

Pre-Residential Assignment
Steps in Designing a Unit of Work

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Step One:

The target population are Korean elementary school students, grades 4 ~ 6, in an EFL context. Class sizes are large (20 ~ 30 students) and take place at a private academy. The students predominantly come from a middle-class background and have been exposed to English through the media (internet, television and through adverts) but have (almost) no contact with native speakers outside the classroom. They have no overt need for English acquisition; consequently, there is no intrinsic motivation to learn English in most cases. On the other hand, students with a higher level of aptitude tend to be motivated by their ability. Further, games and activities that students consider 'fun' generally engage the entire class and encourage participation. English classes with the native speaker teacher meet just one hour a week. Students study with a non-native speaker teacher four hours a week. The course is of an indeterminate length and is likely to proceed throughout the students' elementary school years.

Step Two:

The curriculum is a collection of online syllabuses designed specifically for young learners (primary/elementary school level and perhaps lower middle school in some cases) and the course is a selection of activities from these syllabuses. It is oral and aural in nature. Of course, students must be able to read in order to participate effectively, but there are relatively few written activities. As mentioned above, NNS teachers, in this particular target population, teach four of the five weekly lessons and generally focus on reading and writing. Thus, one aim of the curriculum is to bring a

balance of the four skills to EFL contexts; that is, a general goal is to improve young learner speaking and listening skills:

Syllabus One is not easy to categorize, but can be said to have both structural and lexical elements—structural, in that there is a presentation of forms graded from easy to difficult (several course books were consulted and a subjective form of eclecticism was employed in the grading process) and lexical, in that there is a selection of vocabulary that can be found in natural language (e.g., home, places, people and frequently used verbs) but there is no relation in this curriculum to corpus linguistics:

<http://eslenglishclassroom.com/> (Ctrl + click to follow link).

Syllabus Two (half complete) is an audio version of Syllabus One and can be implemented in the classroom or can be used by students on their own time. Of course the language lab of old is slowly being replaced with computer labs. Headphones and a screen are more likely to engage young learners:

<http://www.english-audio-course.com/> (Ctrl + click to follow link).

Syllabus Three (sample page only) is an attempt to provide a more communicative approach with tasks and task-like activities. There is much work to be done on this approach to online learning. Also, this is the only syllabus that requires writing and includes activities that would be conducive to group and pair work, though not necessarily so. The other three syllabuses are designed for whole class activities:

http://eslenglishclassroom.com/index_files/pasttense.html (Ctrl + click to follow link).

Syllabus Four (work in progress) is a pronunciation syllabus. There is a variety of structured input (listen and select) but, in contrast to other structured input designs, there is a chance for production immediately following each example. It is a paradigm of the oral/aural approach on which this curriculum tends to focus:

http://eslenglishclassroom.com/index_files/pronunciation.html (Ctrl + click to follow link).

Step Three:

The question of learner needs at the beginner level in an EFL context is a difficult one. Obviously, there is a good chance that some of them will need to communicate in English as an international language when they enter the workforce, but others may not. As to 'why' they are doing the course: Their parents send them to the academy . The linguistic needs include lexical and syntactic accuracy, pronunciation and the encouragement of fluency. The approach to realizing these needs will be addressed in the methodology (the later steps in this unit of work). It may be apparent to many teachers of young learners (and parents) that students at this age require visual, auditory, kinesthetic and other sense related forms of input in order to engage them beyond their limitations of attention (learner styles can be 'stretched' to accommodate different learners in large groups). Further, game formats lock in their attention, lower the affective filter (Krashen 2003) and give a sense of purpose to the activities (winning the game—which is what they like to do). Activity theory states that while motives may be different (e.g., language acquisition versus winning a game) the outcomes may be the same (improvement in the use of target structures) (Lantolf 2000).

Step Four:

The aim of this course must reflect the selection of materials and also must be the product of the successful completion of the objectives. Therefore, there is one general aim (the aim of the curriculum ~ to improve learner listening and speaking skills) that may be assessed by way of a specific set of aims that are contained in the four syllabuses. These four aims are as follows:

- 1) To raise student consciousness of basic English lexical and and grammatical forms.
- 2) To build learner listening skills and pronunciation (as an audiolingual conjunct to aim one).
- 3) To inspire student creativity and critical thought using various tasks.
- 4) To improve comprehension and production of English on both the segmental and suprasegmental levels.

These four main aims can then be further broken down into more specific objectives (e.g., students will be able to answer questions using the past tense).

I. Curriculum Aim: Students will achieve a basic level of listening and speaking skills in English.

A) Syllabus One Aim: Students will comprehend and produce basic English lexical and grammatical forms.

- i. Students will have a reading vocabulary of over 300 common nouns and over 40 common verbs.
- ii. Students will understand and use present, past and future notions of time in a controlled manner.
- iii. Students will memorize and understand scripted dialogs pertaining to events common to their age.
- iv. Students will understand and produce most forms of prepositions, demonstrative pronouns, and count and non-count nouns.
- v. Students will answer random but appropriate questions based on the content and context of the previous four objectives.

B) Syllabus Two Aim: Students will build listening skills and pronunciation (as an audiolingual adjunct to aim one).

- i. Students will have a listening vocabulary of over 300 common nouns and over 40 common verbs.
- ii. Students will listen to and produce present, past and future notions of time in a controlled manner.
- iii. Students will listen to and produce scripted dialogs pertaining to events common to their age.
- iv. Students will listen to and produce most forms of prepositions, demonstrative pronouns, and count and non-count nouns.

C) Syllabus Three Aim: Students will employ creativity and critical thought (too 'process-like?') using various tasks in English.

- i. Students will discover and discuss the grammatical rules for present, past and future notions of time in a series of consciousness raising activities.
- ii. Students will tell stories by interpreting a series of pictures and connecting these pictures in a logical manner.

iii. Students will interpret and discuss a role play and create and perform their own role play in an informal manner based on the model.

D) Syllabus Four Aim: Students will develop intelligibility in the comprehension and production of pronunciation on both the segmental and suprasegmental levels.

i. Students will distinguish between and produce similar consonant and vowel sounds in a minimal pairs activity.

ii. Students will distinguish between word final epenthesis and correct pronunciation of words and produce the proper forms in a controlled production exercise.

iii. Students will recognize and correctly choose the most common form of word stress (in a sentence context) among three examples in a listening activity.

iv. Students will recognize and correctly choose the most common form of intonation (in a sentence context) among three examples in a listening activity.

Step Five:

Students will predominantly be working together as a class. The class is divided into two teams and a game format is implemented throughout each lesson. In this way, the teacher is a coach (to each team), a facilitator (to enforce the rules and engage the students), a diplomat (to ease tension and conflict between teams and/or team members) and mediator/regulator (the application of mediation/scaffolding, the process of object to other to self-regulation in terms of the sociocultural model, is used as a general standard and will be addressed again in the methodology). Students, in turn, are encouraged to follow the examples of mediation (realized in the techniques of corrective feedback) set by the teacher. They may only use explicit correction at the outset, but the more able students may learn to use more implicit or subtle forms of CF as they are modeled time and again by the teacher.

Step Six:

Syllabus One: speaking, listening and reading (Ctrl + click to follow link).

1) Nouns: <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/WNO-1/shell.swf>

2) Verbs: <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/WAO-1/shell.swf>

3) Selected grammar: <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/WLO-1/shell.swf>

4) Review of 1) 2) and 3): <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/GSO-1/shell.swf>

5) Role Plays: <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/RPO-1/shell.swf>

6) Word Scramble: <http://www.eslenglishclassroom.com/OVER/PTO-1/shell.swf>

Syllabus Two: speaking, listening and reading (Ctrl + click to follow link).

As above... the files include audio.

Syllabus Three: speaking, listening, reading and writing (Ctrl + click to follow link).

http://eslenglishclassroom.com/index_files/pasttense.html

Syllabus Four: speaking, listening and reading (Ctrl + click to follow link).

http://eslenglishclassroom.com/index_files/pronunciation.html

References:

Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
A summary is useful in Wikipedia: ([Ctrl + click to follow link](#)).

Lantolf, J. (2000) Sociocultural theory and second language learning. Oxford University Press. p.8

