



SECOND UNIT

Syllabus



Título: gossip girls 1066564 Autor: lusi
Tomado de: <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/1066564>

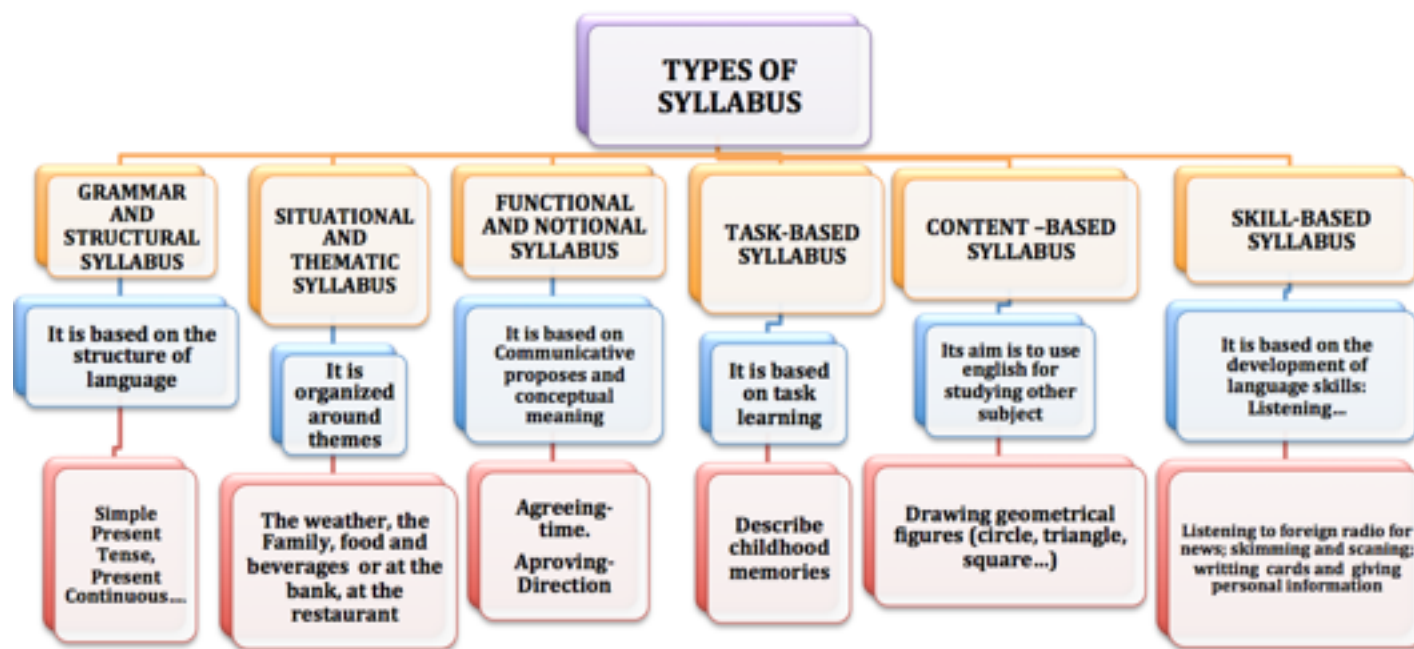
First topic Overview

In language teaching contexts, there are six types of language syllabus: grammar syllabus, situational syllabus, notional syllabus, task-based syllabus, skill-based syllabus and content-based syllabus.

There are many types of syllabus in language teaching and they offer different resources and strategies to be used in the classroom. Knowing the syllabus types will help us to decide and choose the one(s) that is appropriate to our teaching goals and our situations and conditions. The following are some types of language teaching syllabus that will be discussed (Lingualinks Library, 1999).

Definition

For teaching foreign languages is important to know the different educational tools that are essential in the teacher's planning, for that reason, we must define the term "syllabus": "a syllabus is a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students' learning" (Breen, 1984, p 54). At the same time, other authors define syllabus "as a statement of what is to be



Fuente: Producción propia

learnt” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p 80); in this sense) Candlin (1984, cited in Mohammad, 2008, p 1) suggests a different perspective implying that syllabuses are “social constructions, produced interdependently in classrooms by teachers and learners...”. Finally, the syllabus is a framework where the teachers and students can find what to teach, how to teach, what to learn and how to learn, based on the objectives, where content, structure, methodology, activities, material and resources are organized.

Grammar or structural syllabus

1. Language teaching has been dominated by grammar syllabus for several centuries and it focuses on grammar rules and structures. The content of the language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures of the language being taught.

Steps to design a grammar syllabus:

- The teacher chooses the structures that the students have to learn according to the level and the goals proposed in the course.

- The teacher chooses a set of vocabulary to be learned together with forms and structures.
- The teacher decides the main words according to the topics to be learned, for example: simple past tense: adverbs of time (yesterday, last night, last month, etc.), the use of the auxiliary “did”, the auxiliary verbs: was, were, and so on.
- The teacher designs exercises to put in practice the structures, vocabulary and sentences pattern (complete, translate, re write, etc).

In this sense, students learn from the simpler to more complex structures and they may learn the structures more easily; however, students get worried about grammar in communicative activities because they feel afraid to make mistakes.

A notional or functional syllabus

“The content of language teaching is a collection of the functions or the notions that are performed when the language is used” (Wilkins, 1976, p 8).

Steps to design a notional-functional syllabus:

- The teacher makes a list of communication functions of the language that students will learn (expressing agreement and disagreement, greeting people, apologizing, etc).
- The teacher writes a list of the semantic notions (meanings) based on the culture and the context of the speakers of the language (likes and dislikes, formal and informal greetings, values, etc).
- The teacher applies the functions and the notions together into learning tasks, for instance, Introducing yourself; expressing likes and dislikes; giving personal information, describing family members.

An important aspect of the notional/functional syllabus is that students learn how to use the target language to express their own ideas, notions and points of views. This syllabus promotes language learners using the target language.

A situational or topical syllabuses

In this syllabus the contents are organized according to situations in which students learn.

Steps to design a situational syllabus:

- The teacher makes a list of communication situations that will take place (the weather, food and drinks, family life, free time activities and so on).

- The teacher makes a list of topics, grammatical forms and vocabulary and sequence them (simple present tense, frequency adverbs).
- The teacher classifies the topics, forms and structures and fit them with communication situations (One day on the beach, at the restaurant).

The teaching units below are language materials that have been developed based on situational syllabus.

Unit 1. At the library.

Unit 2. At the office.

Unit 3. At the park.

Unit 4. At the restaurant.

Unit 5. Traveling.

Unit 6. At a party.

An important advantage of a situational syllabus is that students learn how to use the target language in an authentic communication. This syllabus is good for language learners who are preparing to go to a country where the language is spoken. This situational teaching has the goal of teaching specific language content that occurs in situations.

A skill-based syllabus

This syllabus is based on the development of the language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) using the target language. Examples of skills in using the target language

may include reading for the main idea, writing good paragraphs, and listening for the main idea.

Steps to design a skill-based syllabus:

- The teacher makes a list of language skills that students need to acquire.
- The teacher makes a list of topics, grammatical forms, structures and vocabulary and sequences according to language skills.

The following is an example of a skill based syllabus:

Listening: listening for specific information.

Reading: reading and answering a questionnaire.

Writing: writing and replying to invitations.

Speaking: talking about past events.

This is a syllabus where the students can develop their communicative competence using different resources.

A task-based syllabus

The content of language teaching includes a series of purposeful tasks that language learners need to perform; tasks are defined as activities that are needed when using the target language (Nunan, 1988).

Steps to design a task-based syllabus:

- The teacher makes a list of abilities or tasks that students need to develop.

- The teacher writes a list of topics, grammatical forms and vocabulary and sequences them.
- The teacher organizes the topics, forms and structures and fit them with the tasks.

Example:

Second unit: reading: All in the memory

Task:

Preparation for tasks. Listen to descriptions of childhood memories.

Task: describe a childhood memory (extended, speaking and writing).

After task. Ask questions and present an oral report (pronunciation, using intonation).

One important advantage of the task based syllabus is that students learn to carry out activities using the target language. Language teaching through task-based syllabus arises during the performance of a given task. The disadvantage is that students often learn to perform tasks and language learning is less emphasized.

A content-based syllabus

The primary purpose of instruction is to teach some content or information using the language that the students are also learning, in other words, the learners use the foreign language to study other subjects such as: Science, Maths, Biology, etc., and this way, they learn not only the subject, but they improve their language use at the same time. This principle is operated in immersion

Some syllabus types may be combined with others.

Richards and Rogers show that a content-based syllabus is similar to a skill-based syllabus, because on the first syllabus, learners are often develop language skills so on the second syllabus the students might read and take notes, listen and write a summary, or respond orally to things they have read or written.

“The types of syllabus mentioned above are not the only types of syllabus that are commonly known in the context of communicative teaching. There are some other types that are not very popular, such as interactional syllabus and learner-centered syllabus” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001b, p164).

teaching in countries as Canada where children of English-speaking parents are sent to French language schools for their primary education (Snow, 1989).

Steps to design a content based syllabus:

- The teacher chooses the topics from the content (subject), for example in Biology: ecosystem, cell, human body, etc.
- The teacher makes a list of topics, grammatical forms and vocabulary and adjusts them to the topics.

For example:

Subject: biology .

Topic: cell.

Vocabulary: parts of the cell.

Structure: simple present and present continuous tense.

The teacher organizes the forms and structures and adjusts them to the topics.

The benefit of a content-based syllabus is that students feel satisfied with the purpose of learning the target language and at the same time, they are acquiring new information. Finally, this syllabus is often used in immersion programs.

Bibliographic references

- Breen, M.P. (1984). Process Syllabuses for the Language Classroom. In Brumfit, C.J. (ed.) General English Syllabus Design Pergamon Press Ltd. and the British Council.
- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). English for Specific Purposes: A Learning Centred Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- LinguaLinks Library. 1999. How to design language syllabus. SIL International. Retrieved December 7, 2001, from <http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/LANGUAGELEARNING>
- Mohseni Far, M. (2008). An Overview of Syllabuses in English Language Teaching, Karen's Linguistics Issues, p 1
- Nunan, D. (1988). The learner Centred Curriculum. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). Approaches and methods in language Teaching (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 164.
- Snow, M; Met, M. & Genesse, F. (1989): A conceptual framework for the integration of language and content in second/foreign language instruction. In TESOL Quarterly, 2, p, 201 – 217
- Wilkins, D. (1976): Notional syllabuses. London: Oxford University Press, p. 8