**Curriculum and Syllabus**

**Curriculum (***n)*

1. Curriculum is an overall plan for a course or programme. It includes the following areas:

***a***the educational purpose of the programme.

***b*** the content of the programme and the sequence in which it will be taught, (also known as the *syllabus*)

***c***the teaching procedures and learning activities that will be employed (i.e. *methodology*)

***d***the means used to assess student learning (i.e. *assessment* and testing)

***e***the means used to assess whether the programme has achieved its goals ( i.e. *evaluation*)

**2**. Curriculum is the total programme of formal studies offered by a school or institution, as in *the secondary school curriculum*

**Curriculum Alignment** *n*

The extent to which the different elements of the curriculum (goals, syllabus, teaching, assessment) match. For example if a curriculum is organized communicatively, but assessment procedures are based on grammatical criteria or if teaching materials in a course did not reflect the objectives there would be a lack of curriculum alignment.

**curriculum guide** *n*

A written document describing the academic curriculum of a school and usually containing a description of its teaching philosophy, its goals and objectives, and its methods of teaching and assessment.

**curriculum ideology** *n*

The beliefs and values which provide the philosophical justification for educational programmes and the kinds of aims they contain. An ideology represents a particular point of view concerning the most important knowledge and value from the culture. Common curriculum ideologies in language teaching are:

1 *academic rationalism*: the view that the curriculum should stress the intrinsic value of the subject matter and its role in developing the learner’s intellect, humanistic values and rationality. This justification is often used for justifying the teaching of classical languages.

2 *social and economic efficiency*: the view that the curriculum should focus on the practical needs of learners and society and the role of an educational programme in producing learners who are economically productive. This is the commonest aim associated with the teaching of English.

3 *learner-centredness*: the view that the curriculum should address the individual needs of learners, the role of individual experience, and the *curriculum development* need to develop awareness, self-reflection, critical thinking, learner strategies and other qualities and skills believed to be important for learners to develop.

4 *social-reconstructionism* : the view that schools and teaching should play a role in addressing social injustices and inequality. Education is not seen as a neutral process, and schools should engage teachers and learners in an examination of important social issues and seek ways of resolving them. This is the ideology of critical pedagogy.

5 *cultural pluralism*: the view that schools should prepare students to participate in several different cultures and not merely the culture of the dominant social and economic group.

1. **The Syllabus**

There is a kind of disagreement over what a ‘syllabus’ is. According to Nunan (1988:5) syllabus design is approached in two different ways: a narrow traditional one and a broad more recent view .The first approach considers syllabus and methodology as two different things. Thus, *syllabus* is more a question of selecting and grading the content [the ‘what’], whereas methodology implies the selection of learning tasks and activities [the ‘how’].

These two main stream thoughts gave birth to two different syllabus kinds: the product and the process syllabuses. According to Nunan “…‘*process*’ is a series of actions directed towards some end. While ‘*product*’ is the end itself. For example, a list of grammatical structures is a product. Classroom drilling undertaken by learners in order to learn the structures is a process. The interaction of two speakers as they communicate with each other is a process. A tape recording of their conversation is a product.”(ibid:12)

Syllabuses such as the structural (or grammatical) syllabus, the situational syllabus and the notional (or functional-notional) syllabus are the result of traditional considerations to syllabus design. All of them are product-oriented syllabuses. These are syllabuses ‘in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of instruction’ (ibid:27)

* 1. **Syllabus Design**

Syllabus design is mainly a matter of selecting items to be learnt and their gradation into an appropriate sequence. There are many kinds of language syllabuses, all of which can be used as a starting point in the planning of a language course-book. Whatever type it is, however, writers and course designers should bear in mind a number of elements while designing their material. When they have an appropriate view of how their theories and conceptions of learning might be translated into suitable activities, they will have to decide about what topics to include. This will turn around what the learners find engaging, what research has found in this area, and the capacity for a good exploitation of the topics they might choose. It will also be essential to think about the kind of culture that the material will reflect, and to consider a sort of balance in terms of the representation of different groups in society: racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic. Once these decisions have been taken, course book writers may focus on the organization of their material, namely the syllabus.

As Nunan (1988:5) states it ‘Syllabus design is mainly concerned with the selection and grading of content’. Yet, According to Harmer(2001:295), every type of syllabus needs to be developed on the basis of certain criteria, such as ‘learnability ’and ‘frequency’, which can inform decisions about selection and ordering.

**2.1.1 Syllabus Design Criteria**

Harmer (2001) came out with the belief that when syllabus designers put syllabuses together they have to think about each item for inclusion on the basis of a number of criteria. The criteria he came out with are described in what comes below.

**2.1.1.1 Learnability**

Some structural or lexical items are easier for students to learn than others. Consequently, simpler language items are to be taught at first place then increase the level of difficulty as the learner’s language level improves. Learnability implies that, at beginner levels, it is simpler to deal with the uses of ***was*** and ***were*** right after teaching ***is*** and ***are***, rather than presenting the ***third conditional*** after *is* and *are*.

**2.1.1.2 Frequency**

The inclusion of items which are more frequent in language, than those which are occasionally used by native speakers seems to have more sense especially at beginning level. The use of *see to* express vision is less used than that which is equivalent with *understand (eg. Oh, I see).* It is, therefore, more logic to teach that second meaning of *see which is more frequent in use than the first one.*

***2.1.1.3 Coverage***

Some words and structures have greater coverage (scope for use) than others. Thus it might be decided, on the basis of coverage, to introduce ***the going to***future before the ***present continuous with future reference***, if it could be shown that *going to* could be used in more situations than the present continuous.

***2.1.1.4 Usefulness***

The reason that words like ***book*** and ***pen*** figure so highly in classroom (in spite of the fact that they might not be used so frequently in real language use) is due to their usefulness in that situation. Similarly, words dealing with family members take place early on in a pupil’s learning life because they are useful in the context of what pupils are linguistically able to talk about.