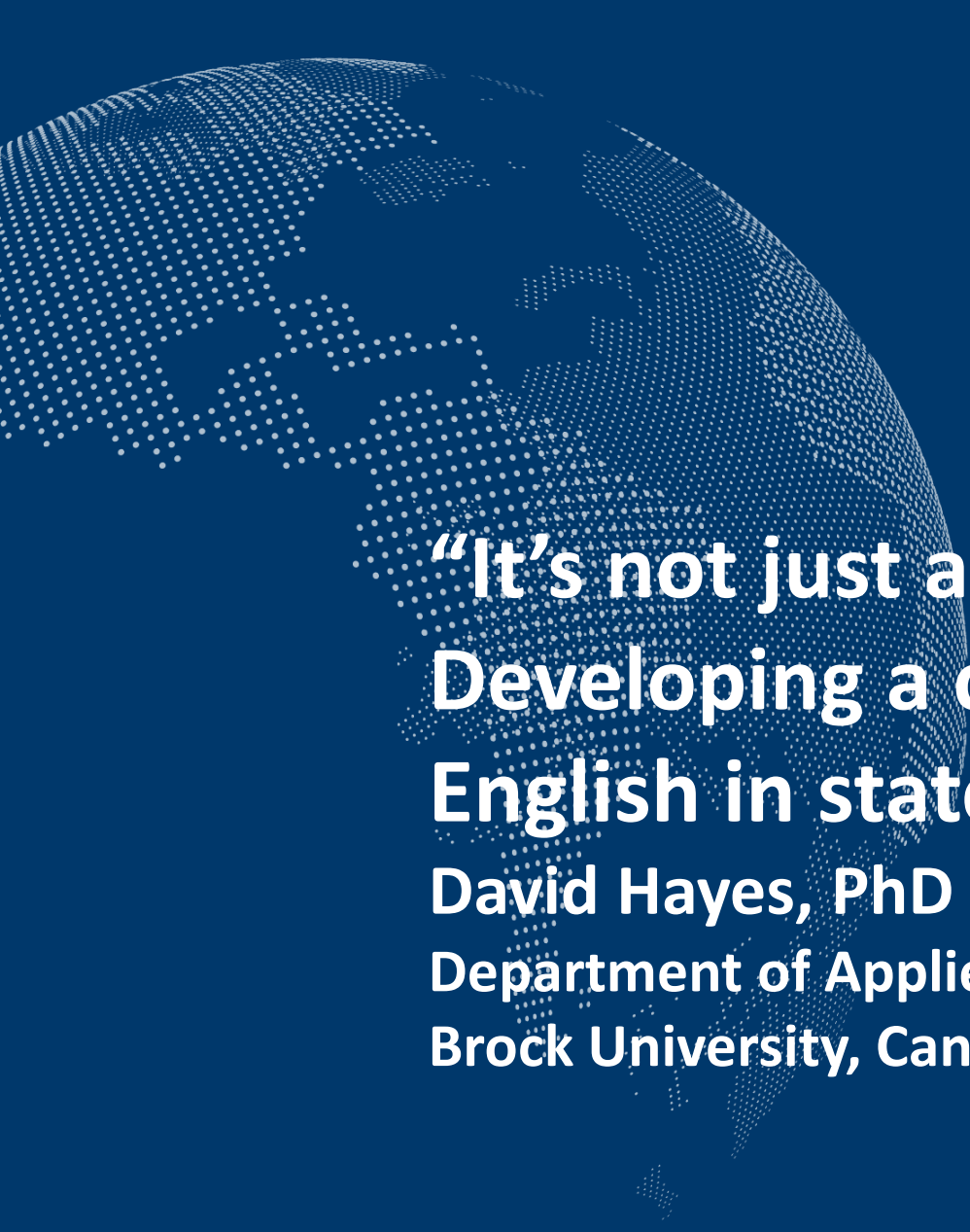




# II Fórum de Língua Inglesa

Elaboração e Implementação de Currículos



**“It’s not just about the language”  
Developing a curriculum for  
English in state education systems**

**David Hayes, PhD**

**Department of Applied Linguistics**

**Brock University, Canada**

# Outline

- Syllabus and curriculum
- The social context of curriculum reform
- Teachers and teaching in social context
- Values in curriculum reform
- Resources in and beyond schools
- Processes in teaching and learning
- English for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Curriculum development and the learners
- Conclusion

# To begin with: syllabus and curriculum

- Syllabus: “a statement of teaching content in the order in which it is to be taught” (Ellis and Shintani, 2014, p. 52)
- We could also add that a syllabus is a statement of content which will also be *tested*
- Curriculum development “includes the processes that are used to determine the needs of a group of learners, to develop aims or objectives for a program to address those needs, to determine an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods and materials, and to carry out an evaluation of the language program that results from these processes” (Richards, 2001, p. 2)
- A curriculum is the broader document, encompassing the syllabus
- It can also be a legal document
- For example ...

# Introduction to Lower Secondary English Curriculum for Viet Nam

“This curriculum document is the legal basis for:

- Managing teaching and learning English at lower secondary level
- Developing guidelines for curriculum implementation
- Compiling and selecting teaching and learning materials, including textbooks, workbooks, teachers’ guidebooks, supplementary materials and electronic resources
- Informing teaching and learning methodology at lower secondary level
- Designing and selecting teaching aids and equipment
- Assessing students’ progress and achievement
- Developing pre- and in-service development programmes for teachers, administrators and teacher educators”

# Types of curriculum

- Today my focus is on ...
- The curriculum **as intended** by policy makers and designed by curriculum developers
- I am not discussing ...
- The curriculum **as implemented** by teachers
- Or the curriculum **as experienced** by students
- Though I recognise how important these are

# The social context of curriculum reform

- A school curriculum is not developed in isolation
- It reflects and encapsulates the values of society at large
- For example, the State Curriculum Framework for English in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh (2007, p. 2) states:
- *“It is our primary objective to reach English to every child of the State and to ensure that the child gains a sufficiently high level of proficiency in it and does not suffer discrimination for lack of it.”*
- It is also a response to changes and expressed needs in society and often the “failure” of the previous curriculum
- We can see this in the introduction to the Basic Education Core Curriculum in Thailand

# Basic Education Core Curriculum. Thailand

“Problems and issues of concern included the [previous] Curriculum’s provisions, application process and results. Among the problems identified were confusion and uncertainty faced by practitioners in educational institutions in preparing school curriculums; the majority of schools were ambitious in prescribing learning contents and expected outcomes; measurement and evaluation did not correlate with the standards set, with negative effects on certification and transfer of learning achievements. Furthermore, issues of learners’ quality resulting from acquisition of essential knowledge, skills, capacity and desirable characteristics and attributes were quite disconcerting.”



# Curriculum reform and social context



- And we can see the relationship between the social context and curriculum reform in this example from Viet Nam

# Introduction to Lower Secondary English Curriculum, Viet Nam

“Across the world today, processes of globalization have seen interaction and interdependence amongst nations growing rapidly. Increasingly, English is seen to be important for national economic development and regional integration, as well as leading to a greater appreciation of other cultures. Simultaneously, information technology has led the move towards knowledge and information-based societies in which English plays a prominent role. [...] Thus, developing communicative competence in English in lower secondary school will provide students with a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure.”

# Values in curriculum reform

- As we have seen a curriculum for government schools goes beyond language and skills
- It also instantiates the values of the wider society, **explicitly** and **implicitly**
- **Explicitly** through a focus on e.g. gender equality, tolerance and respect for other belief systems than our own, promotion of intercultural understanding
- And **implicitly** through the social roles for teachers and students which are represented in the curriculum through e.g. recommended teaching methods
- Let's look at an example of values explicitly formulated

# Values in the curriculum for Lower Secondary English, Viet Nam

“As well as contributing to personal fulfillment, learning English can contribute to mutual understanding and promote a sense of global citizenship. [...] By learning about other languages and cultures, students not only use English as a bridge to intercultural understanding but can also gain insights into our own society and culture. [...] [Learning English] should be done within a framework which fosters the acquisition of lifelong learning skills and cultivates in students sound moral values and a sense of citizenship appropriate to participation in Vietnamese society.”

# Teachers and teaching in social context

- How teachers and students behave in classrooms is strongly influenced by social perceptions of their roles
- ***What is the teacher's role?***
  - The controller of everything that happens in the classroom?
  - The source of all knowledge?
  - A facilitator of students' learning?
- ***What are the students' roles?***
  - Recipients of a teacher's wisdom?
  - Independent thinkers?
  - Co-constructors of knowledge?
- This leads us into a consideration of processes in teaching and learning

# Processes in teaching and learning

- The 'how' of learning in the classroom
- Teacher-centred
- Learner-centred
- Learning-centred
- Consistent with Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories/research

# Processes

- An effective curriculum will be **learning-centred**
- This means the focus is on actions taken by **both teachers and learners** which contribute to learning
- Problems often arise in curriculum reform projects when roles and behaviours advocated for teachers and learners do not fit with society's expectations
- So, while a **teacher-centred** curriculum may be seen as outdated ...
- A **learner-centred** curriculum may be seen as depriving teachers of their accustomed social role as providers of knowledge in the classroom
- A **learning-centred** curriculum attempts to balance roles, with teachers and learners both contributing to the overall goal of student learning
- It also takes account of what we know about **how people learn other languages (SLA)**

# Curriculum teaching-learning processes: Lower Secondary English, Papua New Guinea

- **Teaching and learning**
- English is a practical subject and teaching and learning must reflect this. Learning will be done through practical activities; students will learn by speaking and listening, creative thinking and doing.
- **Student-centred learning**
- The English syllabus uses a student-centred approach as a vehicle to guide and facilitate students' learning. A student-centred approach provides students with the opportunity to practice and develop critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making as well as a range of practical skills and knowledge.



# Papua New Guinea (continued)

- A student-centred approach means that teaching and learning approaches need to be flexible to cater for individual differences and learning should be relevant and meaningful to the experiences and needs of the students. **A student-centred approach allows teachers to be more flexible in determining the most effective ways to help all students achieve the English learning outcomes.** Students learn best through active involvement in their learning; through observation, reflection, performance and taking opportunities to be creative.
- In English, students are encouraged to think critically about what they are learning and to take responsibility for their learning. They learn to teach each other and to learn from each other; to work cooperatively and to work individually.

# Resources in and beyond schools

- Resources impact other aspects of the curriculum – including the teaching-learning approaches – according to:
- Time available (how many lessons per week)
- Electronic resources (e.g. computers; networks – broadband, Wi-Fi)
- Print resources (textbooks; workbooks; other materials)
- Other resources (classroom resources e.g. art supplies; classroom furniture; classroom layout )
- And ...
- Availability of English in the environment
- *How will the resources available in the classrooms on the next slide affect a curriculum?*

# Comparisons of classroom resources



# English for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- The ‘what’ of learning
- English language knowledge and skills
- Skills practised through language
  - Including critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills
- Language content will be specific to the needs of the group for whom the curriculum and corresponding syllabus is intended
- But there is no need to start from scratch
- There are many guides to selecting and sequencing language content on the internet
- For example, consider the British Council – EAQUALS (2010) “Core Inventory for General English”

# Core Inventory for General English

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
<b>Functions</b>	Directions Describing habits and routines Giving personal information Greetings Telling the time Understanding and using numbers Understanding and using prices	Describing habits and routines Describing past experiences Describing people Describing places Describing things Obligation and necessity Requests Suggestions	Checking understanding Describing experiences and events Describing feelings and emotion Describing places Expressing opinions; language of agreeing and disagreeing Initiating and closing conversation Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming or continuing)	Critiquing and reviewing Describing experiences Describing feelings and emotions Describing hopes and plans Developing an argument Encouraging and inviting another speaker to continue, come in Expressing abstract ideas Expressing agreement and disagreement Expressing opinions Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference Interacting informally, reacting, expressing interest, sympathy, surprise etc. Opinion, justification Speculating Taking the initiative in interaction Synthesizing, evaluating, glossing info	Conceding a point Critiquing and reviewing constructively Defending a point of view persuasively Developing an argument systematically Emphasizing a point, feeling, issue Expressing attitudes and feelings precisely Expressing certainty, probability, doubt Expressing opinions tentatively, hedging Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference Expressing shades of opinion and certainty Responding to counterarguments Speculating and hypothesising about causes, consequences etc. Synthesizing, evaluating and glossing information
<b>Grammar</b>	Adjectives: common and demonstrative Adverbs of frequency Comparatives and superlatives Going to How much/how many and very Common uncountable nouns I'd like Imperatives (+/-) Intensifiers - very basic Modals: can/can't/could/couldn't Past simple of "to be" Past simple Possessive adjectives Possessive s Prepositions, common Prepositions of place Prepositions of time, including in/on/at Present continuous Present simple Pronouns: simple, personal Questions There is/are To be, including question+negatives Verb + ing: like/hate/love	Adjectives - comparative, - use of than and definite article Adjectives - superlative - use of definite article Adverbial phrases of time, place and frequency - including word order Adverbs of frequency Articles - with countable and uncountable nouns Countables and Uncountables: much/many Future Time (will and going to) Gerunds Going to Imperatives Modals - can/could Modals - have to Modals - should Past continuous Past simple Phrasal verbs - common Possessives - use of 's, s' Prepositional phrases (place, time and movement) Prepositions of time: on/in/at Present continuous Present continuous for future Present perfect Questions Verb + ing/infinitive: like/want/would like Wh-questions in past Zero and 1st conditional	Adverbs Broader range of intensifiers such as too, enough Comparatives and superlatives Complex question tags Conditionals, 2nd and 3rd Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc. Future continuous Modals - must/can't deduction Modals - might, may, will, probably Modals - should have/might have/etc Modals: must/have to Past continuous Past perfect Past simple Past tense responses Phrasal verbs, extended Present perfect continuous Present perfect/past simple Reported speech (range of tenses) Simple passive Wh- questions in the past Will and going to, for prediction	Adjectives and adverbs Future continuous Future perfect Future perfect continuous Mixed conditionals Modals - can't have, needn't have Modals of deduction and speculation Narrative tenses Passives Past perfect Past perfect continuous Phrasal verbs, extended Relative clauses Reported speech Will and going to, for prediction Wish Would expressing habits, in the past	Futures (revision) Inversion with negative adverbials Mixed conditionals in past, present and future Modals in the past Narrative tenses for experience, incl. passive Passive forms, all Phrasal verbs, especially splitting Wish/if only regrets
<b>Discourse Markers</b>	Connecting words, and, but, because	Linkers: sequential - past time	Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc. Linkers: sequential past time	Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc. Discourse markers to structure formal speech Linkers: although, in spite of, despite Linkers: sequential - past time - subsequently	Linking devices, logical markers Markers to structure and signpost formal and informal speech and writing
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Food and drink Nationalities and countries Personal information Things in the town, shops and shopping Verbs - basic	Adjectives: personality, description, feelings Food and drink Things in the town, shops and shopping Travel and services	Collocation Colloquial language Things in the town, shops and shopping Travel and services	Collocation Colloquial language	Approximating (vague language) Collocation Colloquial language Differentiated use of vocabulary Eliminating false friends Formal and informal registers Idiomatic expressions
<b>Topics</b>	Family life Hobbies and pastimes Holidays Leisure activities Shopping Work and jobs	Education Hobbies and pastimes Holidays Leisure activities Shopping Work and jobs	Books and literature Education Film Leisure activities Media News, lifestyles and current affairs	Arts Books and literature Education Film Media News, lifestyles and current affairs	Arts Books and literature Film Media News, lifestyles and current affairs Scientific developments Technical and legal language

# In more detail ...

A1	
Functions	Directions Describing habits and routines Giving personal information Greetings Telling the time Understanding and using numbers Understanding and using prices
Vocabulary	Food and drink Nationalities and countries Personal information Things in the town, shops and shopping Verbs – basic
Topics	Family life Hobbies and pastimes Holidays Leisure activities Shopping Work and jobs

# Curriculum development and learners

- The ‘who’ of learning
- A curriculum is ultimately designed for learners – the students in school
- Students are rarely – if ever – consulted about their experiences of a curriculum
- If a curriculum genuinely intends to be learning-centred, this is strange!
- The International Conference on the Reform of Secondary Education (UNESCO, 2002, p. 24) recommended that “
- “students need to be the centre of any reform”
- How can we achieve this?

# Involving students

- Conduct stakeholder workshops with students
- Ask for their views on the existing curriculum and textbooks
- Ask for their views on what they think a curriculum relevant to their needs should comprise
- Views of recent school leavers in higher education and in the work force could also be solicited
- These can provide valuable insights into the **curriculum as experienced** and so make a new **curriculum as intended** more relevant to students' needs



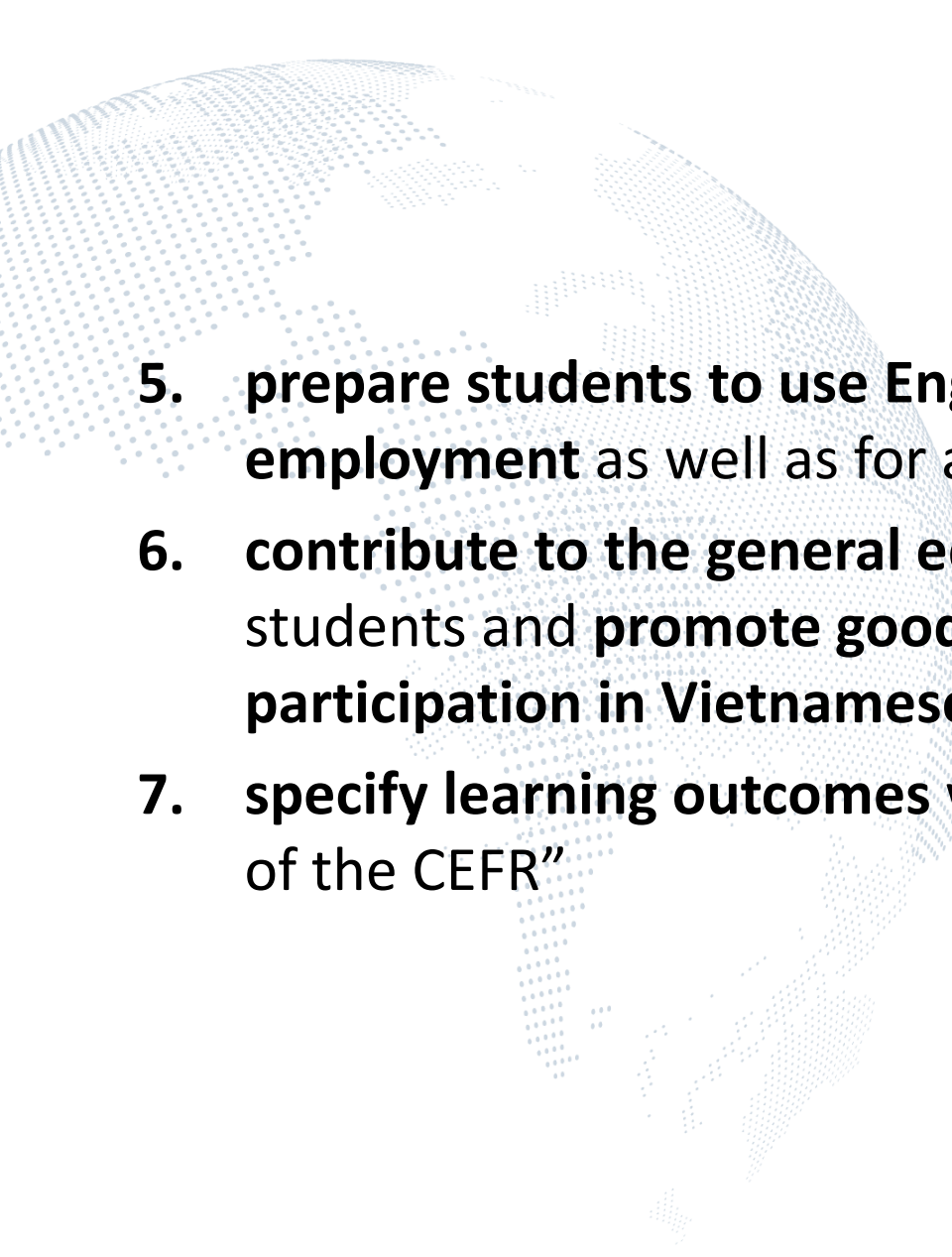
# Conclusion

- Curriculum development for English is multi-faceted
- It needs to consider ...
  - Social roles and values in the wider society
  - Processes of teaching and learning consonant with what we know about SLA
  - English language knowledge and skills required at various levels
- Taking account of all these factors we can then derive basic principles to guide our curriculum development process
- To conclude, I will leave you with another example from Viet Nam – basic principles in curriculum design

# Principles of curriculum design: Upper Secondary English, Viet Nam

“The curriculum will ...

1. **be multi-dimensional**, including themes, topics, communicative competencies and linguistic items
2. **promote the use of the four skills** of speaking, listening, reading and writing equally
3. **be learning-centred**
4. **promote skills for lifelong learning** amongst students
5. **promote learning through various media, including e-resources**

- 
5. **prepare students to use English for immediate employment** as well as for academic purposes
  6. **contribute to the general educational development** of the students and **promote good moral values appropriate to participation in Vietnamese society**
  7. **specify learning outcomes** which are aligned with level B1 of the CEFR”

# The challenge

- The challenge then is to put these principles into practice so as to ...
- Design a curriculum which meets the present and future needs of the students and teachers for whom it is intended ...
- Within the educational system and society of which it is part

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