

Toward Designing a Communicative Syllabus
of Comparative Culture Courses:
A Tentative Proto-Syllabus

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Are we teaching *language* (for communication)?

OR

Are we teaching communication(via language)?

— R. Allwright

This attempt of designing a proto-syllabus of comparative culture courses at a college level is intended for an instructor committed to fostering the academic success of college students who major in English and take the courses.

In order to achieve goals, a teacher must be innovative not only in meeting the needs and wishes of the learners but also in enhancing their unique strengths and capabilities.

In designing such a syllabus, we should present an organizational concept is not based on separate units but rather on a continuous process of communication and negotiation on the target language, i. e., the English language. In this approach, the communicative needs of the learners are the basis on which various linguistic, thematic or functional elements are related.

And the communicative approach to language teaching will place a much higher premium on *process* (i. e., how instruction is carried out and learning is achieved) rather than *language content*. And process is viewed as aiming at cognitively and communicatively engaging activities of as wide a variety as possible. It places high value on overall interaction and on message transmission. Its emphasis is shifted from *linguistic competence* to sociocultural appropriateness and *communicative competence*. In other words, it can be said that it is the integrative (holistic) view, emphasizing

the totality of language learning, which is thought to work best with a communicative approach.

AIMS

Reading

1. Ability to read with immediate comprehension expository writings of average difficulty and mature content
2. Reading fluency to a relative degree (e. g., 200 WPH)
3. "Students' confidence in their own ability to read new material" (Dubin and others, 1986, 47) on their own

Writing

1. Ability to write a paragraph, a paraphrase, a summary, a book report, a short paper, a critical review and a research paper with ease of expression and some feeling for the style of English, according to English thought patterns and methods of development
2. Ability to take notes and to use them for speaking, listening, reading and writing
3. Ability to write an outline for listening, speaking, reading and writing

Discussion

Ability to discuss a specific problem purposefully in the hope of arriving at a solution or clarification in a small group

Content Area (Culture)

An enlightened understanding of the English-speaking people and their culture, achieved through personal contact, through study of systematic description of the foreign culture, (through study of literature and the arts,) and through systematic research and comparison of the target culture with the students' own culture

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are based on, and partly modified from, those mentioned in *Selected Objectives for the English Language Arts* by Arnold Lazarus and *Resource Units in Language Arts* by the present writer (Ogawa, 1974, 1975, 1978).

Listening

To value listening as civilizing and humanizing

To regard listening as a way to learn

To value group processes when members of the group are informed and competent

To be receptive and open-minded ; to be aware of the effect one's prejudices have on one's listening ; to respect controversy and differences of opinion

To know why one is listening ; to be aware of one's own role and motives in listening ; to bring something of oneself to listening

To be aware of the various kinds or degrees of listening : discriminating-critical, aesthetic-appreciative, informative, and escapist-relaxing

To comprehend a speaker's purpose(s)—to inform, to entertain, to convince, to persuade, to incite, to inspire

To apprehend the speaker's major point(s) and supporting points.

To follow the speaker's examples and illustrations in support of his points and arguments

To follow the speaker's outline as well as the content of his speech

To develop efficiency in taking notes while listening, avoiding attempts to take down details

To make value judgments regarding a speaker's information, qualifications, intention, and presentation; to decide whether to accept or reject any part or the whole of a speech—i. e., to decide (1) whether the speaker is informed or misinformed, (2) whether the speech is logical or illogical, effectively presented or not, and (3) whether the various points made by the speaker are relevant or irrelevant, complete or incomplete

To develop proficiency in selective recall; to be able to remember soon after the end of the listening experience the facts and ideas presented by the speaker that, in one's own judgment, are the most important or significant

To listen not only for the literal communication but also for the mood and intent, the nuances, etc.

To apprehend not only the words of the speaker but also his emphasis and tone of voice and his facial expressions

Speaking

To value one's speaking experiences as a means of self-expression and self-fulfillment

To respect one's audience; to try to interest or entertain (depending upon one's purpose in speaking), as well as to instruct or persuade

To appreciate and admire articulate speaking

To prefer the use of clear, accurate, and compelling language in one's speech

To cultivate an attitude of responsibility for speaking honestly and for shunning mere rhetoric

To understand that an effective formal speech reflects planning, and that this planning includes an analysis of the intended audience, occasion, and purpose, along with the careful selection of points to be made, examples and data to be used for illustration, and careful organizing

To understand the roles of the chairman or moderator and of the participants in symposia and panel discussions

To try to develop a pleasant, flexible, and clearly audible voice

To develop poise in public speaking ; to develop the ability to express one's thoughts and feelings with ease before a group

To stick to the topic

To make a straightforward, sincere presentation

To learn to use unobtrusive gestures, which reflect confidence, sincerity, and self-control

To adjust the volume of one's voice to acoustical conditions ; to vary pitch and rate of speaking for purposes of emphasis ; to phrase and pause effectively

To be able to achieve rapport with one's listeners

To develop the ability to ask pertinent questions as well as to answer them

To be able to explain clearly and sufficiently ; to use examples, when possible, to clarify meanings

To master the art of carrying on intelligent, interesting, and courteous

ous discussions and conversations; to develop a pleasant but unaffected tone of voice

To cultivate articulateness in speaking extemporaneously in panel and group discussions

To develop the ability to lead a discussion as well as to participate in one

To develop the ability to select discussion problems suitable to the maturity and interests of the discussions.

To cultivate the ability to convince and persuade

To take an active, co-operative part in discussions; to respond as well as to listen

To persuade, when expressing a controversial point of view, by presenting evidence and by using reason rather than emotion

To maintain eye contact with one's audience ; to utilize feedback by observing the listeners with respect and understanding

Reading

To enjoy reading

To desire the knowledge, insight, and aesthetic appreciation that one can get from reading many different kinds of books and periodicals

To realize that there are several kinds of reading—among them, browsing, skim reading, and analytic reading

To understand that one reads for many purposes ; to know one's purpose for reading a given piece

To increase speed in reading while maintaining comprehension

To recognize syntactic and typographical cues

To know and be able to use classical prefixes, roots, and suffixes in words obviously built upon them

To be able to apprehend the significance of a work's title

To determine the writer's purpose implicit in the genre and in the mode (satire, romance, comedy, tragedy)

To recognize main ideas, supporting details, sequence of events, and causal relationships; to draw appropriate conclusions; to make inferences; to predict outcomes

To be able to distinguish between denotation and connotation

To keep a log of one's opinions about what one has read

To extend and enrich one's vocabulary through extensive and intensive reading

To keep an individual notebook of newly-learned words with contextual excerpts as well as definitions

To read with a pencil; to cultivate the habit of annotating one's own books, by underscoring what seem to be the important and perhaps memorable passages and by adding in the margins tags and one's own critical reactions

To cultivate intellectual curiosity; to continually consult not only dictionaries but also critical books and essays

(To be curious; to derive satisfaction from searching for and finding information)

To understand that the first and quickest way to locate information in an encyclopedia is by using the index rather than the alphabetical volume-listings

To be able to use tables of contents, indexes, and headings and other typographical cues as aids in reading

To be able to use library tools, such as the card catalogue, periodical indexes; to develop facility in locating information in the library

To develop competence in using the dictionary to find definitions and spellings, determine pronunciations, learn derivations, recognize various shades of meaning and interpret each observation made about a word

To know how to use the standard sources and tools of the researcher: dictionaries; encyclopedias; publishers' trade lists; almanacs; and other reference books

To be able to summarize passages succinctly; to be able to make oral or written précis of what one has read or to outline what one has read

To make constant use of libraries

To be committed to the discovery of truth, insofar as it can be discovered

To respect the right of authors to express opinions different from one's own

To understand the demands and purposes of expository writing (to inform, to explain, to interpret, to explicate, to illuminate, to defend, to attack, to convince)

To develop such skills in critical reading as (1) postponing evaluation until one has thoroughly understood what the author has said, meant, assumed, and implied; (2) evaluating whether the author's writing is informed or misinformed, complete or incomplete, logical or illogical, relevant or irrelevant; (3) deciding how much one can or cannot accept and why, and recognizing which examples are and which are not in support of the thesis; (4) evaluating to what degree the author is successful in what he says and the way he says it

To recognize how the parts of an essay or article or chapter of a book fit within the whole; conversely, to be able to analyze the whole into its parts; to recognize relationships between details and main ideas

To be able to distinguish fact from opinion insofar as this is possible

To be able to find an author's thesis statement

To follow the author's line of argument and support for a thesis

To be able to restate main points accurately

To apprehend emphases, not just by such typographical and punctuational cues as italics and exclamation points, but also by the amount of space allotted to certain points and arguments in relation

to the whole

To recognize meanings of key terms in context and whether the author ever does define his key terms, either explicitly, or implicitly through the context

To be able to read for words, transitions, and specific details

To be able to distinguish between non-emotional and emotional language

To recognize implications, to discern assumptions; to draw inferences

To recognize the author's attitude or bias toward his material

To recognize conventions of content and structure of a newspaper article or a magazine article; to distinguish informative and argumentative articles; to grasp the thesis of an essay with an argumentative edge

To read *critically* only after one has read *structurally* (comprehension of whole to parts; parts to whole) and *interpretively* (discovering connotations); to work toward a more and more automatic blending of these skills

To develop a critical spirit; that is, to be constantly alert to conflicting ideas or points of view, to the difference between denotation and connotation, between fact and opinion, between emotional and non-emotional language

To look for and compare differences of opinion in editorials or articles

Reasoning

To believe that clarity of communication and clarity of reasoning are interdependent

To cultivate a zest for reasoning

To accept the need for providing support and evidence for any assertion or hypothesis

To accept the need for tentative assumptions (working hypotheses) and tentative conclusions

To be receptive to the possibilities, beyond "either/or," of a wide range of hypotheses and alternatives

To understand the difference between a statement of fact and a statement of opinion

To understand that "operational" or "empirical" pertains to whatever can be counted, weighed, measured, or perceived with the senses

To understand the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning

To understand the syllogism and several of its variations

To understand that the syllogism provides a frame for testing whether an argument contains such formal fallacies as the *unwarranted conclusion* and the *undistributed middle*; to understand that two things which share some characteristics in common may not share all characteristics or be identical in all respects

To understand the "if-then" pattern of reasoning

To understand the dialectic pattern of reasoning, which consists of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis

To understand why circular reasoning is undesirable

To understand what *non-sequiturs* are and to realize why they are undesirable; to understand, e.g., that the mere starting of a sentence with "thus" or "therefore" does not guarantee that the sentence logically follows or has any connection with its predecessor

To understand the nature of valid evidence; that it consists of logical and empirical proofs rather than of mere assertion and analogy

To realize that there are usually more alternatives than only the two assumed in an either/or assertion; that there is often a wide range of alternatives

To be able to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion

To be able to distinguish inductive from deductive reasoning; and to use either or both whenever appropriate

To muster sufficient evidence and instances from which to generalize; to organize evidence appropriately

To be able to relate conclusion to evidence; to test conclusions wherever possible

To know how to distinguish evidence from mere assertions, analogies, and personal opinions; to distinguish evidence from statistical

research and consensus among authorities

To be able to detect fallacious reasoning

To be able to spot definitions and shifts in definitions

To be able to recognize loaded language

To recognize the propaganda device of "testimonial" and the more subtle or hidden testimonials or arguments by appeal to authoritative organizations; to recognize the other propaganda devices

To be able to recognize and use assumptions, definitions, hypotheses, proofs, and conclusions

To be able to use the "if-then" pattern of reasoning not only as a mode of persuading in one's speaking and writing but also as a tool for making inferences in one's reading and listening

To be able to recognize *enthymemes*—incomplete syllogism or parts of syllogisms

To know how to define one's terms and to stick to these definitions

To be able to choose appropriate grounds for argument (e.g., everyday evidence, research and statistics, documentary reportage, logical proof)

To know how to make appropriate analogies as devices for illuminating rather than as "proofs"

To think; to search for truth

To cultivate an inquiring and skeptical spirit; to be open-minded

enough to reserve conclusions until the facts are in

To reason before making decisions and taking action

To try to discern writers' and speakers' motives for advocating one or another position or course of action ; to ask why a writer or speaker takes a given position

To challenge popular and long-standing assumptions; to go to the sources of knowledge and opinion; to avoid stereotypes; to entertain new ideas

To change one's conclusions where the evidence indicates that a change is warranted

To qualify and bring up to date, wherever necessary, authorities and sources of evidence so as to avoid relying completely upon arguments from superseded authority

To make gracious concessions to opposing and competing ideas and issues

To avoid vague, ambiguous terms in one's argument

To concentrate on issues rather than on personalities ; to avoid namecalling (*argumentum ad hominem*) to avoid sweeping generalizations or glittering generalities; to qualify and sharpen generalizations so that they are closer to the truth

To avoid over-emphasizing favorable points while suppressing or bypassing the unfavorable

To avoid condescending or talking down

To avoid emotional appeals (e.g., super-patriotism, super-brotherhood, and super-dogoodism)

To assign valid causes and cogent reasons in the explanation of events; to avoid post-hocs

To avoid using circular arguments

To avoid fallacious dilemmas ("either/or" assertions or dichotomized thinking)

To avoid non-sequiturs; to avoid using analogies as proofs

Writing

To want to be articulate, accurate, and truthful in writing

To understand such standard devices of taking notes as outlines, questions and answers, acronyms, and other mnemonics

To be able to write précis or summary of selections: to note a selection's main points and to rephrase these main points, ignoring asides and details

To become adept at taking lecture and reading notes; to avoid trying to take down details but rather to concentrate on main ideas, points, and examples; to gain clues for sorting major points from minor points; to discover one's own best notetaking methods and mnemonics

To enjoy the play of mind needed for composing provocative thesis statements

To take pleasure in asserting, proving, defending, exposing, analyz-

ing, explicating, re-examining, and re-interpreting

To know the forms and techniques of expository writing ; to know that “explaining” or “telling how” is only one kind of exposition, that many an interesting and significant exposition develops an idea to defend an opinion or interprets a literary work

To realize that exposition is usually a kind of communication addressed to a large audience and therefore usually calls for formal usage and diction

To realize that the development of skills in expository writing results from controlled quality, from careful application of principles induced from distinguished models and from intelligent revision

To settle on a purpose for writing a given exposition or even a paragraph—i.e., to inform, to interpret, to argue, to convince, to persuade; to be able to include a clear statement on what is to be said and how it is to be said

To be able to express one’s opinion, in an expository essay

To choose a main idea or subject; to narrow it to a topic; to expand the topic to a thesis statement; to stick to this one thesis statement and to subordinate to it related ideas

To develop facility in organizing any paper as a whole before writing a draft ; to state briefly the point of the paper ; to outline, subordinating minor points to main points

To develop skill in organizing an exposition by making topic or sentence outlines, using such conventions as main headings and sub-headings of one or more levels

To develop skill in constructing short-statement or sentence outlines as a guide to orderly exposition, using such conventions as proposition or thesis-statement, thesis question, main answers, and illustrative supports

To settle on, then to be able to follow, one logical order; or, if one embeds one order within another, to have a good reason for it and to make that reason clear to the reader

To be able to write arresting opening sentences ; to write effective clinchers or closing sentences when appropriate to the genre

To be able to define the way in which one is using given terms; to stick to one's given definition

To be able to cite authorities and quote them

To know how to keynote or briefly summarize a quotation as one of the best ways of introducing it; to avoid unIntroduced quotations

To acknowledge indebtedness for quoted and for borrowed ideas; to use quotation marks around quoted material; to avoid plagiarism

To use certain conventions of footnoting consistently in acknowledging indebtedness for quoted or borrowed ideas

ACTIVITIES

Reading

I. Core Reading Component

This component uses authentic materials and ESL textbooks built around thematic units to develop comprehension skills as well as previewing (or surveying), skimming, and scanning skills to

improve rate and comprehension ; and to develop analytical and critical reading abilities such as understanding new vocabulary in context, recognizing rhetorical organization, and examining a text critically.

1. Skimming and scanning

These activities focus students' attention on vocabulary, grammar, rhetorical structure, author's style, etc.

The activities include skimming for the main ideas and sub-points, or for the thesis statement and supporting arguments and scanning to find answers to comprehension questions.

2. Recognizing rhetorical patterns

Identifying the functions and rhetorical structures of a passage is useful not only for writing skills but for reading comprehension as well. Students should be able to identify such typical academic functions or rhetorical devices as defining, observing, illustrating, predicting, classifying, describing, and generalizing at both the sentence and paragraph level.

They should also be able to identify the function of each paragraph as it relates to the entire passage, for example, a paragraph or paragraphs which present background information, introduction, thesis statement, examples, counter-arguments, sub-points, conclusion, etc.

3. Critical reading

Fraid Dubin and others (1986: 119) suggest as follows: "Critical or interpretive reading skills are essential for academic students. . . . The successful student needs to be able to:

- 1) recognize the author's purpose
- 2) recognize the author's point of view
- 3) make inferences
- 4) draw conclusions
- 5) separate fact from opinion
- 6) separate own opinion from text"

Students also must learn to question, evaluate, and criticize as part of the reading process.

After reading a passage, students should learn to synthesize the information, which will prove crucial for writing assignments as well as for participation in class discussions, panel discussions, and debates.

II. Extensive reading component

This component provides students with additional readings and encourages more reading on their own.

Reading Activities

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Previewing

The content of the core reading will be first presented in a lecture.

- Listening and note-taking
- Discussion

2. Vocabulary in Context

Some of the major types of contextual clues are:

- Cause and effect
- Synonyms
- Antonyms
- Functional definitions
- Description
- Examples
- Use of "Be"
- Clause markers
- Appositives
- Parentheses

DURING-READING ACTIVITIES

Text Highlighting or Marking

After reading the passage through once without stopping or

using their dictionaries for unfamiliar words, students should also underline the main idea of each paragraph.

Students need to underline or circle important information.

Besides, they should write comments in the text margins for reactions, definitions, or summaries. They should also take notes on a separate sheet of paper or to write a summary after reading.

Vocabulary in Context

Students should look for clues within the text to determine the meaning of new vocabulary items.

Rhetorical Pattern Recognition

Students should try identify main ideas or controlling ideas and supporting details as well as rhetorical forms such as description, exposition, etc. English patterns of organization need to be taught for reading skills development as well.

Controlling Idea

Key words or phrases

Supporting idea(s) or detail(s)

Implied controlling idea

Understanding General Organizational Patterns

Deduction

Induction (Final Placement)

Deduction/Restatement

Textual Coherence through:

Synonyms

Repetition

Substitutes

The Definite Article

Exemplification Signals

Contrast Signals

Comparison Signals

Enumeration Signals
Chronology Signals
Causality Signals
Spatial Signals
Purpose Signals
(Grammatical) Parallelism
Concessive Contrast
Recognizing Major Thought Relationships
Exemplification
Contrast
 Explicit Contrast
 Implicit Contrast
Comparison
 Explicit Comparison
 Analogy
 Implicit Comparison
Enumeration
 Explicit Enumeration
 Implicit Enumeration
Chronology or Chronological Order
 Explicit
 Implicit
Process
Causality
 Explicit
 Implicit

A Special Case: Introductions
 Deductive Introductions
 Nondeductive Introductions

Coping with a Longer Text

 Setting an overview of a textbook's most general
 controlling ideas and their interrelationship

Thought structure versus physical structure

To read the preface

To skim the table of contents

The formal outline

To construct a (general) outline of the book

Critical Reading Activities

Critical reading activities should and will encourage students to make inferences, draw conclusions and separate fact from opinion.

Writing

Activities

Writing paragraphs

Paraphrasing (including pre-paraphrasing)

Alternating sentence linkers (comparison and contrast)

Alternating active and passive verb forms

Alternating word forms

Alternating clause/phrase structures

Of causality

Of chronology

Of reporting verbs

Using synonymous words or expressions

Taking notes

Summary writing

What to include in a summary

1. the controlling idea
2. the major thought relationships used by the au-

thor to provide support

3. any important definitions of key terms
4. an indication of the author's attitude toward the subject matter

Special considerations

The first sentence

Summary length

When not to paraphrase: specialized vocabulary

Author's attitude

Objectivity

Short paper (3—5 pages in length) writing

Controlling idea

Writing an introduction

Establishing the context

Providing further focus

The controlling idea

Providing evidence

Assembling the data

Deciding the plan

Concluding the paper

Restating/Summarizing

Drawing additional implications

Using a quotation

Writing an outline

Using quotation as documentation

Formal footnoting

Capitalization and punctuation in titles

Citation within a text

Punctuating quotations

A note on plagiarism

Listing references

Proofreading academic papers

Writing definitions

Elements of definition

Formal definitions

Extended definitions

Stipulated definitions

Negative (Inverse) definitions

Note-taking

Writing an outline

Writing a critical review

Reviewing an article

The introduction

Establishing the context

Clarification of the subject

The summary

The critique

The criteria for critical commentary

Establishing the critical point of view

Reporting verbs

a. Neutral verbs of restatement

b. Verbs of restatement with a + or - connotation

c. Verbs of opinion

d. Verbs of uncertainty

The use of tense

The use of quotation

Writing a research paper

Choosing and limiting a topic

Topics to avoid

Interest level

Narrowing the topic
Proposing a working thesis
Compiling a working bibliography
The card catalog
 1. A title card
 2. An author card
 3. A subject card
Periodical indexes
Taking notes/Developing a working outline
Reading/Note-taking: The introduction
Reading/Note-taking: Evidence
 A direct quote note card
 a paraphrase not card

Assembling the rough draft
 Coordinating note cards and outline
Writing the paper
 Showing clear thought relationships
 Coherence devices
 Crediting sources (Footnotng)
 Preparing the bibliography
Writing the final draft
Revising/Proofreading the paper

Culture Studies

As to the thematic dimension of the course, methods and techniques of approaching culture to be taken up in the the process of instruction will be selected from the following list, which is suggested by Louise Damen (1987: 287—89), according to the students' interests and abilities:

1. Area studies, which should be structured so that the students must uncover the information by means of using library resources,

interviewing informants, making surveys, gathering important information, compiling reports, or searching through culture-specific information.

2. Case studies or actual problem-solving, in which students are asked to analyze given cases, identify basic issues, identify basic issues, and suggest solutions.

3. Contrastive approach, which involves the setting up and systematic examination of the contrastive qualities of more than one cultural groups, providing a foundation for cross-cultural comparison and contrast.

4. Culture discovery, which fosters the development of exploratory skills and the searching out of information about the target culture. The main value of this approach is the active involvement of the student in the learning episode.

5. Language and culture connections units, which involve the use of films, television programs, or other visual devices that provide information, generate questions, and develop cultural hypotheses.

6. Readings

This technique involves the use of background information from articles, novels, poems, newspapers, and other written sources which may give insight into culture specific-patterns.

7. Group discussion

8. Informant interviewing

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