**Lesson One: Designing a Syllabus or a course Component**

**Session Two: Completion of Lesson One**

**2.2 Determining Goals and Objectives**

What are the purposes and intended outcomes of the course? What my students need to do or learn to understand these goals?

First, what are goals and objectives and the relationship between them?

Objectives express the specific ways in which the goals will be achieved. The goals represent the destination, the objectives are the various points that chart the course toward the destination. To arrive to the destination one must pass each of these points.

**Why set goals and objectives?**

Here are some reasons:

* Goals and objectives provide a sense of direction and coherent framework for teachers in planning their course.
* Breaking goals into objectives is like making a map for the territory to be exploited.
* Having clear goals and objectives gives the teacher the basis for determining which content an activities are appropriate for the course. They provide a framework for the evaluation of the effectiveness or worth of an activity.
* There are many routes (objectives) to a given destination, some are more circuitous than others, and the length and the nature of the route will depend on one’s departure point.

**How does one choose the appropriate goals and objectives?**

There is no answer to such question. To arrive to a goal one must ask the question: what are the purposes and intended outcomes of the course? The answer may be influenced by an analysis of students’ needs, the policies of the institution, the way the teacher conceptualizes the content.

There are four goals for language learners:

* **Proficiency goals**: include general competency, mastery of the four skills or mastery of specific language behaviour.
* **Cognitive Goals**: include mastery of linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge.
* **Effective goals**: include achieving positive attitudes and feelings about the target language, achieving confidence as a user of language, and achieving confidence in oneself as a learner.
* **Transfer goals**: involves learning how to learn so that one can call upon learning skills gained in one situation to meet the future learning challenges. Goals do not address knowledge and skills only but also the development of attitudes and awareness.

Goals should be realizable. If, for example, I want my students to develop a positive attitude towards the program, this goal is a wish to teachers, it should appear as a program goal if it is to be addressed concretely in the program.

The formation of objectives provides a check if the goals will be addressed. To arrive into objectives, one asks, what students need to learn or do to achieve these purposes? One challenging task in formulating objectives is thinking of objectives that are congruent with the goals and that are not so narrow that they enmesh the teacher in necessary details.

**How does one state objectives?**

Objectives are a particular way of formulating or stating content and activities. Stating objectives depends on conceptualizing the content of the course. Content as knowledge might be stated as students will know…, students will be able to…, students will develop the ability to…

Performance objectives are more associated with content as a skill. Content as an attitude and awareness would be stated as students will be aware that…. Objectives may be stated in terms of what students will do in the course.

There are five kinds of objectives, all are interrelated. Three are concerned with what students will do, the last two deal with what learners will master.

* **Coverage objectives**: what will be covered.
* **Activity objectives:** what students will do.
* **Involvement objectives**: how to maximize students involvement and interest.
* **Mastery objectives**: what students will do as a result of their time in class.
* **Critical thinking objectives**: which learning skill students will develop.

Tension often exists between coverage objectives and mastery objectives because the time it takes to master a skill, knowledge or to develop awareness may not correspond with the time allotted in a syllabus. This tension can create dilemmas for teachers who must cover and test the material in the syllabus.

**2.3.Conceptualizing Content**

What will be the backbone of what I teach? What will I include in my syllabus?

Conceptualizing content has to do with figuring out which aspects of language learning should be included, emphasized, and integrated in the course. Two decades ago, language teaching was influenced by the structural view of language. This influence resulted in one size fits all. For example, an EFL teacher could use the same textbook and the same tasks to teach factory workers, college students, and housewives. There was not much questions about content, it was grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Recently, many changes occurred in the fields of applied linguistics, language acquisition and approaches to language teaching. The proficiency movement, the concepts and various models of communicative competence, the advent of ESP, the proliferation of methods of language teaching, and the diversification of the population of English learners has all provided the teacher with more options to consider in deciding what will be the backbone of a course.

Now, the choices a teacher makes are much more context- dependent and involve a number of factors such as: who the students are, the goals and expectations in learning English, the teachers’ own conception of what language is and what will best meet the students’ needs, the nature of the course, and the institutional curriculum.

There are different ways of conceptualizing and categorizing content. The challenge of the teacher is to decide which ones are appropriate for the course and how they will be integrated. They will be described and outlined in a syllabus grid. Generally, teachers do not do it but it is necessary as a graphic way to illustrate possible categories.

Traditional views of conceptualizing content that teachers have experienced in their own learning is grammar structures, sentence patterns, and vocabulary. These aspects are systematic and rule governed and the basis of content found in textbooks. They include rules of word formation (morphology), rules of pronunciation (phonology), and grammatical structures and relationship among words at the sentence level (syntax).

The communicative approach of Freeman (1986), the work of sociolinguists such as Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1973-1975) and of applied linguistics such as Wilkins (1976) and VanEk(1975) has helped in reorienting thinking about the nature of language. The communicative approach is based on ideas about language and about the purpose of language learning. Language is used in a context which determines and constrains the choices that language users use for different purposes. The communicative competence added a lot of dimensions:

\* Added the language functions as apologizing, persuading, conveying information, ...

\* Added dimension of notion which form a general continuum from general concepts of time, space, and relationship to specific topic related notions such as house, home, weather, personal identification.

Language was seen and used for communicative purposes in situations with other people, which call the learner to pay attention to both the content of language and its appropriateness with respect to formality, non-verbal behaviour, tone, etc. Communicative situation may include ordering food in a restaurant, buying stamps in a post office. These can be added into the syllabus grid.

The proficiency movement and proficiency guidelines have emphasized a four skill approach to syllabus design. For some teachers, these skills are given as students have some combination of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students need to know how to structure a paragraph, how to use cohesive devices, and editing techniques.

In communicative approach, language is not something one learns but something one does. Teachers must conceive their syllabus in terms of what students will do in the classroom as activities and tasks. Tasks are defined as activities that require learners to arrive to an outcome from given information through some process of thought. Tasks are also defined as projects in which learners work together to produce something. There are also tasks of real world and pedagogical tasks. Real world tasks are using language outside the classroom like listening to radio, reading a newspaper, or using a train schedule. Pedagogic tasks are ones that would not occur outside the classroom but help students develop skills necessary to function in the world.

Competency based approach to syllabus design was developed in the United States in response to the influx of immigrants in the 1970’s- 1980’s. it is a combination of communicative and task based approaches. They were used in a course to teach immigrants who have immediate needs with respect to functioning in English, in the community, and in the work place. Competencies are task oriented goals written in terms of behavioral objectives that include language behaviour. There are language and behaviour necessary to function in situations related to living in the community and finding and maintaining a job. Competencies related to living in the community are also called life skills or vocational skills.

The role of culture is crucial in language learning. Culture provides a broader and deeper context for how one knows or determines what is valued, appropriate, or even feasible, and why. Damen (1986) called it the 5th dimension of language learning. Culture enables connection to be made between language and how to use it, when to use it, whom to expect it from, and what kind of of respond to expect after you use it. A teacher who views language as an integral part of syllabus might include the role of culture in human interaction. To understand and interpret the cultural aspects of language and behaviour, and developing skills in behaving and responding in culturally appropriate ways in addition to knowledge of the target culture.

Learning language through or with conjunction with the subject matter will be the focus of the course. This course is called content-based because they integrate a particular content with language teaching aims. The content may be school or work related content, history, economics, or computer. Content-based course may teach the subject matter directly or use the subject matter as the basis for language learning lesson. The target language may be a means for and a by product of learning the subject matter. Content-based approach plays a crucial role in bilingual programs for children as well as ESP courses and EAP course.

Another major aspect that should be added in conceptualizing the content is learners not just the language. The emphasis on learners has introduced other important elements such as: attitudes, self- confidence, motivation, and the learners’ approach to learning that include understanding and developing one’ learning skills. To improve learners’ self-confidence or helping learners become aware of the target culture may be explicitly included in the syllabus. Development of the definitions, taxonomies, and methods for developing learning strategies is one way in which the emphasis on helping learners become self- aware has influenced syllabus design. Fisher combine elements from a content-based approach, a learner training based approach, academic language based approach; for each area, she developed awareness and attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Some teachers allow students to participate in determining the content of their course so that what they do in class gives them tools to cope with and change what they will encounter outside the classroom is the focus of the course. They ask learners to engage in participatory processes that help them understand the social context of their problem and take control of their personal and professional lives through work in the classroom.

The complete syllabus grid will be as follows:

