From Curriculum to Syllabus Design

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Definition: A broad approach and a narrow approach

- "…Syllabus design has been seen as a subsidiary component of curriculum design. "Curriculum" is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation management, and administration of education programs. "Syllabus", on the other hand, focuses more narrowly on the selection and grading of content." Nunan. D: 1988

Backward Design
(Wiggins & McTighe, 2004)

- A method of designing educational curriculum by setting goals before choosing instructional methods and forms of assessment

> "What book will we read?" or "What activities will we do?" or "What will we discuss?"

Shift

> "What should they walk out the door able to understand, regardless of what activities or texts we use?" and "What is evidence of such ability?" and, therefore, "What texts, activities, and methods will best enable such a result?"

- Learners' interests and preferences are taken into account through the curriculum development process.

Why Backword Design?
(for Twin sins…)

1. Activity orientation

2. Textbook coverage

Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe,

Stage 1: Identify desired results

National Standards, Proficiency/ Performance Standards

Stage 2: Determ evidence

Decision on Assessment

Decision on Syllabus Design

Stage **ing experiences and instruction** design activities that will make desired results happen

Discuss with a partner

- *How is Backward Design similar and different from your unit planning models?*

Selection of Syllabus Design

- What gets taught?

- In what order?

- What theory and principles of the language teaching?

- What theory of learning?

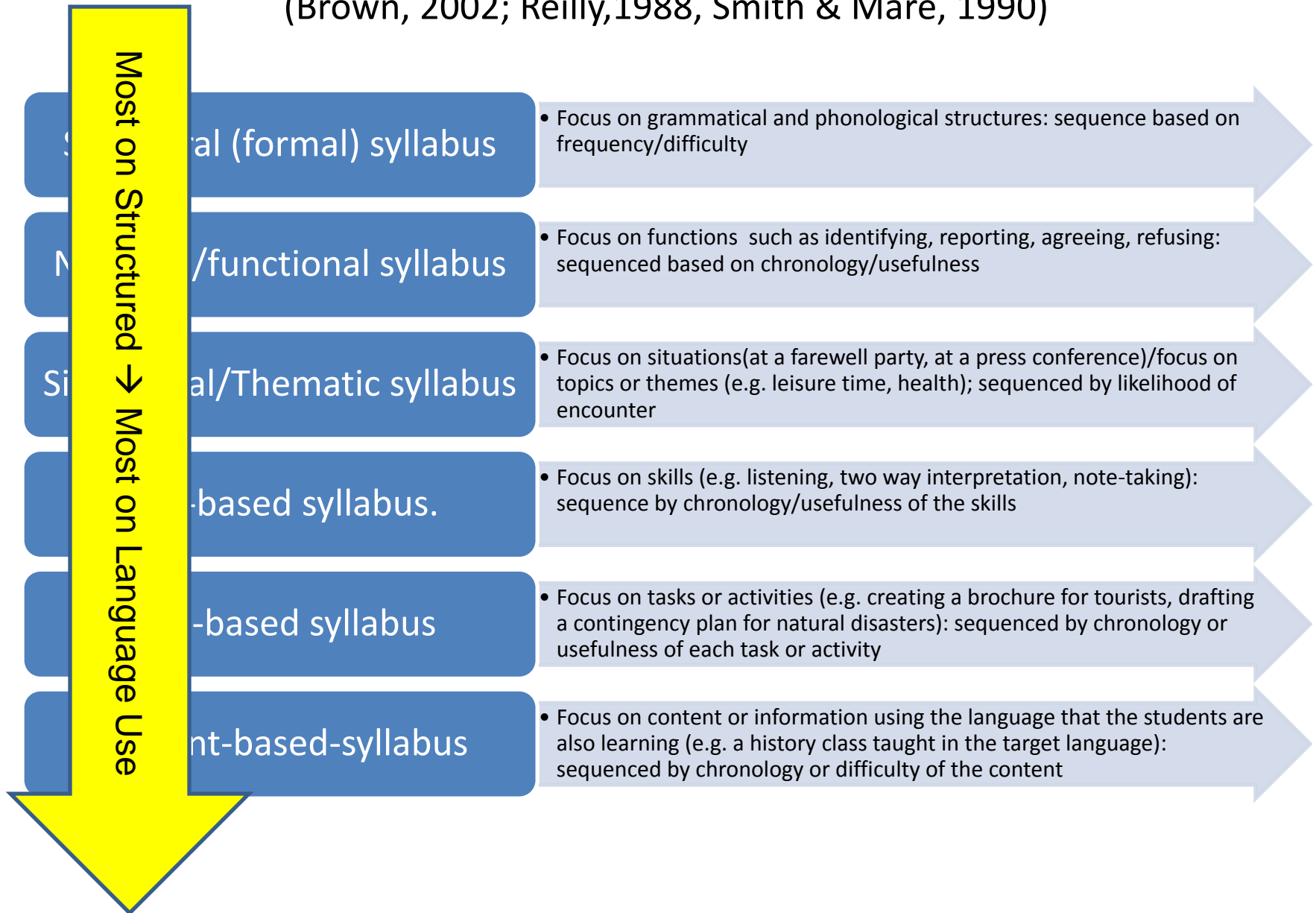- What objectives or purposes of teaching language?

"Approaches to Foreign Language Syllabus Design," ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Washington DC. Reilly, T.: 1988

- "Although six different types of language teaching syllabi are treated here as though each occurred "purely," in practice, these types rarely occur independently of each other. Almost all actual language teaching syllabi are combinations of two or more of the types defined here. For a given course, one type of syllabus usually dominates, while other types of content may be combined with it. Furthermore, the six types of syllabi are not entirely distinct from each other. For example, the distinction between skill-based and task-based syllabi may be minimal. In such cases, the distinguishing factor is often the way in which the instructional content is used in the actual teaching procedure. .."

Types of Syllabus Design
(Brown, 2002; Reilly,1988, Smith & Mare, 1990)

Most on Structured → Most on Language Use

Syllabus Type	Description
Structural (formal) syllabus	• Focus on grammatical and phonological structures: sequence based on frequency/difficulty
Notional/functional syllabus	• Focus on functions such as identifying, reporting, agreeing, refusing: sequenced based on chronology/usefulness
Situational/Thematic syllabus	• Focus on situations(at a farewell party, at a press conference)/focus on topics or themes (e.g. leisure time, health); sequenced by likelihood of encounter
Skill-based syllabus.	• Focus on skills (e.g. listening, two way interpretation, note-taking): sequence by chronology/usefulness of the skills
Task-based syllabus	• Focus on tasks or activities (e.g. creating a brochure for tourists, drafting a contingency plan for natural disasters): sequenced by chronology or usefulness of each task or activity
Content-based-syllabus	• Focus on content or information using the language that the students are also learning (e.g. a history class taught in the target language): sequenced by chronology or difficulty of the content

Steps in preparing practical language teaching syllabus choice

1. Determine, to the extent possible, what outcomes are desired for the students in the instructional program, i.e. what the students should be able to do as a result of the instruction.
2. Rank the syllabus types presented here as to their likelihood of leading to the outcomes desired. Arrange the six types with preference you are going to give to each type.
3. Evaluate available resources for teaching, needs, analysis, materials choices and production and in training for teachers.
4. Rank the syllabi relative to available resources. That is determine what syllabus types would be the easiest to implement within available resources.
5. Compare the lists made under #2 and 4. Making as few adjustments to the earlier list as possible, produce a new list of ranking based on the availability of resources.
6. Designate one or two syllabus types as dominant and one or two as secondary.
7. Review the question of combination or integration or syllabus types and determine how combinations will be achieved and in what proportion.

Hands on Practice

1. *In you small group, brainstorm which syllabus design you want to choose as primary one(s) and secondary one(s) following the steps. (Keep your students' goals/results in mind.)*

2. *Share with the entire group why your group selected them.*

Sample Scope and Sequence (Structural+ Notional/Functional+ Situational/Thematic+Task based)

Situational/Thematic Sequence: Self→ Community

Structural Sequence: based on frequency of vocabulary and grammar, learner survey and data analysis

Notional/Functional Sequence: based on Thematic Sequence

Task Sequence: based on the other sequence

Guiding Principles of Development

- Our assumptions: there is essentially nothing different in designing a syllabus for a less commonly taught language, such as Korean, from designing a syllabus for, say, Spanish.

- We took the position that issues of learning inherent in the content areas of morphology, phonology, and syntax are far less critical than the very processes of learning.

- Moreover, learning and teaching processes are not unique to languages but can be generalized among all knowledge and skill areas.

- The key is not the language itself but how the learning is organized and presented. Given what is known about learning and teaching theory, we have moved away from the more traditional, mimetic teaching approach seen in many textbooks.

- Our basic tenet is that adult learners have identifiable needs and capabilities which must be accounted for in designing a curriculum.

Adult Learning and Cognitive Principles (Knowles, 1973).

- Adults prefer to be self-directed, not as the subjects of learning but as decision-makers: Control shifts from the teacher-curriculum to the learner, as does accountability for the learning. will result in resistance to learning and less favorable outcomes.

- Adults come with life experience that can serve as a base for relating new learning: Schema theory (Mayer, 1983) for the participatory and experiential settings of group problem-solving and simulations.

- Adult's readiness to learn is based on his or her perceived role--in life, in society, and on the job: adults will be much more motivated to learn something they see as relevant to tasks they will eventually be performing. the theory of situated cognition (Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989)

- Adults have a problem-solving orientation to learning: they will learn because they perceive a gap between where they are not and where they need to be, in order to be competent. Creating that gap--not presenting lists of things to memorize--is the stuff of effective learning activities. Hence, learning the building blocks of language, grammar and vocabulary, is centered in our textbook around tasks that require students to process information at higher cognitive levels (Bloom, 1956).

Additional Approaches to Learning

- Different Learning Styles of the acquisition and processing of information: visual vs. auditory, global vs. analytical (Keirsey and Bates, 1984)
- Different Learning strategies (both for skill domains and language processing) in order to raise students' meta-cognitive awareness and help them think strategically about their learning.
- Skill Integration and task-based lesson design: from receptive skills to productive skills
- Learner centeredness
- Job related tasks/skills and scenarios

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