



An Analogous Process for Syllabus, Course, Programme and Curriculum Development

Salma Bouhali

University of Batna 2, Algeria

s.bouhali@univ-batna2.dz

Amel Bahloul

University of Batna 2, Algeria

a.bahloul@univ-batna2.dz

Abstract ;

In the last century, and more precisely in the field of education, a large number of specialists generated various stages for syllabus design, curriculum development, and course design. However, they did not write much about programme development. There is a shortage of resources concerning this area, and researchers often find themselves in a dilemma. Therefore, the present paper aims at shedding light on this fortuitous gap that needs to be elucidated, particularly for EFL teachers in the domain of syllabus design and curriculum development. Thus, it will help all stakeholders easily sort out and deduce generalities that are common between the different processes of development and design without any fear or uncertainty. The results obtained in this piece of research paper demonstrate that educational specialists focused on different processes, and they identified various stages for each process. Yet, those stages do not appear to be the same because educators use different terms and follow dissimilar classifications. However, they did not consider the principles they actually share in common. They all agreed on four essential and significant stages. They are: identifying goals and objectives; selecting and grading content; choosing the appropriate tasks and activities; and making decisions about assessment. At the end of this paper and on the basis of the reached results, the authors of this paper propose a new model to represent a process that is analogous for all of curriculum development, programme development, course design, and syllabus design in this consecutive order, from the largest units in this field, which are curricula, to the smallest units, which are syllabi, and certainly including both courses and programmes.

Article info

Received
November 20;2023
Accepted
May 30;2024

Keywords:

- ✓ curriculum development
- ✓ programme development
- ✓ course design
- ✓ syllabus design
- ✓ process
- ✓ analogous

1. Introduction

Various interpretations surround the issues of developing a curriculum or programme and designing a course or syllabus. Teachers in the field often find themselves confused about how to sort them. Educators like Tyler (1949), Taba (1962), Wheeler (1967), Kerr (1972), Saylor et al. (1981), Yalden (1987), Nunan (1988), Richards (1990), Richards (1992), Print (1993), Brown (1995), Graves (2000), Richards (2001), Van Den Akker (2003), Nation and Macalister (2010), and McNulty (2013) elaborated the process from diverse angles. They focused on just one specific concept. Some of them focused on the process of designing a 'syllabus', as it is the smallest unit that reflects a single subject. Others generalised the process and instead selected the development of a 'curriculum', as it is the broadest term that refers to the overall educational system. In contrast, few others made a reference to the development of a 'programme' or the design of a 'course'. Yet the question remains whether stakeholders can view the process as identical at all levels. In other words, the issue is whether they can consider the processes followed in developing a curriculum or a programme and the ones followed in designing a course or a syllabus analogical.

2. Definitions

The authors of this paper begin by clearly distinguishing the various terms used by curriculum development designers before delving into the issue at hand. The terms curriculum, programme, course, and syllabus are the most salient terms used in the realm of syllabus design and curriculum development. They are not synonymous. Each term refers to a specific concept, and it is essential to

distinguish between them before introducing the different processes of development for each concept.

2.1 Definition of Curriculum

First, curriculum is the broadest term in the field. Kelly (1989) defined it as "the overall rationale for an educational programme of an institution. It includes planning, procedures for the implementation of the plan and students' experiences in the learning process" (p. 14). In other words, a curriculum is an abstract document that determines what, where, when, why, and how it is to be done in an educational system.

In the same vein, Hall and Hewings (2001) mentioned that a language curriculum covers all issues that are related to the "planning, implementation, and evaluation of a series of language learning events conceived as a coherent whole with a specified purpose" (p. 1). Accordingly, a curriculum refers to the three previously mentioned processes to be followed to reach a specific educational goal. For Wojtczak (2002), it is an instructional outline that spells out which goals and objectives should be fulfilled, which subjects should be studied, and which methodology is to be used for learning, teaching, and evaluation. Thus, the aforementioned experts agreed that a curriculum is the entire educational system; it includes everything, starting with planning and moving forward with evaluation. However, they did not refer to factors that may affect its development.

From another angle, Allen (1984, as cited in Brumfit, 1984) stated that "a curriculum is an educational concept, which involves

philosophical, social and administrative factors contributing to the planning of an educational program” (p. 61). He emphasised the necessity of taking into consideration the different factors that may affect the development of an educational programme. Besides, Brindley (1989) indicated that a curriculum addresses the broad abstract objectives of education that mirror the nation's overall educational and cultural philosophies, political and national trends, as well as theoretical perspectives on language and language learning.

Both Allen (1984) and Brindley (1989) recognised that when developing a curriculum, and more specifically, its goals, designers should take into consideration the different factors that surround it. Additionally, Null (2011) claimed, “Curriculum is at the heart of education ... [to make it more convenient for learners] and is a specific, tangible subject that is always tied to decision-making within institutions” (p. 1). According to him, a curriculum is necessary for any educational institution, and when designing it, needs analysis is a forward step that cannot be neglected. Hence, a curriculum is flexible, and decisions are to be made within the staff of institutions.

In all, a curriculum is “an educational programme which describes the purpose of the programme, the content, teaching procedures, and learning experiences necessary to achieve this purpose, and ways for assessing the programme” (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992, p. 94). In other words, an educational programme determines all relevant issues for successful instruction, including

everything: goals, aims, objectives, subject matter, approaches, methods, and strategies of assessment. As Brindley (1989) mentioned, developing a curriculum addresses the following questions:

- What are the school's goals?
- What subject matter has to be taught?
- What kinds of exercises should students do in order to meet their goals?
- What kinds of instructional strategies should educators use to support students in meeting their goals?
- How should the content be arranged?
- How do educators measure the achievements of their students?

Based on the aforementioned questions, Brindley (1989) deduced that a curriculum provides information on:

- The purposes of instruction
- Subject matter to be taught
- Activities students should do
- Resources and techniques
- The distribution of time
- Methods of assessment

2.2 Definition of Syllabus

A syllabus is a term that refers to the smallest unit in the domain of curriculum development and syllabus design. Widdowson (1984) defined a syllabus as “a teaching device to facilitate learning” (p. 26). In other words, it guides teaching. Richards (2001) also stated that a syllabus is “a specification of the content of a course of instruction [which] lists what will be taught and tested” (p. 2). Accordingly, a syllabus is the content to be taught. Moreover, Yalden (1983) compared the syllabus to a “blueprint” and the teacher to someone who converts the plan “into a reality of classroom

interactions” (p. 19). Furthermore, Yalden (1983) mentioned that the syllabus is a plan, and the teacher is the one who turns that plan into a reality of classroom interactions.

According to Brown (1995), “a syllabus provides a focus for what should be studied, along with a rationale for how that content should be selected and ordered (p. 7)”. He claimed that a syllabus should focus on what should be studied, along with an indication of how that content should be selected and ordered.

However, Nunan (1988) asserted that it is necessary “to distinguish a broad and a narrow approach to syllabus design” (p. 4). According to him, there are two distinct approaches to syllabus design. In the narrow approach, content, or what is taught, is the single aspect of syllabus design to be considered. Design is only the selection and gradation of elements to be taught. While in the broad approach, details regarding how content is to be delivered and how learners are to be assessed expand the scope of design to encompass what is known as ‘methodology’. In other words, syllabus design is not restricted just to the selection and gradation of content; it also includes the selection of tasks and activities.

There is a clear distinction between curriculum and syllabus. Shaw (1975) stated that curriculum includes all the learning experiences planned for students, both in and out of the school and community, through classroom instruction and related programmes. According to him, a curriculum encompasses goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and methods of evaluation. He then defined a ‘syllabus’ as a presentation of

the outline of all sections in a curriculum, with the exception of the curriculum evaluation component.

Overall, curriculum is defined as the entire set of purposes, content, resources, processes, and methods of evaluation. However, the syllabus is part of the broader system, and it is considered within the framework of an ongoing curriculum (Berardo, 1997). Nunan (1988) also supported the view that a syllabus is a “subcomponent” of the curriculum. In other words, a curriculum is the overall system that includes various components, among which there is a syllabus, i.e., a syllabus is subordinate to a curriculum.

Both White (1988, p. 4) and Nunan (1989, p. 14) contended that a curriculum communicates the entirety of an instructional programme, including all planned subjects, whereas a syllabus covers just the information of a single subject. Additionally, Brumfit (1984, p. 75) defined the term “curriculum” as the entirety of the offerings made by a teaching institution, and he restricted the term “syllabus” to the duties of the language teacher. As a result, a curriculum is set, while a syllabus is changeable.

2.3 Definition of Programme

The term ‘curriculum’ is not confused only with the term ‘syllabus’; it is often misused to mean ‘programme’. However, each term has its own meaning.

A programme is a useful term that is commonly applicable in almost all educational situations. It is also often confused with the words ‘schedule’ and ‘planning’, which are the meanings of

'programme' in French. In English, 'programme' is something else; they are false friends.

The term 'programme' in English is a basic element in almost all EFL schools, colleges, universities, and educational institutions. It covers anything from a day trip to an entire degree. It includes a series of lectures or courses; it takes a long time (multiple semesters, around three to four years) to get a certificate. In contrast, a curriculum is colossal; it includes more than one degree, i.e., distinct certificates.

2.4 Definition of Course

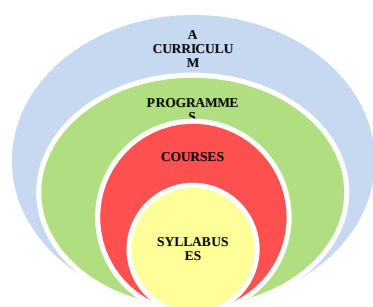
The last term to be defined is 'course'. While a syllabus is an outline of what is to be taught in a specific subject, a course is simply a syllabus when applied, including both the linguistic blueprint and the practices that take place in the classroom. In this context, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) regarded a course as "an integrated series of teaching learning experiences, whose ultimate aim is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge" (p. 65). In other words, a syllabus is a piece of written document that includes the content that is selected and graded according to specific norms. This content is to be implemented in detail in a course, but its implementation differs from one teacher or environment to another, i.e., although the syllabus is always identical, the syllabus can be delivered in two classes by the same teacher while introducing two different courses. This can be due to using various materials, having different groups of learners, or following different methodologies of work and evaluation.

A course is also not a single lecture or lesson. A course means a real series of lessons or lectures. By its end, learners are implied to get a grade. It is a unit of instruction in one subject. It is what is actually delivered to students. According to Brindley (1989), a course is a combination of components, including resources, lessons, materials, extracurricular tasks and activities, and assessment.

In a nutshell, the term "curriculum" represents the overall system of education. It includes everything, starting with elements of planning, passing through elements of implementation, and reaching elements of evaluation. It may afford different degrees when it includes more than one programme. Hence, each programme reflects a degree; a programme is composed of different components. It consists of goals, subjects to be taught and their objectives, processes, resources, and means of assessment. As part of a programme, different subjects are to be taught, and when they are taught, they become considered courses. Thus, a programme contains a specific number of courses, and each course has its own components, namely: goals and objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation. These components are summed up in a syllabus. The latter is an outline or a plan that teachers use to guide their teaching process; it also has the same constituents. In short, a curriculum, syllabus, course, and programme share similar components: goals and objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation.

From the analysis and interpretation of the aforementioned definitions, the authors of this paper generated a framework that clearly represents the distinction between a curriculum, programmes, courses, and syllabuses. The curriculum reflects the overall system, and this comprehensive term may encompass a programme or more. The latter itself includes a specific number of subjects, and these subjects, when implemented, are regarded as courses. Each course has its own syllabus. Actually, this distinction is crucial because it will support the overgeneralization of the processes of design later on. In other words, because the different terms underlie the same umbrella term, that is 'design', it is worth knowing what the interconnection is between these different terms. The framework proposed by the authors is depicted in Figure 1 below:

Fig.1. A framework representing a distinction between a curriculum, programmes, courses and syllabuses



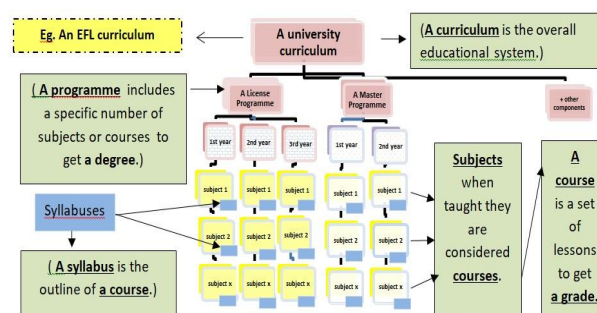
Source: authors' figure

Figure 1 gives a clear and simple image of the relationship between the most prominent terms in the field of syllabus design and curriculum development, namely: curriculum, programme, course, and syllabus. The authors of this paper deduced that the relationship between them can be expressed in terms of

'inclusion', in the sense that one concept is found inside another, and this can be explained in more detail. First, a syllabus is the smallest unit in an educational system. It is part of the course. The course itself is part of the programme, and the latter is included in the all-inclusive system that is a curriculum.

The second figure (Fig. 2) was also created by the authors of this paper. It represents an example of a university curriculum for any specialty in the Algerian context, including the specialty of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). It enables readers of this article to distinguish between the different terms: curriculum, programme, course, and syllabus.

Fig.2. A framework representing a distinction between curriculum, programmes, courses and syllabuses in the context of Algerian universities



Source: generated by the author of this paper (authors' figure)

Figure two 2 represents an example of a curriculum. It is a university curriculum in the Algerian context. It is depicted by the authors. In the figure, the curriculum is divided into its different parts. On the top, it is the university curriculum, the overall educational system that shows the different types of instructions afforded in

any department, and in this framework, it is the example of a department of English. In the university curriculum, there are different programmes, for instance, the License and Master programmes. Each programme includes a specific number of subjects to be taught, and each subject has its own syllabus. When a syllabus is implemented, it is to be considered a course.

To be noted again, the main aim of this paper is not to pinpoint the different key terms in the field of curriculum development. The primary goal of this research is to identify the stages that are similar and comparable in the various models of design or development. Therefore, before entering that phase, the authors should present the prominent models generated by different scholars and analyse the suggested processes. Thus, they will be able to determine which ones are consistent across them.

Processes of Design and Development

Processes of design and development refer to a series of stages that will provide frameworks that help educationalists design or develop a syllabus, a course, a programme, or a whole curriculum. Those frameworks will not help educationalists only; they will also help teachers efficiently in their process of teaching and students effectively in their process of learning.

According to Shiundu and Omulando (1992), curriculum design is the arrangement of its different components with the goal of promoting learning. However, proposals for the components could potentially differ depending on the

designer. Depending on their views and beliefs, different experts in education (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Kerr, 1972; Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis, 1981; Yalden, 1987; Nunan, 1988; Print, 1993; Brown, 1995; Graves, 2000; Richards, 2001; Van Den Akker, 2003; Nation and Macalister, 2010, and many others) generated various models. Thus, numerous models evolved. According to Brady (1990), a “model refers to the relationship between the parts of the process of curriculum development, i.e., objectives, content, method and evaluation” (pp. 57-58).

As it was mentioned earlier, after reaching the first aim, which is to be able to distinguish between the key terms in this piece of research work and identify the interrelation between them, now it is time to focus on the second aim, which is the major one. It is to sort out the most salient processes shared between the most common models. Of course, there are many models. Different scholars introduced various stages. Those stages are limited to only one of the aforementioned terms, i.e., a curriculum, a programme, a course, or a syllabus. Yet, what is questioned is whether educationists can generalise the process and make it identical to all the previously mentioned components in an educational system. To reach the major aim of this paper, which is to detect the common stages that are shared among the various models, an analysis of the different applied models in the field is to be made; this will be for the sake to extracting the most common stages and thus being able to generate an analogous process for all

curricula, programmes, courses, and syllabi.

However, scholars differed in their focus when tackling the issue. Some of them focused on syllabus design; others emphasised course design; a few others dealt with programme development, and more others worked on curriculum development. Moreover, there are scholars (Richards, 1990; Yalden, 1987; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; McNulty, 2013) who did not distinguish between the terms and often used them interchangeably to refer to the same issue.

The authors of this paper, after deep research, analysed the different models and classified them according to the designers' focus, leading to four types of design and development. The first one is limited to designers who focus on the curriculum in general. The second type is restricted to designers who deal with programmes. The third type refers to those who are interested in courses, and the final one corresponds to educators who limit the process to syllabuses.

2.1. Curriculum Development

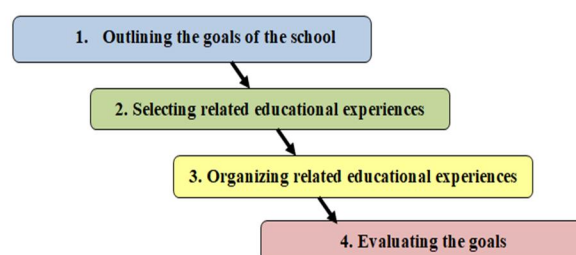
A considerable number of educators (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Kerr, 1972; Saylor, Alexander, & Lewis, 1981; Richards, 1990; Brown, 1995; Akker, 2003; Nation and Macalister, 2010; McNulty, 2013) tackled the issue of development by referring to the overall educational system, i.e., they focused on curriculum. They identified sets of stages. One of the pioneers of curriculum development was Tyler (1949). He presented four basic stages; they were known as Tyler's Rationale. They are: identifying aims and objectives; selecting

educational experiences; including content; organizing educational experiences; and evaluating objectives. These four stages were generated from four fundamental issues that Tyler posed in 1949. They are:

- a. What goals for education should the school aim to achieve?
- b. What kinds of educational opportunities can be offered that are most likely to achieve these goals?
- c. How can these learning opportunities be set up in an efficient manner?
- d. How can we determine if these goals are being met?

Curriculum development follows a linear path, as identified by Tyler (1949), and the emphasis in his model is on the significance of clearly predetermined objectives. When analysing the stages he proposed, it is quite obvious that they reflect the following components in order: objectives, content or subject matter, methods or procedures, and evaluation. His model is shown in the following figure (Fig. 3).

Fig.3. Tyler's Curriculum Development Model (1949)



Source: Tyler, 1949 (figured)

Tyler's model is considered a basis that stakeholders may rely on when developing a curriculum. After his initiative, the majority of curriculum developers (Taba,

1962; Kerr, 1967; Saylor, Lewis, and Alexander, 1981) departed from his principle and proposed a nearly similar process with slight differences.

The second model to be presented is Taba's model (see figure 4). As it was mentioned earlier, it is an expansion of Tyler's model. This model is also known as the grassroots model; it includes seven stages. They are listed below:

Step 1: diagnosis of needs

Step 2: formulation of objectives

Step 3: selection of content

Step 4: organisation of content

Step 5: selection of learning experiences

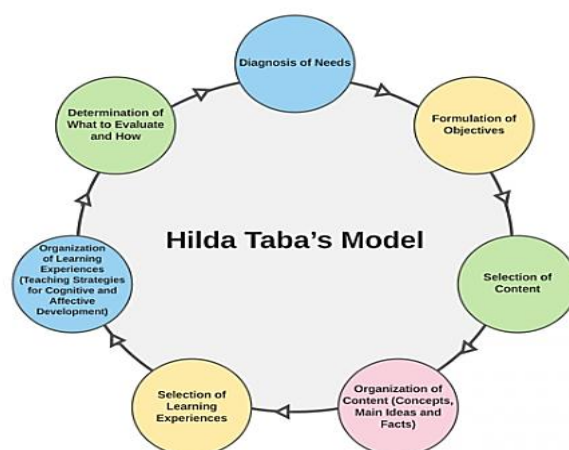
Step 6: organisation of learning experiences

Step 7: determination of what to evaluate and of the ways of doing it (Taba, 1962, p. 12).

Like Tyler's model, Taba's model is linear. While Tyler's model is deductive, Taba's model is inductive, in the sense that it relies on a bottom up instead of a top-down approach. In other words, Taba (1962) claimed that a curriculum should be designed by its real practitioners, i.e., teachers and learners, rather than imposed by superior levels or higher authorities.

Again, the analysis of this model persuades the importance of four basic stages: setting objectives, choosing the appropriate content, selecting and arranging learning experiences, and determining the method of evaluation. Thus, this model supports the main view of this research paper.

Fig.4. Taba's Curriculum Development Model (1962)

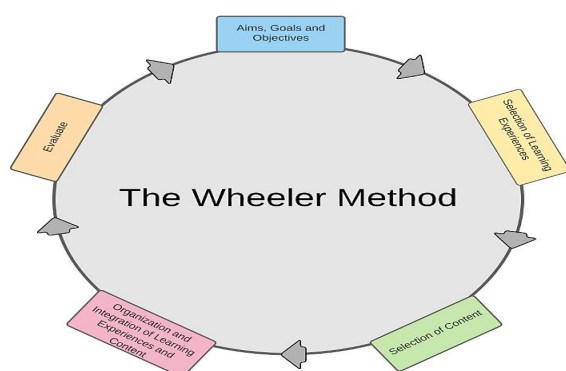


Source: Button, 2021

The third model is for Wheeler (1967). In his model, Wheeler (1967) suggested the possibility of enhancing the curriculum each time after planning, implementation, and evaluation. He insisted that the process should be considered cyclic and flexible. It is a continuous process. Relying on feedback from its evaluation, reforming the curriculum is a step-forward renewal. It affords adjustments whenever needed. It consists of five interlinked stages. They are: establishing objectives, targets, and goals; choosing materials and educational experiences; organising and integrating content with tasks; and creating an assessment plan (see Fig. 5).

Wheeler's model does not differentiate much from the aforementioned models. There are steps in common. It resembles the others in the sense that they share some similar stages, namely when referring to goals or objectives, content, learning experiences, and evaluation.

Fig.5. Wheeler's Curriculum Development Model (1967)



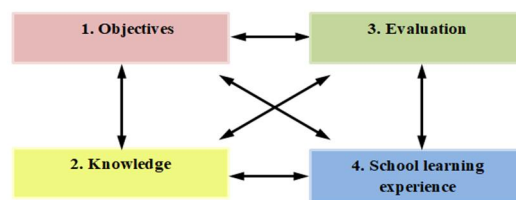
Source: Button, 2021

The fourth model to be tackled is Kerr's. This model is considered another version of Tyler's curriculum development model (Yudhistir, 2023). Like Tyler (1949), Kerr (1972) proposed four essential stages for the design. They are: the specification of objectives; the selection of knowledge to be delivered to learners; the selection of learning experiences; and the identification of the method of evaluation. Both Tyler (1949) and Kerr (1972) focused on the same stages yet used dissimilar names. However, Kerr (1972) insisted on the direct or indirect interrelationship between the stages. He stated that they are interactive. Hence, the process is multidimensional, unlike Tyler (1949), who described the process as linear.

From the analysis of Kerr's model, it is quite obvious that this model is one of the salient ones that emphasised the four most common stages. In his model, Kerr used 'knowledge' to mean content and 'learning experiences' to refer to methodology while the two other stages, which concern objectives and evaluation,

are analogous. The figure below shows Kerr's model:

Fig.6. Kerr's Curriculum Development Model (1972)



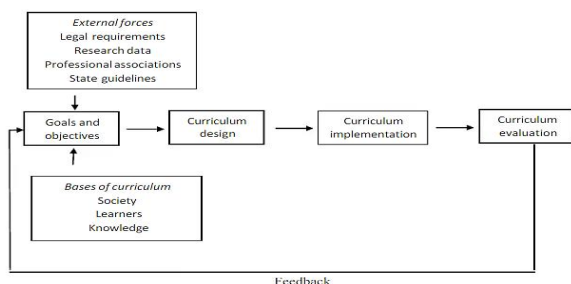
Source: Button, 2021

The fifth model to be analysed in this piece of research work is Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis'. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981) noted that a curriculum needed to have four essential elements. They are: goals and objectives; curriculum design; curriculum implementation; and curriculum evaluation (see Fig. 7). What is noticeable is that these designers agreed to a high extent with Tyler (1949); they followed the same process but used other terms. In determining goals and objectives, they specified specific factors to be considered: external forces, legal requirements, research data, professional associations, and states. Therefore, it is holistic. A distinction to be made is that, in the current model, there is refinement each time the evaluation is reached. In other words, like the wheeler model, this model is also cyclic and thus adaptable.

It is quite salient that the basis of developing curricula from the perspectives of Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981) is similar to the previously mentioned models, especially Tyler's (1949). They all emphasized the four core stages: goals and objectives, the design that is related to making a plan about content, the

implementation that has a link with making decisions about activities and tasks, and at last as a final stage, the evaluation to check the extent of achievement of objectives.

Fig.7. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis Curriculum Development Model (1981)

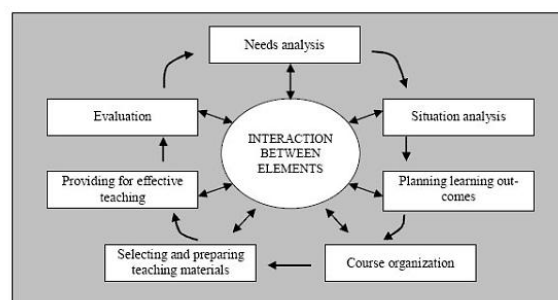


Source: Saylor et al, 1981, pp. 29-30 (adapted)

Richards (1990) also mentioned that, like other areas of curriculum studies, “language curriculum development is concerned with principles and procedures for the planning, delivery, management and assessment of teaching and learning” (p. 1). In other words, the main objectives of developing a curriculum are to ascertain what knowledge, values and skills students should learn in school, what experiences should be offered to achieve the desired learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools should be organized, monitored, and assessed (p. 2). Hence, it outlines a collection of connected procedures that are centered on creating, modifying, executing, and assessing language programmes (p.2). According to him, curriculum development processes in language teaching comprise “needs analysis, situation analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organization, selecting and preparing teaching materials and providing for effective teaching and

evaluation” (Richards, 2001, p. 14). The stages are illustrated in the figure below:

Fig.8. Richards’ Curriculum Development Model (2001)



Source: Kaharuddin et al, 2014

Furthermore, Richards et al. (1992, p. 94) defined curriculum as an educational programme that outlines:

- The programme's educational goals (the ends)
- The content
- The instructional strategies and experiences required to meet these goals (the means).
- Assessment to determine if the goals of education have been met.

Thus, both Richards (1990) and Richards et al. (1992) agreed on the main steps of curriculum development. They proved the significance of the four main and most common stages that have been highlighted earlier.

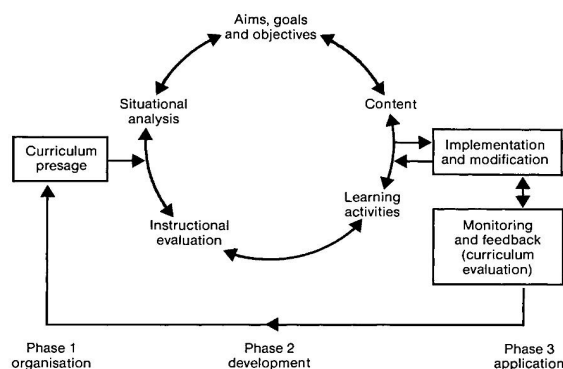
Print (1993, p. 84) pointed out that designing a curriculum is based on three essential phases. They are: organisation, development, and application. In the first phase, which is known as organisation, the group to work on the project is to be selected on the basis of their qualifications, competencies, and experiences. This team starts their project

by specifying a framework for the curriculum. This phase is illustrated in the figure (see Fig. 9). It is labelled 'curriculum presage', i.e., its future occurrence.

In the second phase, which is called development, the curriculum is to be developed after a series of circular processes, namely: conducting a situation analysis; determining aims, goals, and objectives; selecting content; selecting learning activities; and making decisions about instructional evaluation. In the third phase, application, the curriculum is to be implemented, and accordingly, teachers may make modifications for better achievements. The last phase is the implementation of the curriculum. The latter is to be evaluated by the team, and feedback is to be provided for a new revision of the current curriculum.

The analysis of Print's model contended the significance of the four basic stages for the design of any educational curriculum that are specified in the aforementioned models. Thus, Print's model is one of the models that are based on the core components of a curriculum (see Fig. 9).

Fig.9. Print's Curriculum Development Model (1993)

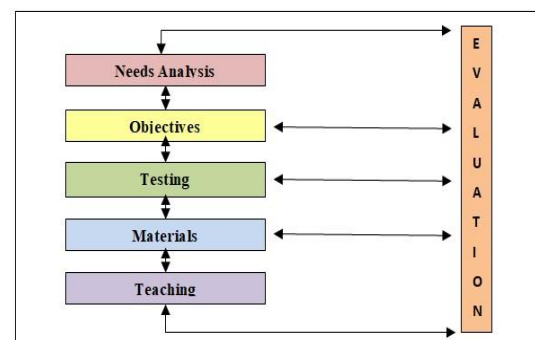


Source: Print, 1993, p. 84

Moreover, Brown (1995) stated that developing a curriculum involves a set of logical steps; they are six: analysis of needs, identification of purposes, selection of resources, selection of tasks, conducting the instruction, and making decisions about assessment. His model provided elements for the improvement of any language curriculum.

The analysis of the aforementioned steps shows that this model comprises the four essential processes for curriculum development. According to him, to renew an existing curriculum, a needs analysis is to be conducted first to determine the objectives to be attained, and on the basis of those objectives, decisions about the materials, methodology, and method of assessment are to be made. However, evaluation is an ongoing process that seeks to improve the previously mentioned components. The graphic below, from Brown (1995, p. 20), illustrates a systematic approach to designing a language curriculum.

Fig.10. Brown's Curriculum Design Systematic Approach Model (1995)



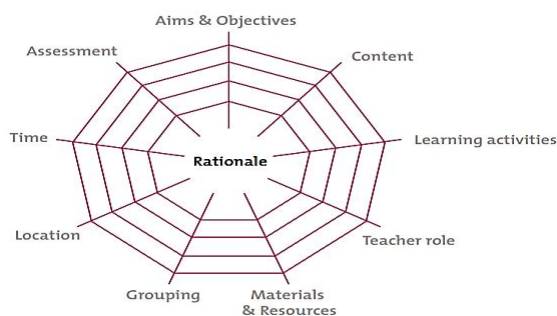
Source: Brown, 1995, p. 20

Akker (2003) generated a model that he called the spider web. This model contains ten components. They are: aims and objectives, content, learning activities, teacher role, materials and resources, grouping, location, time, and assessment. The model depicts how all these elements

in a curriculum have to be aligned for the sake of developing an effective curriculum. He compared the link between the different components to a spider web as a metaphor, in the sense that every chain is as strong as its weakest link, and this is to point out how complex it is, to improve the curriculum in a balanced, consistent, and sustainable manner.

When analysing this model, one can conclude that to develop a curriculum, it is necessary to answer ten questions: why learning? For what purposes? What should be learned? How? With which materials? In what ways does the instructor support learning? With whom? In what location? When? How to be evaluated? Among the following questions, there is reference to the four major stages that were highlighted earlier (aims and objectives, content, learning activities, and assessment). The figure below (Fig. 11) represents a clarification how Akker (2003) visualised the relationship between the various components:

Fig.11. Van Den Akker's Curricular Spider Web Model (2003)



Source: Van Den Akker, 2003, p. 6

Furthermore, Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 2) generated a curriculum design model (as shown in figure 12) that consists of three outside circles, a subdivided inner circle, a centralised

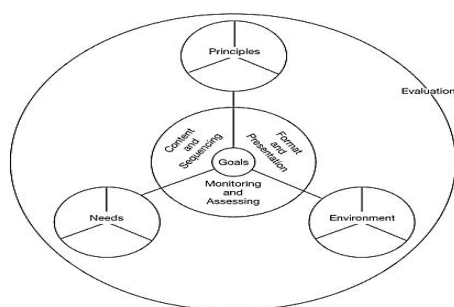
circle, and an outer large circle. The latter represents evaluation, which is the comprehensive phase of the process; it evaluates the effectiveness of the current curriculum, and this evaluation covers all the components of the curriculum.

While the centralised circle is focused on goals, this explains their significant role in making decisions about the other components in the process. The outer circles represent principles, environment, and needs. They are considered three sub-processes: first, environment analysis; second, needs analysis; and third, the application of principles. They involve practical and theoretical considerations that will have a major effect on guiding the actual process of course production.

The inner circle part represents the syllabus. Meanwhile, the outer circles and the inner circle make up the curriculum. The inner circle part has goals as its centre, and it is surrounded by the content and sequencing, the format and presentation, and the monitoring and assessment. The content and sequencing part represents the items to learn in a course, and the order in which they occur. The format and presentation part represents the format of the lessons or units of the course, including the techniques and types of activities that will be used to help learning. The monitoring and assessment part represents the need to give attention to observing learning, testing the results of learning, and providing feedback to the learners about their progress. It provides information that can lead to changes in most of the other parts of the curriculum design process. The large outer circle represents evaluation.

From the analysis of this model, it is quite salient that those scholars also did not ignore the significance of the major most commonly used and widely reliable processes for curriculum development, which are: determining goals and objectives, selecting and sequencing content, selecting format, i.e., tasks and activities, and making decisions about monitoring and assessment. Accordingly, the figure below shows the different components as they were generated by Nation and Macalister (2010, p. 2):

Fig.12. Nation and Macalister's Curriculum Development Model (2010)



Source: Nation and Macalister, 2010, p. 3

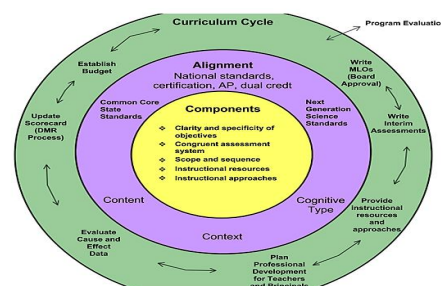
Moreover, McNulty (2013) suggested five main components for a curriculum: objectives; that should be clear and specific; an assessment system, that should be consistent with the objectives; scope and sequence, i.e., knowledge or content; instructional resources; and instructional approaches for teaching (see Fig. 13). These components work together in an operational way.

In her diagram, McNulty (2013) also gave some tips that should be considered in case there is a curriculum project. She identified seven phases for the process of evaluating and renewing any educational curriculum. They are: making a budget,

updating the scorecard, assessing cause and effect information, organising principals and teachers professional development, offering instructional resources and strategies, creating interim assessments, and obtaining board approval. All these stages should be in alignment with: national standards, state standards, content, context, cognitive type, and next-generation science standards.

Once more, based on the analysis of the current model, it is evident that McNulty (2013) also did not neglect the four basic components that were shared among most educators in this discipline, which are related to: objectives, content, procedures, and assessment.

Fig.13. McNulty's Curriculum Development Model (2013)



Source: Thai Do Le & Thanh Ngoc Thien Tran, 2021

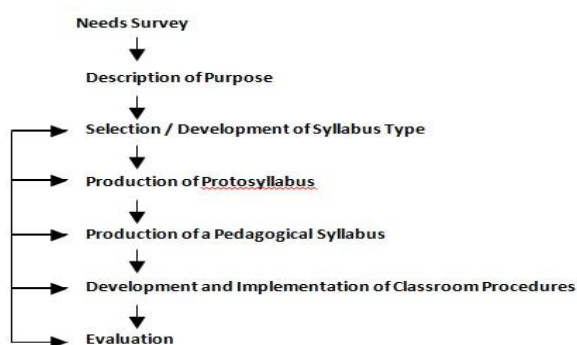
2.2. Programme Development

Yalden (1987, p. 93) provided a framework outlining the phases involved in developing a language program. She proposed seven steps, which she presents in a sequential fashion. These include a needs assessment, an explanation of the purpose, the choice and creation of the syllabus type, the creation of a prototype syllabus, the creation of an educational syllabus, the creation and implementation of classroom procedures, and evaluation.

When analysing the stages, it is clear that the initial phase is a needs assessment. On the basis of the collected data in this initial stage, it is possible to draw up a written description of purposes, and on the basis of those purposes, decisions about syllabuses' types are to be made. Thus, protosyllabi are to be produced and exceeded with pedagogical syllabi. Afterwards, classroom procedures are to be developed. At last, the method of evaluation is to be determined.

When resynthesizing the different phases of programme development as suggested by Yalden (1987), it is absolutely clear to notice that those stages do not differentiate much from what is common. She included objectives, syllabi that represent content, and classroom procedures that refer to methodology and evaluation. Figure 14 below illustrates the process of programme development as framed by Yalden (1987, p. 93):

Fig.14. Yalden's Language Programme Development Model (1987)



Source: Yalden, 1987, p.93

Richards (1990) also claimed that the success of a language programme is not merely built on the act of teaching. He stated that a successful educational programme involves more than that. Before reaching good teaching, a number of levels of planning, development, and

implementation are to be attentively considered. According to him, goals and objectives for the programme have to be developed first. Then, syllabuses and instructional materials are to be designed. After that, instructional strategies have to be determined, and finally, teachers have to be selected and trained, and tests and assessment protocols are to be chosen.

2.3. Course Design

Graves (2000) agreed on the point that designing a language course has several components, and she admitted that classic models of syllabus or course design (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Stenhouse, 1975) as well as recent models (Yalden, 1987; Nunan, 1988; Jonhson, 1989; Richards, 1990; Brown, 1995) agreed on most of the components. The most obvious distinction between them is that some of the stages were further divided into smaller ones, or they were given slightly different names for stages that were exactly the same.

A prevalent feature of course and syllabus design literature is the portrayal of the process as a logical, rational, and linear sequence, wherein the stages are designed to be completed in a particular order. Drowning on the work of others; Graves (2000) went one step further, creating a new model she referred to as a framework. This framework is largely similar to the previous models; the noticeable difference is that the framework is no longer linear but a flow chart.

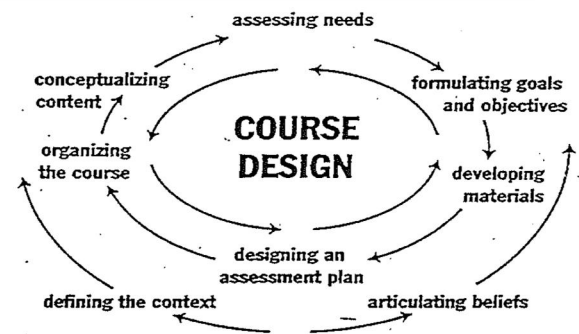
Thus, what is new with Graves' framework is that she brought a new distinction. She shed light on the point that the process is not linear; instead, she

saw it as a connected collection of stages that she thought of as a system. She claimed that designers should understand how the parts fit together into a whole. By changing the framework to a flow chart, two aspects of course design are captured. The first aspect is that there is no hierarchy in the processes and no sequencing for their accomplishments, and the second is that the components are interrelated. As a course designer, you can start at any point in the framework. According to Graves (2000, p. 3), designing a course involves:

- Defining the context
- Articulating beliefs
- Conceptualising content
- Formulating goals and objectives
- Assessing needs
- Organising the course
- Developing materials
- Designing an assessment plan

They were eight stages that were not arranged in a specific sequence but interrelated, in the sense that two or more processes may be going on at once. Yet, the presence of the four fundamental components in this model (goals and objectives, content, material development, and an assessment plan design) is crucial to notice. The framework in the figure below clarifies the process as it was presented by Graves (2000, p. 3):

Fig.15. Graves' Course Design Model (2000)



Source: Graves, 2000, p.3

From another angle, Richards (2001, p. 145) again claimed that distinct stages of planning and design are involved in developing a course. The processes of development do not necessarily occur in a linear order. However, these processes are to be based on the aims and objectives of the course. Some processes may take place synchronously, and many aspects of a course are subject to continuing revision and constant adjustments every time the course is taught once again.

He presented these stages as follows: generating a course rationale, describing entrance and exit points, selecting and arranging course content, organising the course materials, and preparing the sequences and units. What was noticeable in these processes is that the focus is on 'what?' but not 'how?' i.e., in contrast with Nunan's (1988) broad view, Richards (2001) tackled the processes relying on the narrow view of syllabus design in the sense that methodology is not part of the development. It is to be developed separately.

Besides, Macalister and Nation (2010, p. 11) did not limit themselves only to curriculum development; they also specified different stages to be followed when designing a course. In their model,

they did not ignore methodology. In other words, their view was broad. Hence, they included designing the lesson format that represents methodology with the other seven processes they had identified to design a course. These processes are listed below:

- Analysing the environment
- Determining needs
- Setting principles
- Making decisions about goals and choosing and arranging content
- Developing the lesson plans
- Generating an assessment plan
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the course

Thus, all of Graves (2000), Richards (2001), and Macalister and Nation (2010) focused on course design. They generated different classifications by using different names for some identical stages. For instance, defining the context and examining the environment, articulating beliefs, making decisions based on principles, and so on. However, the most significant common aspect is their agreement on the four essential steps that are related to goals and objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation.

2.4. Syllabus Design

There were a few scholars who focused on syllabus design. Maley (1984) was one of them. He declared that syllabus design encompasses the whole process of designing a language programme. He said that “the needs analysis which produces an order unit of items to be taught is organically related to a methodology consistent with the syllabus, a set of techniques consistent with the methodology, and evaluation procedure

consistent with the whole” (p. 77). In other words, Maley (1984) mentioned that the stages to be followed in syllabus design are interconnected. According to him, the first stage is a needs analysis, and on the basis of this analysis, the other stages are built, namely the selection of content, methodology, and method of evaluation.

Nunan (1988) also tackled the issue of syllabus design. Although he focused more on the approaches and types of syllabi, when demonstrating syllabus design, he identified a number of stages for syllabus design. They are as follows: conducting needs analysis, identifying goals, selecting and classifying objectives, choosing the appropriate content and arranging it and selecting and grading learning tasks.

Again, both Maley (1984) and Nunan (1988) agreed on the four essential stages of syllabus design. They both started with an estimation of learners needs to figure out the goals and objectives that will then enable designers to make decisions about content, methodology, and evaluation.

2.5. Odds and Ends / Further Insight

As mentioned earlier, there are educators (Richards, 1990; Yalden, 1987; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; McNulty, 2013) who do not put much weight on the difference between terms such as: curriculum and programme, curriculum and syllabus, programme and syllabus, programme and course, or syllabus and course. They often use terms for each dichotomy from the aforementioned dichotomies interchangeably. For instance, Richards (1990) in his book used the terms curriculum and programme

synonymously, and he focused rather on delivering data about the process of development or design.

In the same vein, Yalden (1987) tackled the issue of programme development and referred equally to course design. In her words, she stated, “The phases of language program development are shown in Figure 9.1. The initial step is a needs survey, for reasons already discussed. Once it has been carried out, the purposes of a given second language program, or course become much more clear” (p. 92). Furthermore, Dubin and Olshtain (1986) claimed, “The terms curriculum and “programme” are used interchangeably in this book to describe the broadest possible contexts in which planning for language instruction takes place” (p. 3). Moreover, McNulty (2013) used in her framework the term programme evaluation to refer to curriculum evaluation. So, all of Yalden (1987), Dubin and Olshtain (1986), and McNulty (2013) used the key terms highlighted in this paper interchangeably.

3.6. The Analogous Process Proposed by the Authors of this Paper

The new model which is proposed in this paper was prompted by the pressing issue of limited resources related to the concept of a programme. The authors aimed to establish a shared understanding of key terms in the field of curriculum development, specifically curriculum, syllabus, course, and programme.

After noticing that a significant portion of scholars in the field frequently overlook the significance of differentiating between the various key terms, the authors became intrigued to uncover the reason behind this gap. Consequently, following an extensive

investigation, they arrived at three noteworthy results. The first issue pertains to the interconnectedness of the major concepts; the second issue identifies the similarities of their components; and the third one focuses on the progression of their design.

Upon analysing the different definitions of the key terms, the authors arrived at the first conclusion that the terms are interconnected. The smallest unit is the syllabus. The latter is a constituent part of a course. The course is a component of a comprehensive programme that is in turn integrated into the curriculum as a whole.

The definitions also led the authors to a second conclusion: the fundamental components of the key terms curriculum, syllabus, course, and programme are similar. They noted that these key terms share four core constituents. They all consist of goals and objectives, content, methodology, and assessment.

Furthermore, the authors drew a third conclusion based on the analysis of various processes generated by different field designers. The authors noted that the processes suggested for the concepts curriculum, syllabus, course, and programme are not very distinct from each other, and the majority of designers emphasised the four aforementioned basic components in their suggested models.

For instance, when analysing Tyler’s (1949), Kerr’s (1972); Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981); and Wheeler’s (1967) models, they all specified identical stages. If stakeholders draw a contrast between them, they will find that the difference lies in the terms used to name each stage, in

addition to some additions to Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis' (1981) model that concern taking into consideration the external forces (legal requirements, research data, professional associations, and state guidelines) and the bases of curriculum (teachers, learners, and knowledge).

In contrast, other designers like Taba (1962), Yalden (1987), Print (1993), Brown (1995), and Richards (2001) suggested that the process goes beyond the four basic stages that were mentioned earlier. They emphasised the necessity of first conducting a situation analysis, a needs analysis, or both as a preliminary stage.

The number of stages proposed by designers also poses a challenge. Some designers create sub-stages within a stage, in contrast to others. As a result, it would allow more variation in proposing different models. As an example, the model of Graves (2000) is not so distinct from that of Nation and Macalister (2010). They suggested similar stages, but they presented them differently. Nation and Macalister (2010) referred to a stage as 'content and sequencing', whereas Graves (2000) divided it into two sub-stages. They are 'organising the course' and 'conceptualising content'. On the other hand, Graves (2000) proposed 'designing an assessment plan' which Nation and Macalister (2010) sub-grouped into two stages: monitoring and assessment, and evaluation. The other stages differ only in terms of names.

Nevertheless, the latest designs produced by Graves (2000), Van Den Akker (2003),

Nation and Macalister (2010), and McNulty (2013) contain further intricacies. Graves (2000) introduced three additional stages besides the previously mentioned ones. Van Den Akker (2003) also incorporated other elements, such as the rationale, teacher's role, grouping, location, and timing. In addition, Nation and Macalister (2010) employed novel elements such as concepts, format, and presentation. Moreover, McNulty (2013) utilised the suggestions put out by previous designers to create a thorough model.

It is crucial to recognise that each model is tailored to a certain process, i.e., each model is created for the purpose of developing curricula, syllabi, courses, or programmes. Furthermore, it is significant to note that some models have a linear relationship between their components, such as Tyler's Model (1949) and Yalden's Model (1987). On the other hand, other models have a cyclic relationship, like Wheeler's Model (1967), Taba's Model (1962), Print's Model (1993), and Brown's Model (1995). There are also models that have an interactive and multidimensional relationship, such as Kerr's Model (1972), Graves' Model (2000), Richards' Model (2001), Van Den Akker's Model (2003), and McNulty (2013).

Hence, the writers maintain the fundamental stages that were universal in all models and devise a novel model that encompasses the stages for all types of processes, regardless of the specific emphasis. In other words, a designer follows analogous steps when developing a curriculum, syllabus, course, or programme. They include establishing

goals and objectives, choosing content, selecting methods, and making assessment decisions. The authors also see the process as multidimensional and non-linear; designers have the freedom to select the sequence of steps that they deem suitable for their design.

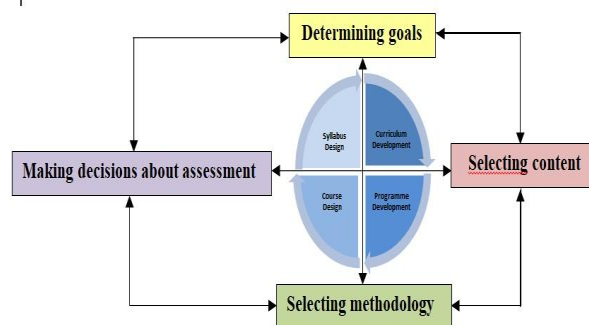
To conclude from all that has been mentioned earlier in the analysis of all the aforementioned models, all the specialists whose names were presented in the third part that is related to the stages in the domain of syllabus design and curriculum development (namely: Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Kerr, 1972; Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis, 1981; Maley, 1984; Yalden, 1987; Nunan, 1988; Richards, 1990; Richards, 1992; Print, 1993; Brown, 1995; Graves, 2000; Richards, 2001; Van Den Akker, 2003; Nation and Macalister, 2010; McNulty, 2013) did not differentiate much in the suggested processes; they shared in common four basic stages. Despite the fact that each model was restricted to a specific term in the specialty, i.e., it was specific either to the development of curricula, programmes, courses, or syllabi; the authors deduced from the analysis of all models that whatever the focus is, four stages are identical. They are: determining goals, selecting content, selecting methodology, and making decisions about assessment.

As a result, and due to the fact that the terms: curriculum, programme, course, and syllabus are interrelated and encompass the same umbrella term that is 'design' or 'development' on the one hand, and on the other hand, they share the same components when considering the common stages of development, the

authors of this paper, in this piece of research work, generated a new framework (see figure 16) to represent a process that is analogous for the design of the curriculums, programmes, courses, and syllabuses. Thus, researchers in general and, more specifically, teachers can use terms like curriculum, programme, course, and syllabus interchangeably. Consequently, they can rely on all resources related to any of them when scrutinising the processes of their development or design.

In short, the authors' new framework is a summary of the general work that is done in this piece of research. It is presented in the figure below (Fig. 16).

Fig.16. The proposed model representing the analogous process for syllabus, course, programme and curriculum development



Source: authors' own model

To put it all together, the proposed model (the authors' model) not only outlines the essential steps for designing a single instructional unit but also has the potential to apply to all instructional units. As a result, it is comprehensive and will be useful for curriculums, courses, syllabuses, and programmes design.

3. Conclusion

There appears to be no standardised process for the design of the curriculum, programme, course and syllabus. Experts had no consensus about the stages; they presented different frameworks. A large number of designers (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Kerr, 1972; Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis, 1981; Richards, 1990; Richards, 1992; Print, 1993; Brown, 1995; Van Den Akker, 2003; Nation and Macalister, 2010; McNulty, 2013) focused on curriculum as it is the overall term in the field, and some others emphasised course (Richards, 2001; Graves, 2000; and Nation and Macalister, 2010). However, few others worked on syllabus (Maley, 1984; Nunan, 1988) or programme (Richards, 1990; Yalden, 1987).

It is true that these terms are not identical, yet they are interrelated. Each term interrelates with all the others. The curriculum is the overall concept. A programme is a small portrait of a curriculum. A course is included in a programme, and a syllabus is a representation of a course. All in all, they belong to the same area of study, namely curriculum development.

Moreover, the various frameworks provided by the aforementioned designers share something in common. It is their development. Consequently, what is obvious is that the primal stages followed to design all of them are analogous. The author of this research paper summed up the process in four essential stages: identifying goals and objectives, selecting and grading content, selecting tasks and activities, and making decisions about the method of assessment and evaluation. The author also deduced a process that is

comprehensive, i.e., the identified stages are convenient not only for the development of curricula that are the overall units; they are also useful for developing smaller units, namely: programmes, courses, and syllabi. This crucial conclusion may generally help stakeholders, and more specifically, EFL teachers, to overgeneralise issues that pose vagueness when making research about any of them.

4. Bibliography List

Allen, J. P. B. (1984). General-purpose language teaching: A variable focus approach. In *Brumfit (1984a)*. 61-74. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Brindley, G. (1989). The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design. In *Johnson, R .K. (Ed). The second language curriculum (pp.63-78)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brady, L. (1990). *Curriculum Development*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*. Boston: MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Brumfit, C. J. (1984). *General english syllabus design*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd. and The British Council.

Button, L. J. (2021). *Curriculum essentials: A journey*. Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language courses: A guide for teachers*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Hall, D., & Hewings, A. (2001). *Innovation in English language teaching*. London: A reader, Routledge Publisher.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, R. (1989). A decision-making framework for the coherent language curriculum. In *Johnson, R .K. (Ed).The second language curriculum (pp. 1-23)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jugessur, Y. S. M. F. (2023). Kerr's model of curriculum design and curriculum development in education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 12(4), 105–107. <https://doi.org/10.35629/7722>

Kaharuddin, A., Yassi, A. H., Arafah, B., & Salah, N. J. (2014). Communicative competence-based syllabus design for Initial English speaking skills. *International Journal of Enhanced Research in Educational Development (IJERED)*, 2(3), 64–83. <https://doi.org/www.erpublishations.com>

Kelly, A. V. (1989). *The curriculum theory and practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Maley, A. (1984). Constraints-based syllabuses. In *Trends in language syllabus design*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

McNulty, T. (2013). *Standardized Clients in Case-Based Simulation: Five Years of Development in an Occupation-Based Curriculum*. Presented at the American Occupational Therapy Education Summit, Atlanta.

Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design*. New York & London: Routledge.

Null, W. (2011). *Curriculum: From theory to practice*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Nunan, D. (1988). *Syllabus design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Print, M. (1993). *Curriculum development and design* (2nd ed.). St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

- Richards, J. C. (1990). *The language teaching matrix* (5th ed.). United States of America: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Saylor, J. G., Alexander, W. M., & Lewis, A. J. (1981). *Curriculum planning for better teaching and learning*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Shiundu, J. S., & Omulando, S. J. (1992). *Curriculum: Theory and practice in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Taba, H. (1962). *Curriculum development: Theory and practice*. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.
- Shaw, A. M. (1975). *Approaches to a communicative syllabus in foreign language curriculum development* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Essex.
- Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Den Akker, J. (2003). Curriculum perspectives: An introduction. In J. van den Akker, W. Kuiper & U. Hameyer (Eds.), *Curriculum landscapes and trends* (pp. 1-10). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Wheeler, D. K. (1967). *Curriculum process*. London: University of London Press.
- White, R. V. (1988). The ELT curriculum design, innovation and management. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 49(1), 157–158.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1984). *Explorations in applied linguistics* (Vol. 2). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Wojtczak, A. (2002, February 1). Glossary of Medical Education Terms, Institute for International Medical Education. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from <http://www.iime.org/glossary.htm> DOI: 10.1080/0142159021000000861
- Yalden, J. (1983). *The communicative syllabus: Evolution, design and implementation*. Oxford: Pergamo.
- Yalden, J. (1987). *Principles of course design for language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yudhistir, S.M.F. J. (2023). “Kerr’s model of Curriculum design and Curriculum development in Education”. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, 12(4), 105–107.