

## MATE Newsletter Supplement (3)

# The Pedagogical Guidelines for the Teaching of English in the Moroccan High Schools

Prepared for publication in MATE newsletter by:  
M. Hassim & M. Fahmi

البرامج والتوجيهات التربوية الخاصة بتدريس  
مادة اللغة الإنجليزية  
بالجدوع المشتركة للتعليم الثانوي التأهيلي

# **The Pedagogical Guidelines** for the Teaching of English in the Moroccan High Schools

**March**

# Foreword

Since the school year 2005 / 2006 will be the start of the reform in the Moroccan high schools, the inspectorate of English has designed new pedagogical guidelines in order to help teachers carry out their task in the best possible way.

Two points seem to be necessary to mention here:

**1-** Though this stage of the reform concerns only the common core (tronc commun), these guidelines concern the secondary cycle as a whole. We firmly believe that when a reform is introduced, it should look at a cycle in a global way. For this purpose, this document should be looked at as having two parts:

**a. Part 1**, which consists of the standards and the program devised for this specific level (common core);

**b. Part 2**, which consists in the methodological framework within which the teachers are advised to perform all through the secondary level.

**2-** This document should be considered as only the first draft of a larger, more elaborate and more complete one. Any suggestions, any new ideas -which have not been mentioned- from teachers or inspectors will be welcome.

The ministry of National Education wishes to thank all the inspectors who have contributed to the writing of the present document in such a short time and often in difficult circumstances.

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## INTRODUCTION

Effective school research reveals that one of the most important elements in improving the results of education is being clear about standards. Having clear standards for both students and teachers makes it possible to develop rigorous local curricula and valid and reliable assessments. The data from such assessments determine where we need to place our emphasis as we improve teaching and learning, bearing in mind that the entire community has had a share in setting academic standards for the education of our students (National Charter, 2000). We believe that these standards will continue to assist parents and educators in preparing students for the challenges of modern society.

### Defining the Academic Standards

Academic standards specify what students should know and be able to do, what they might be asked to do to give evidence of standards, and how well they must perform. They include content, performance, and proficiency standards.

- Content standards refer to *what* students should know and be able to do.
- Performance standards tell *how* students will show that they are meeting a standard.
- Proficiency standards indicate *how well* students must perform.

Standards are necessary! They serve as rigorous goals for teaching and learning. Setting high standards enables students, parents, educators, and citizens to know what students should have learned at a given point in time. The absence of standards has consequences similar to lack of goals in any pursuit. Without clear goals, students may be unmotivated and confused.

Contemporary society is placing immense academic demands on students. Clear statements about what students must know and be able to do are essential to ensure that our schools offer students the opportunity to

acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

### Difference between academic standards and curriculum

Standards are statements about what students should know and be able to do, what they might be asked to do to give evidence of learning, and how well they should be expected to know or do it. Curriculum is the program devised by educators, used to prepare students to meet standards. It consists of activities and lessons at each grade level, instructional materials, and various instructional techniques. In short, standards define what is to be learned at certain points in time, and from a broad perspective, what performances will be accepted as evidence that the learning has occurred. Curriculum specifies the details of the day-to-day schooling.

### Applying the Academic Standards across the Curriculum

When community members and employers consider what they want citizens and employees to know and be able to do, they often speak of broad areas of applied knowledge such as communication, thinking, problem solving, and decision making. These areas connect or go beyond the mastery of individual subject areas. As students apply their knowledge both within and across the various curricular areas, they develop the concepts and complex thinking of an educated person. Community members need these skills to function as responsible citizens.

Employers praise those employees who demonstrate these skills because they are people who can continue learning and connect what they have learned to the requirements of a job. College and university faculty recognize the need for these skills as the means of developing the level of understanding that separates the expert from the beginner.

Teachers in every class should expect and encourage the development of these shared applications, both to promote the learning of the subject content and to extend learning across the curriculum. These applications fall into four general categories:

### **1. Ability to Think**

- Problem solving
- Informed decision making
- Systems thinking
- Critical, creative, and analytical thinking
- Imagining places, times, and situations different from one's own
- Developing and testing a hypothesis
- Transferring learning to new situations

### **2. Skill in Communication**

- Constructing and defending an argument
- Working effectively in groups
- Communicating plans and processes for reaching goals
- Receiving and acting on instructions, plans, and models
- Communicating with a variety of tools and skills

### **3. Production of Quality Work**

- Acquiring and using information
- Creating quality products and performances
- Revising products and performances
- Developing and pursuing positive goals

### **4. Connections with Community**

- Recognizing and acting on responsibilities as a citizen
- Preparing for work and life-long learning
- Contributing to the aesthetic and cultural life of the community
- Seeing oneself and one's community within the state, nation, and world
- Contributing and adapting to scientific and technological change.

## **OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

People today are connecting across cultural, political, and economic borders via the Internet and other information technologies. To meet the challenges of ever-increasing global connections and to be a front-runner in a global economy now and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students in Morocco must communicate in a culturally appropriate manner with people from around the world. Our students must be aware of different perspectives reflected in both the language and behaviours of other people. They must possess language skills and an understanding of other cultures to be productive members of the diverse communities in which we all live.

These standards for foreign language learning are based on an instructional program in English for all students beginning in the preparatory and continuing through the baccalaureate cycle.

These standards do not neglect the teaching of basic language structures, but rather encourage the student to go beyond this knowledge to develop real-life uses for foreign languages. It is the role of parents, teachers, and community members alike to encourage and guide the development of these skills in our students as they strive to become responsible citizens.

Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages reflects the latest research in the field of second language instruction as presented in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.<sup>1</sup> This document, developed by leaders in second language education from across the world, outlines standards for

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1. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (1995). Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

language learning. The content standards were adopted from this document. The standards document adds performance standards that support each content standard. These were developed for students by Moroccan educators from all areas of study.

It should be underlined that English in our curriculum does not exclusively refer to the culture of the use in Great Britain or the USA. English is considered as a language of international communication.

Five key words summarize the intent of these standards:

- **COMMUNICATION:** communicate in English
- **CULTURES:** gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures
- **CONNECTIONS:** connect with other disciplines and acquire information
- **COMPARISONS:** develop insight into the nature of language and culture
- **COMMUNITIES:** participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world with communication and culture as the cornerstone for language learning, the goal is for all students to learn how, when, and why to say what to whom.<sup>2</sup>

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **A. Interpersonal: conversation**

*Content standard:* Students will engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions and exchange opinions in a language other than their own.

*Rationale:* Students should know how to use the language effectively in order to exchange ideas and information with other people in a culturally different manner. This standard focuses on the goal of learning to engage in conversation.

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2. *ibid*

### **B. Interpretive: Listening and Reading**

*Content Standard:* Students will understand and interpret a language other than their own in its written and spoken form on a variety of topics.

*Rationale:* Students should develop strong listening and reading skills to interpret the concepts, ideas, and opinions expressed by members of other cultures through their media and their literatures. This standard focuses on increasing the level of understanding as students listen to, read, or view materials in a new language.

### **C. Presentational: Speaking and Writing**

*Content Standard:* Students will present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in English.

*Rationale:* Students should develop strong speaking and writing skills to communicate their thoughts, concepts, and opinions effectively to members of other cultures. This standard focuses on presenting information in a way that is appropriate for the audience.

## **CULTURE**

### **D. Practices**

*Content Standard:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

*Rationale:* To fully understand another culture, students need to develop an awareness of another people's way of life, of the patterns of behaviour that order their world, and of the traditional ideas, attitudes, and perspectives that guide their behaviours.

### **E. Strategic**

*Content Standard:* Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

*Rationale:* To respect and appreciate the diversity of their world, students need to

learn about the contribution of other cultures to the world and the solutions they offer to problems confronting them. Awareness of these contributions helps students understand how their views and other people's views of the world have been influenced.

### Methodological standards

*Content standard:* Students will show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

*Rationale:* Students who study another language are better prepared to be responsible members of their communities because of their global perspective. They are

able to expanded their employment opportunities both at home and abroad and have access to a wider variety of resources which would allow them to investigate topics of personal interest.

### Performance standards

Students will:

- plan work over a certain time span.
- search out information from dictionaries and other reference materials appropriately and effectively.
- manage projects efficiently.
- use the knowledge of the language creatively and imaginatively.
- organise learning in efficient ways.

Communication	Level 1 (book one)	Level 2
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will carry out a short conversation about personal interests, including what they have done, are doing, and are planning to do.</li> <li>- Students will ask and answer questions, including biographical information.</li> <li>- Students will state personal preferences and feelings.</li> <li>- Students will express personal needs.</li> <li>- Students will ask for repetition and repeat to ensure understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will sustain a conversation including descriptions on selected topics about themselves and their state or country.</li> <li>- Students will ask and answer a variety of questions, giving reasons for their answers.</li> <li>- Students will state personal preferences and feelings with some explanation.</li> <li>- Students will give possible solutions to a problem related to a personal need.</li> <li>- Students will ask for simplification and clarification.</li> </ul>
Interpretive (listening and reading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will understand spoken language on familiar topics that have strong visual support.</li> <li>- Students will comprehend simple daily conversations on familiar topics and selected, age-appropriate authentic recordings, broadcasts, and videos.</li> <li>- Students will understand written materials on familiar topics that have strong visual support.</li> <li>- Students will comprehend the main idea of selected, short authentic written materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will understand spoken language that incorporates familiar vocabulary and structures.</li> <li>- Students will comprehend the main idea and some supporting ideas of selected authentic materials including recordings.</li> <li>- Students will understand selected written materials on topics of personal interest.</li> <li>- Students will comprehend the main idea and some supporting ideas of selected authentic written materials.</li> <li>- In addition, students will begin to</li> </ul>

	- Students will use previous classroom experience with the language to understand its spoken and written forms.	derive meaning through use of prediction, prefixes, suffixes, root words, contextual clues, and word order.
Presentational (speaking and writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will dramatize student-created and/or authentic songs, short poems, skits, or dialogues.</li> <li>- Students will write and present a short narrative about themselves.</li> <li>- Students will give simple commands and make requests of another person or group.</li> <li>- Students will tell a simple story.</li> <li>- Students will write personal journals and/or brief messages to friends (postcard, letter, or e-mail).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will present student-created and/or authentic short plays, stories, skits, poems, and songs.</li> <li>- Students will write and deliver a short presentation about their school or community.</li> <li>- Students will give simple directions to someone in order to complete a multi-step task.</li> <li>- Students will tell a story incorporating some description and detail.</li> <li>- Students will write short compositions and letters.</li> </ul>

## Culture

Practices	Level 1	Level2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patterns of interaction: Students will observe and imitate appropriate patterns of behaviour (such as greetings or gestures) used with friends and family in the cultures studied.</li> <li>- Cultural activities: Students will participate in and learn about age-appropriate cultural activities (such as games, songs, and holiday celebrations).</li> <li>- Beliefs and attitudes: Students will identify some common beliefs and attitudes within the cultures studied such as social etiquette or the role of the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patterns of interaction: Students will interact with respect using culturally appropriate patterns of behaviour in everyday informal and social situations.</li> <li>- Cultural activities: Students will experience cultural and social activities common to students of similar age in the target cultures (such as holiday celebrations, school life, and pastimes).</li> <li>- Beliefs and attitudes: Students will identify some common beliefs and attitudes within the cultures studied and compare them to their own beliefs and attitudes.</li> </ul>

## Strategic standards

Strategic	Level 1	Level 2
	- Objects and symbols: Students will identify objects and symbols, such as flags or currency, that are	- Objects and symbols: Students will compare objects and symbols, such as flags or currency, from other cultures

	<p>used day-to-day and represent other cultures.</p> <p>- Contributions: Students will identify some major contributions and historical figures from the cultures studied that are significant in the target cultures.</p> <p>- Mutual influences: Students will identify some historical and contemporary influences from other cultures that are significant in their own culture such as explorers and settlers, music, and sports.</p> <p>- Geography: Students will identify countries, regions, and geographic features where the target language is spoken.</p>	<p>to those found in their own culture.</p> <p>- Contributions: Students will identify major contributions and historical figures from the culture studied that are significant in the target cultures.</p> <p>- Mutual influences: Students will identify some historical and contemporary influences from other cultures that have impact on today's society such as the democratic form of government and environmental concerns.</p> <p>- Geography: Students will explain the impact of the target countries' geography on daily life.</p>
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## LEVEL 2 SYLLABUS

At the end of the common core, students are expected to perform the following:

### A. listening:

1. Identify the topic of a text.
2. Identify the participants and their roles.
3. Identify the setting of a text.
4. Identify the main idea of a text.
5. Respond to referential questions based on aural texts
6. Identify core vocabulary.

### B. Speaking:

1. Articulate sounds in isolated word forms.
2. Articulate sounds in connected speech.
3. Produce basic intonation patterns.
4. Recite songs and rhymes individually and chorally.
5. Talk about self, family, immediate environment, or issues of interest.
6. Describe a sequence of events.
7. Describe a process.
8. Express likes, dislikes, interests, dreams, apology and gratitude.

9. Make a rehearsed oral presentation about a familiar topic.
10. Respond verbally to direct questions, instructions, suggestions, offers and visual inputs.
11. Give directions and instructions.
12. Ask questions about different matters.

### C. Reading:

1. Make predictions about a reading text.
2. Identify the main idea of a text.
3. Answer factual questions.
4. Make inferences about a reading text.
5. Scan a text for specific information.
6. Skim for the gist or general impression.
7. Deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.
8. Recognize reference.

### D. Writing:

1. Copy a short text accurately.
2. Spell frequently used words correctly.
3. Arrange scrambled words into sentences.
4. Arrange scrambled sentences into paragraphs.
5. Complete sentences by supplying the missing word or group of words.

6. Construct sentences following a model.
7. Produce a short text following a model.
8. Combine sentences using connectors.
9. Write short messages to friends or relatives.
10. Use capitalisation and punctuation correctly.
11. Review, edit and rewrite own work.

### Themes and topics

Personal relations  
 Education  
 Food  
 Shopping  
 The arts  
 Science and technology  
 Recreation  
 Health and welfare  
 Environment and ecology  
 Economy

### Functions

Introducing oneself & others / Greeting people  
 Giving and eliciting information / Exchanging personal information  
 Expressing preferences  
 Expressing opinions / Agreeing and disagreeing  
 Expressing likes and dislikes  
 Requesting and offering  
 Expressing abilities  
 Describing past events  
 Expressing possibility  
 Inviting  
 Talking about quantities and amounts  
 Requesting and offering help  
 Making suggestions  
 Asking for permission.

### Structural content

Tenses: simple present / present progressive (expressing an action in progress and expressing future) / simple past / present perfect + already, yet, ever, never/ future

Modals: Can = may (be allowed to) Can (be able to) / May = could (possibility) / Must / mustn't / don't have to

Questions: Yes/ no.

Wh- questions: where, who, how, what, how many, how much how old, what time, when, why, whose, etc.

Question tags

Answers: short (subject- auxiliary/modal) + long answers

Pronouns: all personal, objective, demonstrative, reflexive, possessive  
 Comparative and superlative forms  
 Conjunctions  
 Prepositions (place and time)  
 Determiners  
 Intensifiers and quantifiers  
 Regular and some irregular plurals  
 Genitive ('s)

## METHODOLOGY

### COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH TO READING

#### I. Rationale: Importance of reading:

There are various reasons for teaching reading:

**1. Reading stands as a skill in its own right:** Thus, it should be developed along with the other skills such as listening, speaking, and writing.

**2. Reading as life requirement:** We do a lot of reading in our daily life. The ability to read opens up new horizons and opportunities. It enables us to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature and do every day things that are part and parcel of modern life such as reading newspapers, instruction manuals, maps, etc. That is why this skill should be catered for at the secondary school level. There is no need to emphasize the fact that, once at university, students will be required to do a lot of reading.

### 3. *Reading and writing relationship:*

Reading is closely related to writing. The more students read, the better they write.

**4. Exam requirement:** There is no denying the fact that the most salient component of the Baccalaureate exam is the reading text and its related comprehension questions.

## II. Competencies to develop in reading:

The competencies we aim at developing in learners can be categorized into two types: macro-competencies (global) and micro-competencies (sub-competencies). The following table outlines the targeted competencies:

Macro-competencies	Micro-competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- identifying, understanding, and interpreting different text-types.</li><li>- recognizing how language operates.</li><li>- determining the organization of a text.</li><li>- operating as autonomous / independent readers.</li><li>- recognizing the function of a text (invitation, complaint, apology, etc.).</li><li>- summarizing the content of a text in one's own words.</li><li>- getting acquainted with the target language cultural aspects and accepting cultural differences.</li><li>- undertaking project work related to the theme of the text under study.</li><li>- active reading (involving underlining, highlighting, taking notes, questioning, outlining, comparing, contrasting, etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- anticipating the content of a text by activating one's schemata.</li><li>- scanning (locating specific information in the text).</li><li>- skimming (extracting the main ideas from the text).</li><li>- understanding information explicitly stated in the text.</li><li>- inferencing (understanding information implicitly stated in the text).</li><li>- transcoding information into tabular form: (tables, graphs, diagrams, time-lines, etc.).</li><li>- distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details.</li><li>- identifying the topic sentence of each paragraph of the text.</li><li>- Reacting/evaluating information read in the text.</li><li>- identifying the cohesive devices and their function (referents, discourse markers, etc.)</li><li>- inferring word meaning from context.</li><li>- interpreting pronoun referents.</li></ul>

## III. Steps to follow:

In reading comprehension, three stages are to be distinguished: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.

### 1. *Pre-reading stage:*

Pre-reading stage aims at brainstorming the ideas included in the text. Here, the focus is primarily on determining the extent of the students' knowledge of and familiarity with the subject matter under study. Subjecting the learners to the following activities / tasks is believed to help activate their background knowledge and schemata:

- *Previewing the title:* The title can be used to trigger the students' predictive potential about the content of the text.
- *Semantic mapping:* This technique can be drawn upon to elicit from students words, word families, concepts, notions, related to the topic under study.
- *Picture stimulus:* Effective use of pictures, graphs and other available visual aids can kindle the students' interest and foster their predictive potential. This activity can also be followed by a short discussion of the topic.
- *Theme discussing:* Prior to reading, the teacher can pair off the students or get

them together in small groups to discuss the theme of the text.

- *Student generated questions*: Here, the students are invited to write a set of questions which they expect the text will respond to. The title, pictures, headings, first sentence of the text, first paragraph, first and last paragraph can be used as a platform to this end.
- *Vocabulary exploitation*: This activity is merely based on a number of text key words written on the board for the students to guess the theme of the subject matter. To elaborate on the subject, and through non-committal questions, the teacher can brainstorm ideas in connection with it. As a follow-up, students can be encouraged to write a short paragraph incorporating the given vocabulary.
- *Exploiting the text in chunks*: To enable students to give free rein to their imagination and stimulate their predictive potential, the teacher can either select the introductory paragraph, or a paragraph taken from the middle of the text, or the conclusion and, then, have his students read and guess the whole content of the text, or part of it, or anticipate what has happened before or what comes next.

## 2. *While-reading stage*:

It is the actual reading of the text by students. A number of activities can be undertaken here. Their main aim is to train students to consider and analyze the rhetorical structure of the text, its organization, coherence, and so on and so forth.

- *Identifying the organization of the text*:
  - Reordering jumbled sentences.
  - Rearranging the events according to their chronological occurrence.
  - Reordering the paragraphs to make a coherent text.
  - Distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details.

- Identifying intrusive sentences within the text.
- Identifying the topic sentence in each paragraph.
- Distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details.
- *Identifying the cohesive devices and their function*: (referents, the way sentences are tied together, discourse markers: connectors, linking words ...)
- *Spotting expressions highlighting functions such as certainty, probability, possibility, necessity, ...*
- *Recognizing the function of the text (the communicative value of the text , e.g. complaint, invitation, apology, ... )*

\* *Word-attack skills*: (Inferring word meaning from context drawing on given clues in the text; identifying the role and function of affixes; interpreting referents; ...)

## 3. *Post-reading stage*:

Coping with a text involves different activities. Each activity is characterized by particular questioning:

- a. “on-the-line questions”: (factual / display questions).
- b. “between-the-lines questions”: (inference questions).
- c. “beyond-the-lines questions”: (questions that transcend the situation of the text).

This third type of questioning has the potential to spark off further discussion of the topic at hand. Personal questions are targeted here. Students are encouraged to relate the theme of the text to their own experience. This adds more variety to the reading lessons and further stimulates students’ interest.

A substantial repertoire of activities is intended at this stage:

- oral or written follow-up
- summarizing the text (oral or written)

- role play and dramatization
- extra-work on vocabulary with a special focus on collocations
- dictionary work
- further exploitation of cultural matters involved in the text (determining similarities and differences with regard to students' own culture ).
- debate and discussion
- project work.

## LISTENING AND SPEAKING

### 1- The teaching context

As is most commonly agreed, the ultimate aim of a language course is going beyond the knowledge of this language to its real-life uses. This cannot be achieved unless the language learner is equipped with basic skills and abilities to comprehend and communicate some contents in the target language, at least through the most accessible mode of communication which is the spoken word.

The aural-oral abilities are therefore high priority skills in language learning, and require much more room and care within the English language course; mainly because the linguistic environment, inside and outside the classroom, is not encouraging for spoken communication in English. Here are some aspects concerning the context of teaching speaking and listening:

- English is generally spoken / heard only in class;
- The teacher is usually the only near-native speaker to be encountered;
- Scarcity of real occasions to put English to immediate use in authentic situations;
- In class, learners just end up chatting in their own language when they work in pairs or groups;
- Most learners will not talk or say anything ; due to lack of confidence and communication stress;

- Listening and speaking skills are not taught systematically: Language learning need training in strategies used for efficient use and reception of language;
- There is little value in isolating listening from speaking skills;
- The listening texts rarely lend themselves to exploitation as teaching tasks;
- It is hard to keep students focus. Most students quit listening when they:
  - miss a phrase or two
  - are stopped by unknown words
  - pick out isolated known words
  - process a text as language not as pieces of information.

In oral communication, operating mainly through interactions and transactions, it is hard to isolate listening from speaking as they are interrelated and function interchangeably and simultaneously. The speaker produces and delivers some utterances that the listener processes, interprets and formulates a reply as a natural completion of the discourse. The teaching of effective communication requires a combination of both skills and concentrated practice of the necessary strategies in a systematic way. The division into a listening and a speaking section is only for methodological purposes.

### 2- Aims and Competencies

Teaching speaking and listening aims at training the students for real life communication, through equipping them with a number of abilities and competencies to the extent that they gain enough confidence to use English in different (learning) situations.

As the learners move along the different levels of the English language course (starting from level 1), they will gradually acquire the necessary knowledge and competencies to engage in effective communication (communicative, cultural, strategic, methodological competencies).

They will be able to

- *recognize* and **reproduce** English sounds and phrases easily and correctly,
- *understand* and **develop** the right intonation and stress.
- *extract; gather and organize* information from spoken materials effectively;
- *listen, understand and sustain* communicative exchanges,
- *make* informed *guesses* and **supplement** or **negotiate** meaning to succeed the exchange,
- **speak** clearly and effectively, and **exchange** information, opinions, experiences,..
- *understand* and **respond** appropriately to others inside and outside school,
- *realize, acquire* and use various types of discourse (scientific, artistic, literary,...)
- **develop** necessary study skills to improve one's communicative skills on their own,
- **manage** mini-projects efficiently: a short talk / presentation; an intervention in a debate, a short play,..)
- **develop** ease of delivery, and reasoning skills ,
- *listen, take notes and speak* from notes
- **use** the knowledge of the language creatively and imaginatively in speaking or listening,
- *value* cooperation, caring , sharing and respect for others,
- work effectively in groups
- *be aware* of own self and be able to express it,
- **modify** one's expectations and behaviour according to attitudes and situations, to harmonize with one's environment,
- **convey** and *understand* cultural concerns based on heritage and national identity,
- *appreciate* values and attitudes of other cultures , and *be aware* of different perspectives reflected in language,

(The words in *italics* refer to listening, the ones in **bold** refer to speaking.)

### 3- General orientations

For the sake of providing systematic teaching of listening and speaking, it is important to approach them as processes rather than expecting students to produce or comprehend spoken language while relying on incidental speech accompanying the classroom instruction.

Within the classroom routine there is a lot of listening and speaking that circulates in the air, but it is not highly productive in terms of competencies, as it is not methodical. However, it can serve as rich input from the teacher or among the students.

Another dimension can be added to sensitize the learners and make them aware of the different elements that each skill involves; with the aim of internalizing them as communication rules and steps.

It is strategic training to be introduced in a systematic way, based on orderly preparation and approaching the skill as a set of manageable elements to be mastered. This goes in line with the standards of learner responsibility and life-long learning.

### TEACHING LISTENING

#### The Nature of listening

"It is too easy to design a listening activity that leaves the listener out."

The great need to develop advanced comprehension skills before one is able to start producing makes of listening the most inevitable area in language teaching. It is at the same time of great complexity for many reasons:

- We can not know what is happening in the mind of the listener to be able to reply instantly,
- The listener's attention can be distracted at any moment , and he can stop listening,
- The listener has little -if any- control over the speaker's language level & pace,

which requires more flexibility in input meant for teaching listening.

- Students tend to work better with sources requiring little sophistication such as: charts, tables & lists and this demands devising activities accordingly;
- Listeners mostly rely on extracting semantic meanings, therefore, they can not usually reproduce them in their original syntactic form, hence the importance of working on reformulation and interpretation tasks.

### **Broad types of listening activities:**

- Listening to a conversation / dialogue
- Listening to a monologue, a tale, a joke, a puzzle
- Listening to a talk / lecture,
- Listening to a song
- Listening to (watching) a film
- Listening to explanations, instructions, requests, questions,
- Listening to descriptions

### **The listening outcomes:**

(Purposeful Listening fosters comprehension competencies.)

Though listening is commonly considered a receptive skill, we can not ignore its prominent productive outcomes. Listening is interactive – even in incidental speaking or listening - as it presupposes a response / reaction in any form: nod, notes, carry out instructions,.. (e.g.: when the teacher explains / introduces ... the students are supposed to be processing the information, waiting for the opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension.

During listening activities we will target the following outcomes and may take them as indicators to measure achievement:

- Obeying commands, following directions
- Drawing the items being described
- Ticking items in lists
- Answering questions
- Matching items, definitions, or phrases

- Locating items, events, etc. on maps, diagrams, etc.
- Identifying the item, person, picture...being described
- Completing sentences, tables, filling gaps in texts, phrases or words, (songs - dialogues - cloze exercises,) through listening
- Taking notes to be used later for production
- Identifying the topic / the main ideas / the details / specific data
- Identifying the moods and attitudes in the text
- Recognizing prominent cultural aspects in the text, and comparing them to his own culture,
- Memorizing: word pronunciation, poems, songs, proverbs, formulas ...
- Recognizing the ways the communicative exchanges are built, (conversational moves, the structure of dialogues...)
- Recognizing and internalising the strategies used in oral communication
- Being aware of the value of cooperation to succeed in any communicative act
- Recognizing the listener's responsibility and active involvement in making oral communication effective and sustained for some reasonable time.

### **Active listening requirements**

For a listening activity to be natural and motivating, it should involve some feedback from the listener, if only a nod of the head, a facial expression, a "yes" or "no", a finger up or any other one word response.

The teacher, as a potential listener, will ensure giving extensive natural feedback to the speakers (students), and give them explicit credit referring to or quoting them from time to time: ("Hmm, interesting," "I thought so too", "Nice! I didn't think of that," rather than overusing evaluative feedback: (fine, good, no, not correct, etc.).

For active listening skills to develop, the listener is due to

- show interest and personal involvement in the speaker's message, give encouraging signals,
- keep eye contact with the speaker, even if one has something else to do parallel to listening,
- react / interact by asking for clarifications, showing understanding, responding appropriately, supplementing information,
- initiate new / appropriate exchanges
- make guesses and inferencing, based on topic and context
- "scale up" his interests and expectations to cooperate with the speaker who also "scales down" his language and expressions to allow communication to take place and last for a moment
- expand the acquired knowledge and strategies to deal with new, unknown situations
- be aware of his responsibility towards his interlocutor, caring to achieve communication."

### **Methodology**

In terms of communicative and interactive language teaching principles, it is hard to conceive of a communication act where the listener is not interacting. We may distinguish the listening tasks requiring verbal outcomes from other ones that limit the listeners' participation to nonverbal responses; but there is always active listening. There can never be listening with a "passive listener".

To this end, the teacher will see to it that effective listening really takes place, through guiding students, preparing them for the activity, assigning appropriate tasks and checking regularly their *being on task* before checking their understanding through *observable behaviour / outcome*.

If we target the teaching of listening as a set of competencies, it will be preferable to

focus on semantic clues rather than syntactic ones in extracting meaning, and not to rely too much on listening session to work on grammatical components of the unit.

**The procedure suggested consists of six steps:**

#### **1. Preparation:**

This first step is very essential to the whole activity, it paves the way and gets the learners ready to engage in listening, It should be reassuring and motivating as well as calming the class down for full attention to the task..

It may be a short listening game, a puzzle, a short simple dictation, then an awareness-raising exercise eliciting from students the strategies they use while listening to the news in L1 or L2, how they get to hear the weather forecast of their area in a noisy room etc.

#### **2. Presentation:**

Helping students to predict the topic / content of the spoken text can be through giving hints, or asking for guesses on where it is happening, how many characters there are, what type of text it is, etc. Then we will proceed to presenting / pre-teaching the key words or expressions.

This can be followed by a word list on blackboard, words to tick if heard, a pre listening question,...

At this stage the tasks to be carried out by the listener should be made clear. Some charts, tables and pictures will help. The teacher should struggle to get students' attention and sustain it till the end of the task..

#### **3. Listening:**

Before we start, we should make sure everybody can hear the teacher or the tape or fellow students; and everyone is getting on task.

While listening tasks should not be too demanding as to distract students from keeping up with the flow of speech.

#### **4. Checking:**

Checking has to be carried out regularly and instantly so as to reinforce the feeling to take them seriously.

It can be done in pairs and the teacher checks samples, or on separate sheets for continuous assessment as quizzes.

Written responses make it easier to know how many students did it, as they guarantee large participation.

It is advised to give positive feedback and provide students with a feeling of achievement.

#### **5. Re-listening:**

The need to listen once or twice more is quite legitimate, as we don't have any visual support.

There will be new tasks for this additional listening, and if necessary some of the previous tasks may be reassigned, at least for weak students to try again while good ones will do some more elaborated tasks.

#### **6. Follow-up:**

Recapitulation about the topic, the strategies used by learners, the ideas and expressions acquired. If we are dealing with a memorable text (song or dialogue, etc.), students will be asked to fill in gaps or rehearse, etc. This phase will serve the production section: speaking or writing, based on notes or memorized material, etc.

### **TEACHING SPEAKING**

#### **I. The status of speaking in a language class: Why teach speaking skills?**

*"Success (in language learning) is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a*

*conversation in the (target) language."*  
Nunan, 1991.

- Speaking is fundamental to human communication.
- If students do not learn how to speak or do not get any opportunity to speak in the language classroom they may soon get de-motivated and lose interest in learning.
- Many learners equate knowing a language to being able to speak it.
- If the right activities are taught in the right way, speaking in class can be a lot of fun, raising general learner's motivation.
- Since the goal of our language course is inevitably to enable the students to communicate in English, then the speaking and listening skills should not be downplayed in the language class practices.

#### **II. Dealing with common hurdles / problems**

##### **A- students are generally reluctant to speak.**

- Positive feedback helps to encourage and relax shy students to speak more.
- Let students know they are being assessed continually on their speaking practice in class throughout the semester.
- Students may be silent simply because the activities are boring or are pitched at the wrong level.
- See to it that the activities capture students' interest and create a real need for communication.
- Since the emphasis is on communication, questions of accuracy need not to be treated with great care.

##### **B- Spoken texts present special difficulties:**

Students find it hard to identify individual words in the flow of "native speech".

- Consider providing written support / tape script of the text or exercise; provide a word list of the key items in the text to

serve as a task and also a kind of synopsis.  
 - Teach real interaction patterns.  
 - Fine tune the speaking activity (content, type, and mode) to trigger the learners' previous knowledge.

**C- The students tend to shift to L1 (mainly during group / pair work.)**

- Beginners tend to use L1 as an emotional support at first; hence the need to reassure them and help them gain confidence.
- Teach classroom language and encourage students to use only English once in the language class.
- Make sure you give students all the necessary language tools they need to be able to complete the task.
- Make sure the task is appropriate to the level of the students (if uninteresting or pitched too high they will revert to L1.)
- A way to discourage students speaking in L1 is to walk around, monitoring their participation and giving support and help.

**D- Very few materials initiate students into different speaking strategies:**

- We need to teach students, in an explicit way, the different strategies we employ in receiving and communicating messages.
  - Train them through samples on how people initiate and sustain a conversation exchange; how they negotiate meaning and how they terminate an interactive episode.
- e.g.: consider the following basics: initiate,

respond, follow-up, (simplified analysis)  
 A- What did you do last night? (*initiate*)  
 B- I went to the cinema. (*respond*)  
 A- Oh really! (*follow-up*)  
 What did you see? (*initiate*)  
 B- Lord of the Rings. (*respond*)  
 Haven't you seen it yet? (*initiate*)  
 A- No, it's difficult with the exams. (*respond*)  
 B- Yes of course. (*follow-up*).

- Encourage students to make positive transfer of speaking strategies from L1; taking benefit from the cultural orality in our society.
- Supply enough practice: “*we learn to speak by speaking*”, and provide as many speaking opportunities as possible for every learner; reducing thus, the teacher talking ratio.

**III. Types of tasks and activities :**

Language learning is fostered by engaging in real tasks and putting the learners in a variety of situations where they can communicate with one another.

The speaking tasks range from single words repetition to delivering talks or taking part in debates. The teacher and the textbooks may decide which to include in view of the learners' level, interests, etc.

The following table suggests some types of speaking activities:

Pronunciation exercises	<i>Dialogues</i> : dialogue completion, jumbled exchanges, dialogue recital / rehearsal,
Responding to teacher questions / comprehension questions	<i>Role-plays</i> : situational cues, functional cues, free role play; role cards,
Asking / repeating T's questions	<i>Songs / poems</i> recital
Reading aloud, from textbook or from notes	<i>Presentations and talks</i>
Correcting peers	<i>Verbal Games</i> : fun & motivation,+ need for language.
Asking for repetition or clarification	<i>Strategic practice</i> : turn-taking, debate reporting, group behaviour, role incorporation, ease of delivery,
Practice of grammatical, lexical or	<i>Tale-telling</i> :

functional items	
Making requests or giving orders	<i>Skits and short plays</i>
Transformation exercises: say it differently, say in the past...	Book / article <i>reviews</i> presented
	<i>Discussions and Debates</i>

The tasks and activities will be obviously graded from simple to difficult and from guided production to free; bearing in mind that the best communicative activity is the one that crosses the skill borders, or, best even, the curriculum boundaries (dealing with cross-curriculum competencies).

The teaching of oral skills requires *methodical planning* and *tactful implementation*. The teacher is invited to afford more preparation time both at the phase of lesson planning and before asking the learners to do the oral task. (*Prepare the task and prepare the students for the task*).

#### IV. Methodological tips:

The teacher's roles:

- Reassure the learners and reduce their potential uncertainty and anxiety about using the target language, by valuing their initial success.
- Explain the aim of speaking tasks as means to practise and to communicate some meaning; so, few mistakes don't matter.
- "Feed" students with some of what to be said: formulas, lexis, ideas, etc. using different sources: pictures, tables, spoken / written passages, etc.
- Divide the speaking task into manageable elements if it is hard to do at one shot.
- Make them aware of the different strategies people (themselves included) use when communicating.
- Build the speaking activity on previous comprehension work; and provide demonstration models (in open pair work as an example.).
- Urge the speakers to use the little language they have acquired, to express new ideas or to gain new knowledge,

(encourage them to "navigate" freely in the language, for example Nonsense language game can be fun and relaxing.)

- Allot them some time for preparation and rehearsal, as this increases the range of language used in the performance task. (dialogue building, short presentation, reading from notes; etc.). It is preferable to give them a set of guidelines or key questions to guide their preparation. e.g.: a simple preparation guide. (*key questions*):
  - \* How will you start the conversation?
  - \* What topics are you going to talk about?
  - \* How are you going to move from one topic to another?
  - \* How are you going to end the conversation?

- optimize the classroom as the real world in which to learn new language and put it into use. "*Comprehension and production are demanding processes that require time and increasing knowledge of language to develop and much practice in real communication to perfect.*"

#### Procedures:

##### 1 - Prepare:

The preparation phase is meant to set the ground for the speaking activity; and to help learners get reassured before engaging in the task.

It can take the form of a review of contents, structures, functions or strategies, etc from previous sessions as it can be surveying the topic to get close to the task at hand. The students get ready to anticipate the type of expressions and lexis to be used by drawing on the context. (e.g.: At the restaurant; the students may be asked to jot down or call out all the items and expressions related to this

topic. The teacher selects the items that are needed for this activity).

### **2 - Present:**

At this stage the teacher introduces a thorough model of the communicative area being targeted, and explicitly draws students' attention to its structure, the expressions used, etc. (the example here, a conversation), and demonstrates the model to the whole class.

The learners observe how the conversational exchange is initiated and sustained, and how it is terminated. They also pay attention to how the teacher pronounces certain words / phrases as well as to the intonation at subsequent stages.

It is the moment to teach the routine and mechanics of group conversation, like: the appropriate ways of opening and closing a conversation, polite ways of making negative comments or interrupting. (e.g.: "*May I ask a question?*", "*May I interrupt for a second?*", "*Sorry to say your conclusion is not justified...*").

### **3- Practise:**

The students may be asked to read out the whole model, then extract requests, exclamations, orders, etc.

They may be asked to read out only the phrases that initiate the exchanges or find out the parts that function as responses, etc.

Based on the previous steps the students are assigned tasks parallel / similar to the model, reproducing the exchange moves, or transforming some parts adding new contents or words as said by the teacher.

The practice can also be a mere memorization of the model being presented (e.g.: dialogues; songs, poems; etc. through different techniques such as: gradual erasure).

### **4- Evaluate:**

After getting practice in various aspects of the model, the learners are invited to demonstrate their ability to deal with the type of strategies they have practised. They may be asked to build dialogues, engage in a conversation, react to some exchanges using the language and content they know or creating new situations and expressing them using new language.

They may be assigned to recite a poem or sing a song from the ones studied, as they can be told to act according to role cards.

### **5- Expand:**

At the expansion stage the learners are expected to extrapolate the use of abilities, knowledge and competencies acquired so far in a creative way.

They will be involved in joint tasks working in pairs or in small groups, in class or at home to manage a mini-project parallel to the model studied or a combination of several models. The outcomes will be presented to the whole class. (presentations, role plays, skits, songs, story telling, debates, etc.).

Example of a class debate:

A student is assigned the role of a group moderator, and has to: *make sure every group member has his say; keep track of time; help/urge others to elaborate their turns; conclude the debate.*

The rest of the class observe how the group works, and take notes or fill in a guiding checklist for later evaluation.

## **TEACHING WRITING**

### **I- Rationale**

Writing refers to the production of written discourse once the learners are familiar with its simplified forms and thoroughly acquainted with oral discourse. Teachers should introduce writing gradually moving from controlled exercises in which the focus

is on mechanics and message, progressing towards more expanded sentences to form paragraphs.

Learners will, in this respect, be prepared to design pieces of written English preferably about topics which are familiar to them, making use of the grammatical and lexical items they have been able to manipulate hitherto.

## **II- Competencies**

Writing as stated by the new curricular objectives should aim at developing the following competencies:

- Generating ideas;
- Drawing on prior knowledge and life experience;
- Planning strategies;
- Organizing ideas;
- Applying prior knowledge to new situations (drawing on other disciplines);
- Exploring materials (text books, magazines);
- Addressing an audience;
- Using English for real life purposes;
- Using the dictionary.

## **III- Discourse forms to develop the before listed competencies**

- Journals and diaries/short notes / messages / post cards / e-mails.
- Anecdotes and stories.
- Guess who.
- Sketches of famous people/ historical monuments/ events.
- Letters.
- School problems.
- Family problems.
- Directions to: school /neighbourhoods...

## **IV- Methodology**

Effective methodology requires seeing to the three main stages related to the writing skill namely pre-writing, writing and follow up.

### ***Pre-writing:***

This stage is of primary importance in the process of teaching writing. The suggested

activities will trigger the learners' writing aptitudes and they will adopt a positive attitude towards the skill and exploit their language acquisitions to perform. In this respect, teachers are recommended to train learners to

- keep records of their learning;
- discuss the topics;
- set planning strategies;
- exchange ideas with peers;
- investigate (resorting to other disciplines and using information sources).

At this stage discussions can be conducted under the teacher's supervision or in small groups.

### ***Writing:***

In spite of being an individual activity, the writing stage provides room for peer collaboration as long as it occurs publicly and within a spirit of fair play. Both the teacher and the learner can take an active role by

- offering advice;
- clarifying ideas;
- providing assistance for the weak learners;
- creating a collaborative atmosphere;
- sharing knowledge;
- revising to get more focus and clarity.

### ***Follow up:***

After the piece of writing has been planned, organized, shaped, drafted and revised, the teacher is expected, at this stage, to train learners to endorse responsibility for the correctness of their work by checking spelling problems and usage errors, preferably in groups of four or five.

This will help learners acquire the ability to check their own papers. Learners should never be given the impression that accuracy is the core of writing. The focus and the praise should be on content.

## TEACHING GRAMMAR

### Rationale

In these guidelines we work a distinction between two types of grammar: descriptive grammar and generative grammar. Descriptive grammar is defined as a grammar which “provides a precise account of usage”, and is often contrasted with prescriptive grammar which « attempts to establish rules for the correct use of language in society » (Dictionary of language and languages, 1992:159). In other words, prescriptive grammar prescribes the rules of how educated people « ought to » speak and write; whereas, descriptive grammar describes the knowledge people must have in order to speak and understand the language. In our case we emphasize the teaching of grammar from the descriptive point of view.

Generative grammar, on the other hand, is a grammar which defines “the set of grammatical sentences in a language: formal rules project a finite set of sentences upon the potentially infinite set which constitutes the language as whole. The term is used as a label for the theoretical approach associated primarily with the thought of Noam Chomsky, which developed the scope and aims of such a grammar”. (op cit, p. 152). Chomsky (1966) advocates that sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition but “generated” from the learner’s underlying “competence”. Grammar practice activities should then involve meaningful language use, and learners should be encouraged “to use their innate and creative abilities to drive and make explicit the underlying grammatical rules of the language.” (Richards, 1986:60).

### Objectives

Objectives should normally be related to the established curriculum aims, but they have to be more specific and measurable to the extent that the teacher can judge whether they have been attained or not. On the whole,

in any grammar teaching sequence, learners will be expected to demonstrate the ability to:

- 1- generate instances of correct usage ;
- 2- manifest their knowledge of the language system in the four main language competencies (listening, speaking, reading and writing);
- 3- discover the linguistic system by experiencing authentic language discourse ;
- 4- realize the meaning potential of grammar rules to achieve communication.

### Approach

The approach we suggest for the teaching of grammar is the inductive approach, which means that the teacher has to proceed from examples, contextualised and rich in content, to help the learner induce himself the rules of the structure. By experiencing authentic language discourse, learners will discover the grammar they need to understand and communicate. It is a context-based and problem-driven approach, well-suited to hypothesis testing and to competency-based approach.

Occasionally, learners may need some explanations for certain grammatical structures. In fact, the combination of both approaches will certainly satisfy different learning styles.

We also urge the adoption of the competency-based approach as suggested in the National Charter of Education and Training. The approach constitutes the main theoretical framework within which the teacher has to proceed when teaching grammar. Nunan (1988:34) states that:

*“The concept of competency-based education (CBE) has been brought in to ESL from the field of adult education where it is used to specify the skills needed by adults to function in today’s society in areas such as communication, computation, problem-solving and interpersonal relationships...”*

*In ESL a competency is a task-oriented goal written in terms of behavioural objectives... It is not what the students know about Language, but what they do with the language."*

Bissonnette and Richard (2001) suggest a model distinguishing among three concepts and levels of learning: skills, capabilities and competencies.

#### *Level One: Skill (habileté)*

This level comprises the attainment of comprehension that allows for retention. It enables the learner to reproduce and explain the content (e.g. a grammatical rule) in his own words. (The "what to do" level.)

#### *Level Two: Capability (capacité)*

This level is achieved when the learner is able to use the comprehended material in more complex contexts. At this level, the learner should be able to determine when, why or how to use the material. (The "when, why or how level".)

#### *Level three: Competency (compétence)*

This level is characterized by the successful, frequent and automatic use of the material, be it a structure or whatever. (The "mastery" level.)

### **Steps**

With reference to the competency-based approach as exemplified by Bissonnette and Richard, we suggest the following procedure for the teaching of grammar. The procedure is expressed at the three levels mentioned above: skill, capability and competence.

#### *Specifying the objective (s):*

The teacher has to specify the grammar objective(s), in behavioural terms. The objective (s) should be measurable and observable so that we can tell whether it is attained or not.

#### *The skill level: Presentation / Comprehension check.*

1. The teacher presents the rule in context, preferably in extended language. The

context has to be of current concern and interesting to the students.

2. To check comprehension, the teacher should ask questions to make the learner verbalize the rule and explain the content.

3. The teacher should make the learner use the newly acquired rule in a series of isolated sentences. He should also be prepared to provide cues and suggest further contexts.

#### *The capability level: Practice / production.*

1. The teacher suggests further contexts, either by using pictures or asking questions about a particular event, to make the learner use the rule as accurately as possible.

2. The teacher uses this time the contrastive strategy by making the learner distinguish between the target rule and another one already presented (as often as possible).

3. The teacher asks the learners to produce orally or write different sentences using the target rule.

#### *The competence level: Use / Application.*

1. *Writing activities:* The teacher asks the students to write an extended piece of discourse in which the target rule is used accurately and appropriately.

2. *Oral activities:* The teacher asks the students to present orally a piece of extended discourse in which the target rule is used accurately and appropriately.

#### *Evaluation checklist:*

To check whether the target rules have become a competence that the learner can use fluently and accurately in any given situation, the teacher can apply the following competency-based checklist:

#### Key:

- 1- Unsatisfactory
- 2- Fairly satisfactory
- 3- Satisfactory
- 4- Very satisfactory

	1	2	3	4
<i>AUTOMATICITY</i> To what extent has the learner been fluent in using the newly acquired rule?				
<i>AUTHENTICITY</i> To what extent has the learner been able to understand the newly acquired rule in authentic discourse ?				
<i>CONTEXTUALIZATION</i> To what extent has the learner been able to use the newly acquired rule in a contextualised piece of discourse?				
<i>SKILLS INTEGRATION</i> To what extent has the learner been able to understand and use the newly acquired rule in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)?				

### Formal procedure for the teaching of grammar

#### *Presentation:*

It is advisable that the presentation of the new structure should be inductive in type, proceeding from clear and relevant examples to help the learners themselves induce the rules. The examples should be well contextualized and might relate to:

- classroom situations.
- life-like situations.
- various contexts of current or previous events.
- visual aids.
- performing of actions.
- miming.

In this oral presentation, one or two examples should be copied on the board so that the students could get acquainted with the spoken and written form of the target structure.

#### *Comprehension check:*

Immediately after the presentation of the new structure, it is essential to check whether the learners have correctly understood that new structure or not, and this can be done through various techniques. The teacher can ask simple questions of the yes / no type, or questions that call for one-word answers.

The teacher can also use « timelines » to check comprehension, especially when teaching tenses. Sentence extensions are another type of comprehension check. The teacher can ask the students to complete sentences the first part of which features a particular structure (e.g. If I had met your friend, I...)

#### *Practice:*

*Receptive practice:* In the early stages of the teaching of a new structure, it is useful to make the students hear or read material containing the target structure and respond either in writing (e.g. transformations,

sentence completion...) or orally (to provide enough room for oral practice). The exercises should be contextualized and cued if necessary to help the students internalize the structure and respond correctly.

*Written productive practice:* The spoken form of new structure practised orally is not enough for the students to get to know the peculiarities of the target structure. There should be a catering for its written form as well. The spelling, the contractions and all the inflections must be dealt with through different activities, and the more varied the activities are, the more effective the retention will be.

## TEACHING FUNCTIONS

### Rationale

One of the most characteristic features of Competency-Based Language Teaching is that it pays systematic attention to what learners are able to do with the target language in their actual and foreseeable social, vocational and academic situations. This, therefore, emphasizes the fact that the learners and the development of their communicative competencies are at the very core of the teaching programme objectives. To attain these objectives, the teaching of communicative functions should receive tremendous consideration in the teaching continuum for the following merits:

- It provides for the teaching of everyday, real-world language use in a variety of sociocultural situations in which features of language elements and culture are selected and graded according to their priority in actual communication, and intermeshed meaningfully from the first lesson at the beginning level of learning to serve the learner's immediate communicative purpose.
- It sets realistic tasks in which the whole class or individualized instruction may be used.

- It recognizes that while the language used in speech or/and writing should be based on the situations or settings in which it occurs and be grammatically and semantically appropriate; the speaker / writer must, above all, have a real purpose for speaking / writing and something to talk /write about.
- The act of communication, even at elementary levels, will be intrinsically motivating simply because it expresses basic, universal communicative functions of language and because it makes use of notions that are most appropriate to complete the specific function or functions being expressed.
- The learner is placed in situations where he must use language as an instrument for satisfying immediate communicative needs, and where the criterion for success is functional effectiveness rather than structural accuracy.
- The learner is helped to relate language forms to their potential functional and/or social meanings.
- The learner is placed in situations where he can use language as an instrument for social interaction, for example through role-playing activities, in which emphasis is on both the communicative effectiveness and the social acceptability of the language used.
- The learner becomes aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.
- The learner can develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He can also learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using a different language
- The learner can distinguish between the forms which he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the

communicative functions that they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system can also be understood as part of a communicative system.

- The learner can attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence, i.e. he can develop skills in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use the language spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended meaning.

### **Types of functions**

Greeting people

Giving and eliciting information

Describing daily activities

Talking about quantity or amount

Talking about past activities

Asking for permission

Expressing ability

Expressing possibility

Requesting and offering help

Talking about wants, needs and preferences

### **Methodology**

#### ***Preparation (tips)***

- Analyze learners' language proficiency and their communicative needs.
- Select language functions for emphasis.
- Choose relevant social, academic and vocational situations.
- Identify topics of interest to learners.
- Specify and determine appropriate communicative exponents, formulas and structures.
- Gather and prepare materials.
- Prepare and adapt dialogues and mini-dialogues for presentation and oral practice of exponents, functional expressions, structures and notions.
- Decide on tasks and activities working modes: whole class, group, pair, or individual work.

#### ***Presentation and activities***

Communicative functions can be presented in two basic ways:

- Inductively: Learners are given different exponents of the function and are asked to identify the function. (What is the speaker doing in all these sentences?).

- Deductively: A situation in which the function is needed is presented and learners are asked to elicit what they could say in that situation. (Give the situation and elicit the function).

#### ***Receptive practice***

Receptive practice is very important with communicative functions, as it takes time to sensitise the learners to nuances of meaning or of formality. It also aims to get them familiarised with the range of exponents of the function. Possible activities for receptive practice include:

- Finding exponents of the function in a dialogue or text.
- Classifying a list of exponents, which the learners are given, into formal and informal.
- Classifying a list of functions according to their precise meaning.
- Discussion of the answers to the tasks above.

#### ***Productive practice***

##### ***1. Controlled practice***

- Transformations between the different exponents of formality and/or informality.
- Direct elicitation: the teacher says something to a student which elicits a particular use of the targeted function.
- Situational cues.
- Functionally cued dialogues.
- Dialogue completion.

##### ***2. Freer practice***

Less controlled ways of practising communicative functions are easiest in writing and of course orally in role plays.

- Dialogue writing.
- Letter writing
- Oral pair practice: Suitable for interpersonal functions and requires the use of cue-cards and other task types

- Practice types for oral work can also be used in writing to provide reinforcement of learning and to practise the written form.

### ***Recycling the communicative functions***

As the learners' repertoire of structures and vocabulary increases, they are able to understand and use more exponents of the different functions. So it is important to recycle a function after it has been first taught, and practise it again with a wide range of exponents and with more detailed nuances of meaning and formality.

### **The teacher's responsibilities**

Some of the basic responsibilities of the language teacher in relation to the teaching of the communicative functions can be summarised as follows:

- To know the interest of the learners; their linguistic and cultural needs; their learning styles, and their social and vocational aspirations.
- To learn about the resources - people and places of the community - which could be used in possible real communicative or simulated activities.
- To broaden the experiences of learners through listening, viewing, reading, and other visual, acoustic, or tactile activities in order to provide them with a wide range of concepts and notions to think about, discuss, and write about.
- To enrich their vocabulary not only by providing them with such varied experiences but also by including - in dialogues and other oral or written materials - the communicative expressions, the formulas of the language, and (in speech) the hesitation words, the exclamations and the appropriate, unarticulated sounds which are authentic and typical of normal communication.
- To present the communicative functions, structures, notions, and cultural insights in appropriate realistic situations which would not only clarify their meaning but would also exemplify the dimensions of human

experience in which they are generally used.

- To prepare realistic activities which have some relevance to the learners' everyday life and communication needs and which use the learners' school and probable home and community experiences as a starting or « jumping off » point for motivating the study of a conversation, a reading passage, or whatever.

- Not to intervene when learners are expressing themselves creatively during fluency activities unless there is a complete breakdown in understanding.

- To encourage students to discuss their culture and their values in the target language.

- To help the learners feel that culture is generally the result of geographical factors and of historical events, that all the people have culture, and that « different from » does not mean « better than » or « worse than ». To develop in the learners an appreciation of cultural pluralism is one of the many worthy goals of the competency-based language teaching.

## **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Classroom management refers to the ways in which student behaviour, movement, and interaction during a lesson are organized by the teacher to enable teaching to take place more effectively. Classroom management covers a wide range of areas including managing pair and group work, handling transitions, giving instructions, and dealing with disruptive behaviour.

### **Managing pair work**

Within a learner-centred view of pedagogy, pair work has become a valuable working mode in that it gives the learners a chance for individual practice, allows for cooperative learning and reduces the amount of teacher interventions.

Pair work can either be open or closed and is usually conducted following this procedure:

- divide the class into pairs
- explain the task and model it
- set an appropriate time limit
- volunteer pairs might be called to perform in front of the class

Suitable activities for pair work include information gap, role plays, structure practice, functional practice, peer editing...

### **Managing group work**

Group work refers to instances when the teacher divides the class into small groups of four or five students.

Group work is an important pedagogical tool as it enables the learners to use language for communicative purposes, encourages independent learning and offers a great deal of opportunities for language use.

Groups can be of the same or mixed ability. Random grouping may also be used by the teacher.

Group work is essentially conducted in three distinct phases:

- A moving-in phase: the teacher organizes the groups and seating. He also gives instructions and briefs group leaders.
- A monitoring phase: the teacher monitors the work of the groups giving assistance when needed.
- A moving-out phase: this includes the report-back sequence.

Group work may be used for a variety of activities such as problem solving, brainstorming for a writing task, preparing a project, decision-making tasks, ...

### **Teacher and learner roles**

As the classroom is becoming less and less teacher centred, the teacher is called upon to adopt new roles and display novel management skills. He is no longer solely an informer, a presenter, and an explainer. As pair and group work have become the predominant working modes and as communication is the goal of the teaching

and learning enterprise, the teacher is rather a monitor, manager and organizer of learning.

As language teaching is centred on the learner, emphasis is placed on training students to take charge of their own learning with a view to becoming autonomous learners. This is achieved by engaging students in learner training activities such as using dictionaries, reading for gist, dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary, using textbooks,...

The learner's role is to participate actively and creatively in language learning using both the material studied in class and his own knowledge and resources.

### **PROJECT WORK**

Project work involves the students in language learning activities that extend beyond the immediate classroom environment. A project is an extended task on a particular topic where the content and the presentation are determined principally by the students. It usually integrates language skills that may be carried out individually or in groups. The focus is generally on fluency and accuracy activities at different project-work stages.

By encouraging students to move out of the classroom and into the world, project work helps to bridge the gap between language study and language use. It is, therefore, a valuable means of extending the communicative skills acquired in the classroom.

Project work culminates in an end product (e.g., an oral presentation, a poster session ...) that can be shared with others, giving the project a real purpose. The value of the project, however, lies not just in the final product but in the process of working towards the end point.

Such an activity is highly motivating because in addition to using the language, the students have the opportunity to collect information and learn new things, draw pictures, maps, diagrams, and charts, to cut out pictures, arrange texts and visuals, do colouring or even carry out interviews and surveys.

### **Some of the benefits of project work:**

- Project work is student-centred, though the teacher plays a major role in offering support and guidance throughout the process;
- Project work is cooperative rather than competitive. Students can work on their own in small groups, or as a class to complete a project, sharing resources, ideas, and expertise along the way;
- It develops skills in working as a team;
- It builds students confidence in expressing and conveying their ideas;
- It caters for different learning styles and personalities and promotes learner independence;
- It may be very creative and include artwork especially in beginning classes;
- It requires all language skills.

Project work is a highly adapted methodology. It can be used at every level from absolute beginner to advanced. Which activities are actually done will, of course, depend on many factors including the age, and interests of the learners, the resources available and the constraints of time and space. Tasks may differ in scope and may be given at the end of a unit, be set for the following week or take a term or even a whole semester to be finalised. They can be mini-projects in the first years of learning the language to extend to full fledged activities later on.

### **Projects presentation**

Depending on the age and level of the students, projects can be presented as:

- Wall display (pictures, map, photographs, report, newspaper articles);
- Posters;
- School/ classroom magazine;
- Interviews (of teachers, fellow students, parents, local personalities);
- Book review;
- Presentations of research finding about programme related issues;
- Recording or video production on matters related to local life;
- Web quest (researching topics of the programme on the internet, exchange e-mails / information with teacher, peers, or native speakers ...)

### **Project work topics**

Any topic studied in class can lend itself to project work. Examples:

- Introducing one self through photographs, drawing and list of characteristics;
- My family (family tree);
- Holidays;
- Famous people;
- Similarities and differences (between people, customs, houses, celebrations...);
- Travelling / Planning a trip;
- Presenting my city / school;
- Food and drink;
- Celebrating a religious feast, a birthday;
- Means of transport;
- War and literature;
- The fight for human rights / against racial discrimination;
- The United Nations / Green Peace.

A project on « Families » might involve some or all of the following:

- \* displaying and labelling photographs of your family members;
- \* writing a story about your parents or grandparents life;
- \* preparing a survey on fellow students family member occupations;
- \* comparing different kinds of families in different countries;
- \* carrying out a survey on who does what in the home;

\* writing a poem for your mother/father/sister's birthday.

## **HOMEWORK**

Students should be assigned tasks to do at home on a regular basis. Because many of them would not study outside class unless homework was set, homework gives them opportunities to revise and practice what they had been taught.

The purpose of homework tasks are to

- revise, reinforce, and in some cases extend, classroom teaching and learning;
- prepare for the next class;
- help students develop self-discipline and self motivation;
- encourage students to adopt a positive attitude to learning.

### **Tips for homework management**

- Daily homework will usually take no longer than one-half hour to forty minutes to complete;
- Students need to be carefully prepared for homework and should always know what is expected of them;
- Rules should be agreed upon as to when to hand in homework and correction procedures;
- When marking tasks, be encouraging in order to create positive feelings towards homework..

## **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

In competency-based education, we are concerned with what students are able to do in English, i.e. with their performance. In order to develop their skills we need to know how they are progressing and what needs improvement, we do this through continuous assessment. Continuous Assessment or informal assessment is a way of collecting information about students' performance in normal classroom conditions.

Because of the nature of the English Curriculum, criterion-referenced standards must be applied when interpreting test scores. Criterion-referenced standards describe the precise amount of end of Unit(s) competencies the learner is expected to attain. The learner's achievements determine whether s/he can proceed to subsequent instruction. Tests using these provide explicit information about what the learner can do or cannot.

### **Rationale**

- Continuous assessment is formative in nature in that it contributes to a great extent to the improvement of learning- moving from one stage to a higher one.
- Its content is essentially based on short-term objectives unlike end of term tests.
- It is also informal, classroom oriented and teacher conducted.
- It enables students to monitor their progress on a regular basis and thus be more prepared for final achievement tests.
- Teachers are more autonomous in the choice of what needs to be assessed and when this needs to be done.
- It can enhance students' motivation for learning; students who get low marks would strive for improvement in subsequent classroom quizzes.
- Teachers get a great deal of feedback from continuous assessment especially as far as their teaching is concerned. This would enhance teacher development, for teachers would use continuous assessment results to bring whatever changes or amendments to their teaching (strategies, activities, classroom management, ...)
- It ensures learning objectives have been reached, and measures standards of teaching and learning.

### **Test specifications**

The writing of a successful test items begins with a specification, and the more accurately this can be drawn up the better. Test specifications provide the official statement

about what the test tests and how it tests it. The specifications are the blueprint to be followed by test and item writer, and they're also essential in the establishment of the test construct validity. Test writers need guidance on practical matters that will assist test construction. They need answers to a wide range of questions such as:

**1. What is the purpose of the test?**

Achievement, proficiency, progress...

**2. What sort of *learner* will be taking the test?** Age, sex, stage of learning...

**3. How many *sections* should the test have?** and time for each section ...

**4. What *target language situation* is envisaged for the test?**

**5. What *text types* should be chosen?**

What should be the source, the topics, the degree of difficulty and authenticity, the length of text and the complexity of the language?

**6. What *language skills* should be tested?**

Items testing main idea, details, inference.

**7. What *language elements* should be tested?** Grammar, lexis, functions.

**8. What sort of *tasks* is required?** discrete point, integrative.

**9. How many *items* are required for each item?** The weight given for each item - equal weighting or extra weighting for difficult items.

**10. What test *methods* are to be used?**

M/C, gap filling, matching, transformation, short answer question, picture description, role play with cue cards, essay, structured writing ..

**11. What *rubrics* are to be used as instructions?** Will examples be required to help testees know what is expected from them?

**12. Which *criteria* will be used for assessment by markers?** How important

is accuracy, fluency, appropriacy, spelling...

It is recommended that teachers in the same school work in groups to develop test specifications for their class quizzes for the textbooks in use, in the light of the principles and criteria mentioned above.

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