

Framework for implementing CBI

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Presented by:

Damaris del Pilar Castañeda Riascos

School of Human Sciences

Linguistics and Languages Department

University of Nariño

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Presented by:

Damaris del Pilar Castañeda Riascos

Advisor:

Helda Alicia Hidalgo Dávila, Ph.D.

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San Juan de Pasto, Noviembre de 2013

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

### **I Love the LORD (PSALM 116)**

I love the LORD, because he has heard  
my voice and my pleas for mercy.  
Because he inclined his ear to me,  
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray, delivers my soul!”  
Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.  
The LORD preserves the simple;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.  
Return, O my soul, to your rest;  
for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.  
For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling;  
I will walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.

*I owe my deepest gratitude to...*

*God for guiding my steps;*

*My parents for giving me their love;*

*My brother and my sister for their unconditional support;*

*My teachers for their wise words;*

*And my friends for believing in me.*

## Resumen

El modelo comunicativo para la enseñanza del inglés denominado Content-Based Instruction (CBI) une la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera a diferentes temas académicos. Según investigaciones realizadas, se evidencia que CBI es un método efectivo en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera cuando parte de un análisis de necesidades del estudiante al inicio del programa. Dicho análisis de necesidades está referido a un proceso en el cual profesores e investigadores descubren las necesidades de aprendizaje de los estudiantes. Para ello es necesario diseñar instrumentos de recolección de datos tales como entrevistas o formatos que permitan extraer información relevante para el diseño de programas CBI. Dicho proceso debe ejecutarse al inicio pues la información obtenida permite diseñar un curso de enseñanza del idioma extranjero acorde al estilo de aprendizaje de los aprendices. Adicionalmente, este modelo comunicativo confiere al estudiante un rol activo/participativo dentro del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje ya que le permite proponer contenidos, actividades y tipos de materiales que se ajustan a sus necesidades. Debido a las ventajas que éste método de enseñanza representa, el propósito de este documento es promover la implementación de Content- Based Instruction en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

**Key words:** CBI, Estudiante como centro del proceso, Análisis de Necesidades, lengua extranjera.

### **Abstract**

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) links the teaching of a FL to several subjects to produce lessons. It has been found to be an effective model to teaching English as a foreign language when it meets the needs of EFL students through Needs Analysis. This is a process in which teachers and researchers discover the students learning needs as a way to devise a Needs Analysis interview or formats, before designing a teaching program to make sure that lessons fulfill particular needs of students and individual learning styles. In this communicative model, learners influence the learning pace, content, activities and material placing the students in the center of the learning process. The aim of this paper is to promote the implementation of Content- Based Instruction in teaching English as a foreign language.

**Key words:** CBI, Learner-centered, Needs Analysis, foreign language teachers

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## Introduction

*If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."*

*— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry —*

If EFL teachers expect their students to be good at English as well as to go beyond the EFL classroom, the aim of EFL teaching must be to strengthen study plans to fulfill learners' learning demands. To do this, teachers need to center the learning/teaching process on students.

For many years teachers and researchers have reflected on the effectiveness of the instruction to find the variables which influence the teaching and learning process of a foreign language positively. As Macdonald (1963, p. 5) mentions "Instruction like any human activity is a complex phenomenon". For this reason, several directions, methods, and approaches have been developed in order to create the best conditions for teaching languages. Against approaches focused on structural features, communicative approaches to teach English were gradually accepted. One of them is Content-Based Instruction which combines language and content instruction. According to Marsh (2002), "CBI refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language" (p. 2).

The implementation of CBI as an educational approach has been increased gradually around the world (Marsh & Langé, 1999), though with different methodological variations because of its flexible nature. Those who are in favor on this educational model believe that CBI methodological benefits are evident not only at linguistic levels but also at content levels. CBI helps to develop communicative skills of the language because this is an educational frame where concepts and foreign language are all integrated in a natural way.

For that, as proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2001), teachers must create a truly learner-centered classroom that sets the basis for an appropriate learning environment. To achieve that, students become the source from where the information for designing the language course as well as the most suitable material for satisfying the learner needs come out.

Also, in the process of designing and implementing a CBI course, a Needs Analysis has an essential role. This term alludes to the actions to gather information that will serve as the basis for designing a curriculum that will fulfill the needs of a specific learners' group (Iwai et al., 1999).

Then, this paper intends to highlight the use of CBI in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language taking as a starting point a Needs Analysis. To do this, the research paper is divided into four parts: (1) Constituents of a teaching method; (2) Content-Based Instruction Method; (3) Learner-Centered approach; and (4) Needs Analysis; in which the connection among those parts will be done in the process. At the end of this section some steps are offered on how to implement a Needs Analysis to create CBI programs based on students' real needs.

The introductory part elucidates the conceptual and terminological ambiguities between the organizational components of the teaching process. It introduces a consistent frame of theoretical principles and teaching procedures where the relationship between theory, research, and practice is clarified. The aim of the first section is to help readers to understand the constituents of a method.

Section two is about the Content Based Instruction Method (CBI). It presents a method analysis because as Mackey (1995, p.139) states "it shows how teaching is done by the books". It means that there is not a case study work where interaction and classroom input can be interpreted; just a review based on what different authors have been writing about this method is

presented. The main objective of this section is to guide readers through a CBI teaching method and to emphasize the essential characteristics that make CBI an effective method to teach English as a foreign language.

Section three is about Learner-centered approach. It is included in the literature review because of its close relationship with CBI models. As it will be mentioned below, CBI courses can only be achieved if the teacher creates a real learner-centered teaching environment.

The four and final part of this research paper states the importance of carrying out a Needs Analysis process before starting a course based on CBI. It describes how classroom language has to be modified in order to provide the learners with accessible and acceptable linguistic input in accordance with their learning needs. The aim of this section is to raise awareness of the relevance of carrying out a Needs analysis in the designing of CBI programs.

Therefore, to start with the first section, constituents of a method will be explored in order to understand language teaching. Here, some fundamental concepts which form language teaching operations will be explained. Those organizational components provide the logical basis behind the language teaching method category proposed in this paper.

### **Contextualizing Learning / Teaching Language Constituents**

Learning languages, especially English, has become more and more important in recent years; the reason given for this phenomenon was that, in the sixteenth century, it became the international language of education, commerce, government relationship among others around the world (Brandl, 2008). Since that moment, learning a foreign language attracted the interest of experts in the languages teaching/learning field. Throughout the two last centuries a great diversity of methods such as the Audio lingual method, the Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, and many others were proposed; however, it is well-known that learning a foreign

language is not a set of easy steps that can be planned. For that reason, several experts consider that there is not a single method that fulfills all learners and programs' aims and needs (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Because of that, the process of learning a language must begin from identifying learners' needs.

For a better understanding of the different theoretical points of view in the evolution of teaching methods, it is essential to make a distinction among the terms approach, method, technique, design, and procedure because of their common usage in this field through their history and because in many occasions they are indiscriminately used. Such distinction is presented from Anthony (1963) and Richards & Rodgers (1982) proposals.

### **Approach, Method, and Technique vs. Approach, Design, and Procedure**

Many studies have been carried out in order to improve the quality of learning- teaching process of a foreign language. To do this, principles and theories about how a language is learnt, how knowledge of a language is presented and how it is incorporated in the learner's cognitive structure, have been proposed. Such principles and theories have been organized in certain categories that attempt to give guidelines that explain the development of a language in formal FL contexts.

### **Approach, Method, and Technique**

Anthony (1963) establishes a hierarchical order in the approach, method and technique (organizational components of the process) as follows:

... An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic (clear, does not need to be proved). It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...

... A method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods.

... A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. (p. 63-7)

According to this framework, approach is the method's theoretical foundation (macro level); a method is the organized planning of the materials and contents (intermediate level); and techniques are procedures, instruments or resources used to achieve an objective (micro level). Even though all the definitions given by the author at that time were simple and clear, with the passing of time, the model presented by Anthony generated a lot of criticism from authors like Clarke (1983) who mentioned that 1) the concept of method was limited; 2) there was ambiguity in the definition given to technique because the relation between the technique and the materials was not appropriate; and 3) the problem with Anthony's model lies in considering the approach from an axiomatic vision, restricting the innovation or modification of the student's behavior as he/she interacts with his/her learning environment. These kinds of criticisms help to generate more complete definitions with higher implications.

### **Approach, Design, and Procedure**

Richards and Rodgers redefine and expand the concepts proposed by Anthony (1963). For them, "Method" is an umbrella term because it represents the connection between theory and practice. Additionally, approach, design and procedures are considered the constitutive elements of a "method"; based on that, the following distinction is done:

**Approach.** According to Richards & Rodgers (1982) “approach” is the theoretical foundation created by two theories. The first one corresponds to the nature of language and the second to the learning of a language. They define it as follows:

It defines those assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning which operate as axiomatic constructs or reference points and provide a theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in classrooms. (p. 154)

**Theory of language.** This theory explains the vision some authors have about the nature of language and also describes the language basic units. Richards and Rogers in their book *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2001, p.20) mention three main theoretical views of the nature of language: structural, functional, and interactional. In structural theory language is considered as a linguistic system which contains elements to encode information. The functional theory is the one in which the language is seen as a tool of communication to express the human communicational needs. Lastly, the interactional theory considers the language as a means of communication that allows establishing interpersonal relations in a speaker’s community.

**Theory of language learning.** This theory explains the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes that take place in learning a language as well as the factors that are beneficial for the process. Theories such as the innatism, cognitivism, and interactionism are the ones that fit best into the theory of language learning.

In general terms, both, the theory of language and the theory of language learning refer to theoretical principles involved in the development of a language. The first one makes reference

to the structure, usage and social function of a language, while the second one to the learning processes of a language as well as the conditions where it is learnt.

**Design.** “Design, specifies the relationship of theories of language and learning to both the form and function of instructional materials and activities in instructional settings” (Richards and Rodgers, 1982, p. 154); This new term, proposed by Richards and Rodgers, replaces what Anthony named as “method” and it refers to the method’s verbal structure because it is possible to find in it: a) the objective methods that are going to be used, b) the selection and organization of the linguistic content (syllabus); c) the kinds of activities carried out by teachers and students and c) the teacher, learner and materials’ role. In short, the “design” puts together the theoretical principles based on the pedagogical tasks inside the teaching/learning process of a language in a formal context.

**Procedure.** “Comprises the classroom techniques and practices which are consequences of particular approaches and designs” (Richards & Rodgers, 1982, p. 154); this term refers to activities that are developed in the classroom which tend to improve the learning of a foreign language, including strategies, resources and classroom interaction processes.

In this section, terms and concepts that constitute language teaching operations in general were examined. However, in this paper, the view in which the “Method” is considered as an umbrella term is embraced because it covers all areas of the process of learning a language. The next section deals with theoretical framework of CBI method. There, aspects such as definition, origin, historical background, theoretical foundation, and CBI contemporary models will be included.



### **Content-Based Instruction (CBI)**

According to CBI programs, learners develop their language abilities as well as gain access to new concepts through meaningful content based on specific purposes. The interest in the implementation of the CBI teaching method has recently increased in EFL contexts especially in countries where English is usually taught as a foreign language (Stroller, 2004). Nevertheless, its application requires to be carried out carefully because there are several challenges for a successful implementation, otherwise CBI may not work (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2004). Some aspects that may interfere with the CBI application may include: inadequate understanding of content knowledge, lack of FL command, and anxiety from both, teachers and students.

#### **Definition of CBI**

Content-Based Instruction has been defined by Brinton et al. (1989) as an approach in which an academic content is incorporated within foreign language teaching in order to generate more effective results. They argue that the curriculum in Content-Based is structured from the analysis of student's needs in which the goal is to help students acquire the information through language learning by working on the development of their academic language skills. Equally, Krahnke (1987) defines CBI as follows: "It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught" (p. 65).

Similarly, authors like Grabe and Stoller (as cited in Orkun, 2006) highlight the degree of complementarity between content and language, where the channel for learning content is language and the source for learning language is content. In accordance with this, Richards and

Rodgers (2001) emphasize that, in CBI, language should be used as a vehicle that leads to knowledge.

Thus, CBI can be defined as a communicative model where a FL is used as a means to acquire information (contents) rather than focusing on language. In this sense, students develop their communication skills in a foreign language through content. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid fragmentation between curriculum content and language learning. This implies that, students can learn both content and language simultaneously.

### **Origins**

Regarding the origins of Content-Based Instruction, some approaches that have emphasized the context of instruction have been developed beforehand. Here “contextualization” was the key term where context and content established relationships. At this point, Communicative Approach proponents like Widdowson, for example, contributed to this new approach by stating that the activities implemented in the teaching and learning process must be based on a meaningful context for students:

... pragmatic equivalence can only be established by considering what utterances count as in context ... the context, whether linguistic within the discourse or extra-linguistic within the situation, will provide the conditions whereby an utterance can be interpreted as representing a particular message or communicative act” (Widdowson, 1979, p.66) .

Nevertheless, according to Brinton, Snow and Wesche (as cited in Madrid, 2001) in order to teach a foreign language, it is not only necessary to contextualize the language through adaptation of structures or functions, but also to introduce authentic material that is

commensurate with the needs and interests of students. This material can be used in foreign language instruction allowing the integration of analytic and experiential techniques.

### **Historical Background of CBI**

According to Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001) CBI history dates back to 389 A.D., when St. Augustine (an early proponent) had already begun to emphasize the importance of teaching a foreign language from meaningful content as it is evidenced in the following quote: "We cannot hope to learn words we do not know unless we have grasped their meaning. This is not achieved by listening to the words, but by getting to know the things signified" (p.4).

Based on the idea expressed above, CBI was taken up in immersion programs in schools conducted in Canada and California in the mid 60's, with immigrant students of different levels that needed to learn the local language and at the same time to continue their studies according to their level of cognitive maturation and intellectual training needs. During that time, the experience gained in this field of education was soon used by methodologists and foreign language teachers who saw great possibilities in CBI as a teaching method. From the late 80's, after the fall of communism, there was a rapid development of the use of English as a teaching means in the subject of the curricula in the Eastern Europe communist countries schools (Bowen, 1997). For many years, courses have included meaningful content and purposes in the professional and academic curriculum study (Freeman, 2000). In CBI, language is acquired through subject matter content using teaching models that integrate practical experiences and theories. Some examples of these models are Languages across the Curriculum, Language for Specific Purposes, and Immersion Education Programs.

As Brinton et al (2001) mention, a model of CBI is Immersion Education, which started in 1965. Here, students are exposed to the target language through communication with a native speaker while learning content in the target language. Another model is Language for Specific Purposes (ESP), in which the purpose is to prepare the learners for the real demands. Some authors consider this model as a goal-directed method which is developed from a needs analysis process (Robinson cited in Orkun, 2006). ESP was first implemented in Britain at professional settings for adults who have already identified their specific objectives (Brinton et al., 1989). Some authors recognize that the demand of the ESP model starts after the Second World War together with the development of science, technology, and commercial settings, making English emerge as an international language (Jordan et al., 1997).

In addition to ESP, English for Academic Purpose (EAP) is another extension of the CBI model. Its history dates back to the time when in some countries English language took an important academic setting being also the medium of instruction. As Jordan (1997) mentions, the EAP purpose is to develop students' communication skills for formal education settings where the courses' focus is the learners' needs. At this point, according to Brinton et al. (1989) EAP matches with CBI because CBI programs should be structured from the academic learners' needs. For this, each particular subject matter follows specific sequences in agreement with the language problems encountered by students (Brinton et al., 1989).

### **Theoretical Foundations of CBI**

**Approach.** There are two principles in which Content-based instruction is centered. First, people develop a FL more easily when people use the language to get information. Second, CBI is a more flexible method because it can be adapted to students' reality.

***Theory of language.*** Richards and Rodgers (2001) found that CBI incorporates elements of functional and interactional views of language theory. Three language assumptions are associated with the theory of language within CBI:

1. Language is text and discourse based: Language learning is beyond the formulation of sentences, and the knowledge to be conveyed or comprehended underlies the nature of language in CBI.
2. Language use draws on integrated skills: In CBI, language is the use of all skills reflecting the real world.
3. Language is purposeful: Language is learned or taught for a specific purpose due to the expectations or needs of learners. (p.208)

The language used by teacher in the classroom should be comprehensible according to students' level proficiency. To do this, teachers could use some language alterations including: First, simplification where language is modified by teachers or teaching experts to facilitate the contents and grammatical structures to the learner. Second, well-formedness refers to the use of academic language textbooks in the classroom. Third, explicitness signifies communicating without using any reduction. Fourth, regularization means to be conscious about standard word order. For instance, despite the English Language follows SVO (subject-verb-object) grammatical order, there are other more complex variations on the structure which should be avoided. And fifth, redundancy means to use extra forms to communicate for emphasizing relevant aspects (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

***Theory of learning.*** In CBI programs, content is considered as a central component. So, learning depends on the quality and quantity of the input. In this respect, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.209) state that "in formal educational settings, second languages are best learned when the focus is on mastery of content rather than on mastery of language per se". Three language assumptions are associated with the theory of learning within CBI:

1. Certain themes, contents or subject matter may be more effective than others for CBI implementation. Some studies demonstrate that one of the easiest subject matter where CBI can be applied is Geography. Also, it is considered that Maps and other visual forms make the material more identifiable and contextualized (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

2. Learners assimilate knowledge best when there is a connection between what the course offers and what the students require from the class (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

3. Prior knowledge and learning experiences are used in class and new teaching material is structured based on what students previously know. So what learners know about language would be the starting point for CBI (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

This way, Richards and Rodgers claim that "People learn a second language most successfully when the information they are acquiring is perceived as interesting, useful, and leading to a desired goal" (2001, p.209). It can be inferred that if learners are concentrating on content (topics, themes, movies, current events in a newspaper article) they will get emotionally involved and interested in the material rather than if they were only learning the language itself.

Similarly, Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989) establish five reasons in order to integrate language teaching and language content. First, depending on learner's purpose, common language used by students should be considered and focused on the functions and form that fulfill their needs. Second, in order to increase students' motivation, the learners' necessities have to be taken into account. Third, CBI is based on the student's prior knowledge of the content. Fourth, in this approach, the teaching process is based on real interaction rather than in isolated language uses. Finally, and according to the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) the context should provide the students with a comprehensible Input.

**Design.** The design of CBI courses includes five components: Objectives, syllabus, types of learning and teaching activities, learner roles, teacher's roles, and teaching materials role.

**Objectives.** In CBI, content objectives and language objectives are established as first step. Although at the beginning, the main objective is content knowledge, language learning will be developed incidentally to the main purpose. Here, if at the end of the learning process, learners show an adequate content knowledge, it will be considered an evidence of successful language acquisition.

**Syllabus.** It will be structured around the content to be taught. Most of the time CBI syllabus is organized using modules centered on specific themes; here, language and academic skills are acquired throughout the course.

**Types of learning and teaching activities.** Stoller (1997) and Mohan (1986) present two models used in CBI as a basis for developing activities. In his model Stoller proposed language skills improvement, vocabulary building, discourse organization, communicative interaction, study skills, and synthesis of content materials and grammar as some teaching/learning categories; while Mohan (1986) suggests a frame based on universal knowledge structures to develop activities such as description, sequence, choice, concepts/ classification, principles, and evaluation. Both models are used by teachers for creating activities in CBI classes.

**Learner roles.** In CBI programs, students have an active role because as Richards and Rodgers (2001) consider, "Learners are expected to be active interpreters of input, willing to tolerate uncertainty along the path of learning, willing to explore alternative learning strategies, and willing to seek multiple interpretations of oral and written texts" ( p.213). It is expected that students take the responsibility for their own learning. Sometimes, they are sources of the content because it is extracted from their learning interests.

***The role of teachers.*** CBI teachers are required to have a good basis of language and content. Also they need to be aware of learners' linguistic proficiency in order to adequate classroom input (language and content). Stryker and Leaver ( as cited by Richards and Rodgers, 2001) propose a list of essential skills for CBI teachers: innovative, dynamic, creative, tolerant, using group work and team-building techniques, negotiator, helping students develop coping strategies, have a good management of content and language. For teachers, CBI is a challenging method that involves being conscious about learners needs, to be flexible and reflective to the learning / teaching process, and be willing to create a truly learner-centered classroom.

***The role of materials.*** CBI principles state that language learning is incidental to content learning; therefore, they are used to teach different subject matters themselves. It is more desirable the use of “authentic material” which should be selected taking into account the students' proficiency level to ensure comprehensibility to students (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In this model, materials promote meaningful learning through non-grammatical content. In this regard, Snow claims that “[...] the form and sequence of language presentation [is] dictated by or, at least, influenced by the content material” (1991, p. 462). It is important to point out that selected authentic material (contents) is not modified but the grammatical aspects are the ones to be adjusted to that content (Brinton et al., 1989). When the preferences for content are met, it is necessary to find a common denominator applicable to the entire group, taking into account the relevance of the topics which should be appropriate for the level of intellectual maturity of the students and which will also provide them with a comprehensible input.

According to Madrid & Garcia (2001) in Content-Based Instruction, students do not only use their four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to communicate in a foreign language, but also interpret, evaluate and re-formulate the contents presented in the materials.



For that reason, it is necessary that students are exposed to authentic material, listen to the instructions given by their teachers in L2, talk about the contents and write reports based on earlier activities.

According to Echevarria (2004) when learners come to school, they come with their own prior knowledge, learning styles, skills, English proficiency level and those things that make them particular. At this point, CBI provides a guide to help teachers develop materials that fulfill all students' features. Taking into account this aspect, Echeverria (2004) proposes eight key components that make content comprehensible for English language learners. They are:

1. Preparation. In an appropriate instructional design, the tasks must be addressed to both content and language by defining clear objectives. It is also necessary to prepare resources, as well as practical activities (letter writing, plays, surveys...) according to students' level. Echevarria (2004) claims that, after determining the learner's language level, teachers must state clear language and content objectives based on what students understand and produce. Also, it is important to provide supplementary materials that give students additional chances and enhance their understanding. Finally, the teachers need to adapt the content according to the student's proficiency level using meaningful activities that integrate academic contents.

2. Building Background. Prior knowledge can be a decisive factor in learning a foreign language in a particular learning environment. For such reason three features are mentioned by Echevarria (2002). First, exploring background experiences which refer to the connection between what students already know about something and what they are going to learn. This leads to an activation process where students build new knowledge by connecting prior ideas. In addition to background experiences, teachers need to establish a correlation between past and new learning. So, it is not enough necessary to activate learners' prior knowledge, but also to

fulfill some knowledge gaps that students might have, that way teachers must find the connection with what has been taught in the past.

3. Comprehensible Input. Contextualization of the foreign language through materials that emphasize the use of language through appropriate speech is a key strategy in CBI programs. Here, it is important to provide very clear explanation to students about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it. Therefore, teachers have to implement some techniques that help students clarify content concepts. For example, clear task instructions, diagrams, and kinesthetic language which help teachers to reinforce what they are saying. However, new vocabulary should be included explicitly to enhance students' comprehension.

4. Strategies. According to Echeverria (2004) there are three types of strategies: Meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socio-cultural strategies. In the first one, students are able to understand, monitor and evaluate their own learning process through the task. In the second one, students apply their own linguistic resources in order to manipulate the contents and express their ideas. And finally, in the Socio-cultural strategies, students build knowledge through both cooperative work and autonomous learning.

5. Interaction. Speakers will not develop their English speaking skills unless they have a lot of opportunities to use it. At this point, activities should promote the student-student and student-teacher interactions. Thus, activities must create opportunities for dialoguing, reaching consensus and discussion.

6. Practice / Application. "Learning by doing". It is necessary to provide a lot of activities where students apply content and language knowledge and at the same time integrate the four language skills in each lesson.

7. Lesson Delivery. Content objectives must be clearly supported by lessons.

8. Review/ Assessment. It is appropriate to evaluate through activities that involve the acquired information and also the use of language through designing tests to promote learning and understanding; in this way, teachers provide learning opportunities to practice the language in a suitable classroom environment.

According to Perez (2003), CBI materials should be structured based on an analysis of needs. To do this, the teacher: 1) identifies what other subjects (math, social studies, natural sciences ... ) have topics that can facilitate the learning of a foreign language; 2) designs the data collection instruments which have as a purpose, to identify the topics, subjects, activities, and teaching methodology that the students like best. 3) applies the instruments in a considerable population sample; 4) analyzes the collected information and selects the subjects, topics, activities and methodology with a higher frequency range; 5) identifies linguistic aspects like grammatical forms, lexical items, and language functions to which the student must pay attention; 6) designs the tools based on authentic material about topics that students like and also analyses the linguistic aspects that can be applied by selecting activities that involve, reinforce and evaluate the student's knowledge.

### **Current CBI Models**

Correspondingly with the CBI principles, Brinton et al. (1989) state that in elementary, secondary, and university education, Content-Based Instruction has developed three instructional models within an eclectic perspective: The Sheltered model, the Adjunct model, and the Theme-based model. Additional to these, Richard and Rodgers (2001) have added other two models: Team Teach and Skills-Based instruction applicable to teaching.

**Sheltered model.** The Sheltered Model was developed to facilitate high quality instruction for English learners when English is taught through content areas. In this model, the

contents are given by a specialist native speaker of the target language and the classes are directed to a discriminated group of EFL students (Brinton et al., 1989). The language level used by teachers is suitable for the specific group of learners in order to provide comprehensible input (Richards and Rodgers, 2001); also, it is necessary to select appropriate texts and linguistic adjustment which facilitate knowledge acquisition (Brinton et al., 1989). In general terms, the Sheltered Instruction model incorporates a subject matter course taught by a content area specialist to a separate class of target language learners.

**Adjunct model.** The Adjunct Model is a kind of instruction that links the content courses and the language courses. In language courses, learners consolidate the linguistic issues but in content course they focus on the subject matter. According to Brinton et al. (1989) both language courses and content share the same objectives and the same tasks. In this type of instruction, students attend classes that focus on content and classes that focus on language in which they will review the concepts learned in the first one. Furthermore, while in the language courses, students are next to native speakers; in content courses, students are separated, so they may develop strategies to improve the content area, which is their primary purpose. At the time that students acquire these skills, they can be transferred to a short instructional context in L2. Stryker and Leaver (1997) believe that the adjunct instruction model increases the students' self-confidence through real life tasks in which students use the language.

**Theme-Based Model.** It was the last model proposed by Brinton et al. (1989) where language courses are organized around specialized topics or themes that allow students to practice their skills. The essential notion of teaching based on the topic is that many different activities are joined together by the content; the topic is executed through all what happens in the classroom and acts as a connecting thread between the students and the teacher (Cameron 2001,

p. 180). In the courses that are designed under this model, the language is linked to the content one. This situation gives the student the opportunity to choose the contents or topics that are going to be presented by the teacher during the course. Inside this kind of designs, there could be a planning stage that looks for the teaching of a FL through a unity that gathers all the topics that are related in one single discipline or several units that present a variety of contents without any connection. The materials that are presented by the teacher represent the basis of the comprehension, the analysis and the practice of the L2 or FL. Its main purpose is to help students to develop the competences that are linked to several topics in L2 or FL. The class is organized as a foreign language class and the teacher is the main responsible for obtaining the material. Into this process, students' collaboration in bringing texts that he/she is interested in is seen as something positive; while the teacher analyzes such material to see if they are suitable or not for the course purpose based on their relevance to the functions and structures. Finally, the evaluation is focused on the skills and language functions.

On the other hand, Richards and Rodgers (2001) propose the Team-Teach model and the Skills-Based model. The former establishes that the materials which are provided for teaching language and content must be consistent with the needs of students and with language learning objectives. The Skills-Based model on its part links the content courses with particular academic skills.

### **Procedure**

The California Literature Project (as cited in Brinton & Holten, 1997) proposes three stages: into (review of prior knowledge), through (presentation of content), and beyond (knowledge practice). However, there are no specific procedures for CBI courses; simply, teachers link activities to the specific type of content that is being used.

As it was mentioned before, it is expected that teachers create a truly learner-centered classroom when working with CBI. For that reason, in the next section a review of Learner centered approach will be presented.

### **Learner as the center of the process in CBI programs**

It has been a really hard process to generate an appropriate environment for learning an FL. Several methods have been carried out as a way to focus their attention on a very specific element into the process, whether the language, the learning, the teacher or the student. In recent models students are considered the central part of the process, who require a deep analysis of their needs as a way to identify the most efficient means to achieve the goal of learning a FL.

In the past, instructors focused on what teacher did rather than what students learned. In this way, students were considered as passive learners who did not take responsibility for their own learning development. As time went by, the learning processes moved towards a different direction, in which the student is seen as the generator of knowledge. This change allows the teaching process to move from the “Instructor-Centered Teaching” approach to the “learner-centered teaching” one (Blumberg, P. 2008).

### **Learner –Centered Teaching**

This is a category where learner needs, expectations, and context are considered fundamental aspects for teaching/learning a language. Its theoretical foundations are based on the idea that the process must not only be focused on the linguistic system but also on the pragmatic one, as a means to develop the communicative competence in learners. The uses of functional language categories as well as the explicit focus on grammar and vocabulary are part of the teaching/learning process. As a result, students develop accuracy in terms of grammar and fluency in terms of communication.

**What is important in a Learner-Centered Teaching Model?**

According to Weimer (2002), there are five points to be considered in the Learner-Centered Approach: the role of content, the role of the instructor, the responsibility for learning, the processes and purposes of assessment, and the balance of power. First, the role of content in this approach is to provide a significant learning environment where students can construct solid knowledge foundations that allow them to develop their learning skills. Second, the role of instruction should be understood as the facilitation of the knowledge rather than the transmission of it. Next, the responsibility for learning includes the creation of an appropriate learning environment where students feel motivated and can assume their responsibilities in terms of learning. Then, processes and purposes of assessment allow students to think about their learning process. Lastly, the balance of power refers to the negotiation between teacher and students regarding the course rules and procedures. These five practices demonstrate the transition movement from Instructor-centered to Learner-centered teaching because they promote a change inside the teaching environment, which confers the students a more active role inside the process.

On the other hand, if language is a system of arbitrary and conventional codes, which allows communication and cultural transmission within a community, its development has to actively involve the learners in formal context where the language has a functional nature. Halliday (1978) states that “Learning a language” involves “learning to mean.” so, he considers that if the student is provided with the right communicative context by means of meaningful and interactive activities, the learner will widen his/her knowledge of the way in which the language is constructed and used.

As it was mentioned before, from the “Learner-Centered Method” view, the teaching process is focused on the student rather than the teacher or instruction. It employs different

communicative methods which displace the role of the traditional instruction in order to facilitate students learning. In those approaches, the learner is considered as the center of the process. Consequently, it is necessary to know the theoretical principles on how a foreign language is learnt.

### **Learner-Centered Method: Theoretical Principles**

At the end of the 60's and the beginning of the 70's, some researches carried out in the field of teaching foreign languages considered that the good command of the linguistic structures of a target language was part of the learning process but that it was not enough to ensure the development of the communicative competence. For example, Newmark (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 115) considers that "complex bits of language are learned a whole chunk at a time rather than learned as an assemblage of constituent items". Also, he adds that focusing only on the form could lead to interference in the learning of a language. He proposes the invention of an alternative method which takes the sociolinguistic theories of authors like Halliday (1973) (functional properties of a language); Hymes (Communicative competence based on sociocultural norms), and Augustin (Speech act) as well as psychological theories such as the cognitivism; and sociology theories involving the construction of social language through communicative models as theoretical foundations. Consequently, it can be said that the "Learner-Centered" category is considered multidisciplinary because it is based not only on the linguistics and psychology disciplines but also on the anthropology and sociology ones, as well as on other sub-disciplines such as ethnography, ethnomethodology, pragmatics, and discourse analysis (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

**Learner-centered theory of language.** The nature of language from this view is understood from different perspectives such as the Chomskyan structural view, Hallidayan



functional view, Hymesian sociolinguistic view, and Austinian speech act theory. Therefore, it is assumed that first, language is a way for transmitting meaning; next, fundamental language units are grammatical and structural as well as notional and functional; afterward, communication is the main objective of language; and lastly, communication is ruled by interaction and interpretation patterns that are part of a speakers community (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.116).

**Learner-centered: theory of language learning.** Cognitivism is the theory that explains language learning based on the cognitive processes that learners carry out to process the input given by teacher and transform it in output. Kumaravadivelu (2006) says that a student develops a language in a sequential mental process where he/she creates, analyzes, tests, and verifies hypotheses about meaningful input. Such learning processes only take place in a communicative interaction between participants, context, and available resources (Breen & Candlin, 1980). At this point, the learner needs to have some communicative abilities such as interpretation, expression, and meaning negotiation. So, from this view, learning involves: first, the learner's ability to express ideas and emotions through language; second, the comprehension of how culture is revealed in the language; third, the practice of the language as a communicative tool to be used inside and outside the classroom; and fourth, the contrast of the target language and its culture with other versions of the target language together with the culture where those versions had their origin (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.119).

**Learner-centered theory of language teaching.** According to Littlewood (1981, p.6), the nature of the language and the theory of learning takes us to observe that the process of learning a foreign language follows communicative models. The author considers that the teacher has the responsibility of: a) creating a suitable environment where the student can develop his/her skills and knowledge as a way to handle and use the linguistic structures

appropriately to express a thought according to a communicative situation in relation to a specific context; b) creating strategies to express meanings according to different circumstances; and c) being conscious about sociocultural rules which influence the use of language. To fulfill those responsibilities, the author proposes that the teacher has to promote meaningful communication in the classroom. To do that, it is necessary: first, to contextualize content; second, to promote group work as a means to generate peer correction and future feedback; third, to design information-gap activities where students can compare their answers with other students; fourth, to use open tasks to provide the student with the opportunity to choose his/her answers and the way to express his/her ideas; fifth, to use authentic language and materials; sixth, to design activities that involve the four skills; and seven, to be tolerant to errors. Here, the idea is to create a communicative teaching environment where students can develop abilities such as negotiation, interpretation, and expression that are taken into account in the learner-centered pedagogy.

### **Teacher's' Role**

Breen and Candlin (1980) recognize two important roles in learner-centered category for teacher: “Facilitator” and “Interdependent participant”. In the first one, teachers facilitate the interaction inside the classroom between learners, activities, and content. And in the second one, the teacher works with students and integrates them actively in the teaching-learning process. To do this, the teachers have to organize the available resources, guide classroom procedures and give clear directions about what students have to do in activities or tasks.

### **Students' Role**

Here, learners have an active role because first, they are the source from whom the information to design a course is extracted (in terms of content, objectives, expectations, type of

task or activities, among others); second, the students are alive entities that generate their own knowledge; therefore they must learn how to negotiate meaning and create their own learning strategies; and third, the student is a social being and for that reason he/she requires the interaction as a way to develop his/her skills and knowledge.

### **Content Specification**

According to the teaching/learning principles, and the roles the participants have, the learner-centered pedagogy selects a product-oriented syllabus because it is concerned with what the learners will know at the end of instruction session (outcomes). Also, it focuses on grammatical aspects and notional/functional categories of language starting from the learner communicative needs. For that reason, Learner-Centered curriculum should provide students with a frame where they can identify, classify, and organize all the language features that are necessary to all the learner's specific communicative purposes. Here, the importance of starting the process from the learner needs is highlighted. On the one hand, Munby (1978, p. 115) says that it is necessary to "ask the question: Who is communicating with whom, why, where, when, how, at what level, about what, and in what way?" as the path to determine the student's needs. From the other side, the Council of Europe, Van Ek (1975) proposed that basic communicative needs as well as grammatical aspects of the foreign language must be identified through a detailed Needs Analysis. In this way, teachers can identify grammatical structures and vocabulary which are necessary to perform a language function as well as to get closer to students' objectives and expectations of the target language.

It can be said that the analysis of the learner's communicative needs play an important role in Learner-Centered pedagogy. Kumaravadivelu (2006) notes some benefits and problems of this analysis. Regarding the benefits, he recognizes that identifying the learning needs of a

learning group can strengthen the process of learning a language because first, it can be more motivating for students; second, it can provide more learning opportunities for learners; and third, it can be in agreement with the student's peculiarities and context. However, Johnson (1982, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006) considers that analyzing each student's peculiarities could become something problematic because each one has their own needs, aspect that may block from focusing on a single function and notion of the target language. In that regard, the Council of Europe proposed, as an alternative solution, the analysis of "Common Cores" of functions related to social areas which are specialized on specific groups of learners.

Next section establishes a framework in order to clarify the connection between Needs Analysis and CBI.

### **The Implication of NA in CBI Course**

The use of CBI in language teaching can be demonstrated in those teaching models where language is developed through subject matter content. It was the case of the best examples of CBI language teaching in 1965: Immersion Education and English for Specific Purpose models (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 1989; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In the former, the students acquired knowledge from all the subjects through the target language; they were exposed to the FL with a native speaker all the time. In the latter model, the students were prepared to face real challenges, for doing that, the learner's objectives were kept in mind.

According to Evan, et al. (1998) what makes these two kinds of the CBI model different from the other English teaching models, is that they are concerned with the student's needs and at the same time connects the contents with the student's real context. Here, the objectives and the rest of the components are originated from a Needs Analysis which shows the path to determine the materials and the course design.

Hence, as Brinton et al. (1989) consider, “CBI should be based directly on the academic needs of students and generally follows the sequences determined by particular subject matter in dealing with the language problems which students encounter” (p. 2). So, CBI courses must be structured from the specific academic needs that are useful as guidelines for the course development. From this perspective, the Needs Analysis should be one of the basic requirements in programs based on CBI as long as the needs are linked to the objectives, the design and the course evaluation (Seedhouse, 1995).

The course design must consider all the components from the formal learning context which must be interrelated between them. The Needs Analysis allows strengthening the union between these components with the objectives and the specific needs from the learner. Based on that, Brown (1995) identified six essential components of course design, highlighting its interaction/relation: Needs Analysis, Objectives, Testing, Materials, Teaching and Evaluation.

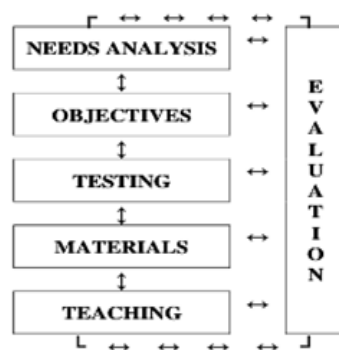


Figure 1: Brown's Systematic Approach to designing and maintaining Language Curriculum.

As it can be observed in figure 01, the Needs Analysis is the starting point that generates the relevant information to structure the components that follow it. Those components are designed to satisfy the requirements discovered in the analysis.

Subsequently to Brown, Masuhara (1998) suggests five components for a course design.



Figure 2: Masuhara's Model of Course Design Procedures (1998, p. 247).

According to figure 02, Masuhara establishes the Needs Analysis as the first component which at the same time generates the goals and learning objectives. After that, the syllabus design is created followed by the methodology and the material to be used. Finally, the testing and evaluation of the process are carried out.

The two models differ in Brown's opinion (1995) because for him, the evaluation is a component that is in a continuous interaction and interrelation with all the components whilst for Masuhara (1998), the evaluation is closely related to the methodology and the materials. Many authors propose that Brown's model is the most applicable because it permits the designers to participate more.

Being aware of the importance of NA in CBI programs, a review about Needs Analysis including definition, types, steps, and means will be presented.

### **Needs Analysis (NA)**

After the emergence of models that tried to optimize the learning of a foreign language, it was possible to establish that the syllabus for language courses must be consistent with the goals the students have for learning the language. For that reason, the course must be designed to be adapted to the students and not vice versa. From here, the communicative approaches that are based on the students' goals, their contexts, their characteristics and learning styles emerged. Such models took the learner's real needs as the starting point in order to create a learning

environment that could satisfy their expectations and at the same time allows learning a foreign language. As a result, these models suggest that the structure and content of a language course need to be established from a Learner's Needs Analysis whose results may contribute to fulfill the learner's language learning needs.

Before expanding the discussion about what a "needs analysis" is in the language program design, it is essential to conceptualize the concept of the word "Need" in the educational environment.

### **Conceptualizing Needs**

In a linguistic context, the term "needs" has been defined by different authors diversely as follows:

- A gap between "what is" and "what should be" (Witkin et al., 1995);
- "A gap between *real* and *ideal* that is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change" (Reviere, 1996, p. 5);
- "Something people are willing to pay for" (wants) or "something people are willing to march for" (demands) (McKillip, 1987);
- "Wants, desires, demands, expectation, motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements" (Brindley, 1984, p.28).

In the educational field, however, the term "need" not only refers to specific requirements of the students but also to their correspondence with the syllabus design in which learners' needs should be implicit (Dickinson, 1991). In general terms, a need is a basic component for the individual that can be perceived as a lack that is connected with the desire to satisfy it with the purpose of creating a suitable environment that generates the most appropriate conditions to achieve a goal.

Inside the educational field and especially all that is part of learning a foreign language, the student's needs play an important role because they affect such process. This is the reason why many teaching models that are focused on identifying those needs before designing the syllabus for foreign language courses have been created. Procedures which are used to collect information about the learner's needs are known as "Needs Analysis" (Richards, 2001: 51). It is worth mentioning that Needs Analysis focuses its attention on what should be done in the future, anticipating the learning needs and opening the way to new solution alternatives.

### **Origins**

The term of "Analysis of needs" appears in 1920 when Michael West set out the questions about "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation" and "how learners might best master the target language during the period of training" (West, 1994). However, the proposal did not raise interest at that time. It was not until after the 1970s when the term came into force in that field.

The Need Analysis in modern language teaching was taken up again by the Council of Europe Modern Language Projects group. The purpose of center of attention on the learners' needs arises from the interest in the design of language courses that could fulfill single and social needs (Martinez 1992, p.135). According to Nunan (1988), in the language planning and teaching field, the "Needs Analysis" dates back to the 1970s. It appears directly related to English teaching models at that time such as: English for Specific Purpose (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and those that were vocationally oriented programs (Brindley, 1984; Graves, 2000). That was the reason why for authors like Richards (2001) "needs" were conceived as language deficiencies that permitted establishing the difference between what a language learner can currently do with the language and what he/she should be able to do.



Around the 80's the teaching of English spread out around the world (Brindley, 1984). This factor generated many "Needs Analysis" studies on language deficiencies and language needs because from its formulation it captured the attention not only from teachers but also from researchers in the field of teaching a language.

Since that time, Needs Analysis arises as a different and significant phase in planning educational programs; it constitutes a component of an approach to curriculum development (Stufflebeam, 1985). Graves (2000) states his position as follows:

Essentially, needs assessment is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students' needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making course decisions based on the interpretation in order to meet the needs. It is based on the belief that learning is not simply a matter of learners absorbing pre-selected knowledge the teacher gives them, but is a process in which learners—and others—can and should participate... When needs assessment is used as an ongoing part of teaching, it helps the learners to reflect on their learning, to identify their needs, and to gain a sense of ownership and control of their learning. (p. 98)

So, it is clear that from this perspective Needs Analysis has a decisive role in the development of a course based on each student individual aspects.

### **Definition of Needs Analysis**

A Need Analysis is a process where the needs of a group of people can be identified or evaluated. This process involves describing problems of a target population in order to find possible alternative solutions to those problems (spring, 2000). Nunan defines the Needs Analysis as "a set of tools, techniques, and procedures for determining the language content and

learning process for specified groups of learners. (1999, p. 149)". In others words, the Needs Analysis is the process in which the researchers collect data in a systematic way about the needs and the preferences of the students. These data are analyzed and used as the basis for the course design (Graves, 2000). This kind of analysis, took place in the notional/functional approach where the focus was in the use of language rather than in the study of the linguistic system (White, 1988).

Richards (1984) recognizes that the Needs Analysis accomplishes three main academic purposes. First, it helps to obtain appropriate information that is suitable for the content, design and implementation of a course. Next, it constitutes a starting point for determining the goals, objectives and content. Lastly, it allows a program to be evaluated and revised, based on the data analysis from the collected information while the course was being developed. On the whole, the Needs Analysis is a complex process which covers syllabus design, selection of course materials, teaching / learning, and evaluation.

Many studies that have been carried out based on the learners' needs, demonstrated the existence of diverse types of needs. These types of needs are classified in those that emerge when the language is used and those that are related to the expectations the learner has towards the language to be learnt.

### **Type of Learner Needs**

**"Target" and "Learning" Needs.** Inside the languages academic field, two conceptions emerged from the word "need": The conceptions of "target needs" and "learning needs". The target needs are concerned with the use of language as well as the role that students need to play in a target situation. Therefore, authors like Hutchinson & Waters define "Target Needs" as "what learners need to do in the target situation" (1987, p.54-63). They also consider that the

analysis of target needs involve identifying “the linguistic features of the target situation or learners necessities (what is English needed for), the lacks (what learner does not know), the desires (what learner feels s/he needs)” (1996, p.55). At this point, it is important to quote the difference that Dickinson (1991) recognizes between the needs (necessities), wants (desires) and lacks terms:

“... needs are those skills which a learner perceives as being relevant to him; wants are a subset of needs, those which a learner puts at a high priority given the time available; and the lack is the difference a learner perceives between his present competence in a particular skill and the competence he wishes to achieve” (p.91).

On the other hand, the learning needs refer to “what the learner has to do in order to learn”, that is, learning strategies to be developed by a student as a way to learn on his/her own. As a result, its analysis is focused on the circumstances where language learning takes place; in other words, the reason why learners take a course, what students are looking for (goals), and which their posture towards the course are (Hutchinson & Waters, 1996:62).

**Objective and Subjective Needs.** As a member in Council of Europe Modern Language Projects, Richterich (1973) identified “objective” and “subjective” needs. Taking into account the “Objective” needs, they are defined as “patterns of language use, and personal resources (including time)” whereas the “Subjective” needs “include the learning strategy, affective needs, learning activity preferences, pace of learning, and attitude towards correction” (Brindley 1984, p.150). According to Nunan, “Subjective” needs also refers to wants, desires, expectations, or other psychological manifestations of a lack (1999, p. 149). As far as the diagnosis for this type of needs is concerned, it has been established that the teacher can diagnose the “Objectives” needs based on the student’s personal profile analysis related to his/her language proficiency and

patterns of language use, while in contrast, the “Subjective” needs are not so easy to diagnose because they depend directly from the student.

**“Content” Needs and “Process” Needs.** Following the same pattern, Nunan (1999, p.149) identified other types of needs in the learner which are called “Content” needs and “Process” needs. To start with, “Content” needs refers to the choosing and the sequencing of vocabulary, grammar, topics, functions, and notions while “Process” needs are related to the election and sequencing of task and experiences of learning.

As Brindley, Evan & John (1998) claim, the process of learner’s needs analysis in language teaching can be carried out before, during and after a learning activity. In this way, the activities can be modified depending on the learners’ situation. When the analysis is performed before, it is called “Initial Needs Analysis” which is directed by teachers or educative institutions. When the analysis is carried out while the course is in progress, it is called “Ongoing Needs Analysis” which is focused towards the student who is facing his/her learning process.

### **Identifying Needs**

A large diversity of media is utilized for gathering information about learners’ needs. Richards (2001) for example, highlights the questionnaires as the most common instruments for such procedure. He also mentions that they are frequently used because they are easy to be designed, to tabulate and analyze the data as well as to deal with considerable number of subjects. In addition to Questionnaires, interviews, attitude scales, surveys, language tests, content analysis, and observations are commonly used as instruments in those procedures as effective ways to gather information.

Robinson (1991, in Tudor 1996, p. 73) considers that the information that is gathered from the several techniques, is derived from two sources: learners themselves (questionnaires, interviews, and tests); and the target situation analysis (observations and case study).

### **Systems for analyzing needs**

Graves (2000) considers six important steps in a “Needs Analysis”. First, it is important to determine what information to collect and why; second, it is paramount to select the best means to collect it; third, it is needed to collect the information; fourth, it is important to analyze the data; fifth, it is necessary to work on the information; and sixth, it is compulsory to evaluate the effect and effectiveness of the action. For the author, those steps provide relevant information to design, implement, develop and evaluate the course because the data gathering follows a cyclic process that provides continuous feedback to the study of the information.

On the other hand, Nunan (1999) suggests that in order to identify the “needs”, first it is necessary to start from the question “What are the skills and linguistic knowledge needed by students to comprehend and produce language for communicating successfully in target language situations?” (p. 151); therefore, the first set of techniques must be designed to gather information about the target language situation. The second set of techniques pretends to gather information connected to the student’s preference content and learning process; it has to be devised to recover data based on the learners.

### **Where does the information come from?**

The information for the analysis emerges from questions or statements that go around an element or parameters that are involved in the process of teaching/learning of a foreign language. One of the most famous systems for analyzing learner needs was “Communicative Needs Processor” (CNP) that was suggested by Munby. It is a model that develops the analysis criteria

that takes as a starting point the communicative purpose that the language has and at the same time establishes that a language course syllabus design could only result later in a previous work on the learners' needs (1978, in Tudor 1996, p. 71).

It was a complex analytic tool that permits course planners recognizing the needs of a group of learners. The identified needs were the basis to create a list of language skills and macro-functions which at the same time, were the basis of the course design specifications as well as the criteria to select the teaching materials (West, 1998). The author establishes eight parameters to describe the communicative needs profile (Munby, 1987). First, Purposive domain: here, the learners and courses purposes are determined; second, setting: time and learning environment where English will be used is specified; third, interaction: it is concerned with the roles in which the participants will encounter themselves in terms of social relationships; fourth, instrumentality: states the means of communication (written, spoken) and the mode of communication (face to face, electronic, among others); fifth, dialect; sixth, communicative event: what the learners have to do with English; seventh, communicative key: the way how learners reproduce the language (formal or informal); and eighth, target level: knowledge, skills, or proficiency obtained at the end of the language course. The aim of Munby's CNP is to discover exhaustively what the learner needs to know in order to act appropriately in the target situation. For doing that, the model uses statements and guiding questions that are related to the elements that influence the learning process such as: Why is language needed? How will the language be used? What will the content areas be? Where will the language be used? And when will the language be used? (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)

On the other hand, Waters (1987) proposed another Needs Analysis model. It is more suitable for the purpose of this document. Such analysis is established from four great questions

that include some others with a lower range: 1) who are the English Language learners? 2) Why are the learners taking the course? 3) How do the learners learn? 4) What sources are available?

Regarding the first question, it is considered as an ELL a person who is learning another language different from its native one. Also, it is a term used in teaching where English is the means of instruction for referring to students who are learning English as a Second Language (García, Ofelia; Kleifgen, Jo Anne; Falchi, Lorraine, 2008). The following aspects should be considered: personal information (age/sex/nationality), knowledge about English, subject knowledge, interests, socio-cultural background, and the vision about English culture.

Concerning the second question, the reasons that motivate an ELL for developing a foreign language are enquired. At this stage, it is essential to be aware of what the attitude toward the language and expectations are as well as the socio-economic status.

About the third question, the cognitive processes that allow an ELL to develop a language are meant to be discovered. It is important to bear in mind the learner's learning background, learning style, concept of learning/teaching and learning strategies.

Relating to the last question, this last guideline comprises the formal context where the development of a target language takes place, what must be taught as well as the materials that facilitate its acquisition. Because there is not a reference framework about teaching materials, this topic is expanded because the materials which are generated from the student's needs, based on the specific contents, are a relevant aspect in CBI programs.

When it is talked about teaching materials and resources in foreign language field, it is referred to a number of means or instruments that promote the teaching and learning process. Madrid (2001) considers that teaching materials accomplishes a mediatic function between teacher and/or teaching process and students and/or learning process.

In accordance with this, Prats (1997) argues that the utility of materials will be evident only if they facilitate the approach of the different methodologies to knowledge, the learning of intellectual skills, and the mastery of the techniques used in the disciplines. Similarly, Blázquez (1989, p.381) suggests that students can manipulate the knowledge through educational materials. So, teaching materials facilitate the reality to be taught and most of the time represents what is explained verbally to help students in their training.

According to Nérici (1973, p. 331), the teaching material has a functional nature that aims to lead the students to develop activities in order to build knowledge. Thus, it provides the opportunity to enrich students' experiences through acting.

Madrid (2001) notes that there is a variety of teaching materials, some of which are visual, others auditory and others integrate images and sounds. Some of them involve varying degrees of participation by the student and others allow students to come into contact with reality. However, the effectiveness of teaching materials depends on the methodology that is used with them.

Regarding the effectiveness of the different types of materials, Edgar Dale (1964) did a research about how students get more information, that is, by what they “do” as opposed to what is “heard”, “read” or “observed”. This research led him to propose a model called "Cone of Experience" where Edgar incorporated several theories related to instructional design and learning processes. The previous study emerged from a needs analysis that emphasizes one of the elements from the guideline question number 3 (How does the learner learn?) because it brings us closer to its cognitive process allowing us to recognize what activities are more effective to teach a foreign language. The outline is divided in three parts that represent the language



communicative functions as well as the necessary activities to carry out the function as we can see:

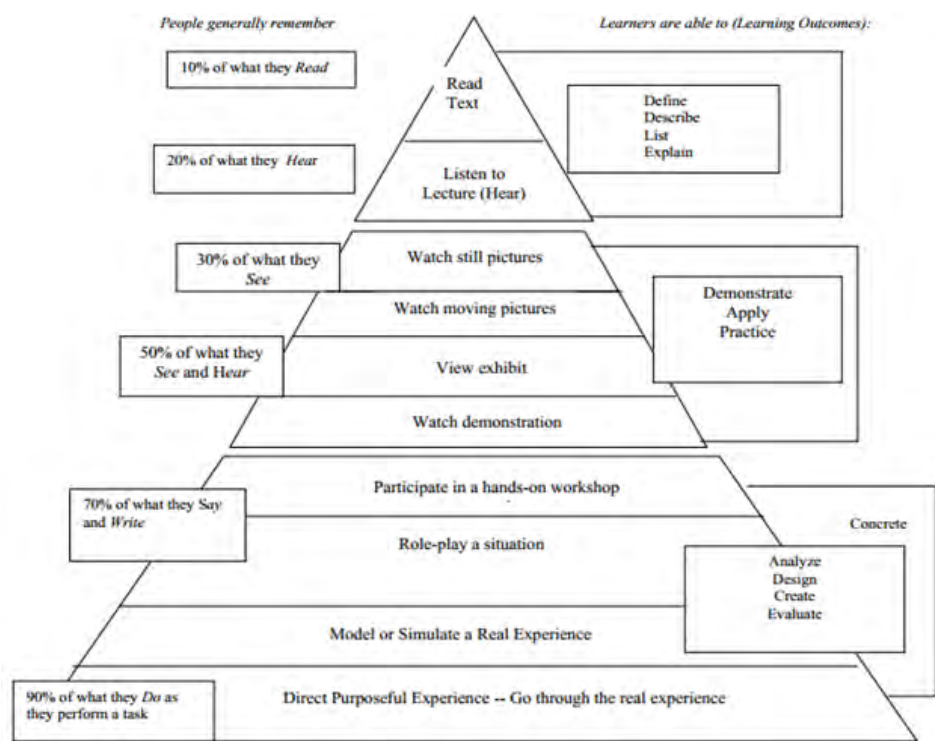


Figure 05: Dale's Cone of experience

According to Dale's research, on top of the cone the less efficient methods are located, that is, verbal symbols, i.e., listening to spoken words. On the contrary, at the bottom of the cone most efficient methods are located which involve direct, purposeful learning experiences, that is, closest things to real, everyday life. In general terms, retention of information is enhanced when students experience real world learning situations.

This overview summarizes the salient features of a Needs Analysis process, from which it is possible to state that, if a needs analysis can be carried out in a FL context, it is fundamental to think about who the foreign language learner is, which these learning and language needs are, which the most suitable materials for optimizing learning are, and what teaching model best fulfills those aspects.

### **Steps for a Needs Analysis to carry out English courses Based on CBI**

The evaluation of needs can change according to the type of need and it is an initial or an ongoing analysis (Evans, et al., 1998). This section will focus on the Initial Analysis because to delimit the options to be investigated, it is necessary to focus on a particular situation. So, first, it is fundamental to select a group of students that are into a specific context where the Needs Analysis will be carried out. In addition to this, a means analysis should be executed, that is, the setting where teaching will take place is explored (Evans et, al., 1998). The information extracted from the analysis must be noted in the chosen instruments for that matter. Graves (2000) considers that the Needs Analysis has a certain number of steps to answer to required questions as a way to achieve the desired purpose, which is to discover the information about the needs that arise in the process of learning a language.

On the other hand, Masuhara (1998, p.240) points out that the first step to carry out a Needs Analysis is to decide the type of information to be collected and why. For doing that, the first stage is to classify the needs into the Needs Analysis based on three aspects: “Ownership (whose needs) learners’ needs, teachers’ needs, and administrators’ needs; Kind (what type of needs); and Source (the origin of needs)”. Not only the type but also the origin change according to the ownership.

**Learners’ needs.** There are three types of needs as well as their sources that can be identified in the learners. To start with, personal needs are based on age, sex, cultural background and interests. Next, the learning needs are based on the learning styles, language experiences, language proficiency, and gaps in terms of knowledge about foreign language, skills and expectations for a course. Lastly, future professional needs are those which origin is long term requirements (FL communicative competence).

**Teachers' needs.** Taking into account the teachers, there are two types of needs that can be identified. First, individual needs which involve sex, age, interests, cultural/ educational background, and foreign language proficiency. Second, Professional needs which refers to teaching experience and preferred teaching style.

**Administrator' needs.** There is only one type of need for this category: institutional needs which are based in the educational policies, resources, salary and socio-cultural needs.

The main purpose is to collect all the information that corresponds to each need, based on that, to design and select the material. Such information must be triangulated from two perspectives: 1) self-perceived needs described and explained by teachers themselves; 2) Needs perceived by people different from the teacher. After deciding the relevant information to be used, the following step is to establish the means by answering the questions: *when, how, and from whom*. Finally, the information that was collected and that is suitable for the purpose will be interpreted. For this procedure it is necessary to have: 1) information from a group of students and teacher. 2) The person who is going to carry out the Needs Analysis; 3) the group of experts that will help to analyze and interpret the information. (Brown, 1995, p. 37)

Through the process of interpretation, the information is refined, providing objective data from the needs that must be satisfied in the learning-teaching process. At the same time, this process will generate not only the objectives but also the preferences the students have, shedding light on the direction of the course and the teaching materials.

### **Steps for Teachers Who Want to design a CBI Program Based on Students' Real Needs in Colombia**

The following steps are suggested to teachers who want to design a CBI program based on the real needs of the students:

**Step 1: Know your Students**

1. Decide what information to collect and why. For example, personal information, student's preferences topics/subject matter, expectations, attitudes toward English.
2. Decide the best means to collect the information (questioner, interview, survey...)
3. Collect the information
4. Simultaneously to the questionnaire, teachers should design a diagnostic test in which linguistics topics that student are expected to know are included. This way, teachers can identify knowledge gaps and level of proficiency.

(See appendix 1: Needs Analysis survey sample for primary school students. And appendix 2: Needs Analysis survey sample for secondary school students)

**Step 2: Find Preferences**

1. To analyze de data
2. Systematize the information
3. Through the tabulation of the questionnaire and test, teachers have to make a list of the subjects and content of students' preferences, which may be integrated into the teaching of a foreign language.

(See appendix 3: Primary School survey Data Analysis sample and appendix 4: Secondary School or vocational programs survey Data Analysis sample)

**Step 3: Integrate Language and Content**

1. Choose central Subjects or topics to be develop during the CBI course
2. Teachers should look for authentic material according to students' subject preferences.  
To do this, teacher can support on books for each subject.

3. Taking into account the results of the gathered information, teachers must design materials and activities considering the needs and preferences of students. To do this, the teachers must explore the themes and decide which linguistic aspect can be worked from that topic.
4. Corroborate the themes with basic standards for each subject proposed by the Colombian Ministry of National Education. These standards provide guidelines of linguistic and content knowledge that must be mastered at each grade.
5. Results by grade must be recorded

(See appendix 5: Result of needs Analysis sample and appendix 6: CBI Course design)

## Conclusion

Content based instruction (CBI) is a communicative teaching method which focuses on learning about something over learning about a language (Davies, 2003). Even though CBI dates back to 1980 in ESL immersion programs, it is now used in EFL settings as an effective model to teach foreign languages. According to Snow & Brinton (1997) and Krueger & Ryan's (1993) studies, CBI is more effective when it is worked on specific student Target Language needs. Brinton (1989) point out that language CBI curriculum should be structured around students' academic needs. Here, learners learn a language and develop their academic language skills as they interact with a great variety of information. In addition to this, Snow (2001) stresses the connection between CBI and English for Specific Purpose (ESP) language course where the learning/teaching elements (materials and curriculum) are designed based on the learner's needs to ensure a successful academic performance.

Likewise, Rhonda Wynne (1997) says that a Learners' Needs Analysis in CBI programs helps the teacher to find out the students gaps between existing skills / knowledge and those that are needed for fulfilling educational setting requirements. Through the results analysis the nature of the need will be identified. At the same time, they will allow choosing the type and means of instruction to satisfy the needs that were found.

In agreement with this, Dudley-Evans & Jo St John (1998) argues that "Needs Analysis" covers the following areas:

- “a) Target situation analysis & objective needs which includes professional information about learners: what they will be using English for; b) Wants, means, subjective needs includes personal information about learners: attitude to English, previous experiences.
- c) present situation analysis which includes English language information about learners:

their current skills and experiences in language use; d) learners' lacks which defines the gap between C and A; e) learning needs includes language learning information: effective ways of learning the skills and the language; h) means analysis includes information about the environment in which the course will be run (p. 125).

On the whole, a Learner's Needs Analysis plays an important role in the design of CBI courses because it generates information that is relevant to by syllabus design, selection of course materials, teaching / learning a course, and evaluation.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Needs Analysis survey sample for primary school students

<b>I. Fill the spaces with your personal information</b>					<b>Date:</b> _____	
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Name: _____						
Place of Birth: _____						
Age: _____						
Date of Birth: _____						
Grade / school: _____						
Address: _____						
Phone Number: _____						
Level: _____						
<b>Students Interview</b>						
<b>II. Mark only one applicable option with an X and/or complete the information.</b>						
<b>Objective:</b> To identify the learners' needs in terms of: learning styles, topics, interests and perceptions that they have in relation to learning English as a foreign language.						
<b>A. I think that learning English is...</b>						
				<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cool	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Boring	<input type="checkbox"/> Annoying	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
<b>B. The subject matter that I like the most is...</b>						
			<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Math	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Other			
<b>The topics that I like the most is:</b> _____						
_____						
<b>C. In my English class I would like to learn by...</b>						
					<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Listening	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching videos	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Participating group works	<input type="checkbox"/> Others	
<b>D. I am taking the course because I want to...</b>						
			<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve my Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> comply with School Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Others			

## Appendix 2: Needs Analysis survey sample for secondary school students

<b>Personal Information</b>									
<b>Name:</b> _____				<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M		<b>Education level:</b> _____			
<b>Hometown:</b> _____				<b>Age:</b> _____		<b>Grade/Semester:</b> _____			
<b>Topics: In my English class, I would like to study topics ...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> About me (feelings, attitudes, Beliefs...): _____									
<input type="checkbox"/> About academic subject: _____									
<input type="checkbox"/> About culture (music, sport, customs...): _____									
<input type="checkbox"/> About current affairs and issues: _____									
<input type="checkbox"/> About Controversial Topics (drugs, abortion...): _____									
<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____									
<b>Language Skills: I want to improve my...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening			<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking			<input type="checkbox"/> Grammar			
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading			<input type="checkbox"/> Writing			<input type="checkbox"/> Pronunciation			
<b>Methods: In my English class I would like to learn by...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> Watching Videos			<input type="checkbox"/> Working in small groups			<input type="checkbox"/> Games: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Studying from textbooks			<input type="checkbox"/> solving problem activities			<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with computers: _____									
<b>Materials: In my English class I prefer...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> Worksheets			<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures			<input type="checkbox"/> Roleplays			
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet			<input type="checkbox"/> Flashcards			<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____			
<b>Assessment: I like to find out how much my English is improving by...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> Doing written tests			<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in class						
<input type="checkbox"/> Doing Pair assessment			<input type="checkbox"/> Working in Projects			<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____			
<b>Expectations: Reasons for learning English ...</b>									
<input type="checkbox"/> I like it			<input type="checkbox"/> My parents like it						
<input type="checkbox"/> It is a requirement			<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____						

### Appendix 3: Primary School survey Data Analysis sample

[illegible]



## Appendix 4: Secondary School or vocational programs survey Data Analysis sample

Grade:			Institution:	Total sts	
<b>Language Skills: I most want to improve my...</b>	<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Materials: In my English class I prefer...</b>	<b>N° sts %</b>
Listening				Worksheets	
Reading				Pictures	
Speaking				Flashcards	
Grammar				Internet	
Pronunciation				Others:	
<b>Methods: In my English class I would like to learn</b>	<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Assessment: I want to find out how much my English is improving by...</b>	<b>N° sts %</b>
Watching videos				Doing written test	
studying from textbooks				Having a pair assessment	
Work in small group				Participating in class	
Problem solving activities				Working in projects	
Others:				others:	
<b>Topics about feeling</b>	<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Topics from academic subject</b>	<b>N° sts %</b>
<b>Topics from culture</b>	<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Topics about current affairs / issues</b>	<b>N° sts %</b>
<b>Controversial topics</b>	<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Others</b>	
<b>Expectations: Reasons for learning English</b>		<b>N° sts</b>	<b>%</b>		
I like it					
It is a requirement					
Others:					

Appendix 5: **Result of needs Analysis sample**

Result of Needs Analysis					
<b>Grade:</b>		<b>Institute:</b>			
<b>FL standards</b>		<b>Subject Standards</b>		<b>CBI program</b>	
Listening: _____		Math: _____			
Reading: _____		Science: _____			
Writing: _____		Social study: _____			
Speaking: _____		Other: _____			
Monologo/ conversation: _____				Content Objective	
				Language Objective	
<b>Subject Matter 1</b>	<b>Topics:</b>		<b>Structures:</b>		[Image, Audio, Video ...]
<b>Subject Matter 2</b>	<b>Activities:</b>				[Input]
	<b>Evaluation:</b>				
<b>Subject Matter 3</b>	<b>Topics:</b>		<b>Structures:</b>		[Tasks]
<b>Subject Matter 4</b>	<b>Activities:</b>				[Evaluation]
	<b>Evaluation:</b>				

## Appendix 6: CBI Course design

<b>Institution:</b>				
<b>TEACHER:</b>	<b>AREA:</b>	<b>SUBTET: ENGLISH</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>ACADEMIC QUARES/SEMESTE R/UNIT</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b> ..... ..... ..... ..... .....		<b>COMPETENCES:</b> ..... ..... ..... ..... .....		
<b>TOPICS:</b> ..... ..... ..... ..... .....		<b>STRUCTURES:</b> ..... ..... ..... ..... .....		
<b>METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES:</b> ..... ..... ..... ..... .....			<b>EVALUATIVE ACTIVITIES</b>	
			Written evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Group work <input type="checkbox"/>
			Oral evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Activity <input type="checkbox"/>
			Quist <input type="checkbox"/>	Worksheet <input type="checkbox"/>
			Presentation <input type="checkbox"/>	Task <input type="checkbox"/>
			Notebook <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Weaknesses in the learning process: .....				
Observations: .....				