


What is the role of curriculum in language teaching?

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Curriculum for language teaching

- Curriculum can be a vital part of language teaching
 - Focus
 - Goals
 - Content
 - Methods
 - Assessment



Curriculum for language teaching

- Developing a curriculum is no easy task!
 - Research concerning needs of students
 - Experimentation
 - Group work – using the “grass root”

Acquisition of a language

- Acquisition of a language is affected by a number of factors, including:
 - Exposure to the target language by native speakers
 - Willingness of student to experiment with the target language
 - Personal confidence
 - Learning ability
 - The amount of vocabulary student knows

The curriculum of Icelandic for foreigners

- Published by the ministry of Education in September 2008
- 240 class hours
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (based on)

The curriculum of Icelandic for foreigners

- In the curriculum clauses about:
 - The role of the curriculum
 - Proficiency skills
 - Organization of courses
 - Assessment
 - Testimony of progress (attestations)
 - Flexibility
 - Learning difficulties / special needs

The role of the curriculum

- Guide for teaching of Icelandic
- One aim is to make assessment and coordination easier
 - Students can move between schools and regions and be sure that there are same demands made of them everywhere

The role of the curriculum

- Teaching Icelandic – make students active participants in our democratic society.
- Emphasis on personal, social and professional competence.
- Diversity among students
 - Language as well as cultural competence training – social well being
- Student responsible for his/her performance

Proficiency skills

- Proficiency skills: Reading, writing, listening, speaking (communication and narration).
- Main emphasis on understanding and speaking.
- Focus is not on grammatical aspects.
 - Supposed to be intertwined with other skills.

Organization of studies

- Divided into four 60 hours courses
- Each course has clear, measurable, final goals, + proficiency goals
 - Directive, not exhaustive
 - Integral teaching – encourage integration

Assessment

- 240 hours equivalent of level A1-A2
- Supposed to be directive for the student
- “Acceptable” results gives the right to continue on to the next level
- Teachers encouraged to use diverse assessment methods

Testimony of progress

- For the student
 - Language pass
 - Self evaluation check lists
 - Confirmation of attendance + hours
 - Confirmation of passing the course
 - Portfolio for students' assignments

Flexibility/learning difficulties

- Illiteracy
 - 120 hours to learn how to read
 - Continue with first two courses
- Tonal languages – pronunciation difficulties
- Individual learning plans
- Start at higher level / skip levels

Final goals of 240 hours

- The student should be able to:
 - Express herself in daily life, at school, at work and privately
 - Cope in unexpected circumstances
 - Have enough vocabulary to participate in conversation about familiar subjects
 - Read a short text in simple Icelandic about a familiar subject
 - Write a short text in simple Icelandic about a familiar subject
 - Have basic understanding of the most common traditions of Icelandic society
 - Understand the main points, when listening to radio or watching tv when the topic is familiar subjects

Implementation – does a curriculum change anything?

- Curriculum in Icelandic for foreigners makes the teaching more visible
- Obligates governments, school administrators, teachers.
 - to be professional, use the framework for reference, develop teaching methods, use diverse methods, use diverse subjects, need for teachers' training recognized

Implementation

- Implementation
 - takes time
 - cooperation between teachers
 - willingness of administrators of schools to invest in development

Should a curriculum include....

- Unit topics and themes?
- Lists of textbooks, pre-packaged materials, Web sites, teacher books and magazines?
- Sample needs assessments?
- Lesson plans?
- Activity ideas?

Should a curriculum include...

- Descriptions of proficiency levels?
- Correlations to internal and external benchmarks?
- Samples of formative and summative assessments?
- Recommended teaching approaches, methodologies, or strategies?

A curriculum?

- Not a suit but a wardrobe full of different outfits – one size does not fit all!

Discussion topics

- **Discussion topics**
- I also have some discussion topics that we might discuss if you are interested
- What is the role of the teacher vs schools and the ministry in implementation?
- Assessment – who is it for? Authorities or the students themselves?
- How detailed should the goals in a curriculum be?
- ISP – Icelandic in the workplace – the same curriculum or a different one?
- Should a curriculum include...