**Content**

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**4.1 Definition**

Content means the language items that are included in the syllabus.

It means the subject matter of linguistic interaction or the topics that are included in the language skills.

Content conceptualization “is a matter of articulating what you will explicitly focus on in the course and knowing why you have made those choices. It also involves choosing the organizing principle or principles that will help to tie the content together” (Graves, 1995, p. 38).

According to Graves (1995, pp. 37-38), “the process of conceptualizing content is a multifaceted one which involves:

* Thinking about what you want your students to learn in the course, given who they are, their needs, and the purpose of the course;
* making decisions about what to include and emphasize what to drop;
* organizing the content in a way that help you to see the relationship among various elements so that you can make decision about objectives, materials, sequence and evaluation”.

**4.2 Framework of Content**

Graves (1995, pp. 43-51) suggested three different categories for conceptualizing content: language, learning and learner, and social context.

**4.2.1 Focus on Language**

* **Linguistic skills:** are those that focus on the systems that underlie the way language is structured; its grammar (words classification, word function, the order of words, etc.), pronunciation (sound pronunciation, sound combination pronunciation, word stress, etc.), and lexicon (content words, word formation suffixes, etc.).
* **Situation:** are the contexts in which one uses language. They typically include places where transacts businesses such as the supermarket, or the travel agency, or places where one interacts with others such as at a party
* **Topics/Themes:** are what language is used to talk or write about. They may be personal, such as family, food, hobbies; they may be professional and relate to employment; they may be sociocultural and relate to education, political system, or cultural customs.
* **Communicative functions:** function refer to the purposes for which one uses language…they include functions such as persuading, expressing preference, and apologizing.
* **Competencies:** they unite situations, linguistic skills, and functions. A competency attempts to specify and teach the language and behavior needed to perform in a given situation.
* **Task:** are activities that are based on interactions whose purpose is to get something. The assumption is that one develops language competence through action and interaction, not as a result of the interaction.
* **Content:** content is subject matter other than language itself. Students learn another subject (content) such as history or math or computer science through the L2.
* **Skills:** the four skills are the channels or modes for using and understanding the language. One (or more) of the four skills is the organizing principle for a syllabus it means that the emphasis is on learning the skill itself as distinct from using the skill for another purpose.
* **Genre:** language at the discourse level can also viewed in terms of genre, communicative events or whole texts which accomplish certain purposes within a social context.

**4.2.2 Focus on Learning and the Learner**

* **Affective goals:** include developing a positive and confident attitude towards oneself as a learner, learning to take risks and to learn from one’s mistakes, and develop a positive attitude towards the target language and culture.
* **Interpersonal skills:** involve how one interacts with others to promote learning. These are skills learners develop and use to interact with each other and the teacher in the classroom. These skills are the basis for effective groupwork and cooperative learning.
* **Learning strategies:** focus on how one learns. They are the cognitive and metacognitive strategies we use to learn effectively and efficiently, such as monitoring our speech or developing strategies for remembering new vocabulary.

**4.2.3 Focus on Social Context**

* **Sociolinguistic skills:** involve choosing and using the appropriate language and extralinguistic behavior for the setting, the purpose, the role and relationship. These skills include knowing the level of politeness to use, exhibiting appropriate extralingistic behavior.
* **Sociocultural skills:** involve understanding cultural aspects of identity, values, norms, and customs such as those underlying kinship relationships, expectations of men and women, or gift-giving.
* **Sociopolitical skills:** involve learning to think critically and take action for effective change in order to participate effectively in one’s community. These skills include learning how to navigate systems such as medical, school, and employment systems, to know one’s rights and responsibilities within them and to take action to make positive changes.

**4.3 Selection and Grading of Content**

**4.3.1 Factors for Specifying Language Course Content**

The general factors according to which learning content for language courses is selected are summarized by Steyn (1981, p.6-9) and Deppenaar (1993, p. 29) as follows:

* The cultural values andentrance levels of pupils;
* the aims and objectives of the language course;
* the long-term and the short-term usefulness of the content to the pupils;
* the relevance, significance and appeal of the content and
* the compatibility of content to the teacher’s approach and attitude.

**4.3.2 Grading of Content**

Stern (1983, p.489) points out that linguistic grading is done in terms of frequency, range, availability, coverage and learnability of items.

* **Frequency:** it would make sense, especially at beginning levels, to place first items which are repeated more by native speakers.
* **Range:** items that are related to each other are grouped together.
* **Availability:** items that are available in the mother tongue are place first.
* **Coverage:** some words and structures have greater coverage (scope for use) than others. So, the items that could be used in more situations are placed first.
* **Learnability:** some structural or lexical items are easier for students to learn than others. Thus, we teach easier items first and then increase the level of difficulty as the students’ level rises.