

## **DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE AND WELCOMING SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH CLASSES**

**Kholmurodova Olima Abdivaliyevna**

Jizzakh State Pedagogical University

Associate professor, PhD

In recent days, English language is taught in variety of manners and contexts, namely it is taught by various methods and syllabuses according to the learners’ needs, levels and background country. A course syllabus serves as an important tool for establishing expectations between students and teachers and can be viewed on one level as a contract between the instructor and the student. A well-written syllabus lays out the course’s structure, responds to frequently asked concerns, can help students feel less anxious, and frees up the instructor to focus on teaching.

A syllabus serves many functions in a class. In *The Course Syllabus: A Learning Centered Approach* (2008, 2nd Ed.) Judith Grunert O’Brien, Barbara J. Millis and Margaret W. Cohen identify at least sixteen elements of a learner-centered syllabus:

- Establishes an early point of contact and connection between student and instructor
- Helps set the tone for the course
- Describes your beliefs about educational purposes
- Acquaints students with the logistics of the course
- Contains collected handouts
- Defines student responsibilities for successful coursework
- Describes active learning
- Helps students assess their readiness for your course
- Sets the course in a broader context for learning
- Provides a conceptual framework

- Describes available learning resources
- Communicates the role of technology in the course
- Can provide difficult-to-obtain reading material
- Can improve the effectiveness of student note taking
- Can include material that supports learning outside the classroom
- Can serve as a learning contract.

The syllabus is the first introduction students receive to you as an instructor and to the content of the course. Researchers at James Madison University surveyed student responses to detailed and brief versions of the same syllabus, and concluded that students associated the detailed syllabus with qualities of a master teacher (Saville et al 2010). Researchers have explored the effect of “warm” and “cold” language in a syllabus on student perceptions of the instructor. An example of “warm” language in a syllabus is “I hope you actively participate in this course. I say this because I found it is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes lectures more fun.)” “Cold” language, on the other hand, expresses the same idea using different words: “Come prepared to actively participate in this course. This is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more interesting.)” Students who read the syllabus with the “warm” language rated the hypothetical instructor both more approachable and more motivated to teach the class (Harnish and Bridges 2011).

In EFL setting, the syllabus that teachers follow in the classroom varies in different ways. English language is considered to be as a foreign language in my country Uzbekistan thus, it is regarded as complex and challenging for most of learners and teachers in my country, especially the speaking is considered to be one of the hardest skills ever. In my point of view, this issue can be connected to selecting particular and relevant syllabus.

The selected article defines issues that the EFL learners come across in speaking class during teaching period at the university in China. And also, the core idea of the article is to give clear solutions to the problem such as, encouraging students to communicate and interact with each other in English language and eliminating

obstacles in EFL setting by stating particular syllabus and methods. As I know, in my situation speaking for non-native students is very difficult and requires effort, it can also be clearly proved in one article by theorists Talandis and Stout (2015, p11), “Getting EFL students to speak can be a challenge no matter what the context, especially in required English classes.”

So, the role of the teacher is to determine these issues and finding solutions for the problems. The selected article defines the core aspects of the issue, namely the author exemplifies certain type of syllabuses such as, communicative, negotiated and learner-centred syllabuses that were conducted by the teacher in China. Namely, the teacher tries different approaches and syllabuses to the problem and finally overcomes the main problem. Consequently, learners achieved to speak without interruptions and interact in English language very easily.

Firstly, in the first year of the teaching period the teacher tries to encourage learners by organising group discussions, pair works and role-plays, but it was unsuccessful, due to some reasons such as, some learners were inactive and preferred to not communicate with the teacher and with their peers, the reason for this was embarrassment of making mistakes in speech among learners.

And then, the teacher puts into practice the syllabus that was useful and productive for the learners. This is called “learner-centred syllabus”, in this context the teacher makes some slight changes to syllabus namely, the teacher gives more freedom to the students. As an example, the teacher organised a sort of discussion by asking students to talk about their aims of learning English language as well as, the teacher asked them about their needs and wishes.

Moreover, students are encouraged to design their own course and activities according to their needs. This approach gave students more motivation to speak and express their ideas more confidentially than usual. In other words, it gave very productive outcomes and it can be stated that, the teacher successfully achieved her/his goal by implementing this syllabus.

This article is an example of using communicative and learner-centred syllabuses simultaneously and successfully. However, in my country many teachers use the different syllabuses one of them is grammatical syllabus. When I was a learner in my country, this syllabus was conducted more than others. The majority of teachers in my country believe that grammatical syllabus is more important than other aspects. In teaching context they prioritise grammar more than communication and other skills. It can be also stated in the articles, “Explicit knowledge gained thorough grammar instruction helps learners in three ways. Firstly, it helps them monitor their utterances before and after they are produced. Secondly, it helps learners notice certain features in the input: „For example, if learners know that plural nouns have an –s, they are more likely to add the –s on the ends of nouns they hear or read in input and also more likely to associate the –s morpheme with the meaning more than one.” (Ellis, cited in Sasan Baleghizadeh 2012, p112).

In contrast, the other article defines, “The grammatical syllabus is a powerful device for enabling language learners to master grammatical rules; however, it is not as powerful where sociolinguistic rules of appropriacy are concerned. A learner who in response to the question “Do you mind if I open the window?” says, “Yes, I do” is typical of someone whose knowledge of English grammar might be perfect yet who does not know how to give socially appropriate replies.” (Widdowson, cited in Sasan Baleghizadeh 2012, p112). And I think, teaching only grammar can pose a threat learner’s development and the learners can lack in communication in English language.

Evaluating the appropriateness of the software and answer to the question that is mentioned in Hubbard’s (2006) criteria (Walker and White, 2013, p160), “If the software were a human teacher, would you want that person teaching your students?”. Considering all the software evaluations above, I would answer yes to the question above, because as it is mentioned above there are a number of benefits for the students if we integrate the activities with the software in the language learning process, it is a cutting-edge software and I think by this way, we can avoid conventional methodologies that creates boredom and typicality for the learners.



In conclusion, every teaching situation or context has strengths and weaknesses, but the article stated above contributes to learner speaking skill more positively in EFL setting in my situation, because as I mentioned above the speaking is one of the deficiencies in my country, so that I think teachers with EFL background should teach in more modern way than traditional, such as teaching communicative, negotiated and learner-centred syllabuses rather than grammatical syllabus.

### REFERENCES:

1. Al-Busaidi, K. (2013). An empirical investigation linking learners’ adoption of blended learning to their intention of full e-learning. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 32(11), pp.1168-1176.
2. Browne, T., Jenkins, M. and Walker, R. (2006). A longitudinal perspective regarding the use of VLEs by higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 14(2), pp.177-192.
3. Coates, H., James, R. and Baldwin, G. (2005). A Critical Examination Of The Effects Of Learning Management Systems On University Teaching And Learning. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 11(1), pp.19-36.
4. Saville, Bryan K., Tracy E. Zinn, Allison R. Brown, and Kimberly A. Marchuk. (2010). “Syllabus Detail and Students’ Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness.” *Teaching of Psychology*, 37:3, 186-189.
5. Harnisch, Richard J. and K. Robert Bridges. (2011). “Effect of Syllabus Tone: Students’ Perceptions of Instructor and Course.” *Social Psychology Education*, 14, 319-330.
6. Grunert O’Brien, Judith, Barbara J. Millis and Margaret W. Cohen. (2008). *The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach*, 2nd Ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.