

Context and organising principle

LSI has used a Grammar Syllabus for the past 10 years. Whilst lexical and functional syllabuses have become popular for periods of time, a syllabus organised around grammar has always remained a popular choice among students and stakeholders. Its product focus has the advantage of equipping students with a series of high frequency structures in a reassuringly systematic way.

While grammar is the organising principle of the LSI syllabus, it is by no means the sole focus of teaching. Indeed, as an organising principle, it provides a framework to unlock other important aspects of language e.g. functional language, lexis and pronunciation. Teachers are asked to see the syllabus as a base from which to build.

The syllabus has six levels ranging from Beginner (A0/A1) to Advanced (C1/2). It covers two periods of ten weeks which are in turn divided into five two week blocks. This allows LSI to control when certain structures and content are covered in class. This is particularly important given the movement of students between different LSI schools/classes in that it helps to ensure they do not encounter repetition of materials. The length of the syllabus means teaching staff always have fresh resources available: a student could, in theory, remain in the same class for 20 weeks without repeating core material.

The syllabus is designed to ensure that all students, regardless of length of stay or start date, receive some exposure to core structures relevant to their level. It also takes into account the multi-lingual nature of classes at LSI and the different linguistic acquisition orders of students of different mother tongues.

The syllabus is cyclical in this regard, and allows students to move class on any week as soon as Academic Management feel they are ready, regardless of start date, overall duration or number of weeks studied.

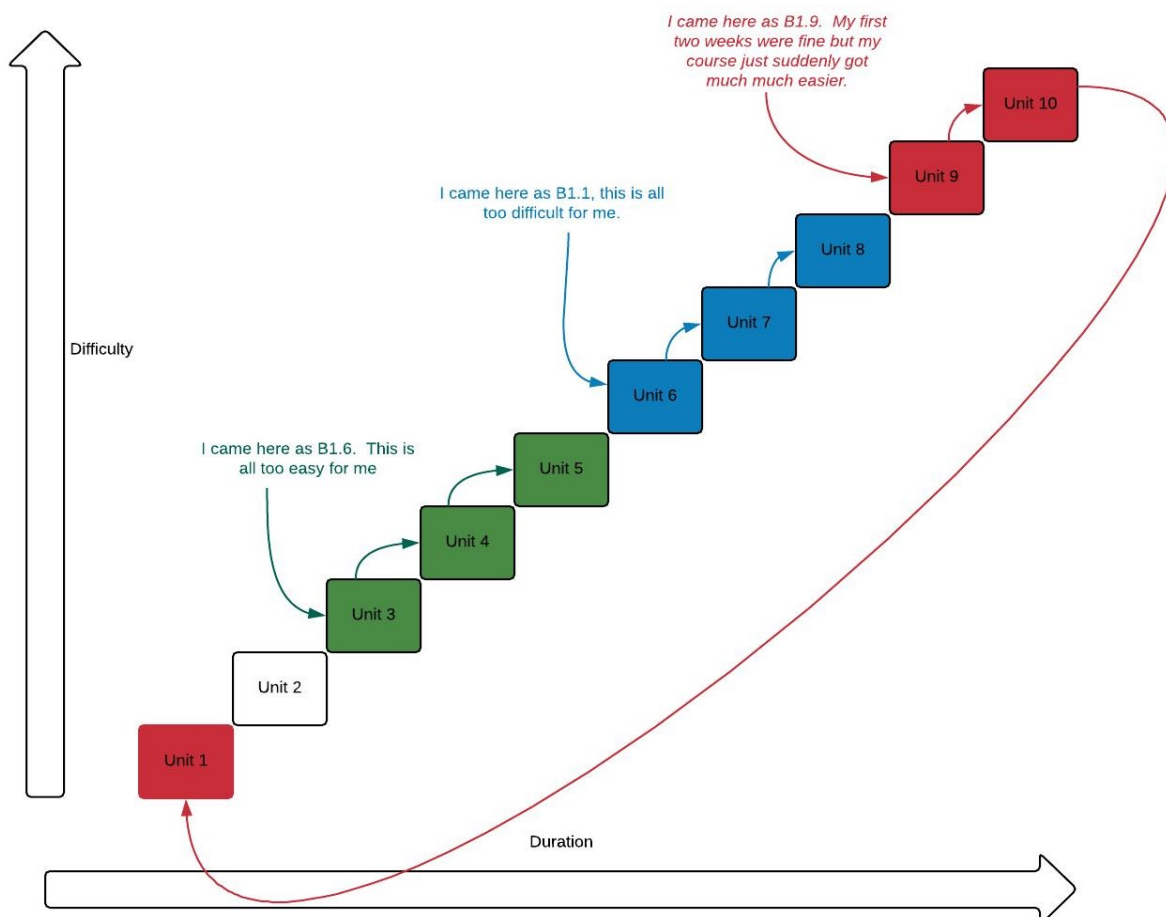
This flexibility recognises and is designed to allow for the different learning styles, progression rates, aptitudes and goals of our wide range of students, and that there is still a wide range of ability within any perceived level. We do not want any student to ever be held back by a system or to needlessly complete a syllabus, large parts of which they may have acquired previously elsewhere.

We use colour coding rather than a numerical system to enhance the idea that the syllabus is cyclical and any beginning or end is based only on the acquired linguistic knowledge of the student.

Similarly, a non-linear approach to the course-book encourages teachers to teach to the level of the class, adapting and supplementing as necessary based on day to day and task to task aptitude. Put crudely, with a linear syllabus, a student on a three week course just starting B1 level could find themselves struggling to cope with Units 8, 9 and 10 of a course book, while a student almost ready to move onto B2 may not be challenged studying Units 1,2 and 3. Likewise, we lose any sense of progression or logic if a student is studying unit 9,10 and

then moves back to Unit 1 in their final week. All of the students who join us do so at some stage through a level.

If we imagine each unit studied through a standard book represents .1 of a level gained, we can see the following:



In addition, when all students are progressing through the book, a level change up represents an entire shift up a complete level. Rather than moving from B1.9 to B2.1 a student would move from B1.6 to B2.6 and likely be out of their depth

A linear syllabus is not necessarily fit for purpose giving the rolling intake, different course duration and learning backgrounds of our students. The LSI Cyclical syllabus, while far from perfect, is a better fit, encouraging teachers to teach to the individual students in their class.

The core syllabus books are New English File and Life, which were selected for their variety of methodology, their quality and the suitability of the topics they contain. Given that these books are used internationally, alternatives (Inside Out, English File 2nd Edition and Total

English) are available if students have seen a lot of the material previously in their home country.

As mentioned, the syllabus is a supporting framework, rather than a prescriptive list of structures to be followed at all costs. This also applies to the course book material. Whilst there is enough material to allow for course book only lessons, teachers are encouraged to supplement from a wide range of resources and to teach 'off syllabus' in response to the needs of their students as and when they arise. To support this, there is a wide range of teaching resources in the staffroom and teachers are encouraged to create their own materials and to use as much realia as possible. To this end, each classroom has a large screen display connected to the internet.

The proportion of 'off syllabus' vs 'on syllabus' teaching might be expected to rise depending on the experience of the teacher, with some very experienced and creative teachers only occasionally referring back to it for underlying content and principle. Regardless, all class content is checked for appropriacy by the Academic Management on a regular basis via weekly plans and student progress and satisfaction closely monitored.

Progress testing, monitoring and outcomes.

Student needs are established during classes and through regular homework tasks. Students are also given the opportunity to articulate their learning needs and short and long term goals by completing their Learning Journals on our LMS, ELSI. Students also attend periodic 1-2-1 tutorials, which take place following every level test.

Level tests are conducted every fourth Friday or Monday. These tests are more summative than formative, focussing on the language and skills expected of students at any given level rather than on the language seen and studied in one particular week. As the tests cover all of the grammar at any one level, students are reminded that a low score is not an indication that they are not making progress, but that there are more linguistic points for them to acquire before they are ready to move up. Many of these they may not yet have encountered. A student who has moved up from an A2 to a B1 class and only been in the B1 class for two weeks for example, may expect to get a maximum of 20% on the grammar section as they have only been exposed to 20% of the B1 syllabus. These tests are as much diagnostic in this regard as they are evaluative.

Communicative and written skills are assessed during the test in relation to class peers and graded accordingly. As such, the level tests are a useful tool in helping teachers and management assess when a student is ready to progress to the next class, or may be struggling. They also allow students to keep track of their own progress.

Test results and tutorials are stored on E-LSI, where students can also check their attendance. This also provides a range of electronic materials for student and teacher use. Morning materials are divided up and accessible weekly. They follow the topic and linguistic areas of the morning syllabus and can be used either as homework, or for self-study. They are designed to be simple in task type, and focus on consolidation.

Tutorial and level test results are linked back to specific study items on E-LSI, focussing the student's attention on errors and weaknesses in what was studied in the two weeks prior to the test. Most exercises can be checked by the student and they are encouraged to see the academic management should they not achieve a satisfactory grade within a few attempts. This ensures self-study and remedial work is focussed, and does not overwhelm the student with linguistic areas they may not yet have encountered, or may not yet be able to acquire (due to L1/learner type etc)

On a less granular level, the Learning Journals help to keep students on track during their studies, and foster and develop a sense of learner autonomy and responsibility. Goals for the course are requested pre-arrival, then discussed and agreed during interview on the first day, with the focus being on realistic aims. This is monitored, amended or extended in class on a weekly basis, with the teacher available to provide guidance.

Students are encouraged to prioritise outcomes and set themselves both short and long term goals, progress against which is self-assessed on a weekly basis. The Learning Journals are all kept on ELSI and easily navigated to assess past goals with a final day evaluation, to help the students assess their own progress and outcomes at the end of their course against their first day goals.

Fluency Materials

The Fluency syllabus is hosted electronically on E-LSI. Each week has a topic which is used as the basis for conversation, vocabulary and skills classes. This topic is the same at all three levels of PM Fluency materials to promote cross class integration, project work and links to the social programme where possible.

The materials themselves have been created by LSI teaching staff from around the world and use Prezi software for increased ease of access and face validity.

As with the General 20 syllabus, teachers are encouraged to see these materials as a base from which to build, designing and adapting materials to suit their class on any given day.

Methodology

LSI encourages teachers to use a variety of different techniques and teaching styles, believing that there is not one correct way to teach or learn and taking into account the diversity of our students, their educational backgrounds and learning styles.

IT provision focuses on user-friendly reliability. PCs linked to flat screen TVs have replaced IWBs and projectors in most cases. This should encourage teachers to supplement classes with internet resources (youtube etc), course book platforms (such as ActivTeach) as well as the content hosted on E-LSI.

Planning

LSI General 20 Syllabus Rationale (Adults)

Taking into account student feedback from Learning Journals and tutorials, lesson content is planned a week in advance by the teacher and displayed in the relevant classroom. These 'Plans for the Week' are checked and passed by the Academic Management at the start of the week to ensure our standards are being maintained and each class is receiving adequate instruction and appropriate content.

Daily lesson plans which divide up the syllabus into individual lessons, are also available, should they be required. In general however, teachers are expected to use the material on the syllabus and any supplementary material to plan their week. Help with planning is available from more experienced teachers, or the Academic Management Team.

Reviewed April 2019 by LSI UK Policies Committee
Next review April 2020

Morning Plan for the Week

Class name:

Week Beginning:

Room Number:

Teacher:

Last week in the Progress Booklets the class asked for:

So in class this week we will be studying:

Grammar:

Vocabulary:

Skills:

Topics:

Signed by
teacher _____

Academic management comments :

Signed by Academic Management: _____