

PARTICIPANTS	STAGES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT						
	policy	syllabus		programme		classroom	
		ends	means	materials resources	teacher training	teaching acts	learning acts
policy makers							
needs analysis							
methodologies							
materials writers							
teacher trainers							
teachers							
learners							

Table 2: Stages in curriculum development

Consequently, the curriculum can only specify what the students should learn. It cannot effectively determine that the specified areas are learned.

Table 2 shows how the primary participants influence the development of a coherent curriculum. Each set of decisions is determined by the ideal or what Johnson calls the 'designated' specialists (op. cit.: 19). In the final classroom stage, the central place of teachers and learners can reinforce Johnson's notion of a continuing and cyclical process of development which needs to continue throughout the curriculum's life cycle. Consequently, each specialist has a responsibility for making decisions.

Naturally Johnson's insistence on a coherent curriculum must be contextualised by a series of evident constraints, to do with policy and pragmatic issues. Policy constraints relate primarily to those decisions taken at all levels of the curriculum, while pragmatic constraints can be subdivided into two sources of pressure: those from within the curriculum (such as from the teachers, learners, and

education managers participating in the curriculum), and those acting from outside the curriculum, constraints which cannot by and large be controlled by participants. Time and financial pressures are two of the most obvious examples.

Johnson's concept of the coherent curriculum has merit for EFL teaching contexts in that it emphasises the need for 1) constant revision, and 2) involvement and collaboration at each stage by appropriate specialists in a collegial management and pedagogical environment.

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Improving on the mind map: domain networking

Kent Hill questions the usefulness of mind maps.

My issue is twofold: the first is with graphic organizers such as mind maps; the second is with current process-writing methods. The well-intentioned thinking behind mind maps is that they involve starting with simple, main ideas and getting deeper in. But because the beginning of a mind map is a word with a circle around it, which then has lines branching out from it, I suggest that this process does not get deeper in but gets more disperse—and loses focus.

Additionally, mind maps are text-based. In actuality, however, language and the mind (where the writing process occurs) are more complex than just text. There is an important cognitive and conceptual basis to both as well. It is more likely that thought begins within broad cognitive domains and takes its own perspective from within them. Therefore, though text-based methods help students to accomplish the writing process, teachers could be doing



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more to assist students to organize their thinking and produce quality writing.

Secondly, writing textbooks often introduce different kinds of process writing (i.e. comparison, descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, and opinion) but they do not show how to combine them into a coherent essay; nor do they show how they are related to cognition or how combining them can create a thesis statement.

Consequently, in an effort to resolve these issues, a socio-cognitive-based approach to essay writing was developed: *domain-blending* and *domain-networking*. Socio-cognitive learning (Hill 2004) is an approach to teaching, which combines socio-cultural theory (Lantolf 2000) and cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987).

language and the mind ... are more complex than just text

Indeed, considering the brain has a billion neurons and each neuron has ten thousand synapses, simply drawing a circle around a word with some lines coming from it and calling it a 'mind map' seems a bit of a misnomer, if not a mediocre use of metaphor or figurative language. A more accurate reflection of the organization of cognition would have to have at least four domain networking levels—prototypes, spatio-temporal, causation and social roles (MacWhinney 1999). Domain blending underlies these levels by re-evaluating the comparison and contrast essay in a new cognitive context. Normally the comparison is literal, but domain blending involves the use of metaphor and metonymy as basic, comparing and contrasting, meaning-making functions (Fauconnier 1997).

Descriptive prototypes

The typical descriptive essay requires students to describe an object from either a subjective or an objective perspective. This ability to view an object in a very basic way is similar to the cognitive construct of prototypes, or best examples. It is noun-based and can be divided into subordinate, basic and super-ordinate categories. This domain has a mainly word-level focus and the grammar that emerges in students' writing is often determiners or inflections, for example, singular or plural.

Narrative spatio-temporal relations

The most important part of a narrative essay is the plot. Typically, the plot develops in four stages: background, conflict, resolution and ending. These four stages are also important to the organization of cognition. To develop the necessary sequence of actions, this domain incorporates spatio-temporal reference frames. It is activity-based and has a triangular deictic dimension between a speaker—an object—and an environment-centered frame. Temporal relations are also perceived using these three analogous frames, and the perspective matches up with the tense or aspect in the sentence.

Causation or cause and effect

The third level is sentential and is the one that is most centrally involved in the emergence of grammar. This is the system of causal action frames, which allows us to understand the action and centrality of a verb from the perspective of the subject, namely, SVO and transitivity. By understanding the interrelation in the chain of the cause and effect relationship along with a spatio-temporal prototypical basis, students' writing may start to show the structure of reason and logic.

Social roles and opinions

The final cognitive level allows for the adoption of the socio-cognitive perspectives of other human beings. This cognitive level has many similarities to various genres of social interaction such as giving opinions, persuasion, and argument. In terms of its linguistic reflexes, this system involves more salient features of pragmatics and sociolinguistics.

Conclusions

After giving students a topic (e.g. 'The future of ...?' or 'The perfect ...?'), I ask students to try to write five or six examples for each of the four levels and then to choose their favorite from each domain. By combining their favorite from each into one grammatically correct sentence, they then have their thesis statement. In one class, I asked half the students to use the domain-networking matrix and the other half to use a mind map and I found that students using the matrix more often included elements from it in their thesis statement than those who used the mind map.

Each of these domains establishes a partial cognitive reflection of the entire human being; combined, they offer a more accurate map of the mind. Language expresses the integration of advanced conceptual thinking from these four cognitive domains, creating metaphoric and figurative language to form narrations, develop social relations and produce good writing. With this in mind, this short paper has argued for a more psycholinguistic basis for the teaching of writing.

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