

Learner-Centered Communication

Curriculum;

ESL Curriculum for PCC Low-Intermediate Level 4

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Intro section

This project was initiated as part of the requirements at Portland State University in the Applied Linguistics Department within the Curriculum Design course. This course is structured in a Matryoshka Principle, where we get to experiment with applying course structure to our own experience, while structuring a course, all within the course as guided by Dr Kim Brown. Within this maximal freedom and student autonomy, we were able to determine which linguistic philosophies we would apply, where, and for whom, as well as what method of delivery we would employ. Given all this infinite agency, and through a democratic process, we decided to work within the parameters of the local preeminent adult english educator, Portland Community College. We then began to implement the steps as laid out by McAllister and Nation. This paper largely follows the chapter headings as they guide us through this project.

We discussed our team's skills and decided that a lower intermediate level would be appropriate for our skill level and area of expertise. Within the PCC context lower intermediate would be level four. Level four is broken into three courses. Writing, Reading, Communication. This gave us yet another demarcation. With our commitment to work through this process to prepare our team members interested in pursuing employment there, we felt it most realistic to conform with this three part division of contexts and objectives. This level of limitation was not without controversy within the team. This practical project does demonstrate the breadth of skills required for teaching adult english as an additional language within the existing teaching milieu.

The Teaching Landscape: Context, Constraints, and Opportunities

This communication skills course, designed for low-intermediate, level 4 learners¹ will be conducted at Portland Community College (Program Overview, n.d.). For the purposes of this assignment, we have modeled the course format based on one of our members' current teaching environments and a subsequent needs analysis of that group, which will be discussed later on. The classroom is easily accessible via Trimet bus, light rail, and other public transportation services. It is equipped with two whiteboards, dry-erase markers, a computer connected to a projector, a document camera, and speakers. This course meets two times a week for one hour and fifty minutes each, for a total of 10 weeks, or about 40 contact hours. Homework will be available for students to have extra practice outside of class, but checked only for completion.

The class consists of 21 regularly attending students who form a heterogeneous group, with ages ranging from 28 to 72. They represent a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The students are level 4 intermediate English learners, possessing a foundational understanding of the language; however, their proficiency levels within the intermediate range may vary, which will be discussed further later in this paper. This means that students can use more complex sentence structures and participate in longer conversations that use everyday language. Based on observations of this student population, we expect students to be highly motivated to learn due to a curricular focus on a student-centered approach. Students will care

¹ CEFR level 4 means learners are competent in most social situations and can understand and communicate in most everyday contexts, with increasing ability to handle more complex sentence structure and vocabulary.

about their learning if it is more suited to their personal needs and interests. To support this design, we intend to integrate crowd-sourced materials tailored to their interests.

The instructional team consists of teachers who have an MA in TESOL or an MA degree with "advanced" TESOL training; this information comes directly from the PCC stipulations on their website. The instructors are committed to the full ten-week duration of the course, as well as additional time outside of class for lesson preparation and engagement with instructional materials. While instructors have the flexibility to adapt existing materials or create new and relevant materials as needed, they will not need to develop new materials for this course as there will be sufficient materials provided. Instructors serve as effective models of target language use, demonstrating fluency, accuracy, and intelligibility. Additionally, supplementary resources will be provided to support the effective implementation of instructional materials. For example, these resources may include documents or websites where source materials were found, an overview of other courses within this program to understand the space the students are coming from, and other websites to find more information on different ESL courses offered and their goals.

Theoretical Perspective

The curriculum designed for the Level 4 Communication course at Portland Community College is guided by a student-centered approach to language learning and teaching. In a student-centered approach, meaningful communication, inclusivity, and learner self-agency are core values integrated into educational design. Such an approach draws upon Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in particular, the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) and core principles in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2024). Following the core values

held in a student-centered approach, this curriculum is guided by three supporting pillars: **CLT**, **UDL**, and **social justice**. In a CLT approach to language learning, student interaction is central to the language learning process and enhanced when content is meaningful to the language learners (Brandl, 2021). Therefore, following a CLT model, content for classroom interaction entails material relevant to the language learners resulting in a student-centered approach to curriculum design. As a result, rather than providing predetermined content, this curriculum highlights the important role of social justice in the language learning process through providing the opportunity for student self-agency. In the design of this curriculum, students have the opportunity to guide their own learning process through participating in content design according to student needs. Lastly, in addition to providing relevant content, taking a student-centered approach entails actively incorporating methods to support student learning and engagement. Principles in UDL provide guidance on the various ways to support language learners (CAST, 2024). By presenting content in multiple ways, providing opportunities for students to produce work in various ways, and by providing multiple ways for learners to interact with the content, students' diverse needs are supported.

Central to a student-centered curriculum design that highlights meaningful communication for second language acquisition, is the Interaction approach, which holds that interaction between individuals assists in the learning process (Mackey et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2019). With an emphasis on language in use, the Interaction Approach draws upon Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of a learner's output for language learning and Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which holds that the role of noticing provides the opportunity for learning (Mitchell et al., 2019). Taken together, the Interaction Hypothesis proposed by Long (1996) posits that interaction provides the opportunity for learning

to take place as learners notice issues through feedback in an interaction (Mitchell et al., 2019). In other words, through listening and speaking in an interaction, learners make adjustments in communicating according to what is noticed to be a necessary alteration for successful communication (Mitchell et al., 2019). Therefore, for Long (1996), both input and output play central roles in the language learning process (Mitchell et al., 2019). In taking an Interaction approach in language learning and teaching, such an approach views language learning as an environmental social process where learners' active participation plays a central role.

Given interaction is central to language acquisition, in CLT, an emphasis is placed on student interaction following a student-centered educational model emphasizing meaningful communication. The use of authentic materials, which reflect naturally occurring language resources, such as the use of media and real-life interactions, enhances learning through engaging students in meaningful interaction (Brandl, 2021). Further, authentic materials may be incorporated by student driven selections, which further supports a student-centered approach. Taking an Interaction approach with the use of authentic materials, CLT further highlights student-centered learning by providing task-based activities. Task-based activities prioritize real-world communication rather than a focus on isolated grammatical forms (Brandl, 2021). Classroom tasks, therefore, are designed for student interaction with meaningful subject matter, promoting student self-agency as materials provide a platform for student engagement in their own learning process.

Drawing from Tollefson (1986), as discussed, this curriculum is designed to allow for content that extends beyond the traditional scope in curriculum design for second language learners. Rather than follow predetermined functional language objectives, students are provided the opportunity to be full participants in determining classroom content. This critical

perspective, which highlights the self-agency of the learner in the language classroom, ensures that curriculum content is negotiable and aligns with learners' interests and needs. While a CLT approach highlights the importance of using authentic materials for meaningful interaction, an approach that advocates for supporting students to be full participants in their language learning journey provides students with linguistic empowerment.

Following a student-centered approach, in addition to utilizing principles in CLT and highlighting the central role of student self-agency in content design, this curriculum is designed following the three core principles in UDL, which provide a framework for equitable access to learning, ensuring students with diverse backgrounds and abilities are supported. Following the first principle in UDL, multiple means of representation, material designed for this curriculum is presented in various ways to support learners (CAST, 2024). Additionally, following the second principle in UDL, multiple means of action and expression are integrated, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge through diverse formats, such as speaking, writing, and various multimodal opportunities (CAST, 2024). Lastly, in alignment with the third principle in UDL, this curriculum provides multiple means of engagement by providing multiple ways for students to interact with the content (CAST, 2024). By taking such a student-centered approach in curriculum design, the goal in this curriculum entails providing multiple means of support according to the needs of the language learners.

Needs Analysis

Instructor Informants

While designing this curriculum for an ESOL class, we agreed it was important to gather firsthand insights from experienced instructors to ensure that the curriculum aligns with student

needs, institutional expectations, and effective teaching practices. To achieve this, we conducted both email and in-person interviews while observing classes at PCC. We spoke with three instructors currently working in the ESOL program at PCC. One of the group members is volunteering as a beginner level ESOL teacher assistant. Their mentor, Grace Lee—a former Portland State University MA TESOL graduate—was asked about her experience teaching at PCC, what was difficult about the program and how she dealt with institutional expectations, goals, and assessments. We also gained insights from Tim Krause via email—another former Portland State University MA TESOL graduate—where he explained the areas his students tend to struggle with the most, which activities they enjoyed best, which areas as an instructor he wished he had more time to develop and focus on and how much time outside of the classroom his students spent doing homework. Lastly, we spoke with Brittany, who teaches a comparable curriculum to the one we are constructing. Brittany Wilkins explained the resources she uses for class, what activities she implements, and what the students enjoy doing most.

Student Informants

As part of our research, we had the opportunity to observe Level 5 ESOL communication students during Brittany Wilkins' class at PCC. The class consisted of about 20 students from varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds, each with unique goals, such as becoming a teacher, restaurant owner, florist, interior designer, nurse, psychologist, or even an actor. Many students expressed in class the desire to communicate well in their daily and professional lives, whether by running their own businesses, working in public-facing jobs, or just interacting effectively in their careers. These conversations directly affected our curriculum design, which focuses on essential communication tasks such as making appointments, speaking with teachers at

parent-teacher conferences, and scheduling visits with dentists, doctors, and veterinarians. These real-world interactions require skills that extend beyond grammar and vocabulary, such as the ability to ask and answer questions clearly, confirm and clarify details, and use polite and culturally appropriate phrasing. With the activities in our lesson plan, we hope to provide students with practical tools that not only help them in their immediate language-learning experience but also support their long-term professional and personal goals.

Necessities

The program serves learners at Level 4, classified as Low Intermediate English Language Learners (ELLs). This definition is stipulated by Oregon Adults English Language Proficiency Standards (OAELPS)—the standards that loosely govern PCC curricula—at Level 4 learners can meet basic survival needs, handle routine social demands, and understand simple phrases spoken slowly. They can also interpret simple written materials, such as directions, maps, and menus, and write short messages. These learners are suited for entry-level jobs that involve basic oral and written communication, especially if tasks are demonstrated or clarified orally.

Teachers often self-report learner information when entering the class via a short needs analysis survey that they develop themselves. These surveys assess learners' levels of comprehension, pre-existing knowledge and learning preferences given their respective situations. To mirror this approach, we conducted our own student needs analysis survey among Brittany Wilkins' Level 5 communication students. Our survey gathered information on learners' interests, study habits, work habits, and the kinds of activities they found most enjoyable for learning English. This expanded our perceptions of what these learners might need, rather than relying solely on our own limited perspectives. It showed us how students balance their

educational goals with their daily responsibilities such as work and what instructional methods they find most interesting such as group projects, games, or worksheets. *A copy of our needs analysis survey can be found in Appendix A.*

One significant challenge is the discrepancy between program expectations and the time available for both instructors and students. As Tim Krausse (2025) notes, “the expectations of our programs—and our students—are disproportionate to the time we actually have or the time they can actually devote to class.” Instructors often find themselves addressing students’ social service needs—such as access to food, healthcare, and understanding U.S. academic culture—on top of language instruction. Tim also poignantly observed that outside factors such as national politics and immigration concerns such as ICE enforcement, add another layer to student support. These critical but time-consuming responsibilities reduce the time available for focused language instruction.

Lacks

According to the OAELPS handbook and information gathered from PCC’s course content and outcome guides (CCOG), at Level 3, students focus on foundational communication skills, such as understanding the main ideas of spoken content and responding appropriately in conversations, typically with simpler structures. Level 4 builds on these skills by encouraging more advanced listening and speaking strategies. Students are expected to comprehend more complex language structures and rhetorical patterns, such as cause-and-effect or problem/solution. They start engaging in discussions on less familiar topics, where they may need to organize ideas and articulate a point of view, providing more evidence or reasoning. At this level, students are also expected to handle a greater variety of communication contexts,

including personal, workplace, and academic discussions, with a focus on fluency, organization, and critical thinking.

According to one of our teacher informants, AI is creating new challenges in language learning. One question is whether learners should develop their language skills independent of these tools or be allowed to complete their tasks with the resources they have access to.

Despite these advancements, ChatGPT's responses still rarely appear as natural, as they are oftentimes rather long, hesitant or even obscure (Brunet-Gouet et al., 2023); in linguistic terms ChatGPT does not observe the Gricean maxims of Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relevance (Tao, Agrawal, Dombi, Sydorenko, & Lee, 2023).

What this means is that AI such as ChatGPT produces conversations that can, if imitated by a human, feel overly lengthy, irrelevant to the topic at hand, rude, untruthful and vague. AI can pose challenges for students using it for language learning or writing, particularly because it violates these maxims, and in doing so, does not reflect the natural flow of human conversation that learners would encounter in real-world interactions. This makes it potentially inauthentic as a resource, however, it can still serve other valuable purposes. For example, we each created a lesson plan that incorporated AI to supplement activities and materials, as well as to generate rationales for each. When provided with clear and purposeful prompts, AI can still be effectively used for positive educational outcomes in the classroom. AI is here to stay, and rather than hoping it will simply fade away, both instructors and students would benefit from having the right tools to navigate its complexities. Ignoring its presence is not a solution—learning how to engage with it effectively is.

Wants

The following is based on our teacher informants. The diverse nature of ESOL students at Portland Community College can make it difficult to generalize their needs, as student

backgrounds, goals, and experiences vary significantly across cohorts. As per Tim Krause, in terms of classroom engagement, students generally enjoy interactive and dynamic learning experiences. Activities such as games, social projects, and collaborations—particularly those involving small group work and jigsaw exercises—tend to be well received. Digital media that reflects current technological trends is appealing, so long as students have access. Guest speaker and authentic materials also contribute to an engaging classroom environment.

We conducted a student needs survey to better understand the preferred learning activities and topics of our students. The results indicated that, overall, students enjoyed partner discussions and group work as their most effective methods for learning English. However, due to the small sample size of approximately 16 students, there was significant variation in the topics that interested them. Some of the most commonly selected topics included immigration, making appointments, and communicating with their child's teachers. Given the limited scope of our survey, we recognize that these preferences may not be representative of all learners at this level. To mitigate sampling bias, this curriculum is hypothetically designed specifically for the group of students who participated in the survey, ensuring that it aligns with their expressed needs and interests.

Observation and Analysis

Observing language learners of varying levels assisted with both necessities and wants. One class contained beginner-level learners. Though this is not the level we are focusing our curriculum on, the information gathered is still relevant and insightful. One observation is that learners tend to group themselves based on a shared primary language, which can serve as an auxiliary support system. This learner-preference to collaborate with peers with the same primary

language reflects a deeper cultural dynamic, as language is not only a tool for communication but also an indication of identity and community. The preference to collaborate with other students who share the same primary language aligns with research on translanguaging, which discusses how multilingual learners use all of their linguistic resources to support learning and social connection. This concept will be explored further in the research section of this paper.

Pronunciation challenges observed at the beginner level also have direct implications for Level 4 instruction. Many learners exhibit phonetic or syntactic transfer from their primary language e.g. the learners with Spanish as their primary language typically add a prefix schwa particle to [/s/ + consonant cluster] i.e. Spain becomes eSpain. Russian speakers struggle with articles and determiners i.e. a and the; this is due to the fact that Russian syntax does not utilize this feature. This is more of a concern from learners, as our curriculum encourages language fluency.

In our student needs analysis given to Brittany's class, a significant portion of learners reported that pronunciation was their greatest challenge and the area in which they most wanted to improve. This is somewhat ironic given that our curriculum is grounded in the idea that learners at this level may not always be perfectly understood. Instead, our goal is to support their intelligibility, prioritizing fluency over accuracy. We aim to help students navigate the cline of formality and proficiency in ways that best serve their personal and professional lives (Hornberger & McKay, 2010, p. 91). However, if pronunciation proves to be a key concern for certain learners—such as those whose primary languages are Vietnamese, Malay, Thai, or Chinese, and who may struggle with incorporating final consonants—then addressing this need becomes a valid and necessary part of the curriculum.

Being able to see the strategies used for the beginner-level learners is also insightful e.g. a higher-cognitive-load learning objective calls for a less complex activity and vice versa.

Observing that beginner-level learners rely heavily on specific learning strategies as well such as scaffolded repetition, visual aids, and translation tools such as learners' phones, informs us better how low-intermediate learners transition from remembering, understanding, and applying into analyzing, evaluating and creating (Blooms Taxonomy, 1956, as cited in Macalister & Nation, 2020, p. 93.)

Review of Previous Research

Research on translanguaging as discussed by Dr. Sunny M. C. Lau and languaculture, as discussed by anthropologist Michael Agar, highlights that leveraging students' language and culture can facilitate comprehension and accelerate progress rather than hinder it e.g. the learners grouping themselves in accordance with their primary languages (Agar, 1994, p. 183), (Garcia, 2016, as cited in Lau, 2020). Allowing students to use their first language strategically—such as for clarifying instructions or discussing difficult concepts—can support their ability to engage with English more confidently. In a Level 4 curriculum rooted in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), this insight suggests that translanguaging can be incorporated as a method of scaffolding rather than discouraged (Hornberger & Mckay, 2010, p. 292).

Cultural differences observed at the beginner level, such as variations in receptivity to feedback and group work, emphasize the need for culturally responsive teaching. Agar wrote that grammar and vocabulary alone were not sufficient for learners, providing only rich points without frames. "Rich points" happen when language learners come across moments of confusion because something in the new language or culture doesn't match what they expect. These moments can feel frustrating at first, but they actually create opportunities to ask

questions, make adjustments, and develop a deeper understanding of both the language and the people who speak it (Agar, 1994, p. 142). For learners, speaking grammatically correct English without properly framing the situation first might communicate something different than what was intended (Agar, 1994, p. 143). Because the classroom has such a diverse range of learners, there are many cultures to take into consideration. The Russian learners for example, are much less likely to ask for help, when suggestions are made or feedback given, they are quick to agree, regardless of actual comprehension—they value their independence which affects their learning style.

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Learner-based Curriculum

We aimed to have an inclusive design curriculum based on the learners' subjective needs and desires. Inclusive design is not a universal curriculum that is supposed to work with everyone; instead, it is about making everyone feel included. It can be difficult when learners in a classroom do not all share the same primary language. All ESOL classes at PCC have diverse sets of learners e.g. the Russian learners were much less likely to ask for help and value their

independence which affects their learning preferences. Being culturally responsible in curriculum design involves acting as a "cultural detective." You cannot truly understand what learners need or how to help them without first identifying the root cause of their struggles—asking, where did the problem come from? By acknowledging the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners, we can better understand the specific challenges they face and offer more tailored support. For example, both Brittany and Grace act as cultural detectives by creating Excel spreadsheets that house their students' circumstances, such as primary language, work schedule, and other factors influencing their learning. This approach aligns with critical theory, which emphasizes understanding power dynamics and cultural contexts in education. The critical theorist James Tollefson advocates for examining how language policies can perpetuate inequality and how educators can address these disparities. By having a critical perspective, instructors can identify and lessen biases, aiding in a more egalitarian curriculum. In designing this curriculum we tried our best to ask what is it that learners wish to do with the language most? One of our primary goals was to identify the most important elements of the level 4 communication class, more specifically, realistic goals that would provide the most opportunities for these low-intermediate learners and protect them from linguistic discrimination, as described by Sandra Lee McKay (Hornberger & McKay, 2010, p. 93).

Goals and Objectives

The curriculum goals in this course are best viewed within their context. The course that we are writing this curriculum for is one of many courses within an eight-level ESL program. Each level of these eight levels and each course within each level has had objectives assigned to it. This process is meticulously manicured such that there is a logical flow from absolute beginner to college ready English speaker. The goal for this complete eight level course of

instruction is to provide learners with effective language knowledge for interacting in a variety of communicative settings (OAELPS Handbook), focusing on career readiness with the possibility of continuing academic pursuits in preparation for careers. It should be noted that we could not find any textual basis for this OAELPS standardization within PCC's online corpus, however all of our teacher-informants indicated that this is their standard.

At the risk of being overly specific this course is intended to take a student who has completed PCC's level 1, 2, and 3, as well as level 4 reading and level 4 writing and prepare them for level 5. To reiterate, this course exists within a structure of 18 courses. And the portion of the complete standardized curriculum assigned to this communication course emphasizes both productive and receptive activities; with an emphasis on developing more advanced speaking and listening strategies to understand "more complex language structures and rhetorical patterns such as cause-and-effect or problem/solution" (OAELPS Handbook). Reading and writing tasks are the focus of the other two courses at this level, when employed in this course it is primarily to prepare for communicative activities.

The topics covered in this learner-centered curriculum focus on preparing students to interact in four different situations (talking to a teacher, a doctor, a dentist, and a vet). These themes were expanded from students' responses to their areas of interest concerning making appointments (based on feedback from the Needs Analysis Survey).

Lessons re-introduce grammar by contextualizing grammatical structures and features within the real-world context for verbal communicative needs. Vocabulary and verb forms are deemphasized, though with our commitment to learner guided content, we do need to introduce some based on their relevance to the specific focus of each lesson. With the emphasis on fluency

over grammatical accuracy, learners acquire skills in communicative competence through a variety of engaging activities working in pairs and groups to enhance collaborative learning.

Building on their existing knowledge of the English sound system, learners gain more advanced practice with pronunciation, to achieve intelligibility and comprehensibility (Smith and Nelson, 1985).² **Pronunciation is therefore monitored primarily to ensure that learners are effective in their oral productions, so there is less emphasis on 'correct' pronunciations.**

The curriculum provides additional suggestions and resources to encourage the learners' self-efficacy, including research-based learning strategies (such as writing daily journal entries), understanding the needs of the individual learner, and the influence of motivation on learning outcomes.

Goals

We are using the majority of the intended outcomes for the level 4

Communications course at PCC as a basis for the goals for this curriculum.

However, two of the original goals were adapted for our course, because we felt they did not reflect the learner-centered focus of our curriculum. Thus,

the goals for the PCC Communication course are as follows: Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

² Intelligibility is the ability to recognize individual words; Comprehensibility is the ability to understand the message (Smith and Nelson, 1985).

- Understand oral communication as a process that involves determination of purpose, selection and adjustment of strategies, comprehension checks, and integration of prior knowledge with new knowledge to address the communicative purpose.
- Use knowledge about language, culture, and context to prepare for and accomplish communication tasks at the low intermediate level.
- Use listening skills to understand and respond to different types of discourse.
- Produce spoken English that is mostly understandable with some repetition or clarification.
- Begin to identify and correct basic pronunciation problems.
- Deliver a planned presentation on a familiar topic.

The adjustments to these goals restated the latter two on the above list.

First, to emphasize a less-prescriptive formula for addressing the learners' speech. Second, change the presentation to a role-play activity to reflect the interactive nature of communication for their final culminating assessment.

Our goals for this curriculum are, therefore, upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand oral communication as a process that involves determination of purpose, selection and adjustment of strategies, comprehension checks, and integration of prior knowledge with new knowledge to address the communicative purpose.
- Use knowledge about language, culture, and context to prepare for and accomplish communication tasks at the low intermediate level.
- Use listening skills to understand and respond to different types of discourse.
- Produce spoken English that is mostly understandable with some repetition or clarification.
- **Recognize and adjust basic pronunciation differences that influence comprehensibility and intelligibility.**

- **Perform a roleplay activity from one of the contexts from the course.**

Objectives

Within the outline for this course the phrase “communicate at the appropriate level” does a lot of work. To back this up there are three separate detailed lists of points that the students will be able to use. These lists are the result of dividing out big lists of standardized requirements into long multi-course sequences. See Appendix A for the complete list, in the next section we will be addressing this in greater detail including how we determined what of it to focus on.

The objective then for this course will be to teach the students to communicate orally while leaning on the specific objectives in the previous two courses. This will be done to leverage our understanding of building long term memory through review and novel repetition.

The Learning Objectives list after we trimmed some redundancy that was covered in the other courses, and after the decision to broaden the interpretation of public speaking, (to include prepared conversations such as appointment making and progress report meetings)

Learning Objectives List

1		Pronunciation
	1.1	Consonants, Vowels, Stress, and Intonation
	1.2	Increase awareness and pronunciation of final consonants, especially grammatical markers.
	1.3	Recognize common sound substitutions that interfere with meaning (e.g. /iʏ/ and /ɪ/).
	1.4	Identify syllables and word stress in familiar words.
	1.5	Understand and use basic sentence stress patterns and common reductions.
	1.6	Understand and begin to use basic intonation patterns.

2		Critical Thinking Skills
	2.1	Follow written and oral instructions.
	2.2	Distinguish between formal and informal speech contexts.
	2.3	Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details.
	2.4	Avoid plagiarism.
	2.5	Preparation of a thought/argument with an introduction, body, and conclusion.
	2.6	Distinguish main ideas and details.
3		Public Speaking
	3.1	Use of notes (note cards or the topical outline) while speaking.
	3.2	Primarily extemporaneous delivery of statement
	3.3	Primarily extemporaneous Answering questions (from the audience)
	3.4	Appropriate presentation skills, including appropriate voice projection, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, and stance, with focus on the audience, not on any visual aids.
	3.5	Use of visual aids at the teacher's discretion.
4		Listening Comprehension
	4.1	Use prior knowledge of culture, language, and context to understand and interpret the message.
	4.2	Identify own purpose for listening and take notes or complete tasks accordingly.
	4.3	Listen and use information to complete a task (e.g., hold a discussion, finish a dialogue, find a location on a map, choose a restaurant).
	4.4	Use strategies to check comprehension and repair comprehension breakdowns (e.g., asking for clarification or repetition).
	4.5	Recognize stressed words in a sentence.
	4.6	Apply knowledge of basic grammar structures and vocabulary to aid comprehension.
	4.7	Identify strategies for improving listening comprehension outside the classroom setting.
5		Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
	5.1	Participate in discussions and other communicative activities.
	5.2	Use language functions, such as negotiating meaning, asking for clarification and repetition, expressing agreement, and giving advice, in a culturally appropriate manner.

5.3	Use questions to ask for information, clarify, and follow up.
5.4	Answer questions asked by classmates.
5.5	Understand the culturally-determined nature of non-verbal communication.
5.6	Identify strategies to improve intelligibility.

Within the context of an existing college that operates within a funding structure it is common that courses are held to standards. Administrators lean on the existing National and Regional bodies that are related to the structures that fund the institutions that they oversee. The result is an earnest effort and a detailed list of stepwise progressions to achieve an Homunculus whose animism is academic force of will.

Our solution was (counter-intuitively) addition. We took these two lists that we have stated are already too long and we added to them a third list based on content. We will discuss this in more detail in the following section.

Scope and Sequence

Within the context of the real world context that we selected, there was no textbook assigned for this course or level. As a result we were free to build a Scope of content that matched the results of our needs assessment. The Results of the survey are shown in the table below.

Survey Results excerpt:

What topics do you want to study?	Number of votes	% of votes
Talking about immigration	5	35.7%
Talking to your boss	1	7.1%
Talking to your child's teachers	2	14.3%
Talking about Citizenship	3	21.4%
Making appointments	2	14.3%

Other:	5	35.7%
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Within the current political environment some of the team members did not feel it appropriate to teach a course about Immigration or Citizenship. As a result we went with the next most popular content topic requests: ‘Making Appointments’ and ‘Talking to your child’s Teacher’.

Within these two topics our team discussed potential ways to subdivide this content. Making appointments got broken down into two categories: who we make appointments with and the forms and pragmatics of making appointments. In our attempt to performatively listen to the results of the needs assessment we looked at the data from the interview portion of the surveys, based on this we picked Doctor, Dentist, and Veterinarian appointment making.

In order to transform the context of ‘Talking to your child’s Teacher’ into a unit with subunits for this course we decided on again a two-dimensional breakdown. First a unit on the norms, culture and structure of the US education system, and second, how to gauge, measure and navigate your child’s progress within this context.

The layout proposed by our team breaks down as follows when laid out across a ten week term with Class introductions, review days, test days, and Finals.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Module</u>	<u>Weekly Focus</u>		<u>Module Lesson n.</u>
1	1	INTRO	Intro	Ice breaker + student needs survey	
	2			Course Outline+	
2	3	Talking with your child's teacher	US Ed System	US Ed System - 101 for parents	1
	4			US Ed System - Pragmatics (calls, emails, conference)	2
3	5		Student Progress in the US	Student Progress - Achievements	3
	6			Student Progress - Issues	4

4	7			Student Progress - Solutions	5
	8		Meeting Agenda -Student progress	Building an argument, timing pragmatics, logic, clarifying questions	6
5	9		Module Review		Review
	10		Test		Test
6	11	Making Appointments	Doc	Describe Issue + Phone skills vs in-person (speaking)	1
	12			Understand numbers and schedules + Follow-ups (listening)	2
7	13		Dentist	Describe Issue + Phone skills vs in-person (speaking)	3
	14			Understand numbers and schedules + Follow-ups (listening)	4
8	15		Vet	Describe Issue + Phone skills vs in-person (speaking)	5
	16			Understand numbers and schedules + Follow-ups (listening)	6
9	17		Module Review		Review
	18		Test		Test
10	19	Review	Course Review		Review
	20		Course Final		Test

This above sequence shows the logical flow of content establishing a scope. This stepwise progression allows for continuous scaffolding and some use of spiral sequencing. We wanted to build this to maximize retention through naturally occurring revision. We also felt that these contexts offered opportunities to teach naturally occurring forms of English that these students will be encountering in their lives, again to maximize the potential that they are able to apply and thereby review this content in their daily lives.

The next step was to integrate the standards into this content-based sequence. We decided on a matrix approach, to spiral through the objectives. This allows us to structure the objectives and the reviews around a logical progression. With both of these halves mocked up it was possible to arrange the weekly focus and sub unit items to match with a matrix of the learning objectives. By

finessing the two together, and after a few rounds of this process, we came up with the Scope and sequence that you can see below:

Week	Lesson	Module	Weekly Focus					
1	1	INTRO	Intro					
	2			1.1		3.1		5.1
2	3	Mod# 1	US Ed System				4.1	5.2
	4						4.2	5.3
3	5		Stud't Prog.	1.2			4.3	
	6				2.1		4.4	
4	7				2.2	3.2		
	8		Meeting Agenda	1.3	2.3			
5	9		Mod#1 Review					
	10		Test					
6	11	Mod# 2	Doc	1.4	2.4	3.3		
	12						4.5	5.4
7	13		Dentist	1.5	2.5	3.4		
	14						4.6	5.5
8	15		Veterinarian	1.6	2.6	3.5		
	16						4.7	5.6
9	17		Mod#2 Review					
	18		Test					
10	19		Course Review					
	20		Test					

Assessment

The design of this curriculum includes both formal and informal assessments. For formal assessment, students are given role play scenarios based upon content covered during the course.

Informal assessments include exit-tickets and participation in class activities. Evaluation of class participation includes monitoring student contribution to all class sessions, observing the learners during pair work activities, determining student verbal competencies, assessing student ability to complete in-class work, and interpreting the students' language competencies throughout the course.

For out-of-class work, teachers may assign homework for students as preparation for the following class, graded for completion only.

The final assessment (mentioned above) is a collaborative assignment that allows students to demonstrate their learning in a role play. Like project-based learning, this culminating assessment enables students to perform in a hypothetical scenario reflecting a real-life appointment situation.

Other benefits of role-play include giving flexibility for students to choose an appointment context that is most meaningful to them and providing learner empowerment to perform the task (Christison & Murray, 2014). Providing students with some options for engagement helps to meet the goals of the learner-centered curriculum by generating interest and motivation (CAST, Inc. 2018).

The assessment of the culminating roleplay activity is primarily teacher-based, however, peers may provide feedback on the performances of their classmates (Christison & Murray, 2014), which would be considered for their final grade.

Opportunities for Development

The course content for the level 4 Communications class outlined by PCC (cite CCOG for ESOL 44N) provided the basis for the curriculum designed by our team. However, we made some adaptations to the course design given the perceptual mismatch between their standards and our emphasis on a learner-centered approach.

The major changes were as follows: there is no explicit teaching of new grammar in our curricula since the focus areas are on speaking, listening, and some attention to pronunciation. However, reviewing previously learned material including the necessary language structures and vocabulary ensures that students can communicate appropriately in the appointment contexts.

In addition, our intended outcomes for the course differ from those of PCC in two additional areas: the evaluation of pronunciation and the form of a final assessment.

Concerning pronunciation, as mentioned in the section on the curriculum goals, all students are viewed as legitimate speakers of English, regardless of their L1 transfer.

Although PCC appears to follow this underlying viewpoint, the stated outcomes for the course include the “correct[ion] of basic pronunciation problems.” Since we believed that the terminology conveys a more negative evaluation of learners’ speech, we chose to emphasize the principle that learners should aim to make the necessary adjustments to their pronunciation to achieve intelligibility and comprehensibility (Smith & Nelson, 1985).

Lastly, we changed the summative assessment from a planned presentation to a role-play activity. Although there may be some benefits to delivering a presentation for a communications class, role-play is a more appropriate assessment measure since the curriculum aims to prepare students to interact with professionals during an appointment. Therefore, it was important for learners to demonstrate their ability to perform in this type of situation by the end of the course.

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Appendix A

Student Needs Survey						
We are Student-Teachers at Portland State University learning to make courses that meet the needs of students.						
1.	Name (optional):					
2.	Age					
	0-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 60
3.	Did you take the Level 3 course? (YES/NO)					
4.	Do you plan on taking the level 5 courses? (YES/NO)					
5.	Do you do homework? (YES/NO)					
6.	How many hours a week do you practice or study outside of class?					
7.	What do you have the most trouble with?					
	a.		Listening			
	b.		Speaking			
	c.		Pronunciation			
	d.		Public Speaking (giving a speech)			
8.	What activities do you like best to learn English?					
	a.		Talking to a partner			
	b.		Group Projects			

	c.		Games
	d.		Worksheets
	e.		Quizzes or Exams
	f.		Other(s):
9.	What language are you best at?		
10.	What did you like or dislike about your past school experiences?		
11.	What topics do you want to study? Select as many as interest you:		
	a.		Talking about immigration
	b.		Talking to your boss
	c.		Talking to your child's teachers
	d.		Talking about Citizenship
	e.		Making appointments
	f.		Other:
12.	a.		Do you work? (Yes/No)
	b.		If Yes, how many hours per week do you work?

Appendix B

Student Needs Survey Results