

CHAPTER 3

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3.1 Introduction:

Curriculum and Syllabus design is an integral part of teaching-learning process. Curriculum design is planning of the course about what to teach, why to teach, and how to teach. The curriculum and the syllabus is the link between teachers and students, the way to communicate the goals of teaching and learning. Without the syllabus, we are in a vacuum, without having the knowledge what is to be imparted to the students, and what are the goals to be attained by them.

However, ‘curriculum’ and ‘syllabus’ are the terms used interchangeably in the informal situation; there is a distinct difference between the two. According to Robertson, “curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs...”(1971:564). The syllabus on the other hand, is “a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself” (Shaw) Hutchinson and Waters define syllabus as follows: “At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects of language and linguistic performance.”²⁴

However, a syllabus can also be seen as a "summary of the content to which learners will be exposed"²⁵. Of course, curriculum design ultimately depends on the purpose of the institution which provides the curricula. Along with time, position and situation, curriculum and syllabus keeps on changing and this change is most expected to cope with the present need.

²⁴ Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80)

²⁵ Yalden. (1987: 87)

The syllabus is prescribed keeping in mind the need of the learners, the objective of learning, the nature of learning as well as the teaching and learning conditions. The local conditions and constraints may affect and influence in the designing of the syllabus.

3.2 The description of the course:

The schools of Assam can be broadly divided into two broad divisions; the first group follows the government education pattern designed by Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, while the other follow their own curriculum designed by their affiliating boards. The first group of schools consists of both government and private schools while the second group consists of private schools only. In both the type of schools, now a days English is treated as a compulsory subject right from the beginning. Though the different schools adopt different syllabuses depending on their affiliating board, at the high school level, i.e. at class IX and X, all vernacular medium schools as well as English medium schools which are affiliated by Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) have to follow the same syllabus, therefore the same textbook. In the High School Leaving Certificate Examination (HSLC) too all the students of both English and vernacular medium have to answer the same question paper.

All the Manipuri medium school of Silchar sub-division is affiliated by Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) and the syllabus of 10th standard is also prepared by the same. English is introduced in the syllabus of govt. schools from class I. A student has minimum 8-9 years instruction in the subject before he is introduced the class X syllabus.

3.2.1 The present English syllabus of class X (2010-2013):

The present syllabus of English for 10th standard is introduced in the year 2010. The syllabus designed for class x is a one year course where the material provided is a main textbook named 'NEW ENGLISH READER'. The communicative approach has been adopted while preparing the syllabus, so that students are equipped with the best knowledge of the language, which they can

use in their real life situation. The syllabus of class x itself is an effort to give maximum knowledge of the language coming out of the barrier of content study.

3.2.2 The course materials:

The course materials provided for class X by SEBA board is named as ‘NEW ENGLISH READER’. The textbook has been designed to enable the students of this level to attain a proficiency in the language so that they can develop an ability to use language both orally and in writing appropriate to a context or situation. The course introduces the students to a variety of reading texts for developing both intensive and extensive reading skills, and to provide rich reading experience. A detailed discussion of the English syllabus for class X of SEBA affiliated schools of Assam are mentioned below:

Text book: *NEW ENGLISH READER* (for class X)

Prepared by: Board of Secondary Education Assam

Published by: The Assam State Textbook Production and Publication Corporation limited Guwahati

First Publication: 2009

Table 3.1 English syllabus for class X

	Unit Sub-unit / lesson	Marks
1. Prose	Father’s help	10
	Earthquake in Assam	
	Preparation for England	10
	A child speaks	
	The ant community	5
2. Poetry	Lucy poems	8
	In the bazaars of Hyderabad	7
	The light of other days	

	The professor	
3. Extensive Reading	The bishop's candlesticks	6
	The cabuliwallah	4
4. Grammar	Determiners, Tense Forms, Direct and Indirect Narration, Vocabulary, Voice, Sentence Correction, Synthesis of Sentences, Sentence patterns, Use of Prepositions, Verb phrases.	20
5. Composition	a. Translation/ Substance writing of an unseen prose passage or poem	8
	b. Essay writing/Story writing	6
	c. Letter writing- formal or informal/Report writing	6
6. Oral English	A morning walk Weak forms An excursion: A dialogue Minimum pair drills (1) Telephone skills (1) Minimum pair drills (2) Telephone skills (2) Practicesheet: Short responses	10
	total	100

3.2.3 Objective of the syllabus: The syllabus of English for class X is prepared keeping in mind certain objectives which the students are expected to learn after the completion of the course.

i) Teaching Reading

The course introduces learners to a variety of reading texts to provide a rich reading experience:

- A story by R.K. Narayanan to exhibit a deep understanding of child psychology
- Experiences by Ruskin Bond to make them acknowledge the supremacy of nature,
- An extract from Gandhiji's autobiography to provide the knowledge of Gandhiji's life,
- Environmental awareness by Severn Suzuki,
- Natural life by C.R.Rutley to make them admire the organized way of life parallel to the community life of man

The course also includes a beautiful selection of all time favorite poems like 'Lucy poems,' 'In the bazaars of Hyderabad', 'The light of other days' and 'The professor' by Wordsworth, Sarujini Naidu, Thomas Moore and Nissim Ezekiel respectively. The lessons provide a rich fare of reading experiences to the students for the development of different language skills. The poems that are given mainly aim at providing enjoyment and appreciation of the language.

The course also included two stories for extensive reading 'The bishop's candlesticks' by Norman Mckinnell and 'The cabuliwallah' by Rabindranath Tagore i.e. the reading texts included in the reader are meant for both intensive and extensive reading skill development. Intensive reading is generally defined as reading for information. It involves an understanding of the main idea as well as the specific details related to the text i.e. global and local comprehension. A global comprehension question requires learners to demonstrate their

understanding of a passage as a whole or large part of it. Thus global comprehension generally focuses on the main gist or idea of a passage or a poem.

A local comprehension question requires learners to show how well they have understood specific details that have either been mentioned explicitly in the passage or that need to be inferred from information available in the passage.

Extensive reading means reading in quantity in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure and to encourage a liking for reading. In extensive reading comprehension questions are main tool to find out how well the learners have understood the text.

- The course content in the text has been selected keeping in mind the following objectives i.e. by the end of this course, a student is expected to,
- Read in a considerable speed depending on the purpose of reading.
- Identify and analyze the main points of a text.
- Develop the power of skimming so that going through the reading material; they can get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the intention of the author.
- Develop the power of scanning so that he is able to locate specific information and find out what he is looking for.
- Read extensively for pleasure.
- Read with correct pronunciation with proper stress and intonation pattern.

ii) Teaching Writing:

Writing at this level stresses upon the learners ability to work in the following way i.e. by the end of this course, a student should be able to,

- Express his ideas clearly without grammatical errors.
- Organize a topic with proper introduction and conclusion.
- Use an appropriate style and format while writing a story, letter (formal and informal), report, paragraph, substance etc.

- Expand notes into a piece of writing.
- Reduce a given text into a summary.
- Recode information from one text to another (advertisement to report, diary entry to letter etc.)

iii) Teaching Speaking:

The textbook for class X also includes a section entitled ‘Oral English’ with the objective of developing in students the skill of speaking English so that they can participate effectively in oral communication in real life situation. It is hoped that oral English section of the book will address adequately the development of communication skills and also enable them to acquire the strategies for interpersonal communication in English. It is expected that by the end of this course, a student should be able to

- Speak intelligibly with proper use of stress and intonation.
- Convey a message in person or over phone.
- Narrate incidents or events in a logical sequence.
- Take part in a discussion and express ideas clearly.
- Express and argue a point of view clearly and effectively.

iv) Teaching Listening:

As speaking presupposes listening the lessons attempt to enhance the learners’ listening skill. The course requires learner centred activities having frequent and lively interaction among teachers and students in pair work and group work activities. The teacher will act as a facilitator to stimulate learners’ responses. There should be ample scope for the students for listening before the actual production of words and sentences by them. Audio visual aids providing speech practice used as an when practicable with ample focus on presentation of the teacher and active participation of the learner.

There should also be an evaluation of performance of the learners at the end of each lesson through individual oral performance which could include an ability to

form meaningful utterances in an appropriate context besides demonstrating an ability to-

- Listen to a talk or conversation and understand the topic
- Understand and interpret a conveyed message.
- Distinguish the relevant information from irrelevant one.
- Understand and respond appropriately to the to the directive language (advice, instruction, order, request, warning etc.)
- Listen for information for specific purpose e.g. radio broadcasting, announcements, commentaries, news reading etc.

v) **Teaching Grammar:** By the end of the course it is expected that students will be able to use the following accurately and appropriately in context.

---Verb forms:

Tenses:

Present/Past forms

Simple/Continuous forms

Perfect forms

Future time reference

---Modals

---Active and Passive voice

---Use of Determiners

---Direct and Indirect narration

---Sentence patterns

---Correction of Sentences

---Synthesis of Sentences

---Verb phrases

---Use of Prepositions

---Phrases and idioms

---Noun and verb forms of a word

vi) Teaching to appreciate Literature: By the end of the course, a student is expected to be able to understand, analyze, appreciate and respond to a literary text.

---able to understand the plot/theme/story as emerging through the main events and progression of the incidents.

---able to understand the feelings and emotions of the poet/writer.

---able to understand the character portrayal as revealed through the description of main events, speech and dialogue

---Background setting as revealed through the story.

---Understand the rhyme and rhythm of poetry as well as other rhetorical devices like simile, metaphor, pun, alliteration etc.

The objective itself proclaims how the syllabus is designed to fulfill the students' present and future need so that they are able to use the knowledge in their real life situation. If the objectives are achieved successfully, it will not only make them an independent learner, but also equip them with knowledge to face the world with better understanding.

3.2.4 Homework and Assignments:

Throughout the year, the students are engaged in various tasks and activities like homework, projects and assignments. The students' understanding is tasted through written activities like class work or homework, which are made them to

do after each lesson. Except these, they are also given projects and assignments, which are guided by either the teacher or free kind of task. The teacher gives them some information on a topic and students are required to write a letter, report, essay or compose a story on it. Sometimes they are given to collect an information by themselves are asked to prepare some projects and assignment on it. There is no fixed number of assignments and projects given to them, but it ranges from 2-5 from each unit of the syllabus.

3.2.5 The Examination scheme:

In order to assess the students' level of achievement, a continuous assessment policy is adopted along with the formal examination. In the class tests, understanding of the students is tasted which is conducted after each lesson. Unit Tests, which are conducted twice in a year, follow class test and each unit test carries 25 marks. Again Half Yearly exam is conducted in the middle of the academic year. As after the completion of the course, students have to face board exams, so their knowledge is filtered through a selection text to be held before the Final Board Exam.

The Final Board Examination is held after the completion of the course at the end of the academic year. The final examination is conducted by the board itself and a certificate is issued after successful completion of the course.

The format of distribution of marks for final examination paper is as follows-

Table 3.2 Distribution of marks for final examination paper

Section	Unit	Marks
Section A	Prose	25
Section B	Poetry	15
Section C	Extensive reading	10

Section D	Grammar	20
Section E	Composition	20
Section F	Oral English	10
	total	100

3.2.6 The Qualifying Criteria: The examination that is held after the completion of the course is known as H.S.L.C. (High School Leaving Certificate) Examination. The total marks allotted in this Exam for each subject is 100. In English subject, 90 marks is written exam and rest 10 is marks is oral which evaluated separately. Out of total 100 marks, a student has to secure 30 or more to be qualified in the subject.

3.3 The Previous Syllabus and the Changes Made:

The syllabus prescribed until 2009 spread over two academic years. The syllabus of class ix and x was prescribed in a single textbook without any clear-cut distinction. The main objectives of the course were:

1. Enlarging the vocabulary of the students so that they can understand a piece of work in the language.
2. Developing the skills like reading with proper apprehension.
3. Developing the written skills so that students can write independently and accurately.
4. Creating an interest to read for pleasure.

Considering the objectives, we can realize that the previous syllabus concerned mainly on two skills reading and writing. The listening and speaking skills were not given so much importance. The textbook that was prescribed for the course

were LEARNERS' ENGLISH where the course for both class IX and X was included.

The examination was held after one year and questions are asked which were content based items and grammar.

3.4 Comparison between the Two Syllabuses:

A comparison between the two syllabuses makes it clear that the new syllabus is more effective for the students as it covers the fulfillment of all the four required skills of learning while the old syllabus emphasized only upon the reading and writing skills. The coverage of the four language skills has made it more systematic and affective.

The old syllabus was teacher centric, who was of prime importance in the whole teaching learning process. Students had to follow only the teachers' instructions and act accordingly. Students were the passive participants and teachers used to explain the contents in the textbook making the students only learn and write in the exam. However, the new syllabus is learner centric and activity based where the students have to take active part in the teaching learning process. The students have to take part in oral practices and drilling as well as group discussion etc that make them actively involved without simply depending on the teachers.

The earlier syllabus was exam centric. Teachers taught and students learnt just to pass out the exams. Whatever little language learning was possible, that was only incidental. But the recent syllabus helps them in language learning.

3.5 The Present Syllabus: An Analysis

The data elicited from the survey especially from teachers' questionnaire provide us various information of the syllabus. It is found that a large number of teachers believe that all the objectives of teaching English cannot be achieved by the present syllabus. 80% of the teachers believe that speaking and listening skills are not given so much importance in the present syllabus where the exercises

given in the text book also can develop only reading and writing skills. 90% of the teachers believe that it is not possible to achieve the objectives as they are confused between completing the syllabus and focusing on skill development.

3.3 Percentage response of the teachers about objectives of the present syllabus

objectives of the syllabus	Total no of teachers	Total response	percentage
To develop and integrate four language skills	10	8	80%
To give the students the opportunity to express their ideas	10	1	10%
To enable the students to face real life situations	10	1	10%
To make them appreciate the language	10	nil	0%

Developing and integrating four language skills is the prime objective of the present syllabus which is well reflected in the responses of the teachers where 80% of them reply in favour of it. Most of the teachers believe that if this aim is not fulfilled the other objectives like facing the real life situation or developing inner quality of the students etc are not fulfilled. They won't be able to appreciate the language nor even be able to communicate in the target language.

Table 3.4 Objectives of the syllabus achieved in real sense

objectives achieved in real sense	Total no of teachers	Total response	percentage
Only reading and writing	10	8	80%
reading writing and speaking	10	nil	0%
Listening and speaking	10	nil	0%
All the four language skills	10	2	20%

The objectives that could be achieved in real sense present an astonishingly dismal scenario where 80% of the teachers say that only two skills reading and writing are achieved in real sense when other two prime skills like listening and speaking are generally neglected as they are not tested through examination. The students get the scope of listening only in the classroom which is not at all sufficient for them. Though an oral English section is introduced in the syllabus but it is not given proper emphasis.

Table 3.5 Teachers response about non achieving all the objectives of the syllabus

Reasons for not achieving the objectives	Total no of teachers	Total response	percentage
Time consuming lessons and activities	10	nil	0%
Importance given on completion of syllabus rather than focusing on skill development	10	9	90%
Lack of cooperation of the students	10	nil	0%
Difficult syllabus	10	1	10%

About 90% of the teachers responded that while teaching English importance given on completion of syllabus rather than focusing on skill development. This implies that their teaching is purely examination oriented and teachers are not so much concerned about teaching students all the skills as much as completing the syllabus.

Table 3.6 Teachers response about the merits of the syllabus

Merits of the syllabus	Total no of teachers	Total response	percentage
Useful for real life situation	10	2	20%
informative	10	4	40%
Develops all the skills to some extent	10	1	10%
All the above	10	3	30%

Teachers' report shows that the syllabus has the characteristics to develop the skills among the students. It is the teachers who need to use it properly and make the teaching learning process an effective one.

Table 3.7 Teachers response about the drawbacks of the syllabus

Drawbacks of the syllabus	Total response	percentage
No sufficient guideline to the teacher	1	10%
Examination oriented syllabus and therefore importance given on completion of syllabus	1	10%
All the skills are not given equal importance	1	10%
All the above	7	70%

The syllabus is not free from some drawbacks as here the listening and speaking skill didn't get equal importance as writing. Therefore all the time students and teachers are found busy developing only the writing skill neglecting the other three. Examination oriented syllabus tests only the writing skill and therefore other three skills are often neglected.

3.6 The Innovative Features of the Present Syllabus:

The syllabus of class X is based on communicative English, which has objective of developing the four language skills. The lessons included in the syllabus give a detail about the local atmosphere and practical knowledge about the surroundings. Most of the lessons included in the syllabus are written by Indian writers which are easy to understand by the learners and very informative. The oral practice lessons are very beneficial for the students as it develop their communicative skills. Some of the important features of the new syllabus are:

1. The materials are presented in a very interesting manner with necessary illustrations.
2. All the four language skills are given importance.
3. The word notes after every lesson improves the students' vocabulary.
4. The variety of exercises after every lesson makes their learning more effective.
5. The lessons included in the syllabus are very informative which is useful in real life situation.

The new course book also aims to follow the communicative approach. It tries to develop the four language skills and also the harmonious development of communicative capacity within the student.

3.7 The Drawbacks of the syllabus:

Though the syllabus is meant to fulfill all the necessary needs of the students, but it is not completely free from faults. The following drawbacks are found in the present syllabus of class X.

1. The syllabus cannot fulfill all the objectives that it is meant for.
2. Syllabus does not develop all the skills of language learning. Though language learning is based on four skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing; but the syllabus does not encourage the first two skills in real sense. The listening skill is practiced only for a limited period in the classroom. The oral practices prescribed in the syllabus are not sufficient for them.
2. The teachers are often found confused as they can't decide which should be given prime importance- the completion of the syllabus within the time limit or development of skills among the students.
3. The basic knowledge of some of the students in certain areas is very poor that it is not possible to uplift them to cope up with the syllabus of class X.
4. There is a huge gap between the syllabus of class IX and X with the syllabus of class I to VIII. There is no coordination found between the syllabuses of these two sections. It is because the syllabus from class I to VIII is prepared by NCERT while syllabus of class IX and X is prepared by SEBA.
5. The materials provided in the course are not sufficient. The textbook does not offer enough guideline to the teacher. There is no specific guideline for the students which grammar book should be followed.

3.8 Suggestive Measures and Conclusion:

To sum up, we can finally come to the fact that the present syllabus is quite innovative and practical fulfilling the need of the students. However it needs some sort of development which will help the students in their all round

development fulfilling present and future needs and also helping them in their professional areas.

1. Acquiring a language is not an easy task, as it means the ability to use the language correctly and confidently. The confidence is built only when a speaker gets enough scope to use the language. Therefore, it is my personal belief that if the oral English part in the syllabus from class 1 onwards, the students could be more helpful from it.

2. As we all are aware of the fact, that even we the teachers, are also not perfect in pronunciation; hence wrong pronunciation of the teachers affect the learning of the students. Therefore, I would like to suggest having the provision of audio-visual cassettes for the language learning process to get the perfect pronunciation of the language.

3. As the syllabus has become learning oriented, the task of the teachers has also increased. The teacher has to play various roles in the classroom. He is a role model for the students while learning the language. He is also a moderator in the group activities, a classroom organizer, a practical adviser and a co-communicator. To perform all the above-mentioned tasks, he/she needs to be quite active, up-to-date with all the methods, skills and procedures of language learning. To fulfill the above-mentioned criteria, they must be given sufficient training. Orientation classes are also to be provided to the teachers.

3. As the syllabus is examination oriented and the students are tested through marks, it is often noticed that writing skill gets more importance. Listening and speaking skills are most of the time neglected due to the lack of environment, which makes their language learning process incomplete. Therefore listening and speaking skills are also should be given as much importance as writing. Specially speaking skill should be more encouraged.

4. The examination-oriented process makes teachers to complete the syllabus within limited period of time rather than learning the language in true sense. so

the language learning period should be expanded so that teachers and students get enough time for proper teaching and learning of the language.

5. When language is taught in the class it should be taught in such a way that it helps them in professional life and interviews in future. It also must prepare the students for higher education in different fields of study.

6. The syllabus should equip the students with sufficient knowledge so that they can be adjusted with the present society.

7. The syllabus should make the student an independent learner appreciating the language and its various aspects.

8. Spoken English should be made a compulsory subject in the school level.

The syllabus of class x has to be perfect enough to lead the students for higher education as well as various competitive exams. Students from various parts of the country go for similar higher education program as well as competitive exams after class x. So the syllabus of different states has to be quite uniform lacking a serious gap. A syllabus can be fruitful in true sense, if it cares all the above-mentioned aspects.