

Republic of Lebanon
Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports
Center for Educational Research and Development

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM
(Second Foreign Language)

Decree No. 10227. Date 8th May, 1997.
(Details of content - Third year of each cycle)

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CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Upon completion of the prescribed years of study for English as a second foreign language (grades 7-9 and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Secondary, at the rate of 2 hours a week), students are expected to be able to do the following:

LISTENING OBJECTIVES

*** Demonstrate basic understanding of spoken discourse.**

- Understand and use basic words and expressions prevalent in classroom language.
- Respond to instructions, commands, directions, and questions physically or verbally.
- Identify main points and supporting details.
- Match spoken language to print or pictures.

*** Demonstrate critical understanding of spoken discourse.**

- Draw inferences related to themes, characters, actions, and events.
- Recognize and describe attitudes and emotions.
- Make predictions about the conclusion of a story or the results of an experiment.
- Distinguish between fact and opinion.
- Classify and categorize elements in discourse.
- Relate information to personal experience and/or prior knowledge.

*** Demonstrate enjoyment and interest in spoken discourse.**

- Memorize and recite poems, jokes, riddles, tongue twisters, etc.
- Sing along with songs and rhymes.
- Ask for repetitions, clarifications, and explanations.

*** Demonstrate awareness of the linguistic and organizational features of spoken discourse.**

- Identify dialectal features (syntax, vocabulary choice, and accent).
- Identify style and register markers.
- Identify key terms emphasized, transitionals used, and turning points.
- Identify methods of development (narration, description, definition, argumentation, etc.).

ORAL COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

* **Communicate basic needs and courtesies.**

- Greet others properly.
- Use polite forms of address and requests.
- Ask for and give directions.
- Ask for repetition and clarification.
- Request and give information.
- Ask and answer questions.

* **Speak correctly, coherently, and spontaneously.**

- Speak in meaningful utterances.
- Speak with proper enunciation, stress and intonation.
- Vary stress and intonation to reflect various attitudes and emotions.
- Speak with an easy flow, especially when using recurrent classroom language.

* **Communicate a variety of interactive and transactional tasks.**

- Express and justify point of view about a certain topic.
- Make a presentation on a researched topic.
- Describe and comment on events, behaviors, and actions.
- Give a speech on a special occasion.

* **Take part in group activities and discussions.**

- Participate in group games, surveys, dramatizations, storytelling, etc.
- Observe turn-taking rules.
- Keep interruptions brief and purposeful.
- Take on different roles in a conversation (initiator, developer, commentator, etc.)

READING OBJECTIVES

*** Demonstrate the mastery of word recognition skills.**

- Recognize frequently used words at sight.
- Infer meaning of words and special expressions from context.
- Use phonic, morphological, and syntactic clues to get word meaning.

*** Demonstrate basic understanding of what is read.**

- Skim and scan text (references, textbooks, magazines, databases, etc.) for information.
- Identify events in a story, steps in a lab experiment, ideas in a text, etc...
- Answer factual and simple inferential questions about text.
- Identify basic terminology and concepts in specialized texts.

*** Comprehend and interpret what is read.**

- Make plausible predictions of outcomes.
- Relate information to real life, experiences, and prior knowledge.
- Suggest a different conclusion to a story.
- Identify bias, attitudes, intentions, faulty evidence, false conclusions, etc...

*** Demonstrate awareness of linguistic and organizational features of the text.**

- Identify elements of informal language (deviant structures, and slang).
- Identify and explain register markers.
- Identify key terms, discourse markers, transitionals, etc...
- Explain how knowledge varies to suit context, speaker, topic, purpose and audience.

*** Read for pleasure and enjoyment.**

- Report on extensive reading highlighting points of interest.
- Consult magazines, newspapers, references, atlases, encyclopedias, computer database, for more information on topics read.
- Learn by heart and read aloud favorite poems, quotations, proverbs, etc...
- Exchange stories, magazines, computer discs, and books.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

*** Demonstrate ability to communicate meaningful, purposeful messages.**

- Supply biographical information on forms.
- Write short messages, notes, and letters.
- Explain opinion in relation to a topic.
- Paraphrase/translate important messages and notices.
- Write a set of directions with illustrations (map to one's house).
- Write a report on a topic in a subject matter area.
- Write journals.

*** Demonstrate ability to reinterpret input.**

- Recognize ideas in tables, graphs, charts, etc...
- Write short research papers.
- Express and support a point of view in relation to textual information.
- Describe and comment on an incident or an experiment.
- Participate in group writing (reading other's writing and writing to continue the sequence of events).
- Revise individually, in a pair, or in a group to ensure proper and adequate treatment of topic.

*** Demonstrate ability to write accurately, fluently, and coherently.**

- Write grammatical, meaningful sentences using the proper punctuation marks.
- Write using proper register.
- Use technical vocabulary and discourse features that characterize the content area one is writing about.
- Use formal and informal language as required by the task (social, academic, personal, etc...)
- Maintain thematic unity in the produced text.
- Use the appropriate transitionals, paragraphing, sentence length, etc.
- Develop your paragraphs adequately.

THINKING SKILLS OBJECTIVES

*** Demonstrate ability to synthesize information taken from various disciplines.**

- Relate information across content areas.
- Make an oral or written presentation on an inter-disciplinary topic.
- Reorganize texts in new forms (e.g. chart out textual information).

*** Demonstrate ability to interpret written and spoken discourse critically.**

- Make plausible prediction based on textual information.
- Make appropriate generalization and judgments.
- Classify, organize, and categorize information.
- Read properly to what is said or heard.

*** Demonstrate ability to approach and perform tasks in a logical manner.**

- Analyze and synthesize facts.
- Use analogies and inferences.
- Make outlines, take notes, and brainstorm.

*** Demonstrate ability to transfer learning.**

- Relate textual information to previous knowledge.
- Apply learned strategies in the acquisition of new information and the solution of new problem.
- Draw on first and first foreign language knowledge to reinforce concepts and skills.

CULTURAL AWARENESS OBJECTIVES

*** Demonstrate familiarity with typical customs and behaviors in the target language as presented in authentic texts (newspapers, films, radio and television programs, et.)**

- Identify appropriate protocol in relation to socialization.
- Identify customs, habits, and special occasions.
- Identify famous historical events.

*** Demonstrate appreciation of the similarities and differences in cultural and rhetorical patterns between native and target languages.**

- Explain the similarities and differences in concepts of space and time.
- Explain the similarities and differences in approach to problems and to communicative tasks.
- Identify similarities and differences in attitudes towards work.
- Identify stereotypes and pre-conceived ideas of the other in the two cultures.

*** Develop understanding, appreciation, and empathy towards the target culture.**

- Recognize and explain stereotypes and generalization.
- Explain differences between native and target language cultural patterns objectively.
- Promote what one considers positive aspects of the target culture.

*** Understand the cultural bases of meaning.**

- Explain frequently-used idiomatic expressions and proverbs.
- Explain the connotations of words.

STUDY SKILLS OBJECTIVES

*** Develop effective organizational skills.**

- Make plans for how to use study time.
- Set goals to be achieved.
- Keep an organizer or an agenda.

*** Demonstrate ability to synthesize information from various sources.**

- Take notes.
- Consult a wide range of reference material.
- Draw outlines of presentations.
- Use illustrations and graphic organizers.

*** Develop library and research skills.**

- Identify and use the various sections of the library.
- Consult and use computer databases and programs.
- Locate relevant information in references, encyclopedias, atlases, charts, indices, documentaries, etc...)

*** Demonstrate use of effective study strategies.**

- Use K-W-L
- Use pre-reading techniques.
- Skim, scan, and skip as needed.

CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES
BASIC EDUCATION, CYCLE III
Grade 9

By the end of grade 9, students in English as a second/foreign language are expected to be able to do the following :

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|----------------------|---|
| LISTENING OBJECTIVES | <p>* Demonstrate basic understanding of short passages of spoken discourse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recall details in a narrative. - Identify specific details. - Summarize text. - Fill in missing word, from a given list, in a cloze representation of text. - Take meaningful notes. <p>* Demonstrate advanced understanding of spoken discourse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain meanings of new words and expressions using contextual, morphological, and syntactic clues. - Suggest solutions to identified problems. - Make oral presentation relating new and old information on a topic. - Organize ideas in graphic form (chart, web, story frame, etc.). <p>* Demonstrate critical understanding of spoken discourse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infer intended meanings. - Infer speaker's attitude, emotions, and biases. - Make predictions by examining title. - Transfer knowledge from English to content areas and vice versa. - Compare and contrast actions/attitudes of characters. |

Grade 9 (LEVEL III)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|---|--|
| <p>ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS</p> | <p>* Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in social and academic situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate and participate in conversational exchanges. - Talk about personal experiences and point of view. - Compare two ideas or concepts. - Present information in a chronological sequence. - Offer and respond to invitations. - Explain one's behavior or behavior of characters presented in spoken discourse. <p>* Demonstrate ability to speak fluently and accurately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak with an easy flow using learned and adapted utterances. - Pronounce consonants, vowels, diphthongs, and consonant clusters correctly. - Pronounce words, compounds, phrases, and simple sentences using the correct stress patterns. - Pronounce statements and questions (Yes-No and Wh-) using the correct intonation patterns. |
| <p>READING OBJECTIVES</p> | <p>* Demonstrate ability to read texts at a reasonable rate, with understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answer questions on timed readings with 80% accuracy. - Identify author and title. - Skim for gist of text. - Scan for specific information. |

Grade 9 (LEVEL III)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|---|--|
| WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Demonstrate ability to produce short pieces of academic writing.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Express personal reactions, such as feelings, point of view, likes, dislikes, wishes, etc.- Write short letters to friends/pen pals.- Write formal letters to the school principal.- Describe events in a sequence of pictures.- Write a book report. * Demonstrate ability to write correctly, coherently, and fluently.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Write well-organized paragraph with topic sentence, details, and appropriate transitional.- Write grammatical sentences using punctuation marks properly.- Use appropriate terminology.- Write from notes or outline. |

Grade 9 (LEVEL III)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|---------------------|---|
| STUDY SKILLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Develop reading rate.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Read at a speed of approximately 70 words per minute.- Practice doing timed word and phrase recognition exercises. * Develop library and research skills.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use reference books as sources of mini-papers.- Jot down notes from a lecture or from a book- Make an outline for your paper.- Consult maps, charts, pictures, multi-media computer programs, etc. |

CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES
SECONDARY CYCLE
Third Secondary

By the end of the Third Secondary, students in English as a second/foreign language are expected to be able to be able to do the following :

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|-------------------------------|---|
| LISTENING OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrate understanding of spoken discourse (authentic and standardized testing materials). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify speaker, and main points. - Identify restatements, inferences, and conclusions. - Compare and contrast two objects, two events, or two ideas. - Argue against a position/stand presented in discourse. * Demonstrate ability to evaluate arguments presented in spoken discourse. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and explain logical fallacies/inconsistencies. - Identify and describe ambiguities, oversimplifications, and over generalizations. - Examine presented evidence to determine relevance, applicability, and value. - Identify and discard irrelevant material. * Demonstrate awareness of the sociolinguistic and rhetorical features of language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify elements of style and register, and explain the reasons for using them. - Illustrate how language varies according to audience, context, and purpose. - Identify elements of coherence and thematic unity. |
| ORAL COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrate ability to handle complex speaking tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss topics of interest with native or near-native speakers. - Give an informal speech (e.g. at a friend's party). - Give a formal speech (e.g. speaking for the graduating class). - Present creative work (a story, a science project, a poem, etc...) to the satisfaction of the audience. |

Third Secondary (LEVEL VI)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|--------------------|--|
| READING OBJECTIVES | <p>* Demonstrate versatility in the application of sociolinguistic conventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vary language to fit topic, purpose, and audience. - Use the proper forms of address and discourse markers in simulated presentations and speeches. - Vary intonation, sentence stress, and vowel length for special effects. - Speak grammatically using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures to fit context. - Keep attention on theme with little, if any, digression. <p>* Demonstrate ability to infer hidden meanings and process information effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify bias, attitude, and intent of author. - Identify positions and points of view in text. - Identify exaggeration, irony, and sarcasm. <p>* Demonstrate ability to evaluate and judge the content of reading materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify weaknesses of an argument (magazine article, letter to the editor, editorial, etc.). - Identify irrelevant material and false arguments. - Identify ambiguities, fallacies, over generalizations, etc. <p>* Demonstrate awareness and appreciation of the socio linguistic and sociocultural features of text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain culturally-loaded idiomatic expressions. - Identify expressions of culture that are at variance with native culture. - Identify linguistic markers of attitude, bias, class, sex, and region. - Explain symbolism used in literary texts. |

Third Secondary (LEVEL VI)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|--|---|
| <p>WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrate ability to work with others for information gathering and information processing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find meaning of part of text and share it with others (jigsaw reading). - Make a group presentation on a researched topic. - Solve riddles, problems, mysteries, etc. in a cooperative fashion. * Demonstrate ability to reinterpret audio, written, and visual input. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarize main points of an interview or an article. - Rewrite poems, songs, or technical manuals in ordinary English. - Transform a dialogue into a story or vice-versa. - Use information from varied sources (field trips, lab experiments, films, documentaries, computer data base, etc.) to write a term-paper. * Demonstrate ability to perform complex writing tasks in content areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write directions/instructions for solving problems. - Write a story or an essay, the point of view of a plant, a molecule, an insect, a machine, etc. - Argue for or against a point of view, a theory, or a conclusion. * Demonstrate ability to write fluently, coherently, and accurately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce essays that are well-researched, well-documented, and well-presented (linguistically, stylistically, and organizationally). - Use the language mechanics (punctuation marks, citations forms, capitalization, etc.) properly. - Revise, edit, and redraft to ensure greater accuracy, precision, and variety of expression. |

Third Secondary (LEVEL VI)

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|---|--|
| <p>CULTURAL AWARENESS OBJECTIVES</p> | <p>* Demonstrate understanding of cultural situations, attitudes, and beliefs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare and contrast attitude to minorities, women, and immigrants with those in Lebanese and French cultures. - Compare textual information with what is presented in popular television programs. - Distinguish between dominant cultural norms and odd individual behaviors. - Identify common elements among the three cultures : Lebanese, French, and English. - Identify universal themes in English literature. <p>* Demonstrate awareness of cultural allusions in text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify ideas and beliefs that are typical of a certain historical, literary, and/or scientific era. - Explain various culturally-oriented procedures and approaches to research. |
| <p>THINKING SKILLS OBJECTIVES</p> | <p>* Demonstrate ability to apply critical thinking skills in their assimilation of and reaction to presented information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and present relevant evidence. - Establish suitability of evidence to thesis. - Identify and formulate major and minor premises. <p>* Demonstrate ability to apply critical thinking skills to research activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write a critical review of literature. - Formulate hypotheses. - Report and interpret results. - Discuss implications of findings. |

Third Secondary (LEVEL VI)

GRAMMAR OBJECTIVES

| SKILL | INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES |
|-------------------------|--|
| STUDY SKILLS OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Use a variety of texts from various content areas effectively.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify special terminology and expressions for each area.- Explain similarities and differences in approaches to information presentation.- Interpret information and synthesize it in research projects and papers. * Follow academic lectures and presentations.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take organized notes for future use.- Outline issues and main points.- Write own comments on what is said. * Practice taking tests.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time own simulated test-taking activity.- Discuss answers with teacher.- Revise areas of weakness. |

GRAMMAR OBJECTIVES

- **Subject Pronouns** : **She** likes cheesecake.
- **Object Pronouns** : Nancy bought **me** a souvenir from Paris.
- **Possessive Pronouns** : Lebanon is **my** country.
The camera is **mine**.
Which car is **yours**?

- **Verbs**
 - Simple Present : Nadim **is** upset.
Don't **be** late.
Do you **have** a geography class now?
 - Simple past : There **was** a last concert at school.
Did you finish your homework?
I **had** a medical checkup last week.
 - Future : The children **will be** in Faraya tonight.
I **am going to** study hard.
Zahi **will** travel to the Far East in September.
 - Past continuous : I **was playing** the piano when I heard a terrible noise.
 - Present continuous : Samer **is playing** football now.
 - Past perfect : I **had finished** my homework when my friend arrived.
 - Demonstrative adjectives :
That was a good idea.
This house is old.
These are the best.
Those apples are delicious.

- **Nouns** : Singular & plural
Nina drank two **bottles** of water.
There are thirty **students** in class.
- **Countable**: There are **many** children in this room.
- **Noncountable**: There isn't **much** money left in my account.
- **Common and proper** :
We went sightseeing in the **city**.
Paris is a big city.
- **Punctuation** : What is your favorite color ?
I am thirteen years old .
I sent you a card on July 20th 1996.
What a lovely idea !
- **Intensifier** : The radio was **very** loud.
- **Simple conjunction** : Samar called me **and** left a message.
The shirt is the right size **but** it is too short.
- **Possessives**: This is Dad's car.
- **Frequency adverb** : Dad is **always** busy.
Have you **ever** been to the zoo ?
- **Prepositions**: Classes start at 8:00 o'clock **in** the morning.
The book is **under** the desk.
The lamp is **beside** the bed.
The girl with the blonde hair is my sister.
- **Periods in abbreviations**: **Dr.** Fawaz is our neighbor.
- **Capitalization**: I live in **B**eirut.
- **Wh- questions**: **What** is your last name?
Where is Budapest?
Whose shirt is this?
Why are you upset?

- **Numerals (cardinals / ordinals) :**

There are **four** melons in the fridge.

The **third** boat is my father's.

- **Simple statements / requests :**

It's very hot. **May** I turn on the air conditioner?

The rain will stop **soon**.

- **There:**

There are ducks in this pond.

There is a bank near our house.

- **Modals:**

I **can** lift this table.

May I add one thing?

You're ill. You **must** see a doctor.

- **Pronouns (reflexive / emphatic) :**

Rima fell and hurt **herself**.

I live by **myself**.

- **Comparison of adjectives/adverbs:**

Mary is **taller than** her sister.

- **Compound:**

Samya left early, but she arrived home late.

- **Compound - complex sentence :**

Mary wants to leave , but I can't wait **until you and Nora get ready**

- **Nouns (abstract / collective)**

Elementary education is obligatory in most countries.

Rima bought her mother a bunch of flowers.

- **Intensifiers:** Your work is **quite** good.

- **Conditionals:** Type 1: If I lose my job, I will go abroad.

Type 2: If I had money, I would have gone with you.

Type 3: If my horse had won, I would have made a lot of money.

- **Possessives:** It's not yours. This is the boy's jacket.

- **Adverbs of time:** The rain will stop **soon**.

- **Acronyms**

NATO : North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

- **Requests**

Could you help me with this problem?

- **Sequence of tenses**

He **tells me he's** a good tennis player.

- **Superlative**

This is the **niciest** dress on display.

- **Transitive verbs / intransitive**

I can't afford a new suit.

- **Passive voice:** The food **was cooked** last night.

- **Phrasal verbs:** She's **run down**.

I ran **out of money**.

- **Prefixes:** Mark is an **ir**responsible student.

Verbs / continued :

- **Present perfect progressive:**

My father has been working for this company for 10 years.

- **Present perfect :**

I've **planted** fourteen rose bushes so far this morning.

- **Question tag:** Jenny was annoyed, wasn't she?

- **Relative clauses:** This is the man **whose** car was stolen.

A METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

OF THE NEW ENGLISH CURRICULUM

The new English curriculum has been developed around the principle of integrating language and content in the English as a foreign language classroom. It calls for organizing instruction around meaningful and developmentally appropriate themes. A basic premise here is that integrating language and content is effective in improving the linguistic and content area gains; in enhancing academic, linguistic, and cognitive development (Cummins, 1981); and in providing comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). This is because thematic-based instruction enables learners to develop denser background knowledge, to read and write from multiple perspectives, and to engage in meaningful and interactive tasks in a print-rich environment. Materials representative of all spoken and written genres will be chosen from a variety of sources and academic disciplines keeping in mind the need for having authentic, interesting, relevant, and exploitable content.

METHODOLOGY

The curriculum aims at developing three levels of English language proficiency: a) English for social interaction, b) English for academic purposes, and c) English for socio-cultural development. These levels are largely determined by a number of critical input, output, and context variables such as comprehensibility, redundancy, frequency, accuracy, and motivation. We believe that the most appropriate framework of classroom interaction that will address the above conditions and achieve the desired levels of proficiency is Cooperative Learning (CL). Essentially, CL constitutes a series of pro-social methods and structures (such as think-pair-share, mixer review, information gap, jigsaw, group investigation, and round table) which involve students working together according to the

principles of simultaneous interaction, positive interdependence, individual accountability, and team reward. A detailed description of the dynamics and procedures of CL can be found in Kagan (1992) and Slavin (1990).

At the lower levels of proficiency, there is emphasis in the new curriculum on the role of contextualized and motivating language practice in developing all the skill modalities. Consequently, the comprehension-based and humanistic-affective methodologies such as the Total Physical Response (TPR), Silent Way (SW), Whole Language, Natural Approach, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning (CLL), and skill integration approaches are employed. Along similar lines, a wide variety of hands-on, acting-out, and task-based activities as well as language experience stories, dialogue journals, learning logs, and graphic organizers are also used, depending upon the curricular objectives and/or themes under consideration. For a detailed description of these methodologies and activities see Freeman (1986), Nunan (1991), Weaver et. al. (1990), and Shaaban et al. (in press).

At the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency, the emphasis gradually shifts from pre-academic to academic and socio-cultural English as learners develop their critical thinking skills and acquire a wide variety of linguistic and grammatical structures needed for immediate success in an all-English curriculum in various areas of study and at the university level.

SKILLS

The stages of instruction and modes of presentation in developing the skills of listening, oral fluency, reading, and written communication are based on the pedagogical implications of some widely accepted theoretical views (models) of the skills and in accordance with optimal conditions for language acquisition.

Listening

Viewed as an active communication process, listening involves the transform of auditory input into intelligible and useful comprehension. Thus, the new curriculum provides learners at the beginning levels with opportunities to develop their sub-skills of auditory discrimination, auditory analysis, and memory as well as attention, code selection and schema search and instantiation. At the advanced levels, listening tasks emphasize academic listening activities which include note-taking, organization, interpretation, and evaluation. Instruction is planned according to the proficiency levels of learners and gradually moves from deriving direct meaning to making inferences, to deriving critical meaning drawing on a variety of authentic materials such as recordings, radio broadcasts, songs, TV shows, lectures, and so forth. Similarly, the stages of lesson planning proceed from pre-listening to listening, to post listening activities in order to help learners build and/or activate relevant background, comprehend what is heard and finally interpret and reflect on their comprehension. The following activities listed under each stage are examples of what may be done in a listening comprehension class.

Pre-Listening Stage

- Giving background information
- Reading relevant material
- Looking at related pictures and illustrations
- Discussing statements
- Answering questions relevant to text
- Labeling a picture

Listening Stage

- Marking/ checking items in pictures
- Identifying the relevant picture
- Organizing pictures in order
- Completing pictures
- Drawing pictures
- Tracing/ following a route on a map
- Carrying out activities
- Completing grids/ forms/ charts
- Answering questions raised in the pre-listening stage
- Spotting mistakes

Post-Listening Stage

- Solving problems
- Interpreting text
- Role-playing
- Extending lists
- Sequencing/ grading
- Matching
- Summarizing

- Jigsaw listening
- Identifying relationships between speakers
- Recognizing mood/ attitude/ bias/ intention

Oral Fluency

Oral fluency instruction aims at engaging learners in meaningful, referential, and exploratory talk as they express their needs, feelings, ideas, and intellectual positions in a relaxed and supportive environment. Instruction is organized according to the proficiency levels of learners as they gradually develop their skills of using formulaic expressions, information routines (describing, making comparisons, telling stories, and giving instructions), and transactional routines (such as telephone conversations, interviews, meetings, and discussions) to negotiate and construct meaning. The stages of instruction proceed from pre-speaking to speaking and post-speaking in order to describe objects in the immediate environment, fill in information gaps, debate controversial issues, and convey intellectual positions, observing the systematics of turn-taking and culturally appropriate behavior. The following activities listed under each stage are examples of what could be done in an oral communication class.

Pre-Speaking Stage

- Examining pictures
- Listening activities related to topic
- Reading a relevant text
- Collecting information from a variety of sources

Speaking Stage

- Responding appropriately to prompts
- Participating in dialogues
- Presenting new material
- Commenting on a topic
- Reciting poetry
- Leading/ participating in discussion
- Observing systematics of turn-taking
- Participating in problem-solving activities
- Conducting interviews

Post-Speaking Stage

- Role-playing
- Writing a summary
- Using graphic organizers to represent ideas
- Evaluating the speaking activity
- Conducting further research
- Making a detailed presentation
- Participating in project work

Reading

Reading is perceived in the curriculum as an active process of constructing meaning as a result of the interaction between the reader and the text, that is the interaction between textual input (content and form) and existing background knowledge (experience and prior knowledge). As such, learners are trained in a variety of text-processing and background activation and/or building strategies according to three stages of lesson planning i.e., pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. As students go through these stages, they develop the requisite background knowledge for comprehension, set expectations for reading, confirm their expectations, and finally critique and evaluate their comprehension of what is read. The following activities listed under each stage are examples of what could be done in a reading comprehension class.

Pre-Reading Stage

- Brainstorming about a topic
- Drawing semantic webs and/ or charts
- Defining key words and expressions
- Watching a film related to topic
- Doing a know-wonder-learn activity
- Becoming familiar with structures, genre, and style
- Scanning graphics, headings, and titles
- Making predictions based on knowledge of topics or on textual clues
- Answering questions on text

Reading

- Revisiting and revising predictions
- Relating to previous knowledge
- Reconsidering answers to pre-reading questions
- Comprehending what is being read
- Maintaining interest
- Formulating and testing hypotheses
- Identifying what is positive interesting and neutral (P.I.N.)

Post-Reading

- Using graphic organizers to represent ideas
- Elaborating, expanding, and extending
- Transferring acquired information and skills to new contexts
- Answer comprehension exercises
- Writing an essay on a related topic

Written Communication

The new curriculum proclaims a process-oriented view of composing which involves having students go through the following stages: pre-writing, writing, revising, and publishing. Instruction is organized to help learners manage their acts of composing, develop their authentic voice as writers, and self-sponsor their written products. During pre-drafting, learners explore and

conceptualize their topics through a variety of heuristic procedures following which they write multiple drafts of their ideas and finally revise and share their written products with the rest of the class through bulletin boards or the school magazine. Furthermore, at the advanced levels of proficiency learners develop their skills of academic writing in a variety of assignment formats such as reports and research papers according to the expectations of an academic audience in the various fields of study. The following activities listed under each stage are examples of what could be done in a written communication class.

Pre-Writing

- Gathering information and thoughts
- Brainstorming about the topic with peers
- Narrowing the topic
- Outlining
- Reading texts related to the topic
- Watching a movie or a documentary related to the topic
- Identifying audience, purpose, and genre
- Developing and writing a plan
- Asking probing questions

Writing

- Writing the first draft
- Stressing clarity over mechanics
- Maintaining stream of consciousness
- Requesting the help of the teacher when experiencing mental block

Revising

- Checking for purpose, audience, and clarity
- Checking for register
- Taking into consideration input from teacher and peers
- Correcting spelling, syntax, and mechanics

Publishing

- Ensuring legible handwriting
- Using illustrations and pictures as needed
- Sharing final version with others
- Receiving a grade

Beside emphasis on the four language skills, the new curriculum promotes critical thinking, study skills, and cultural awareness. Of particular importance in this regard is helping learners assess their own use of language and develop their awareness of the linguistic and organization features of a wide variety of oral and written text-types. Similarly, the new curriculum underscores the importance of learning strategies and effective study habits as well as curiosity and empathy toward other cultures.

In brief, the English curriculum provides for the development of learning and thinking strategies which help students extend their communicative competence, construct and use their academic knowledge effectively, and expand their socio-linguistic and socio-cultural horizons in a stress-reduced learning environment.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

One of the main arguments for the adoption of a content-based approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language is that in this approach students are given instructional materials which are either at or just above their language proficiency level. Furthermore, because of the familiarity of the content of the materials used for instruction, the anxiety and tension generated normally when students face an unfamiliar text are substantially reduced. Consequently, students acquire language proficiency while they continue to develop cognitively and to reinforce their knowledge of content by further exposure to the content presented in new forms.

The instructional materials selected and/or adapted for the thematic units encompassed a wide variety of text types and teaching aids. Of particular concern to us was the development of theme-based packages of instructional materials that are authentic, exploitable, and relevant to the theme under study. Therefore, we selected materials which, though not generated specifically for any language teaching purposes, included a good range of language functions and structures as well as reflected up-to-date and developmentally appropriate and interesting content. For example, to cover the theme of "Human Communication" in grade 10, we used materials selected from the content areas of literature, psychology, and sociology. Selected materials were first photocopied,

typed, and then sequenced and matched with instructional objectives. Materials which deviated from “good” writing were adapted by changing words, deleting extraneous text features such as unnecessary remarks, and adding connectors. We were careful to keep these modifications minimal in order not to fall into oversimplification whereby the text loses its authenticity, which contradicts the basic principles of theme-based language instruction.

In order to help learners process challenging and difficult texts, we resorted to the use of learning “crutches” such as audio-visual aids, grids, graphic organizers, and the like which we will discuss later. Some of the instructional aids which we recommend that teachers draw on in their teaching are: charts, tables, diagrams, illustrations, pictures, realia, transparencies, tape-recordings, radio and television programs, films, interactive videos, and specially-designed videos. The tools that we believe every EFL teacher should have access to, in addition to classroom walls and chalkboard, are video cassettes, overhead projectors, tape recorders, radios, televisions, and advanced computers.

As for classroom activities, students will be involved in hands-on performance tasks, brainstorming in groups, physical involvement, discussions, developing semantic maps, and the like. Special emphasis is placed on the use of graphic organizers such as graphs, tables, maps, flow charts, and Venn diagrams because they are used to place information in meaningful contexts and, consequently, help students develop learning strategies, increase retention, activate background knowledge and prior learning, and organize ideas logically. The ultimate goal of using these aids and activities is to facilitate communication and comprehension as a result of the development of the following elements associated with language development in a theme-based approach:

Amplification: This is achieved by means of reducing linguistic barriers through familiarizing students with unfamiliar structures, vocabulary, and concepts (Addison, 1988).

Contextualization: This is achieved by means of providing learners with realia, visuals, and props (Cummins, 1981).

Negotiation of meaning: This is achieved by means of developing the strategies of confirmation, elaboration, expansion, and extension through activities such as brainstorming, pairwork, and discussions (Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

Redundancy: This is achieved by means of recycling knowledge, accessing background information, restating and paraphrasing, and reaching the same information through various sources (Savill-Troike, 1991).

Cognitive Work: This is achieved by means of getting enough practice in outlining, summarizing, highlighting and underlining texts, writing down key words, and generating questions (Webb, 1988).

EVALUATION GUIDELINES

In developing the evaluation component for the new English curriculum, we adopted the context-adaptive model for developing language achievement tests (Turner, 1992). This model fits the principles and characteristics of theme-based language instruction as it divides the process of test writing into stages during which teachers clarify instructional objectives, determine and describe appropriate test formats, and establish the clarity, practicality, reliability, and validity of those formats.

Evaluation is viewed in the curriculum as an integral part of the learning/teaching process in the sense that the achievement tests are meant to reflect both curriculum objectives and classroom activities. Furthermore, evaluation is treated as a continuous operation that employs various formal and informal tools of assessment for obtaining information about a student's proficiency level. Continuous evaluation will thus incorporate the latest trends in testing and assessment such as oral and written tests, group tests, peer evaluation, self evaluation, portfolios, observations, interviews, and conferences. Finally, the tests will reflect the questioning and answering schemes and strategies that the new curriculum has recommended for use in the classroom; this view fits rather well within the current practices in testing which support the principle that "in constructing tests it is important to include texts and activities which mirror as closely as possible those which students have been exposed to and/or are likely to meet in their future target

situations” (Weir, C., 1993: 65). Questioning routines such as cloze procedure, wait-time (for oral work), wonder questions, think - pair - share (TPS), and positive - interesting - neutral (PIN) as well as questioning frameworks such as description, personal interpretation, and critical and creative questions will be reflected in the designed tests. Answering frameworks, or possible student answers, need also to be considered; Olsen (1996) provides the following useful adaptation of Krashen and Terrell’s taxonomy of the stages of language acquisition and response task types:

Taxonomy and Student Response Task Types

| Stage of Acquisition | Performance Indicator(s) | Student Response(s) /Ask Students to: |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Stage One:</i> Preproduction | Kinesthetic | point act out choose watch arrange or sort out visuals number manipulate gesture circle mark use follow directions |
| <i>Stage Two:</i> Early Speech | Kinesthetic; AND one- or two-word utterances | name label number list tell use group or sort words or phrases manipulate answer categorize |
| <i>Stage Three:</i> Speech Emergence | Kinesthetic; one or two words utterances; AND phrases and | describe define recall explain retell summarize |

simple sentences

compare contrast write
follow directions read
give or list steps

Stage Four:

Fluency Emergence

Kinesthetic; words, phrases,
and simple sentences

justify create give opinion
debate defend analyze
describe in detail examine
evaluate complete

Another model that was consulted in connection with teaching and testing English as a foreign language is the 3R's model (Olsen, 1996). The model discusses three ways in which students interact with content materials; these ways reflect different types of mental activity. The three R's are: recognition, replication, and reorganization. Recognition corresponds to Krashen and Terrell's silent period and early speech and involves performance tasks such as matching, choosing, and manipulating objects. Replication corresponds to Krashen and Terrell's early speech through fluency emergence and involves tasks such as exchanging information in charts, maps or picture pairs. Reorganization requires students to demonstrate the ability to reorganize given information into different formats or text types; it includes performance tasks and activities that lend themselves to group work such as creating a time line, an outline, or a semantic map. Reorganization tasks are very practical in that they "can accommodate various levels of language proficiency from 'silent' and 'speech emergence' through 'fluent' stages of Terrell's taxonomy as well as articulate, highly verbal responses" (Olsen, 1996: 16).

With all the of the above considerations as guidelines for the teacher-tester, the task of designing tests of students' achievement becomes relatively clear and manageable. However, before deciding on the test format, the teacher needs to become aware of the test operations, that is he has to determine what it is that he wishes to measure and/or what he believes the students can

do; he also needs to become aware of the test conditions, that is under what circumstances (Weir, 1993). Conditions and operations differ slightly between the skills involving comprehension (listening and reading) and those involving communication (speaking and writing). For example, the following considerations fall under the heading of operations for comprehension skills: direct meaning (main ideas and details, and attitudes), inferred meaning (situation, writer/speaker, and discourse function) and linguistic and organizational features of the text; on the other hand operational considerations for communication skills include: informational skills (narration, description, definition, instruction, comparison, explanation, and presentation), interactional skills (expressing, eliciting and responding, directing, and decision-making), and improvisational skills (negotiation of meaning, argumentation, and management of interaction). Examples of conditions considerations for comprehension skills are the following: purpose, nature of text, organization, lexical range, topic, status of writer/speaker, schemata, size of input, and textual complexity; on the other hand, conditions considerations for communication skills include: purpose, text type/discourse output required, functioning under normal time constraints, interlocutors/audience, organization, lexical range, type of information, cognitive demands, setting, channel, and size of output. Needless to say, there are special features of each skills that the test designer needs to observe.

As for the actual design of the test, we suggested that teachers identify testing objectives by examining the objectives and performance tasks set in the curriculum and targeted in the various instructional units. Teachers may then determine the test formats in light of the nature of those objectives and performance tasks, following which they may write test specifications in order to guide the process of test writing through specifying the purpose, source, and scoring procedure of the test. For example, teachers may use the formats of labeling, matching, and/or cloze type exercises to assess vocabulary acquisition and, then, score such tests objectively based on an answer key. Similarly, teachers may use essay type questions and score responses holistically in order to measure content knowledge and writing proficiency. Other test formats may include ratings of learners' responses according to some established criteria in order to measure analytical skills; they may also include using observation forms in order to assess learners' level of

participation and engagement in class activities such as journal writing, free writing, questioning, role playing, and so forth.

Upon specifying test formats and test specifications, teachers may set acceptable standards for achieving the instructional objectives under consideration. These standards may take the form of numerical scores of accurate answers (80 % or 85 %) or letter grades (A, B, or C) whereby non-numerical assessment may be translated into numbers and/or letters. As it may be difficult to ask teachers to pilot achievement tests, it is recommended that tests be prepared and reviewed by a group of teachers in order to establish test validity. Needless to say, scoring tests should also be the work of a group as well in order to establish inter-rater reliability and uniformity.