Designing a visualized curriculum

Design

Therefore, students in the intermediate level start to feel the urge to produce language orally since they acquire the notion of knowing considerable mount of vocabulary and grammar. Thus, in order to motivate students gain the fluency that would use their competence, certain techniques must be used. Brown (2001) in this regard recommends that teachers and designers should " use techniques that cover spectrum of learners needs, from language-based focus on accuracy to message- based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency. Personally, I think of real life tasks as the best to initiate and carry on conversations because most students seek the knowledge of the language in order to communicate with others. This paper includes four main parts. First of all, I will introduce the importance of designing a curriculum for students who are in the intermediate level and want to travel abroad. Second, I intend to clarify the basics of making this curriculum in a Syrian context. Third, I will present the environment that Syrian participants live in with an analysis for their needs.

Finally, I will discuss the key results (findings), trying to design a visualized curriculum unit that may lead to a better educational future. 2. The Importance of This Visualized Curriculum The importance of this curriculum comes from the fact that inactive use of delivered knowledge should be replaced by full engagement with the subject matter through conversation. Paulo Fire (1970) states that, " Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication.

If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible" (p.

35). This will lead to the core of any teaching curriculum when the conversation open minded, independent thinker who can defend his or her position without resorting to rigid assertions based on partial understanding or incomplete knowledge. This curriculum is designed to help students make use of their prior knowledge of the language form. This can be approached as classes of a teacher to a student, a teacher to students.

Students would be the center of this learning process since the curriculum is obviously communicative. The role of teachers in here should be encouraging to all students in order to make them participate and value all contributions, incorporating as many as possible into an extended conversation from the dialogues already mentioned in the textbook. Resources, teacher styles, assessment methods and time were important factors in determining the relevance and value of curricula in Syrian schools. But I feel that some are missing the point completely.

The point I am making is that content based delivery of the curriculum, and its traditional division of subjects constrain the understanding of students, and fail to prepare them for a dynamic world of work and life that is constantly changing. Combined with the appropriate skills, individuals will have the ability to apply creative solutions to problems they may encounter on a daily basis and speaking the foreign language is one of them. My approach to any support f HAIL curriculum " Face 2 Face" would be to drive it towards practical knowledge that can be applied in pragmatic ways to constantly changing conditions.

In his 1996 book Curriculum as Conversation, Arthur Palpable argued that "[m]such of the school curriculum of the time was based upon false premises and reflected a fundamental misconception of the nature of knowing" (p. 3). Unfortunately, all the language curricula being taught in Syrian schools strip knowledge of its contexts that give it meaning and vitality, and lead to an education that stresses knowledge without a context rather than practical knowledge. In such a yester, students are taught about the traditions of the past, and not how to enter into and participate in those of the present and the future.

In order to prepare students for the using the language in real life, we need to understand that contexts are changing rapidly but much curriculum content does not, and can thus quickly become archaic. We can therefore no longer afford to rely solely on content, and need to present more situated learning opportunities. Situated approaches to learning involve an emphasis on context, not Just on content, and the best way to experience appropriate contexts is to do it for real. Carl Young (2004) relates the story of a language teacher who used pure conversation as the basis for all her teaching.

Although this sounds like a non- effective method of teaching a language, it is actually quite insightful. He even thinks the curriculum (p. 82). The way teachers in Syria follow in their teaching is far from being a shared responsibility. Once learning responsibility is shared between teachers and students, students would be more interested in the process. Fire (1970) points out that " Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by concealing the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. Bleakly goes on to elaborate

that " democracy in education requires interplay between the individual and the collective through authentic dialogue - as the reconstructions suggest, constructing curriculum as an extended and complicated conversation. " (p. 300). To achieve this, teachers are required to assume a role as learners, while students are allowed to become teachers, to facilitate the free and open dialogue that will constitute conversation as curriculum. It seems clear o me that to encourage open and free dialogue in a formal learning environment, the power gap between teacher and student must be removed.

When teachers wish to promote democratic learning, students are given permission to challenge and encouraged to discuss, debate, and argue. 3. Basics of Establishing This Curriculum In the following comparative table regarding the components of curriculum (Graves, 2000 & McAlister, 2010, p. 137), it is clear that defining needs, context, goals, content, and principles are essential in terms of establishing a visualized course. Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation come in the second step of applying this course on students in order to check its practicality in meeting all the aforementioned. Pick] In this paper of course, I will do the first step since it is going to be a status defining step which leads to a view of what might be a suitable curriculum. 3. 1 Environment Analysis McAlister (2010) emphasizes the importance of environment analysis by saying that it is "[a]n important part of curriculum design because at its most basic level it ensures that the course will be usable" (p. 15). Since environment is represented in intent, two factors affect the designing process " people" and " physical setting" according to Graves (2000).

In the case of HAIL physical environment, the classes I had my samples in were pretty big with good ventilation and light. Both classes had projectors, good desks, and comfortable seats. Those classes seemed to be quiet and appropriate for the learning process, although I prefer to have more than one place where the learning process takes place because it can refresh students. As for people, the two important categories are teachers and students. The age of 34 out of 5 students was between 21 and 26, thus it would not be considered an important practice her own activities. The teaching approach followed there is the communicative approach.

Time is the only constraint that limits both teachers and students to give what they are capable of since they have only one month to finish the course with one hour forty minutes actual teaching for five days a week. 3. 2 Needs Analysis Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divide needs into target needs (I. E. What learners need to do in the target situation) and learning needs (I. E. What the learners need to do in order to learn). In this section, I will introduce the sample I tested, the tools, the procedures I followed to analyze the data, and then I will discuss the findings of the analysis regarding their target needs and learning needs. . 2. 1 Sample Background The sample which I analyze in this paper includes students in the Higher Language Institute who are studying the English language. These intermediate-level thirty-five students are divided into two sections, and they are studying " Face to Face" curriculum which is chosen by the HAIL administration since it meets their expectations. Students in this institute are above 18. Upon the informal interview I had with most of them, they were all university students

who either wanted to continue their higher studies outside the country or wanted to have future Jobs that required them to travel outside the country.

Questionnaires were passed to students during their classes see Appendix (1). After that the purpose of the research, which is enhancing speaking abilities when traveling abroad, was explicitly explained. 3. 2. 2 Collecting Data Tools The tools that were chosen are credible since the design of my research is based on quantitative and qualitative methods. In this regard, I chose unstructured interviews tit the students and a questionnaire. The interview focused on how students felt at this level of English and whether they were able to communicate using the speaking skill.

The questionnaire has ten questions checking students' thoughts of their abilities and their needs to improve in speaking. Every question has five options as answers in order to measure accurately the answer that the student wants. These options range from one to five as follows (strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree). 3. 2. 3 Study Procedure In order to pass any questionnaire in the institute, permission must be taken from he administration and the teacher who is responsible for the surveyed classes. After doing all the aforementioned, I passed the questionnaire papers in two classes taught by the same teacher Ms.