



Balance in language teaching
LTP TESOL Certificate
TESOL 11

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How well are our courses presenting the language students need?

- Research suggests an average language course:
- does not systematically recycle the grammatical forms outside the presentation unit / lesson
 - has an almost random vocabulary selection without much regard to frequency or usefulness (mostly based on topic)
 - rarely, if ever, recycles taught words either later in the unit, the book, or the series
 - provide little additional practice in review units or workbooks
 - has an overwhelming focus on new material in each lesson

Questions

Make a list of say 20 activities you (or your students) most often do in your classes.

e.g. explain things on the board, use the course book, discussions, pronunciation practice, read aloud,

Compare with a partner

The Balanced Curriculum

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching • Dictionary work • Studying from a grammar book • Intensive reading • Language awareness activities • Conscious word learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled language production activities. • Language and pronunciation drills • Gap fill exercises • Memorized dialogs • Sentence completion tasks • Tests
Fluency Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive reading • Extensive listening • Watching movies • Browsing the Internet • Listening to the radio or music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Free' language production activities. • Casual conversations • Debates and discussions • Email, and online chat • Diary writing • Essays

The Balanced Curriculum

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build language knowledge and get control over it Develop learning strategies 	
Fluency Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a sense of how the language works Build autonomy Build pragmatic and cultural knowledge 	

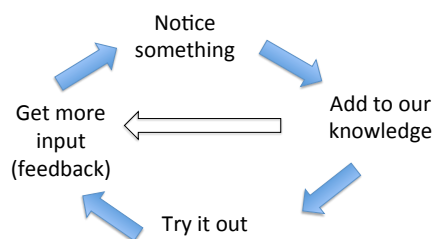
Balance in Language Teaching

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides new knowledge <i>about</i> language features -raises awareness of how the language works - raises awareness of learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -gives practice in checking whether something is known - allows learners to actively construct language - focuses on accurate control over language features
Fluency Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners get a feel for how the language works - consolidates the discretely learned language features - allows learners to meet huge amounts of text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gives real time opportunities to experiment with language use - gives feedback on the success of language use - builds fluency of language production

The **Balanced** Curriculum

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Box 1 - Formal Learning Building knowledge about the language Awareness raising	Box 2 - "Getting Control" Linking knowledge Accuracy focus
	Box 3 - Fluency Input Networking knowledge Comprehending input fluently	Box 4 - Fluency Output Experimenting with language Developing fluency

The Cycle of Learning



The Balanced Curriculum and the Cycle of Learning

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Notice things	Try it out (controlled)
	Add to your knowledge	
	Get more input	
Fluency Practice	Notice things	Try it out (free production)
	Add to your knowledge	
	Get more input	

What happens if they **don't** do these things?

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	- Fewer chances to notice new things - Hard to add new knowledge	- Can't check the accuracy of what they learnt
Fluency Practice	- Not enough input - Few chances to develop automatic processing - Can't develop fluent eye movements	- Can't experiment with their knowledge fluently

Beginner (young learners)

Aim: basic language building

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Phonics Matching sounds to words Flashcards Games Some basic word order	Read and repeat Controlled production
	Listening to VERY easy stories Read along with the teacher	Read aloud

Lower Elementary

Aim: Consolidation of the basics

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Alphabet Flashcards Word study Some grammar Study skills	Spelling Writing simple sentences Fun tests to check understanding Simple memorized dialogs
	Reading very simple stories Listening to simple stories	Read aloud

Elementary / Lower Intermediate

Aim: Initial fluency

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Word building Grammar Intensive reading Intensive listening	Complex spellings Some tests Controlled production Role-plays
Fluency Practice	Extensive reading Extensive listening Speed reading	Topic controlled conversation Free chatting Journals / diaries Emails

Intermediate

Aim: Fluency and speed

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Intensive reading Collocation Colligation Lexical chunks	Control over complex discourse markers Cohesion, coherence
Fluency Practice	Extensive Reading Extensive Listening Simple movies Simple songs Speed reading	Debates Essays Pushed output Speeches Discussions

Advanced

Aim: High level language control

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Intensive reading Colligations Idioms etc. High level lexis	Controlled production
Fluency Practice	Native texts Native movies Songs Radio, TV shows	Debates Formal Essays Pushed output Complex discourse

The balance of teacher roles

knowledge source	guide
provider of accurate models	resource
controller	observer
elicitor	participant
tester	facilitator
feedback organizer	manager
prompter	goal setter
judge / assessor	observer
	counsellor

The balance of teacher roles

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	knowledge source provider of accurate models controller elicitor	tester feedback organizer prompter judge
Fluency Practice	counsellor guide resource observer	assessor participant facilitator manager goal setter observer

True or false?

The balanced curriculum tells us *what* needs to be done.
The balanced curriculum suggests activities be done in the order, Box 1, 2, 3 and then 4.
The balanced curriculum should replace your curriculum.
Students can easily understand the balanced curriculum.
TBC is an ideational framework for teachers planning curriculums and lessons.

The components of a language focus lesson

Engagement – get the students interested in the topic
 Contextualization – embed the forms within a larger context
 Check understanding – of the context
 Presentation – to notice the new form and its behaviour
 Assess – to assess they understand the new form
 Activate – controlled production
 Integrate and personalize – freer production and personalization

Engagement

Aim:
 To motivate students to become interested in the topic
 To prime them for the topic reading / listening

Example activities:
 Discussions of the topic – general or personal
 Watching a short video about the topic
 Researching the topic before class
 Brainstorm vocabulary that might be used
 Guess information that might occur in the text
 Make questions you want answered in the text

Contextualization

Aim:
 To embed the target language within a context so students
 can be primed to notice it
 To create (help them notice) a gap in their knowledge
 To raise interest in the topic

Example activities:
 A reading text containing the target
 A listening text containing the target

Checking understanding

Aim:
 To ensure the context within which the target form is
 embedded is understood
 'Comprehension first'

Example activities:
 Comprehension questions
 Give a short summary of the text
 Check with a partner
 True and false questions
 etc.

Presentation

Aim:
 To ensure students notice both
 a) the form and
 b) the use

Example activities:
 Teachers explain the rules / behavior of the past simple tense
 Teachers elicit the rule from the students
 Teach guides the students to discover the rule
 Students read the rule from their textbook

Intentional / Incidental

Intentional
 - aim to directly teach / learn something
 - e.g. textbook presentation, dictionary use, wordcards

Incidental
 - aim to hope they pick up or notice the target from exposure
 - students are doing something else (e.g. reading a passage
 for meaning) but notice something new as they do it.

How are we going to teach what?

Discrete knowledge	'Fuzzy' knowledge
Individual words Important lexical phrases False friends Loanwords Important collocations and colligations Basic grammatical patterns Important phrasal verbs, idioms etc. Word, phrase and sentence level awareness	Register, Genre ... Pragmatic knowledge Restrictions on use Most collocations and collocations A 'sense' of a word's meaning and use A 'sense' of how grammar fits with lexis - the tenses, articles etc. Discourse level awareness
→ Intentional learning e.g word cards	→ Incidental learning e.g extensive reading
Selection issues – what do we teach? Sequence issues – in what order? Scaffolding issues – how do we consolidate previous learning? Presentation issues – what method?	Rough grading Ensuring recycling Engaging text Matching input text to intentionally learnt materials

Deductive vs Inductive presentation

Deductive – 'telling'

telling / explaining the rule e.g. on the board, in a text or handout

Inductive presentation – 'discover the rule'

A: What are your plans for the weekend?

B: I'm meeting my brother on Friday at 7, and then I'm playing tennis in Yokohama on Saturday. And you?

A: I'm not sure maybe I'll stay home.

Advantages of Deductive

Potentially fast, effective and more direct

Controlled and planned

Disadvantages of Deductive

Little cognitive effort for students

Not always sure everyone understood

More fragile knowledge

Advantages of Inductive

More cognitive effort – better learning

Better chance for longer learning

Disadvantages of Inductive

Takes time

Harder to prepare / plan for teacher

Assess

Aim:

To assess in controlled, decontextualized ways whether the students have understood the rule for both

a) the form and

b) the use of the target

No aim to be communicative

Example activities:

A short quiz

Gap-fill activities

Complete the sentence

Sentence transformation

Activate

Aim:

To move the discrete knowledge from controlled receptive understanding to controlled productive use

Example activities:

Embed the form in a role-play situation leading to extension

Integrate and personalize

Aim:

To get learners to express themselves (rather than just communicate) while using the new target

Example activities:

Discussion of the topic with questions aimed at eliciting the target language

Reformulation into a different skill (e.g. extend a roleplay to where students create new situations around the target language)

How do they fit the Balanced Curriculum?

Engagement – get the students interested in the topic

Contextualization – embed the forms within a larger context

Check understanding – of the context

Presentation – to notice the new form and its behaviour

Assess – to assess they understand the new form

Activate – controlled production

Integrate and personalize – freer production and personalization

How do they fit the Balanced Curriculum?

	Receptive	Productive
Language Study	Contextualization	Check understanding of the text
	Presentation	Assess understanding of the form Controlled activation
Fluency Practice	Engagement Contextualization	Integration and personalization

Methods

Grammar-translation

Audio-visual

Direct method

Structural method

Reading method

Comprehension approach

Situational-Functional approach

Communicative language teaching

Lexical approach

The problems with methods and approaches

They tend to :

- emphasize the one-size-fits-all mentality
- require teachers and learners to act in specific predetermined ways
- be low on flexibility
- promote the idea there is a 'right' and a 'wrong' way to teach
- create gurus and a small publishing industry to promote the method

Post-Method

We are now in a post method era. This approach suggests

- there is no one best method
- all methods have their strengths and weaknesses
- we can be eclectic (borrow aspects of each method as needed)
- but we must have some underlying principles to guide us

Aspects of a post-method approach

Maximize learning opportunities

- teaching as a process of creating and using learning opportunities, a process in which teachers strike a balance between their role as managers of teaching acts and their role as mediators of learning acts

Minimize perceptual mismatches

- emphasize the recognition of potential perceptual mismatches between intentions and interpretations of the learner, the teacher, and the teacher educator

Facilitate negotiated interaction

- meaningful learner-learner, learner-teacher classroom interaction in which learners are entitled and encouraged to initiate topic and talk, not just react and respond (i.e. express themselves not just communicate)

Aspects of a post-method approach II

Promote learner autonomy

- helping learners learn how to learn, equipping them with the means necessary to self-direct and self-monitor their own learning

Foster language awareness

- drawing learners' attention to the formal and functional properties of their L2 in order to increase the degree of explicit-ness required to promote L2 learning;•

Activate intuitive heuristics

- providing rich textual data so that learners can infer and internalize underlying rules governing grammatical usage and communicative use

Contextualize linguistic input:

- highlighting how language usage and use are shaped by linguistic, extralinguistic, situational, and extra situational contexts

Aspects of a post-method approach III

Integrate language skills:

- holistically integrating language skills traditionally separated and sequenced as listening, speaking, reading, and writing

Ensure social relevance

- being sensitive to the societal, political, economic, and educational environment in which L2 learning and teaching take place; and Understanding post method pedagogy

Raise cultural consciousness

- emphasizing the need to treat learners as cultural informants so that they are encouraged to engage in a process of classroom participation that puts a premium on their power/knowledge

Dimensions of Competence

Linguistic competence

grammar / syntactic

lexis / semantic

phonology

morphology

Pragmatic competence

genre, register

coherence , cohesion

the way the language promotes reflects power, relationships and the world

Factors affecting acquisition

Learner internal factors

Individual – age, anxiety

Affective – motivation, attitude

Tactical – strategy use

Knowledge – language knowledge

– metalanguage knowledge

Negotiation – interactive ability

– interpretative ability

Environmental – social and educational contexts

Learner external factors