Report

WORKSHOP NO.5/98

THE SPECIFICATIONS OF OBJECTIVES FOR LEARNER AUTONOMY AND CULTURAL AWARENESS WITHIN SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Malta, 7-11 April 1998

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1 Introduction

This workshop was organised as the result of cooperation between the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Malta. Malta as one of the founder members of the Graz Centre has contributed to its activities in several ways. On this occasion it hosted the Workshop where, in addition to 27 participants from member states of the partial agreement, another 20 Maltese educators from both the state and non-state education sectors participated.

This workshop draws on the experience of previous Council of Europe workshops:
- New Style Workshops 13A and 13B, “Language and culture awareness in language learning/teaching (L2 and L1) for the development of learner autonomy (age 11-18)”. Workshop 13A took place in Genoa, Italy in December 1993, and the follow-up workshop 13B took place in Malta in March 1996.
- ECML Workshop “Awareness for Autonomy: the missing links. Language and culture awareness in language learning/teaching for the development of learner autonomy”, held in Graz in March 1997.

2 Aims

This workshop was intended to build on the insights of these two events while focusing on learner autonomy (LA), cultural awareness (CA) and syllabus development. Within this framework the objectives of the workshop were for practitioners from different countries to
- Share their experiences
- Explore routes in the specification of objectives, resources, processes for LA, CA and syllabus development
- At the end of the workshop to engage in a research and development phase by forming networks in order to disseminate the work.

3 Organisation of the Workshop

3.1 Organising and animating team

On behalf of the Maltese authorities, the workshop was organised by
Mr Andrew Buhagiar, Director, Student Services & International Relations
Mr Paul Attard, Assistant Director, Planning & Development

The animators were:
Antoinette Camilleri (Coordinator) Head, Department of Arts & Languages in Education, University of Malta.
David Newby, Graz University, Austria.
Berta Kogoj, Board of Education and Sport, Slovenia
Albane Cain, Institut National de Recherche Pedagogique, France.
3.2 Participants

Almost all the participants were directly involved in syllabus evaluation and development for modern languages at secondary level (age 11 – 18). They also had a specific interest in improving syllabuses by introducing elements of cultural awareness, and by providing means of enhancing learner autonomy through the syllabus.

3.3 Languages and Cultures

The workshop was conducted in English and French with simultaneous translation. The international participants enjoyed listening to the Maltese language outside the formal meetings! Throughout the workshop there was heavy emphasis on culture especially in relation to Good Friday and Easter celebrations as the workshop took place that week. The international participants brought plenty of realia representing their cultures to share, while Maltese traditions gave an additional cultural taste to the workshop events. In fact, one of the highlights of the workshop was the activity in the Maltese community on Thursday morning which generated great enthusiasm and intercultural learning!

4 Workshop Programme

The timetable is presented in Appendix 1. The programme was sub-divided:
Day 1 (Tuesday): Introduction, getting to know each other, sharing among participants of experience and information relating to the themes of the workshop.
Day 2 (Wednesday): Input by the animators on the three themes of LA, CA, and syllabus development.
Day 3 (Thursday): Hands-on activities by the participants in groups – activity on cultural awareness and learner autonomy in the community.
Day 4 (Friday): A simulation activity on syllabus design for LA and CA, and a cultural event (visit to the Good Friday Procession).
Day 5 (Saturday): The setting up of international networks for further dissemination, research and development, and conclusion of the workshop.

5 Official Opening

The Maltese Minister of Education and Culture, the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, opened the workshop officially. Opening addresses were also made by Mr Charles Mizzi, the Director General of Education, Mr Andrew Buhagiar (see below), and Dr David Newby on behalf of the ECML.
5.1 Welcome by Mr Andrew Buhagiar
Director of Education, Support Services and International Relations
Member of the Governing Board of the ECML

“L-Ghodwa t-Tajba”, Good Morning and Welcome to workshop 5/98 of the European Centre for Modern Languages, which is the first activity of its kind to be held in Malta.

Soon after achieving independence in 1964 Malta started to play an active role in all the major activities of the Council of Europe, and more recently in that organisations’ work in the field of Modern Languages through the several programmes including the last phase Language Learning and European Citizenship.

Given the context of the intensive activity in the field of Curriculum Development and Implementation that the Maltese Education Division has undergone during the last two years; and bearing in mind that we are literally on the eve of important developments in the area of syllabus design, Malta could not but grasp the opportunity of hosting this particular workshop. The European Centre for Modern Languages has provided us with a unique opportunity of holding a structured European dialogue on an educational theme of high relevance for years to come.

We are extremely honoured to have with us experts and practitioners in the field of syllabus design from nearly thirty European countries. They bring with them a wealth of experience and commitment which they are offering to share with twenty Maltese participants. The Maltese participants, too, come from a representative cross-section of the educational system at all levels. Together they should provide us with just the right mix of competent contributors to an interactive and intensive workshop atmosphere. We welcome you all to this workshop.

6 Introduction to the Context and the Aims of the Workshop
by Antoinette Camilleri

This workshop introduces a new perspective to syllabus development. The syllabus by itself has been dealt with at other workshops (eg. ECML Workshops 7 and 9 in 1995). However, I believe, this is the first time that an ECML workshop is using the syllabus as the organisational tool for managing learning in terms of objectives, resources and processes for learner autonomy and cultural awareness.

Introduction to the theme

By way of introduction to the academic content of this workshop, I would like to quote from the Conclusions and Recommendations of New Style Workshop 13B held in Malta in 1996. As to Aims it says that (p. 147):
“In addition to the development of the learners’ communicative competence, modern language programmes in schools should aim at developing their progressive independence of thought and action combined with social responsibility, as well as their acceptance of, and respect for the cultures of other peoples… Acceptance should be based on knowledge, understanding and appreciation. This aim involves analysing, and where appropriate questioning the learners’ own culture as well as the culture of others”.

As for Curriculum development it says:
“Curriculum development in respect of modern languages should take the above aims fully into account… Attention should be given to the strategies of innovation needed when the pattern of working in a school is to be changed”.

With regard to resources:
“Materials suitable for use in classes oriented towards the development of intercultural understanding and autonomous working … are urgently needed. Resource centres, where teachers can meet, discuss and consult information sources, including teaching and learning materials, should be more generally available”.

The Syllabus

In talking about the ‘syllabus’ in the way we are going to do in this workshop, I think we shall be introducing to some of you, at least, a new paradigm. To my mind, the normal state of affairs in many countries is that of having an established syllabus, more often than not prescribed by a central authority, to be followed in schools. The new paradigm tackled here is one where the syllabus is negotiated on a day to day, week by week, or month by month basis between teachers and learners.

I’m sure it must have occurred to you, especially those familiar with experiments in learner autonomy, to question the compatibility of syllabus design with learner autonomy. The two will become compatible when we change our understanding of who, and how the syllabus comes into being. Here, we look upon the syllabus as THE ORGANISATION OF LEARNING EVENTS, and we shall focus on AIMS, RESOURCES AND PROCESSES.

The Syllabus is required because we need a framework to organise new information to guide our search for more knowledge, to help us decide what should be selected for attention.

We need a Methodology to allow us to explore and to help us make sense of the results of those explorations. We need a Theory for its power to generalise and extend our knowledge. At the same time we need to avoid becoming victims of our own knowledge, theories and beliefs.

The philosophical understandings of the nature and function of education, eg. in the promotion of European citizenship and even good world citizenship; the humanistic values of peace, tolerance and democracy; and the urgent economic needs of the individual and the country, such as employment, all feed in their own way to justify
the need for this new paradigm of syllabus development, autonomous learning and cultural awareness.

Similarly, from the classroom methodology point of view, the concepts of LA and CA have been influential for a number of years. Undoubtedly, CA enhances communication with others, and develops the learners’ potential for understanding themselves and others as cultural and linguistic beings. The promotion of LA, similarly, prepares the learners better for the more and more complex society and world of learning, and enhances their ability to organise and direct their own learning. The learner himself/herself actually becomes the major resource in the learning experience.

7 The Syllabus

7.1 The Task of Syllabus Design

by David Newby

Introduction

In this paper I shall discuss the role of the syllabus designer, consider different ways of approaching the tasks involved and suggest how syllabus designers might bring greater coherence into the decision-making processes that are necessary when drawing up a syllabus.

Syllabus and curriculum

The distinction that is made in English, though not in some other languages, between syllabus and curriculum is, at first sight, simple and uncontroversial. A syllabus might be defined as 'the specification of aims and the selection and grading of content to be used as a basis for planning FL courses', a definition which still leaves open one of the most important questions of how the 'content' should be specified. This question will form the core of my second paper. An FL syllabus can in turn be seen as part of a wider, more general curriculum, which not only goes beyond specifying the content of a single school subject but also includes aspects of policy or of organisation, such as how many languages should be studied, at what ages etc.

It seems to me, however, that in recent years the distinction between the two terms has become somewhat blurred, due on the one hand to the nature of modern language learning and the diverse forms it takes and on the other, to the fact that language learning is being seen increasingly not only in terms of the linguistic, functional potential it offers, but as a means of enriching the social and cultural education of the learner. As a result, not only do many school curricula take an interdisciplinary approach to school subjects, which is reflected in the increasing use of project work or the integration of 'language across the curriculum' into school timetables, but also the growing focus on learner autonomy and modes of implementing its principles. This, together with the use of technical innovations such as the internet and e-mail in language learning have all resulted in a broader
specification of modes of learning which are restricted neither to a single subject nor to the confines of the classroom itself.

Overall purposes and effects of a syllabus

There appear to be two overall purposes underlying most national syllabuses: the first, to regularise learning and teaching to varying extents in order to achieve some degree of uniformity; the second, to influence learning and teaching in various ways. Depending on the desired degree of regularisation, a syllabus may at one end of the spectrum attempt to impose uniformity or, at the other, wish to encourage diversity. This in turn reflects the need to control learning or a wish to direct learning. Van Lier (1996:8) refers to the latter as 'empowering'; to the former as 'disempowering'.

The image in many teachers' minds of a prescribed, authoritarian, top-down syllabus imposed on teachers by ministry officials - an obviously disempowering approach - seems in recent years, and following a trend towards greater democratisation within educational systems, to be gradually giving way to a more 'empowering' approach in which teachers and even learners take an active role in the decision-making process.

This aspect is linked to the second overall reason for having a national syllabus, which is to influence the teaching and learning process in some way, be it to prescribe or proscribe, to guide, to recommend, to support, to clarify, to motivate, to reform or whatever. Clearly, the potential of a syllabus to exert both positive and unintended negative influences on the learning process is considerable.

The syllabus within an operational framework

In recent years, due not least of all to work that has taken place within the framework of the Council of Europe's activities in general and to the influence of the Threshold Level in particular, national syllabuses throughout Europe have moved closer to each other concerning their specification of objectives and content. The study carried out by Courtillon, Girard, Page, and Richterich on behalf of the Modern Languages Project Group and published by Girard et al., 1994, which compares a number of national syllabuses, shows many common features but also some important differences between them. This diversity may be the result of institutional differences, of different culture-specific aims or philosophies (for example, the new Austrian syllabus lists among its general aims 'health and physical fitness'), of different 'learning cultures' or of different degrees of acceptance of modern trends and approaches in theoretical areas of language learning, such as the communicative approach, learner autonomy etc. Of course, every syllabus operates within certain contextual constraints and as Johnson (1989:18) says, one of the challenges of the syllabus designer is to reconcile 'what is desirable (policy) with what is acceptable and possible (pragmatics)'. These constraints will differ from country to country.

In addition, it is important to remember that a syllabus is only one element of an overall 'operational framework', which may begin with policy-making, include materials development and end up with what Girard (1994: 108) in his model terms 'teaching and learning acts'. In other words, the success of a syllabus can only be
assessed on the basis of the actual effect it has on learning and teaching. Johnson warns against the 'procedural display' of many syllabuses, which he defines as 'behaviour which enables participants to appear to be doing a good job when in fact they are not', a perhaps not uncommon feature of what might be termed 'ivory-tower syllabuses' which ignore the teaching and learning acts.

General questions relating to design and role of syllabus

In order to take a structured and coherent approach to syllabus design it might be useful to consider the following questions within the decision-making stages. I have added a few key words to indicate possible answers, some of which might be negative, unintended outcomes.¹

1. Why is a syllabus needed and what are its general aims?
   regulate, direct, empower/disempower etc
2. What effect is it likely to have on language teaching and learning?
   innovation, motivation, clarification, guidance, resentment, confusion etc
3. Who is going to use it?
   teachers, textbook writers, students, no one etc
4. Who is going to design it?
   Ministry officials, educational experts, teachers, learners etc
5. How will it be drawn up?
   Research-based, informed brainstorming, needs analysis, student questionnaires etc
6. What should it specify?
   (to be discussed later)
7. How will it be implemented?
   Support (guides, seminars) for teachers, parents, students etc
8. How will it be evaluated?
   By whom, form, ongoing etc

Democratising syllabus design

One result of the group work activity which followed this talk was a fairly general feeling among delegates that the role of teachers in the process of syllabus development is too small; there still appears to be a tendency for national syllabuses to follow a top-down approach and for a syllabus to be aimed at the materials writer rather than the classroom teacher. The wish for a move towards some kind of 'negotiated syllabus' and for greater consideration of means of implementation was expressed by several groups. Clearly, there is still a need for those working in this field to consider ways of avoiding a 'disempowering' syllabus and of integrating the perspective of 'teaching and learning acts' into the research and developmental work that accompanies syllabus design. On this matter I shall let van Lier (1996: 20) have the final word:

'A map is not the territory. In a similar way, the syllabus is not the journey.'

¹ Note: This list of questions formed the basis of the following groupwork activity.
Experience, appreciation, criticism, and so on, are not laid down in the syllabus, they are merely made available by it, and brought to it by the learners.’

(For References see 7.2).

7.2 Approaches to Syllabus Design
by David Newby

Introduction

In 7.1 I considered some issues relating to the task of syllabus design. Here the focus will be the content of syllabuses. I shall outline some general approaches to specifying content and consider how recent developments in the field might influence this process. I shall further discuss different forms of objective specification, particularly with regard to cultural awareness (CA) and learner autonomy (LA) and consider how recent Council of Europe publications approach these areas.

Trends and approaches to syllabus design

If we examine national syllabuses and read theoretical works in this area (the two do not necessarily move in the same direction or at the same pace), it is possible to identify four different approaches to content specification in syllabuses, though since these approaches overlap to a certain extent and are not necessarily mutually exclusive, it might be more accurate to talk of perspectives which will lead to different 'entry points' to the task. Examples of all these perspectives can be found in the posters that delegates to this workshop have put on display. The four approaches are summarised in Figure 1.

The first approach, which consists largely of listing language forms, usually grammatical structures or lexical fields and examples, might be considered 'theoretically obsolete' nowadays, but in fact is not an uncommon form of specification with regard to grammar, where traditions die hard.

The 'unit of communication' perspective draws on the theoretical work of Wilkins (1976), Munby (1978) etc. and, above all, on the Threshold Level, which takes as its starting point an analysis of situational, notional and functional, and behavioural, skill-based components of communication. As with the first approach, this is language-oriented with the difference that its categories are meaning-based. As far as the role of the learner is concerned, he/she is not seen as a knower of forms but as a user of purposeful language. The poster display at this workshop shows that of the four approaches referred to, it is this that seems to take the central role in modern syllabus design, reflecting some kind of consensus of general principles of 'communicative teaching' in most European countries.

The third approach, which takes as its entry point 'views of learning', reflects a general shift that has taken place in FL teaching over the past decade towards striving for a greater understanding of the learner who is doing the learning rather
than the teacher who is doing the teaching or the language that is being learnt. The flames of this shift have been fanned by different winds, which - for differing reasons – give centre stage to the learner: the Krashen ‘acquisition’ view, which attempts to map insights from studies of L1 acquisition onto second or foreign language learning; the 'humanistic’ orientation of Carl Rodgers, Earl Stevick etc., which stresses affective aspects of language learning; theories of instructed - as opposed to naturalistic - learning processes, styles and strategies, which have a long history but increasingly draw on coherent psychological models, such as those of Vygotsky. These various trends have led to a crystallisation of ideas, whose core rationale is reflected in terms such as 'learner-centred', 'learning to learn' or by the more general educational-philosophical term 'learner autonomy'. In theoretical works on syllabus design, the learner-based view underlies, amongst others, those of Nunan (1988, 1992) and van Lier (1996). As far as actual national syllabuses are concerned, the influence seems to be relatively small, though growing.²

Figure 1: Four approaches to syllabus design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY POINT</th>
<th>VIEW OF LEARNER</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Language forms</td>
<td>Student as a 'knower' of language</td>
<td>grammatical structures, lexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Units of communication</td>
<td>Student as a user of language</td>
<td>situational and behavioural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>components; notions, functions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>skills, sub-skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Views of learning</td>
<td>Student as a learner of language</td>
<td>learning processes and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>techniques, psychological/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>humanistic components, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Paralinguistic) Competences</td>
<td>Student as a citizen of an international community</td>
<td>socio-cultural competence, use of media, (inter)cultural awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It could be argued that the fourth perspective, which I have termed 'paralinguistic competences' is merely an extension of the third, which is in fact the case. However, I have set up a different category to reflect recent trends which might be summarised

² Fenner (1997:12) notes that principles of learner autonomy have been incorporated into syllabus design in Norway, the Netherlands and Spain.
under the term 'European citizenship', the focus of various Council of Europe workshops. Examples sometimes quoted in connection with the term citizenship show a variety of perspectives ranging from the political/cultural - 'peace', 'tolerance', 'democracy' to the functional - 'employment'. Unlike, the third category of my chart, which is largely 'inward-looking' in that it focuses on the learning processes of each individual learner, this category is 'outward-looking' in that it stresses the learner's role within a community. This may, of course, include his/her 'learning role', for example by using e-mail or by taking part in educational exchanges. Reference to this category can be found in several national syllabuses: to quote one example from the poster display, the phrase 'promotion of the European dimension' can be found in the national syllabus of Cyprus.

As far as the topics of our present workshop are concerned, cultural awareness and learner autonomy, clearly it is by taking the third and fourth approach of the above chart that will lead us to insights concerning the specification of objectives.

Product and process in syllabus design

As with many terms in language teaching, product and process can be used in different ways. I should therefore stress that in this paper I am not referring to the distinction commonly made in communicative teaching with regard to the use of language; for example, the psychological process of reading is often contrasted with the product of reading: the knowledge which results from it. In the context of syllabus design 'product' can be linked to any kind of knowledge, ability or other outcome of learning, be it linguistic, cultural or whatever, whereas 'process' can be seen from different perspectives: psychological - related to learning, including various types of metacognitive processes and consciousness-raising; methodological - related to teaching acts; behavioural or activity-based, such as using the internet, taking part in projects etc. In a nutshell, product concerns what the learner should know; process concerns how the learner might learn or what the teacher might do to facilitate learning.

It is overwhelmingly the case that national syllabuses specify their content as products or outcomes, rather than as processes. A glance at the posters on display at this workshop will confirm this. (This is, of course, not intended as any kind of criticism.) Thus, language tends to be specified in terms of what the learner should know, as short or long-term objectives. Whether the specification is of a form, a meaning or a language function does not alter the fact that it is a product specification. As far as cultural awareness is concerned, objectives also tend to be formulated in terms of products, either as knowledge (the learner should know about customs of a particular culture etc.) or as socio-cultural competence (the learner should know the language and behaviour appropriate to taking a meal with a family of another culture) or as mental states (the learner should be tolerant towards otherness etc).

The product-process debate goes back to the 1980s, with some theoreticians such as Widdowson (1990) taking the view that a syllabus should only be concerned with defining products, whereas others favoured a process-oriented approach, for which
terms such as 'procedural' or 'task-based' syllabuses were coined (see Johnson, 1982:135). At this time, the term process was linked mainly to methodology. Recently, however, process specifications have been applied to learning processes by advocates of a strongly learner-based orientation. For example, van Lier (1996:3) states:

'I will use the term language education curriculum, defining curriculum in a holistic and process sense. It is holistic in the sense that every part and every action must be motivated by and understood in relation to all other parts and actions, in an integrative way; it is process-oriented in the sense that pedagogical interaction is motivated by our understanding of learning rather than by a list of desired competencies, test scores, or other products. The setting of goals and objectives, and the construction and assessment of achievement, are themselves integral parts of the curriculum process, rather than pre-established constraints that are imposed on it from the outside.'

In terms of our previous discussion, van Lier's use of 'holistic' might be linked to the 'paralinguistic competences - citizenship' view of Figure 1. More controversial might be his interpretation of the word 'process', which represents a strong challenge to most existing syllabuses. Whilst the pragmatic constraints operating at the level of national syllabuses would clearly represent an obvious barrier if we were trying to implement his idea of a process approach, I believe that if we have any commitment to principles of learner autonomy, we need to explore possible ways of incorporating a process approach, particularly with regard to cultural awareness.

Specifying objectives for CA and LA: Council of Europe publications

The 1990 version of the Threshold Level included additional categories which reflected the growing interest in cultural awareness and learner autonomy in FL teaching. Some of the categories, with brief examples, are:

**SOCIOCULTURAL COMPONENT**
- eg 'Major public holidays', 'body language'

**LEARNING TO LEARN**
- eg 'The learners can monitor their own progress'

However, unlike the newer major Council of Europe work, A Common European Framework of Reference, the Threshold Level does not go very far in this direction. The main reason for this might be that, in terms of Figure 1, the Framework expands its area of analysis to incorporate categories 3 (views of learning) and in particular 4 (paralinguistic competences). This would seem to result from the fact that the Framework takes a wider view of language, which goes beyond the communication-based core of the Threshold Level and extends its area of analysis to include human

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3 My comments represent my own interpretation of these documents. These views may not be shared by the authors.
thought and non-linguistic behaviour. The different perspectives are represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Both documents follow what might be termed a 'communication model' approach; that is, they take as their starting point the real world as the basis for categorisation and follow the process of generation of language. Whilst the Threshold Level, however, is very much language oriented, the Framework makes an attempt to describe human behaviour in wider terms - for example, there is specification of non-linguistic human activities, such as social skills, 'living skills' and leisure activities. (4.7.1.2.1). This is not to say that language is excluded, of course, but the language categories are embedded within other categories of human cognition and behaviour. This in turn opens up the door to a wider perspective to objective specification, which is - in theory - compatible with a process-oriented, 'citizenship' view of cultural awareness.

Figure 2: Comparison of perspectives in the Threshold Level and the Common European Framework.

| PRIVATE } | THRESHOLD LEVEL |
| Context → Function → Form |

THE REAL WORLD

Thought → Behaviour → Action

+ Learning & Teaching

FRAMEWORK

Of particular interest in this connection would seem to be the 'quatre savoirs' categorisation: savoir, savoir faire, savoir être, savoir apprendre. These are briefly explained in Figure 3, together with examples of how these categories might be relevant in the areas of cultural awareness and learner autonomy.
Figure 3: Common European Framework: Les quatre savoirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>LA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SAVOIR</td>
<td>Declarative knowledge</td>
<td>knowledge of target culture, rituals, history etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SAVOIR FAIRE</td>
<td>Skills and know/how</td>
<td>social skills, leisure skills, showing cultural sensitivity etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SAVOIR ETRE</td>
<td>Existential competence</td>
<td>openness to otherness, willing to distance oneself from conventional attitudes etc</td>
<td>cognitive styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. SAVOIR APPRENDRE</td>
<td>Ability to learn</td>
<td>learning skills and strategies</td>
<td>study skills, heuristic skills, analysing new language, using internet etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admittedly, the parallelism of the 'savoirs' is aesthetically appealing but, I wonder myself if, with the exception of category 1, the word 'savoir' might not be redundant or inaccurate, as is suggested by the authors' English version. But who knows: perhaps if Descartes had been reincarnated in Strasbourg of the 1990s, he might have declared, 'Je sais penser, donc je sais être...'

Whilst I feel these categories to be a useful basis for objective specification, it would seem to me that with the exception of 'savoir apprendre' they are still outcome or product oriented. The interesting - and difficult - task for the syllabus designer and the classroom teacher is to specify the processes by which these savoirs can be developed in terms of teaching and learning acts.

Conclusion

There is clearly a trend in syllabus design on the one hand to broaden perspectives in the direction of 'paralinguistic competences' and on the other to take a more strongly process-based approach. Whilst some may argue that a process approach goes beyond the brief of the syllabus designer, I believe that we do need to give consideration to the implementation of a syllabus, which means that we must pay attention to the process aspect. In other words, syllabuses should at least to some extent include specifications such as tasks inside and outside the classroom and the type of metacognitive strategies outlined by Antoinette Camilleri in Section 9. Various Council of Europe publications point the way in this direction in connection with CA (for example: Byram, M and Zarate, G. 1994; Artal et al, 1997; Byram, 1997). In order to do this syllabus design needs to come closer to the classroom,
which on the one hand will have implications for the way in which syllabuses are
drawn up and on the other, will require us to reconsider the forms of content
specification that we employ in our national syllabuses.

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7.3 Determining Goals and Objectives in Syllabus Design
by Berta Kogoj

The session started with reading a Slovene story about a young blacksmith who had, by using his eyes only, learned his trade for three years only to discover that what he tried to forge resembled no useful tool. The story, among other notions, illustrates the consequences of total absence of clear objectives of an activity.

In the process of planning and teaching it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between goals and objectives. K. Graves (1996) defines goals as “general statements of the overall, long-term purposes of the course and objectives as the specific ways in which goals will be achieved”. Other authors, such as van Ek (1993) and Nunan (1988) define both terms in a similar way.

The formulation of goals and objectives reflects the general orientation, namely who is in the centre of the teaching - learning process. Quite frequently, one set of goals or objectives contains a mixed perspective, that is teacher (teaching) and the student (learning) perspective.

For example:

a) to participate in an enterprising venture developing skill for successful comprehension and production of written and oral texts = goals of learning;

b) to encourage creative, reflective, and factual writing by providing a purposeful focus encouraging students to discover the development of their own learning strategies = goals of teaching

What is the purpose of clearly defined goals and objectives in a syllabus or a course design?

They provide
  • a sense of direction
  • a coherent framework for the teacher
  • a basis for determining which content and activities are appropriate for a course
  • a framework for evaluation of the effectiveness or worth of an activity

(Graves, 1996)

Goals and objectives usually refer to different areas:
  • knowledge
  • skills
  • attitudes
  • values
  • awarenesses
The formulation of goals and objectives differ according to these different areas. For example:

- The students are aware of the importance of reading to obtain information - awareness
- The students have a positive attitude towards reading / are willing to read to obtain information - attitude
- The students can read a newspaper article to find information about celebrating Easter in Malta - skills
- The students know how to read a text in order to obtain information – knowledge.

Nunan (1988) presents four ways in which goals and objectives can be stated:
1. What the teacher plans to do in class.
2. The general goals and philosophy of a teaching institution.
3. Course content.
4. What the learner is supposed to be able to do at the end of a course of study.

The fourth way, namely the description of the intended learning outcomes (performance objectives), traditionally has four dimensions:

- the student as the subject
- an action verb which defines behaviour or performance to be learned - a task statement
- conditions under which the student will demonstrate what is learned - a conditions statement
- minimum level of performance required after instruction - a standards statement

(Finley and Nathan, 1980, quoted in Richards and Lockhart, 1994)

The advantages of these objectives are that they provide possibilities for ranking objectives (taxonomies) and are are relatively easily assessed or tested by traditional means (tests). However, only instructional goals (knowledge, skills) can be measured this way.

Objectives can be ranked according to different levels. In the fifties Bloom’s taxonomy of instructional objectives was very popular and in some contexts it has been revived (English as a Second Language, 1994). On its basis some adaptations have been made (Chamot and O’Malley). These performance objectives are based on the so-called thinking skills. They are defined at six levels:

- knowledge (recall of previously learned material)
- comprehension (grasping the meaning)
- application (using the material in new and concrete situations),
- analysis (breaking down, material so that it is more easily understood)
- synthesis (putting material together to form a new whole)
- evaluation (judging the value of material for a given purpose).

For each level tasks can be defined, such as:

- name the parts of the body, label the parts of the car - knowledge
- explain your typical day, identify the hero of a story - comprehension
- sequence the events in a story, act out a fairy tale - application
• compare two objects / characters, map the best route for your holiday trip - analysis
• design a fashion show, rewrite the story from a foreigner’s point of view - synthesis
• compare the two short stories and tell which one you would recommend to your friends and why; Which book do you like better and why? - evaluation

(see English as a Second Language, 1994).

Naturally, for other areas of language education taxonomies are also possible, e.g. for language development, but they are not the focus of this presentation.

The degree of explicitness of goals and objectives varies. Van Ek (1993) describes some factors:
• variations in the extent of the educational field for which objectives are meant (e.g. objectives for school education at national level)
• the degree of centralisation aimed at a particular country (more centralised - more specified content and structure)
• the target population (e.g. school children in general education, adolescents preparing for a profession)
• the status of certificate awarded on successful completion of the course (more specific objectives in order to ensure validity of the certificate).

However, many teachers do not formulate goals and objectives. "Rather than breaking down the goals into behavioral objectives and then developing activities to match objectives, however, teachers often develop objectives as they plan specific teaching activities. According to Macdonald (1965) and Eisner (1967), it is while developing activities themselves that consideration of objectives becomes important, for this is where "ends for learning become integrated with means for learning" (Clark and Yinger 1979:232). Activities, are, hence, "the basic structural units of planning and action in the classroom" (Clark and Yinger 1979:237)."

(Richards and Lockhart, 1995)

The structure of the workshop facilitated the participants to adopt this natural sequence in simulating a syllabus design for cultural awareness and learner autonomy.

But: If you don’t know where you are going, you never know when you are there. And neither did the young blacksmith know.

References


### 7.4 Syllabus Development in Slovenia

by Berta Kogoj

**The Context**

Traditionally Slovenia has had a centralised education system, that is, there are national syllabuses for all school subjects. Until 1989 subject advisors were responsible for pedagogical supervision, but their responsibility was also to train teachers. In the 90's innovation in education increased enormously, but, interestingly, mainly in absence of official monitoring.

**The History**

The political and social changes in the late 80's caused a raising dissatisfaction with education. Researchers at the National Education Institute conducted an extensive evaluation of the current practice in elementary schools (age 7 - 15) and in the early 90's proposed significant changes in compulsory education. At the same time syllabuses for secondary schools were revised. In modern foreign language education this resulted in the design of syllabuses: they contained general goal statements, lists of grammatical structures at traditional levels, lists of skills and text types, communicative functions, topic areas and literary texts.

At the same time as the grounds were being prepared for a formal national curricular reform significant changes were taking place in ELT. In elementary education a six-year national project *Foreign Languages in Primary School* (age 9-11) was
launched. A catalogue of objectives which aimed to be a syllabus for lower secondary education was produced and extensive in-service teacher education carried out with the support of foreign agencies.

At the upper secondary level final exams, conducted by teachers, were introduced in early 90’s and a few years later a ‘matura’, an external school-leaving exam. For both types of exams catalogues were produced.

With the new legislation in 1996 the conditions were ready for a general curriculum renewal. In this context several bodies at different levels were established for a limited period of time to prepare new programmes and syllabuses for all levels of pre-university education.

The new curriculum for elementary education (ages 6 - 15) have brought significant changes: the amount of lessons for school language learning has increased by almost 60% for FL 1, lowering the age of FL introduction from 11 to 9 and at the same time a second foreign language as an optional subject was introduced. An important change will be brought by innovations which have their grounds in the legislation: partial streaming (up to 25% of lessons) in the second 3-year period and in the 7th grade and total streaming (3 levels) in grades 8 and 9 and the possibility of introducing descriptive assessment in the second 3-year period.

At upper secondary levels of education the changes regarding foreign language education are not so drastic. A significant change represents the introduction of FL education for early school-leavers in 2-year vocational programmes.

**Development of syllabuses for English as a foreign language**

The curricular committee for English has based its work on the positive practice of the recent years and the development of different sciences as well as research and development in the area of second and foreign language education. An important guide has been the publication *Guidelines for Educational Reform*, issued in 1996 by the National Curricular Committee.

The committee has produced four syllabuses for vocationally oriented 2-, 3- and 4-year schools, one for general secondary schools (grammar schools - ‘gimnazija’), and a syllabus for FL 1 in elementary education. The syllabuses for FL 2 (optional) and FL 1 for adults attaining elementary education are still at an early phase.

As an example documents for lower secondary education, ages 11 - 15 will be presented.

There is no particular approach towards teaching and learning adopted in the syllabus, however, the general orientation is:
- the language is viewed as communication
- language learning is also a tool for personal development
- the syllabus should reflect learner and learning-centred orientation
• learning for accepting and respecting otherness and education for life-long learning are important goals of language education
• elements of different approaches and methods are recommended

The following table represents basic characteristics of *The Catalogue of Objectives* and the Draft 2a of the new syllabus for English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Catalogue</th>
<th>The syllabus (draft 2a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official status</td>
<td>has not been submitted to the national approval body, therefore not official; is a basis for syllabus development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target audience</td>
<td>is aimed primarily at teachers, learners and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English and Slovene (metalanguage is in Slovene)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>The authors were free to choose the structure; as the name suggest it is primarily lists but with many examples, explanations: 1. Topics 2. Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing - microskills - text types - tasks all illustrated with examples 3. Language functions with exponents 4. Grammar: forms and use; explanations and examples of use, difficult areas further explained (reference grammar for students) 5. Grammar exercises (examples of communicative activities, also integrated skills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The draft 2a is a result of a 1.5 year process of syllabus development. It has been shaped by the opinions and comments of several hundreds of English teachers (drafts 1a and 2a were reviewed by 80 English teachers and then revised before they were (or will be) reviewed by 500 English teachers), some ELT specialists and also the National Curriculum Committee i.e. the area committee for basic education. All teachers' comments have been collected and studied. Significant changes have been introduced to the syllabus and as a result the reports of those changes with the commission commentary sent to all teachers.
The syllabuses for secondary schools have been approved by the National Approval Committee, whereas the syllabuses for primary schools are still in the process of development. However, once they are ready another huge action will take place, that is teacher development for all levels, particularly those that will be facing significant changes. As dr. Viljo Kohonen quoted:

“There is no curriculum development without teacher development.”

(Lawrence Stenhouse 1975)

“There is hardly any significant school development without teacher development.”

(David Hargreaves 1994)

(quoted at the Council of Europe Workshop 8B in Velm 7-13 May 1995).

8 Cultural Awareness

8.1 “Cultural awareness”, ou qu’est-ce que la prise de conscience culturelle?

(Contribution d’Albane Cain)

Tout natif sachant parler sa langue est inséré dans un système linguistique, il est également intégré au sein d’un ensemble de données d’ordre historique, géographique, social, économique, traditionnel, coutumier. C’est d’abord vers un décalque terme à terme de la langue maternelle vers la langue étrangère et vers une exclusion des données culturelles étrangères, assortie d’un jugement de valeur le plus souvent dépréciatif que s’oriente l’élève. La vocation d’un cours de langue est de rendre l’apprenant capable de se détacher du système natif comme étalon exclusif à l’aune duquel tout autre système est jugé et de mettre en place une plasticité d’accueil envers la culture étrangère.

Le terme de “cultural awareness” utilisé pour la première fois par M. Byram, recouvre un concept central pour l’acquisition de compétences culturelles en classe de langues.

Même lorsqu’il y a correspondance terme à terme entre les mots de la langue étrangère, les termes sont en fait porteurs de significations liées à une époque, un lieu, un pays particulier. Il importe donc de différencier les concepts selon qu’ils renvoient à la culture maternelle ou étrangère. C’est pourquoi il ne faut pas passer sous silence cette différenciation significative. En conséquence, on peut faire l’hypothèse qu’une différenciation est une opération indispensable à l’acquisition d’une compétence linguistique ou culturelle et qu’elle sera d’autant plus efficace qu’elle sera effectuée d’une manière consciente et par voie de comparaison.

Pour mettre en place une compétence culturelle, il est nécessaire d’agir sur les attitudes. La première étape consiste à prendre en compte ce que connaissent les apprenants: idées reçues, représentations conscientes ou inconscientes, connaissances

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4 A qui nous sommes redevables de certaines des compétences mentionnées ci-dessous.
tronquées ou exactes. Cet ensemble de données agit comme un filtre sur la capacité à accepter l’information nouvelle et peut la déformer.

L’acceptation d’un système différent implique qu’on agisse sur les attitudes afin:
• de rendre les élèves conscients de la complexité du système étranger pour qu’ils ne le réduisent pas au groupe que représente la culture dominantes;
• d’évacuer les représentations qui privilégient le pittoresque et l’exotisme;
• de mettre en place la relation d’égalité;
• de les rendre capables de bien gérer les phases successives d’expérience de l’altérité;
• de ne pas transgresser systématiquement les codes de comportement et de communication qui prévalent dans le système étranger.

Il est également nécessaire d’assurer la mise en place d’un certain nombre de connaissances concernant:
- les liens historiques réciproques;
- les histoires nationales;
- les marqueurs respectifs d’identité;
- les institutions;
- le découpage de l’espace;
- les processus de socialisation;
- les distinctions sociales.

L’acquisition d’une compétence d’interprétation et de mise en relation implique la maîtrise de capacités spécifiques:
- être capable de lire les indices d’ethnocentrisme d’un document;
- être capable d’identifier les domaines possibles de malentendus et d’agir en médiateur culturel, opération qui requiert une mise à distance du système de la culture native;
- être capable d’éviter la surgénéralisation de phénomènes;

La mise en place de compétence de découverte et d’interaction sollicite des capacités liées aux précédentes, mais cependant distinctes d’elles par les objets techniques auxquels elles s’appliquent:
- être capable d’élaborer une méthode de recherche d’informations et de mise en question systématique d’un document qui prenne en compte les connotations, les présupposés et permettent de les interpréter;
- être capable d’identifier les références pertinentes et d’évaluer les degrés de proximité culturelle. Tout ceci présuppose un choix de documents présentant un écart de contenu. Par écart de contenu, nous entendons toute différence porteuse de sens entre, d’une part, les références implicites que constitue le système de données d’ordre historique, géographique, social, économique, traditionnel, coutumier au sein duquel tout natif est intégré, et d’autre part, l’information apportée par un ou plusieurs documents.

Un choix pertinent de documents permet d’installer auprès des élèves des compétences critiques avec une relative économie de moyens. Prenons l’exemple de la représentation picturale des deux assemblées législatives. La Chambre des
Députés en France et la Chambre des Communes en Grande Bretagne. La disposition en hémicycle de la première se distingue de celle face à face de la seconde. Cette différence de disposition dans l’espace correspond à une différence de fonctionnement du système politique. On peut donc s’appuyer sur cette représentation matérielle pour faire comprendre le lien entre le système électoral majoritaire simple dans un cas, majoritaire à deux tours et proportionnel dans l’autre et le système des partis: bi-partisan dans un cas, multiparti dans l’autre.

8.2 L’insertion de contenus culturels dans les programmes d’enseignement en France (contribution d’Albane Cain)

Historique

Les programmes existent depuis le début de siècle. La discipline scolaire langues vivantes s’est créée tardivement, après le français et les mathématiques en s’opposant aux langues mortes et en affirmant son côté utilitaire. Ceci explique que la conception de l’enseignement des langues:
- ait toujours oscillé entre des deux pôles que représentent la mission formatrice qu’on assigne à l’enseignement d’une langue et la visée instrumentaliste et opérationnelle qui veut qu’une langue serve à communiquer;
- se soit efforcé de gérer au mieux cette contradiction avec les pondérations différentes selon les époques, les avancées de la science, la pression sociale, les besoins de l’économie, les avancées technologiques.

Etat actuel

A l’heure actuelle, il existe des programmes pour le collège (11 – 12 à 15 – 16 ans) et pour le lycée (16 – 19 ans). Certains de ces programmes sont nouveaux:
- 1995 pour la première classe de collège;
- 1997 pour le cycle central (deuxième et troisième années de collège).
Les programmes concernant la dernière année de collège sont à l’état de projet. Les programmes concernant le lycée datent de 1986 - 87.

La volonté des ministres de l’Education est de rendre ces programmes lisibles par des non-spécialistes, notamment les parents d’élève. Les tendances qui dominent ces nouveaux programmes sont:
- la clarification des objectifs;
- le décloisonnement des disciplines scolaires;
- le recentrage des contenus d’enseignement sur l’essentiel;
Il importe de rappeler qu’au collège nous sommes dans le cadre d’un enseignement de masse. C’est pourquoi il est nécessaire:
1. de proposer des parcours de réussite;
2. d’apporter des réponses adaptées aux élèves en difficulté;
3. de proposer clairement à tous des objectifs communs;
4. de s’adapter à la diversité des élèves en offrant des approches diversifiées;
9 Learner Autonomy

9.1 The specification of objectives, resources and processes for Learner Autonomy by Antoinette Camilleri

I consider learner autonomy (LA) both as a classroom methodology and as a philosophical approach to learning. Its aims could be considered at two levels:
Short term: to maximise student learning at present, and
Long term: to prepare students for future, life-long learning.

If we agree that LA is a desirable goal to achieve, then our next question is How? In this paper I will treat LA from two main perspectives: the social and the cognitive. Learning, and especially, learning in an autonomous way, is a social process and our students need to be provided with the opportunities and the skills necessary for social learning. Similarly, learning is enhanced with cognitive preparation. In view of this I shall talk about increasing ‘awareness’, ‘understanding’, ‘meaning’ and ‘sharing’. This helps to maximise student learning at present. Furthermore, it also helps to prepare learners for European citizenship, in an environment of peace, tolerance, democracy and employability.

Awareness is the ability to:
- to step back and reflect
- to honestly evaluate what you are doing, and
- to do so in a rich, collaborative, problem-solving environment.

‘Awareness’ is closely related to the development of metacognition, which is progressive. In Byram’s (1998) terms, ‘awareness’ provides the missing link (between language and culture awareness and learner autonomy) when viewed as a “meta-cognitive reflection on language, culture and learning processes”. The ability to think about your own thinking (metacognition) is essential in a world of continuous change. Through metacognition we can develop skills that are genuinely transferable.
Metacognitive skills are progressive. When young, children need plentiful help and direction. Then we can reduce this direction progressively as children master more and more metacognitive skills until by the end of adolescence they are able to take full responsibility of their own learning. Formal schooling, therefore, must start a dynamic process through which pupils are progressively weaned from their dependence on teachers and institutions and given the confidence to manage their own learning.

**Understanding** is necessary for growth and creativity on the part of the learner. In order to understand, we need a balance of 3 types of abilities (see Sternberg, 1997):

- The Synthetic: the ability to go beyond what is given to generate novel and interesting ideas;
- The Analytic: the ability to analyse and evaluate ideas; and
- The Practical: the ability to translate theory to practice, abstract ideas into accomplishments.

To view learning in this way is to move away from the traditional concept of learning largely as the ability to memorise information. Furthermore, since not all learners are capable in all three types of abilities, by providing space for each we will be basing our teaching and assessment on a broader set of abilities. In this way we take a more balanced approach to education to reach all of our students.

**Meaning**

As society is becoming more complex, change more rapid, and knowledge quickly obsolete in a highly technological era of information, there is a greater need for learners to be able to make sense of their environment. Conditions of learning are required that provide students with the opportunity to select data, and assimilate it in a way that allows them to challenge misconceptions and to create new accurate conceptions. This can’t be done if the curriculum or the methodology or even the structure of the school is so rigid that students experience only the presentation of data without the opportunity to make sense of it. In this context, during this workshop we are talking about a flexible syllabus that could be negotiated on a day to day, week by week, month by month basis etc. between learners and teachers.

**Sharing**

Through a recent article by Pool (1997), I was happy to learn that the human brain is not simply a ‘mental’ or ‘cognitive’ apparatus, but is actually a ‘social’ organ. Among other things, the studies referred to in Pool (1997) explain that,

- The brain is a complex, dynamic system
- It is a social brain
- The search for meaning is innate
- The search for meaning occurs through ‘patterning’, and
- Emotions are critical to patterning.

While we already know that LA is a social process (see Camilleri, 1996, 1997), studies on brain-based learning as a social activity, add value to cooperative learning. **Cooperative learning** is aptly described in Hilke (1990) where she explains that through it students learn to share responsibility for learning; it
encourages student initiative; it develops their leadership skills; it helps develop communication skills and group relations; it improves academic achievement; and enhances self-esteem. Cooperative learning is about positive interdependence and occurs when students undertake a group task with a feeling of mutuality. This is achieved through:

- **mutual goals (goal interdependence)**
- **division of labour (task interdependence)**
- **sharing of materials & information (resource interdependence)**
- **assignment of differing roles (role interdependence)**
- **joint rewards (reward interdependence)**

In what follows I talk about LA as a cognitive process. Enlarging the brain’s mental activity and flexibility also helps us in our endeavour of preparing students for exposure to ‘otherness’. I shall talk about 7 thinking strategies (after Cardellichio & Field, 1997), and give a few practical examples in the area of cultural awareness as discussed in this workshop, to illustrate how these strategies could be applied.

1. **Hypothetical thinking** is a powerful stimulant to neural growth because it forces us to conceive of issues and consequences other than the standard and expected ones. The following examples of questions for discussion can help improve hypothetical thinking:
   - What images come to the mind of the Maltese when they hear the term “Good Friday”?
   - How distant should I stand from a native speaker of Maltese?
   - How do Maltese people expect me to greet them?
   - Would they appreciate it if I uttered a couple of words in Maltese?

   This is about getting the learners to question the setting they are familiar with, and to hypothesise a contrasting state of affairs. It would help them be better prepared for difference and quick to act accordingly.

2. **Reversal** is a specific kind of hypothetical thinking that highlights attributes of events or situations that might otherwise go unnoticed. One of the techniques used in visual thinking to get outside the context or beyond the information, is by blurring the picture or turning it upside down. The following are simple examples for improving reversal:
   - Who goes in first through the door? (eg. in Austria the man walks first into the restaurant)
   - When/Who/How do you pay at a restaurant? (eg. in Austria one has to pay for each slice of bread in a restaurant)
   - What are the queuing habits? Are allowances made for foreigners?
   - Which food is eaten at what time of day? Why?

3. **The application of different symbol systems** refers to the application of rules and procedures of particular thinking systems to others. For example, in language
one can move from a verbal system of representation to a graphical one, to a musical one, or even to a mathematical one.

4. **Analogy** is about looking for correspondences. It requires creativity and a new way of looking at events in order to provide new insights. We can get the students to think of examples, like:
   - Are the clothing habits of Malta like those of _____?
   - Are family relations in Malta like those in _____?
   - Are leisure activities in Malta like those in _____?

5. **Analysis of point of view** is when we start asking ourselves ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions relating to other people and their beliefs. It is about looking for detail, and evidence to support our point of view. This helps us to extend our mind sets as we look for different accounts and explanations. We can use newspapers, books, and examples from the media originating from the target culture and ask questions like:

   In newspapers
   - what is considered to be of daily news value?
   - what do readers write to the Editor about?
   - what is advertised?

   In books for children
   - what are the topics dealt with?
   - how are the characters described?
   - what would future children think about this?
   - what would my grandmother in her childhood have thought about this?

   In the media
   - what is shown on television?
   - which are the favourite programmes?
   - what are the news about?
   - what are the weather reports normally like?

6. **Completion** is related to our natural inclination to look at things as complete. This urge can be used to extend students’ thinking in multiple ways. Language provides ample opportunity for this. For example, from a limited text we can recreate a whole context, or provide various beginnings and endings to complete a narrative or an account. Examples of linguistic and cultural contexts of ambiguity that could be utilised in this way are idioms, proverbs, common expressions & metaphors. We can ask questions like:
   - in which contexts are they used?
   - what shades of meaning do they carry?
   - who uses them most?
what do they tell us about their users?

7. Web Analysis refers to the exploration of the complexity of relationships of things that actually happened. The goal is to uncover the complex multitude of effects. In the context of cultural awareness discussed here, we could look at the effects of, for example, historical events, geographical features, population density and political systems on peoples’ attitudes, daily life, building structures and transport systems.

Numerous practical exercises can be carried out, based on existing resources, quite plentiful, for example, to take the case of Malta in Valletta. Museums and Cathedrals offer wonderful opportunities to help us find links between cultures. Take the War Museum. Which country hasn’t been tainted by war? How have people in towns and villages, in different countries been effected by war? I know of a project between schools in England and in Germany which consists of students carrying out interviews via e-mail to find out how war has effected them. Take the Museum of Archaeology. What is similar and/or different in the Museums of Archaeology in Valletta, in Nicosia, in Berlin etc. What links have there been in the past between the various countries? Are we still experiencing cultural residues of those links? Museums of Art and Cathedrals are other fine examples of how art and religion, for instance, transcend boundaries of time and nation. What cultural and other links can we find there?

Conclusion

In summary, what we’re trying to do here is not to pass on knowledge, but to enlarge the students’ mental and social abilities to teach themselves. Let us remember that the teacher herself is a major asset in the learning process, performing a new role as a learner herself.

References


10 Participant based activities

10.1 Show & Tell (Group Work – Tuesday afternoon)

This activity consisted in the sharing of experiences in syllabus design. After each participant showed the poster that they were asked to bring along, they had the following questions for discussion and for presentation in the plenary session:

- Which are some of the most common factors in the various syllabuses presented in your group?
- Which one is the most original syllabus/idea?
- What is the biggest challenge for syllabus designers?

(see Appendix 2 for the outcome of this group work)

10.2 Preparation for the Cultural Activity in the Community (Group Work – Wednesday afternoon)

This session was in preparation for the Thursday morning activity in the community. The aim of the exercise was to “find out about how people live: their norms, values, priorities, expectations, traditions etc. with regard to the Good Friday and Easter celebrations”. The participants had to think of the resources required to gather such information like interviewing, filming, photographing, other realia. In each group the participants chose roles within sub-teams such as the interviewers, the technical team, the production team, and the observers. The findings of this activity were presented on Thursday afternoon.

(see Appendices 3a and 3b for examples of the results of this activity).

10.3 Sharing Cultures (Group Work – Wednesday evening)

This activity involved the sharing of the cultural objects brought along by participants. They showed and talked about their tokens that represented Good Friday/Easter in their respective countries. Then each participant had to mention 5 words associated with Good Friday, and another 5 associated with Easter. The discussion was then centred around the varying perceptions that people with different cultural backgrounds have of the same occasion, and how this might effect their perceptions of others.

10.4 Simulation Activity (Group work – Friday morning)

Imagine you are designing a syllabus for the teaching of a language. Choose a topic to focus on. Your task is to define objectives, resources and processes relating to LA and CA.

(see Appendix 4 for an example of the result of this activity).
11 Networking

The Workshop set the climate for thinking along new lines of syllabus development. One week was, of course, too short for any new substantial material to be developed. In fact it was intended right from the start simply to serve as an ‘appetiser’ for further study and development by the participants in their own contexts. In view of this, the importance of networking as a means for further dissemination, research and development was emphasised right throughout the workshop. On the last day the participants had the opportunity to think and discuss further the theoretical aspects of the topics and to consider effective forms of implementation through cooperation. As a result, the following networking groups were established:

1. Deriving principles from good practice.
2. Specification of objectives for LA and CA.
3. Unity in Diversity.
4. Enhancing LA and CA using the portfolio approach.
5. Langue et culture: élaboration d’un dossier.
6. Analyser les programmes et leur réalisations dans le but de réorienter davantage les objectifs visant le socio-culturel (programme de francais) et interculturel.
7. Cultural awareness and language awareness based on interaction with texts.

12 Evaluation

All participants praised the organisation of the workshop, the animators’ input, and the high degree of participation of everyone present. The activity that was liked best was the cultural exercise in Valletta.

The most useful aspect of the workshop was the fact that 20 Maltese participants could take part since the workshop was held in Malta. This gave the Maltese the opportunity to interact with national and foreign colleagues, and to take part in follow-up networks, at both national and international levels. The Maltese authorities and educators particularly welcome decentralised workshops like this one and appreciate its benefits for the professional development of local staff.
## Appendix 1: The Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tues. 7 April</th>
<th>Wed. 8 April</th>
<th>Thurs. 9 April</th>
<th>Fri. 10 April</th>
<th>Sat. 11 April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00 Official opening</td>
<td>09:00 Approaches to Syllabus Design</td>
<td>09:00 Activity in the Maltese community on CA and LA</td>
<td>09:00 Specifying objectives</td>
<td>09:00 Introduction to networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 The Context and the Aims of the Workshop</td>
<td>10:00 Syllabus development in Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
<td>09:15 Integrating objectives</td>
<td>09:30 Formation of networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 Coffee Break</td>
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<td>09:45 Simulation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 Intro. of animators &amp; participants</td>
<td>11:00 Syllabus Development in France</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:00 Group presentations</td>
<td>11:00 Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 Group work</td>
<td>15:00 Debate on LA</td>
<td>15:00 Group Work</td>
<td>Cultural Tour</td>
<td>15:00 Presentation of networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15:30 Objectives for LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:30 Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:00 Poster exhibition Poster Tour</td>
<td>17:00 Objectives for CA</td>
<td>17:00 Group Work</td>
<td>17:00 Workshop evaluation &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 Group Reports</td>
<td>17:00 Group presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:30 Dinner</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Group Work |                       |                       |                                       |                                      |
Appendix 2: Show & Tell Discussion

1. Which are some of the most common factors in the various syllabuses presented in your group?
   - Foreign language learning starts at age 9
   - In some countries 2nd and 3rd foreign languages are taught at secondary school
   - The communicative approach predominates
   - There are differences in the flexibility allowed for learner autonomy
   - There are differences in the use made of textbooks
   - Learner autonomy is stated in the syllabus, but not implemented in practice
   - Cultural awareness components are stated in the syllabus, but not all aspects are covered in practice, because teachers are not trained for it.

2. Which one is the most original syllabus/idea?
   - The Norwegian one is the most student centred
   - In Finland there is more room for autonomy in syllabus development
   - In Croatia there is a lot of room for flexibility and creativity

3. What is the biggest challenge for syllabus designers?
   - The integration of skills
   - The integration of the concept of learning how to learn
   - To find a way how to compromise between the educational policy, students’ and teachers’ needs
   - Preparing teachers at pre-service and in-service to adequate levels that permit them to implement LA and CA
Appendix 3a: Examples of Metacognitive Strategies used during the Cultural Activity in the Community (see 9.1)

| Hypothetical thinking                      | • Pre-meditated questions, e.g. what are the characteristics of Maltese processions, inside/outside, how long, etc?  
|                                          | • What do you have for breakfast at Easter?  
|                                          | • Select a number of people, e.g. policemen who would probably expect problems on these days; young people who would probably be less interested in what is going on; the older generation who will most probably be more religiously involved.  
| Reversal                                  | • Why was there food in the church? Is it common? Who is it for?  
| Application of different symbol systems   | • Photographs  
|                                          | • Audio and video recording  
|                                          | • Interviewing young people (discussing moral values/codes confused the interviewees)  
|                                          | • Costumes  
|                                          | • Procession  
| Analogy                                   | • Compare with Lutheran, Orthodox, other Catholic countries  
| Analysis of point of view                | • Why do Maltese people have processions?  
|                                          | • Why are the sculptures so important and specific?  
|                                          | • How is religion practised in normal times?  
|                                          | • Analysis of the question of ‘passion’ as (i) ultimate suffering; (ii) as love with the image of the victorious Christ.  
|                                          | • In Malta the aspect of the Franciscan suffering is overpowering to that in northern Europe (Lutheran).  
| Completion                                | • Multiple activities build up an entity, like using photographs and thinking about them  
|                                          | • Recreation of the ‘whole’ by adding objects (eg. food, flowers etc) to the words and photos on poster or verbal presentation  
|                                          | • Visiting churches and chapels and interviewing the Maltese people added to the ‘Maltese experience’  
| Web Analysis                              | • Which values and feelings of the local Catholic believers are close to those of the interviewers  
|                                          | • Contrast the information obtained with the knowledge and experience of the perception of Good Friday in native countries.  

Appendix 3b: **Examples of Group Interdependence** (see 9.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutual goals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To explore, to learn, to discover, to analyse, to summarise and to present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To get as much information as possible about Easter in Malta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All participants were changing ‘caps’ whenever it was required: interviewing people, formulating questions, using imagination, inventing ways for presentation of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Maltese participants would guide and observe; the foreign participants would record and interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of materials and information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All the materials and information collected were readily shared and discussed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The combination of human resources and technological gadgets made it possible for the group to complete the task successfully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment of different roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learner autonomy was used to the utmost: we felt free to choose the role required at every particular stage of the work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roles assigned were: photographer, technician, local guide, observer, interviewer, time-keeper – each person was in charge of something</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint rewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The satisfaction achieved from the result and the feeling of security from belonging to the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The task was accomplished and rewarded by some new facts learned which meant cultural enrichment for the group and the local people (diversity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Absorbed the local ‘gentillesse’ – a positive sense of otherness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rediscovered playing in the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allowed for different talents of the group members – learned about each other’s Easter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Simulation Activity: An Example of a ‘new syllabus’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lent and Easter Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>For learners to become aware of difference, and to accept otherness. Also to increase solidarity through learning about food, traditions and the related values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Intermediate learners of English, age 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept of awareness

- What is obvious (own habits and traditions)
- How is this seen/valued by others?
- What happens in other cultures?
- What are own reactions to what happens in other cultures?
- Understanding/Accepting difference eg. By cooking the target meal, going beyond the food to the social and political histories related, and the values associated with it
- Look into the ethical and moral aspects related

Resources: Internet, food items, films, interviews

Language content: Expressing refusal, acceptance, thanking, appreciating, table etiquette, talk during meal-times, menus, recipes

Social factors: Table manners, rituals before, during and after a meal, or related to the preparation of food, fasting, unusual food, diet laws (focus on tendencies, avoid stereotyping)

Activities: Role-play, cross-curricular approach
Appendix 5: **List of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International participants</th>
<th>Maltese participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josef Huber, ECML</td>
<td>Andrew Buhagiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albane Cain, France</td>
<td>Paul Attard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berta Kogoj, Slovenia</td>
<td>Antoinette Camilleri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Newby, Austria</td>
<td>Joseph Agius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anera Adamik, Croatia</td>
<td>Monica Attard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josep Arey, Principality of Andorra</td>
<td>Joseph Axiaq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanja Astvastryan, Republic of Armenia</td>
<td>Cecilia Borg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludmila Bannikova, Republic of Belarus</td>
<td>Alfred Cachia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vesella Boeva, Bulgaria</td>
<td>Raymond Camilleri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuzanna Dziegielewsk-Pecynska, Poland</td>
<td>Louise Cutajar Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne-Brit Fenner, Norway</td>
<td>Maria Daly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erzsebet Imrene Bajczi, Hungary</td>
<td>Alfred Falzon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina Katnic-Bakarsic, Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Frank Gatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathrine Kiyitsiogloulachou, Greece</td>
<td>Charles Mifsud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boris Klemencic, Slovenia</td>
<td>Mary Rose Mifsud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyro Korae, Cyprus</td>
<td>Marlene Mifsud Chircop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leili Kostabi, Estonia</td>
<td>Frankie Muscat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Koltehnikova, Slovak Republic</td>
<td>Terence Portelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galina Krizahovskaya, Ukraine</td>
<td>John Preca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma Memo, Albania</td>
<td>Sarah Sammut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gheorgae Moldovanu, Moldova</td>
<td>Geraldine Sciberras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmundas Narbutas, Lithuania</td>
<td>Alexander Spiteri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktoria Oscheptova, Federation of Russia</td>
<td>Vincent Vella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermine Penz, Austria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinikka Raappana, Finland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerrit Jozef Reijnders, The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Niara Robalde, Latvia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Katerina Stejfova, Czech Republic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo Trojan, Luxembourg</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Gudrun Halla Tulinius, Iceland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean Claude Vignaud, France</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Interpreters:**
- Caroline Curta di Giulio
- Chantal Fayolle

**Secretaries:**
- Romina Tabone
- Tanya Zammit
- Melanie Falzon
Developing autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process – i.e. conscious reflection and decision-making. This again is something most teachers will see in what they usually consider as good learners: an awareness of the learning process. Promoting autonomy is not simply a matter of teaching strategies. There’s more to encourage LA than the way you teach. Online learning materials whether informal (i.e. following no particular syllabus) or more formal (i.e. following a syllabus or linked to a face-to-face syllabus) increasingly allow learners to follow the learning paths that suit their needs, their pace of learning, etc., something which is very difficult to do with a face-to-face course. Curriculum development and learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: constraints and possibilities. Turid Trebbi. Cultural competence: a basis for participation in society. Laila Aase. Sumed by much of the teaching and learning population that the process leading to these two not totally identical objectives – (a) learning success, and (b) language mastery – must be exclusively based on a convergent tactical process. This washback effect often taints with uncertainties the thinking processes of teachers who will otherwise openly support varieties of learning organization which cater for and even capitalize on individual learner differences, and who try to foster learner-centeredness and autonomy. There are levels and degrees of learner autonomy. In fact, dependence and autonomy are not categorically distinct. Rather, they exist on a continuum. In my own classrooms, I work hard at moving learners along a continuum from total dependence on the teacher to autonomy. She is using a mandated textbook in which the goals and objectives are implicit, and yet she is able to make the goals of the lesson explicit to the learners. She does so by actively involving them in the process, rather than simply informing them. The next step in the development of a learner-centered classroom would be to train learners to identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies. Detailed guidance on how this might be achieved are taken up later in the book when we focus on the learning process.