean almost any level of specificity (the 'four skills' – reading, writing, speaking, listening – versus using the target language to confirm an order for a meal in a restaurant). Specification of objectives is

a major component of this kind of design, especially in programmes designed to teach language for specific purposes.

Designs based on social activities and problems This approach to planning has been most influential in second (as opposed to foreign) language teaching, i.e., for immigrants or new residents of a culture in which the target language is viewed as a tool for coping with the social and economic demands of daily life. Heavy emphasis is placed on language as a tool of survival and on exposure to experiences in the community which will assist survival.

Designs based on cognitive or learning processes   This orientation has always been a peripheral rather than mainstream way of approaching instructional design. It stresses the ways learners think (over the content of instruction *per se*) and aims at strengthening the learners' ability to examine and solve problems on their own. Perhaps the best developed application of this approach in applied linguistics can be seen in the organisation of composition courses and materials (for example Lawrence, 1972), although a theoretical basis for process approaches in instructional syllabuses has been developed in Widdowson (1984b). (See also Hansen and Stansfield, 1981, for a discussion of matching learning situations and learning styles.)

Designs based on feelings and attitudes   These approaches represent the humanistic, affective end of the planning spectrum, an appealing region to those who believe that learning must bring people together and that the capacity to learn increases with one's openness to others. Miller (1976) and Rogers (1969) offer exemplary rationales for this design in educational planning. Those who apply humanistic values in language programming would emphasise development of the person *through* language (see, for example, La Forge, 1983; Moskowitz, 1978), and thus would view language more as a tool than an object.

Designs based on needs and interests of the learner This approach to planning has generally supported rather than supplanted other approaches, although needs-based curricula have been in vogue for the past twenty years, particularly in public education systems. It constitutes a strong justification for the decisions planners make about instruction, for example, to say that their way of organising it will meet learners' needs. The central characteristics of the approach include *systematic* assessment of learners' language needs, along with consultation of learners at appropriate points in the planning and instruction processes. Influential advocates of this orientation in applied linguistics would include Stevick (1971), Munby (1978) (largely in connection with the

technology of specific-purpose syllabus design) and, in general, The Council of Europe (see, for example, Richterich, 1983; Richterich and Chancerel, 1980).

These six orientations do not, of course, constitute the final word on the subjective bases and educational values which underlie language programme planning. They do, however, represent the most influential streams of thought in educational curriculum design which have found their way into applied linguistics. The main point I want to make here is that their influence has filtered down to language teaching professionals, whether or not such professionals clearly understand the bases of their systematic planning efforts. Moreover, the importance of needs-and-interests designs in our field closely parallels their popularity in public and adult education generally. I next want to examine the reasons for this popularity along with the theoretical bases for implementing needs-and-interests designs in language planning. At the same time, I will emphasise the persistence of other orientations within needs-based approaches which influence planners' — most often teachers' — perception of learners' needs.

Learner needs in language syllabus design

What are the sources of our fascination with needs? To what extent have approaches to needs assessment been mixed with other approaches to educational planning?

Two major streams have fed the interest in needs-based designs in language programme planning. The first was a legacy of public aid to education in the United States during the mid 1960s — a period of rapid social change which government was prepared to support. Needs assessment activities undertaken by various publicly funded educational and service-providing agencies were largely motivated by federal and state legislation requiring the identification of needs as a condition of receiving financial support (Saylor and Alexander, 1974; Stufflebeam *et al.*, 1985; Warheit *et al.*, 1978). The need for convincing precision in educational needs assessment was also reinforced during this period by the 'behavioral objectives' movement in educational planning, particularly in North America, which insisted on specifying in measurable form all goals of importance within an educational system (Mager, 1962, is an exemplar of the literature in this field). The emphasis on precision and accountability clearly influenced the appearance of needs assessment as a form of educational technology and its diversification into a collection of educational research methodologies (see, for example, Kaufman, 1972; Witkin, 1977).

This positivistic faith in the power of applied science to secure new knowledge and to protect us from the unreliable application of mere

'common' sense has very much made its mark in planning language-for-specific purposes (LSP), the second major source of interest in needs assessment in language programme planning. The direct link between LSP and needs assessment is examined in Mackay and Bosquet (1981), Mackay and Mountford (1978), Munby (1978), Robinson (1980) and Schutz and Derwing (1981). Munby, who represents probably the most technically satisfying approach to needs assessment in LSP, describes the link in these terms:

> The most crucial problem at present facing foreign language
> syllabus designers, and ultimately materials producers, in the field
> of language for specific purposes, is how to specify validly the
> target communicative competence. At the heart of this problem is a
> reluctance to begin with the learner rather than the text and the
> lack of a rigorous system for finding out the communicative needs
> that are prerequisite to the appropriate specification of what is to
> be taught.
>
> (Munby, 1978: iv)

Here we have the beginnings of a rationale which centres on belief in the power of technical solutions to help people develop specific language competencies. Although Munby's rationale is among the clearest and best-founded in LSP syllabus design, the method for implementing it has been largely lost upon the vast majority of practitioners (Hawkey, 1983, 1984 notwithstanding) because of its complexity. What we do have now is a relatively open-minded attitude among practitioners about undertaking systematic assessment, the ideological and methodological underpinnings having been provided from a wide variety of sources in education.

What is needs assessment, then, how is it accomplished and what are its effects?

Essential principles

Definition   The definition of need is the basis of any needs assessment. Unfortunately, an operational definition must be constructed anew for each assessment because its elements will change according to the values of the assessor or influential constituents of an educational system. In general, however, the skeletal structure of a definition is most often expressed as a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state. Thus, as a waiter, my need for being able to confirm an order for salads and sandwiches in a target language (TL) could be based on some of the following: Experience and opinion indicate that confirming an order in the TL is essential to fulfilling it properly; I cannot, at the moment, confirm an order in the TL; therefore,

I need to learn how to confirm orders in the TL, possibly drawing content from lists of words and phrases typically used for the purpose. This all may sound very reasonable and precise, until we learn that my need for learning the subjunctive forms in Spanish, or perhaps how to distinguish subject and object particles in Japanese, could just as well be indicated by the results of a grammar test and the preference of a teacher for a grammatical syllabus. The problem with defining needs, then, lies in the specification of who needs what, as defined by whom (Coffing and Hutchison, 1974; Richterich, 1983) – and a clear understanding by clients or prospective learners that the syllabus will inevitably represent a collection of authoritative, informed opinions about what should be taught (Berwick, 1984b). The subjectivity of needs definitions is thus probably the main conduit by which alternative philosophies of planning are able to find their way into needs-based syllabuses.

Preferences for particular forms of needs assessment Stufflebeam *et al.* (1985) note a variety of needs assessment types in educational practice, including what I have already described as analysis based on the discrepancy between what people know and what they ought to know (*discrepancy analysis*). Exponents of this form of needs assessment in various areas of applied educational research include Kaufman (1972) in public education curriculum planning, Knowles (1970) in adult education programme planning and, by examination, Munby (1978) in applied linguistics syllabus design. One of the disadvantages of this approach to needs assessment is that areas which are difficult to measure tend not to be included in the assessment. Moreover, discrepancy analysis gives the impression that needs can be discovered with mechanical simplicity once observations have been quantified, leading stakeholders in the assessment process to accept the validity of both the design and the process without close examination.

Although this form of assessment seems most familiar to language professionals who have thought of measurement in terms of tests, or who are accustomed to thinking of lists of structures or functions from which needs can be selected in supermarket fashion, other needs assessment types have emerged in other areas of social science research. Stufflebeam *et al.* (1985: 7) also list *democratic* approaches which emphasise examination of a reference group's views: when a majority of the reference group wish a change in some form of educational practice and make their wishes known, a need is thereby expressed. A democratic approach is going to have great public relations value in situations involving educational constituencies (beyond the prospective learner, of course), although democratic consensus on a large scale would not ordinarily be a useful way of specifying objectives and content for the language syllabus. In practice, the democratic (or, perhaps more accurately, learner-centred)

aspects of needs assessment in language syllabus design generally entail consultations or interviews with prospective learners (see, for example, Richterich and Chancerel, 1980) in order to accommodate individuals' goals.

An additional view of needs assessment involves reliance on informed judgement, or expert opinion, and in practice can require elaborate methods to obtain statements of needs. This *analytic* view of needs assessment is reasonably familiar to applied linguists who, after all, comprise the 'experts' most often involved in goal-setting, sentiments about democratic procedures notwithstanding. Because the knowledge base of language courses is likely to emphasise language over content, the technical expertise of linguists will be the predominant source of syllabus specifications. The abstractions drawn from linguistic science may be very difficult to operationalise validly – the emphasis is on applying theory to practice – and the complexity and utility of linguistic descriptions may simply be beyond the interest of practitioners in the field. So far, what I believe is the methodology of choice for this expert-centred approach to needs analysis – the 'delphi study' (Linstone and Turoff, 1975), which helps to systematise consensus building among experts (see *Methodologies*, below) – has not made much of an impact in our field. Moreover, I think we are going to have to re-think the issue of *who* the experts are in needs assessment and the means by which their opinions are to be included in the assessment (Berwick, 1984b).

One final view of needs assessment in educational research, the *diagnostic* approach, comes from the social services (see, also, Bradshaw, 1974, on normative needs) and may have its greatest application in second language learning situations – situations in which 'survival' seems to be the major rationale for course content. Here a need is defined in terms of the harmful consequences of a deficiency. Thus, not knowing how to ask the manager of a supermarket where the cereals are might be considered a deficiency serious enough to require treatment in a syllabus if experts are able to diagnose particular groups or individuals as 'suffering' from the deficiency (Berwick, 1978).

Although compensatory training of this sort operates at the level of fairly basic survival needs, it might be argued that expert perception of such needs is quite subjective and arbitrary, that a person suffering deprivation may have no such perception and may want none of the proffered help.

These views of needs assessment seem to fit particular preferences for curricula (for example, diagnostic designs based on social activities and problems + designs based on specific competencies), and, more important for our purposes, suggest how much approaches to needs assessment are dependent on and mingled with other approaches to curriculum planning. One explanation for 'slippage' between theory and practice in

needs assessment, then, may be that models for assessment offered to planners unrealistically assume that planners will buy the whole package and nothing but the package. In fact, as we will see, language programme planners are likelier to 'buy' a number of packages and use them in wonderfully patchwork fashion when they have a syllabus to get out.

Types of need

I have looked at types of needs assessment without much consideration for the ways in which needs themselves have been described in the literature. What are some of these types and how might they apply to language needs assessment?

One of the most enduring distinctions among needs is that between 'felt' needs and 'perceived' needs. This is a useful distinction since it lets us locate the source of need and strike a philosophically satisfying balance between learner-centred and teacher- (viz. authority-) centred inputs to the planning process. Felt needs are those which learners have. The connotation which has developed for the term is one of unsophisticated, egocentric expressions of a desired future state which individuals can be induced to express if planners ask the right questions. Felt needs in this revealed state are sometimes referred to as 'expressed' needs and, depending on the preferences of the people doing the assessment, may be (and often are) devalued by viewing them as 'wants' or 'desires'. The range of responses to 'mere' wants can include ignoring them, interpreting them, and, of course, applying them directly to planning operations – developing a kind of people's syllabus, a smorgasbord of responses to wants – whatever else professional planners may say about their educational value.

I think the usual response is the middle ground where interpretive expertise is applied to what learners say they need. Even Freire's radical methodology for discovering the motivating themes of local groups (Freire, 1970) is fundamentally an interpretive strategy and depends for its success on experts' sensitive understanding of what they think people really need. Thus 'perceived' needs represent the other side of the coin – judgements of certified experts about the educational gaps in other people's experience. Once again, perception of needs can be expressed as a range from sensitive consideration of learners' statements about themselves to largely insensitive prescriptions about learners who may have had the bad luck to fall under the control of an educational despot. This reminds me of the claim one of my teachers made a long time ago – perhaps times have changed – that all students need a good shot of Latin to straighten out their thinking. Such perceptions may be wise, but it is difficult to think of them as being 'true'. After all, we have no absolute basis to dispute anybody's values (particularly if they carry the weight of

authority). Along these lines, perceived needs have been described as 'normative' needs (see Bradshaw, 1974; Griffith, 1978; Monette, 1977), and even as 'real' needs (Chambers, 1980) or 'objective' needs (Richterich, 1980) – although we should be wary of prescriptions for language learning which claim to be more than informed perceptions and preferences about learners' futures.

Practice

Methodologies

I don't want to unnecessarily abbreviate this discussion of values and authority in needs assessment – issues which are, after all, at the basis of all educational planning – but I think that, in their theoretical guise, they are essentially intractable and uninteresting for most people involved in the planning process. Thus, I want to take educational values into the field of practice in this section and will begin here by emphasising the very practical point made rather cursorily earlier on – that our perceptions of need develop from what we believe is educationally worthwhile, that needs are not simply 'out there' waiting to be counted and measured with the latest innovations of educational technology (see Monette, 1979a, for a helpful explication of the point).

What educational technology does offer, however, is a highly versatile collection of methodologies to suit various planning situations, ranging from assessments for the individual learner to massive programmes of the sort likely to be found in multi-national corporations. I will list and briefly outline those which I think are among the most innovative and likely to be of greatest utility and then try to round out the discussion by drawing together several key generalisations which I hope will begin to link theory with practice. The reader also is directed to more complete discussions of needs assessment methodologies found in Richterich and Chancerel (1980), Stufflebeam *et al.* (1985) and Witkin (1977).

Inductive (category-dependent ~~generating~~) methods

One of the earliest systematic approaches to assessing language needs at the individual level is Stevick's 'Socio-topical matrix' (Stevick, 1971; Buckingham and Pech, 1976). The matrix is drawn so that the kinds of people the learner most urgently needs to interact with are arrayed against the things a learner is most likely to want to talk about. An optional linguistic dimension (this could take the form of language structures or functions) can also be used to broaden the scope of the grid with the intersecting cells producing the content basis of an entire course. Individuals with similar socio-topical profiles can be easily grouped.

Another inductive approach to language needs assessment is Freire's 'dialogue' (Freire, 1970) in which important themes in the lives of prospective learners are gradually clarified through graphic and verbal exercises. The method combines in-depth observation of people in various locations and life situations along with classification of salient themes which keep appearing during extensive discussions with and observations of members of a defined community (a group of farmers or factory workers, for example).

The broad range of what might now be called 'target situation analysis' (see Chambers, 1980; Jupp and Hodlin, 1975) also fits within the tradition of inductively organised applied research, although it is clear that the political and social values which underlie Freierian 'dialogue' do not govern the more technically-oriented analysis of communications in work situations. The emphasis of target situation analysis is on the nature and effect of target language communications in particular situations (in offices, on assembly lines, in meeting rooms, in content-area classrooms, for example). Expert analysis of communication establishes standards against which current performance can be gauged. 'Needs' in this context are perhaps more appropriately described as 'objectives' for learners who will eventually have to demonstrate competence in the situations.

Clearly, within the framework of target situation analysis, reliance on candidates who face instruction to describe their needs (as opposed to merely offering evidence of them during observation) is not going to prove very fruitful, given the strong emphasis on technical analysis of communications which these candidates are unable to handle in the first place. One interesting variation in this approach to language needs assessment is the case study (Schmidt, 1981) which requires intensive study of an individual engaged in language-dependent tasks and then generalisation about the individual's language problems in the defined learning situation. Schmidt finds the greatest values of case studies to be greater understanding of process-oriented needs (needs arising during the learner's attempts to gain knowledge in a field) and establishing a basis for designing a questionnaire or interview battery (see *Deductive methods*, below).

A method which resembles target situation analysis, but which traditionally employs groups in artificial, target-like situations is the 'Critical Incident Technique' (see Flanagan, 1954; Cohen and Smith, 1976). In language needs analysis critical incidents might be breakdowns or difficulties in communication which learners experience when attempting to solve a motivating problem. Competent verbal solutions serve as points of contrast with problematic ones and serve as standards for analysis of the communicative record. The technique requires some faith in the representativeness of the situation under scrutiny and plenty of time to conduct a sensitive analysis, but it does suggest some interesting extensions of needs assessment into such areas as simulation and role

play, which ordinarily are only viewed as approaches to instruction (Berwick, 1984a, 1984b).

One final inductive method I want to mention is the 'delphi study', originally developed at the Rand Corporation in the 1960s to assist futures research (see Dalkey, 1969; Linstone and Turoff, 1975; Weatherman and Swenson, 1974; also, Holmes, 1977 on adult ESL programme planning). Use of the technique entails asking stakeholders or experts in a given field (who never meet each other during the delphi process) to rank items which constitute important or desirable future conditions. This ranking continues for several rounds and is influenced by informing the individuals involved about the degree of support each item has received to date. Individuals are asked to reconsider their previous choices in the light of an emerging consensus on particular items.

The technique can be described as inductive when the initial list of items is developed by the raters during the first round, although variations on the delphi study also allow for presenting the raters with a list and then asking them to respond (a deductive approach to t e process). Application of delphi methodology to language needs assessment could, for example, have panels of managers and specialists in a company, who face the task of creating a comprehensive language training programme, propose specific language uses of value to the company; these would eventually find their way into a needs assessment questionnaire in the form of items to be evaluated by prospective learners.

Deductive (category-dependent) methods

Deductive approaches to language needs assessment are the natural complement to the kinds of inductive approaches outlined above. They are also the more typical way into needs analysis, constituting an extension of the tests-and-measurement tradition of educational research into applied linguistics. Unfortunately this collection of deductive methodologies, ranging from simple questionnaires to highly complex sociolinguistic typologies and surveys, generally has no special justification as instrumentation to assist needs assessment. Concepts of need are almost never clearly defined, values are generally left unexplicated, and category-generating methodologies (see *Inductive methods*, above) are typically not invoked to support the selection of categories and items used to generate data.

At the same time, the typologies, surveys and questionnaires which are most frequently used in language needs assessment are valuable resources for the programme planner. I will list some of the best and most accessible deductive approaches here and hope that my cursory treatment will not be taken for disinterest.

Richterich (1983) and Richterich and Chancerel (1980) are two fundamental documents in the Council of Europe's attempt to outline a framework for language needs assessment. What they offer to the planner is a comprehensive list of topics under which data may be collected by a variety of methods of interest and use in local planning situations.

Trim (1980) has noted the extraordinary number of possible combinations of information-gathering categories and sub-categories in Richterich's early model (see Richterich, 1980, originally, 1973): basic demographic features, agents, roles, times, places, environments, functions or purposes of communication, references to affective status, attitudes, means of communication and so on – many of which have found their way into the work of Richterich and Chancerel. This latter guide for practitioners of needs assessment organises data collection into three basic information categories: identification by the learner of his needs, identification of the learner's needs by the teaching establishment, and identification of the learner's needs by the user-institution (i.e., the 'social unit making use of one or more foreign languages to enable it to operate properly', Richterich and Chancerel, 1980: 43). Again, the number of categories in the framework a planner will have to deal with (and may choose to ignore) is stunningly large, although I think the level of organisation to be found in the framework will be a boon to people who have yet to undertake a full-scale assessment of language needs.

Actual data collection methods of potential use are listed, although not explained, and range from surveys and questionnaires to language tests and attitude scales. A companion text (Richterich, 1983) provides case studies which greatly assist the planner to think about data collection and analysis in a wide variety of typical adult learning situations.

Munby's (1978) 'Communicative needs processor' is, perhaps, the most highly developed model-mechanism for the interpretation of specific language learning needs. I want to emphasise that it offers a rationale for its inclusion of categories (to be filled with data on the basis of interviews with candidate learners) and that it has found application in a number of planning situations (see, for example, Hawkey, 1980, 1983). However, as in the case of the Council of Europe framework, the whole of the model is likely to be unwieldy in most planning situations. Perhaps a more fundamental point is that we are going to have a great deal of faith in what appears to be a comprehensive categorisation of 'micro-functions' in the second stage of the processor: Do we believe that learners 'need' language functions, or at least those functions offered for choice in the typology? I have the impression that the system's precision unrealistically limits our view of alternative interpretations of need and that, at the same time, it leaves largely unexamined the problem of interpreting data. Interpretation is probably the most practical problem any needs assessment manager is going to encounter (raw data rarely

'speak' very eloquently), with artful construction and description of needs at the subjective heart of the whole process (Schutz and Derwing, 1981, make a similar point in a description of their needs assessment in Taiwan). In other words, the Communicative Needs Processor gives us exemplary mechanisation when perhaps more art would do.

This observation is just as applicable to the closed-ended questionnaire or other survey instruments, although a fair perspective on category-dependent methodologies would have to allow for their relative ease of use. I want to briefly mention several kinds of questionnaires which have been published and are of potential value in bringing the needs assessor to the actual point of interpretation.

A number of questionnaires apply a useful distinction between needs felt by the learner and needs ascribed to them by administrators of the programme in which they study or will study (recall the felt needs/ perceived needs distinction discussed above). Examples of felt/ascribed questionnaire content include Holmes's (1977) study of community survival topics for ESL courses in Los Angeles and Mackay's (1978) study of English for specific purposes at Mexico's National Autonomous University. Although no clear definition of need is offered in either study, need is apparently indicated by high frequency, overlapping responses to choices available on the questionnaire. This is a fairly straightforward approach to locating areas for emphasis in programming and tends to satisfy the constituents of a needs assessment that their interests will be represented in the eventual educational product.

Harlow *et al.* (1980), on the other hand, focus exclusively in their survey on *student-perceived* communication needs in French. According to the authors, the questionnaire employed for the survey can be completed in less than 15 minutes. It contains opportunities for students to evaluate the probability of using French in various future situations (for example, study, travel, etc.) and asks respondents to evaluate the importance of 65 functional descriptors under six general categories of language use (getting things done, socialising, showing emotion, and so on). The categories of language use and descriptors were based on authoritative lists, produced by the Council of Europe and notional-functional specialists, and on introspection. Items likely to be incorporated into a syllabus resulting from the needs assessment would be those which received high rankings in one or more categories of use.

Finally, Carrier (1983) offers a sophisticated method for eliciting respondents' evaluations of 'language subskills' (analogous to Harlow *et al.* 'descriptors' of language use but at a more specific level). Respondents are asked to evaluate a list of subskills of possible importance in an office or factory, for example, from four different work-related perspectives: necessity, priority, problems (caused by ineffective use of the subskill), and importance. A simple check-mark on the questionnaire accomplishes

the respondent's evaluation of an item, a process repeated until all items have been evaluated.

Although it is unclear from Carrier's description whether current or future language use is being evaluated (this must be sorted out in any application of the questionnaire format), once the data are gathered and stored in a computer they can be used quite flexibly. For example, it might be useful to combine several of the use categories and then obtain a printout of the names and section addresses of employees who indicated high priority and problems for use of such combined subskills as organising, writing and revising research reports in English. This kind of flexibility – common to all computerised data bases – does not obviate the necessity of interpreting the data in whatever form requested. Nor does it eliminate the burden of deciding how to request data in the first place. There will always be some concept of need, some vision of a syllabus, some preference for method and content underlying the collection and display of information about language needs.

What happens when theory and practice collide?

A clear direction   I think it is a fundamental of needs assessment that at some point in the process the assessment will be given a clear direction, or it will fail. By 'clear direction' I mean something like an action plan that satisfies sources of authority in the system and furthers their goals. It is at this breakthrough point that clients and planners may come to blows, since a planner's educational values may conflict with those of a client willing to assert the client's values. The planner's preferences and expertise may find little recognition in the outcomes of the needs assessment – a risk professional planners who are likely to possess clear educational preferences – will have to take. But I really want to note the more typical pattern at the other end of the scale, the case of non-professional planners, generally teachers in an institutional programme, who may lose themselves in the masses of detail which inevitably accumulate as the needs assessment progresses from concept to analysis of a data base to applications within the programme.

Managers in a company language programme, for example, may suddenly awaken to the fact that information is going to be gathered about people in their sections, and may start to register some subtle and not-so-subtle objections to violation of the status quo. Although there are numerous consequences for failing to assuage sources of influence in the institutional system, one of the more likely consequences is that the needs assessment will be forced to simmer on the back burner until consensus has been reached on the basic goals and methods of the assessment. The process may wait for years to restart; it may never be revived. Teacher-planners who may possess only a thin, eclectic collection of ideas about

the goals and methods of language learning are going to be at a serious disadvantage when they discover the machine beginning to stall. The point I want to make is that educational and institutional values ought to be insinuated into the needs assessment at the outset, when control over the direction the assessment is going to take is most firmly in the hands of educational planners.

In practice, this will mean that a consensus on goals and strategies for interpreting data should be developed fairly early between those who have responsibility for planning and those who are stakeholders in the products of the needs assessment. Very likely, planners will want to begin with what I have called 'category-generating' methodologies in order to expand their own perspectives on possible content for instruction (or for such other purposes as testing and evaluation) and to lay the groundwork for later methods of data collection which build on themes of actual importance to the institution.

A view of the future   The attempt at data collection itself is meaningless, of course, unless the planners know reasonably well in advance what kinds of analyses will be made of the data – what questions, for example, will be 'asked' of piles of computer printout as they accumulate on some unfortunate person's desk. Leaving space on a questionnaire for the respondent's telephone number may seem an obvious thing to do when designing a form, yet it was just this lack which almost killed the usefulness of a recent, massive English language needs assessment at a major Japanese steel company involving nearly 10,000 respondents – one of the largest formal needs assessments ever undertaken at a single institution in Japan.

Under normal circumstances (and here I mean circumstances in which the planner is relatively inexperienced, has lots of other responsibilities and is never very sure about reliable co-operation from the rest of the teaching unit) foresight of the type described here may be hard to come by. However, finding a 'clear direction' obviously also means knowing pretty well how the assessment is going to end up – knowing, for example, whether it will be used to help design short courses or workshops, and whether the content for such courses will be expressed as language functions or structures or topics or something else. This sort of commitment to a defensible strategy for use of data (one which must, by the way, be communicated frequently and simply to non-planners) is very much what Monette (1979b: 548) had in mind when he argued that 'objectives are required to define needs'. Thus I think the crystal ball isn't nearly as useful in language needs assessment as a planner's vision of the language programme in six months' time.

Ellis, R. (2002). **The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum**. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos *New Perspectives on Grammar Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (pages 14-34). Routledge: London.

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Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. I will collect them next week.

1. What are the four reasons that the author gives for learners' failure to achieve a high level of grammatical competence?
2. Summarize the six aspects of SLA research that support grammar instruction?
3. Where and when should grammar be taught in the EFL/ESL curriculum? Why?
4. The author describes the kind of activities that need to be present in a unit to support grammar acquisition; what are these activities?

The place of grammar instruction in the second/foreign language curriculum has been strongly debated in the past 30 years. In teaching methods reliant on a structural syllabus (e.g., grammar translation, audiolingualism, Total Physical Response, situational language teaching), grammar held pride of place. However, with the advent of communicative language teaching (see, e.g., Allwright, 1979) and "natural" methods (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1983), this place has been challenged and in some cases, a "zero position" has been advocated (e.g., Krashen, 1982) on the grounds that teaching grammar does not correlate with acquiring grammar. More recently, various arguments have been advanced for incorporating a ''focus on form"[1] into the language curriculum (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998), motivated by research findings that suggest that "natural" language learning does not lead to high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence (e.g., Swain, 1985). The purpose of this chapter is to consider a number of reasons why grammar should be included in a second language (L2) curriculum. The chapter also addresses how a grammar component might be incorporated into a communicative curriculum. Finally, it outlines an approach to the teaching of grammar that is compatible with the curricular framework being proposed.

THE CASE FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

A case for teaching grammar can be mounted from different perspectives: (1) acquisition theory, (2) the learner, and (3) language pedagogy. Taken together,

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[1]Long (1988) distinguishes between a "focus on forms" and a "focus on form." The former refers to traditional approaches to grammar teaching based on a structure-of- the-day approach. The latter refers to drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms (and the meanings they realize) in the context of activities in which the learner's primary focus of attention is on meaning.

arguments based on these perspectives provide a compelling argument in favor of teaching grammar.

Acquisition Theory

It is now widely acknowledged that L2 learners, particularly adults, fail to achieve high levels of grammatical competence even if they have ample opportunity to learn the language naturally. Hammerly (1991) indicates that many naturalistic learners, even after years of exposure to the L2, often fail to proceed beyond the second level on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale of language proficiency. Kowal and Swain (1997) and Swain (1985) point out that learners in Canadian immersion programs (i.e., programs in which the target language serves as the medium of instruction for teaching subject content) achieve high levels of discourse and strategic competence but frequently fail to acquire even basic grammatical distinctions, such as passé composé and imparfait in French.
There are many possible reasons for learners' failure to achieve high levels of grammatical competence, including the following:

1. Age: Once learners have passed a "critical period" (about 15 years of age in the case of grammar) the acquisition of full grammatical competence is no longer possible.
2. Communicative sufficiency: Learners may be able to satisfy their communicative needs without acquiring target language norms.
3. Limited opportunities for pushed output: Research (e.g., Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990) has demonstrated that the linguistic environment to which learners are exposed in the classroom may indeed be limited in quite significant ways.
4. Lack of negative feedback: It has been suggested that some grammatical structures cannot be acquired from positive input, which is all that is typically available to learners learning an L2 "naturally" (see White, 1987).

If (1) is the reason, not much can be done to alleviate the problem pedagogically, as teachers are clearly powerless to alter the age of their learners. However, there is growing doubt concerning the validity of the critical period hypothesis where grammar is concerned; it is becoming clear that there are large numbers of learners who, given sufficient time and motivation, are successful in acquiring target language norms even if they start learning the L2 after the age of 15. If (2) and (3) are the reasons, two possible solutions suggest themselves. One is improving the quality of the interactional opportunities learners experience, for example, by ensuring that learners' communicative needs are enhanced by requiring them to produce "pushed output." One way of achieving this is by devising a curriculum of communicative tasks that are linguistically demanding (e.g., call for learners to activate their rule-based as opposed to lexical competence - see Skehan, 1998). The other solution is to focus learners' attention on grammatical form (and, of course, the meanings they realize) through some kind of grammar teaching. Point (4) also indicates the need for grammar teaching, as this serves as one of the more obvious ways in which learners can obtain the negative feedback needed to acquire "difficult'' structures.

Given that the possible reasons for learners' failing to achieve target language norms vary in the kind of solution they point to, it is obviously important to establish

whether the "teach grammar" solution is, in fact, effective. Earlier (see Fotos & Ellis, 1991), I summarized the main findings of what is now a substantial body of empirical research that has investigated the effects of form-focused instruction on interlanguage development. This summary, I would claim, remains valid today. It states:

1. Formal instruction helps to promote more rapid L2 acquisition and also contributes to higher levels of ultimate achievement (Long, 1988).
2. There are psycholinguistic constraints which govern whether attempts to teach learners specific grammatical rules result in their acquisition. Formal instruction may succeed if the learners have reached a stage in the developmental sequence that enables them to process the target structure (Pienemann, 1984). Conversely, it will not succeed if learners have not reached the requisite developmental stage.[2]
3. Production practice is not sufficient to overcome these constraints. There is now clear evidence to suggest that having learners produce sentences that model the target structure is not sufficient to guarantee its acquisition as implicit knowledge. Studies by Schumann (1978), R. Ellis (1984), and Kadia (1988), among others, suggest that formal instruction directed at developmental or difficult grammatical structures has little effect on performance in spontaneous language use. (The term developmental refers here to structures that are acquired in stages and involve the learner passing through a series of transitional phases before mastering the target structure. Examples of developmental structures are negatives and interrogatives.)
4. It is possible, however, that formal instruction directed at relatively simple grammatical rules (such as plural or copula be) will be successful in developing implicit knowledge, as such forms do not require the mastery of complex processing operations (Pica, 1983; Pienemann, 1984).
5. Formal instruction is effective in developing explicit knowledge of grammatical features. There is substantial evidence to suggest that formal instruction is successful if the learning outcomes are measured by means of an instrument that allows for controlled, planned, language use (e.g., an imitation test, a sentence-joining task, or a grammaticality judgment task). It is in this kind of language use that learners are able to draw on their explicit knowledge. Studies by Kadia (1988); Lightbown, Spada, and Wallace (1980); Schumann (1978); and Zobl (1985) all support such a conclusion.
6. Formal instruction may work best in promoting acquisition when it is linked with opportunities for natural communication (Spada, 1986).

In short, although there are constraints that govern both when and what type of grammar teaching is likely to work, there is clear evidence that, providing these constraints are taken into account, teaching grammar can have a beneficial effect on learners' interlanguage development. This conclusion is now widely accepted by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers (see Doughty and Williams, 1998).

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[2] A recent article by Spada and Lightbown (1999) does cast some doubt on the claim that developmental sequences are inviolable. This study found that learners who were at an early stage in the acquisition of question forms were able to learn question forms at an advanced stage as a result of formal instruction, suggesting they were not constrained by the kind of psycholinguistic constraints on acquisition proposed by Pienemann. Spada and Lightbown suggest that the effectiveness of instruction may depend less on the learners' stage of development than on the type of instruction.

The Learner's Perspective

An equally strong reason for including grammar in the L2 curriculum is that many learners expect it. Adult learners typically view "grammar" as the central component of language and, irrespective of the type of instruction they experience, are likely to make strenuous efforts to understand the grammatical features they notice. In an analysis of the diaries written by ab initio learners of German in an intensive foreign language course at a university in London (Ellis, R., unpublished manuscript), I was struck by the depth of the learners' concern to make sense of the grammar of German. Their diaries are full of references to grammar—of their struggle to understand particular rules and their sense of achievement when a rule finally "clicked." It should be noted, too, that "grammar" for these learners consisted of explicit rules that they could understand; it was not the kind of implicit grammar that comprises interlanguage.

Of course, not all learners will orientate so strongly to studying grammar. Some, younger learners for example, may be more inclined to view language functionally - as a tool for communicating - and may be less able to benefit from grammar instruction. Nevertheless, it is my contention that many successful learners are not only prepared to focus on form but actively seek to do so (see Reiss, 1985). For such learners, a "communicative" syllabus that eschews a focus on grammar may be missing the mark.

A Pedagogical Perspective

One of the arguments that was advanced against the kind of notional/functional syllabus that appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s was that ''notions'' and "functions" do not provide a basis for the systematic coverage of the language to be taught (see Brumfit, 1981). Examples of notions are possibility and past time, whereas examples of functions are requests and apologies. The problem with such constructs is that they are not generative in the way grammar is. A similar criticism can be leveled at the current fashion for task-based or thematically based syllabuses. There can be no guarantee that the teaching activities that are based on such syllabuses provide a full and systematic coverage of the grammar of the L2. To some extent, tasks can be devised so that they require learners to use specific grammatical features, but, at least where production tasks are concerned, there are limits on the extent to which these features are essential in performing the tasks (see the comments later in this chapter) as learners are adept at avoiding the use of structures that they find difficult. Arguably, the only way to ensure a systematic coverage of the grammar of the L2, then, is by means of a structural syllabus. Such a syllabus provides teachers and learners with a clear sense of progression—something that I think is missing from both notional and task-based syllabuses. However, this does not mean the abandonment of meaning-based syllabuses and a straight return to the structural syllabus. Rather, I see a need for both. This involves a curriculum that incorporates both types of syllabus. We will now turn to the question of how grammar can be incorporated into a language curriculum.

THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR IN THE CURRICULUM

Deciding the place of grammar in the language curriculum involves seeking answers to the following questions:

1. At what stage of learners' general L2 development should grammar be taught?
2. With what intensity should grammar be taught?
3. Can the teaching of grammar be integrated into meaning-focused instruction?

The first question concerns the general timing of the grammar instruction. The second deals with whether grammar instruction should be intense or spread over a period of time. The third concerns the crucial matter of the relationship between the grammar and the communicative components of a syllabus.

The Timing of Grammar Instruction

An assumption of traditional approaches to grammar is that it should be taught from the very beginning stages of a language course. This assumption derives from behaviorist learning theory, according to which learning consists of habit formation. Learners must be taught correct habits from the start to avoid the unnecessary labor of having to unlearn wrong habits in order to learn the correct ones later. As Brooks (1960) put it, "Error, like sin, is to be avoided at all cost." Such a view is not supported by current theories of L2 acquisition. Interlanguage development is seen as a process of hypothesis-testing and errors as a means of carrying this out (Corder, 1967). Learners follow their own built-in syllabus. Thus, it is now widely accepted that errors are both a natural and inevitable consequence of the processes of acquisition. In other words, there is no longer a theoretical basis for teaching grammar to prevent errors.

There are, in fact, some fairly obvious reasons for not teaching grammar to beginners. First, as the immersion studies have shown (see Johnson & Swain, 1997), learners do not need grammar instruction to acquire considerable grammatical competence. Learners with plentiful opportunities to interact in the L2 are likely to acquire basic word order rules and salient inflections without assistance. For example, L2 learners who have never received instruction are able to acquire the rules for ordering elements in the English noun phrase; they do not put the adjective after the noun, even when this is the ordering in their L1 (Hughes, 1979). They are also able to acquire the English auxiliary system and, over time, use this in a target-like manner in interrogatives and negatives. Probably, they will also acquire at least some complex structures such as simple relative clauses in which the relative pronoun functions as subject (as in "Mary married the man who lived next door"). Of course, not all learners will acquire these grammatical features; some learners, like Schumann's Alberto (Schumann, 1978), will fossilize early. But many learners will go quite a long way without any attempt to teach them grammar. In other words, up to a point, the acquisition of a grammar takes place naturally and inevitably, providing learners experience appropriate opportunities for hearing and using the L2.

A second, more powerful reason for not teaching grammar to beginners is that the early stage of L2 acquisition (like the early stage of L1 acquisition) is naturally agrammatical. Language learners begin by learning items—words or formulaic chunks. They communicate by concatenating these, stringing them together into

sequences that convey meaning contextually, as shown in these examples from Ellis (1984):

> Me no (= I don't have any crayons)
> Me milkman (= I want to be the milkman)
> Dinner time you out (= It is dinner time so you have to go out)
> Me no school (= I am not coming to school on Monday)

Such utterances are ubiquitous in the spontaneous, communicative speech of beginner L2 learners, both child and adult. It is only later that learners begin to grammaticalize their speech. According to N. Ellis (1996), they do this by extracting rules from the items they have learned—bootstrapping their way to grammar. It would seem, then, that the early stages of language acquisition are lexical rather than grammatical (see also Klein & Perdue, 1992; Lewis, 1993).

If grammar teaching is to accord with how learners learn, then, it should not be directed at beginners. Rather, it should await the time when learners have developed a sufficiently varied lexis to provide a basis for the process of rule extraction. In crude terms, this is likely to be at the intermediate-plus stages of development. There is a case, therefore, for reversing the traditional sequence of instruction, focusing initially on the development of vocabulary and the activation of the strategies for using lexis in context to make meaning and only later seeking to draw learners' attention to the rule-governed nature of language.

The Intensity of Grammar Instruction

Independent of when grammar should be taught is the question of how intense the instruction should be once it starts. Is it better, for example, to spend substantial periods of time focusing on a relatively few (albeit problematic) grammatical structures, or is it better to deal less intensively with a broad range of structures?

There are now a number of studies that demonstrate that when problematic grammatical structures are taught intensively learners acquire them. Harley (1989), for example, describes an instructional treatment for dealing with the distinction between passé composé and imparfait that lasted eight weeks! Thankfully, this resulted in marked gains in the accuracy of these verb forms that were sustained over time. One wonders, however, how feasible such intense treatments are in the context of the complete language curriculum. If such lengthy periods of time are devoted to a single grammatical structure there will be little time left to focus on the numerous other grammatical problems the learners experience.

Underlying this question of the intensity of the instruction is another question. What is the goal of grammar instruction? Is it to lead learners to full control of the targeted structures? Or is it to make them aware of the structures and, perhaps, of the gap between their own interlanguage rule and the target language rule? Grammar instruction, again influenced by behaviorist learning theory, has assumed that the goal of grammar instruction is complete accuracy. It is this assumption that appears to motivate the call for intense doses of instruction of the kind Harley provided. However, a more cognitive view of L2 learning suggests that acquisition begins with awareness, and that once this has been triggered learners will achieve full control

through their own resources in due time. Such a view supports a less intense, broader-based grammar curriculum.

The Relationship Between Code-Focused and Message-Focused Instruction

Traditional language teaching was code-focused, although there were probably always some opportunities for message-focused activity, even in the most audiolingual of courses. With the advent of communicative language teaching, however, more importance, quite rightly, has been given to message-focused language activity, not just because this is seen as needed to develop communicative skills in an L2, but also because it caters to the natural acquisition of grammar and other aspects of the code (see, e.g., Prabhu, 1987). Perhaps the key issue facing designers of language curricula is how to relate the code-focused and the message-focused components. There are two basic options.

The first is the integrated option. Integration can be achieved in two ways:

1. Communicative tasks that have been designed to focus attention on specific properties of the code. I have referred to these elsewhere as "focused communicative tasks." Such an approach represents a proactive approach toward integration; it takes place at the level of the curriculum content.
2. Teachers' feedback on learners' attempts to perform communicative tasks. Such feedback can focus on specific errors that learners make. This approach is reactive in nature; it takes place, not at the level of content, but methodologically. The feedback can be instant (i.e., can occur as an immediate response to a learner error) or it can be delayed (i.e., take place after the communicative task has been completed).[3]

There are enormous problems in designing focused communicative tasks (see Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993) that preclude using them as a means of achieving curricular integration. As I have already noted, learners are adept at sidestepping the grammatical focus while performing a communicative task, unless of course they are told what the focus is; in which case, it can be argued that the task ceases to be communicative and becomes a situational grammar exercise. Integration is more likely to be achieved reactively rather than proactively, although there are some obvious problems here, not least concerning the nature of the feedback; should it be explicit, which potentially endangers the communicative nature of the task, or implicit, when it might not be noticed? Currently, however, strong arguments have been advanced for what Long (1991) has called ''a focus on form" (i.e., reactive feedback while learners' primary attention is on message). The claim is that drawing learners' attention to form in the context of ongoing communicative endeavor is compatible with the type of input processing that is needed for interlanguage development.

The second approach for relating the two elements of a language curriculum is the parallel option. Here no attempt is made to integrate a focus on code and message;

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[3] Little is currently known about the relative efficacy of immediate and delayed negative feedback on learners' acquisition of grammatical features. Most studies of negative feedback have focused on the type of feedback (e.g., whether it is implicit or explicit) rather than the timing. This is clearly an area that needs to be investigated.

instead, these are entirely separate components. In such a syllabus, the main component would consist of communicative tasks, designed to engage learners in the receptive and productive processes involved in using language to convey messages. A second, smaller component would consist of a list of grammatical structures to be systematically taught. There would be no attempt to create any links between the two components. The time allocated to the two components would vary according to the learners' general level of proficiency. Thus, at the elementary level there would be only communicative tasks (receptive rather than productive in the first instance). At the intermediate stage, once learners had established a lexical basis for the acquisition of grammar, the focus on code (which could include pronunciation and discourse as well as grammar) would kick in, growing progressively larger as time passed, until it occupied close to half of the total time available with advanced learners. This proportional curriculum model (Yalden, 1983) is shown in Fig. 2.1.

Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Communication tasks	→	→
	Code-focused tasks	→

FIG. 2.1 *The relationship between the communicative and code components of a syllabus.*

This proposal flies in the face of what is generally considered to be good practice in language pedagogy—namely, that the curriculum should be carefully constructed to ensure an integration of skills, with tasks carefully sequenced to ensure a systematic and graded progression. However, such syllabuses, although superficially sensible, ignore the essential fact that skill integration is not something that is achieved externally by the curriculum designer (or teacher) but must be achieved internally by the learners themselves, in accordance with their built-in syllabuses and their particular learning goals. Curriculum designers have hung themselves quite needlessly on the gallows of the integrated syllabus.

There are strong arguments to support the view that the goal of the code-oriented component of the syllabus should be awareness rather than performance; that is, the syllabus should be directed at developing learners' conscious understanding of how particular code features work, not at ensuring that learners are able to perform them accurately and fluently. In more technical terms, this entails a syllabus directed at explicit rather than implicit knowledge of the L2. As I have argued elsewhere (see Ellis, R., 1991a, 1993, 1997), it is unrealistic to try to intervene directly in interlanguage development by teaching implicit knowledge, as this constitutes a highly complex process, involving intake and gradual restructuring, which we still understand quite poorly and which is not amenable to one-shot (or even to several-shot) pedagogic ministrations. In contrast, explicit knowledge can be taught relatively easily in the same way that history dates or mathematical formulae can be taught.[4] Of course, explicit knowledge constitutes a lesser goal than implicit knowledge, as

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[4] This assumes that many L2 learners are capable of learning a wide range of explicit rules. Such an assumption is controversial, however. Krashen (1982) claims that learners are only capable of learning simple rules (e.g., third-person -s). However, there is research evidence to suggest that Krashen seriously underestimates learners' capacity for explicit knowledge (see, e.g., Green & Hecht, 1992).

effective communication activity requires the latter type of knowledge. This limitation, however, is less severe if it can be shown that explicit knowledge plays an important facilitating role in helping learners acquire implicit knowledge by encouraging "noticing" and "noticing the gap" (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). If learners know about a grammatical feature they are more likely to heed it when they come across it in the input and also to attend to how it differs from the current interlanguage rule that underlies their own performance in the L2. In other words, the goal of a grammar syllabus becomes not that of teaching learners to use grammar but of helping them to understand how grammar works. In this respect, but not others, this position is closer to that of the cognitive code method than to behaviorism.

A crucial issue is the content of the code-oriented component of the syllabus. Clearly, this will have to go beyond grammar, to include pronunciation (perhaps) and discourse features. Here, however, I will consider only the question of grammar content. Clearly, this content should be derived from our understanding of the learning problems that learners experience; that is, the content should be remedial in nature, focusing on areas of grammar where learners are known to make errors. There are, in fact, many such areas that are common to all learners. The so-called developmental errors reflect learning problems that are universal. Examples are as follows:

- omission of plural -*s*
- omission of third person -*s*
- overuse of the article *the* (and corresponding under-use of *a*)
- the double comparative (e.g., "more faster")
- resumptive pronouns in relative clauses (e.g., "The man who my sister had married *him* …")
- process verbs (e.g., "The size was increased greatly.'')

Our knowledge of such problem areas of grammar provides a solid base for the development of a general grammar syllabus, applicable to all language learners. Of course, syllabuses designed for specific groups of learners will need to take account of the fact that there are also some errors directly traceable to first language influence. Probably, though, the transfer errors are less numerous than the developmental errors (see Ellis, R., 1994).[5]

Curriculum designers also need to consider how this grammatical content can be graded. There is a growing and somewhat confused literature dealing with this issue. Although there is general agreement that grading should proceed in accordance with difficulty, there is much less agreement regarding what this actually involves. This results, in part, from the failure to recognize that what is difficult with regard to implicit knowledge may not be difficult in terms of explicit knowledge. For example, teaching learners to understand the rule for third-person -*s* (explicit knowledge) is relatively easy, but teaching them to use this feature accurately and fluently (implicit

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[5] Many errors, of course, are the result of both developmental and transfer processes. Thus, whereas all L2 learners seem to have problems distinguishing the use of the and a learners whose L1 does not include an article system (e.g., Japanese or Korean learners) are likely to experience the problems for longer, often failing to completely overcome them, even though they achieve a very advanced level of overall proficiency.

knowledge) is problematic. Thus, third-person -*s* can be thought of as an easy explicit feature but a difficult implicit feature. The question that needs to be addressed, then, is what criteria influence the level of difficulty learners are likely to experience in acquiring grammatical features as explicit knowledge? Table 2.1 suggests some of the criteria. At this juncture, it is not possible to apply these criteria in a systematic fashion, although it might be argued that these are the very criteria that have been traditionally applied in the development of structural syllabuses. Thus, designers of grammatical structures can call on this tradition with some confidence.

TABLE 2.1
Criteria for determining the difficulty of grammatical structures as explicit knowledge approach for teaching grammar

Criteria	Definition	Example
1. Formal complexity	The extent to which the structure involves just a single or many elements.	Plural -*s* is formally simple; relative clauses involve many elements.
2. Functional complexity	The extent to which the meanings realized by a structure are transparent	Plural -*s* is transparent; articles are opaque
3. Reliability	The extent to which the rule has exceptions.	Third-person -*s* is very reliable; the rule for periphrastic genitives is much less reliable.
4. Scope	The extent to which the rule has a broad or narrow coverage.	The Present Simple Tense has broad scope; the Future Perfect Tense has narrow scope.
5. Metalanguage	The extent to which the rule can be provided simply with minimum metalanguage.	Plural -*s* is simple; reflexive pronouns are more difficult; subject verb inversion is even more difficult.
6. L1/L2 contrast	A feature that corresponds to an L1 feature is easier than a feature that does not.	For French learners of English, the position of adverbs in sentences is difficult.

Finally, it should be noted that the two principal curricula options—integrated and parallel—are not, in fact, mutually exclusive. It would be perfectly possible to complement a parallel syllabus that includes a nonintegrated grammar component with Long's "focus on form" through reactive feedback to errors that learners make when performing tasks from the communicative component of the syllabus. There are considerable strengths in such a proposal as a focus on form. It may be one way in which teachers can encourage learners to make use of their explicit knowledge to "notice" features in the input. This raises the intriguing possibility of forging a link between the focus on form and the teaching of explicit knowledge (i.e., by teachers directing feedback on features that have recently been explicitly taught). It is doubtful, however, if such a link can ever be anything other than opportunistic. In general, the focus of teachers' feedback in the communicative strand of the curriculum will not

match the focus in the grammar component. Nor do I see this as something for which to strive for the reasons I have already given.

AN APPROACH FOR TEACHING GRAMMAR

The approach for teaching grammar that will now be outlined is premised on the assumption that the focus of the instruction should be awareness rather than performance. There are, in fact, two senses of awareness. First, learners can be made aware of the formal properties of the language as they experience these in input; that is, they can be made to consciously "notice'' them. Second, learners can be made aware in the sense of forming some kind of explicit representation of a target form (i.e., developing explicit knowledge). Figure 2.2 shows these two senses of awareness. The particular approach to teaching grammar that I will now describe involves attempts to induce both kinds of awareness.

	Awareness (1)	Awareness (2)	
		explicit knowledge	
input			output
	intake (noticed forms)	implicit Knowledge	
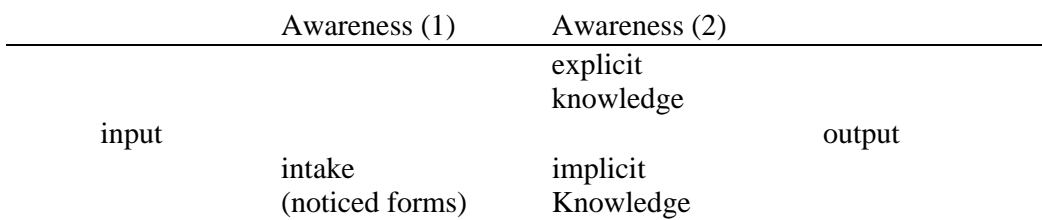
FIG. 2.2 *Two types of awareness in L2 acquisition.*

The materials (Ellis & Gaies, 1998) consist of a series of units, each directed at a single grammatical problem. The approach is remedial, with the error targeted in a unit indicated in an "error box." By asking "Do my students make this error?" the teacher is able to determine whether to teach the unit.

A unit consists of five kinds of activities:

1. Listening to comprehend: Here students listen to a continuous text that has been contrived to contain several examples of the target structure. On this occasion, however, they are required to focus on the message-content of the text.
2. Listening to notice: In this activity the students listen to the text a second time (and if necessary a third or fourth time) to identify the target structure. To assist the process of noticing the structure, they are asked to complete a gapped version of the text. It should be noted, however, that this fill-in-the-gap activity differs from traditional grammar exercises in that students do not have to rely on their competence to complete the text; they can obtain the missing words by listening carefully.
3. "Listening to Notice" is intended to raise the first type of awareness in the students. Oral rather than written texts have been chosen to induce real-time input processing.
4. Understanding the grammar point: This activity is directed at helping learners develop explicit knowledge of the grammar point (i.e., awareness). They are helped to analyze the "data" provided by the text, which they have now completed, and to "discover'' the rule. A discovery approach to teaching explicit knowledge is favored on the grounds that it is more motivating and that it also serves a learner-training function. By completing such tasks,

learners can develop the skills needed to analyze language data for themselves and so build their own explicit grammars of English. However, there is a grammar reference section (at the back of the book) to which students can refer to check the accuracy of the explicit rule they have formed.

5. Checking: The students are given a further text (this time, written) containing errors. They are asked to identify the errors and correct them. This kind of grammaticality judgment task is chosen because it lends itself to the use of explicit knowledge (see Ellis, R., 1991b). It also fosters the skill of monitoring, which, as Krashen (1982) has pointed out, draws on explicit knowledge.

6. Trying it: Finally, there is an opportunity for students to try out their understanding of the target structure in a short production activity. The emphasis here is not so much on practicing the structure as on proceduralizing students' declarative knowledge, a step DeKeyser (1998) considers to be necessarily intermediate between the teaching of explicit knowledge and its full automatization as implicit knowledge.[6]

These materials are not designed to develop implicit knowledge. Indeed, this can hardly be achieved in a single hour, the typical length of time needed to complete a unit. They are directed at developing students' awareness of grammar. As such, the materials do not constitute a complete curriculum but rather the kind of grammar component I have described in the previous section. They will need to be complemented with task-based materials of a communicative nature.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to make a case for teaching grammar. However, the case is a circumscribed one, and it is perhaps useful to conclude by saying what is not being proposed as well as what is.

It is NOT being proposed that:

- We revert back completely to a structural syllabus.
- We teach beginners grammar.
- We attempt to teach learners to use grammatical features accurately and fluently through intensive practice exercises.
- We teach grammar communicatively (e.g., by embedding a grammar focus into communicative tasks).

It is being proposed that:

- We include a grammar component in the language curriculum, to be used alongside a communicative task-based component.

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[6] DeKeyser's claim that explicit knowledge can be converted into implicit knowledge by means of automatizating practice can be challenged for the reasons explained earlier in this chapter. However, his idea of "proceduralizing declarative knowledge" seems a useful one. Thus, the materials stop at this stage and make no attempt to supply the kind and amount of practice that DeKeyser acknowledges is needed for automatization.

- We teach grammar only to learners who have already developed a substantial lexical base and are able to engage in message-focused tasks, albeit with language that is grammatically inaccurate.
- We teach grammar separately, making no attempt to integrate it with the task-based component (except, perhaps, methodologically through feedback).
- We focus on areas of grammar known to cause problems to learners.
- We aim to teach grammar as awareness, focusing on helping learners develop explicit knowledge.

These proposals are theoretically based and, as such, provide a solid foundation for the teaching of grammar. However, it needs to be acknowledged that there is more than one theory of L2 acquisition and that somewhat different proposals based on alternative theories are possible (see DeKeyser, 1998, for example). This is likely to ensure that the place of grammar in the curriculum and the nature of grammar teaching will be hotly debated in the years ahead.

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1. What is the definition of autonomy?

2. Why would learner autonomy be appropriate for a summer camp offered by the Mandela School?

3. What are the five principles for promoting learner autonomy? How do they help learners become autonomous?

Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum:
principles for designing language courses

Sara Cotterall

This article argues that fostering learner autonomy is an important and appropriate goal in language course design, but that principles to guide the design of such courses are currently lacking. The article proposes five course design principles for language courses which seek to foster learner autonomy. Each principle is discussed in relation to the experience of designing two skills-based courses taught within an intensive English language course. The paper concludes with the claim that a language course which integrates these principles will contribute both to learners' control over their own language learning process and to their developing language proficiency.

Introduction
Many language teachers are convinced of the importance of incorporating principles of learner autonomy—'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Holec 1981: 3)—into their practice. The applied linguistics literature also bears testimony to interest in this issue, with at least four collections of papers on learner autonomy appearing in the last four years (Dickinson and Wenden 1995, Pemberton *et al.* 1996, Benson and Voller 1997, and Cotterall and Crabbe 1999). Yet many of the contributions in these collections deal principally with the theoretical background of learner autonomy, and the role played by learner variables such as attitudes, beliefs, strategies, and roles. It is considerably less common to read reports of classroom-based courses which integrate principles of learner autonomy in their design. In a recent article on learner autonomy in *ELT Journal*, for example, Lee (1998) reports on a voluntary self-directed learning programme which seeks to help learners become more autonomous. But what of mainstream courses dedicated to the same principles?

This article argues that learner autonomy should not be seen as a goal only for highly committed students completing optional courses, or for students operating within selected educational or cultural contexts. Rather, it should be seen as an essential goal of all learning. Littlewood (1999: 73) comments:

> If we define autonomy in educational terms as involving students' capacity to use their learning independently of teachers, then autonomy would appear to be an incontrovertible goal for learners

everywhere, since it is obvious that no students, anywhere, will have their teachers to accompany them throughout life.

Language courses which aim to promote learner autonomy will incorporate means of transferring responsibility for aspects of the language learning process (such as setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating progress) from the teacher to the learner. In what follows, two such courses are described and evaluated in terms of their ability to foster learner autonomy. As a result of the experience gained in designing and delivering the courses, five principles to guide the design of similar language courses are proposed. These are generic course design principles which can be applied to a range of learners and settings.

In the next section, the context for which the language courses were designed is briefly described. Then the rationale for each principle is outlined, followed by a report on the experience of attempting to incorporate the principles in the two courses. Finally, the paper discusses the potential contribution of principles such as these to our under-standing of strategies for promoting learner autonomy is discussed.

Context

The courses described here were designed for a group of 20 learners drawn from five classes of learners enrolled on a 12-week intensive English language course at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The learners attended class for three hours every morning with their class teacher, and then attended a course in an area of special interest (or need) for two hours one afternoon each week for five weeks in each half of the course. The two special interest courses described here focused on speaking and reading skills respectively.

The promotion of learner autonomy is an important explicit goal of the language programme within which the courses were offered (see Cotterall 1995 for more detail). The challenge of designing these courses lay in identifying content which, within a ten-hour period, would enhance learners' control over their language learning in relation to the skill focused on. Other relevant constraints in the context included the learners' high expectations, their relatively low English proficiency, the wide range of nationalities represented in the group, and the diverse goals of the participants.

Principles of language course design: the theory

The five principles which emerged from the course design process relate to (1) learner goals, (2) the language learning process, (3) tasks, (4) learner strategies, and (5) reflection on learning. The challenge facing course designers who wish to foster learners' ability to 'take charge of ... [their] . . . learning' (Holec 1981: 3) is to find ways of supporting the transfer of responsibility for decision-making about learning from teacher to learner. Each of the principles discussed here contributes to that transfer of responsibility.

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The course reflects learners' goals in its language, tasks, and strategies
Any course designed to promote learner autonomy must set out to achieve the goals which the learners deem important. Breen and Candlin (1980: 95) comment:

> However vague a learner's initial interpretation [of the demands of the target repertoire and its underlying competence] may be, he is not going to learn anything unless he has an idea of what he is trying to achieve.

Therefore, in a course which seeks to foster language learners' autonomy, time is devoted to raising learners' awareness of ways of identifying goals, specifying objectives, identifying resources and strategies needed to achieve goals, and measuring progress. Decisions about language, texts, tasks, and strategies to focus on during the course are made in relation to the stated goals of the learners.

Course tasks are explicitly linked to a simplified model of the language learning process
A basic understanding of the language learning process is essential for anyone who wishes to manage their own learning. Learners can only be autonomous if they are aware of a range of learning options, and understand the consequences of choices they make. Armed with a model of language learning, learners are able to question the role of input texts and tasks, to trial alternative strategies, and to seek feedback on their performance. Without access to such a model, learners are forced into the role of 'consumers' of language courses.

Course tasks either replicate real-world communicative tasks or provide rehearsal for such tasks
This principle is related to the first one. Learners enrol in language courses in order to improve their performance of certain L2 tasks. Their goals and needs must therefore be paramount in the design of any course which seeks to develop their ability to manage their own learning. This means that the tasks in which the course provides preparation, practice, and feedback should be those in which the learner will participate in the future. Such 'transparency' of course content is the hallmark of courses designed to foster learner autonomy.

The course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance
The recent explosion of interest in learning strategies has provided language teachers with suggestions as to which learning strategies to present and, more importantly, empirical justification for spending time with learners discussing and experimenting with such strategies. At the heart of learner autonomy lies the concept of choice. This principle relates particularly to extending the choice of strategic behaviours available to learners, and to expanding their conceptual understanding of the contribution which strategies can make to their learning.

The course promotes reflection on learning
In a recent report, Dam and Legenhausen (1999: 90) claim that learners' ability to reflect critically on their learning is a measure of the effectiveness of the learning environment. They use the term 'evaluation' to refer to the metacognitive activity of reviewing past and future learning experiences in order to enhance learning, and claim that:

> In an autonomous classroom . . . [evaluation] is viewed as the pivot of a good learning/teaching cycle . . . Evaluation has a retrospective and prospective function, in which the learning experiences of the past are reflected upon and transformed into plans for future action.

The potential for learner autonomy increases as an individual's learning awareness grows. Therefore activities which prompt learners to reflect on their learning aim to enhance learners' insight into their learning processes.

Principles of language course design: the practice

Now that the rationale for each principle has been briefly explained, the next section will report on the experience of attempting to integrate these principles in the design of two short courses.

The course reflects learners' goals in its language, tasks, and strategies
In both courses, learners' goals were a principal focus in the first session and featured in discourse surrounding all tasks. In the initial session, learners were asked to specify detailed reading or speaking goals, to identify appropriate resources, and to formulate measures for determining when their goals had been reached. In practice, this process uncovered some unrealistic goal setting. While working with one learner—a surgeon who had recently emigrated to New Zealand—I discovered that his goal for the reading course was to acquire the ability to read scientific articles in English. While this goal was relevant and important, it was highly unrealistic given the size of his English vocabulary, his limited experience of dealing with authentic texts, and the duration of the course. After talking to me further about his goals and his current proficiency, the learner decided to focus initially on simplified materials while expanding his sight vocabulary and increasing his reading speed. This change in goals did not harm the learner's motivation; rather, it enhanced it, by ensuring that he experienced early success, and by identifying some way stages in the journey towards his more long-term goals.

The peer interviews revealed that few learners had experience of goal-setting or of monitoring or evaluating their learning, and that they were unlikely to acquire this without extensive supported practice. Given the size of the group, it was not possible to work with each learner in class time. Accordingly, one learner was asked to articulate a personal goal for each in-class task. On completion of the task, the learner was asked to 'think aloud' about the level of performance achieved in relation to his/her stated goal. This modelling was reinforced at the end of each session when learners summarized their reflections in their journals. This made it possible to follow up issues in subsequent sessions with the

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whole class, or with individuals through journal responses. Other learners reported discussing issues which arose in our course with their class teachers in their regular interviews.

Figure 1   **Simplified model of the language learning process**
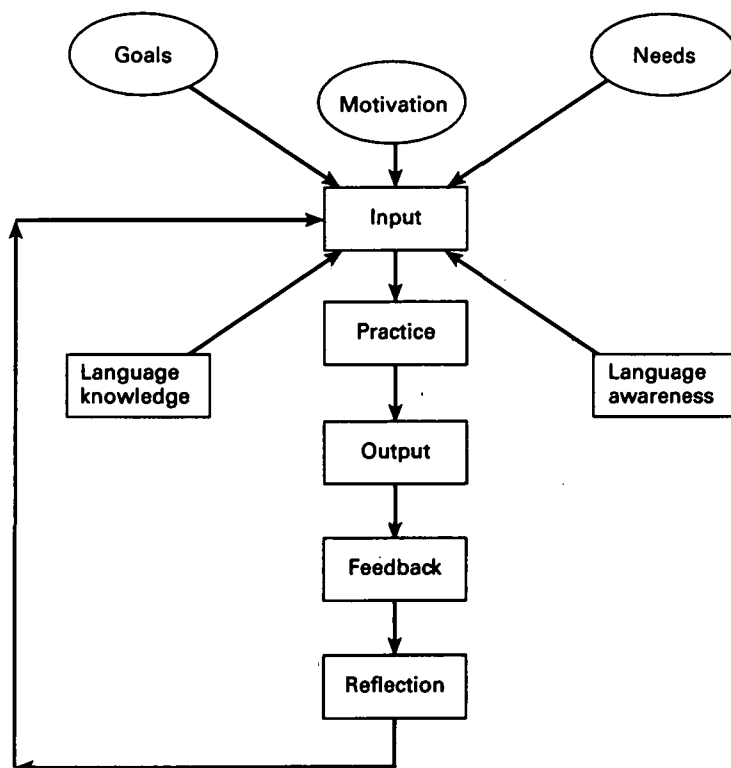
Course tasks are explicitly linked to a simplified model of the language learning process
A simplified model of the language learning process was introduced in the first session (see Figure 1). Elements identified in the model were: *goals, needs, motivation, input, language knowledge and awareness,* (form-focused) *practice* (i.e. rehearsal with a goal of enhancing accuracy or fluency), (meaning-focused) *output* (i.e. actual language use with a goal of communication), *feedback* and *reflection*. The model introduced useful concepts and metalanguage for discussing learning problems, as the following incident illustrates. One day a learner commented:

'I don t like doing activities in class. I prefer grammar exercises.'

By identifying grammar in the language learning model as *language knowledge* it was possible to make the point that learning grammar without producing meaning-focused output (see Swain 1995) would not contribute to the development of proficiency. (While processing input might help, production is essential for syntactic processing to occur.)

Adult language learners deserve such explanations, and benefit from discussing and questioning the process in this way. Constant reference to the model prompted insightful reflections from the learners, and helped support the transfer of responsibility for aspects of the learning process.

Course tasks either replicate real-world communicative tasks or provide rehearsal for such tasks

Both courses incorporated tasks linked to goals identified by the learners. The majority of learners in the Speaking course wished to increase their fluency in everyday spoken English. Accordingly a task linked to the practice element of the model—'4-3-2'—was introduced to the learners and used in every session. This activity models the principle that, by keeping the subject matter familiar and the language items constant, it is possible to gain fluency in repeated deliveries. Learners were enthusiastic about the '4-3-2' activity (see Arevart and Nation 1991) and volunteered a number of ways of using it outside class. (For example, they suggested using it to practise responses to commonly-asked questions, to rehearse formal presentations, and to review ideas for an assignment.)

Incorporating tasks drawn from learners' future communication situations resulted in enhanced motivation. Learners' future needs were addressed by, for example, designing a generic interview task, which sought to meet the speaking goals of course members who wished to enhance their confidence and fluency in responding to questions posed in a range of formal settings. Rather than having to create links between pedagogic tasks and their own needs, learners instead practised tasks associated with their target situations, and received feedback on their performance.

The course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance

In the Reading course, learners identified a number of sources of reading difficulty: lack of knowledge of high frequency vocabulary, inability to match strategies to texts, insufficient time spent reading in English, and poor word and text attack skills. Clearly no 10-hour course could satisfactorily address all these needs. But a course committed to promoting learner autonomy shifts the focus from solving specific problems to providing experience of problem-solving. Accordingly, sessions focused on matching strategies to problems. (See Appendix for an activity of this kind.)

Given the fact that many course members had previous experience of successfully learning another language, they were able to suggest language learning strategies from their own personal repertoires. Other strategies were modelled by the teacher, such as expressions for constructing paraphrases, which were presented and practised in one of the Speaking sessions. Such strategies proved highly popular with the learners and may have resulted in the expansion of their interlanguage by encouraging them to manipulate familiar language items in novel contexts.

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The course promotes reflection on learning

Both courses integrated activities which required learners to reflect on their learning, such as discussion of the goal-setting process, analysis of task types, and experimentation with strategies to monitor progress and evaluate personal learning. Awareness-raising occurred both in the discourse surrounding each task ('Why are we doing this? How will it help? What makes it difficult?') and also in the feedback at the end of each session. Learners were asked to complete a journal entry each week recording their answers to questions such as:

1 What did you do today?
2 What did you learn today?
3 What are you going to do differently as a result of today's class?

Learners submitted their journals at the end of each session and had them returned with teacher comments at the start of the subsequent session. Sessions frequently began with activities inspired by issues raised in learner journals, such as brainstorming solutions to problems encountered in authentic communication situations.

Conclusion What did this experience reveal about the contribution of these course design principles to the design process? Adopting these principles freed the writer from the unrealistic challenge of attempting to meet 20 different learners' needs within a 10-hour course, and instead presented the learners with a means of meeting their own needs. By making the language learning process salient, the course helped learners understand and manage their learning in a way which contributed to their performance in specific language tasks.

More specifically, observations of learners performing course tasks, learners' comments in their journals, and the results of a written evaluation, suggested that the inclusion of tasks related to learners' goals (Principles 1 and 3), resulted in an unprecedented level of motivation. Learners reported that they valued discussion of and practice with solving learning problems, and reported using 'course' strategies outside class. Many also improved their ability to assess their own performance, with one learner reporting excitedly 'I used 4-3-2 to practise my five-minute seminar, and today I spoke for six minutes without stopping!'

Incorporation of material on the language learning process (Principle 2) provided the learners with a model for solving their own learning problems, as the episode with the learner who preferred doing grammar to using the language (cited above) illustrates. The inclusion of material on learner strategies (Principle 4) proved an efficient solution to the problem of limited time. Discussing and applying selected strategies to sample speaking and reading problems served as an excellent modelling device. Learners became familiar with a simple problem-solving process and reported greater confidence in adopting strategies to solve new language problems. One learner wrote in her final evaluation:

The Reading course was useful in helping me improve my English.
1 It helps me to read more quickly.

2 Strategies (improved).
3 Knowing what to do with problems in reading.

However the *sine qua non* of autonomous learning is represented by Principle 5. Without reflection, learners cannot assess their past learning or plans for future action. Therefore courses designed to promote learner autonomy must encourage learners to set personal goals, monitor and reflect on their performance, and modify their learning behaviour accordingly.

These two courses aimed to provide a supportive environment in which learners were encouraged to take decisions about their language learning. That environment integrated goal-setting activities, discussion of the language learning process, modelling of strategies, task practice, and reflection on experience. The essential characteristic of instructional programmes which foster learner autonomy is the way in which they scaffold instruction to provide guidance without assuming control of learners' decision-making:

> In order to improve individual performance, whether it is teaching or learning, we need a sense of ownership, and power, driven by an exploratory attitude and working within a curricular framework that is flexible and dynamic enough to allow for individual explorations. (Cotterall and Crabbe 1999: 141).

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Note
1 I am grateful to Jonathan Newton for permission to use ideas included in this worksheet.

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Appendix
Sample strategy
task—speaking
course[1]

a Read the list of language learning problems in Table 1.

b Work with a partner to brainstorm solutions to each problem.

c Look at the list of solutions presented in Table 2, and discuss each one.

d Modify the solutions in any way you like, and then try and match them to selected problems.

e Be prepared to report back to the class.

Table 1

Problems
I can't find the right words.
I don't know how to make good sentences.
I want to use a greater variety of sentences.
I don't speak smoothly enough or fast enough.
I don't have much confidence to speak.
I translate when I speak and listen.
I want to use native speaker expressions and not just
speak in learner language.

Table 2

Solutions
Get involved in lots of social activities.
Read a range of simple, interesting texts.
Study vocabulary lists.
Never pay attention to grammar.
Do lots of intensive comprehensive activities when you read and listen.
Ask your conversation partner(s) for feedback.
Only talk with native speakers.
Talk often about familiar topics.
Talk about texts you have read.
Learn appropriate ways to interrupt and to express misunderstanding.
Pay attention to the form of language you hear.
Spend most of your time studying hard by yourself.
Regularly review your progress.
When you are having a conversation, check that your
conversation partners understands you.

1. What is a goal? What is an objective? And what is the relationship between goals and objectives?

2. Why are goals and objectives necessary in the design and evaluation of language programs?

3. Briefly summarize the process that the author describes one should go through when formulating goals and objectives.

5

FORMULATING GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 *Make a list of questions you have about goals and objectives. Use the list as a guide as you read the chapter.*

In a teacher training workshop I conducted recently I began by having each participant talk to another person and find out a few things they had in common. As I circulated to listen in on some of the conversations I came across two teachers who had found something they didn't have in common: their views on goals and objectives. One teacher quite vehemently stated that you couldn't teach without your objectives clearly spelled out, otherwise you wouldn't know what you wanted the students to learn. The other teacher, equally emphatically, said that objectives were a hindrance because everything was decided beforehand and students were forced to follow a path that might not be right for them. I suggested that they were both right. Their viewpoints represented what I see as one of the contradictions or paradoxes of teaching: it helps to have a clear idea of the territory to be covered—clear objectives—at the same time that it is important to follow the learners' lead as they move through the territory.

In principle, goals and objectives are a good thing. The question *How can you design a course if you don't know where you want your students to come out?* seems to be a good argument for setting goals. In practice, goals and objectives are one of the hardest aspects of course design for the teachers I have worked with, including myself. Why is this so? I think the reason lies in the nature of teaching and of teachers' lives. Studies on teachers' planning processes in the 1970s and early 80s showed that teachers are primarily focused on the "concretes" of the classroom: what they will teach, how they will teach it, the students in the classroom (Clark and Peterson 1986.) Aspects of planning which were not immediately tied to the here and now of the classroom, such as goals and objectives or how the class fit into the curriculum as a whole, were not in the foreground of their thinking. This doesn't mean that teachers don't have goals and objectives but rather that these are implicit in what they do rather than explicitly stated, or that they are a later part in the planning process. In my own planning, I tend to think in terms of content—the general areas of what I want to teach or students to learn—and to think about how to integrate those in the classroom. However, when I finally sit down to write goals and objectives, I am forced to be explicit about what I want students to get out of the course. Being explicit then keeps me accountable in the sense that the materials I develop and

what I choose to teach need to fit with the goals and objectives. The goals and objectives also provide a map of what I need to assess.

One problem with goals and objectives is that what happens in the classroom is to a greater or lesser extent unpredictable, while goals seem fixed. Denise Lawson, whose beliefs about teaching an advanced writing course we saw in Chapter 3, puts it this way:

Denise Lawson

> Looking back over the process of designing this course, I realize that determining goals and objectives presented a real stumbling block for me. Although the idea of determining goals and objectives as a starting point made sense, I was reluctant to put mine on paper; it felt limiting, like a Tupperware container into which my course would have to fit.

A Tupperware container is a plastic container used to store food.

Denise captures the tension between the organic nature of teaching and the way in which goals seem to constrain it, to force it into a "Tupperware container." I don't think that's a reason not to have goals. Goals provide guidelines and should be flexible enough to change, if they are not appropriate. There are two bigger obstacles to formulating goals and objectives. One is lack of time. Generally, the very full working days of teachers do not provide the planning time needed to formulate goals and objectives for their courses. The other is that people don't know how to formulate them. This chapter is meant to help you formulate goals and objectives for your course in a way that makes sense to you. In the chapter we will explore what goals and objectives are and the relationship between them as well as a variety of ways to formulate and articulate them.

If you haven't had experience with formulating goals and objectives, you will probably go through a few drafts or need to put the first draft aside and come back to it once you have worked on other aspects of your course. The goals themselves or the wording may change. You will write them differently if you plan to give them to your students or if they provide a working document for you. You will be clearest about them after you have finished teaching the course! However, once you have learned the "discipline" of writing goals and objectives you will find that they will help you make decisions so that you can shape a coherent and satisfying course. Dylan Bate, a teacher who designed a course for university students in China, expresses this view in this way:

Dylan Bate

> Teaching is making choices. There are many worthy and precious things that can be done in the second language classroom, but they can't all be done. Choices must be made, and the only appropriate arbitrator in these decisions are the goals and purposes defined by the teacher for the specific course in its specific context. Once I realized this, the other parts of the puzzle either became irrelevant or quickly fell into place.

WHAT ARE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP?

Goals

Goals are a way of putting into words the main purposes and intended outcomes of your course. If we use the analogy of a journey, the destination is the goal; the journey is the course. The **objectives** are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination. In most cases, the destination is composed of multiple goals which the course helps to weave together. Sometimes, teacher and students reach unexpected places. When you do veer "off course," it may be because you need to adjust your course for a more suitable destination for your students and so you must redefine and refine your goals. On the other hand, goals can help you stay on course, both as you design the course and as you teach it.

Stating your goals helps to bring into focus your visions and priorities for the course. They are general statements, but they are not vague. For example, the goal "Students will improve their writing" is vague. In contrast, "By the end of the course students will have become more aware of their writing in general and be able to identify the specific areas in which improvement is needed" while general, is not vague. It also suggests that there will be other goals which give more information about the ways in which students will improve their writing.

A goal states an aim that the course will explicitly address in some way. If, for example, one of the goals of a course is to help students develop learning strategies or interpersonal skills, then class time will be explicitly devoted to that goal. Because class time is limited, and the number of goals is not, choice is important. While you may be able to think of many laudable goals, they should address what can be realistically achieved within the constraints and resources of your course, i.e., who the students are, their level, the amount of time available, the materials available. They should be achievable within the time frame of the course with that group of students (see Figure 5.1).

At the same time, goals are future oriented. In his book on curriculum design, J. D. Brown proposes that goals are "what the students should be able to do when they leave the program." (1995, p. 71). The following is an example of a goal from a writing course using computers which illustrates this point: "By the end of the course students will have developed the ability to use the computer for a variety of purposes." Finally, goals are the benchmarks of success for a course. The course can be deemed successful and effective if the goals have been reached. I suggest applying this "formula" to your goals: If we accomplish X goals, will the course be successful? This last question foreshadows the relationship between goals and assessment, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

Figure 5.1: Making Choices about Goals

possible goals

goal

goal

goal

goal

goal

goal

goal

goal

goal

what is achievable?

what is appropriate?

goal 1   goal 2   goal 3

Objectives

Frameworks

× **Objectives** are statements about how the goals will be achieved. Through objectives, a goal is broken down into learnable and teachable units. By achieving the objectives, the goal will be reached. For this reason, the objective must relate to the goal. For example, in a first pass at formulating goals for his course, one teacher stated one goal as, "Students will be able to interact comfortably with each other in English." One of the objectives he listed under that goal was for students to learn to tell stories. There is nothing wrong with students learning to tell stories, but telling stories generally does not require interaction, and so for this teacher's goal, learning to tell stories was not the most appropriate objective. The teacher asked himself, "Will achieving this objective help to reach the goal?" When he determined that the answer was no, he eliminated that objective and sought other, more appropriate objectives.

The following analogy was used by two teachers in an EFL reading class, Carolyn Layzer and Judy Sharkey, to help their students understand goals, objectives and strategies.

> I told the students that a friend wanted to lose 10 pounds that she had gained over the winter. I wrote, "I want to lose 10 pounds" on the left side of the board. Then I asked the students for some advice on how to achieve her goal. I wrote their responses on the right side of the board. Some of their advice was very general, for example, "exercise" and "don't eat junk food." I told them my friend's schedule was very busy and asked what kind of exercise she could do given her time constraints. This led to some more specific suggestions, for example, "She should always take the stairs instead of the elevator." Students could see that the more specific the advice, the easier it would be to follow it.

Showing how the suggestions could cause the effect of losing weight illustrates the relationship between goals and objectives: If I work out at the gym and stop eating junk food, then I am likely to achieve my goal of losing 10 pounds. My first objective is to set up a regular gym routine; My second objective is to stop eating junk food.

Thus another aspect of the relationship between goals and objectives is that of cause and effect. If students achieve A, B, C objectives, then they will reach Y goal. Figure 5.2 tries to capture the cause and effect relationship between goals and objectives. In principle, this is a good idea. In practice, students may not achieve the goal or may achieve other goals the teacher hadn't intended. Using the losing weight analogy above, the workout at the gym may improve muscle tone and density, and because muscle weighs more than fat, weight loss due to the reduction in junk food may be minimized. However, the person may end up feeling more energetic and not care about the weight loss anymore! On the other hand, if the goal remains important and is not achieved through the means or objectives described above, then the objectives may need to be examined and changed or refined so that the goal can be reached.

Figure 5.2: Cause and Effect Relationship between Goals and Objectives

**If these
objectives are achieved**

**then this goal
will be reached.**
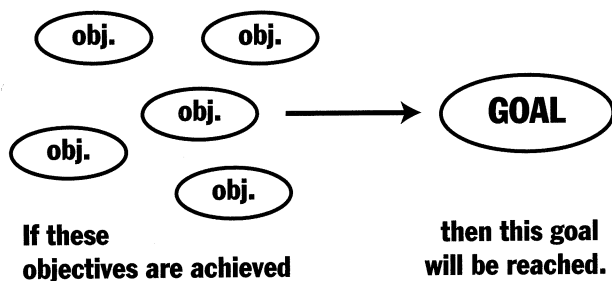
Objectives are in a hierarchical relationship to goals. Goals are more general and objectives more specific. Brown (1995) points out that one of the main differences between goals and objectives is their level of specificity. For every goal, there will be several objectives to help achieve it, as depicted in Figure 5.3. Goals are more long term, objectives more short term. To return to the weight loss analogy above, losing weight could be an objective if there is a larger goal, for example to improve one's overall health. Some teachers have found it helpful to have three layers of goals and objectives. The important point is that each layer is more and more specific.

Figure 5.3: For Every General Goal There Are Multiple Specific Objectives
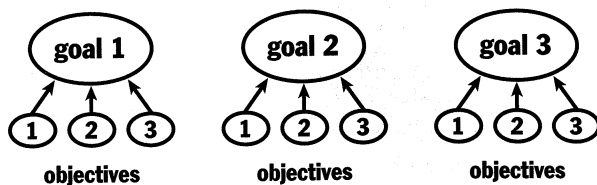
The Australian Language Levels guidelines have four layers for their goals and objectives. The goals, which provide direction for the teaching and learning, are written from the teacher's perspective. They are divided into broad goals, which are the general aims of the course, and specific goals, which break down the broad goals and make them more tangible. Objectives spell out what the students will actually learn or be able to do by the end of the course. General objectives spell out holistic results and specific objectives spell out particular knowledge or skills the students will acquire (Vale, Scarino, McKay 1996). The relationship among these four layers is depicted in the chart in Figure 5.4 below for a syllabus module on "Self and others" at the senior secondary level.

Figure 5.4: A Four-Part Scheme of Goals and Objectives From the Australian Language Levels

One of five **broad goals** is "learning-how-to-learn":

Learners will take a growing responsibility for the management of their own learning, so that they learn how to learn, and how to learn a language

The **specific goals** are to enable learners to develop the:

- cognitive processing skills to understand and express values, attitudes, and feelings; process information; think and respond creatively
- communication strategies to sustain communication in the target language.

Some **general objectives** for these goals are:

Learners will be able to:

- take part in an interview and thereby talk about self, family, home; make suggestions, ask questions; state and ask opinions;
- keep a diary for a specified period of time

Some of the **specific objectives** for the general objectives are:

Learners will be able to:

- generate questions
- state and ask opinions
- record information

5.3 *Study the relationship between the different levels of objectives and goals in Figure 5.4. Can you see how the specific objectives will help to achieve the general objectives? How the general objectives will help to achieve the specific goals? How the specific goals will help to achieve the broad goals?*

One objective may serve more than one goal; see Figure 5.5. For example, Denise Lawson had two affective goals for her advanced composition course: "Students will develop confidence in their ability to write in English." "Students will develop an appreciation for the contribution their knowledge and

experience (and that of their peers) make to the learning process." These goals are served by the same objectives. Among them are: "Students will be able to document their strengths as writers, highlighting areas in which they can serve as 'teachers' to other students." "Students will be able to use assessment forms to evaluate their own and their peers' writing." "Students will be able to articulate how they can use feedback from their peers to improve their writing."

Figure 5.5: One Objective Can Serve More than One Goal
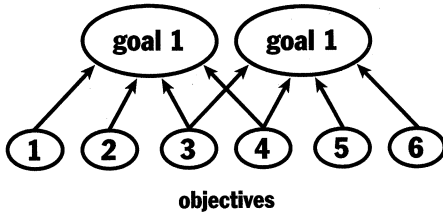
objectives

5.4 *Use the diagrams in figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.5 as a basis for summarizing the information about goals and objectives and the relationship between them.*

Formulating goals and objectives helps to build a clear vision of what you will teach. Because a goal is something toward which you will explicitly teach, stating goals helps to define priorities and to make choices. Clear goals help to make teaching purposeful because what you do in class is related to your overall purpose. Goals and objectives provide a basis for making choices about what to teach and how. Objectives serve as a bridge between needs and goals. Stating goals and objectives is a way of holding yourself accountable throughout the course. Goals are not a "wish list." For example, if one of your goals is for students to be able to identify areas of improvement in their writing, then you will need to design ways for students to evaluate their writing as well as ways to assess their effectiveness in identifying those areas they need to improve. Finally, a clear set of goals and objectives can provide the basis for your assessment plan.

WHAT ARE WAYS TO FORMULATE AND ARTICULATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

Examples of goals

The goals and objectives you will read about below were written by the teachers for themselves to serve as a planning tool for their courses. When you write your own goals, you should keep in mind the audience for the goals. If it is your students, you will need to consider whether the language you use is accessible to them. Even if you alone are the audience for the goals and objectives, you should try to make them transparent enough for someone else to understand. Unpack the language to simplify and clarify it and also to find out if what you thought was one goal or objective is actually more than one.

5.5 *Study the two sets of goals for two writing courses below.*

1. What do you like about each set? What don't you like about each one? Why?

2. What do the goals tell you about each teacher's course? About their beliefs?

3. What are similarities and differences in the way the goals are stated?

The goals below are David Thomson's goals for his course, "Writing using computers." The course is for intermediate to high intermediate level students in an Intensive English program in the United States. It meets for 30 hours over 4 weeks.

Figure 5.6: Goals for a "Writing Using Computers" Course

◆ **Teachers' Voices**

David Thomson

See Appendix 5-1, page 239, for David Thomson's complete set of goals and objectives.

ACTFL is an acronym for American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages.

Awareness

Goal 1. By the end of the course, students will have become more aware of their writing in general and be able to identify the specific areas in which improvement is needed.

Teacher

Goal 2. Throughout this course, the teacher will clearly communicate to students what his standards are for successful completion of tasks.

Goal 3. By the end of the course, the teacher will have developed a greater understanding of student needs and will make adjustments to ensure these needs can be met the next time he teaches the course.

Attitude

Goal 4. By the end of the course, students will have developed a positive attitude toward writing.

Skills

Goal 5. By the end of the course, students will have developed the ability to use the computer for a variety of purposes.

Goal 6. By the end of the course, students will improve their writing to the next level of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Writing scale.

Knowledge

Goal 7. By the end of the course students will be able to understand the elements of and what constitutes "good writing"

Goal 8. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand the appropriateness of using computers for different writing and research purposes.

The following goals are for Denise Lawson's 10 week, 40 hour, Advanced Composition course in a university extension program in the United States.

Figure 5.7: Goals for an Advanced Composition Course

I. Proficiency

Students will develop effective writing skills transferable to any context.

II. Cognitive

Students will gain an awareness of the influence of sociocultural issues on their writing.

III. Affective

- Students will develop confidence in their ability to write in English.
- Students will develop an appreciation for the contribution their knowledge and experience (and that of their peers) makes to the learning process.

IV. Transfer

Students will gain an understanding of how they can continue to improve their writing skills.

David and Denise have organized their goals in different ways. David has used a framework which he calls "A TASK," which is derived from the KASA (knowledge, awareness, skill, attitude) framework, and Denise uses Stern's 1992 framework of cognitive goals, proficiency goals, affective goals, and transfer goals. I will explain those frameworks in more detail below. For some teachers, frameworks are helpful as a way of organizing their goals. For other teachers, the categories they have used to conceptualize content, for example, functional, topical, grammatical, tasks, reading, writing, affective, etc., provide the categories for the goals. Denise Maksail-Fine conceptualized the content for her high school Spanish course in the categories of speaking, listening, reading, writing, cross-cultural skills, and cooperative learning skills. These categories provide the basis for her goals below.

5.6 *Study the goals for the Spanish 3 course below.*

1. What do you like about them? What don't you like about them? Why?

2. What do the goals tell you about the teacher's course? About her beliefs?

3. Compare them with the two sets of goals above. What are similarities and differences in the way the goals are stated?

These are Denise Maksail-Fine's goals for her year long high school Spanish 3 class:

Teachers'
Voices

**Denise
Maksail-Fine**

See Appendix 5-2,
page 242, for
Denise Maksail-
Fine's complete
set of goals and
objectives.

Figure 5.8: **Goals for Spanish 3**

Goal 1: Students will be able to utilize the skills of listening and speaking for the purposes of: socializing, providing and obtaining information, expressing personal feelings and opinions, persuading others to adopt a course of action, in the targeted topic* areas, by: (her objectives for this goal follow).

Goal 2: Students will be able to utilize the skills of reading and writing for the purposes of socializing, providing and obtaining information, expressing personal feelings and opinions, persuading others to adopt a course of action, in the targeted topic* areas, by: (her objectives for this goal follow).

Goal 3: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings of perceptions, gestures, folklore, and family and community dynamics by: (her objectives for this goal follow).

Goal 4: Students will develop skills that enable them to work together cooperatively by: (her objectives for this goal follow).

The targeted topic areas are: personal identification, house/home, services/ repairs, family life, community and neighborhood, physical environment, mealtaking, health/welfare, education, earning a living, leisure, public and private services, shopping, travel, current events.

Formulating goals

X The first step is to list all the possible goals you could have for your particular course, based on your conceptualization of content, your beliefs, and/or your assessment of students' needs (see Chapter 6). The list may be ragged, it may not be clear what is truly a goal or how to state it, and there may be repetition and overlap. Next steps are to look for redundancies, and to identify priorities based on your beliefs and your context. What is most important to you? What are the expectations of the institution, the students? Because all of these factors come into play, your goals will go through several drafts as you consider different aspects of the course and as you try to make the way you express them clearer.

5.7 *Make an initial list of goals for your course. Keep in mind the image of a destination with multiple aspects or the formula "The course will be successful if . . ."*

Once you have a list or map of your goals, how do you organize them into a coherent plan? One way to organize your goals is to use the **categories you have used for conceptualizing content,** as Denise Maksail-Fine did for her Spanish course. (You may want to look again at her mind map in Chapter 4.) These categories might include communicative functions, topics, grammar, tasks, reading, writing, interpersonal skills, etc. For example, if your course integrates the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, then you can have four major goals, each one related to a skill.

Teachers have also found that different conceptual frameworks can help them to organize their goals. I have worked with two. The first one is called **KASA,** which is an acronym for **knowledge, awareness, skills,** and **attitude.** The second one comes from H. H. Stern (1992) and includes **cognitive** goals, **proficiency** goals, **affective** goals and **transfer** goals. I will also introduce a third framework developed by Genesee and Upshur (1996).

The KASA framework was developed by the faculty in the Department of Language Teacher Education at the School for International Training, where I have taught for the last 16 years, and is used as a basis for our MA program goals. **Knowledge** goals address what students will know and understand. These goals include knowledge about language and about culture and society. **Awareness** goals address what students need to be aware of when learning a language. These include areas of self-knowledge, understanding of how the language works, and understanding of others' use of language, for example, becoming aware of the strategies they use as learners, or the importance of extralinguistic factors in communication. **Skills** goals address what students can do with the language. This is perhaps the broadest area, encompassing the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as well as the functions and tasks one accomplishes through language. **Attitude** goals are those that address the affective and values-based dimension of learning: students' feelings toward themselves, toward others, and toward the target language and culture. These goals include respect, self-confidence, and valuing community. I have found that objectives related to attitudes depend a lot on the teacher's attitude and what the teacher does. For example, if a goal is to develop a positive attitude toward writing in a second language, then the teacher herself needs to develop an attitude that values writing, both her own and her students'.

Here is how the KASA framework might work for a teacher who is learning how to formulate goals and objectives.

> **Knowledge:** I know that goals are X, that objectives are Y, that one can state them in this way.

> **Awareness:** I never realized how useful it is to set goals and objectives. Now I do.

Knowledge is not particularly useful without awareness. You can take a test about how to formulate goals and objectives, but if the "penny hasn't dropped" about their usefulness, then the knowledge is useless. Having awareness and knowledge about goals and objectives is not sufficient however; one must also develop the skill through practice and use.

> **Skills:** After many attempts and reflection on those attempts, I know how to write goals and objectives.

> **Attitude:** Although it can be frustrating, I feel that I will get better at doing this, and that goals and objectives are essential to developing a coherent course.
> **OR** I feel that goals and objectives are mechanistic and a waste of time.

Clearly, the attitude expressed in the last sentence will make it difficult to achieve any of the above, which is one reason that I feel that affective/attitudinal goals are worth having.

As we saw above, David Thomson used the KASA framework to formulate the goals for a writing course using computers, but he added another layer, goals for the teacher, and turned the acronym around to read: ATASK. He writes:

David Thomson

> I have listed the goals and objectives under the headings
> A TASK (A [Awareness], T [Teacher], A [Attitude], S [Skills],
> and K [Knowledge]. I have called it this because a "task" to me
> connotes something done on an ongoing and as-needed basis.
> Tasks are done regularly and routinely and require modification
> and adaptation to fit the needs of the situation. I want my goals
> and objectives to have that same dynamic and flexible sense.

> Just having finished a teacher-training program has given me a
> new perspective on my role in the classroom. I want to, more
> appropriately need to, be accountable for my teaching, my actions,
> and my relationships with my students. Having goals and objectives
> written down (not in stone, of course) is one way for me to hold
> myself accountable and keep me focused on my responsibilities
> during the course.

David notes at the end of his list of goals and objectives:

David's goals and objectives can be found in Appendix 5-1 on page 239.

> These are the goals and objectives for the course. I still am not
> certain if the "knowledge" goals are appropriately labeled and
> belong under that heading, but that is a semantic issue I can attend
> to later. For now I feel they are broad enough to cover the areas I
> feel are the core to the course. I would feel comfortable starting off
> this class with them, especially knowing that they do not have to
> be "etched in stone."

David makes three points that are important to keep in mind. First, goals and objectives should reflect not only what you want your students to accomplish in the course, but also your beliefs. David has chosen to explicitly include goals related to his teaching because of his belief that he needs to be accountable for what he does. Your beliefs will be expressed differently; for example, you may feel that beliefs about teaching are implicit in other goals. Second, the purpose of goals is to give you a clear sense of what the course is about and where you are headed. How they are worded is something you can work on over time. Third, they are not "etched in stone" and can be changed if they do not work or can be modified to fit the reality of your course.

Stern (1992) has a similar framework for setting goals. He proposes the following categories:

> **Proficiency:** these include what students will be able to do with the
> language (e.g., mastery of skills, ability to carry out functions).

Cognitive: these goals include explicit knowledge, information, and conceptual learning about language (e.g., grammar and other systematic aspects of communication) and about culture (e.g., about rules of conduct, norms, values).

Affective: these include achieving positive attitudes toward the target language and culture as well as to one's own learning of them.

Transfer: these include learning how what one does or learns in the classroom can be transferred outside of the classroom in order to continue learning.

Denise Lawson used Stern's framework to organize the goals for her composition course. She writes the following:

> [My] goals and objectives are a direct expression of my teaching principles. As I have already mentioned, I have found formulating goals and objectives to be the most difficult part of the curriculum design process. After experimenting with different formats (including categories based on Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, and Awareness), I decided to use Stern (1992). This format makes sense to me because it addresses four areas I want to emphasize: proficiency, cultural knowledge, students' attitudes, and learning strategies. I determined one goal each for Stern's Proficiency, Cognitive, and Transfer categories, and two for the Affective category. Five broad goals are appropriate and achievable for a forty-hour course.

A fourth way to organize goals is described by Fred Genesee and John Upshur in their book *Classroom-based Evaluation in Second Language Classrooms* (1996). Their framework includes:

Language goals: language skills learners are expected to acquire in the classroom

Strategic goals: strategies learners use to learn the language

Socioaffective goals: changes in learners' attitudes or social behaviors that result from classroom instruction

Philosophical goals: changes in values, attitudes and beliefs of a more general nature

Method or process goals: the activities learners will engage in

In their book, Genesee and Upshur focus on language goals, because they are concerned with what can be evaluated by teachers. They suggest that each goal or objective should focus on only one skill or area (e.g., reading or writing, not both) because objectives applicable to one may not be applicable to another, and students may attain one but not the other.

I have described four approaches to organizing goals: using your categories for conceptualizing content, using the KASA framework, using the Stern framework, and using the Genesee and Upshur framework. You may also choose to

develop your own framework, which could combine elements of the above, and add in ones that are not included.

The three frameworks above all include affective goals of some sort. Not all teachers feel it is appropriate to state affective goals, even though they may be implicit in their teaching. Kay Alcorn shares this view as she writes about her approach to writing goals:

Teachers' Voices

Kay Alcorn

> When I envisioned goals and objectives they looked similar to what I had seen in course syllabi created by past and present professors that detailed what we would learn, not the actual affective means by which we would do so. I have never seen goals that state "The students will develop a sense of community through x, y, and z." Nor have I seen objectives that declare "The students will take risks by means of process writing." When future administrators require course outlines along with goals and objectives, it is my sense that they won't expect me to include my teaching philosophy. Hopefully, through the interviewing process and departmental lines of communication they will come to know my teaching beliefs so that I will not need to perpetually restate them for every new course I embark on.

Investigations

5.8 *Go back to your initial list of goals from Investigation 5.7 and organize them according to the framework you are most drawn to of the four suggested above: your categories for conceptualizing content, the KASA framework, the Stern framework, the Genesee and Upshur framework. You may also combine the aspects of each framework that appeal to you.*

Frameworks

FORMULATING OBJECTIVES

A classic work on formulating objectives is Robert Mager's 1962 book on performance objectives, written when behaviorism and stimulus-response theories of learning were still in vogue. Mager suggests that for an objective to be useful, it should contain three components: performance, condition, and criterion. Performance describes what the learners will be able to do, condition describes the circumstances in which the learners are able to something, and criterion, the degree to which they are able to do something. To these three components, Brown (1995) adds subject, who will be able to do something, and measure, "how the performance will be observed or tested." (p.89) For example, look at this objective from Brown and the five components below it.

> *Students at the Guangzhou English Language Center will be able to write missing elements on the appropriate lines in a graph, chart, or diagram from information provided in a 600-word 11th grade reading level general science passage.*

> **Subject:** students at the GELC

> **Performance:** write missing elements . . . in a graph, chart, or diagram from information provided in a . . . passage."

Conditions: on the appropriate lines . . . 600 word 11th grade reading level general science passage

Measure: to write the correct words (observable part of the objective)

Criterion: the criterion is 100%, all the missing elements

Figure 5.9: Brown's Components of Performance Objectives, Adapted from Mager

Subject: who will achieve the objective

Performance: what the subject will be able to do

Conditions: the way in which the subject will be able to perform

Measure: the way the performance will be observed or measured

Criterion: how well the subject will be able to perform

The above approach to objectives is both useful and problematic. I find it useful for a number of reasons. First, it proposes that objectives should communicate clearly what you want your students to achieve and it outlines how to make them clear. Second, the subject is stated in terms of those who will achieve the objective, in the case of a course, the students. Teachers often fall into the trap of writing objectives from the point of view of what *they* will do, not what their student will learn. Another value, as Brown points out, is that the more specific one can be, the more useful and comprehensible the objectives will be to others.

Third, the performance is stated in terms of something the students will be able to do. This is useful because it looks at learning as active, participatory, and outcome based. It heads off vagueness and lack of clarity. Brown provides an excellent list of performance verbs on page 88, drawn from Mager and adapted from Gronlund (1985). Mager contrasts vague verbs like "know," "appreciate," "understand," with precise verbs like "construct," "identify," "contrast."

I find the element of performance problematic because not all learning is observable, and much of what happens in learning is unpredictable. As Ron White points out in his excellent analysis of behavioral objectives, "If education is viewed as a voyage of discovery, the pre-specification of outcomes inherent in behavioral objectives may be seen as conflicting with the essential speculative nature of the education process." (1988, p. 30) He goes on to quote Skilbeck (p. 32):

> The implausibility of predicting detailed performances (when there can be unexpected outcomes) and the inherent freedom of the learner in an educative process are not reasons for supposing that we cannot or must not try to specify performance objectives. We can agree that students' performances (a) cannot or should not be pre-specified in detail and (b) are a part but not the whole of what we mean by education, but why should either of these considerations be inconsistent with stating objectives as the directions in which we are trying to guide student learnings?

Toward this end, Mager's list of verbs is helpful in focusing our thinking about areas of learning that are not measurable. For example, instead of saying "Students will appreciate the difference between their culture and the target culture," one can say "Students will be able to identify two differences between their culture and the target culture and explain how they feel about them."

In describing "criterion," one states the "quality or level of performance that will be considered acceptable" (Brown 1995, p. 23). This is useful because it helps to set standards and to hold oneself and one's students accountable. I find the criterion component the most problematic, however, for a number of reasons. It may be impractical for a teacher planning a course to take the time to figure out the degree of specificity for each objective, it may "box him in" prior to having met the students, and it may be unrealistic. One teacher who was designing a course for hotel employees formulated an objective in this way: "Students will be able to greet guests to the hotel with the correct use of time of day (good morning/afternoon/evening) and correctly respond to standard greetings ("How are you?" "Nice day" etc.) three times out of four." The teacher was trying to include a criterion by stating three times out of four; however, for the students this would be problematic because, even though they may reach the standard, they may fail at their jobs. What the students need is not to be able to get it right three times out of four, but to know what to do the fourth time when they don't get it right. An additional objective might be "Students will be able to use a variety of strategies for repairing breakdowns in communication."

5.9 *Choose one of the goals you wrote in Investigation 5.7 and write an objective for it in which you try to use the five components from the Performance objectives described in Figure 5.9. What was easy to write? What was difficult to write? Why?*

Iris Broudy writes about her experience trying to use Brown's framework as she formulates the objectives for her intermediate conversation course in Mexico.

Iris Broudy

See Chapter 4 for Broudy's insights in conceptualizing the content of her course.

The issue of specificity has been rather problematic in writing objectives. Brown (1995) says that objectives should include not only performance (the students will be able to ...) but also conditions and criteria. In other words, I may have an objective that says that students will be able to use the hypothetical conditional, but under what circumstances? Written quiz? Controlled speaking? Free use? And by what standards? All the time? 90 percent? 50 percent?

Brown helped me to focus on what is reasonable to cover in a twelve-week course and what degree of competence I might expect. Being specific about how performance will be measured forces the teacher to really pay attention to what is going on in class and to consider whether she is "teaching to the objectives." However, such specificity during the initial conceptualization of objectives may not be possible, or even appropriate. In fact, "too close a specificity can lead to suffocation of initiative and interest." (Yalden 1987, p. 105) Yes! It can suffocate the teacher, too. I felt locked in, writing such

objectives as "Students will be able to give advice or warnings using appropriate modal forms with 80 percent accuracy in cloze exercises." How can I possibly determine such details before the course begins? I would just be guessing at criteria and conditions, pulling numbers out of the air.

My own view is that measure and criterion are probably more important when designing an assessment plan, once you have met the students and spent time teaching them. In other words, you might be much more specific about measure and criterion in designing a test or setting up an assessment task like a role play or written task, because you can tailor it to your students. Because objectives may be based on what you perceive to be the needs of the students, they are subject to change once you have actually met them. Additionally, you may want (and be able) to negotiate objectives with your students, in which case, having objectives too clearly specified in advance may make it difficult for you to give them up. Nevertheless, a clear set of objectives, even without the kind of detail in Figure 5.9, can be immensely helpful in designing an assessment plan since they provide a chart of what is to be learned and therefore a basis for what can be assessed.

Iris Broudy illustrates some of these points:

> Moreover, in establishing criteria, I see an important distinction between passive knowledge (getting it right on the exam) and true acquisition (producing a form consistently in free use). Toward which proficiency should the objectives be geared? Should there be a separate objective for each? And how do I take into account the fact that individual learners will be in different places in their interlanguage? Learning does not suddenly jump from point A to point Z, and that reality further complicates the task of establishing criteria when setting objectives.

> The main point here, I think, is that if my teaching is to be student-centered, if my course is to be fluid and flexible, then the goals and objectives must reflect that.

Denise Maksail-Fine, whose goals we saw on page 82, successfully used the way she conceptualized content as the framework for her goals and elements of the Mager/Brown formula as the framework for her objectives for her year-long high school Spanish 3 course. She writes:

> When it came to writing the goals and objectives for this course, I began by thoroughly reviewing the goals of each standard and their corresponding indicators as listed under Checkpoint B of the New York State LOTE (Languages other than English) Standards for Modern Languages. According to the standards, "Checkpoint B corresponds to the level of performance that all students should demonstrate in order to obtain a high school diploma." (page v).

> My first step was to adapt the goals listed under each standard so as to use them as some of the goals that form the basis of the Spanish 3 course. Then, I adapted the performance indicators for use as objectives for each goal where appropriate and practical.

Teachers' Voices

Denise Maksail-Fine

My measure for what was appropriate and practical was twofold:
a) whether or not I could realistically provide students with the
resources and context essential for supporting them in working
toward achieving that objective; b) given the constraints (temporal,
linguistic, financial, etc.) of my context, whether or not I would
be capable of measuring said objective. For example, I ended up
omitting the wording "on the telephone" from objective 1.1 because
I felt that I would not only be unable to measure students' com-
prehension in this way, but I could not, within regularly scheduled
class time, provide students with opportunities for interaction using
the telephone medium.

My next step was to reflect on ways in which my own approach to
teaching had begun to shift and to formulate some of those changes
into goals and objectives as well. Much of this change of thinking
is reflected in Goals 3 and 4 and their accompanying objectives.
For example, as reflected in Goal 4, I really want students to work
much more cooperatively with each other than I have required
them in the past. I felt strongly enough about this requirement to
explicitly address it within the framework of the course. The objec-
tives listed under Goal 4 illustrate my vision of what it means for
students to work together cooperatively.

I faced a few different internal struggles as I compiled and refined
the goals and objectives for this course. One of the first conflicts
I faced was taking New York State's goals and objectives for my
students and somehow investing something of myself in them in
order to make them my own. I felt that without ownership of them,
they were pretty much useless to me. This is because I have found
that unless I am invested in something and I value it, I have a
difficult time effectively teaching it.

I was able to derive some personal investment from the state's goals
and objectives by modifying them to outline more clearly what I
perceived as appropriate and practical for my students. This process
of refinement also assisted me in reconciling my second internal
conflict, which centered on whether or not the state's goals and
objectives were realistic and appropriate given my teaching context.

Another conflict I faced focused on how much to include in the
goals and objectives (I wanted to include EVERYTHING) and
to what degree of specificity. This has been an ongoing struggle
throughout this entire curriculum design process. Being a perfec-
tionist, I did not want to leave anything out, nor did I want to be
too vague. Given the fact that this course spans an entire academic
year (i.e., forty weeks), I really had to work to feel comfortable
with leaving the minute details to the unit and lesson planning
levels. As a final comment, I think that it is important to note that
by working through the aforementioned struggles, I emerged and
remain satisfied with the resulting course goals and objectives.

Below are the two New York State standards for Languages other than English (LOTE) and Denise's first goal and objectives. Her complete list of goals and objectives can be found in Appendix 5-2 on page 242.

Figure 5.10: The First Goal and Objectives for Spanish 3

NYS LOTE Standard 1: Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.

NYS LOTE Standard 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.

Goal 1: Students will be able to utilize the skills of listening and speaking for the purposes of: socializing, providing and obtaining information, expressing personal feelings and opinions, persuading others to adopt a course of action, in the targeted topic* areas, by:

Objectives**
Students will be able to:

1.1. comprehend messages and short conversations when listening to peers, familiar adults, and providers of public services in face-to-face interactions

1.2 understand the main idea and some discrete information in television and radio or live presentations

1.3 initiate and sustain conversations, face-to-face, with native speakers or fluent individuals

1.4 select vocabulary appropriate to a range of topics, employing simple and complex sentences in present, past, or future time frames, and expressing details and nuances by using appropriate modifiers

1.5 exhibit spontaneity in their interactions, particularly when the topic is familiar, but often relying on familiar utterances.

*targeted topic areas: personal identification, house/home, services/repairs, family life, community and neighborhood, physical environment, mealtaking, health/welfare, education, earning a living, leisure, public and private services, shopping, travel, current events.

**criterion: student-produced written work and spoken utterances must be of the level that they can be understood by a native speaker of the L2, who speaks no English, but is used to dealing with non-native L2 speakers and writers.

5.10 *Take one of Maksail-Fine's objectives and analyze it according to the framework in Figure 5.9 on performance objectives. Which components are included? Which are not included? Do you feel that the objectives are clear as they stand? Would you modify them in any way? Why? What do you like about Maksail-Fine's approach to goals and objectives? What don't you like? Why?*

Another way to formulate objectives is to use a framework developed by Saphier and Gower (1987). Saphier and Gower's cumulative framework includes **coverage, activity, involvement, mastery,** and **generic** thinking objectives. **Coverage objectives** describe the material (textbook units, topics, curriculum items) to be covered in the course. They point out that, unfortunately, that is the way in which many teachers (and administrators) view a given course: it "covers" the material in Book 2, or the items on the curriculum list, irrespective of whether the students actually learn the material. **Activity objectives** describe what the students will do with the material. For example, fill out a worksheet or answer comprehension questions about a reading. **Involvement objectives** describe how the students will become engaged in working with the material. For example, make up their own comprehension questions about a reading and give to peers to answer. **Mastery objectives** (also called learning objectives) describe what the students will be able to do as a result of a given class or activity. For example, to use and describe two different reading strategies. **Generic thinking objectives** (which I also call critical thinking objectives) describe the meta-cognitive problem-solving skills the students will acquire. For example, to explain how they decide which reading strategies are appropriate for which texts.

Figure 5.11: Saphier and Gower's Cumulative Framework for Objectives

coverage: the material that will be covered in the unit, lesson

activity: what students will do in a unit, lesson

involvement: how students will become engaged in what they do in the unit, lesson

mastery: what students will be able to do as a result of the unit, lesson

generic thinking: how students will be able to problem solve or critique in the unit, lesson

Denise Lawson used the Stern categories for her goals and the Saphier and Gower framework for her objectives for her advanced composition course. She writes:

> The objectives are listed under the categories: Activity, Involvement, Mastery, and Critical Thinking. An additional category, "Coverage" suggested by Saphier and Gower, was not appropriate for my purposes here because it relates to material covered, such as chapters in a textbook. In place of a textbook I have prepared a diverse list of materials (including literature, films, and songs) that will be selected as writing prompts by the students; as a result, I do not have specific "Coverage" objectives.

Denise Lawson

Below are her first goal and the objectives. For the complete set of goals and objectives, consult Appendix 5-3 on page 244.

Figure 5.12: First Goal and Objectives for an Advanced Composition Course

I. Proficiency

Students will develop effective writing skills transferable to any context.

Activity

- Students will use a five-step process writing model to write three paragraphs: descriptive, personal narrative (memory), and expository; two essays; and a group research paper.
- Students will use assessment forms to evaluate their own and their peers' writing.
- Students will annotate their reading and maintain reading logs.

Involvement

- Students will develop criteria for a well-written paragraph, essay, and short research paper.
- Students will work with peers to generate ideas, get feedback, and to write a research paper.

Mastery

- Students will be able to use the process writing model.
- Students will be able to assess writing (their own and others') based on criteria for good writing.

Critical thinking

- Students will be able to determine and articulate characteristics of a well-written paragraph, essay, and short research paper

> The five steps
> in the process:
> brainstorm,
> draft, revise,
> edit, publish.

5.11 *What do you like about Denise Lawson's approach to goals and objectives? What don't you like? How would you adapt the approach? Why? What are the similarities and differences between Denise Lawson's and Denise Maksail-Fine's way of stating objectives?*

I'd like to conclude with both encouragement and caveats. Goals and objectives are not cast in cement. The image of cement alone conjures up something fixed and immovable, which are not good qualities of goals and objectives. They are an informed guess at what you hope to accomplish given what you know about your context, your students' needs, your beliefs about how people learn, and your experience with the particular content. As you teach the course, you will have the opportunity to test the goals and objectives and to modify and adapt them accordingly. Therefore, goals and objectives should be dynamic and flexible. If you are developing ones for a new course, they will probably become clearest once the course is over and you can look back at what you and your students were and were not able to do. You should be as complete in describing

goals and objectives as you can, however, because they can provide a guide for the materials and assessment tools you develop. When I read over a teacher's goals and objectives, I have a clear idea of what the course is about, what the students will learn, and what is important to the teacher about what and how they will learn.

Below is a summary of guidelines to consider when formulating goals and objectives:

1. Goals should be general, but not vague.

2. Goals should be transparent. Don't use jargon.

3. A course is successful and effective if the goals have been reached. Try this "formula" for your goals: if we accomplish [goal], will the course be successful?

4. Goals should be realistic. They shouldn't be what you want to achieve, but what you can achieve. They should be achievable within the time frame of the course with that group of students.

5. Goals should be relatively simple. Unpack them and make them into more than one goal, if necessary.

6. Goals should be about something the course will explicitly address in some way. In other words, you will spend class time to achieve that goal.

7. Objectives should be more specific than goals. They are in a hierarchical relationship to goals.

8. Objectives should directly relate to the goals. Ask yourself: "Will achieving 'x' objective help to reach 'y' goal?"

9. Objectives and goals should be in a cause-effect relationship: "if objective, then goal."

10. Objectives should focus on what students will learn (e.g., students will be able to write a term paper) and/or processes associated with it (e.g., be able to make an outline), not simply on the activity (e.g., students will write a term paper).

11. Objectives are relatively short term. Goals are relatively long term.

12. There should be more objectives than goals. However, one objective may be related to more than one goal.

13. Don't try to pack too much into one objective. Limit each objective to a specific skill or language area.

14. The goals and objectives give a sense of the syllabus of the course. Objectives are like the building blocks of the syllabus.

15. A clear set of goals and objectives provides the basis for evaluation of the course (goals) and assessment of student learning (objectives).

16. Both goals and objectives should be stated in terms of the learner. You may, however, have specific, separate goals for yourself as a teacher.

17. Your course may have two or three layers of goals and objectives, each more specific, depending on the length and nature of your course. The point is for you to have a clear and purposeful vision of your course.

5.12 *Write up your goals and related objectives in a way that makes sense and is useful to you. After you have written them, consider how you could convey the information they contain in a memo or letter to your students.*

Suggested Readings

The literature on goals and objectives is not very teacher-friendly—goals and objectives are explained, but examples to illustrate them are sparse. The best and most comprehensive examples I've seen of how goals relate to objectives are in the Australian Language Level (ALL) Guidelines, which were developed for primary and secondary school teachers in Australia. *Pocket ALL* (1996) is a guide to how the guidelines can be used as a basis for developing a course and provides examples of goals and objectives within syllabus modules and "units of work" within those modules.

For more on performance-based objectives, see Brown's chapter on goals and objectives in his book, *The Elements of Language Curriculum* (1995). He presents the pros and cons of those types of objectives, although he clearly favors them. He also provides examples of goals and objectives developed for a program in China and a program in Hawaii.

Designing A Seventh-Grade Social Studies Course for ESL Students at an International School by Pat Fisher (1996) describes how she successfully grapples with the process of putting together goals and objectives for her course.

1. What is the difference between statements of aims and statement of objectives?

Aims	Objectives
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.
d.	d.

2. What are three benefits of writing statement of objectives from the perspective of student learning?

3. What type of verbs should statement of objectives contain? Why?

Defining learning objectives for ELT

Hamed el Nil el Fadil

This article attempts to introduce the teacher of EFL to developments in the area of specifying learning objectives. This topic has been largely ignored in recent years as new theories of language acquisition and the emphasis on communication have come to the fore. Many teachers, while welcoming the new approaches, nevertheless feel a need for a clearly defined frame-work for organizing their teaching, both in the long term and in the short term. When you have studied this article carefully, you should be able to (a) distinguish between statements of aims and statements of objectives, (b) discuss the merits of writing objectives from the point of view of the learner, and (c) write both complete and abbreviated statements of learning objectives for different language skills, functions, and notions. Given the choice, you may elect to use such statements in addition to the more conventional teacher's aims.

Statements of aims and statements of objectives[1]

Most modern language courses seem to recognize the need for teachers to give some kind of direction to their activities by stating the aims of each lesson or unit in the course. Generally speaking, these statements of aims describe either the activities of the teacher (as in examples (a), (b) and (c) below) or the object of the lesson (examples (d) and (e)):

a to teach greetings and introductions
b to teach the names of animals
c to practise the simple past
d indirect statements/questions in the present with *know*
e ways of making suggestions: *let's . . ., I suggest . . ., why don't we . . .?, I think we should . . .*

Statements like the above, however, present a number of difficulties for teachers and learners alike. Firstly, they are written from the point of view of the *teacher* and not the learner. They tell us what the teacher will be doing during the lesson and not what the pupils will be able to do at the conclusion of the lesson. For example, one could ask: 'How long should the pupils practise for, and for what particular purpose and at what level of proficiency?' Secondly, they are open to different interpretations by different readers, as it is not clear whether active production of the forms is required, or merely passive recognition. This is especially true with statements involving language functions or notions, as in examples (b), (c), (d) and (e) above. Thirdly, it is impossible for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching except by personal criteria such as whether the students appear active, responsive, or even just amused.

Thus we can see that, although many language courses try to give direction and order to the activities of the teacher, they miserably fail to do so, because the aims stated for each lesson or unit, not to mention the goals

of the whole course, lack the precision needed for effective teaching and evaluation.

The need for written learning objectives

There are a number of reasons why it is valuable to write precise statements of objectives in terms of pupils' learning, rather than in terms of teachers' activities. In his book *Preparing Instructional Objectives* (which I strongly recommend to teachers of EFL), Mager suggests three reasons for writing learning objectives (Mager 1975:6).

First, when objectives are defined in terms of learning outcomes, teachers have a better chance of selecting the most appropriate content and teaching tactics. When the teacher has stated quite specifically what he or she wants students to learn, the teacher can ask: 'Now that I know what I want my pupils to learn, what is the best way of helping them achieve it?'

Second, when objectives are described in precise and unambiguous terms, it is easier to find out if our teaching has been effective or not, since we can test our pupils' performance. Depending on the result of our assessment, we either augment our objectives or try using different materials and teaching tactics. This process of trying out new materials and new tactics may eventually create the teacher–researcher that Widdowson (1984) has recently been calling for.

Third, when pupils know exactly what is expected of them, they can organize their own efforts in order to attain the stated objectives. A further benefit is that slow learners, armed with a set of learning objectives, can seek specific help from their peers, parents, and others in the community.

Resistance

Despite the obvious merits, EFL/ESL teachers have been reluctant to use objectives-based instruction, for a number of reasons. First, this approach smells too much of behaviourism. Many instruction designers use the term 'behavioural objectives', and their insistence on *observable* behaviour makes EFL/ESL experts reject such objectives. As it is assumed that it is difficult to observe much of language behaviour, the notion is seen as being incompatible with recent thinking in TEFL methodology, even though it has been proved to work in other spheres of learning and teaching. Second, it is maintained that it is difficult to determine a precise time target for a group of learners to achieve a certain objective within. Third, there is the fear that this approach may fail to take account of language acquisition, as hypothesized and described by Krashen among others, where learning a language is a slow-building spontaneous process catalysed by exposure to meaningful input in the target language (see Krashen 1983:41).

Allaying the fears of TEFL/TESL experts

The term 'behavioural objectives' tends to be confused with behaviourism. Because of this, many writers now avoid using this term and use other terms such as: 'instructional objectives' (Mager 1962/1975), 'performance or operational objectives' (Gagné and Briggs 1974/1979), or 'learning objectives' instead. Needless to say, the stating of such objectives in no way dictates the route learners will take to achieve them. One can write learning objectives for a number of different learning capabilities, including both cognitive and affective ones, regardless of the theory of language learning one espouses. Indeed many educationists in this field adopt modern cognitive theories of learning (see Gagné 1977, Introduction).

Moreover, the fact that learners have different learning abilities is allowed for in a systematic objectives-based approach. On the one hand, it is possible to analyse any objective in order to discover the prerequisites

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needed for learning it, and consequently it is always possible to deal with these before addressing the new objective. On the other hand, enrichment programmes can be provided for those students who reach the desired level of performance rather too soon, while remedial materials can be given to those students who fail to reach the expected level.

In addition, this approach takes account of natural acquisition theory. In their latest book, Krashen and Terrell (1983:65) make the point that: 'A decision on the methods and materials to be used in a course is possible only once the goals of the course have been defined'. They have also listed some goals for the learning of English through their Natural Approach. If the importance of stating goals is accepted, as it seems to be, then it becomes necessary to make them so specific that two different teachers cannot interpret them differently. This is a very important condition if we want statements of objectives to be useful to teachers and textbook writers. I will try to show in the next section how this can be done.

How to write learning objectives

The first task of a course writer is to define the goals of the course.[2] As statements of aims tend to be interpreted differently by different people, it is imperative to make them as precise as possible. In other words, we need to transform general statements of aims into unambiguous statements of objectives. For such statements to be precise they have to:

a provide information about the focus of the lesson, i.e. what the students will be learning, whether these are concepts, intellectual skills, or attitudes, etc;
b specify what the learner must do in order for us to ascertain that he or she has fulfilled the objectives;
c lay down the conditions or define the situation(s) in which the intended outcomes are to occur;
d determine the level of proficiency or speed the learners must attain;
e state the proportion of students expected to attain the stated outcomes;
f fix a time limit within which the learners should achieve the objectives.

Obviously, not all six need to be specified all the time. Indeed, we may sometimes specify the first three or four things only. Below are three examples: the first is a complete statement containing all six elements, the second is an abbreviated statement containing four, while the third example illustrates how the same principles can be applied to the writing of course objectives.

An example of a complete statement of a learning objective:
'By the end of the week (TIME), all pupils (TARGET INDIVIDUALS), will be able to use (BEHAVIOUR) fairly accurately (LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE) appropriate greeting forms, such as *hello, good morning, good afternoon, good evening* (FOCUS) when meeting different people at different times (SITUATION).'

An example of an abbreviated statement of objectives:
'Given a short text of about six hundred words (FOCUS), the student will read it silently in three minutes (CONDITION), and answer orally (BEHAVIOUR) at least eight of the ten multiple choice questions (LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE).'

An example of course objectives:
'By the end of the course, the pupils will be able to express themselves accurately and appropriately in different situations, such as the following:

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— in social groups, discussions, and talks
— in giving out instructions or directions for carrying out tasks, such as helping some one find their way in town, etc.
— presenting an oral summary of a written or oral report
— giving detailed information about an accident and asking for help.'

Observable behaviour

Perhaps this is the most important and at the same time the trickiest of the components. In order for us to be certain that the pupils have achieved the objectives stated, we need to remember two things when specifying the desired behaviour. First, we must use action verbs and avoid using non-action or abstract verbs (Gagné and Briggs 1974/1979:122). The verbs on the left are among the verbs that are useful, while those on the right are among those to be avoided when writing statements of learning objectives:

Verbs to use	*Verbs to avoid*
Recite, sing, say, direct, describe, write down, classify, apologize, ask, greet, describe, argue, demand, request, etc.	Enjoy, understand, learn, know, revise, listen, read, practise, etc.

Second, when we have to use words such as *understand, read,* or *listen,* we require learners to perform some observable behaviour from which we can infer that they have listened to or read something and understood it. In the second example above, the verb *read* was used, but learners were required to answer some questions based on the text in order to show that they had read and understood the text. There are, of course, other ways of providing such evidence, for example completing tables, following a route on a map, etc.

The level of performance

Although it is possible to measure objectively the performance of a listener or reader, it is difficult to measure objectively the performance of a speaker or writer (van Ek 1980:84) for at least two reasons. On the one hand, the level of performance in speech and writing depends on the abilities of the listener or reader as well. This is characteristic of situations where pupils of markedly different abilities are taking part in a role play, for example. One speaker may not be understood, not because of inability to communicate, but because of the inability of others to understand him or her. Moreover, the evaluation of a speaker or writer, to a large extent, depends on the subjective judgement of the teacher. Teachers differ not only in what they consider to be acceptable performance but also in their tolerance of pupils' mistakes. However, there are a number of guidelines which I have found to be useful in this connection.

First, we must always regard our students as progressing towards a native-like command of the target language, although this requires a lot of time, effort, and patience both from students and their teachers. Secondly, we must recognize the need not only for grammatical accuracy but also for appropriateness of the form to the particular situation in which it is uttered (Widdowson 1978:67). For example, 'Will you borrow me your book?' may be more acceptable than 'Lend me your book' uttered in an imperious tone. Finally, we should turn a blind eye to some of our pupils' mistakes, so as to encourage the development of fluency.

Target individuals and time

When planning lessons or courses, it is essential to be realistic about what students can master within any period of time, whether it is a lesson, a term, or even a period of years. For example, many practising teachers with

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whom I have discussed the question of how much to teach complain that inspectors and other school administrators assess teachers' efficiency according to how much material they have covered, rather than according to how effectively it has been learned. This may well be the simplest way of finding out whether a teacher has been working or not,but it is not a valid means of evaluating the teacher. There are many other more effective methods of doing this, and one of the most important is to find out what the teacher intended the students to achieve, and what degree of success he or she had with these objectives.

Given the varying standards achieved by ESL/EFL students, it is imperative that we investigate how much students can learn within a given period of time. Obviously learners have different learning abilities, and, as the novice teacher gains in experience and wisdom, he or she will come to realize what students are capable of mastering within a given period of time, and to appreciate that what is a realistic objective for one group of students may be unrealistic for another.

Summary Statements of learning objectives written from the point of view of learners do not replace the more conventional statements describing teachers' activities; indeed, they are intended to be an essential complement. Statements of learning objectives are useful in organizing the activities both of teachers and or students. Moreover, they help the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. For learning statements to be useful, they must be precise about (a) the object of the lesson, (b) what the pupils must do in order for us to know that they have achieved the objectives, (c) the conditions or the situations in which they will perform, (d) the level of proficiency they must attain, and (f) the time in which the objectives will be achieved. Of course, not all of these components are equally important, and in many cases we can settle for the first three or four only. □

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Notes
1 These two terms are used quite loosely in educational writings. However, 'aims' usually refer to long-term, general indications of intent, while 'objectives' are used to refer to short-term, specific indications of intent.
2 The aims of a course can be determined either by taking advice from some recognized authority such as a ministry of education, or by doing a needs analysis.

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1. When designing a course what are the three questions that a designer must consider when creating the content of the course? What should a designer write to answer these questions? Can you write one the course we have evaluated and are redesigning?

2. What is meant by the term "scope"? What is meant by the term "sequence"?

3. The author describes several kinds of syllabus-types in the article. Which syllabus-type or combination or types would be appropriate for the program we are working on? Why?

6 Course planning and syllabus design

A number of different levels of planning and development are involved in developing a course or set of instructional materials based on the aims and objectives that have been established for a language program. In this chapter we will examine the following dimensions of course development:

- developing a course rationale
- describing entry and exit levels
- choosing course content
- sequencing course content
- planning the course content (syllabus and instructional blocks)
- preparing the scope and sequence plan

These processes do not necessarily occur in a linear order. Some may take place simultaneously and many aspects of a course are subject to ongoing revision each time the course is taught. The types of decision making that we will examine in this chapter are also involved in developing instructional materials and many of the examples discussed apply to both course planning and materials design.

The course rationale

A starting point in course development is a description of the *course rationale*. This is a brief written description of the reasons for the course and the nature of it. The course rationale 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?

The course rationale answers these questions by describing the beliefs, values and goals that underlie the course. It would normally be a two- or three-paragraph statement that has been developed by those involved in planning

and teaching a course and that serves to provide the justification for the type of teaching and learning that will take place in the course. It provides a succinct statement of the course philosophy for anyone who may need such information, including students, teachers, and potential clients. Developing a rationale also helps provide focus and direction to some of the deliberations involved in course planning. The rationale thus serves the purposes of:

• guiding the planning of the various components of the course
• emphasizing the kinds of teaching and learning the course should exemplify
• providing a check on the consistency of the various course components in terms of the course values and goals

(Posner and Rudnitsky 1986)

The following is an example of a course rationale:

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

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

Describing the entry and exit level

In order to plan a language course, it is necessary to know the level at which the program will start and the level learners may be expected to reach at the end of the course. Language programs and commercial materials typically distinguish between *elementary, intermediate,* and *advanced* levels, but these categories are too broad for the kind of detailed planning that program and materials development involves. For these purposes, more detailed descriptions are needed of students' proficiency levels before they enter a program and targeted proficiency levels at the end of it. Information may be available on students' entry level from their results on international proficiency tests such as TOEFL or IELTS. Or specially designed tests may be

needed to determine the level of students' language skills. Information from proficiency tests will enable the target level of the program to be assessed and may require adjustment of the program's objectives if they appear to be aimed at too high or too low a level.

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

In order to ensure that a language program is coherent and systematically moves learners along the path towards that level of proficiency they require, some overall perspective of the development path is required. This resulted . . . in the development of the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR). The ASLPR defines levels of second language proficiency as nine (potentially 12) points along the path from zero to native-like proficiency. The definitions provide detailed descriptions of language behavior in all four macro-skills and allow the syllabus developer to perceive how a course at any level fits into the total pattern of proficiency development. (Ingram 1982, 66)

Similarly, in 1982 the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages published proficiency guidelines in the form of "[a] series of descriptions of proficiency levels for speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture in a foreign language. These guidelines represent a graduated sequence of steps that can be used to structure a foreign language program" (Liskin-Gasparro 1984, 11). The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (see Appendix 1) have been widely promoted as a framework for organizing curriculum and as a basis for assessment of foreign language ability, though they have also attracted controversy because they are not research-based (e.g., see Lowe 1986). Band descriptors such as those used in the IELTS examinations or the UCLES/RSA Certificate in Communicative Skills in English (Weir 1990, 149–179) can be similarly used as a basis for planning learner entry and exit levels in a program. (See Appendix 2 for an example of performance levels in *writing,* and Appendix 3 for band descriptors for "oral interaction.")

Choosing course content

The question of course content is probably the most basic issue in course design. Given that a course has to be developed to address a specific set of

needs and to cover a given set of objectives, what will the content of the course look like? Decisions about course content reflect the planners' 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 efficient basis for second language learning. For example, a writing course could potentially be planned around any of the following types of content:

- 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)
- texts (e.g., writing a business letter)

Similarly a speaking course could be organized around:

- functions (expressing opinions)
- interaction skills (opening and closing conversations, turn taking)
- topics (current affairs, business topics)

The choice of a particular approach to content selection will depend on subject-matter knowledge, the learners' proficiency levels, current views on second language learning and teaching, conventional wisdom, and convenience. Information gathered during needs analysis contributes to the planning of course content, as do additional ideas from the following sources:

- available literature on the topic
- published materials on the topic
- review of similar courses offered elsewhere
- review of tests or exams in the area
- analysis of students' problems
- consultation with teachers familiar with the topic
- consultation with specialists in the area

Rough initial ideas are noted down as a basis for further planning and added to through group brainstorming. A list of possible topics, units, skills, and other units of course organization is then generated. One person suggests something that should go into the course, others add their ideas, and these are compared with other sources of information until clearer ideas about the content of the course are agreed on. Throughout this process the statements of aims and objectives are continually referred to and both course content suggestions and the aims and objectives themselves are revised and fine-tuned as the course content is planned. For example, a group of teachers

sted the following initial ideas about what they would include in a course n listening and speaking skills for a group of intermediate-level learners:

asking questions
opening and closing conversations
expressing opinions
dealing with misunderstandings
describing experiences
social talk
telephone skills
situation-specific language, such as at a bank
describing daily routines
recognizing sound contrasts
using communication strategies

'hese topics then have to be carefully reviewed and refined and the fol->wing questions asked about them:

,re all the suggested topics necessary?
[ave any important topics been omitted?
; there sufficient time to cover them?
[as sufficient priority been given to the most important areas?
[as enough emphasis been put on the different aspects of the areas identified?
Vill the areas covered enable students to attain the learning outcomes?

)eveloping initial ideas for course content often takes place simultaneously /ith syllabus planning, because the content of a course will often depend on ιe type of syllabus framework that will be used as the basis for the course liscussed later in this chapter).

)etermining the scope and sequence

)ecisions about course content also need to address the distribution of con->nt throughout the course. This is known as planning the scope and se-uence of the course. *Scope* is concerned with the breadth and depth of cov-rage of items in the course, that is, with the following questions:

Vhat range of content will be covered?
'o what extent should each topic be studied?

or example, in relation to the course on listening and speaking skills re->rred to in the preceding section, one area of potential content identified

was "describing experiences." But how much will be included in relation to this topic? And should two, four, or six class periods be devoted to it? The *sequencing* of content in the course also needs to be determined. This involves deciding which content is needed early in the course and which provides a basis for things that will be learned later. Sequencing may be based on the following criteria.

Simple to complex

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

Chronology

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

Need

Content may be sequenced according to when learners are most likely to need it outside of the classroom. For example, the rationale for the sequencing of content in a social survival curriculum is given as follows:

The topics and cross-topics in the curriculum are sequenced "in order of importance to students' lives, ease of contextualization and their relationship to other topics and cross-topics." The sequence is:

    i. basic literacy skills
    ii. personal identification
    iii. money
    iv. shopping
    v. time and dates
    vi. telephone

vii. health
viii. emergencies
ix. directions
x. transportation
xi. housing
xii. post office
xiii. banking/bills
xiv. social language
xv. clarification

(Mrowicki 1986, xi)

Prerequisite learning

The sequence of content may reflect what is necessary at one point as a foundation for the next step in the learning process. For example, a certain set of grammar items may be taught as a prerequisite to paragraph writing. Or, in a reading course, word attack skills may be taught early on as a prerequisite to reading unsimplified texts at later stages of the course.

Whole to part or part to whole

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

Spiral sequencing

This approach involves the recycling of items to ensure that learners have repeated opportunities to learn them.

Planning the course structure

The next stage in course development involves mapping the course structure into a form and sequence that provide a suitable basis for teaching. Some of the preliminary planning involved will have occurred while ideas

for course content were being generated. Two aspects of this process, how-ever, require more detailed planning: *selecting a syllabus framework* and *developing instructional blocks*. These issues are closely related and some-times inseparable but also involve different kinds of decisions.

Selecting a syllabus framework

A syllabus describes the major elements that will be used in planning a lan-guage course and provides the basis for its instructional focus and content. For example, in planning a course on speaking skills based on the course content discussed earlier (in the section titled "Describing the entry and exit level"), a number of options are available. The syllabus could be:

* *situational:* organized around different situations and the oral skills needed in those situations
* *topical:* organized around different topics and how to talk about them in English
* *functional:* organized around the functions most commonly needed in speaking
* *task-based:* organized around different tasks and activities that the learn-ers would carry out in English

In choosing a particular syllabus framework for a course, planners are in-fluenced by the following factors:

* *knowledge and beliefs about the subject area:* a syllabus reflects ideas and beliefs about the nature of speaking, reading, writing, or listening
* *research and theory:* research on language use and learning as well as ap-plied linguistics theory sometimes leads to proposals in favor of particu-lar syllabus types
* *common practice:* the language teaching profession has built up consid-erable practical experience in developing language programs and this of-ten serves as the basis for different syllabus types
* *trends:* approaches to syllabus design come and go and reflect national or international trends

In the 1980s and 1990s, the communicative language teaching movement led to a reexamination of traditional approaches to syllabus design and a search for principles for the development of communicative syllabuses (see Chapter 2). A communicative syllabus is either an attempt to develop a framework for a general language course, such as a Threshold Level syl-labus, or one that focuses on communication within a restricted setting, such as English for Specific Purposes. Because many different syllabus ap-

proaches are available in developing "communicative" courses, many different syllabus frameworks can make a claim to be versions of a communicative syllabus: for example, competency-based, text-based, and task-based syllabuses. Other approaches to syllabus design are also possible and we will consider now the nature of these different syllabus options.

Grammatical (or structural) syllabus: one that is organized around grammatical items. Traditionally, grammatical syllabuses have been used as the basis for planning general courses, particularly for beginning-level learners. In developing a grammatical syllabus, the syllabus planner seeks to solve the following problems:

- to select sufficient patterns to support the amount of teaching time available
- to arrange items into a sequence that facilitates learning
- to identify a productive range of grammatical items that will allow for the development of basic communicative skills

Choice and sequencing of grammatical items in a grammar syllabus reflect not only the intrinsic ease or difficulty of items but their relationship to other aspects of a syllabus that may be being developed simultaneously. The syllabus planner is typically mapping out grammar together with potential lesson content in the form of topics, skills, and activities, and for this reason grammatical syllabuses often differ from one course to the next even when targeting the same proficiency level. Appendix 4 presents the grammatical syllabus underlying a typical first-year EFL course.

Grammatical syllabuses have been criticized on the following grounds:

- They represent only a partial dimension of language proficiency.
- They do not reflect the acquisition sequences seen in naturalistic second language acquisition.
- They focus on the sentence rather than on longer units of discourse.
- They focus on form rather than meaning.
- They do not address communicative skills.

These objections are true for traditional grammar-based courses and few language courses today are planned solely around grammatical criteria. Indeed, it is doubtful if they ever were. However, grammar remains a core component of many language courses. There are several reasons for this:

- Teaching a language through its grammar represents a familiar approach to teaching for many people. In many parts of the world, teachers and students expect to see a grammar strand in a course and react negatively to its absence.

- Grammar provides a convenient framework for a course: grammar can readily be linked to other strands of a syllabus, such as functions, topics, or situations.
- Grammar represents a core component of language proficiency: communicative competence includes the ability to use grammar and therefore deserves a place in the curriculum.

Grammatical syllabuses thus continue to be widely used in language teaching. Typically, however, they are seen as one stream of a multiskilled or integrated syllabus rather than as the sole basis for a syllabus.

Lexical syllabus: one that identifies a target vocabulary to be taught normally arranged according to levels such as the first 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000 words. We saw in Chapter 1 that vocabulary syllabuses were among the first types of syllabuses to be developed in language teaching. Today there is a large degree of consensus in English-language teaching concerning targets for vocabulary teaching at different levels and textbook and materials writers tend to keep materials within target vocabulary bands. Typical vocabulary targets for a general English course are:

Elementary level: 1,000 words
Intermediate level: an additional 2,000 words
Upper Intermediate level: an additional 2,000 words
Advanced level: an additional 2,000+ words

(Hindmarsh 1980; Nation 1990)

An example of a course planned systematically around lexical targets is the *Collins Cobuild English Course* (Willis and Willis 1988), of which Willis (1990, vi) comments:

The 700 most frequent words of English account for around 70% of all English text. That is to say around 70% of the English we speak and hear, read and write is made up of the 700 most common words in the language. The most frequent 1,500 words account for 76% of text and the most frequent 2,500 for 80%. Given this, we decided that word frequency would determine the contents of our course. Level 1 would aim to cover the most frequent 700 words together with their common patterns and uses. Level 2 would recycle these words and go on to cover the next 800 to bring us up to the 1,500 level, and Level 3 would recycle those 1,500 and add a further 1,000.

Because vocabulary is involved in the presentation of any type of language content, a lexical syllabus can only be considered as one strand of a more comprehensive syllabus.

Functional syllabus: one that is organized around communicative functions such as *requesting, complaining, suggesting, agreeing.* A functional

syllabus seeks to analyze the concept of communicative competence into its different components on the assumption that mastery of individual functions will result in overall communicative ability. Functional syllabuses were first proposed in the 1970s as part of the communicative language teaching movement (see Chapter 2) and have formed the basis for many language courses and textbooks from that time. They were one of the first proposals for a communicative syllabus, that is, one that addresses communicative competence rather than linguistic competence. In *Threshold Level English*, basic functions were identified through analysis of the purposes for which learners use English, particularly younger learners up to the intermediate level using a language for social survival and travel purposes. This resulted in a widely used functional syllabus that consists of 126 functions grouped into the following categories (see Appendix 5):

- imparting and seeking factual information
- expressing and finding out attitudes
- deciding on courses of action
- socializing
- structuring discourse
- communication repair

Functional syllabuses such as *Threshold Level* provided the first serious alternative to a grammatical syllabus as a basis for general-purpose course design, and major courses published from the 1980s increasingly employed functional syllabuses, sometimes linked to a parallel grammatical syllabus. Because they often focus on communication skills, functional syllabuses are particularly suited to the organization of courses in spoken English. Functional syllabuses have proved very popular as a basis for organizing courses and materials for the following reasons:

- They reflect a more comprehensive view of language than grammar syllabuses and focus on the use of the language rather than linguistic form.
- They can readily be linked to other types of syllabus content (e.g., topics, grammar, vocabulary).
- They provide a convenient framework for the design of teaching materials, particularly in the domains of listening and speaking.

Functional syllabuses have also been criticized for the following reasons:

- There are no clear criteria for selecting or grading functions.
- They represent a simplistic view of communicative competence and fail to address the processes of communication.
- They represent an atomistic approach to language, that is, one that as-

sumes that language ability can be broken down into discrete components that can be taught separately.

- They often lead to a phrase-book approach to teaching that concentrates on teaching expressions and idioms used for different functions.
- Students learning from a functional course may have considerable gaps in their grammatical competence because some important grammatical structures may not be elicited by the functions that are taught in the syllabus.

These objections can be regarded as issues that need to be resolved in implementing a functional syllabus. Since their inception and enthusiastic reception in the 1980s, functional syllabuses are now generally regarded as only a partial component of a communicative syllabus. Alternative proposals for communicative syllabus design include task-based and text-based syllabuses (discussed later in this section).

Situational syllabus: one that is organized around the language needed for different situations such as *at the airport* or *at a hotel.* 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 and the typical communicative acts and language used in that setting. Situational syllabuses have been a familiar feature of language teaching textbooks for centuries (Kelly 1969) and are often used in travel books and books that focus on mastering expressions frequently encountered in particular situations. An example of a recent situationally organized textbook on English for travel is *Passport* (Buckingham and Whitney 1995), which contains the following situational syllabus:

1. On an airplane	10. In a restaurant
2. At an immigration counter	11. In a café
3. At a bank	12. In a bar
4. On the telephone	13. On a bus
5. On the street	14. In a store
6. In the city	15. At the post office
7. At home	16. At the cinema
8. At the doctors'	17. In a hotel
9. In an office	18. At the airport

Situational syllabuses have the advantage of presenting language in context and teaching language of immediate practical use. However, they are also subject to the following criticisms:

- Little is known about the language used in different situations, so selection of teaching items is typically based on intuition.

- Language used in specific situations may not transfer to other situations.
- Situational syllabuses often lead to a phrase-book approach.
- Grammar is dealt with incidentally, so a situational syllabus may result in gaps in a student's grammatical knowledge.

The role of situations in syllabus design has recently reentered language teaching, albeit in a different form from traditional situational syllabuses, with the emergence of communicative approaches to syllabus design and ESP. ESP approaches to curriculum development attribute a central role to the situation or setting in which communication takes place and to the following elements of the situation (Munby 1978; Feez 1998):

- the participants
- their role relations
- the transactions they engage in
- the skills or behaviors involved in each transaction
- the kinds of oral and written texts that are produced
- the linguistic features of the texts

Competency-based language teaching (see Chapter 5 and later in this section) is an approach to teaching that focuses on transactions that occur in particular situations and their related skills and behaviors. Text-based syllabus design (discussed later in this section) focuses on transactions, the texts that occur within transactions, and the linguistic features of the texts. The notion of situation has thus been incorporated as an element of more comprehensive approaches to syllabus design.

Topical or content-based syllabus: one that is organized around themes, topics, or other units of content. With a topical syllabus, content rather than grammar, functions, or situations is the starting point in syllabus design. Content may provide the sole criterion for organizing the syllabus or a framework for linking a variety of different syllabus strands together. "It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct effort to teach the language separately from the content being taught" (Krahnke 1987, 65). All language courses, no matter what kind of syllabus they are based on, must include some form of content. But with other approaches to syllabus design, content is incidental and serves merely as the vehicle for practicing language structures, functions, or skills. In a typical lesson in a grammar-based course, for example, a structure is selected and then content is chosen to show how the item is used and to provide a context for practicing the structure. In a topic-based syllabus, in contrast, content provides the vehicle for the presentation of language rather

than the other way around. Maximum use is made of content to provide links and continuity across the skill areas. Claims made for the advantages of courses based on content-based syllabuses are:

- They facilitate comprehension.
- Content makes linguistic form more meaningful.
- Content serves as the best basis for teaching the skill areas.
- They address students' needs.
- They motivate learners.
- They allow for integration of the four skills.
- They allow for use of authentic materials.

                    (Brinton, Snow, and Wesche 1989; Mohan 1986)

Topic-based syllabuses have often been a feature of ESL programs in elementary or secondary schools where the teaching of English is integrated with science, mathematics, and social sciences, as well as of ESL programs for students at the university level. Brinton et al. (1989, 27) give the following example of how a content-based course can be organized:

In a theme-based course, a high-interest topic such as "culture shock" could serve as the organizing principle for a 2-week integrated skills course, with the linguistic focus of the instruction determined by the students' needs, their proficiency level, and (last but not least) the degree to which the content "maps" onto the course objectives.

This approach was used in a German university program described in Brinton et al. (1989) that was built around the following themes:

television	modern architecture
religious persuasion	microchip technology
advertising	ecology
drugs	alternative energy
racism	nuclear energy
Native Americans	Dracula in myth, novel, and films

Issues that arise in developing a topic-based syllabus are:

- How are themes, topics, and content decided on?
- What is the balance between content and grammar or other strands in the syllabus?
- Are ESL teachers qualified to teach content-based courses?
- What should be the basis for assessment – learning of content or learning of language?

Although choosing appropriate content is an issue in the design of any language course, using topics as the overarching criterion in planning a

course leaves other questions unresolved because decisions must still be made concerning the selection of grammar, functions, or skills. It may also be difficult to develop a logical or learnable sequence for other syllabus components if topics are the sole framework. Different topics may require language of differing levels of complexity and, as a consequence, it may not always be possible to reconcile the different strands of the syllabus. Appendix 3 in Chapter 8 describes how a topical syllabus was used in developing speaking materials.

Competency-based syllabus: one based on a specification of the competencies learners are expected to master in relation to specific situations and activities (see Chapter 5 for an extended discussion). Competencies are a description of the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for effective performance of particular tasks and activities. For example, the work-skills curriculum in Mrowicki (1986) is organized according to topics and competencies.

The curriculum's language competencies are divided into topic and cross-topic areas. A topic refers to the context in which language is used. For example, the competency "Report basic household problems" is found in the topic "Housing." A cross-topic is a topic which can occur in other topic areas. For example, the competency "Read and write dates" from the cross-topic "Time and Dates" also occurs in the topics "Shopping" (reading expiration dates of food), "Health" (reading appointment times), "Banking and Bills" (reading the date due on bills), etc. (Mrowicki 1986, ix)

Examples of competencies related to the topic of "telephoning" are:

1. read and dial telephone numbers
2. identify oneself on the telephone when answering and calling
3. request to speak to someone
4. respond to request to hold
5. respond to offer to take message

Competency-based syllabuses are widely used in social survival and work-oriented language programs. Advantages and disadvantages of a competency-based approach are discussed in Chapter 5.

Skills syllabus: one that is organized around the different underlying abilities that are involved in using a language for purposes such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking. Approaching a language through skills is based on the belief that learning a complex activity such as "listening to a lecture" involves mastery of a number of individual skills or microskills that together make up the activity. Examples of skills that relate to different types of language use are:

writing: creating a topic sentence
            distinguishing between main ideas and supporting sentences
            self-editing

listening: recognizing key information
            using discourse markers to identify the flow of discourse
            following rapid speech

speaking: recognizing turn-taking signals
            introducing a topic
            using communication strategies

reading: reading for gist
            guessing words from context
            reading and making inferences

Skills have traditionally been a central focus in language teaching and there have been attempts to identify the *microskills* underlying the use of the four *macroskills* of reading, writing, listening, and speaking as a basis for syllabus design (e.g., Munby 1978). Yalden (1983) gives the following example of a skills syllabus for the teaching of study skills:

Basic reference skills: understanding and use of
- graphic presentation, namely, headings, subheadings, numbering, indentation, bold print, footnotes
- table of contents and index
- cross-referencing
- card catalog
- phonetic transcriptions/diacritics
- bibliography
- dictionaries

Skimming to obtain
- the gist of the text
- a general impression of the text

Scanning to locate specifically required information on
- a single point
- more than one point
- a whole topic

Transcoding information presented in diagrammatic display, involving
- completing a diagram/table/graph
- constructing one or more diagrams/tables/graphs

Note-taking skills
- completing note-frames

- deletions
- use of diagrams

Appendix 6 contains a skills syllabus for *listening* and *speaking* from a national curriculum document in an EFL country. Claims made in support of skills-based syllabuses are:

- They focus on behavior or performance.
- They teach skills that can transfer to many other situations.
- They identify teachable and learnable units.

Skills-based syllabuses have the advantage of focusing on performance in relation to specific tasks and therefore provide a practical framework for designing courses and teaching materials. They may be more relevant to situations in which students have very specific and identifiable needs (such as preparing for university-level studies in English). Skills syllabuses have been criticized, however, on the following grounds:

- There is no serious basis for determining skills.
- They focus on discrete aspects of performance rather than on developing more global and integrated communicative abilities.

Task-based syllabus: one that is organized around tasks that students will complete in the target language. A task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language such as *finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions,* or *reading a set of instructions and assembling a toy.* "Tasks are activities which have meaning as their primary focus. Success in tasks is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome, and tasks generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use" (Skehan 1996, 20).

All teaching makes use of tasks of different kinds. A task-based syllabus, however, is one based on tasks that have been specially designed to facilitate second language learning and one in which tasks or activities are the basic units of syllabus design. While carrying out these tasks, learners are said to receive comprehensible input and modified output, processes believed central to second language acquisition. A number of second language acquisition theorists have proposed tasks as a basis for syllabus planning. Long and Crookes (1991, 43) claim that tasks: "provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners – input which they will inevitably reshape via application of general cognitive processing capacities – and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty."

The basic claims made for a task-based syllabus are:

- Tasks are activities that drive the second language acquisition process.

- Grammar teaching is not central with this approach because learners will acquire grammar as a by-product of carrying out tasks.
- Tasks are motivating for learners and engage them in meaningful communication.

Two kinds of tasks have been proposed as a basis for syllabus design: *pedagogical tasks* and *real-world tasks*. Pedagogical tasks are based on SLA theory and are designed to trigger second language learning processes and strategies. The following are tasks of this kind:

- *jigsaw tasks:* These tasks involve learners in combining different pieces of information to form a whole (e.g., three individuals or groups may have three different parts of a story and have to piece the story together).
- *information-gap tasks:* Tasks in which one student or group of students has one set of information and another student or group has a complementary set of information. They must negotiate and find out what the other party's information is in order to complete an activity.
- *problem solving tasks:* Students are given a problem and a set of information. They must arrive at a solution to the problem. There is generally a single resolution of the outcome.
- *decision-making tasks:* Students are given a problem for which there a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.
- *opinion exchange tasks:* Learners engage in discussion and exchange of ideas. They do not need to reach agreement.

Although communicative activities of the type just described have long been a feature of communicative language teaching, advocates of task-based syllabuses propose them as the central feature of a syllabus rather than playing an incidental role. Real-world tasks are designed to practice or rehearse those activities that are found to be important in a needs analysis and that turn out to be important and useful in the real world. There is little difference between these kinds of tasks and those made use of in other situationally based approaches to syllabus design, such as Competency-Based Language Teaching.

At present, however, task-based syllabuses have not been widely implemented in language teaching. Among the concerns they raise are:

- *definition of task:* Definitions of tasks are sometimes so broad as to include almost anything that involves learners doing something.
- *design and selection of tasks:* Procedures for the design and selection of tasks remain unclear.

- *development of accuracy:* Excessive use of communicative tasks may encourage fluency at the expense of accuracy.

Although the notion of task appears useful as a component of methodology, it has yet to be widely adopted as a unit of syllabus design.

Text-based syllabus: one that is built around texts and samples of extended discourse. As already noted, this can be regarded as a type of situational approach because the starting point in planning a syllabus is analysis of the contexts in which the learners will use the language.

[This approach] starts with the texts which are identified for a specific context
or which have been identified by students. This approach is often used when
an overall context for language learning has been defined, such as in a specific
workplace or a university or other further study context. Units of work are then
developed in relation to the texts. For example, the spoken texts identified for
a group of engineers in a workplace were: spoken instructions to field staff,
presentations of report findings at meetings and telephone negotiations with
contractors. (Burns and Joyce 1997, 17)

A text-based syllabus is a type of integrated syllabus because it combines elements of different types of syllabuses. Appendix 7 gives an example of the processes involved in developing a text-based syllabus. The following are examples of text types that can be used in planning a text-based syllabus (Feez 1998, 85–86):

exchanges	simple exchanges relating to information and goods and services
	complex or problematic exchanges
	casual conversation
forms	simple formatted texts
	complex formatted texts
procedures	instructions
	procedures
	protocols
information texts	descriptions
	explanations
	reports
	directives
	texts that combine more than one text types
story texts	recounts
	narratives
persuasive texts	opinion texts
	expositions
	discussions

In teaching from a text-based syllabus a five-part cycle is proposed that involves:

1. building the context for the text
2. modeling and deconstructing the text
3. joint construction of the text
4. independent construction of the text
5. linking related texts

The following advantages are suggested for a text-based syllabus:

• It teaches explicitly about the structures and grammatical features of spoken and written texts.
• It links spoken and written texts to the social and cultural contexts of their use.
• It allows for the design of units of work that focus on developing skills in relation to whole texts.
• It provides students with guided practice as they develop language skills for meaningful communication through texts.

(Feez 1998, v)

Criticisms of this approach are similar to those made of competency-based approaches, namely:

• It focuses on specific skills rather than a more general language proficiency.
• It may be impractical in many situations.

An integrated syllabus: Decisions about a suitable syllabus framework for a course reflect different priorities in teaching rather than absolute choices. The issue is, which foci will be central in planning the syllabus and which will be secondary? 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 arriving at a decision about which approach to syllabus planning to take, the course planners need to decide between macrolevel and microlevel planning units in the course. For example, a reading course might first be planned in terms of reading skills (the macrolevel planning category) and then further planned in terms of text types, vocabulary, and grammar (the microlevel planning category). A syllabus might be organized grammatically at the first level and then the grammar presented functionally. Or the first level of organization might be functional with grammar items selected according to the grammatical demands of different functions. In practical terms, therefore, all syllabuses reflect some degree of integration. Krahnke (1987, 75) concludes:

For almost all instructional programs, it is clear that some combination of types of instructional content will be needed to address the complex goals of the program. . . . for most general teaching applications, whose goal is functional ability in broadly defined settings and structural knowledge and communicative ability in specific situations, a combination of functional, structural, situational, and skill-based instruction is the probable choice. On the other hand, in some second language teaching settings, skills and tasks can be more narrowly specified, instructional resources are richer, or specific structural or formal knowledge is not required by the program for students to succeed, and a combination of task-based, skill-based, situational, functional, and content instruction may be chosen.

Developing instructional blocks

So far we have described the processes used to make decisions about the content of a course as well as its syllabus framework. A course also needs to be mapped out in terms of instructional blocks or sections. An instructional block is a self-contained learning sequence that has its own goals and objectives and that also reflects the overall objectives for the course. Instructional blocks represent the instructional focus of the course and may be very specific (e.g., a single lesson) or more general (e.g., a unit of work consisting of several lessons). Planning the organizational structure in a course involves selecting appropriate blocks and deciding on the sequence in which these will appear. In organizing a course into teaching blocks one seeks to achieve the following:

- to make the course more teachable and learnable
- to provide a progression in level of difficulty
- to create overall coherence and structure for the course

Two commonly used instructional blocks are planning by modules and by units.

Modules: This is a self-contained and independent learning sequence with its own objectives. For example, a 120-hour course might be divided into four modules of 30 hours each. Assessment is carried out at the end of each module. Modules allow for flexible organization of a course and can give learners a sense of achievement because objectives are more immediate and specific. Care needs to be taken, however, to ensure that the course does not appear fragmented and unstructured.

Units: This teaching block is normally longer than a single lesson but shorter than a module and is the commonest way of organizing courses and teaching materials. It is normally a group of lessons that is planned around

a single instructional focus. (Sometimes units are referred to as a *scheme of work*.) A unit seeks to provide a structured sequence of activities that lead toward a learning outcome. The factors that account for a successful unit include:

- *Length:* Sufficient but not too much material is included.
- *Development:* One activity leads effectively into the next; the unit does not consist of a random sequence of activities.
- *Coherence:* The unit has an overall sense of coherence.
- *Pacing:* Each activity within the unit moves at a reasonable pace. For example, if there are five activities in the unit, one does not require four times as much time to complete as the others.
- *Outcome:* At the end of the unit, students should be able to know or do a series of things that are related.

The following comments by a learner indicate that the organization of the course units was not successful:

We did lots of different things in the course and many of them were quite useful. But it's hard to see where all the separate things fit together. Also, I never knew quite what to expect, where we were going from day to day.

The issue of unit structure is also crucial in developing instructional materials. In planning an upper-intermediate-level course with a topical organization of units and an integrated syllabus (Richards and Sandy 1998), the following solutions were reached with respect to unit structure (see Appendix 8).

- Each of the two books in the series would have 12 units.
- Each unit would consist of 8 pages that divide into two 4-page lessons.
- Each unit is organized around a general theme such as *creativity, communication, education* and *learning.*
- Each lesson focuses on a topic related to the unit theme. For example:

Unit theme: *creativity*
Lesson A: *creativity and jobs*
Lesson B: *creative products*

Within each 4-page lesson, each page has a distinct focus in both terms of topic treatment and language focus. For example:

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

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

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

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

Lesson B

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

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

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

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

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

Preparing the scope and sequence plan

Once a course has been planned and organized, it can be described. One form in which it can be described is as a scope and sequence plan. This might consist of a listing of the module or units and their contents and an indication of how much teaching time each block in the course will require. In the case of a textbook it usually consists of a unit-by-unit description of the course cross-referenced to the syllabus items included. Appendix 9 gives part of a scope and sequence plan for *New Interchange 1* (Richards, Proctor, and Hull 1997).

Having considered the different processes involved in planning and developing a language program, we can now turn to issues that arise in creating conditions for effective teaching of the course. These are the focus of Chapter 7.

Discussion questions and activities

1. How are different proficiency levels characterized and distinguished in a course or program you are familiar with? What are the advantages or limitations of using proficiency ratings or band descriptions as described in Appendixes 1–3?

2. Compare two or more textbooks for the same area (e.g., writing, speaking, listening) and for learners of the same level. How similar are the syllabuses in each book? Examine the teacher's books for each course. What justification do the authors of each book provide for the kind of syllabus they employ?

3. Choose three different approaches to syllabus design that are possible for the following types of courses and consider the advantages and limitations of each approach:

   a reading course
   a speaking course
   a writing course

4. Examine three different textbooks in a particular skill area (e.g., reading skills, writing). What approach to the selection and sequencing of content does each book adopt?

5. Do you think that grammar is a relevant component of a language course? If so, for what kind of courses? What would the role of grammar be in such a course? How would the choice of grammatical content be determined?

6. Select two or three related functions from the Threshold Level syllabus (see Appendix 5) and consider the language that would be needed to teach these functions to lower-intermediate learners in a speaking course. What decisions are involved in selecting the language realizations (or exponents) for functions in a functional syllabus?

7. Consider the design of a language course for airline employees working at the check-in counter at an airport. Suggest examples of the following:

   • the transactions they engage in
   • the skills or behaviors involved in each transaction
   • the kinds of oral and written texts that are produced
   • the linguistic features of the texts

8. How is a situational syllabus related to other syllabus options discussed in this chapter?

9. Plan a topic-based 4-hour unit of work in a course for a group of learn-

ers you are familiar with (or for intermediate-level ESL students in a general English class). Describe how the unit would do the following:

- integrate different language skills
- develop grammar from content

10. Compare two units from two course books that are designed for the same area and level. What unit structure does each book employ? How effective is the unit structure for each book?

11. Examine the skills listed in Appendix 6. How would you define "skills" based on the examples given in the syllabus?

12. Give an example of pedagogical tasks and real-world tasks that could be used in designing the following:

a reading course
a listening course

13. Examine the textbook unit in Appendix 8 and find examples of horizontal and vertical coherence as discussed on page 167.

Appendix 1　Proficiency descriptions for the domain of speaking

Proficiency descriptions for the domain of speaking from the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). The guidelines describe proficiency levels for speaking, listening, reading, and writing according to the levels of Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior. They are intended as guides for program planning and the development of objectives.

Generic descriptions – speaking

Novice	The Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material.
Novice-Low	Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.
Novice-Mid	Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need, although quality is increased. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers will be understood only with great difficulty.
Novice-High	Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.

Intermediate   The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
– create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode;
– initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and
– ask and answer questions.

Intermediate-Low   Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented, and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstandings frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Intermediate-Mid   Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs, e.g., personal history and leisure time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Intermediate-High   Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and

topics, but errors are evident. Limited vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly un-expected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narra-tion and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally be understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.

Advanced   The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
- converse in a clearly participatory fashion;
- initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an un-foreseen turn of events;
- satisfy the requirements of school and work situa-tions; and
- narrate and describe with paragraph-length con-nected discourse.

Advanced   Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can han-dle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and de-scribe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood with-out difficulty by native interlocutors.

Advanced-Plus   Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and spe-cial fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hy-

pothesize. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-Plus speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech but under the demands of Superior-level, complex tasks, language may break down or prove inadequate.

Superior   The Superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
– participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and
– support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

Superior   Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior-level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior-level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical, and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of error are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

Appendix 2   Description of performance levels; writing (adapted by Paltridge from the IELTS test [Paltridge 1992])

Levels	Overall	Ideas & argument	Accuracy	Fluency	Appropriateness	Intelligibility
Beginner	Nonwriter. Cannot write in English at all.					
Elementary	Intermittent writer. Very difficult to follow.	Evidence of few ideas with no apparent development. Little apparent coherence to the text.	Very limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, and relational patterns. Little grasp of conventions of punctuation and spelling and use of cohesive devices.	Isolated words or short stock phrases only. Very short text.	Use of language (including layout) minimally appropriate to text type, function, and communicative goal.	Can convey only very simple meanings. Concentration and constant verification necessary on the part of the reader.
Intermediate	Limited writer. Rather difficult to follow.	Limited range of ideas expressed. Development may be restricted and often incomplete or unclear. Information is not arranged coherently.	Limited grasp of lexical, grammatical, and relational patterns and use of cohesive devices. Weaknesses in punctuation and/ or spelling.	Texts may be simple, showing little development. Limited structures and vocabulary. Little subtlety and flexibility.	Use of language generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a limited range of text types. Layout generally appropriate to text type.	Can convey basic meanings, although with some difficulty.
Upper-Intermediate	Moderate writer. Fairly easy to read and understand. Texts generally well organised.	Moderate range of ideas expressed. Topic development is present, but may still lack	Moderate grasp of lexical, grammatical, and relational patterns and use of cohesive devices	Texts show increased development. Writes with a fair range and variety of language.	Use of language generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative	Broadly able to convey meanings, although errors can interfere with communication.

	some detail and supporting statements. Information is generally arranged coherently.	enabling the expression of a broader range of meanings and relationships between those meanings. Occasional faults in punctuation and spelling.	Moderate level of subtlety and flexibility.	goal within a moderate range of text types. Textual organisation and layout generally appropriate to text type.	Communicates meanings effectively. Only occasional interference due to errors.
Advanced	Competent writer. Easy to read from start to finish. Texts generally well organised.	Good range and progression of ideas expressed and coherently arranged, although there may still be isolated problems. Ideas and evidence are relevant, but more detail may still be desirable.	Competent grasp of lexical and grammatical patterns, although problems may still occur with punctuation and spelling. Relationships within and between propositions generally well managed.	Can generally write spontaneously on general topics. Competent use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Competent level of subtlety and flexibility.	Use of language generally appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a range of text types. Textual organisation and layout appropriate to text type.	
Special Purpose	Good writer. Can write well within general and own special purpose areas. Able to produce organised, coherent, and cohesive discourse.	Good range of relevant ideas are coherently expressed. Evidence is presented and discussed. Where appropriate, a point of view is presented and developed.	Confident and generally accurate use of lexical and grammatical patterns, cohesive devices, punctuation, and spelling. Relationships within and between propositions well managed.	Writes well on general topics and on matters relevant to own special purpose interests. Good range of grammatical structures and vocabulary, subtlety, and flexibility.	Use of language mainly appropriate to function, text type, and communicative goal within a good range of text types. Textual organisation and layout appropriate to text type.	Communicates meanings competently and effectively; qualified intelligibility in certain special purpose areas. Can generally be understood without any difficulty.

Appendix 3   Band descriptors for oral interaction skills

These descriptors are from UCLES/RSA Certificates in Communicative Skills in English (Weir 1990). Certificates in all four areas – reading, writing, listening, and oral interaction – are offered at four different levels.

In order to achieve a pass at a given level, candidates must demonstrate the ability to complete the tasks set with the degree of skill specified by these criteria:

	Level 1	*Level 2*
Accuracy	It is acceptable for pronunciation to be heavily influenced by L1 if it is generally intelligible. With support, the candidate must be able to clarify any confusions caused by lexical or grammatical errors.	Pronunciation must be clearly intelligible even if still obviously influenced by L1. Grammatical/lexical accuracy is generally high, though some errors that do not destroy communication are acceptable.
Appropriacy	Use of the language must be broadly appropriate to function, though it may not correspond to native-speaker expectations. The intention of the speaker can be perceived by a sympathetic listener.	The use of language must be generally appropriate to function. The overall intention of the speaker must be generally clear.
Range	It is acceptable for the candidate to have a severely limited range of expression and to have to search often for a way to express the desired meaning.	A fair range of language must be available to the candidate. Only in complex utterances is there a need to search for words.
Flexibility	The candidate is not expected to take the initiative in conversation, or to respond immediately to a change in topic. The interlocutor may have to make considerable allowances and often adopt a supportive role.	There must be some evidence of the ability to initiate and concede a conversation and to adapt to new topics or changes of direction.

(continued)

	Level 1	*Level 2*
Size	Contributions limited to one or two simple utterances are acceptable.	Must be capable of responding with more than short-form answers where appropriate. Should be able to expand simple utterances with occasional prompting from the interlocutor.

	Level 3	*Level 4*
Accuracy	Pronunciation must be clearly intelligible, even if some influences from L1 remain. Grammatical/lexical accuracy is high, though occasional errors that do not impede communication are acceptable.	Pronunciation must be easily intelligible, though some residual accent is acceptable. Grammatical/lexical accuracy must be consistently high.
Appropriacy	The use of language must be generally appropriate to function and to context. The intention of the speaker must be clear and unambiguous.	The use of language must be entirely appropriate to context, function, and intention. There is nothing to cause confusion.
Range	A wide range of language must be available to the candidate. Any specific items that cause difficulties can be smoothly substituted or avoided.	There must be only occasional obvious limitations on the range of language. Few allowances have to be made for the fact that the candidate is not a native speaker.
Flexibility	There must be consistent evidence of the ability to "turn-take" in a conversation and to adapt to new topics or changes of direction.	The candidate must be able to "turn-take" and "direct" an interaction appropriately and keep it flowing.
Size	Must be capable of making lengthy contributions where appropriate. Should be able to expand and develop ideas with minimal help from the interlocutor.	Must be capable of making lengthy and complex contributions as appropriate. The interlocutor does not need to support the candidate.

Appendix 4   Grammar items and their sequence in a first-year English course (from Axbey 1997)

Present verb *be*
Subject pronouns
Possessive adjectives
Indefinite article: *a/an*
Plural nouns: *-s, -ies, -es*
Prepositions: *from, in, near, at, with, there is/are*
Countable nouns with *some* and *any*
Definite article: *the*
Plural nouns: irregular
Demonstrative pronouns: *this/that, these/those*
Adjectives
have/has got
Present simple
Object pronouns
Whose? How often?
enough
can/cannot (can't)
like + noun/*like* + gerund
Adverbs of frequency
Do you like?
Would you like?
Past verb *be*
Present continuous for present activities
Indefinite pronouns: *everyone, everybody, no one, nobody* + singular verb
most/some/a few + plural verb
ask/tell + infinitive
Past simple

Expressions with *go*
too + adjective/*not* + adjective *enough*
When clauses
want + infinitive
Imperatives
countable/uncountable nouns with *many/few, much/little*
Comparative adjectives
Superlative adjectives
Prepositions of place
Articles: definite/indefinite/zero
Present continuous for fixed plans
Verbs + prepositions
Expressions with *get*
going to for intentions
would you like + noun/infinitive
can for permission
cannot/can't for prohibition
should/shouldn't for advice about polite behavior
Possessive pronouns
Present perfect
Indefinite pronouns
should/shouldn't for giving opinions
will/won't for promises of help
promise/remember/forget + infinitive
have to for obligation
Adverbs of manner
Prepositions
will/won't for predictions
think so/hope so

Appendix 5 Threshold level syllabus

From *Threshold 1990* (Van Ek and Trim 1998).

Language functions for threshold level

1 Imparting and seeking factual information
1.1 reporting (describing and narrating)
1.2 correcting
1.3 asking
1.4 answering questions

2 Expressing and finding out attitudes
2.1 expressing agreement with a statement
2.2 expressing disagreement with a statement
2.3 enquiring about agreement and disagreement
2.4 denying statements
2.5 stating whether one knows or does not know a person, thing or fact
2.6 enquiring whether someone knows or does not know a person, thing or fact
2.7 stating whether one remembers or has forgotten a person, thing or fact or action
2.8 enquiring whether someone remembers or has forgotten a person, thing or fact or action
2.9 expressing degrees of probability
2.10 enquiring as to degrees of probability
2.11 expressing or denying necessity (including logical deduction)
2.12 enquiring as to necessity (including logical deduction)
2.13 expressing degrees of certainty
2.14 enquiring about degrees of certainty
2.15 expressing obligation
2.16 enquiring about obligation
2.17 expressing ability/inability to do something
2.18 enquiring about ability or inability to do something
2.19 expressing that something is or is not permitted, or permissible
2.20 enquiring whether something is or is not permitted or permissible (including seeking permission)
2.21 granting permission
2.22 withholding permission
2.23 expressing wants/desires
2.24 enquiring about wants/desires
2.25 expressing intentions

3.9 offering assistance
3.10 inviting someone to do something
3.11 accepting an offer or invitation
3.12 declining an offer or invitation
3.13 enquiring whether an offer or invitation is accepted or declined
3.14 asking someone for something

4 *Socialising*

4.1 attracting attention
4.2 greeting people
4.3 when meeting a friend or acquaintance
4.4 replying to a greeting from a friend or acquaintance
4.5 addressing a friend or acquaintance
4.6 addressing a stranger
4.7 addressing a customer or a member of the general public
4.8 introducing someone to someone else
4.9 when being introduced to someone, or when someone is being introduced to you
4.10 congratulating someone
4.11 proposing a toast
4.12 taking leave

5 *Structuring discourse*

5.1 opening
5.2 hesitating
5.3 correcting oneself
5.4 introducing a theme
5.5 expressing an opinion
5.6 enumerating
5.7 exemplifying
5.8 emphasizing
5.9 summarizing
5.10 changing the theme
5.11 asking someone to change the theme
5.12 asking someone's opinion
5.13 showing that one is following a person's discourse
5.14 interrupting
5.15 asking someone to be silent
5.16 giving over the floor
5.17 indicating a wish to continue
5.18 encouraging someone to continue
5.19 indicating that one is coming to an end
5.20 closing

5.21 telephone opening
5.22 asking for [someone]
5.23 asking someone to wait
5.24 asking whether you are heard and understood
5.25 giving signals that you are hearing and understanding
5.26 announcing new call
5.27 opening [letter]
5.28 closing [letter]

6 Communication repair
6.1 signalling non-understanding
6.2 asking for repetition of sentence
6.3 asking for repetition of a word or phrase
6.4 asking for confirmation of text
6.5 asking for confirmation or understanding
6.6 asking for clarification
6.7 asking someone to spell something
6.8 asking for something to be written down
6.9 expressing ignorance of a word or expression
6.10 appealing for assistance
6.11 asking someone to speak more slowly
6.12 paraphrasing
6.13 repeating what one has said
6.14 asking if you have been understood
6.15 spelling out a word or expression
6.16 supplying a word or expression

Appendix 6   Skills syllabus for listening and speaking

From Malaysian Secondary School Syllabus form IV (1989).

1.0 Listening and Speaking

The component on listening and speaking deals with the skills of sound discrimination, extracting information, and prediction, in order to perform specific functions. The skills also include those of determining and using registers to suit different audiences, and for different purposes, so that students are able to express their thoughts clearly and succinctly and be able to fully participate in conversations and discussions.

The sub-skills that follow the main skills in this component are to be taught together with the main skills. These sub-skills are not arranged in a hi-

erarchy and are thus not intended to be followed as a rigid sequence. They need to be repeated in different but meaningful combinations.

Objectives of the component on listening and speaking

Listening to and discriminating: consonant clusters, sentence stress and intonation, diphthongs and homonyms

Listening to and understanding: words, phrases and sentences; instructions, messages; stories; talks; reports; opinions; poems; dialogues; information in reports, guides, charts, graphs, manuals, forms, and letters; description of scenes, events, places, things, and processes and procedures

Speaking with correct pronunciation, intonation, word stress and sentence rhythm

Asking for and giving: meanings of words, phrases and sentences; instructions; messages; talks; reports; opinions; information in reports, guides, charts, graphs, manuals, forms and letters; descriptions of scenes, events, places, things, and processes and procedures; and

Telling stories

Skill specifications

At the end of the English Language Programme for Form IV, students should be able to

1.1 Listen to and discriminate between: consonant clusters, diphthongs and homonyms.

1.2 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give meanings of words, phrases and sentences.

1.3 Speak with correct intonation, word stress and sentence rhythm.

1.4 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give instructions on how to fix things, such as a leaking tap.

1.5 Listen to and understand, ask for and give and relay messages received through the mass media, such as the radio and the television.

1.6 Listen to and understand, and tell stories on moral values, such as self-reliance, diligence and public-spiritedness.

1.7 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in talks on current issues, such as consumerism and health care.

1.8 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in reports, such as newspaper reports and book reports.

1.9 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in charts, graphs and manuals.

1.10 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in informal letters, in newspapers and in formal letters of enquiry and complaint.

1.11 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of scenes, such as tourist spots in the ASEAN region.

1.12 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of events, such as the SEA games.

1.13 Listen to and understand, ask for and give opinions on current issues, such as unemployment.

1.14 Listen to and understand selected poems of writers from ASEAN region.

1.15 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of processes and procedures, such as the recycling of material.

1.16 Listen to and understand, and express displeasure and regret.

1.17 Practice social skills such as interrupting a conversation, and joining in and participating in a conversation.

The following sub-skills need to be combined and taught simultaneously with the above main skills where appropriate.

Sub-skills of listening
a. Discerning main ideas
b. Understanding sequence
c. Noticing specific details
d. Inferring
e. Comparing
f. Predicting
g. Determining relevance
h. Distinguishing fact and fiction
i. Differentiating between fact and opinion
j. Generalizing
k. Classifying

Sub-skills of speaking
l. Using correct pronunciation
m. Questioning
n. Paraphrasing
o. Supporting and clarifying
p. Summarizing
q. Using registers
r. Speaking coherently

Appendix 7 Designing a course from texts (from Burns and Joyce 1997)*

Step	*Discussion and examples*
1 Identify the overall context	University: course focus is preparing students for study at university
2 Develop an aim	To develop the spoken and written language skills required to undertake university study
3 Note the language event sequence within the context	These could include: • enrolling at university • discussing course selection • attending lectures • attending tutorials • using the library • reading reference books • writing essays • writing reports • undertaking examinations • participating in casual conversations

4 List the texts arising from the sequence	These could include:
	• enrollment forms
	• service encounter – selecting courses
	• lectures
	• tutorial discussions
	• service encounter – library enquiry
	• Range of possible written texts, for example:
	  – discipline-specific essays
	  – discipline-specific reports
	• Range of possible reading texts, for example:
	  – discipline-specific journal articles
	  – discipline-specific books
	  – library catalogues
	  – lecture notes
	• examination papers
	• genres within casual conversation (e.g., anecdote)

(continued)

Step	*Discussion and examples*
5 Outline the sociocultural knowledge students need	Students need knowledge about: • academic institutions • academic procedures and expectations • the role of the student

6 Record or gather samples of texts	• Written texts:
	  Gather examples of essays, catalogues, journals etc.
	• Spoken texts:
	  You may need to:
	  – find available recordings
	  – prepare some semi-scripted dialogues youself
	  – record authentic interactions

7 Develop units of work related to the texts and develop learning objectives to be achieved	Classroom tasks should be sequenced within units of work to provide students with: • explicit input • guided practice • an opportunity to perform independently

Appendix 8   A unit from *Passages 1* (Richards and Sandy 1998)

Unit 9   Putting the mind to work

Lesson A *Exploring creativity*

1   Qualities of creative people

starting point

A   What qualities do you think creative people usually have? Rank them in terms of importance, and add others of your own. Then compare with a partner.

___ curiosity	___ independence	___ resourcefulness
___ decisiveness	___ intelligence	___ sensitivity
___ determination	___ originality	___ thriftiness
___ discipline	___ patience	___ _____

B   **Pair work**   Do you think these occupations demand a high level of creativity? Discuss some of the qualities you need in each job, and then compare around the class.

screenwriter

surgeon

cameraperson

sculptor

news announcer

animal trainer
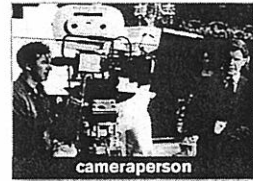
Originality is an important quality for a person who is working as a screenwriter. A screenwriter has to think up interesting, new stories.

2   Creativity at work

listening

A   Listen to Angela, Simon, and Naomi talking about their jobs. What are their occupations? Why is creativity important in their work?

	Occupation	Why creativity is important
Angela		
Simon		
Naomi		

B   **Pair work**   Is creativity important in what you do every day? Why or why not?

Reduced relative clauses

*grammar
focus*

You can shorten a relative clause by dropping *who* and the verb *be*.

Originality is an important quality for a person **(who is) working** as a screenwriter.

You can also drop *who* and change the verb to *-ing*.

Anyone $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{who wants} \\ \text{wanting} \end{array} \right\}$ to be successful has to work hard.

A   Rewrite these sentences by reducing each relative clause. Then compare with a partner.

1. Anyone who wants to become a journalist should be able to write under pressure.

   Anyone wanting to become a journalist should be able to write under pressure.

2. Anyone who is hoping to succeed in business needs to have original ideas on how to market products.
3. A person who works as an inventor is always looking for new ways of solving common problems.
4. A person who is working as a detective has to try to get inside the mind of a criminal.
5. Anyone who is trying to become a successful actor will find that there is a lot more to it than he or she first thought.
6. Someone who works in advertising needs to be able to write catchy slogans.
7. A person who is responsible for a large staff has to be creative with scheduling.

B   Now rewrite the sentences in Exercise A with your own ideas. Then compare with a partner.

*Anyone wanting to become a journalist
should keep up on current events.*

Jobs that demand creativity

iscussion   **A   Pair work**   How much creativity do these jobs require? Rank them from 1 (most creative) to 6 (least creative), and then compare with a partner. Ask and answer follow-up questions.

____ businessperson   ____ fashion designer
____ chef   ____ lawyer
____ radio DJ   ____ teacher

A: I think being a businessperson takes a lot of creativity, especially if you have your own company.
B: How so?
A: Well, someone running a business has a lot of problems to solve. . . .

B   Group work   Join another pair. Describe one more job that requires a high degree of creativity, one that requires a medium degree, and one that requires little creativity. Explain your choices and then share your answers with the class.

5 **Creativity quiz**

scussion **A** Creative people often answer "yes" to questions like these. Can you think of two more questions to add to the list?

1. Do you like to take risks?
2. Do you often question the way things work?
3. Do you like to come up with ways of improving things?
4. Are you sensitive to beauty?
5. Do you think it's OK if your ideas don't work at first?
6. Do you excel in many different fields?
7. Are you curious about the world in general?
8. Do you have a creative sense of humor?
9. _____
10. _____

Are you sensitive to beauty? Do you like to take risks?

Source: From *Eccentrics* by David Weeks, M.D., and Jamie James

B **Group work** Answer the questions in Exercise A. Give examples to explain your answers.

I like to take risks. For example, last week I went bungee jumping.

6 **Creative solutions**

'iscussion **A** **Pair work** Look at these situations, and think of at least three interesting suggestions for each one.

1. You manage a sports club and want to attract new members. What are the best ways?
2. You have to entertain some preschool children for an afternoon. What will you do?
3. It's your friend's birthday, and you want to plan a surprise he or she will never forget. What can you come up with?
4. You have an empty closet in your apartment and want to use it for something other than storage. What can you do with such a small space?

A: What would you do to attract new members to a sports club?
B: Well, there are many people who are embarrassed to exercise in public. I would try to attract them by . . .

B **Group work** Compare your ideas in groups. Which are the most creative?

7

Beginning new paragraphs

Begin a new paragraph each time you change focus.

A Read this composition and decide where the writer changes focus. Write a Ⓟ where you think each new paragraph should begin. Compare with a partner.

> Lucy Gomez is the most creative person I know. She started piano lessons when she was only 6 years old. At school, she was always creating interesting projects in her art class. When she was only 12 years old, she won a citywide poetry contest. Her parents were very proud of her. Now Lucy works as a sitcom writer for a popular TV show. She works with a group of writers, and together they have to think of fresh ideas. They also have to come up with funny dialog for the actors on their show because the actors have to play believable characters that will make the audience laugh. It is not an easy job, but Lucy does it well. She starts work late in the morning and often works until 7 or 8 at night. Lucy is very curious. She likes to travel and meet new people who have opinions that are different from hers. She often carries a notebook with her and writes down what she sees and hears. Lucy tells me that these new experiences are a good source of ideas for her work. I always enjoy talking to her and am happy to know someone as bright and creative as Lucy.

B Write a three-paragraph composition about someone you know who is very creative or who is unique or different in some other interesting way. Use these questions or others of your own to get started.

1. In what ways is this person special or different?
2. How does this affect his or her life?
3. Would you like to be like this person? Why or why not?

C Pair work Read your partner's composition, and answer these questions.

1. Are the paragraphs divided where they should be?
2. Is the focus of each paragraph clear?
3. Is there any additional information that you would like to know that was not included in the composition?

Lesson B *Ideas that work*

1 Everyday objects

starting point **A** Look at these "inventions." Why do people use them often? Why do you think they have been successful?

microwave oven

buttons

matches

Post-it Notes

paper clips

People need a quick and easy way to cook food, which is why the microwave oven has been so successful.

B Pair work What everyday objects in your household are the most useful? Why do you think they have been so successful?

2 Great ideas?

listening **A** Listen to John, Sandra, and Ted talking about what they would invent to make their lives easier. What are the inventions? What would they do?

	What are the inventions	What would they do
John		
Sandra		
Ted		

B Pair work Which invention would be most useful for you personally? Why?

Non-defining relative clauses as sentence modifiers

grammar focus

Non-defining relative clauses with *which* can be used to make a comment about an entire sentence. Notice the use of the comma.

People need a quick and easy way to cook food, **which is why the microwave oven has been so successful.**

Seat belts are now required in all vehicles, **which means fewer people die in traffic accidents.**

A   Match these problems with the appropriate non-defining clauses. Then compare with a partner. Can you think of another clause to complete each sentence?

1. AIDS kills thousands of people each year, _i_
2. Cities are running out of safe places to dispose of trash, ___
3. It's very difficult to quit smoking, ___
4. Air travel became more dangerous in the 1980s because of terrorism, ___
5. Children used to get sick after opening medicine bottles and taking pills, ___
6. There are thousands of accidents in the workplace each year, ___
7. The postal service in many countries is not very efficient, ___
8. People already find today's computers inadequate, ___
9. It's easy to get lost when driving in a new city, ___
10. It used to be that people couldn't drive in the rain, ___

a. which means that more powerful models need to be developed.
b. which means that new methods of recycling will have to be invented.
c. which means engineers need to work harder to design safer workplaces.
d. which is why express delivery services have become very popular.
e. which is why scientists developed the nicotine patch.
f. which is why personal navigation systems were developed for rental cars.
g. which is why childproof bottle caps were invented.
h. which is why windshield wipers were invented.
i. which is why scientists are working so hard to find a vaccine.
j. which is why more sensitive types of metal detectors were invented.

B   Add non-defining clauses beginning with *which is why* . . . or *which means that* . . . to these statements. Then compare with a partner.

1. People today watch TV more than they buy books, . . .
2. The Internet is used by millions of people, . . .
3. Airplane design has improved tremendously, . . .
4. There have been many advances in medicine in recent years, . . .
5. It's becoming less expensive to use cellular phones, . . .

Inventions and discoveries

discussion

Group work   What three inventions or discoveries have had the greatest impact on life in the twentieth century?

The jet engine has had a great impact on life in the twentieth century. People can now travel long distances in a short amount of time.
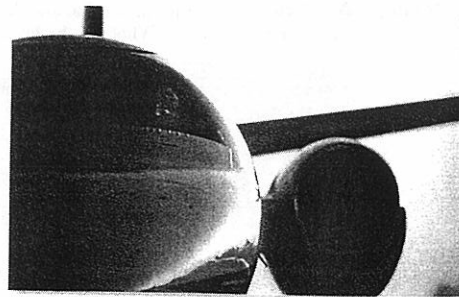
5 Collocations

:abulary   **A**   Combine the verbs with the nouns to make common expressions. How many expressions can you find? Compare with a partner.

| Verbs		Nouns	
analyze	make	a mistake	alternatives
explore	organize	a problem	possibilities
find	solve	a situation	information
		a solution	

analyze a situation   solve a problem

B   Pair work   How do people come up with ideas for new inventions? Answer using the expressions in Exercise A.

> *It's important not to be afraid to make a mistake.*

6 Making life better

:cussion   **A   Pair work**   Why do inventors invent new products? Read this list of reasons, and add two more of your own.
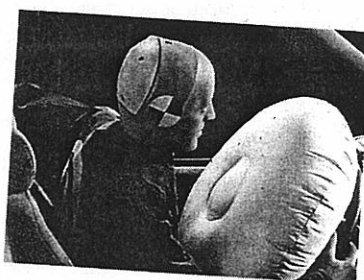
- ◉ to make business more efficient
- ◉ to make daily life easier
- ◉ to help protect people's health
- ◉ to save lives
- ◉ to make life more enjoyable
- ◉ to protect the environment
- ◉ _____
- ◉ _____

B   Group work   Join another pair. Why do you think these things were invented? Use the reasons in Exercise A or others of your own.

air bags for cars	lie detectors	overnight delivery services
fax machines	life preservers	the Walkman
handheld computers	jet engines	virtual reality

> *Air bags for cars were invented in order to save lives. Without them, more people would be injured in car accidents.*

Innovative products and services

reading   **A Pair work** Why were these things developed or invented? Why have they been so successful?

Sony Walkman   **NIKE athletic shoes**   **FedEx overnight delivery**

B Now read the article. What questions do you think inspired the inventors of these products?

SILLY QUESTIONS, BRILLIANT ANSWERS

Several years ago, Masaru Ibuka, the chairman of Sony, was at a company planning meeting. Suddenly he had a brilliant idea. He stopped the meeting and asked everyone present what would happen if Sony removed the recording function and speaker and sold headphones with a tape player instead. Almost everyone thought he was crazy. Still, Ibuka kept thinking about his idea and worked at refining it. The result, of course, turned out to be the wildly successful Sony Walkman.

Good ideas often start with a really silly question. Bill Bowerman was making breakfast one day. As he stood there making waffles for his son, he wondered what would happen if he poured rubber into his waffle iron. Later, he tried it and the result looked something like the bottom of most sports shoes we see today. Still, when he took this idea to several existing shoe companies, he was literally laughed at. In fact, every single company turned him down. Though rather discouraged, Bowerman persevered and went on to form his own company, making NIKE athletic shoes.

Sometimes good ideas grow out of frustration. When Fred Smith was a student at Yale University, he had some paperwork that he needed to have delivered across the country the next day. Smith was amazed to find out that overnight delivery was impossible. He sat for a long while wondering why. Why couldn't there be a reliable overnight mail delivery service? He decided to design one. Smith did just that and turned his design into a class project. His business professor gave him only a C for his efforts. However, Smith was not through. He refined the ideas in that class project and eventually turned them into one of the first and most successful overnight mail services in the world – FedEx.

We know today, of course, that each of these ideas led to an incredibly successful product or service that has changed the way many of us live. The best questions are usually open-ended and are often silly. Children aren't afraid to ask such questions, but adults frequently are. Think how different the world might be if people never asked "silly" questions!

C Group work Discuss these questions. Then share your answers with the class.

1. Why do you think so many people turned down Bowerman's idea?
2. Why do you think Smith's professor gave him a C on the project?
3. Which idea has led to the most imitations?
4. Do you have any ideas for new products or services? What are they?

Lesson B   81

Appendix 9 Part of the scope and sequence chart from *New Interchange,* vol. 1 (Richards, Proctor, and Hull 1997)

Plan of Book 1

Title/Topics	Functions	Grammar
UNIT 1 PAGES 2–7		
Please call me Chuck. Introductions and greetings; names and titles; countries and nationalities	Introducing yourself; introducing someone; checking information; asking about someone; exchanging personal information	Wh-questions and statements with *be*; yes/no questions and short answers with *be*; contractions; subject pronouns; possessive adjectives
UNIT 2 PAGES 8–13		
How do you spend your day? Occupations, workplaces, and school; daily schedules; clock time	Describing work and school; asking for and giving opinions; talking about daily schedules	Simple present Wh-questions and statements; time expressions: *at, in, on, around, until, before, after, early,* and *late*
UNIT 3 PAGES 14–19		
How much is it? Spending habits, shopping, and prices; clothing and personal items; colors and materials	Talking about prices; giving opinions; talking about preferences; making comparisons; buying and selling things	Demonstratives: *this, that, these, those; one* and *ones;* questions: *how much* and *which;* comparisons with adjectives
UNIT 4 PAGES 20–25		
Do you like jazz? Music, movies, TV programs; entertainers; invitations and excuses; dates and times	Talking about likes and dislikes; giving opinions; making invitations and excuses	Simple present yes/no and Wh-questions with *do;* question: *what kind;* object pronouns; modal verb *would;* verb + *to* + verb
REVIEW OF UNITS 1–4 PAGES 26–27		
UNIT 5 PAGES 28–33		
Tell me about your family. Families and family life	Talking about families and family members; exchanging information about the present; describing family life	Present continuous yes/no and Wh-questions, statements, and short answers; determiners: *all, nearly all, most, many, a lot of, some, not many, a few,* and *few*
UNIT 6 PAGES 34–39		
How often do you exercise? Sports and exercise; routines	Asking about and describing routines and exercise; talking about frequency; talking about abilities	Adverbs of frequency: *always, almost always, usually, often, sometimes, seldom, hardly ever, almost never, never;* questions with *how: how often, how much time, how long, how well, how good;* short answers
UNIT 7 PAGES 40–45		
We had a great time! Free-time and weekend activities; vacations	Talking about past events; giving opinions about past experiences; talking about vacations	Past tense yes/no and Wh-questions, statements, and short answers with regular and irregular verbs; past tense of *be*
UNIT 8 PAGES 46–51		
How do you like the neighborhood? Stores and places in a city; neighborhoods; houses and apartments	Asking about and describing locations of places; asking about and describing neighborhoods; asking about quantities	*There is/there are; one, any, some;* prepositions of place; questions: *how much* and *how many;* countable and uncountable nouns
REVIEW OF UNITS 5–8 PAGES 52–53		

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1. Why is retrospective evaluation of materials more important than predictive evaluation of materials?

2. What is micro-evaluation? What kind of activities can be used in micro-evaluations? Why?

3. What are the three types of evaluation that the author describes? Which two are the best to use when doing micro-level evaluation of materials? Why?

4. Why would we want to build a materials evaluation component into to program design? What are the benefits of making this kind of assessment a part of the curriculum?

The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials

Rod Ellis

This article distinguishes two types of materials evaluation: a predictive evaluation designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use, and a retrospective evaluation designed to examine materials that have actually been used. Retrospective evaluations can be impressionistic or empirical. It is suggested that one way in which teachers can conduct empirical evaluations is by investigating specific teaching tasks. A procedure for conducting a task evaluation is described. Finally, it is suggested that task evaluations constitute a kind of action research that can contribute to reflective practice in teaching.

Materials evaluation: an overview

Teachers are often faced with the task of choosing what teaching materials to use. In effect, they are required to carry out a *predictive evaluation* of the materials available to them in order to determine which are best suited to their purposes. Then, once they have used the materials, they may feel the need to undertake a further evaluation to determine whether the materials have 'worked' for them. This constitutes a *retrospective evaluation*.

Predictive evaluation

A brief review of the literature relating to materials evaluation reveals that, to date, the focus of attention has been more or less exclusively on predictive evaluation. There are two principal ways in which teachers can carry out this kind of evaluation. One is to rely on evaluations carried out by 'expert' reviewers. Journals like *ELT Journal* assist teachers in this respect by providing reviews of published coursebooks. In some cases (such as the Survey Reviews this journal provides from time to time), the reviewers identify specific criteria for evaluating materials. However, in reviews of individual coursebooks, the criteria often remain inexact and implicit.

Alternatively, teachers can carry out their own predictive evaluations. There are numerous checklists and guidelines available to help them do so (e.g. Cunningsworth 1984, Breen and Candlin 1987, Skierso 1991, McDonough and Shaw 1993). These instruments are generally organized in a manner that reflects the decision-making process which it is hypothesized teachers go through. Breen and Candlin (1987), for example, organize the questions in their checklist into two phases, the first of which enables teachers to address the overall 'usefulness' of the materials, while the second caters for 'a more searching analysis' based on the teacher's actual teaching situation. The idea behind these guides is to help teachers carry out a predictive evaluation *systematically*.

However, there are limits to how 'scientific' such an evaluation can be. As Sheldon (1988: 245) observes, 'it is clear that coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick'.

Retrospective evaluation

This being so, the need to evaluate materials retrospectively takes on special importance. Such an evaluation provides the teacher with information which can be used to determine whether it is worthwhile using the materials again, which activities 'work' and which do not, and how to modify the materials to make them more effective for future use. A retrospective evaluation also serves as a means of 'testing' the validity of a predictive evaluation, and may point to ways in which the predictive instruments can be improved for future use.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, there are very few published accounts of retrospective evaluations of course materials, and very little information about how to conduct them. The bulk of the published literature on evaluation deals with programme or project evaluation (e.g. Alderson 1992, Weir and Roberts 1994, Lynch 1996). Such evaluations may incorporate materials evaluation but they are necessarily much broader in scope. Otherwise, the only other published work on the empirical evaluation of teaching materials is to be found in accounts of the trialling of new materials (e.g. Barnard and Randall 1995). The purpose of this article is to begin to address the question of how retrospective evaluations of materials can be carried out.

Evaluating course materials retrospectively

Teachers can perform a retrospective evaluation impressionistically or they can attempt to collect information in a more systematic manner (i.e. conduct an empirical evaluation). It is probably true to say that most teachers do carry out impressionistic evaluations of their teaching materials. That is, during the course they assess whether particular activities 'work' (usually with reference to the enthusiasm and degree of involvement manifested by the students), while at the end of the course they make summative judgements of the materials. Empirical evaluations are perhaps less common, if only because they are time-consuming. However, teachers report using students' journals and end-of-course questionnaires to judge the effectiveness of their teaching, including the materials they used.

One way in which an empirical evaluation can be made more manageable is through micro-evaluation. A macro-evaluation calls for an overall assessment of whether an entire set of materials has worked. To plan and collect the necessary information for such as empirical evaluation is a daunting prospect. In a micro-evaluation, however, the teacher selects one particular teaching task in which he or she has a special interest, and submits this to a detailed empirical evaluation. A series of micro-evaluations can provide the basis for a subsequent macro-evaluation. However, a micro-evaluation can also stand by itself and can serve as a practical and legitimate way of conducting an empirical evaluation of teaching materials.

Empirical evaluation of materials   37

Conducting a micro-evaluation of tasks   A micro-evaluation of teaching materials is perhaps best carried out in relation to 'task'. This term is now widely used in language teaching methodology (e.g. Prabhu 1987; Nunan 1989), often with very different meanings. Following Skehan (1996), a task is here viewed as 'an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome'. Thus, the information and opinion-gap activities common in communicative language teaching are 'tasks'.

Describing a task   A 'task' can be described in terms of its *objectives*; the *input* it provides for the students to work on (i.e. the verbal or non-verbal information supplied); the *conditions* under which the task is to be performed (e.g. whether in lockstep with the whole class or in small group work); the *procedures* the students need to carry out to complete the task (e.g. whether the students have the opportunity to plan prior to performing the task); and *outcomes* (i.e. what is achieved on completion of the task). The outcomes take the form of the product(s) the students will accomplish (e.g. drawing a map, a written paragraph, some kind of decision) and the processes that will be engaged in performing the task (e.g. negotiating meaning when some communication problem arises, correcting other students' errors, asking questions to extend a topic).

Evaluating a task   Evaluating a task involves a series of steps:

Step 1: Choosing a task to evaluate
Step 2: Describing the task
Step 3: Planning the evaluation
Step 4: Collecting the information for the evaluation
Step 5: Analysing the information
Step 6: Reaching conclusions and making recommendations
Step 7: Writing the report

Choosing a task to evaluate   Teachers might have a number of reasons for selecting a task to micro-evaluate. They may want to try out a new kind of task and be interested in discovering how effective this innovation is in their classrooms. On other occasions they may wish to choose a very familiar task to discover if it really works as well as they think it does. Or they may want to experiment with a task they have used before by making some change to the input, conditions, or procedures of a familiar task and decide to evaluate how this affects the outcomes of the task. For example, they may want to find out what effect giving learners the chance to plan prior to performing a task has on task outcomes.

Describing the task   A clear and explicit description of the task is a necessary preliminary to planning a micro-evaluation. As suggested above, a task can be described in terms of its objective(s), the input it provides, conditions, procedures, and the intended outcomes of the task.

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Alderson (1992) suggests that planning a program evaluation involves
working out answers to a number of questions concerning the purpose of
the evaluation, audience, evaluator, content, method, and timing (see
Figure 1). These questions also apply to the planning of a micro-
evaluation. They should not be seen as mutually exclusive. For example,
it is perfectly possible to carry out both an objectives model evaluation,
where the purpose is to discover to what extent the task has
accomplished the objectives set for it, and a development model
evaluation, where the purpose is to find out how the task might be
improved for future use, at one and the same time. The planning of the
evaluation needs to be undertaken concurrently with the planning of the
lesson. Only in this way can teachers be sure they will collect the
necessary information to carry out the evaluation.

Figure 1:
Choices involved in
planning a task-
evaluation

Question	Choices
1 Purpose (Why?)	**a.** The task is evaluated to determine whether it has met its objectives (i.e. an objectives model evaluation).
	b. The task is evaluated with a view to discovering how it can be improved (i.e. a development model evaluation).
2 Audience (Who for?)	**a.** The teacher conducts the evaluation for him/herself.
	b. The teacher conducts the evaluation with a view to sharing the results with other teachers.
3 Evaluator (Who?)	**a.** The teacher teaching the task.
	b. An outsider (e.g. another teacher).
4 Content (What?)	**a.** Student-based evaluation (i.e. students' attitudes towards and opinions about the task are investigated).
	b. Response-based evaluation (i.e. the outcomes—products and processes—of the task are investigated).
	c. Learning-based evaluation (i.e. the extent to which any learning or skill/strategy development has occurred) is *investigated.*
5 Method (How?)	**a.** Using documentary information (e.g. a written product of the task).
	b. *Using tests (e.g. a vocabulary test).*
	c. Using observation (i.e. observing/recording the students while they perform the task).
	d. Self-report (e.g. a questionnaire to elicit the students' attitudes).
6 Timing (When?)	**a.** Before the task is taught (i.e. to collect baseline information).
	b. During the task (formative).
	c. After the task has been completed (summative): i) immediately after ii) after a period of time.

The decision on *what* to evaluate is at the heart of the planning process.
Here three types of evaluation can be identified. In a student-based
evaluation, the students' attitudes to the task are examined. The basis
for such an evaluation is that a task can only be said to have worked if
the students have found it enjoyable and/or useful. Evaluations
conducted by means of short questionnaires or interviews with the

students are the easiest kind to carry out. Response-based evaluations require the teacher to examine the actual outcomes (both the products and processes of the task) to see whether they match the predicted outcomes. For example, if one of the purposes of the task is to stimulate active meaning negotiation on the part of the students, it will be necessary to observe them while they are performing the task to which they negotiate or, alternatively, to record their interactions for subsequent analysis in order to assess the extent to which they negotiate. Although response-based evaluations are time-consuming and quite demanding, they do provide valuable information regarding whether the task is achieving what it is intended to achieve. In learning-based evaluations, an attempt is made to determine whether the task has resulted in any new learning (e.g. of new vocabulary). This kind of evaluation is the most difficult to carry out because it generally requires the teacher to find out what the students know or can do before they perform the task *and* after they have performed it. Also, it may be difficult to measure the learning that has resulted from performing a single task. Most evaluations, therefore, will probably be student-based or response-based.

Collecting the information
As Figure 1 shows, the information needed to evaluate a task can be collected before, during, or after the teaching of the task. It may be useful for the evaluator to draw up a record sheet showing the various stages of the lesson, what types of data were collected, and when they were collected in relation to the stages of the lesson. This sheet can be organized into columns with the left-hand column showing the various stages of the lesson and the right-hand column indicating how and when information for the evaluation is to be collected.

Analysing the information
Two ways of analysing the data are possible. One involves quantification of the information, which can then be presented in the form of tables. The other is qualitative. Here the evaluator prepares a narrative description of the information, perhaps illustrated by quotations or protocols. In part, the method chosen will depend on the types of information which have been collected. Thus, test scores lend themselves to a quantitative analysis, while journal data is perhaps best handled qualitatively.

Reaching conclusions and making recommendations
It is useful to distinguish 'conclusions' and 'recommendations'. Conclusions are general statements about what has been discovered about the task from the analyses that have been performed. Recommendations are the evaluator's ideas regarding future actions. The conclusions need to be framed in relation to the purposes of the evaluation. Thus, in an objectives model evaluation, the conclusions need to state to what extent the objectives of the task have been met, while in a development model evaluation the conclusions need to indicate in what ways the task has worked or not worked, and how it can be improved.

Writing the report
Strictly speaking, it is not necessary to write a report of an evaluation unless the evaluator intends to share the conclusions and recommenda-

tions with others. However, by writing a report the teacher-evaluator is obliged to make explicit the procedures that have been followed in the evaluation and, thereby, is more likely to understand the strengths and limitations of the evaluation.

Conclusion Materials have traditionally been evaluated predictively using checklists or questionnaires to determine their suitability for use in particular teaching contexts. There have been surprisingly few attempts to evaluate materials empirically, perhaps because a thorough evaluation of a complete set of materials is a daunting undertaking, which few teachers have the time to make. There is, however, an urgent need for the empirical evaluation of teaching materials. One way in which this might be made practical is through micro-evaluations of specific tasks. The purpose of this article has been to suggest how such micro-evaluations can be accomplished.

A micro-evaluation of a task can serve several purposes. It can show to what extent a task works for a particular group of learners. It can also reveal weaknesses in the design of a task, and thus ways in which it might be improved.

It can be argued that teachers have always engaged in evaluating the tasks they use and that the kind of micro-evaluation advocated here is, therefore, unnecessary. However, it can be counter argued that there is much to be gained by formalizing the procedures used to carry out micro-evaluations. First, the procedure that has been advocated in this article requires teachers to pay attention to evaluation as they plan lessons, as many educators advocate (e.g. Nunan 1988). Second, formalizing the procedure for evaluation forces teachers to go beyond impressionistic assessments by requiring them to determine exactly what it is they want to evaluate and how they can do it. Third, micro-evaluation serves as one way of conducting action research and, thereby, of encouraging the kind of reflection that is believed to contribute to teacher development (Richards and Lockhart 1994). In fact, teachers may find it easier to begin action research by identifying a task they would like to evaluate than by looking for a problem to solve, the usual way of getting started. Fourth, and perhaps most important, micro-evaluation serves as a form of professional empowerment. Clarke (1994: 23) has argued that teachers need 'to keep their own counsel regarding what works and does not work and to insist on an interpretation of events and ideas that includes . . . a validation of their own experiences in the classroom'. While this does not necessitate a commitment to systematic evaluation, it does assume a responsibility for ensuring that classroom events are interpreted as accurately and systematically as possible. Carefully planned materials evaluations, in the form of task evaluations, may provide a practical basis for achieving this.

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