

Lecture 1: Course Design and Syllabus

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Probing questions:

- Have you ever designed a course for English language learners?
- What did you have to take into consideration, when you designed your course?
- What were your resources and challenges?

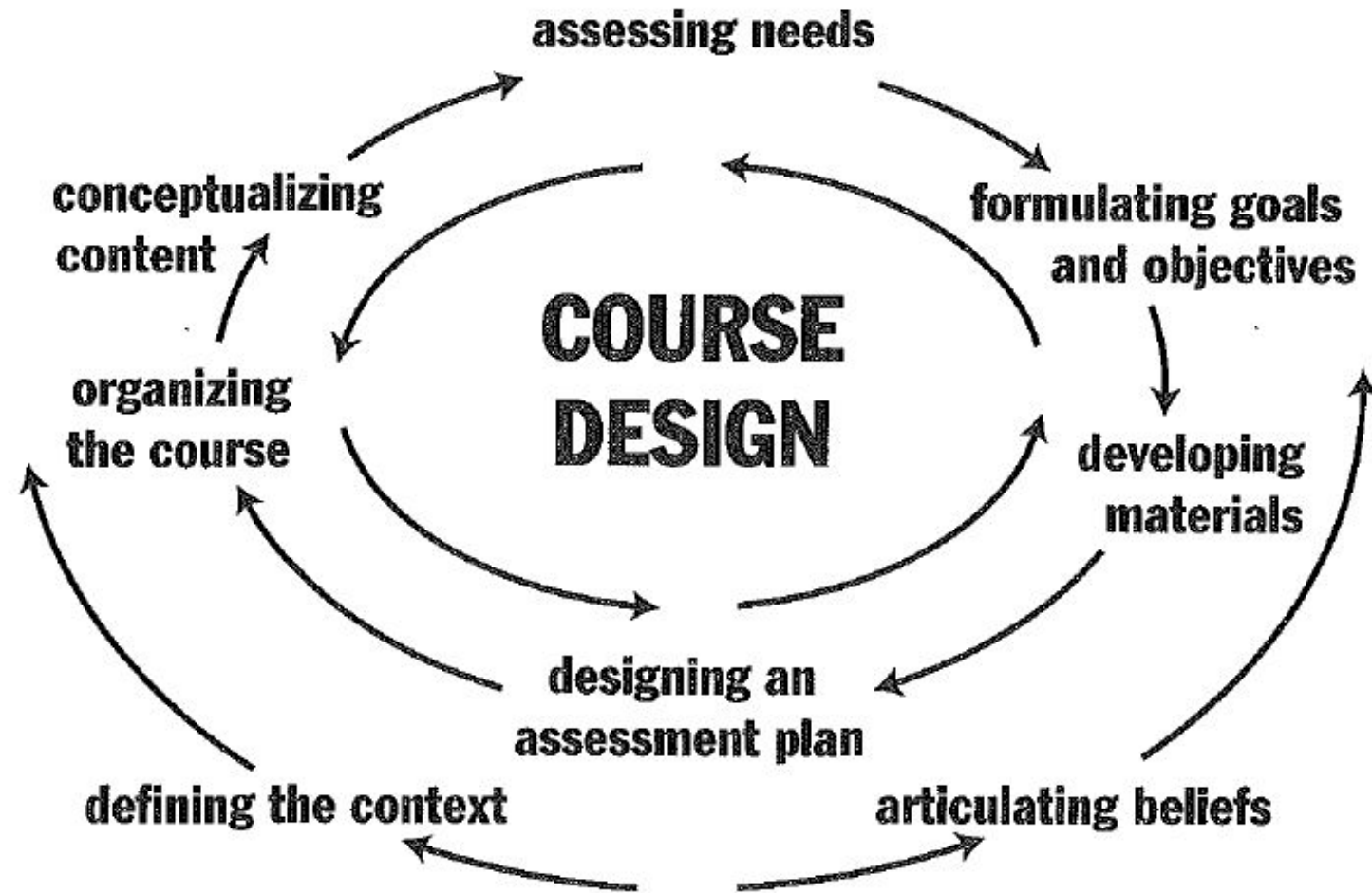
What is a language course?

- ✓ A course is “an integrated series of teaching-learning experiences, whose ultimate aim is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge”

(Hutchinson and Waters 1996: 65)

- General English course, Survival English course, English for Doctors, English for Aviation, English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Figure 1.1: A Framework of Course Development Processes



Articulating beliefs

- What is a language?
 - Rule-governed vs meaning-governed
- What does it mean to be proficient in the language?
- How can you motivate students to be better learners of the language?
 - Relating teaching to life experiences; consider SSs learning styles
- How can your teaching style affect your learners?

Figure 1.1: A Framework of Course Development Processes

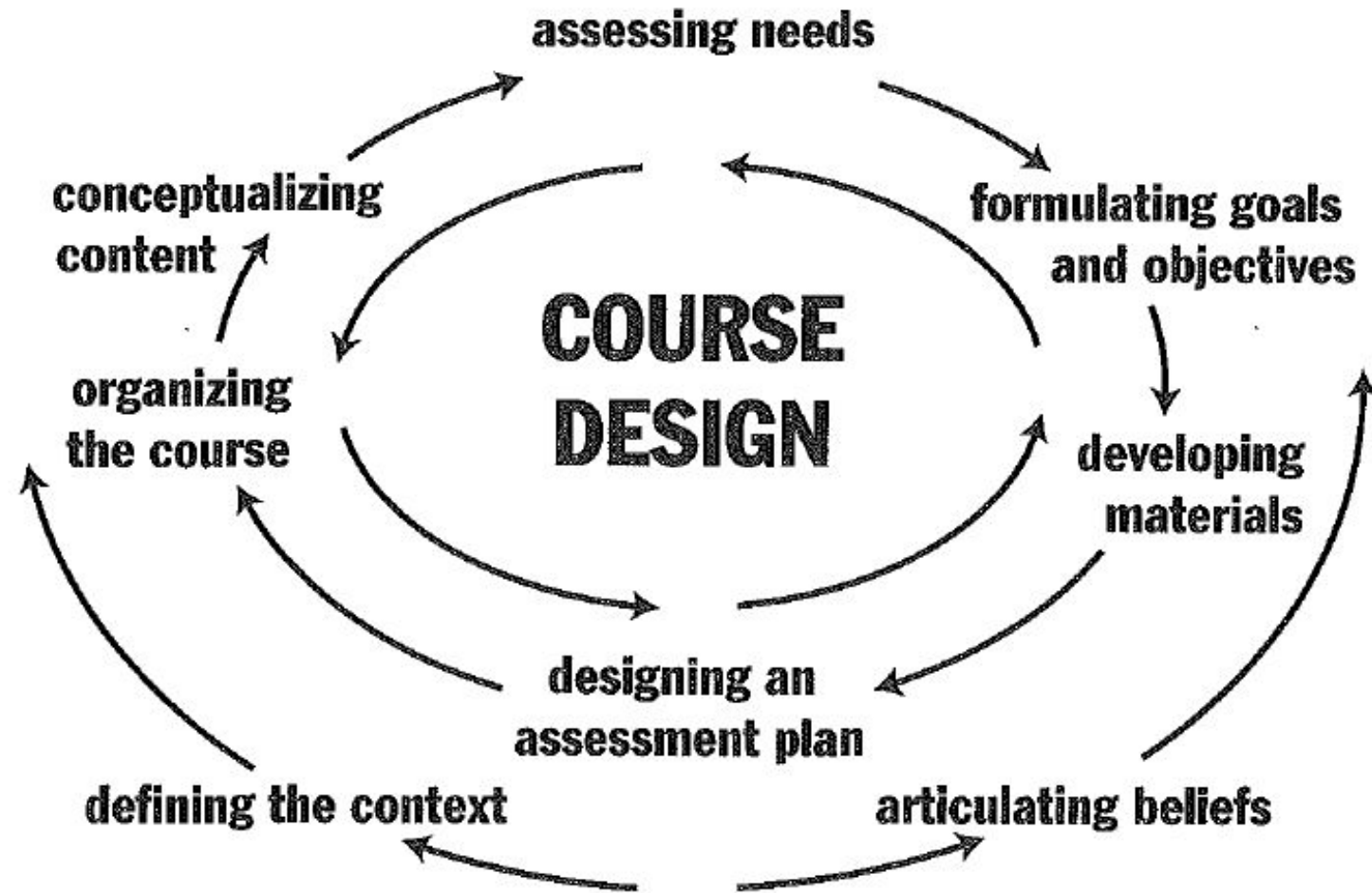
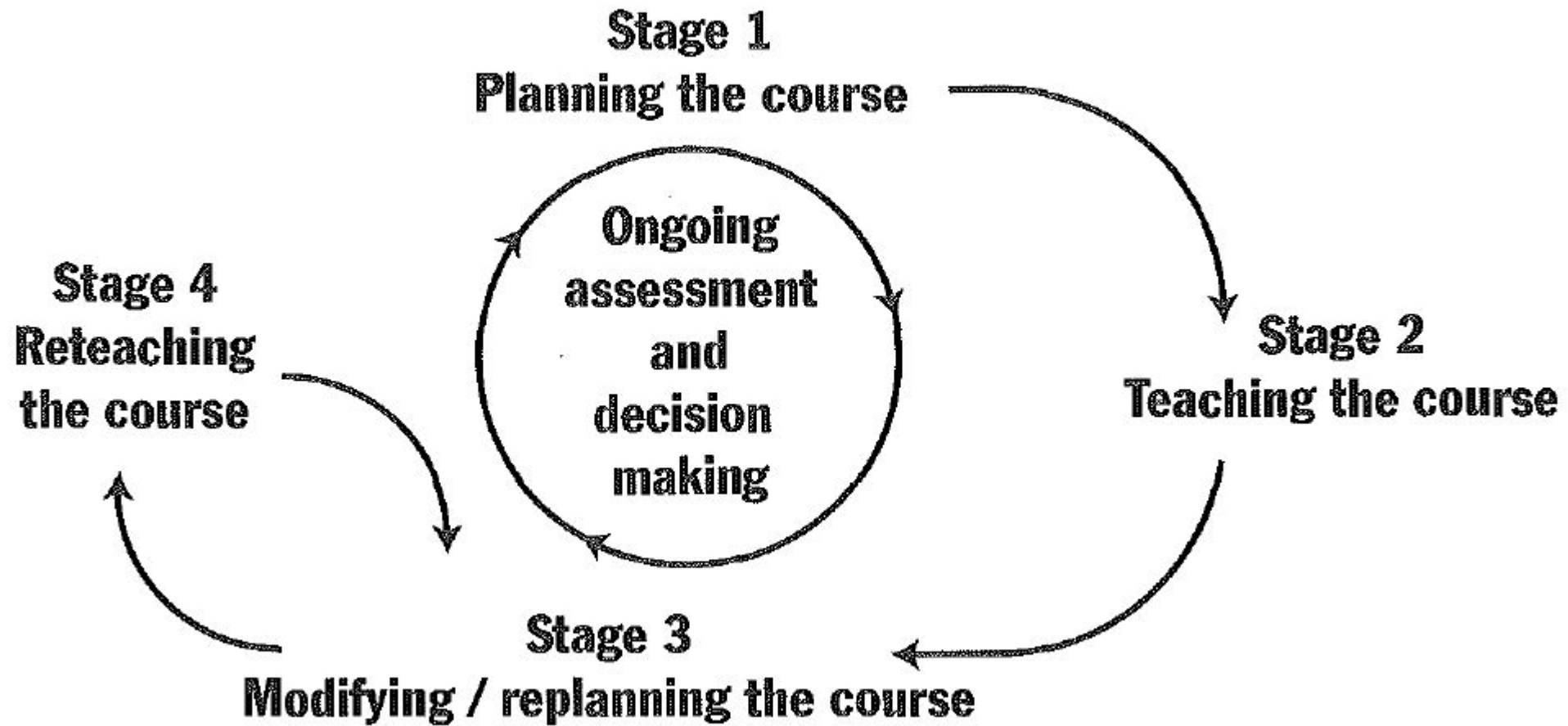


Figure 1.2: The Cycle of Course Development



Products of course design

- A course rationale
- A list of goals and objectives
- A list of competencies achieved by the students
- A needs assessment questionnaire
- A test bank
- A syllabus

Task for this course

Choose a course as the basis for your work. It can be:

- a course you have taught and want to redesign
- a course you are planning to teach
- a course in which you are or have been a learner

Follow the process of course design to develop a syllabus for your course. Present your syllabus in class at the end of the semester.

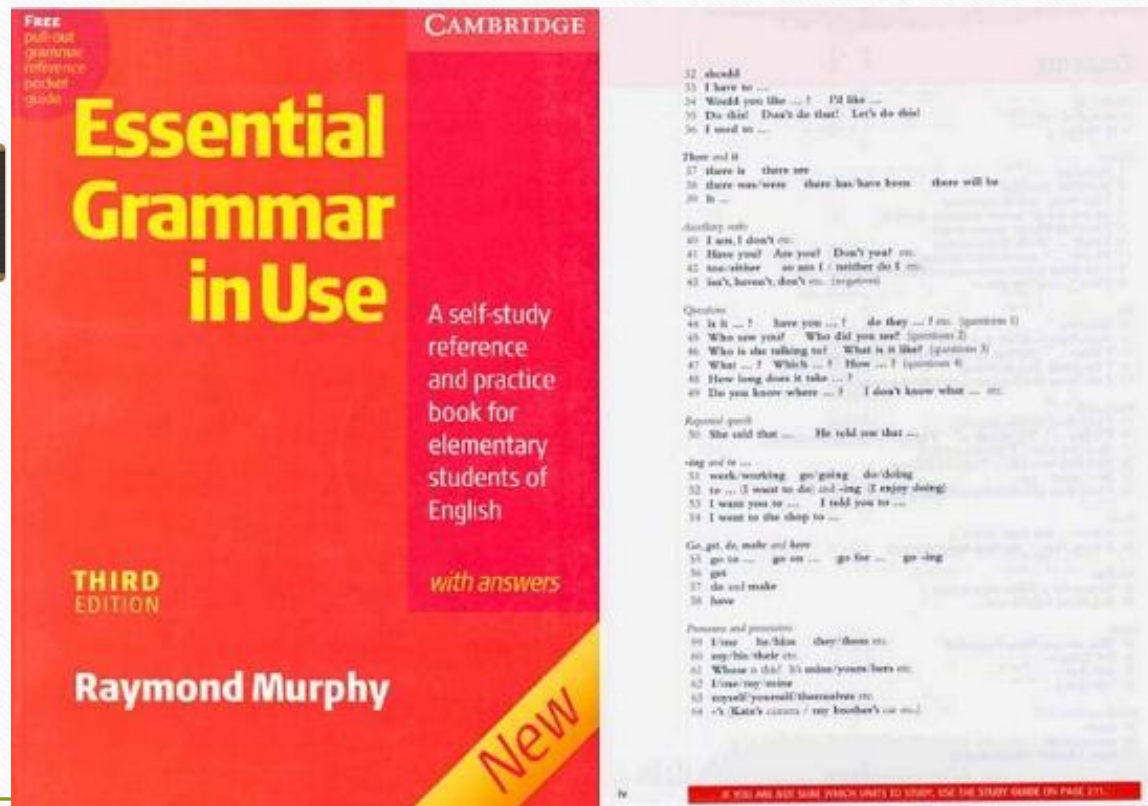
Characteristics of a syllabus

- Describes the major elements that will be used in a language course and provides the basis for its instructional focus and content
- Consists of **a comprehensive list** of items to be taught in the course - content items (words, structures, topics) and process items (tasks, methods)
- Includes explicit objectives, time schedules, methodology or approach, recommended reading materials etc...

Types of syllabus

Grammatical	Situational
Lexical	Topic-based
Grammatical-Lexical	Skills-based
Functional	Task-based
Integrated-Skills syllabus	

Grammatical syllabus



- Organized around grammatical items
- Grammar-translation method
- Advantages/disadvantages?

Lexical syllabus



Identifies target vocabulary to be taught according to levels:

- Elementary level: 1.000 words
- Intermediate level: an additional 2,000 words
- Upper Intermediate level: an additional 2,000 words
- Advanced level: an additional 2,000+ words

Functional syllabus

- Main assumption: mastery of individual functions results in overall communicative ability
- Things that learners can do with the language:
 - Suggesting, promising, apologizing, greeting, inviting, requesting, complaining, suggesting, agreeing etc.

Situational syllabus

- Organized around the language needed for different situations
- Advantages/disadvantages?



Topical or content-based syllabus

- Organized around themes, topics, or other units of content.
- With a topical syllabus, content rather than grammar, functions, or situations is the starting point in syllabus design.
- An example:
 - Television
 - Modern architecture
 - Advertising
 - Ecology
 - Alternative energy

Skills-based syllabus

- Organized around the different underlying abilities that are involved in using a language for purposes such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking

WRITING CRITICALLY

Introduction

Writing critically

Arguing and discussing

Providing reasons and explanations

Arguing a point of view

Generalisations

Cautious language

Evaluating a point of view

Advantages and disadvantages

Comparing and contrasting

Providing support

Supporting with examples

Providing evidence to support your claims

Drawing conclusions

Recommendations

Summary

References

Task-based syllabus

- Organized around tasks that students will complete in the target language
- A task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, or reading a set of instructions and assembling a toy (Skehan 1996, 20)
- Tasks can be pedagogical (information-gap tasks, matching etc.) and real-life (decision-making, opinion exchange, problem solving etc.)

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VOCABULARY

- 1** What do you do?: *I'm a student, I work in a shop*
The alphabet
Possession: *my, your, etc.*
- 5** **Countries and nationalities:** *Germany, German, etc.*
Punctuation
Pronunciation: Word stress 2
- 9** **Everyday life:** *wake up, have lunch, etc.*
Adverbs of frequency: *always, usually, etc.*
- 13** **Free-time activities:** *go jogging, read magazines, play*
- 17** **Family members:** *grandparents, niece, etc.*
Pronunciation: schwa /ə/

GRAMMAR

- 2** **Classroom language:** *a book, a desk, etc.*
Plurals: regular and irregular
this / that
- 6** **to be:** statements, questions, and short answers
- 10** **Present simple:** statements
English in the world: Student jobs

SKILLS

- 3** **Listen and speak:** Using numbers and asking about location
Ordinal numbers: *first, second, third, etc.*
Pronunciation: Word stress 1
- 7** **Listen and speak:** Giving personal information
wh- questions with to be
English in the world: Titles: *Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss*
- 11** **Read and write:** People's everyday life
and, but, because
Pronunciation: /ɪ/ or /i:/
- 15** **Listen and speak:** Talking about likes and dislikes
like + -ing
Pronunciation: /b/ and /əʊ/
- 19** **Read and write:** Describing your family
Object pronouns
English in the world: Families
- 23** **Listen and write:** Describing your town
English in the world: Street signs

ENGLISH FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

- 4** **Story:** That's Life! Episode 1 *Hi. How are you?*
Saying hello and goodbye: *Good morning, See you, etc.*
Possessive 's
- 8** **Talking about days and times:** *It's Monday, It's three o'clock, etc.*
Prepositions of time 1: *on, at*
- 12** **Story:** That's Life! Episode 2 *Is Sarah here?*
Responding
- 16** **Ordering food and drink**
Would you like ... ?
English in the world: Foreign words in English
- 20** **Story:** That's Life! Episode 3 *He's a nice guy*
Suggestions
- 24** **Giving directions:** *Turn right, It's on the left, etc.*

Personalizing the syllabus?

- Do you think it is important to personalize your syllabus?

Task

- Study the following syllabi, mark the components which they have in common
- Develop a syllabus template which you will use for describing your course