

National English Program

in Basic Education Second Language: English



Curricular foundations

Preschool • Elementary school
• Secondary school

Phase of expansion



Fomentar la lectura
mejora la educación y la cultura

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PRESENTATION

The legal principles established in Article third of the Mexican Constitution, the educational transformation encouraged by the 2007-2012 *National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo)* and the objectives outlined in the 2007-2012 *Education Sector Program (Prosedu: Programa Sectorial de Educación)* have established the leading basis to provide direction and sense to the actions in public education policies in Mexico.

Within this framework and based on the attributions granted by the General Law of Education (*Ley General de Educación*), the Secretariat of Public Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*) proposed as one of Prosedu's fundamental objectives to be achieved by 2012 "to raise the quality of education so that students improve their level of educational achievement, have a means of accessing to a better well-being and thus, contribute to the national development".¹ The main strategy for attaining such objective in Basic Education is "to carry out an integral reform in Basic Education, focused on the adoption of an educational model based on competencies that corresponds to the developmental needs of Mexico in the XXI century",² envisaging a greater articulation and efficiency among preschool, elementary and secondary school.

¹ SEP (2007), *Programa Sectorial de Educación*, México, p. 11.

² *Ibidem*, p. 24.

Prosedu has also established that “the criteria for quality improvement in education must be applied to teacher training, the updating of curricula and syllabus contents, pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and didactic resources”.³ Simultaneously, Unesco⁴ has indicated that educational systems are to prepare students in order to face the new challenges of a globalized world, in which the contact among multiple languages and cultures becomes more and more common every day. In this context, the educational system is compelled to help students understand the diverse cultural expressions in Mexico and the world.

It is from this perspective that the Secretariat of Public Education acknowledges the need to include English as a subject in the curricula of preschool and elementary education, as well as to make the necessary changes to the Second Language: English subject curricula in secondary school. The articulation of the teaching of English in all three levels of Basic Education has the aim to guarantee that, by the time students complete their secondary education, they will have developed the necessary multilingual and multicultural competencies to face the communicative challenges of a globalized world successfully, to build a broader vision of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world, and thus, to respect their own and other cultures.

In order to carry out the actions that enable the articulation of English teaching, the Secretariat of Public Education has implemented the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE, or *PNIEB: Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*) from which syllabuses for the three levels of Basic Education are derived. Such syllabuses are devised based on the alignment and standardization of national and international standards, the selection of criteria for teacher training, the establishment of guidelines for the design and evaluation of educational materials, as well as for the certification of English language proficiency.

As shown in the following chart, the NEPBE includes diverse in-class testing stages and phases of expansion, which have the purpose of collecting data that may offer valuable information regarding the pertinence of the approach, the contents of the syllabuses, as well as the organization and articulation through the four cycles of the NEPBE.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁴ Delors, J. et al. (1996), *La educación encierra un tesoro. Informe a la Unesco de la Comisión Internacional sobre la Educación para el siglo XXI*, Madrid, Santillana/Ediciones Unesco, pp. 31 y ss.

CHART 1. NEPBE IN-CLASS TESTING STAGES AND PHASES OF EXPANSION

CHART 1. NEPBE IN-CLASS TESTING STAGES AND PHASES OF EXPANSION				
STAGE OR PHASE	SCHOOL YEAR	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	First in-class testing stage.	Cycle 1 (Preschool 3 rd grade, Elementary school 1 st and 2 nd grades).		
	Phase of expansion for generalization.		First phase of expansion of Cycle 1 (Preschool 3 rd grade, Elementary school 1 st and 2 nd grades).	
	Second in-class testing stage.		Cycle 2 (Elementary school 3 rd and 4 th grades).	
	Phase of expansion for generalization.			Second phase of expansion of Cycle 1.
				First phase of expansion Cycles 2 and 3.
Third in-class testing stage.			Cycle 4 (Secondary school 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd grades).	

The aforementioned stages and phases will enable the collection of data regarding the support that teachers need in order to develop the expected competencies and learning outcomes, as well as the implications the new curricular proposal has in the school organization. This way, it will be possible to assess curricula, both academically and pedagogically, and incorporate the necessary adjustments before they are generalized in preschool and elementary schools. In addition, the results of this experience will allow to provide better resources for the generalization of the curricular reform in all the elementary schools of the country.

From the curricular reforms carried out in Preschool (2004), Secondary school (2006), and Elementary school (2009), the following leading principles were established from the curricular articulation in Basic Education:

- a) Basic Education graduate's profile, which reflects the proficiency level that a student must hold when graduating. Each and every subject of preschool, elementary and secondary levels should aim to help students achieve this profile.

- b) The competencies for life that must be developed during the three levels of Basic Education in order to participate in society and solve practical problems, thus improving life and coexistence standards in an increasingly complex society.
- c) Curricular achievements indicate progress made by students; they express the expected competency level of development, and they provide a synthetic description of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values students can achieve after having studied one or more content units in a subject's curriculum.

Consequently, since the incorporation of Second Language: English as a subject is stated in the Integral Reform in Basic Education, curricular approaches previously carried out in preschool, elementary and secondary school are mentioned repeatedly throughout the current document.

Secretariat of Public Education

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary society, predominantly governed by information and communication technologies, requires citizens with the competencies needed to insert themselves within a globalized changing world. Basic Education is responsible for providing students with the opportunity to develop these competencies. Thus, in order to accomplish the aforementioned, it assumes the need for students to acquire some fundamental skills, such as the use and command of these technologies and the command of at least one non-native language.

From this perspective, the *2007-2012 National Development Plan* (PND, for its initials in Spanish), in Axis 3, *Equal Opportunities*, points out as its twelfth objective: “to promote integral education of people in the complete educational system” and indicates that “[for education] to be complete, along with the abilities to learn, to apply, and to develop knowledge, it should address the appreciation for ethical values, good citizenship, history, art and the culture, and languages”.⁵ Likewise, as a measure to reduce the disparity in the quality between private and public schools, the PND proposes that the latter should offer “the possibility to study extracurricular subjects related to sports, arts, culture and languages”.⁶

⁵ Presidencia de la República (2007), *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007-2012*, México, p. 190.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

At present, the teaching of English in Basic Education within the Mexican public educational system is only compulsory in secondary schools. However, during the last few years significant efforts have been made to include the English language subject within the elementary school.

In the national context, the endeavor carried out by 21 federal entities in generating their own English programs for elementary education is acknowledged. However, the fact that these are not at a national level has made their operation extremely heterogeneous in aspects such as coverage, achievement levels, types of contents addressed, as well as teaching hours. In some cases, this has hindered the continuity of proposals in the subsequent educational levels. This situation has generated the need to design syllabuses for the teaching of English based on current regulations (not only for secondary schools but also for preschool and for all grades of elementary education) and to create conditions so that these can operate with equity and quality in all Basic Education schools in the country.

To respond to this need and based on what PND and Prosedu have established the 2011 Curricular Map for Basic Education opens two spaces for the teaching of English: preschool and elementary education. Since English is part of the educational field of Language and Communication, this is integrated into the curricular map as Second Language: English. Thereby, it assures its consistency with the subject of Spanish and its articulation with preschool, elementary, and secondary education. As shown in the following curricular map, the Second Language: English subject thus has, for the first time in its history, a place within the Basic Education curricula.

The fact that the Elementary School Reform –which came into effect during the school year 2009-2010– includes the teaching of English, undoubtedly represents some progress. However, the possibility of putting this teaching into practice is limited by the shortage of teachers trained for this purpose.

Therefore, it is worth explaining that the in-class testing stages and phases of expansion for the syllabuses of Second Language: English in Basic Education follow a different scheme from those of other subjects. This can be seen in a couple of distinctive features:

1. Their design is organized by cycles and not by school grades, which guarantees continuity and articulation in the different grades and levels in Basic Education. Thus, the program for Cycle 1 comprises 3rd grade of Preschool, and 1st and 2nd grades of Elementary school; Cycle 2 includes 3rd and 4th grades of Elementary school; Cycle 3, 5th and 6th grades, while Cycle 4 includes 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of Secondary school.

2011 CURRICULAR MAP FOR BASIC EDUCATION

CURRICULAR STANDARDS ¹	1 st SCHOOL PERIOD			2 nd SCHOOL PERIOD			3 rd SCHOOL PERIOD			4 th SCHOOL PERIOD		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
EDUCATIONAL FIELDS FOR BASIC EDUCATION	Preschool			Elementary school						Secondary school		
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION	Language and communication			Spanish						Spanish I, II & III		
			Second Language: English ²	Second Language: English ²						Second Language: English I, II & III ²		
MATHEMATICAL THINKING	Mathematical thinking			Mathematics						Mathematics I, II & III		
EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL WORLD	Exploration and knowledge of the world			Exploration of Nature and Society			Natural Sciences ³			Science I (emphasis on Biology)	Science II (emphasis on Physics)	Science III (emphasis on Chemistry)
	Physical development and health						The state where I live			Geography ³		
										History ³		
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR COEXISTENCE	Personal and social development			Civics and Ethics ⁴						Civics and Ethics I & II		
				Physical Education ⁴						Tutoring		
	Artistic expression and appreciation									Artistic Education ⁴		

¹ Curricular Standards for: Spanish, Mathematics, Science, Second language: English, and ICT Skills.

² For students who are speakers of an Indigenous language, Spanish and English are considered second languages to the mother tongue. Second Language: English is in process towards its generalization.

³ They foster the learning of Technology.

⁴ They create educational links with Natural Sciences, Geography, and History.

2. They are open and flexible, since they offer guided sequences of contents that enable the teacher to carry out the adaptations demanded by specific scenarios of the complex Mexican educational system reality:

- Contents are basic and they are defined by two main categories: *Social practices of the language* and *specific competencies with the language*. This allows contents to be covered according to the learning progress of the students and the needs that communicative situations demand to tackle such contents. Thus, the relationship between contents and their transversal reading is guaranteed.

From this perspective, the Basic Education program for English teaching faces the challenge of redefining its object of study so that the selection, presentation, and organization of contents is feasible to the social practices of the language both, in school and out-of-school contexts. It is worth mentioning that the *social practices of the language* and the *specific competencies with the English language* presented throughout the four cycles of the NEPBE, acknowledge the disciplinary underpinnings and learning contents of the subject. Among other reasons, as stated by L. Arnau and A. Zabala, this is because:

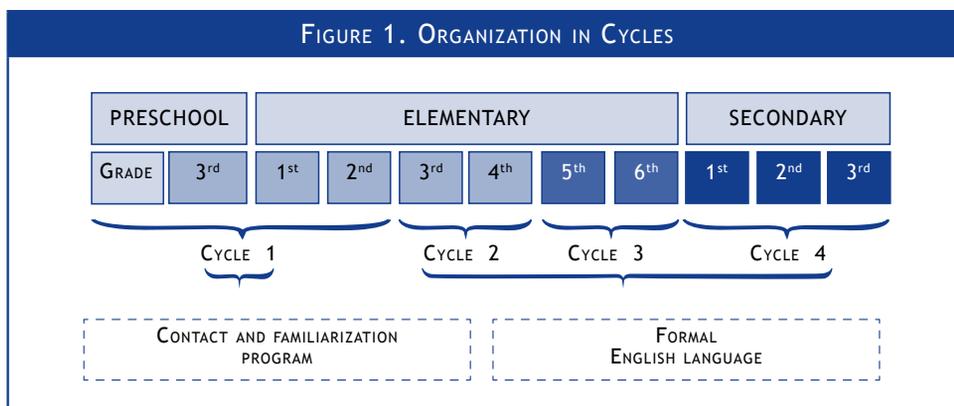
Every educational project entails an intention, which sets its results for a future application and is therefore essential. Educating does not have an immediate intention, its purpose is that what is now being taught and learned within a school context, is used someday in the real world, when the knowledge, skills, or attitudes once learned become necessary. Therefore, these will never be used as they were once taught in the classroom [...]. What is going to be taught is not a series of contents logically organized as part of an academic discipline; rather, their selection, presentation, and organization will depend on the possibilities they each have to respond to “real” situations or needs.⁷

The aforementioned, as well as the in-class testing and expansion stages of the curricular guidelines, will allow the opportunity to have progressively enough teachers with the required qualification for the appropriate teaching of the subject Second Language: English in the levels prior to secondary education.

⁷ Free translation by the National English Coordination; taken from *11 ideas clave. Cómo aprender y enseñar competencias*, Barcelona, Graó, 2008, p. 124.

NATIONAL ENGLISH PROGRAM IN BASIC EDUCATION. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

As shown in Figure 1, the NEPBE considers two ample stages. The first one is devoted to contact and familiarization (Cycle 1); its main purpose is to sensitize students with the English language by means of getting them involved in *social practices of the language* and *specific competencies with the language* that are carefully planned and are the basis for later learning. The second stage focuses on the formative teaching of English (Cycles 2, 3, and 4). In this stage, the students will obtain the required competencies to use English in an effective way, by means of participating in specific competencies with the language, defined by and based on social practices of the language in different social learning environments.



In order to determine the extent and scope of the syllabuses, the time allocated to each cycle and the *Common European Framework of Reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR)¹ were used, the latter developed by the Council of Europe and The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).²

CHART 2. CEFR COMMON LEVELS OF REFERENCE*		
COMPETENT USER	C2 Mastery	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
	C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2 Vantage	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1 Threshold	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2 Waystage	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1 Breakthrough	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: Global scale, taken from COE, 2001:24.

¹ *Common European Framework of Reference.*

² Consejo de Europa y la Asociación de Evaluadores de Lengua en Europa.

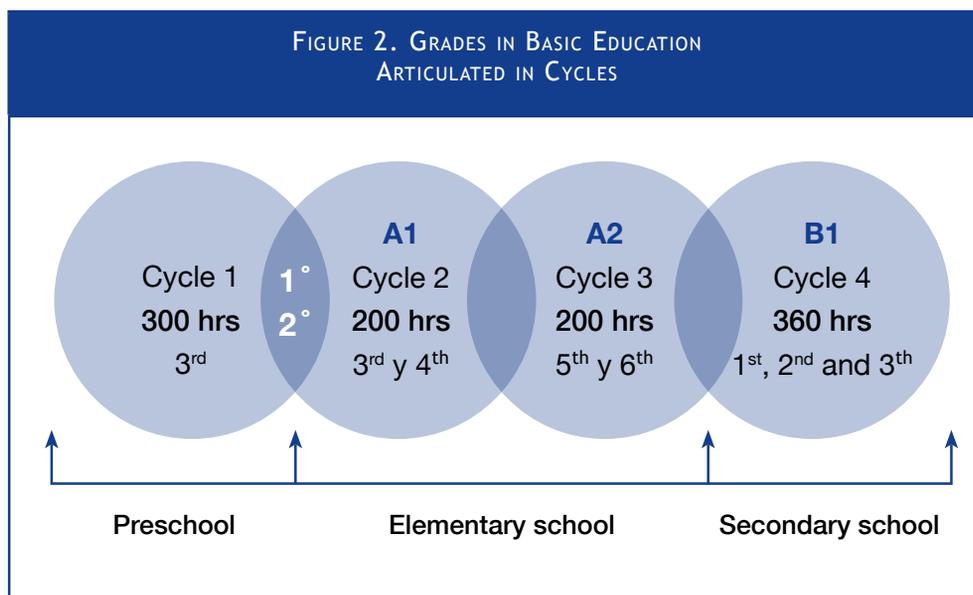
The CEFR describes and establishes levels of common reference for 18 languages, English among them. The six levels of this framework and their descriptors are shown in Chart 2.

Based on this framework of reference, the *Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP)* developed a series of national standards for foreign languages and created the *Certificación Nacional de Nivel de Inglés (Cenni)*, by its initials in Spanish) with the purpose of showing the equivalences between both groups of standards (see Chart 3). The Cenni standards were taken into account to establish the minimum levels that students should attain after having completed each NEPBE cycle.

CHART 3. INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR) INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS		NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR LANGUAGE LEVEL. NATIONAL STANDARDS AND APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS			
LEVELS		-		+	HOURS
C2	➔	17	18	19	1251-1300
C1	➔	14	15	16	851-900
B2	➔	11	12	13	651-700
B1	➔	8	9	10	451-500
A2	➔	5	6	7	321-350
A1	➔	2	3	4	161-200
					} Basic Education

However, in the CEFR as well as in the Cenni, the number of hours suggested for each level has been estimated for an adult population. This is why the NEPBE uses these documents only as parameters to establish the contents for each cycle and the different time scales required to attain each of the achievement levels. As shown in Figure 2, unlike the rest of the subjects in the 2011 Basic Education Curricular Map, the subject Second Language: English is comprised into four cycles that articulate the levels of Basic Education; the first and last include the greatest amount of hours.



This is how the basis for familiarization, approximation, acquisition, and consolidation of curricular content for the subject Second Language: English are established in order to attain the purposes in the syllabuses and achievement levels.

On the other hand, as shown in the Chart 4, the amount of weekly sessions and their duration varies depending on where the school grades are within the cycles of the syllabus.

**CHART 4. TIME AND NUMBER OF WEEKLY SESSIONS FOR THE SUBJECT
SECOND LANGUAGE: ENGLISH**

Cycles 1 to 3	Cycle 4
Preschool and Elementary school	Secondary school
Three 50-minute sessions	Three 40/45-minute sessions

About the number of hours for the teaching of English, the NEPBE includes a total of 1060 hours, which correspond to the sum of hours allocated to this subject in each school grade (200 days, 40 weeks). As shown in Figure 2, they are distributed throughout the cycles in such a way that these, besides being accumulative, are necessary to attain the profiles (-/+) corresponding to the achievement levels for each one.

From this perspective, the 300 hours assigned to work with Cycle 1 syllabuses are necessary to attain A1 level of achievement corresponding to Cycle 2. Likewise, the total 500 hours that comprise Cycles 1 and 2 sum up the number of hours required to

reach the A2 level of Cycle 3 (200 hours). Whereas the 700 hours based on the sum of Cycles 1, 2, and 3 plus the 360 hours of Cycle 4 are those necessary to attain level -B1 of Cycle 4 (1 060 hours).

Based on the previous distribution, it is expected that students attain at least Cenni level 3 at the end of Cycle 1, level 5 towards the end of Cycle 2, level 7 at the end of Cycle 3, and level 8 when they finish Cycle 4, as shown in Figure 3.

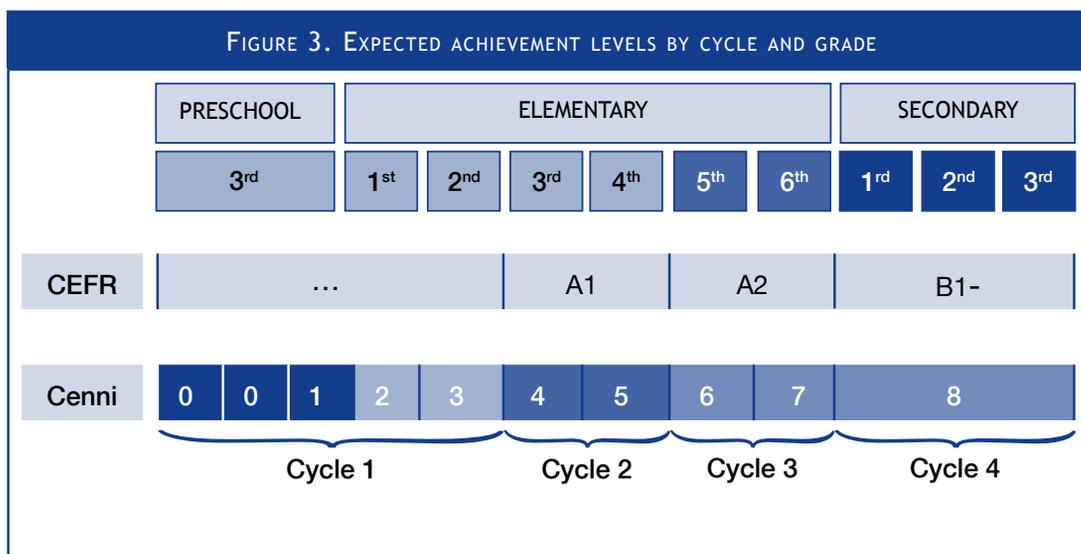


Figure 3 also shows how NEPBE cycles compare with the levels of proficiency demanded by the international standards for the achievement of English competency. This competency, however, does not only depend on the amount of class time allocated to the target language, but also to other factors such as student’s competency in their mother tongue, teachers’ level of English proficiency, and the accessibility and availability of printed and multimedia resources (audios, videos, compact discs, etc.) in this language.

It is due to this, and since one of the conditions to learn a non-native language is the exposure to it, it is essential that teachers have a solid domain of the language, so as to achieve the minimum levels of proficiency expected at the end of each cycle.

PURPOSES

General Purpose of English Language Teaching in Basic Education

The purpose of English Language Teaching in Basic Education is for students to get the necessary knowledge to engage in social practices with spoken and oral language to interact with native and non-native English speakers by means of *specific competencies with the language*. This is to say, through competencies that involve production and interpretation of oral and written texts –of familiar, academic and literary nature– students will be able to satisfy basic communication needs in different everyday, familiar, and known situations.

Thus, students need to learn to use language to organize their thoughts and speech; analyze and solve problems; and gain access to different cultural expressions from their own and other countries. Besides, it is essential that they identify the role language plays in the construction of knowledge and cultural values; students should also develop an analytical and responsible attitude to face the problems that affect our world.

Competence in the English language does not stem from mere repetition or exposure to it for a very long time. It is necessary to have a variety of individual and collective experiences that include different ways to participate in oral exchanges and in texts reading and writing.

Therefore, the school –whose responsibility is higher in the case of students that come from communities with low literacy and scarce or non-existent contact with the English language– should provide the necessary conditions for students to participate in such experiences, to reach gradual autonomy in their intellectual work, and to be able to transfer what they have learnt in the classroom context to out-of-the-classroom communicative situations.

Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 1

The purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 1 in Basic Education (3rd grade Preschool, and 1st and 2nd grades of Elementary school) is to raise students' awareness about the existence of a language different from their own and to get them acquainted with English by developing *specific competencies* particular to routine and familiar *social practices of the language*, through the interaction among students and spoken and written texts belonging to various social environments.

Therefore, at the end of this cycle, students are expected to:

- Acknowledge the existence of other cultures and languages.
- Acquire motivation and a positive attitude towards the English language.
- Begin developing basic communication skills, especially the receptive ones.
- Reflect on how the writing system works.
- Get acquainted with different types of texts.
- Start exploring children's literature.
- Use some linguistic and non-linguistic resources to give information about themselves and their surroundings.

Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 2

The purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 2 in Basic Education (3rd and 4th grades of Elementary school) is for students to acquire the necessary knowledge to understand and use English in order to recognize, understand, and use common expressions through the development of *specific competencies* particular to *social practices of the language* related to the production and interpretation of oral and written texts, pertaining to the Familiar and community, Literary and ludic, and Academic and educational environments. At the end of this cycle, students are expected to:

- Express simple opinions and requests in familiar contexts.
- Recognize basic instructions, information, and advertisements.
- Identify basic aspects of pronunciation and vocabulary used in everyday life contexts.
- Use expressions to refer to personal aspects and needs.
- Respond to spoken and written language in different linguistic and non-linguistic ways.
- Use different strategies to solve everyday problems, as well as to look for information about concrete topics.
- Identify similarities and differences between their own cultural expressions and those of the English language.
- Establish basic social contact by means of their linguistic repertoire.

Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 3

The purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 3 in Basic Education (5th and 6th grades of Elementary school) is for students to develop *specific competencies* particular to *social practices of the language* that enable them, through the interaction with oral and written texts, to understand and use English to carry out simple, everyday communicative activities about familiar and community, literary and ludic, and academic and educational environments. At the end of this cycle, students are expected to:

- Understand and produce everyday or routine information and its general meaning.
- Begin or participate in some conversations or transactions using verbal and non-verbal strategies.
- Recognize similarities and differences in the form and social use between their mother tongue and English.
- Use strategies to present information, understand academic texts, and solve simple problems.
- Express opinions and provide short descriptions.
- Produce comprehensible messages, adapting their linguistic forms and pronunciation.
- Use strategies to recognize form and understand content in a variety of simple literary texts.
- Interact with oral and written texts for specific purposes, and use them as a basis for further interaction.
- Socialize by means of common expressions.

Purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 4

The purpose of English Language Teaching for Cycle 4 in Basic Education (1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of Secondary school) is for students to consolidate their proficiency in English in basic communicative situations and develop *specific competencies* particular to *social practices of the language* within a range of communicative situations, in which they understand and produce, in general way, oral and written texts about different topics. At the end of this cycle, students are expected to:

- Identify the main idea and some details from a variety of short oral and written texts, using their knowledge of the world.
- Understand and use information from different textual sources.
- Produce short, conventional texts that respond to personal, creative, social and academic, purposes.
- Adapt their language to unexpected communicative needs.
- Recognize and respect differences between their own culture and the cultures of English-speaking countries.
- Express some judgments and opinions about issues that are interesting to them or resemble their everyday reality.
- Use appropriate registers in a variety of communicative situations.
- Master linguistic resources to understand the relationship between the parts of a statement or text.
- Edit their own or their classmates' writings.
- Use grammar, spelling, and punctuation conventions.
- Participate in formal communicative situations.
- Keep communication flowing, identify breakdowns and use strategic resources to repair it when necessary.

FOUNDATION

Language definition

The NEPBE shares the definition of language expressed in the *2004 Program of Pre-school Education*; the *2006 Spanish syllabus. Secondary. Basic Education*; as well as the *2008 Curricular Parameters. Indigenous Language. Indigenous Elementary School. Basic Education*.

Language is a communicative, cognitive, and reflective activity through which we express, exchange, and defend our ideas; we establish and keep interpersonal relations and gain access to information; we participate in knowledge building, organize our thoughts, and reflect on our own discursive and intellectual creation.

Language shows a variety of forms that depend on the communicative purposes, the interlocutors, the type of text or oral interaction, and on the medium by which the exchange is carried out. Writing a letter, for instance, apart from involving creating phrases and sentences, implies selecting appropriate expressions that convey the purpose of the author, the circumstances of the recipient and the patterns the writing process follows. In a similar way, a conversation requires intonation, intensity, rhythm, speed, and pauses to adjust the meaning of the sentences.³

³ SEP (2006), *Educación básica. Secundaria. Español. Programas de estudio 2006*, México, p. 9.

From this perspective, learning a language implies acquiring rules of socially imposed (implicit) use and the ways of using them in different social environments where people participate, in order to:

- Communicate ideas and convey feelings.
- Establish and keep relationships with people.
- Gain access to information.
- Build up knowledge.
- Organize thoughts.

Accordingly, the NEPBE –like the Spanish teaching programs and the curricular parameters of indigenous languages– is far from omitting or excluding the formal study of the language structure or narrowing it to the study of uses and functions. It establishes an approach to teaching in which the capacity to reflect on language is closely related to the communicative functions of language, whose purpose is to analyze and improve the communicative competence of students. Therefore, not only does it take into account linguistic but also cultural learning, since one of its functions is socialization, whose purpose is for students to relate with each other, to progress and reconstruct the social world they live in.

From this perspective, to claim that the teaching approach that underpins language studies (mother tongue, second language, or foreign language) minimizes or ignores the importance of grammatical learning in the classroom is inaccurate and ill favored. This teaching approach promotes and encourages reflection on the linguistic aspect of language, its functions, and communicative uses necessary to achieve the effective and successful participation of students in social practices of the language of the 21st century societies.

LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH

Social practices of the language

Social practices of the language represent the core referent in the definition of NEPBE's contents. This decision complies with the approach for language teaching adopted by the Secretariat of Public Education, as stated in the syllabuses of subjects, such as Spanish and Indigenous Language.

Social practices of the language are patterns or ways of interaction, which, in addition to the production and interpretation of spoken and written texts, include several activities linked to them. Each practice has a specific communicative purpose and a history linked to a particular cultural situation. For instance, nowadays, the spoken language practices used in dialogs vary quite often. The dialogue is established or kept according to social and communicative conventions of the culture where the exchange takes place.⁴

Given the status of English as a non-native language and the changes derived from its implementation in the national curricula, a series of *specific competencies* –besides the *social practices of the language*– are established to define the contents of this subject. The *specific competencies* are conceived as complex and articulated configura-

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

tions of the *doing with*, *knowing about*, and *being through the language*, whose purpose is to preserve the formal aspects and functions of language within social life.

These competencies involve three types of knowledge of different nature, which define the programmatic contents. These are described as follow.

“Doing” with the language

This type of content correspond to the communicative actions carried out in concrete interactive situations which, besides the production and interpretation of oral and written texts, are necessary to accomplish the communicative aim associated with participating in specific competencies with the language. Other reason is that “individuals learn to talk and interact with others while being in the same context. They learn to interpret and produce texts (in spoken and written form), to reflect on them, to identify problems and solve them, to transform them and create new genres, graphic formats and mediums; in other words, to interact with the texts and with other individuals who are linked to them”.⁵

Therefore, the teaching treatment for this type of contents entails, on the part of the teacher, a planning that guarantees that students “will learn by doing”, that is to say, they learn to listen by listening, to speak by speaking, to read by reading, and to write by writing in real communicative situations and with different purposes.

As a result, the contents of “doing with the language” are not to be conceived as a simple list of instructions or activities to do with students, but as curricular contents, whose clear intention is to teach what a competent English speaker knows how to do to successfully participate in activities with language in different social contexts. For example, in order to record information on a specific topic, it is necessary to know the purpose of that information (a conference, a community exhibition, to persuade someone to do something, etc.), to recognize the intended audience (children, young adults, well-known or unknown people, etc.), to identify where to find the information, what sources to use (books, newspapers, specialized texts, etc.) or how to look for them (key words, dictionaries, etc.).

The contents of “doing with language” are organized in a sequence that articulates the rest of the contents (“knowing about language” and “being through language”) in a cyclic and recurrent way. This has the purpose of helping teachers to plan the necessary stages to create a product, solve a problem, attain a specific goal, and decide when and how to address the “knowledge about language” required to develop the previously planned stages.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

In the case of the teaching of a non-native language, this approach is fundamental since the functions of language are those that guarantee practice to be meaningful to students and similar to what they will face in real life. Therefore, it is necessary to develop methods to organize the educational work as shown in the following chart.

GUIDELINES TO ORGANIZE TEACHING WORK
<p>Plan <i>communicative situations</i> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articulate the curricular contents (doing with, knowing about, and being through language) in a process that involves an initial, development and closing phase.• Foster cooperative work, i.e. distribute actions that involve responsibilities among students, offer opportunities in which everyone participates, make sure couples exchange knowledge and are aware of what they need to learn.• Allow to foresee difficulties and possible solutions as well as to evaluate each stage and the process as a whole.• Ease the way to approach unknown or particularly difficult contents that require an in-depth treatment to continue with the process and obtain the intended product.• Boost students' self-esteem and confidence in the use of English. <p>Guarantee the development of <i>routine activities</i> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the product of consensus and negotiation between teacher and students, instead of being previously determined.• Foster confidence in students in the classroom, give a sense of belonging to the class, extend learning, and allow the processes to be more efficient in this situation.

It is important to highlight that routine activities are not prescriptive; whether they are included or not, depends on the students and the teacher's interests and needs. However, since they represent the opportunity for students to decide what to do with the language (reading a story, listening to a song, practicing writing, analyzing a linguistic topic, etc.), it is suggested to consider a specific time destined to this through the school year, e.g. one session a month.

“Knowing” about the language

This type of contents involves a series of aspects, concepts, and topics for reflection on features, characteristics, and elements of the language, aiming at students to “raise awareness about their knowledge, know aspects of the language they had not reflected on before, and develop greater confidence and versatility to the use of the language. The purpose of learning more about grammar, increasing vocabulary, getting acquainted with writing conventions is to improve the students' skills for reading, writing, speaking, and listening”. This is why it is fundamental to introduce students to a challenge of oral or written interaction in a real communicative situation –such as creating a product, reaching a goal or solving a problem– where they want to succeed, so that reflection on the language processes makes sense and stimulate interest and motivation to learn.

Consequently, the teaching treatment that implies this type of contents will depend on the students' need "to know" to successfully overcome the challenges they will face when participating in specific competencies with the language throughout the school year.

On the other hand, there will be times when it becomes necessary to formulate explicitly knowledge of the linguistic system and the resources of the oral and written texts. From this perspective, students' own needs and difficulties will let the teacher determine which contents of "knowing about the language" will require a specific teaching treatment and to what extent, as this will allow students to progress and be successful in the tasks prepared for each stage of the process. In this sense, these contents are not expected to be totally covered or to be treated in the same way or extent. For this reason, specific suggestions or examples are provided only when they are essential to an activity. Students are expected to learn, develop, increase, and consolidate their knowledge in English to participate efficiently in social practices of the language.

The types of knowledge about the language in all cycles of the NEPBE seek to:

- Reflect on features and types of oral and written texts, which include the communicative purposes they pursue, as well as the graphic and textual components they use.
- Reflect on the English language and its structure, so that students can understand the content of oral and written texts they study, and can efficiently produce their own texts.
- Provide students with the necessary bases to develop awareness of the differences between their mother tongue and the English language, in order to become communicatively efficient.
- Provide the students with a tool to identify the structure of texts they interact with. It is important to point out that some of the features listed depend on the use they have in different learning environments and are recurrent in different practices as their form and/or meaning is determined by the context.
- Reflect on the constituent elements of the linguistic system, their function and the way they are connected to the knowledge of their mother tongue.
- Provide students with the necessary knowledge to solve doubts regarding basic norms of correspondence between speaking and writing, as well as spelling conventions whose knowledge will bring about better outcomes in the production of texts. It is important to consider that opposite to other cycles, Cycle 1 focuses its attention in the comprehension of oral transactions in the English language. That is why spelling is not the main focus of attention.

The contents of “knowing about the language” comply with two basic functions of the language: to be a means of communication and to be used as an instrument for thought. In turn, topics and aspects for reflection on the language are taught through oral and written texts in different social environments, because:

- It is by means of production and comprehension of texts or speech that interaction and communication among people is established.
- Texts are –not words, sentences or isolated and out-of-context phrases– considered as the minimum units with meaning and social sense. It is worth mentioning that it does not imply eliminating their analysis, but focusing on knowing their function within a text or speech according to the contexts.

It must be acknowledged that to understand and to produce oral and written texts in real communicative contexts involves –besides the linguistic “knowledge” itself–, a series of abilities and strategies. Although these belong to the field of the pragmatic use of the language, they are also part of a cognitive field, since they imply generating ideas, selecting information, making outlines, etc. This recognition involves that, depending on the communicative situation, the use of language is intentional and it is regulated by the cognitive abilities and strategies that are put into practice.

“Being” through the language

These contents refer to aspects related to the role of intercultural education in general and to language diversity in particular, as well as the multiple functions they carry out and the attitudes and values underlying oral and written interaction. On the one hand, their goal is to increase the opportunities for students to share their knowledge and experiences with English through socializing the different products obtained during the work through tasks in and out of school. On the other hand, it is to appreciate the importance of fostering a harmonious, effective, tolerant, and inclusive atmosphere of communication.

“Being through the language” contents are transverse and permanent throughout the entire NEPBE. Students must become aware of their own culture and that of other countries, they must learn how to act with the language in different environments of social life and value the consequences of their actions. For this reason, these contents have a specific place within the syllabuses. However, given their transverse nature, the treatment of this type of contents should not be limited to a particular moment; on the contrary, they should be present in a permanent way.

In conclusion, far from reducing the curriculum content to a disjointed and out-of-context teaching of skills, knowledge, and values of the structure of the target language, it is expected that the teaching of English be the same approach as the other two language subjects. In other words, to provide an education that preserves the functions and uses of language in social life. From this perspective, the problem is not when to begin teaching a non-native language (before or after literacy in the mother tongue), but rather the why, what, and how to teach and learn this language.

Hence, the contact with social practices of the language and the specific competencies with the language derived from the former should be included since the initial grades of Basic Education (3rd Preschool, 1st and 2nd grades of Elementary school), as the presence, contact, and familiarization with these practices and activities provide the basis to guarantee:

- Acknowledgment of the linguistic and cultural diversity of our country and the world that facilitates the promotion and development of positive, appropriate, and flexible attitudes required for the understanding among people and nations.
- Confidence in the capacity of learning and being able to communicate in more than one language.
- Broadening of opportunities to interact with the oral and written language. That is to say, to think about it, question it, compare it, use it, etc.

Finally, it is important to stress that one of the conditions for learning a language is to understand the situation where it is used. For this reason, it is crucial that the learning of the English language is centered on the students' experiences and interests when engaging in communicative situations. Therefore, students are not expected to master English as a native speaker, nonetheless the necessary actions are prescribed to reach the purposes and achievements established in the cycles of the NEPBE.

Social learning environments

Unlike the students' mother tongue (Spanish or an Indigenous language), the English language is not present in most of their social environments due to its condition of non-native language. This makes it fundamental to promote social uses of this language in the classroom by creating social learning environments that compensate the absence of English in the out-of-school context. Their implementation provides opportunities to learn the diverse communicative registers and formats necessary to participate successfully and with autonomy in everyday practices of the language in social life.

The purpose of the social learning environments established in the NEPBE is to preserve the social functions of the specific competencies carried out with the language, so that they become meaningful to students and can participate actively in reading and writing activities as well as in oral exchanges.

Social environments contribute to create language learning conditions, in this case English, since they entail the development of collective activities that favor exchange among peers, making sure every participant knows what to do and what they need to learn to successfully overcome the challenge of communicating in English with a specific social purpose.

The practices of the language as cooperative activities based on social learning environments will enable students to internalize them so that they can gradually become capable of carrying out self-regulated tasks and strategies to deal with the difficulties that may arise.

Also, the diversity that an intercultural context represents, as in the case of Mexico, can and should be taken as an advantage for linguistic learning, as it opens up the possibility of linguistic and cultural enrichment.

According to one of the CEFR objectives, incorporating a non-native language, such as English, into the national curriculum implies emphasizing the relationship between languages, so that both can benefit from the exchange:

The plurilingual approach emphasizes the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands [...] he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.⁶

From this perspective, it is assumed that no linguistic variety is better than other; therefore, rather than a correct or incorrect way of speaking English, there are appropriate or inappropriate uses depending on the situation where communication takes place. Thus, the aim is to establish spheres of usage in the classroom, and in the case of English, to generate intentionally social environments in the classroom in order to recreate specific communicative situations. This is fundamental to achieve the purposes of the four cycles of the NEPBE. Specifically in Cycle 1, where the references to the elements of the communicative situation such as non-verbal language, register, meaning conveyed

⁶ Consejo de Europa (2002), *Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas: Aprendizaje, Enseñanza y Evaluación*, Instituto Cervantes (trad.), Madrid, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte-Subdirección General de Cooperación Internacional/Secretaría General Técnica del MECD-Subdirección General de Información y Publicaciones/Anaya, p. 4.

in words, participants attitudes, affective expressions, and all aspects involved in a communicative interaction, are as important as, for instance, the recognition of elements that form words and sentences, just to mention a few of them.

It is through participating in specific competencies with the language in diverse social environments that the conditions to acknowledge the following aspects will emerge:

- A linguistic use and its characteristics.
- Linguistic competence students have (pronunciation, intonation, stress, syntactic and semantic structure, etc.).
- Type of errors made (systematic or casual).
- Attitudes in communicative interactions.
- Values students give to events and people.

Familiar and community environment

In the familiar and community environment, students should approach English through situations that are close to them, known, and familiar in order to foster a higher self-esteem and confidence in their own capacity to learn. Thus, the basis and necessary conditions are set so that by means of the “doing with the language” students can activate “knowledge” and “values”, as well as build and generate meaning in oral and written communication, real or semi-real situations within a known context.

Academic and educational environment

The social practices of the language in this environment emphasize the strategies required to learn and study in situations where students use formal and academic language both in oral and written texts. The purpose of this environment is for students to participate in oral and written situations that imply acting in and out of the classroom and continue learning to successfully face the challenges of our present world.

Therefore, in this environment the emphasis is on the learning strategies that will allow students to adjust their comprehension (listening/ reading) and production processes (speaking/ writing) in order to identify meanings and solve problems that arise to fulfill the aimed goals. In this environment, students are expected to learn how to participate in social practices of the language that include knowledge about different areas of knowledge.

Literary and ludic environment

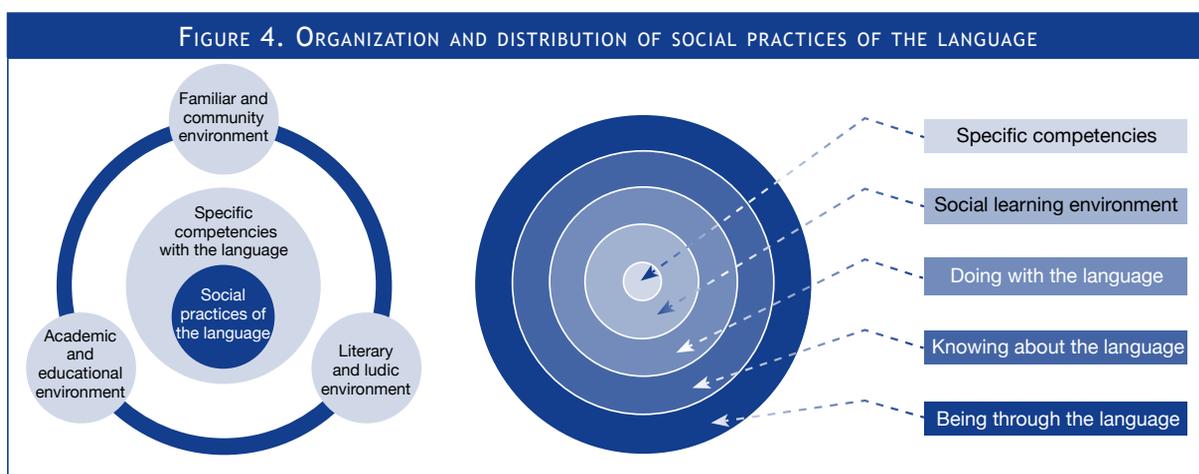
This environment focuses on the approximation to literature through participating in reading, writing, and oral exchanges in order to activate students' experiences and knowledge so that they share and contrast their interpretations and opinions. This generates the necessary learning conditions to participate in a social structure to broaden socio-cultural horizons and to value beliefs and expressions different from their own.

Unlike the two previous social environments, this one in particular “intends to foster a freer and more creative attitude, to encourage the students to appreciate and value other cultures, to go beyond their immediate environment, to discover the creative power of the word and experience the aesthetic enjoyment that diversity and literary fiction can produce”.⁷ Besides, the students get an opportunity to play with words (by speaking and writing), using either their own or others' literary texts of interest to the teacher and themselves.

⁷ SEP (2006), *Educación básica. Secundaria. Español. Programa de estudio 2006*, México, p. 17.

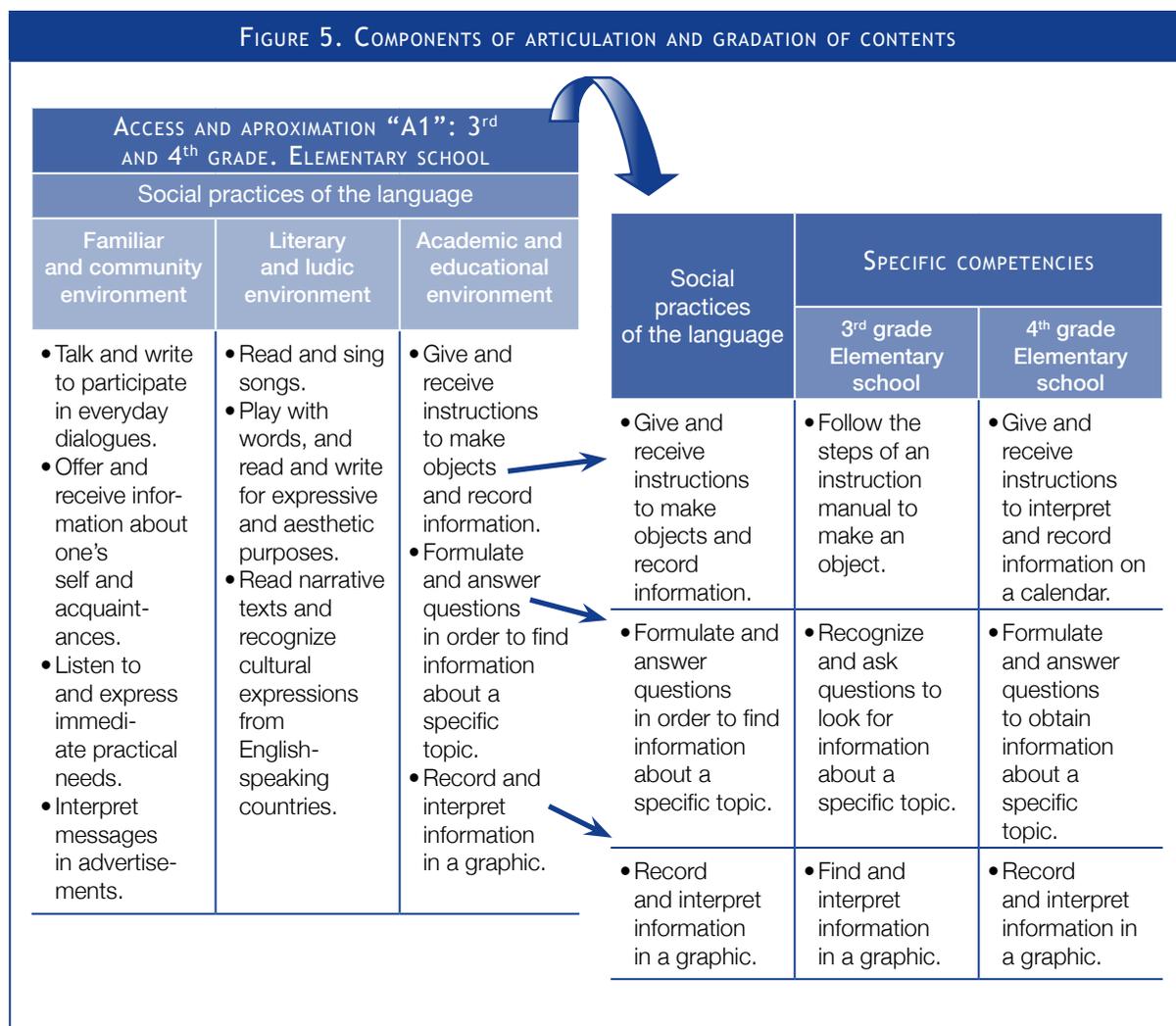
CONTENT ORGANIZATION

As it was explained in the “Approach” section, the social practices of the language constitute the main reference in defining the contents. The specific competencies derive from these and are distributed in three large social learning environments where the interaction between individuals and texts takes place both, in spoken and written form. In addition, it is where the interaction acquires a different nuance and where the activities with the language fulfill different social and communicative purposes that makes sense and gives meaning to the three types of curricular contents (*doing* with the language, *knowing* about the language and *being* through the language) as shown in Figure 4.



As shown in Figure 5, the components that organize and grade the curricular contents of the subject are:

- Social practices of the language, which articulate the school grades in each of the cycles.
- Specific competencies that define the specific curricular contents for each school grade in the cycles.



This way, each cycle includes ten social practices of the language distributed along five units that correspond to the five two-month periods of the school year. As shown in Chart 5, units include a social practice of the language and a specific competency with the language for each social learning environment, from which the contents and the actions to create a product derive.

CHART 5. UNIT COMPONENTS		
Unit 2		
SOCIAL PRACTICE OF THE LANGUAGE: FOLLOW STEPS IN A SET OF INSTRUCTIONS IN ORDER TO MAKE A PRODUCT		
ENVIRONMENT: EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC		
SPECIFIC COMPETENCY: Follow instructions to carry out a simple science-related experiment		
ACHIEVEMENTS	CONTENTS	PRODUCT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish instructions from a list of materials. • Order words to form questions. • Interpret and follow instructions. • Identify the order of instructions in a sequence. 	<p>DOING WITH THE LANGUAGE</p> <p><i>Explore simple illustrated texts on experiments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify parts of the text and their distribution. • Distinguish instructions from lists of materials. • Identify graphic and textual components. <p><i>Participate in the reading aloud of texts on experiments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predict the content based on previous knowledge, title, and illustrations. • Identify questions about an experiment • Identify words that form questions. • Order words to form questions. • Select options to answer questions. • Practice the pronunciation of questions and answers about an experiment. • Identify and follow instructions to carry out an experiment. <p><i>Participate in the writing of texts on experiments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify names of materials. • Rewrite names of materials. • Complete instructions using one or more words. • Compare differences and similarities in instructions. • Identify the logical order of instructions in a sequence. <p>KNOWING ABOUT THE LANGUAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and topic. • Textual and graphic components. • Word and sentence formation. • Repertoire of words necessary for this social practice of the language. • Upper and lower-case letters. • Punctuation. <p>BEING THROUGH THE LANGUAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use language as a means of sharing knowledge. • Show confidence in the use of the English language. • Pay attention to the audience. 	<p>ILLUSTRATED SEQUENCE OF AN EXPERIMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose a simple experiment (i.e. germinate a seed). - Make or cut out cards. - Write the list of materials for the experiment on the cards. - Collect the materials and start the experiment under teacher's supervision. - Observe the different stages of the experiment. - Write sentences (previously written by the teacher) that describe every observed stage. - Check that the written form of sentences and materials is complete and legible. - Display the illustrated sequence of the experiment inside or outside the classroom.

ASSESSMENT

Learning assessment should be conceived as a group of actions aimed at getting information about the students' performance in order to intervene at different moments (before, during and after) in the teaching-learning process, and decide whether the teaching situations, the organization of work in the classroom, the use of materials and the kind of help or guidance provided are on the right track towards reaching the program's purposes.

Therefore, assessment is neither defined, nor established on the grounds of the progressive levels, but by taking into account the teaching purposes, the specific competencies and social communicative activities with the English language, and the program contents.

From this perspective, the purpose of assessment is to help students identify what they have learned in a specific period and what needs to be reinforced. In addition, to help teachers revise and analyze their practice, so that they can re-consider, make decisions or innovations, and in general, improve the language teaching-learning process.

Assessment is a core element in the syllabuses because it can influence the teaching learning process, as well as its outcomes. In other words, assessment becomes the main focus of attention for the teacher, the students and their parents, and it affects the interaction among students and between them and the teacher in the classroom.

For this reason, it is necessary that assessment take into account:

- The students' performance during the development of tasks or programmed activities.
- The progress students make, related to their own starting point and the products derived from the specific competencies with the English language in different social environments.

It is important to mention that it is not expected that students create language products identical to those of a proficient user of the language or a native speaker; they are expected to acquire in a sequenced way, the linguistic and written resources given by different texts provided to fulfill communicative purposes. The aim is to create opportunities for the students to compare their products with those in the social surroundings of the classroom and out-of-the-classroom contexts, so that with the teacher's support and guidance, the students will broaden and deepen their knowledge and use of the English language.

Therefore, assessment should provide information about the extent of progress each student shows in the different stages of the teaching- learning process. This allows the teacher to grade and help students identify what they have learned after a specified period of time (unit, semester, year, and cycle), becoming a continuous, permanent process and not an isolated event which happens at the end of a teaching period. Some procedures that allow for the gathering of information about the students' learning process as well as their performance in class are:

- a) Self-assessment and peer-assessment (co-assessment):* they involve the students' appraisal concerning their own and their classmates' performance on the grounds of some clear and well-planned criteria.
- b) Portfolios (folder or file)* that correspond to a gathering process of learning evidence. The teacher and the students create a file or a folder where they will keep the products derived from different tasks carried out during a specific period. For the portfolio to be used properly there must be shared control and responsibility between the teacher and the students.

The NEPBE states that as the ways to gather information about learning vary, a vision of students' learning assessment will be clearer and therefore, fairer.

Teaching assessment

Assessment is fundamental to the improvement of the teaching-learning processes. Just like the learning assessment, teachers can gather data about their teaching practice from different sources, for instance:

- a) They can get feedback from their students in a not-very-structured way, from observing their reactions and performance, by means of formal interviews and questionnaires applied to different people from the school community (for instance, the students' parents or fellow teachers) or even through casual conversations.
- b) They can get feedback through personal reflection on their own practice, preferably in a structured way, in order to focus on specific areas, for instance, recording a session, writing down the details of a lesson or keeping a journal of everyday activities.
- c) They can get feedback from other teachers who are willing to observe some sessions and share honest and respectful comments. An important element in this process is the ability to reach agreements on those aspects to pay attention to before the observation takes place, in order to have a clear objective during that session.

Assessing the teaching practice allows for the improvement of teaching quality, which will benefit and have a positive effect on the teacher's personal and professional development.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Teaching materials play a highly significant role in this program. As it can be inferred from the characteristics and definition of the components in the English syllabuses, the quality and type of materials that the students will use –printed or multimedia– influence greatly on their learning of English.

Since the social practices and competencies of and with the language are the main reference of the NEPBE, texts and materials should be authentic, for instance, commercial labels, letters, dialogues, instructions, rhymes, etc. However, it is also true that teachers do not have frequent access to these English language materials or texts. Nonetheless, it is of paramount importance that those –particularly the spoken and written texts– designed for teaching, reflect the characteristics of those used in real life, that is, they have a clear social and communicative purpose, a context, and respond to authentic language models.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) offer countless opportunities to interact with oral and written texts in the English language. It is important to foster and take advantage of their effective use, allowing new ways to acquire knowledge. It is necessary to mention that ICT are not limited to computer- related tools, but they also include media such as radio, TV, and video.

ICT are very useful tools to stimulate the specific competencies with the English language, and in some cases, they are bound to enhance the social practices of the language like writing and recording texts, looking for information in electronic sourc-

es, listening to native speakers of English in a conversation or a song, among others. Therefore, a good recommendation is to use these tools as often as possible.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the authenticity of the tasks is as important as the authenticity of the spoken and written materials. If students are to be successful participants in the social practices of the language, it is paramount for them to engage in tasks that resemble the real world.

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TEACHING GUIDELINES

According to the social practices of the language, the work carried out within the classroom implies assignments and tasks which promote reflection, both on formal aspects of the language and the uses which give them meaning considering didactic observations such as the following:

- a) Consider students as active participants in the construction of learning, which means that, by using their own knowledge and experiences, students will be able to:
 - Take part in real-life or life-like communicative activities as language users and learners at the same time.
 - Develop their own ideas and questions about the relation between linguistic forms and communicative functions of the language, based on the analysis of language use that students and people around them have in different social environments.
 - Make decisions, accept responsibilities, and have an opinion about the activities related to the use and analysis of the English language, as well as, the creation of products developed in the different social learning environments along the five units included in each grade in the four cycles of the NEPBE.

- b) Consider teaching as a process that fosters and encourages use (meaning) and reflection (form) on language through specific communicative situations or tasks, which challenge students and involves to:
 - Develop, expand, and apply the necessary knowledge and strategies to respond successfully in different communicative situations.
 - Analyze their own communicative practices and those of the people around them in order to understand, explain, question, adapt, and correct them depending on the social sphere where they are and the intentions they have.

- Face new and unfamiliar communicative situations, which enhance the students' ability to solve problems and deal with questions related to language use and form and the behavior and attitude in specific activities with the language.
- Work the activities with the English language as a means of promoting cooperative work in order to deal with oral interaction and writing problems based on negotiations, feedback, and analysis of knowledge, strategies, and problem solving.

It is also necessary that teachers define, along with their students, the tasks (or projects) that will give meaning to the contents of the program and at the same time, take into account the following criteria:

- Use previous knowledge, experiences, and interests that students have and know about the practices of the language, both in their mother tongue and in English.
- Choose real-life or semi-real life tasks the students are familiar with in order to pose a challenge that involves creating a product, solving a problem or reaching a goal.
- Consider the level of complexity of the contents derived from the specific competencies with the English language, so that they are both challenging and feasible for students.
- Guarantee that the tasks (or project stages) are organized as a recurrent cycle for the students to be able to work on aspects or topics for reflection about English in the three social learning environments.

It is convenient to take into account that the point is not to go over the same contents repeatedly, but to establish teaching sequences that allow a suitable and adequate work in different levels of depth and complexity.

Characteristics of the English language teacher

In order to achieve the NEPBE's goals successfully, it is necessary that teachers be competent in the following areas:

- a) *English Language proficiency.* In the process of teaching a non-native language, the teacher is the most important model for spoken and written language, and sometimes the only model available. Therefore, the teacher must be a competent and proficient language user as well as a critical, well-informed agent knowledgeable of the aspects related to linguistic analysis.

- b) *Knowledge related to the students' development at different ages.* The teacher must have solid knowledge about children and adolescent development in order to understand their needs, interests, and abilities, as well as the difficulties students face in the foreign language learning process.
- c) *Knowledge related to the English language teaching.* Teachers must understand the essence of the subject matter (social practices with the English language), such as the “*doing with*”, “*knowing about*”, and “*being through*” the language that derive from the process, so that they can adopt teaching strategies that can fit their nature and the socio-cultural approach which lead to teaching practices such as:
- Modeling strategies used by expert English language users in different social practices for oral and written communication, so that students can understand the choices and decisions they can make to participate successfully in those practices.
 - Enabling and promoting students' attitudes toward reflection and analysis by means of questions or problems that draw their attention and encourage their interest in the uses, functions, and linguistic forms of the English language, as well as in the similarities and differences between English and the students' mother tongue.
 - Planning activities that keep the social functions of the English language and, at the same time, enable the distribution, sequencing, and articulation of the program's contents, giving students the opportunities to participate in them.
 - Deciding on the product to obtain based on the teaching approach of the contents in each specific language practice, in order to guarantee the practice of uses and social functions in communication, as well as the necessary aspects that help present and socialize the product in a formal context.
 - Selecting or creating, if necessary, printed and multimedia resources, which guarantee permanent contact with different models and styles of the English language use.
 - Organizing and creating social learning environments, which foster and guarantee permanent interaction with oral and written texts through English language materials, as well as the distribution and use of the classroom's physical space.
 - Creating and fostering oral and written interactions, which enable students to be aware of the consequences and impact when language is used.
 - Building a respectful atmosphere in which students feel confident enough to practice and use English without fear of criticism by their peers or the teacher.

