

**FEDERAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL IN THE STATE OF PARANÁ:
A SYLLABUS DESIGN REGARDING THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH**

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Summary:

This paper has the objective of making some suggestions and comments on the syllabus design regarding the teaching of English for Federal Technical High School Students in the State of Paraná; Reading skills ; Teacher's role; selecting material ; types of activities and keeping in touch with the teacher from the schools involved in such a kind of teaching.

INTRODUCTION

By a "syllabus"we understand the set of items of language which will be dealt with in a course situation and it should, ideally, take into consideration the subjects it is being designed for - the appropriate methodology; the number of hours the course will take; material conditions as well as economic variables.

Syllabus design in Brazil, as far as the teaching of English is concerned, seems to be far behind any modern methodology. Unfortunately most of our schools are still basing their syllabuses on structural items aiming at the achievement of correct sentences, well-formed paragraphs, no matter how stilted those sentences may be.

In other words, the goal is still linguistic competence. This is the reason why, I believe, our students do not succeed when they need to use English for real purposes: if the teacher is not around,students do not know what to do.

Thus, what we need in our syllabuses is authenticity of roles and situations.The students should be given ground to develop specific linguistic skills, adequating the learning of the language to their purposes and needs.

Brazilian syllabuses must take into account the "day after" graduation. That seems to be the most relevant point in teaching, i.e. the students should be prepared to face situations in foreign language in an appropriate way. And the way to do it , I believe, is to prepare them according to their needs. One graduate may very well need English for his/her academic work (intensive reading), other for translation, another for spoken communication, and so on.

Then , courses such as "English for Specific Purposes"are getting more space in syllabus design.

The syllabus design for the teaching of English at CEFET-Paraná-UNEDs- (high school students) is essentially concerned with the learner's needs, dealing more precisely with reading comprehension skills, which seems to be the basic skill the students need to master.

The main objectives of such a syllabus are the following:

- I - to provide the learning with practice in efficient reading.
- II - to develop the learner's sense of critical evaluation.
- III - to develop the learner to recall the content of a text in English.
- IV - to call the learner's attention to linguistic items such as word- formation, cognates,word power, which will be helpful in facilitating the overall comprehension of a text.

"Efficient reading" mentioned in objective I is meant to encompass:

Reading to recognize a. the ability to recognize the rhetorical functions dealt in a text, i.e. to describe, define, exemplify, classify, make assumptions, give instructions, summarize.

Reading to comprehend b. the ability to grasp the meaning of a word or idea in context.

Reading to infer c. the ability to draw inferences from the text by taking the title and the "typographical keys" (capital letter, numbers, italics, cognates, repeated words, graphs, tables, etc), as well as the only sources of information.

Reading to select d. the ability to select the important sections of a text or book.

Reading to recognize structures e. the ability to recognize and manipulate the formal device which are used to create new words in a sentence.

The syllabus design proposed for the high school students of CEFET-Paraná-UNEDs- is associated with their professional requirement: without the knowledge of a foreign language-English, in this case- their development in their chosen sphere of work could be restricted or at least adversely affected.

MATERIAL DESIGN

It is important to keep in mind the need of working on diversified authentic texts that will offer the students the opportunity to deepen their previous knowledge as well as establish connections with other areas (scientific, cultural and technological information).

An "authentic" text is one written for a specific audience (not language learners) and its purpose is the communication of subject content rather than language form. Notice that by this, an authentic text does not have to have a high conceptual level; the crucial element is that it aims to convey information and ideas rather than the use of language.

A teacher of ESP has to familiarise himself/herself with a range of published material which he/she can draw on to meet group and individual needs, as well as make use of simulation or even some kind of drama technique to restore conditions conducive to learning.

Materials have to be carefully designed to raise motivation so that the changes of a successful learning are increased.

By dealing with diversified text subjects, sometimes the ESP teacher realises that his/her knowledge of a specific subject has limits; he/she may also feel the need for closer cooperation with the subject teacher, perhaps even developing a team- teaching programme (interdisciplinary study)!

READING ACTIVITIES

To complete tasks successfully, the students must be able to change their reading strategies and speed to suit their purposes. They may have to "skim" a text rapidly to find out its general message. Thereafter they may "scan" more slowly, reading more thoroughly to extract the specific information they require.

Many learners do not have this capacity to change their reading strategies and may have to be eased away from an inefficient word-by-word approach to reading a text. This can be achieved by imposing time limits on reading assignments and by improving students word guessing strategies.

Much of a good reader's skill lies in his/her ability to pick up the various signals that a writer transmits and to use them to link ideas together and predict the form and content of the message.

A correct prediction means successful comprehension. Initially, the signal will take the form of titles and then typography and punctuation can be useful indicators of a writer's intention or attitude. Brackets may indicate a digression or a qualification; heavy type, underlining or italics are all used for emphasis.

Another way of predicting some of the content of a text is to use graphs and diagrams. The representation in graphic form is a convention which is taken for granted these days.

Here is a summary of exercise types based on the relationship between diagram and text:

- a) Write down all information diagram represents.
- b) Match written text with relevant diagrams.
- c) Choose from several diagrams the one that best represents content of text.

- d) Complete text using information from diagrams.
- e) Draw graph or diagram to represent important information in text.
- f) Label diagram according to information in reading passage.

COMMENTS

The main objective of the proposed syllabus is the one of stimulating the students to find out the correlation between what they already know to what is being learned in a text, having a critical view of it.

It is indispensable to emphasize the significance of sharing ideas and experiences with the teachers involved in such a syllabus.

By doing that, we-teachers of English at CEFET-Paraná-UNEDs will grow better as professionals and also as human beings; learning with each other we will be able to provide the students a real "meaningful learning".

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