Syllabus Design in EFL Settings

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What is a syllabus?

It is a public, comprehensive document containing an ordered list of what is to be taught in a course within a specific time frame. Additionally, the objectives, processes, materials, methodology and assessment tasks are listed. Sometimes the textbook *is* the syllabus of the course.
Why using a syllabus?

• It shows professionalism and knowledge of what being a teacher really entails.

• It serves as a reference for students and teachers (especially novice teachers).
Why using a syllabus?

- It gives learners a sense of progress.
- It accounts for an adequate sequence of contents in a course.
- It helps teachers be more organized and creative in their planning.
- It can be used more than once if changes are made to adjust to the needs of the new students.
Why using a syllabus?

- It serves as a useful tool to evaluate the course at the end of it.
- It helps Ts define what is essential in a course and what could be left out if necessary.
Types of syllabi

• Syllabi can be either synthetic (the L2 is segmented into discrete items expecting Ls to put everything together) or analytic (L2 is seen as a whole and Ls should be immerse in real communication). Beglar and Hunt (2002)
Types of syllabi

- Ur (1996) provides a comprehensive classification:
  - **Grammatical**: contents are organized according to structures
  - **Lexical**: a list of lexical items with collocations and idioms are set
Types of syllabi

- **Grammatical-lexical**: a combination of both
- **Situational**: real-life contexts of language with names of situations are stated (e.g., at a restaurant, at the bank, on the street)
- **Topic-based**: a set of related vocabulary items headed by broad topics are the contents
- **Notional**: notions (concepts that language can express) such as number, time, place, color are listed
Types of syllabi

- **Notional-functional**: a combination of notions and functions (things you can DO with language) such as apologizing, describing, asking for information are listed.

- **Procedural**: it specifies the task to be done (read a map, make a decision, write a story) rather than the language itself.
Types of syllabi

- **Process**: a not pre-set syllabus where students and teachers negotiate the contents of the course. It is only listed retrospectively.

- **Mixed or “multi-strand”**: a combination of two or more syllabuses to adjust to the needs of the learners or the setting.
What about Pasto & Colombia?

• In EFL Settings such as Colombia (large groups, scarce materials, Only 2 or 3 hours a week), what type of syllabus can be appropriate?

• Syllabus design will depend on the philosophy of teaching of each educator. This philosophy of teaching is built on the T’s beliefs about what language is…
What about Pasto & Colombia?

• …what language learning is, which method and techniques, which method and techniques are the most conducive to learning and what kind of feedback is the most effective to enhance learning among others.
What about Pasto & Colombia?

- Knowing what the government wants from FLT nowadays it can be suggested that regardless of the syllabus type you choose...
What about Pasto & Colombia?

• Syllabi must have a balance between focus on forms and focus on meaning.

• Functions must be included in a syllabus since the standardized exams the government is implementing require functional, not grammatical knowledge.
What about Pasto & Colombia?

• Syllabuses must include both task-based (asks Ss to perform something and discussion, usually carried out in groups, is a means to an end) and topic-based (asks Ss to talk about a topic-usually controversial) activities.
What about Pasto & Colombia?

• Assessment tasks should be present in the syllabus to give Ss time to prepare in an autonomous way.
• Group-work must be included to maximize the available time.
What about Pasto & Colombia?

- Emphasis should be placed on creating conditions for developing communicative competence.
- Productive skills should be as important as receptive skills.
Your Turn...

Based on what you read and on this brief lecture create a syllabus for the assigned situation