Core Content and Concretised Goals in the Swedish Upper Secondary English Curriculum

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Abstract

The Swedish Upper Secondary English Curriculum consists of lists describing required core content and attainment levels necessary for assessing students on English courses 5, 6 and 7. These lists display relevant instructional information for individual English courses in different places, complicating efforts in course planning. This study performs a text analysis on the curriculum’s core content and attainment level information, with the aim of making the information more accessible and useful in course planning and assessment. The text analysis synthesises attainment levels into concretised goals and then further analyzes the concretised goals to evaluate how they evolve over the English courses. A text analysis is performed on the curriculum’s description of core content to evaluate how they evolve over the English courses. The results, showing the evolution of both core content and concretised goals over the English courses, are displayed in a tabular format for ease of comparison. In addition, the results comprise a list of concretised goals in each course. The concretised goals evolve to a relatively small degree over the English courses, whereas the core contents evolve to a relatively larger degree over the English courses. This study may be of use in helping teachers in their course planning and assessment first, by providing a checklist of concretised goals that can be used in planning instruction aimed towards student fulfilment of curriculum attainment levels; second, by providing user-friendly information on concretised goals and core contents and their evolution over the English courses.

Keywords

Text analysis, curriculum, core contents, attainment levels, concretised goals, reception, production and interaction.
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1. Introduction

There is a widespread belief that perseverance is enough to get results. In the words of the world-famous deaf and blind political speaker and author Helen Keller, “We can do anything we want as long as we stick to it long enough”. Of course, teachers want their students to succeed, and to that end they should encourage students to persevere.

But perseverance alone is not enough. Perseverance is not enough when time is limited by education authorities’ deadlines on course grade verdicts. It is not only deadlines that are defined by the education authorities. In Sweden, English students’ success in the subject depends on how far they meet a list of attainment levels as described in the national curriculum (Skolverket 2011a).

The constraints postulated in the curriculum imply that teachers need effective and efficient means to help students reach attainment levels, rather than merely encouraging students to persevere. Skolverket (2011b:29-31) describes such an effective approach, an approach that sees ‘teaching’ situated on a constructive alignment starting from attainment levels, leading to assessment. This constructive alignment means that attainment levels are used to determine concretised goals, and that ‘teaching’ is the art of helping students meet these goals. Assessment means evaluating how far students have met these goals and what students need to develop further in order to meet those goals. Therefore, every stage is linked to attainment levels defined by the national curriculum.

The Swedish Upper Secondary National Curriculum for English is divided into three courses, English 5, 6 and 7, with the attainment levels of each course becoming progressively more advanced (Skolverket 2012a). As well as attainment levels, the curriculum describes core content for English 5, 6 and 7, which also become progressively more advanced.

Although the curriculum clearly describes the core contents of each course, it is difficult to visualise how core content progresses, from English 5 to English 6 and from English 6 to English 7, as no comparison is made. What similarities are there between the courses and what are the major differences? As a result, it is difficult to have a strategic overview of progression from English 5 to English 7.

Similarly, although the curriculum clearly describes attainment levels for each course, it is difficult to visualise how the attainment levels (and therefore attendant concretised goals) progress as students move through the courses from English 5 to English 7. It may help to know whether the same concretised goals used on one course can be used on a later course.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The lack of overview of course progression and the lack of a description of the progression of the attainment levels requires addressing. This project attempts to address these deficiencies through a text analysis of the Swedish Upper Secondary National Curriculum in English.

Firstly, a text analysis of the curriculum core content for English courses 5, 6 and 7 is performed in order to determine the similarities and differences between the courses as they progress, to give teachers a more strategic vision. Secondly, the attainment levels described in the National Curriculum for English courses 5, 6 and 7 are analyzed with the aim of defining a list of concretised goals implicit
in the curriculum. In addition, these concretised goals are analyzed to determine similarities and differences between the courses as they progress.

The hope with this project is that it allows the curriculum to be seen from a new angle, an angle that may be beneficial to teachers. The results of the text analyses are presented in graphic, tabular form. Presenting core content and concretised goals in this graphic, reader friendly format might help teachers with their strategic planning and in choosing appropriate teaching materials to help enable students to reach their desired grades. In other words, this study aims to be a beneficial tool for English teachers at upper secondary level.

Research Questions

- What similarities and differences are there in the core content of English courses 5, 6 and 7?
- How can the grade descriptors for an attainment level type be synthesised to a single common descriptor for that attainment level (a concretised goal)?
- How do these concretised goals evolve from English 5 to English 6 to English 7?

2. Background

According to Skolverket (2011a:1) the purpose of learning English is to give students an all round communicative ability. This communicative ability is defined in terms of receptive and productive/interactive skills, consisting of reading, listening, writing and speaking. Communicative ability is assessed by attainment levels. In addition, it is recommended that teachers use attainment levels to determine concretised goals (Skolverket 2011b:29-31). These concretised goals should form the basis of assessment. Therefore instruction should aid students in meeting the demands of these concretised goals. There is an ample body of literature and research that discusses learning and instruction of the communicative skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking.

2.1. Curriculum

The teaching of English at upper secondary level is prescribed by the Upper Secondary National Curriculum for English. English comprises three courses, English 5, 6 and 7, with each course at a progressively higher level than the preceding course (Skolverket 2011a). The overall aims of the curriculum are described in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Upper Secondary Level English Subject Objectives (Skolverket 2012b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Understanding of spoken and written English, and also the ability to interpret content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech and writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The ability to use different language strategies in different contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) The ability to adapt language to different purposes, recipients and situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) The ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The curriculum divides each English course into two areas, core content and attainment levels. The curriculum divides core content into Content of communication, Reception and Production and interaction. Content of Communication describes appropriate subject domains, for example ‘Authors’ in English 6 (Skolverket 2011a:6). Reception describes required areas of student input in reading and listening, for example ‘Literature and other fiction’ in English 5 (2011a:3). Production and interaction describes areas of focus of students’ spoken and written production or interaction, for example, ‘Use of basic stylistic and rhetorical concepts’ in English 7 (2011a:9).

For each English course there are a number of attainment levels. Each attainment level describes an aspect of communicative ability and also functions as a grade descriptor, A, C or E, with A being the highest and E the lowest. Table 2 gives an example of how an attainment level changes according to its grade descriptor. For example, students assessed at grade A are able to express themselves with balance; expressing oneself with balance is not required for grades E and C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Example of an attainment level from E to A in English 6 (Skolverket 2012b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Descriptor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Concretised Goals

Concretised goals are the link between attainment levels, instruction and assessment (Skolverket 2011b:29-31). Concretised goals are a synthesis of an attainment level’s grade descriptors (grade descriptors are used for assessment). For example, a concretised goal synthesised from Table 1 could be ‘expresses with variety, clarity and structure’. A teacher can then decide on suitable instruction that may enable students to meet these concretised goals. For example, for the concretised goal described above, instruction could involve students self-assessing variety, clarity and structure in expressing themselves a classroom discussion. A list of concretised goals could form the backbone of a course plan as students are required to be assessed in relation to the attainment levels described in the curriculum (Skolverket 2011a).

2.3. Theoretical background

There is an ample body of literature and research into learning and instruction in the skills of reception and production/interaction. These skills are often separated into reading, listening, writing and speaking (e.g. Hedge 2000). The literature discusses skills and strategies that the language learner should acquire. To clarify the difference between skills and strategies, strategies are deliberate attempts to understand and construct meaning, whereas skills are automatic actions that result in understanding and comprehension (Afflerbach et al. 2008:368). In this way, the same action can either be a skill or a strategy depending on how it is used. If a reader unconsciously scans a text, it is a skill; conscious scanning is a strategy.
2.3.1. Reading

Reading is a complex activity involving knowledge of content schema, formal schema, genre and language as well as reading competencies (Hudson 2007). Gordon (1982, quoted in Hudson 2007:83) describes three sets of competencies: reading skills development, reading comprehension development and reading research and study skills. Hudson defines reading skills development as developing lower level skills of decoding and defines reading comprehension development, as well as reading research and study skills, as developing higher level skills. These higher level skills can be summarized as recognition, recall and inference of main ideas, details, sequences, comparisons, cause and effect relationships and character traits; questioning; evaluating; synthesizing; reorganizing and transforming; appreciation (Clymer 1968:19-23; Eagleton & Dobler 2007).

Instruction in formal schema and genre can lead to learners becoming more accomplished readers (Hudson 2007:192-199:221-224). Instruction in the use of reading strategies leads to improved reading comprehension (Eidger 2006:307). However, as reading is a complex activity involving a wide range of skills dependent on purpose and context it does not seem appropriate to merely isolate individual strategies to be taught and practised by students (Hudson 2007:292). Instead, the trend in teaching reading comprehension has been towards focussing on fewer strategies, and developing the strategic reader. Comprehension routines, such as ‘Reciprocal Reading’ and ‘Questioning the Author’, that promote metacognitive awareness of effective reading strategies have been successful in developing strategic readers (Duke and Pearson 2002:218-223).

According to Block and Duffy (2008:29) reading is a recursive process where predictions are continuously made and updated as a text is read. At the same time, the reader decodes and derives meanings from words, phrases, sentences and texts, which are fed into the ongoing predicting and re-predicting cycle. Duke and Pearson’s (2002:218-223) comprehension routines mirror the reading process that Block and Duffy (2008:29) describe. In addition comprehension routines can be supplemented by instruction in individual reading strategies, such as the introduction into ‘Reciprocal Reading’ of a stage asking students to skim ahead to determine if predictions are accurate. Alternatively, ‘Questioning the Author’ could include a question such as, ‘How could skimming this text help our understanding of it?’

Readers do more than show understanding (Guse 2011:303-306). Readers evaluate and interpret texts. Readers might interpret a text within a wider context, such as what the text says about contemporary society. Alternatively, the reader might interpret a text from a personal viewpoint, such as an identifying with an incident or reacting to the author’s use of language (personal interpretation of this kind is labelled ‘appreciation’ by Clymer (1968:22)). In evaluating the text the reader might evaluate contents of the text as fact or opinion, or discuss the text’s adequacy or appropriateness. Therefore it seems necessary for reading comprehension routines to include evaluation, interpretation and appreciation to allow the reader to more fully participate in the text.

Readers also use texts (Guse 2011:305). A text user selects texts for a purpose, adjusts reading strategies according to text type and purpose as well as accepting or rejecting a text’s position. This reader role has similarities to the reading research and study skills competence described by Gordon (1982, quoted in Hudson 2007:83). Another way to consider reading research is that it comprises of a number of stages, including questioning to determine goals, understanding resources, evaluating sources, synthesising and transforming information (Eagleton and Dobler 2007). A classroom project can focus on each stage in turn. Thus, according to Eagleton and Dobler (51), research and study skills development is achievable through project work.
Texts have value beyond their use in developing students’ comprehension and research and study skills. Texts are a potentially useful resource which students can benefit from studying, after reading skills instruction. In other words students can use texts for consciousness-raising of linguistic features. “Learners are encouraged to notice particular features of the language, to draw conclusions from what they notice and to organize their view of language in the light of the conclusions they have drawn” (Willis & Willis 1996:64). Table 3 shows types of consciousness-raising activities that students can perform. The objectives of consciousness-raising are to identify ideological meaning, beliefs, values, judgements and attitudes as well as recognising how vocabulary, organization or style help achieve a purpose.

Table 3. Suggested consciousness-raising activities (Willis & Willis 1996:70)

- identify a particular pattern or usage and the language forms associated with it.
- classify and/or find similarities and differences
- make generalizations and check against more language data.
- find similarities and differences between patternings in their own language and English.
- reconstruct/deconstruct language in ways which reveal underlying patterns

In the real world, readers read for a purpose and use relevant strategies depending on this purpose (Eider 2006:307-310). In order to give students a real reason to read and use different knowledge and strategies, Eider suggests a set of purposes in reading (see Table 4). Giving students a purpose for reading in the classroom is vital, as ‘real’ reading outside the classroom always has a purpose.

Table 4. Suggested purposes for reading in the classroom (Eider 2006:319-320)

- to make a decision
- to report (orally or in writing) what one has learned about a subject
- to synthesize or put information into a different format
- to get a general idea about something
- to learn about a subject (in order to pass a test on it)
- to obtain information crucial for performing a specific task
- to make an argument or case for something
- to be entertained, or to pass the time

2.3.2. Listening

Listening requires both bottom-up and top-down processes (Hedge 2000:230-235). Top-down listening involves metacognitive knowledge of person, task and strategies as well as the ability to use effective listening strategies. Examples of metacognitive knowledge are: the person, the perception the individual has of their own listening skills; the task, what might affect success in the task; the strategy, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies appropriate for a task (Goh 2010:182).

Research suggests that effective metacognitive strategies include planning, directed attention, selected attention, monitoring, evaluation and problem solving (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari 2010). In addition,
useful listening strategies in the classroom might be listening for gist, inferring, elaborating from prior knowledge, prediction, visualisation, note taking and summarising (Chen 2009). The evidence suggests that activities that encourage students to be strategic listeners are more successful than activities that focus on instruction of one strategy at a time (Goh 2010:184-186).

Lynch (2009) divides listening comprehension into several types: literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation and response. In order to comprehend spoken discourse the listener needs to combine the listening processes of recognition, interpretation and participation. Recognition involves bottom-up processing, such as recognition of vocabulary, syntax and lexical segmentation, processes similar to the reading skill of decoding. In addition, recognition can be aided by awareness and knowledge of speech patterns and discourse types. Interpretation involves application of context, schemata and sociocultural knowledge. Lynch also notes that in the real world listening is not just a receptive skill; it often involves interaction, or ‘participation’ in his words. This type of interactive listening involves the following ‘conversational adjustments’: confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification request, repetition and completion (63).

Instruction in the classroom can help students with listening recognition and comprehension skills (Lynch 2009:40-41; 91-105). Lynch suggests that instruction can help development of recognition skills in two ways. First, it seems that listeners’ recognition skills can develop if they closely read parts a listening text that particularly caused them problems, in order to isolate what exactly the problem was. Second, development of recognition skills can be improved through conscious raising activities using listening transcripts. Students analyze the text for linguistic features that cause problems, such as reduced forms, assimilation, elision, resyllabification, cliticization, lexical segmentation, speech patterns or schemata, and in doing so are more aware potential problems in future listening.

In common with reading, listening comprehension also includes stages of evaluation, interpretation and appreciation (Lynch 2009:95). Therefore, instruction should focus on strategies that develop these skills. In addition, listening as a study skill should not be ignored. Although Lynch does not explicitly describe listening as a study skill, he does mention examples of listening that could be described as study orientated listening skill, such as listening to a lecture, with the listener as addressee (61). Eagleton and Dobler’s (2007) description of reading research and study skills to include evaluating sources, synthesising and transforming information, could equally apply when considering listening as research and study skill.

2.3.3. Writing

In the language classroom we can differentiate between writing to learn and learning to write (Tribble 2010:161). The focus on the former is not on the skill of writing, but on practising or demonstrating a different language skill, such as use of tenses. ‘Learning to write’ focuses on the writing skill, the receptive skill that the curriculum requires students acquire. Writing involves knowledge of content, language, the writing process and genre (Badger & White 2000, Hyland 2003).

Knowledge of content refers to the topic area that a writing assignment covers. Without content knowledge it is very difficult for students to write on a topic. Language knowledge refers to the understanding of appropriate vocabulary and grammar to be used in a writing task. Although lexical variety and grammatical accuracy can help the writing process, alone they are not markers of good writers (Hyland 2003:27).
Knowledge of the writing process refers to the cognitive processes and metacognitive strategies a writer engages in preparing and producing a written text. These cognitive processes include planning, setting goals, analyzing problems, drafting, revising and reflecting on the task. These processes are marked in expert writers (Hyland 2003:10-14, Harmer 2004:4-6). In contrast, the less expert writer focuses mainly on content at the expense of the above processes.

Knowledge of genre refers to the awareness that texts which share a similar audience and context (social context) as well as purpose, also share similar linguistic features and patterns of organisation. In other words, texts of the same genre are linguistically similar. For example, a letter to a newspaper (social context) to give an opinion (purpose) will have linguistic features (for example, formality of tone) and patterns of organisation (for example, starting by referring to a newspaper article) that other letters to newspapers present.

(Hyland 2003:136-141) describes a classroom model that combines genre awareness and writing process development, divided into four categories; they are contextualizing, modelling, negotiating and constructing. ‘Contextualizing’ describes activities that work with the process of understanding purpose, audience and context. ‘Modelling’ is a joint teacher/student investigation of prototypical language and patterns in a genre. ‘Negotiating’ is the joint teacher/student writing of texts. ‘Constructing’ refers to students in dependently producing their own written texts.

Hyland’s (2003:136-141) classroom model is discussed in terms of Vygotsky’s (1978) ‘scaffolding’, where learning is best achieved when students work within their Zone of Proximal Development. Students should be able to successfully complete genre awareness with the assistance of the teacher as verbal interaction with the teacher provides the scaffolding that allows students’ genre awareness to develop. Hyland also sees feedback as offering an additional layer of scaffolding, helping learners develop accuracy and clarity. Nevertheless, giving feedback should not only be the teacher’s role. Peer feedback and correction can help students develop strategies in reviewing and revising, strategies that good writers constantly use (Hedge 2005:117-126).

Harmer (2004:61-84) argues that students should also receive instruction that helps with writing fluency. Although Harmer provides no definition of writing fluency, he implies that fluent writers are in the habit of writing and can start writing a text without much hesitation (and continue writing without much hesitation). Writing activities in pairs or groups with minimal preparation are suitable towards the aim of students developing writing fluency (for example, instant writing or collaborative writing).

### 2.3.4. Speaking

Speaking can be separated into three functions, interaction, transaction and performance (Richards 2008:22-28). Small talk is an example of the interactive function; here the primary importance is on maintaining interpersonal relationships. Clarifying understanding is an example of a transactional function, where the primary importance is on what is said or done; in the case of clarifying understanding making sure that one understands what was said. A request (for example, to open a window) is another example of transaction, where a speaker wants something done (for example, the window opened). Maintaining audience engagement is an example of a performance function; here the primary importance is on transmitting information to an audience.

Thornbury and Slade (2006:295-304) propose a three part instructional model of practice, awareness and instruction (in any order) to aid students in developing their speaking competence. Practice can consist of role plays and simulations, discussions, debates and games. Awareness refers to student
investigation of spoken discourse in order to identify linguistic features. Instruction consists of teacher assisted help in analysing linguistic features in spoken dialogue. The speaking research and literature recommended a number of linguistic features that may be suitable for focussing on using the three part instructional model: genres; conversational moves such as initiating, responding, following-up, expanding, challenging, reformulating and summarizing; turn taking; gambits (phrases used in establishing, maintaining and ending contact), discourse strategies (phrases that make the listener receptive to the speaker’s conversational goal) and speech acts (language that achieves a particular purpose) (Busturkmen 2001, Burns 2001, House 1996, Thornbury & Slade 2006).

An important point is that students have considerable speaking practice. Speaking practice improves fluency, a faster speech rate of speech with fewer hesitations and repetitions. Speaking practice leads to greater fluency, as fluency is acquired rather than resulting from instruction; the recipe for improved fluency is more speaking (Thornbury & Slade 2006:214-217).

Bejarano et. al’s (1997) use of interaction strategies views ‘interaction’ as a combination of Richard’s (2008:20-26) interaction and transaction. These interaction strategies either modify interaction to help solve comprehension problems or improve interaction by maintaining the flow of the discourse (see Table 5). Research shows that instruction that makes students aware of these strategies and actively promotes usage of the strategies, leads to improved speaking competence in L2 learners (Bejarano et. al 1997:205-206).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified-interaction strategies</th>
<th>Social-interaction strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checking for comprehension and clarification</td>
<td>Elaborating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for assistance</td>
<td>Facilitating flow of conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving assistance</td>
<td>Responding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing.</td>
<td>Seeking information or an opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraphrasing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Richards (2008:35-38) suggests that speaking as performance is treated in a similar way to writing. Linguistic, organizational or contextual features of this type of discourse should be analyzed and discussed, before students begin the writing process. In addition, awareness of successful presenting technique can be gained from watching effective presentations. However, speaking as performance requires more than genre awareness and an effective wiring process. In addition, peer feedback can have positive effects, as the feedback leads to the speaker taking their audience into greater consideration.

The overall aims of English (see Table 1) include understanding written and spoken English, ability to express one’s self in spoken and written English, ability to adapt language to purpose, audience and situation as well as the use of strategies to improve communication. The literature and research into learning and teaching the skills of reception and production/interaction show that the aims of the curriculum are achievable, despite the complexity of learning and teaching the communicative skills. In a similar way, the requirements of each English course are more complex than the objectives
described in Table 1, as curriculum requirements for each course refer to attainment levels and core content. This project aims to make sense of the complex requirements of the curriculum through creating a list of concretised goals derived from the attainment levels for each course, and then determining the evolution of those concretised goals over the English courses. In addition, the core content is analyzed to determine its evolution over the English courses. This analysis takes place with the research and literature into learning and instruction of the communicative skills in the background.

3. Method

The aim of this project is to analyze the Swedish Upper Secondary National Curriculum in English (Skolverket 2011a) in an attempt to present it in a different manner that may be helpful to teachers. The method chosen is a qualitative text analysis of the core content and attainment levels as described in the curriculum. Of fundamental importance in a text analysis is a close reading through highlighting important words and phrases, and summarizing content. The researcher must strive towards veracity even though a text analysis can never be a completely objective investigation (Johansson & Svedner 2006:49-50).

Text analysis is a more appropriate method of research than other methods of research, specifically surveys, interviews, action research or introspective research. McKay (2006) suggests surveys or interviews as suitable methods of obtaining data. Teacher surveys and interviews could have provided data that might have answered the research questions, such as determining similarities and differences in core content. However, a text analysis was felt to be more effective than teachers’ interpretations or opinions of the curriculum. Although text analysis, surveys and interviews are all subjective methods of research, a text analysis is more appropriate in that the focus of analysis is always on the curriculum, whereas teacher replies in surveys and interviews could not be guaranteed to remain focussed on the curriculum, and might have resulted in an entirely different study. Moreover, asking teachers to synthesise attainment levels to a concretised goal and thereafter describing how these concretised goals evolved over the English courses is a very time consuming task. It would be difficult to ensure that enough teachers sufficiently completed the task. Other alternative research methods suggested by McKay, such as action research or introspective research, were rejected as they would provide findings concerning classroom practice, rather than information about the curriculum that the research questions pose.

3.1. Procedure

Core content and attainment levels were translated into English (my translation henceforth) and then both subject to text analysis. The text analysis sought a synthesis of attainment levels into concretised goals, as well as deriving the similarities and differences of core content and concretised goals across the English courses. Since drafting the results Skolverket has translated the curriculum into English (Skolverket 2012b), the Skolverket translations were cross-checked with my translations and appropriate changes made to the publication of the results.
3.1.1. Text Analysis of Core Content

Skolverket (2011a) divides core content into three sections, Content of Communication, Reception and Production, with requirements published in list form. This project kept the same sections. Text analysis was performed in Content of Communication, Reception and Production with the purpose of finding similarities and differences across the three English courses in each of these three sections.

In Skolverket’s document, bullet points are used to group together content of a similar type. For example, in Reception in English 5, Skolverket describes ‘Coherent speech or discussions of different types, for example interviews’ under one bullet point, in contrast to a separate bullet-pointed ‘Literature and other fiction’ (2011a: 3). The information under each bullet point was first analyzed to determine whether bullet points could be divided into separate propositions, based on a subjective evaluation. Table 6 shows how one Skolverket bullet point in Content of Communication in English 7 was divided into three separate propositions based on a subjective evaluation. It was felt that Skolverket’s bullet points were too broad and three separate propositions similar in nature could each be isolated. For example, the three separate propositions resulting from the text analysis (see Table 6) could be isolated and described as ‘topics’, ‘outlook’ and ‘literature’.

Table 6. Text analysis of a Skolverket bullet point in Content of Communication in English 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skolverket</th>
<th>Text Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and complex subject areas, even with a more scientific character, connected to students’ education, society questions and working life; thoughts, ideas, opinions, experience and feelings; contemporary and historical cultural expression, for example literary eras</td>
<td>Theoretical and complex subject areas, even with a more scientific character, connected to students’ education, society questions and working life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thoughts, ideas, opinions, experience and feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contemporary and historical cultural expression, for example literary eras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The separate propositions derived from Skolverket’s bullet points in one course were compared with the separate propositions in the other English courses. A close reading was performed to analyze whether groups of propositions, across all the English courses, could be arranged under a heading that described their similar nature. In addition, the analysis determined if propositions were relevant to one course, two courses or all three courses. Table 7 shows how separate propositions were grouped together under the heading Topics in Content of Communication. The first row shows propositions relevant to all three courses, the second row shows propositions relevant to two of the courses and the third row shows a proposition relevant to just one course.
Table 7. Text analysis of propositions under the Topics heading in Content of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects related to students’ education as well as related to society and working life</td>
<td>Concrete and abstract subjects related to students’ education as well as related to society and working life</td>
<td>Theoretical and complex subjects, even with a more scientific character, related to students’ education as well as related to society and working life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current issues</td>
<td>Current issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events and the course of events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once a proposition was found to apply to more than one English course it was subjected to further close reading, with the purpose of discovering similarities and differences between the courses. This methodology followed Johansson & Svedner’s (2006:50) recommendation to highlight important words and phrases. Descriptions used across all the courses were highlighted (Table 5 uses bold text). Then the course content that is not described across all the courses was analyzed further to determine whether it is relevant to just that one course or shared with another course. In this way the analysis proceeded to determine the nature of the evolution of core content.

3.1.2. Text Analysis of Attainment Levels

Skolverket (2011a) describes attainment levels using grade descriptors E, C and A on English courses 5, 6 and 7. Each attainment level type was analyzed to determine whether it measured a single attribute or two attributes. As a result, one attainment level type was found to contain two separate attributes; one of the attributes was combined with an existing attainment level type and the other attribute formed a unique attainment level type. This is expanded upon in ‘Attainment Levels’ in the ‘Results’ section.

For each attainment level type, the grade descriptors E, C and A for English courses 5, 6 and 7 were placed in a table. Table 8 shows how nine attainment level types were placed.

Table 8. Text analysis of an attainment level type for grade descriptors E, C and A on English courses 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Express with <strong>relative</strong> variety, <strong>relative</strong> clarity and <strong>relative</strong> coherence</td>
<td>Express with <strong>relative</strong> variety, clarity, <strong>coherence</strong> and <strong>relative</strong> structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Express with <strong>relative</strong> variety, clarity and <strong>relative</strong> structure</td>
<td>Express with <strong>variety</strong>, clarity and <strong>structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Express with <strong>variety</strong>, clarity and <strong>structure</strong></td>
<td>Express with <strong>variety</strong>, <strong>balance</strong>, clarity and <strong>structure</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The bold text used in Table 8 is Skolverket’s; it highlights the increasing demands on students as the grade level advances. The underlined text is mine; it highlights changes in the attainment levels as the courses progress. Once the attainment level types were entered in a table, a close reading was performed on the curriculum for three purposes. First, I could ascertain a common theme that describes all the attainment levels and give that table a heading: in other words, the heading describes the skill to be assessed. In the example of table 8, the attainment level to be assessed is Effectiveness of Communication. Second, the attainment level types were analyzed to determine whether they referred to receptive or productive/interactive skills. For example, the attainment level type Effectiveness of Communication in table 8 refers to a productive/interactive skill.

Third, I performed a close reading of the grade descriptors E, C and A to determine a concretised goal for each of the English courses by searching for similarities between the grade descriptors. A close reading of the grade descriptors illustrated words and phrases common to all grade descriptors. For example, in Table 8 the common language for all grades in English 5 is the language not in bold (expresses with variety, clarity, coherence).

Next, further analysis on the differences between the grade descriptors focussed on determining whether these differences referred to modifying a requirement for all grades, or a description of further requirements to satisfy a grade. For example, the differences in grade descriptors in English 5 in Table 8 are ‘relative’ and ‘structure’. ‘Relative’ is a modifier; it describes the extent to which students meet the attainment level. ‘Structure’ is a further requirement to meet grades A or C. As a result, ‘relative’ was absent from, but ‘structure’ included in the concretised goal, ‘express with variety, clarity, coherence (and structure)’. ‘Structure’ is in parenthesis as it is not required to pass the course, but required for certain grades. In the same way, other concretised goals include skills in parenthesis, abilities that are not required to pass the course, but are required for certain grades. For example, the concretised goal of Strategies in English 5 is ‘choose and use strategies to solve problems and improve interaction (and develop it in a constructive way)’.

Once a set of concretised goals was determined, they were further analysed through close reading, in order to ascertain how concretised goals evolve over the English courses. Concretised goals for the same attainment type in English courses 5, 6 and 7 were placed beside each other for a close reading. All lexical words were considered important and hence highlighted, following Johansson & Svedner’s (2006) suggestion to highlight important words and phrases. The text analysis resulted in isolating words and phrases that were common to all three courses, two courses or just the one course. Table 9 shows the concretised goals for reception in Effectiveness of Communication. Concretised goals common to the three courses are in bold, and italics are used to show concretised goals particular to two courses. For example, expressing with variety and clarity are required on all English courses, as well as ‘structure’ being required in English 6 and 7 and for certain grades in English 5. In addition, expressing with coherence is only required in English 5.
Table 9. Text analysis of concretised goals for the receptive skill of Effectiveness of Communication in English courses 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effectiveness of Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English 5</td>
<td>express with variety, clarity, coherence (and structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 6</td>
<td>express with variety, clarity, structure (and balance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>express with variety, clarity, structure, (balanced and accuracy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Results and Discussion

The evolving nature of core content, the synthesis of attainment levels into concretised goals and the evolving nature of those concretised goals are illustrated below. This is followed by a discussion on the use of appropriate instruction on the different English courses to meet the requirements of evolving core content and concretised goals.

4.1. Core Content

Core content changes considerably as students move from English 5, to English 6 to English 7. This progression is illustrated and described here. I have attempted to illustrate the nature of evolving content over the English courses through summarizing important features and referring to graphic tables.

4.1.1. Content of Communication

The text analysis identified four distinct areas in Content of Communication which I have given the headings Topics, Ideas etc, Literature etc and Issues in the English Speaking World. This last area mirrors the fifth overall object of the subject English (see Table 1). The contents in each of these four areas evolve as the English courses progress, which is presented in a tabular format in Appendix 1.

The curriculum requires that areas of Content of Communication are present on every English course. Subjects related to students’ education as well as related to society and working life, included in Topics is one example. Regarding Ideas etc, all the courses should cover thoughts, opinions, ideas, experience, feelings and ethical questions. Issues in the English Speaking World has a focus on social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and different parts of the world where English is used, which is required on all courses.

Although there are areas of Content of Communication that are ever-present on the English courses, Appendix 1 illustrates how contents evolve. In Topics there is a progression from themes concerning events and the course of events in English 5, to more abstract subjects in English 6. The themes concerning events and the course of events can refer to events in society, working life or related to students’ education (such as new school legislation). In English 6, in contrast, more abstract subjects regarding society, working life or related to students’ education (such as organisation of society) are
required. Nevertheless, current issues are suitable topics on both English 5 and 6. English 7 introduces a requirement for scientific, theoretical and complex topics. This includes a chosen specialisation area, where students research an academically-related subject of their choice.

English 5 in Ideas etc has a focus on relationships. The focus concerns existential questions in English 6 and 7. The curriculum does not give examples, but personal description of one’s family illustrates relationship content, whereas consideration on one’s role within a family has an existential focus.

The third heading is Literature etc, which in English 5 requires a focus on fiction and discussion of content and form. In English 6 the focus progresses to discussion and analysis of theme, ideas and authors. In English 7 the focus is on discussion and analysis of cultural expression, both contemporary and historically; for example, changing literature style in different literary periods. Issues in the English Speaking World in English 5 are concerned with the spread and position of English worldwide. English 5 and 6 share a focus on living conditions, attitudes, values, traditions, whereas in English 6 and 7 societal issues and historical conditions are required content areas.

4.1.2. Reception

Text analysis of Reception showed a great deal of change over the English courses. Content was categorised under six headings; Receptive varieties, Spoken types, Literature texts, Expository Texts, Study Strategies and Consciousness-raising. Appendix 2 shows how these six areas evolve over the English courses.

Receptive Varieties refers to the types of English students should listen to and read in the English courses. It is required for students to listen to English that is regionally or socially accented across all the English courses. Similarly, written texts that are narrative, discursive, argumentative or even report-like are required in all the English courses. In English 6 and 7, the difference is that the spoken and written discourse becomes more formal and complex.

The category of Spoken Types states that coherent speech and discussions are suitable types of spoken discourse in all the English courses. The required content in Spoken Types evolves in the following way: interviews are required in English 5 and 6, and debates and lectures are required in English 6 and 7. In addition, students on English 7 are required to listen to in-depth reports.

The category Literature Texts needs some clarification, as the meaning of ‘literature’ can be interpreted in different ways. For example, it can mean “the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age” or “writings in prose or verse; especially: writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest” (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2012). The heading Literature Texts entails the former meaning of body of works. On the other hand literature, which is recommended as reading material on all the courses, entails the latter meaning of excellence. The text analysis shows that as the courses progress, the focus of recommended literature texts moves. In English 5 the required content is literature and other fiction (the curriculum does not explain what ‘other fiction’ means). English 6 recommends poems, drama and songs as well as contemporary and older literature. In comparison, English 7 recommends contemporary and older literature as well as fiction from other genres, such as drama (the curriculum does not give any more examples).

The curriculum is not entirely clear in discussing literature. For example, ‘other fiction’ is required in English 5 and ‘fiction in different genres’ is required in English 7. Without any explanation in the curriculum, it is difficult to determine the difference between the two, as they both seem to imply
‘different fiction’. Therefore, it seems necessary to refer to Literature etc in Content of Communication (see above and Appendix 1) and Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation and Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation in Concretised Goals for Reception (see below and Appendix 4) for further information on literature instruction in the English courses.

The curriculum is quite explicit regarding Expository Texts. Manuals and reportage are required for English 5, popular science for both English 5 and 6, reviews for English 6 and scientific texts, contracts and in-depth articles for English 7. However, as the curriculum requires a range of expository texts for different purposes on all courses, the above text types should be added to. For example, Topics and Receptive Varieties (above) illustrate further required types of expository texts that can supplement the requirements detailed in Expository Texts.

Study Strategies requirements evolve considerably over the English courses. For example, students in English 5 need basic strategies to help them read and listen in different ways, as well strategies to search, select and evaluate texts. In English 6 students need strategies for source-critical approaches as well as strategies to choose relevant information in longer texts and understand implied meaning and perspective. In English 7 students also need strategies to accommodate and structure information in longer texts as well as strategies to interpret implied meaning, perspective, attitude, purpose & values. The common ground on all courses is a requirement that students have a critical attitude to the material they listen to or read.

In Reading in section 2.3. Theoretical Background above, the practice of consciousness-raising was discussed as a potentially useful after-reading activity that can help students develop their linguistic resources. Table 3, in section 2.3.1. Reading, shows some suggested consciousness-raising activities. The Consciousness-raising category requires both spoken and written discourse to be analyzed. Moreover, Consciousness-raising describes the discourse features that consciousness-raising activities should focus on, in the different English courses. In English 5 consciousness-raising is at the lexical level, requiring students to analyze words and phrases that create structure. English 6 is focussed on structure, context, attitude, perspective & style in different genres and how language, picture and sound influence the reader or listener. English 7 requires a more complete genre analysis as well as analyzing discourse for use of style and rhetoric and how power is manifested through language.

4.1.3. Production

Text analysis of Production identified four distinct areas, Productive/Interactive Varieties, Improving, Interactive Strategies and Documentation and Citation. Like Reception these four areas display considerable content change over the English courses (see Appendix 3).

The Productive/Interactive Varieties section is relatively extensive. Assessing and giving and supporting opinions are required at every level. In English 5 students are required to instruct, narrate, explain and discuss. In both English 6 and 7 summarising, commenting and arguing are required. In English 6 there is a focus on reporting, and in English 6 and 7 reasoning and applying (the curriculum does not specify what ‘applying’ means, but as Content of Communication specifies that communication is related to students’ education or working life it could mean applying for a job or university ). In English 7 students also have to negotiate and investigate. There is also a reminder that in English 7 productive content includes an academically-related chosen specialisation.

Under Improving students are not only required to repair and revise their own written and spoken production but also to assist classmates when communication breakdowns occur, or communication can be improved, and on all three English courses. Students on English 5 are expected to focus their
improvements on language that can improve discourse in terms of variety, clarity, precision and structure. In both English 5 and 6 these improvements involve adapting language to situation. In English 6 and 7 students are required to improve their structure and adapt their communication so it is suited to the genre, especially in more formal contexts (for example, in writing a letter of application). English 7 adds a further requirement that students make improvements adapted to style; in other words making improvements that consider the audience’s reaction.

Required content in Interactive Strategies in English 5 and 6 consists of knowledge of strategies to participate in and assist discussions on topics connected to society and working life; in English 6 the same strategies are required to assist students in debates. However, in English 7 a range of further interactive strategic content is required. Students are expected to contribute to and lead written and spoken communication, in different media, regarding matters such as negotiations or work processes. In addition, interactive communication is expected to be flavoured by rhetorical and stylistic devices.

Documentation and Citation is not required content in English 5. However in English 6 students are expected to comment and take notes on discourse from different sources. In English 7 the requirements have progressed to include appropriate citation and documentation of the type that might be expected in the workplace. In addition, source-critical awareness & appropriate citation are required.

### 4.2. Attainment Levels

Following close reading and referencing appropriate literature, attainment level types were given a heading that described the skill(s) required by students. As mentioned above, one particular attainment level type was found to describe two separate attributes. This attainment level type, as described by grade descriptor E in English 5 is, “Students show their understanding by in basic terms giving an account of, discussing and commenting on content and details, and with acceptable results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content” (Skolverket 2012b:4).

“Students show their understanding by in basic terms giving an account of, discussing and commenting on content and details” was separated from “act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content” for the following reasons. The latter attribute is closely related to the reading skills of interpreting, assessing and evaluating (Clymer 1968:21-23, Guse 2011:304-306). The former attribute is closely related to comprehension and reorganization (Clymer 1968:19-21). The sub-skill of comprehension and reorganization is defined by another attainment level type, as described by grade descriptor E in English 5, “understand the main content and basic details”. On the one hand, we have “understand the main content and basic details”, and on the other hand we have, “show ... understanding ... content and details”. Therefore these two formulations were combined in one attainment level type under Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation.

As a result, the ‘act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content’ attribute was identified as a separate attainment level type of a ‘react and draw conclusions’ theme. With these changes in the attainment level types, we can now turn to the different categories of concretised goals identified in this project.

#### 4.2.1. Concretised Goals

A full list of concretised goals for English course 5, 6 and 7 is given in Table 10. In addition, I have grouped the concretised goal into three categories, Reception, Production/Interaction or Reception and
Production/Interaction. The Reception category includes concretised goals concerning reading and listening, the Production/Interaction category includes concretised goals concerning speaking and writing and the Reception and Production/Interaction category includes concretised goals concerning reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Table 10: Concretised goals for English 5, 6 and 7

**Reception**

| English 5 | show understanding, by giving an account of, discussing and commenting on main ideas, details (and entirety), in spoken English of varying tempo and clearly expressed written English of different genres, |
| English 6 | show understanding, by giving an account of, discussing and commenting on main ideas, details (and entirety) in spoken English of fast tempo and written English of different genres and more formal contexts |
| English 7 | show understanding, by giving an account of, discussing and commenting on main ideas, details (and entirety) as well as implied meaning in spoken English of fast tempo and written English of different genres and advanced character |

**Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation**

| English 5 | react to the message and instructions in the contents |
| English 6 | draw conclusions and react to the message and instructions in the contents |
| English 7 | draw conclusions and react to the message and instructions in the contents |

**Study Strategies**

| English 5 | choose and use strategies to assimilate and evaluate contents |
| English 6 | choose and use strategies to search for relevant information and assess the source’s reliability |
| English 7 | choose and use strategies to search for relevant information, organise it, and assess the source’s reliability |

**Production & Interaction**

**Effectiveness of Communication**

<p>| English 5 | express with variety, clarity, coherence (and structure) |
| English 6 | express with variety, clarity, structure (and balance), |
| English 7 | express with variety, clarity, structure, (balance and accuracy), |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriateness and Fluency</strong></td>
<td>express with fluency and adjusted to purpose, audience and situation</td>
<td>express with fluency and adjusted to purpose, audience and situation</td>
<td>express with fluency and adjusted to purpose, audience and situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency</strong></td>
<td>interact with clarity, fluency (and freely), adjusted to purpose, interlocutor and situation even in contexts that are more formal</td>
<td>interact with clarity, fluency (and freely), adjusted to purpose, interlocutor and situation even in contexts that are more formal and complex</td>
<td>interact with clarity, fluency, and ease, adjusted to purpose, interlocutor and situation even in contexts that are more formal and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-repair</strong></td>
<td>repair and improve own accounts</td>
<td>repair and improve own accounts</td>
<td>repair and improve own accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>choose and use strategies to solve problems and improve interaction (and develop it in a constructive way)</td>
<td>choose and use strategies to solve problems and improve interaction (and develop it in a constructive way)</td>
<td>choose and use strategies to solve problems and improve interaction (and develop it in a constructive way)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Speaking World</strong></td>
<td>discuss features concerning different contexts and parts of the English speaking world and compare with own experience and knowledge</td>
<td>discuss features concerning different contexts and parts of the English speaking world and compare with own experience and knowledge</td>
<td>discuss features concerning different contexts and parts of the English speaking world and compare with own experience and knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text analysis identified three separate categories of concretised goals types for reception. The first category has a common theme of ‘showing understanding’. In the reading and listening literature the term ‘comprehension’ is used to indicate understanding. Although the curriculum does not explicitly mention it, comprehension presupposes de-coding in reading or recognition in listening (Hudson 2007:79-84, Lynch 2009:29-42). Therefore, ‘recognition’ is included in the heading along with ‘comprehension’. In addition, ‘reorganisation’ is included in the concretised goal category heading, as classifying, paraphrasing, summarizing and synthesizing (all reorganisation types) show listener/reader understanding (Clymer 1968:20-21).

The second category has the common theme of ‘reacting and drawing conclusions’ and is given the heading Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation (this follows the decision to separate ‘showing understanding’ from ‘reacting’ as discussed above in the previous section). The third category of concretised goals has the theme ‘using strategies to find information’, especially strategies to search for, assimilate, evaluate, organise and assess reliability of information. This category is given the heading Study Strategies, as assimilation, evaluation, organisation and assessment of reliability of information are all related to educational research. Moreover, the strategies describe the reading competency of research and study skills (Gordon 1982, quoted in Hudson 2007:83).

The categories of concretised goals in Production/Interaction were determined from a close reading of the attainment level types and reference to the speaking and writing literature. Effectiveness of Communication resulted from attainment level descriptors that focussed on how well the students express themselves. The other headings Appropriateness and Fluency, Self-correction, Interaction, Strategies, and English Speaking World resulted from repeated use of the themes in the attainment level descriptors. The heading Research and Presentation in Reception and Production/Interaction reflects a student’s ability to acquire information through research and then present findings.

As discussed earlier, the list of concretised goals can be used by teachers to help in choosing appropriate instruction to aid students in meeting the requirements of the curriculum. Nevertheless, further text analysis was performed on the concretised goals in order to determine the nature of the evolution of concretised goals over the English courses. The results of this further text analysis might give teachers a strategic overview of evolving concretised goals, and thereby aid long term planning.

4.2.2. Concretised Goals for Reception

The evolution of the concretised goals for reception is presented in Appendix 5. There are a number of concretised goals that are constant over the English courses. The concretised goals for Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation require that students on all courses show understanding of the main ideas, details, or even the entirety of spoken or written discourse by giving an account,
discussing and commenting. The concretised goals for *Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation* require that all students can react to the message and instructions of spoken and written discourse. Furthermore, a common concretised goal for *Study Strategies* is that all students on all courses are able to use study strategies.

The concretised goals do, however, evolve over the English courses to a small degree, skill wise. In *Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation* English 5 students are expected to understand spoken English at varying tempo, whereas English 6 and 7 students need to be able to understand faster tempos. In addition there is a requirement that English 6 students understand within more formal contexts and English 7 students understand discourse of a more advanced nature, as well as understanding implied meaning. *Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation* describes the requirement that English 6 and 7 students can draw conclusions in their reaction to discourse.

In *Study Strategies*, the concretised goals evolve from a requirement in English 5 that students use and critically review contents, to a requirement that English 6 and 7 students seek and evaluate the reliability of sourced information. In English 7 a concretised goal requires students to organise researched information.

### 4.2.3. Concretised Goals for Production/Interaction and Concretised Goals for Reception and Production/Interaction

The concretised goals for Production/Interaction show very little change and for Reception and Production/Interaction no change over the English courses (see Appendices 6 and 7). This suggests that although teachers should be aware of changing concretised goals, they should pay greater attention to ensuring that core content is appropriate to the level, especially as increasingly abstract content places greater demands on student production and interaction.

In *Effectiveness of Communication* all students are required to express themselves with variety and clarity (and structure if they want a higher grade). English 5 students have the concretised goal to express themselves coherently, and on English 6 and 7 students are required to express themselves with balance. English 7 includes the concretised goal that students express themselves accurately.

As their headings suggest, the categories * Appropriateness and Fluency* and *Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency* are rather similar. A distinction between the two is that the former refers to fluency and appropriacy in non-interactive communication and the latter to fluency and appropriacy in interactive communication. In addition, concretised goals for * Appropriateness and Fluency* remain the same for all courses, whereas *Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency* has an additional requirement for English 6 and 7 students to interact in more complex contexts.

In *Strategies, English Speaking World* and *Research and Presentation* concretised goals remain the same throughout the English courses. It is important to note that although concretised goals remain the same over the courses, grade descriptors change over the courses, so in assessment teachers must refer to the grade descriptors.

Tendencies in the evolution of core content and concretised goals can be summarized as follows. Content becomes more complex, formal, abstract, existential, academic, lengthy and scientific as the courses progress. Students are expected to be more critical of content and sources, use more extensive documentation and citation as well as analyze discourse in greater depth. However, concretised goals do not evolve over the courses to the same extent. As the courses progress concretised goals require
students to draw more conclusions, understand more implied meanings, evaluate more critically and
communication with greater balance and accuracy.

4.3. Discussion

This section presents the findings from research in relation to the requirements from the curriculum. I
discuss areas of instruction that can aid students in the development of skills required by the
concretised goals.

4.3.1. Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking

When choosing texts, the teacher has to follow the core content requirements in the curriculum. At the
same time, the teacher should aim at increasing students’ motivation in reading. Two possible ways to
do this are as follows. First, students should be allowed to choose texts, when possible, themselves as
this increases interest and motivation (Hedge 200: 206). If students are not accustomed to searching
the Internet and libraries for texts, instruction should train students in search methods. Once texts are
chosen, students require instruction. Instruction in reading should focus on the strategic reader,
consciousness-raising and study skills.

Comprehension routines (Duke & Pearson 2002:218-223) can help to achieve the concretised goals of
Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation. In addition, if these routines are supplemented by
an additional strategy which focuses on evaluating, interpreting and showing appreciation of texts (or not!),
the concretised goals in Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation can be addressed. As
suggested by Eagleton and Dobler (2007:51), project work helps students towards the concretised
goals in Study Strategies. Finally, all texts are suitable for consciousness-raising activities. If these
consciousness-raising activities raise awareness of genre and formal schema, they will indirectly help
students in developing their reading skills (Hudson 2007:294-296).

If the choice of reading texts can raise interest and motivation in students, so can the choice of
listening texts. It may be easy for students to use You Tube to find useful clips, but the curriculum
requires more advanced texts as the courses progress. Guse (2011:309 - 310) lists some useful
websites appropriate for listening content of a more advanced variety. Once listening materials are
chosen, they are ready to be used in instruction. The following aspects of instruction in listening might
be considered useful in helping students achieve progress in their listening skills: bottom-up listening
and consciousness-raising, listening strategically, meta-cognitive awareness of listening processes,
study skills.

Consciousness-raising activities can encourage students to focus on linguistic features that cause
recognition problems, thereby allowing students to develop abilities described by the concretised goals
in Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation. In addition, Goh’s (2010:187-200) integrated
experiential listening tasks and guided listening activities can help students develop their
comprehension skills described in the concretised goals of Recognition, Comprehension and
Reorganisation. As with reading, there needs to be direct attention on strategies that meet the
concretised goals in Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation. Students can develop their abilities
described by the concretised goals in Study Strategies through project work of the type described by
Eagleton and Dobler (2007).

Writing skills can be effectively developed by balancing writing process strategies with genre
awareness. Process writing is especially suitable for developing skills described by the concretised
goals in *Effectiveness in Communication*. Hedge (2005) describes a number of activities such as planning, organization, writing and revising which are suitable for helping students with the concretised goals of variety, clarity, structure, coherence, elegance and accuracy. *Self-repair* strategies can also benefit from focusing on the editing stage in the writing process.

The skill of writing appropriately, as described in the concretised goals of *Appropriateness and Fluency*, can be developed through genre awareness activities. Fluency can be helped by encouraging the ‘writing habit’ (Harmer 2004:61-84), for example, by activities focused on instant writing and collaborative writing. Although the concretised goals referred to in *Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency* may refer to Internet chat-room writing, it is likely that they refer to speaking only, as ‘chatting’ is not mentioned in the core contents. Similarly, *Strategies*’ reference to improving interaction is most likely to refer only to speaking, with its reference to interaction.

The concretised goals in *English Speaking World* require students to ‘discuss facts’, which I interpret as a speaking skill. The extent of students’ ability to discuss will be related to how far they develop the abilities described in the concretised goals for speaking. In addition, there must be extra focus on content development, as this particular speaking ability includes the adequate knowledge of a content schema (which I termed ‘English speaking world’).

Thornbury and Slade’s (2006:295-304) three part instructional model of awareness, instruction, and practice has the potential to aid students in making progress in the concretised goals of *Effectiveness of Communication*. This model raises awareness of appropriateness through genre awareness, thus aiding student development of the abilities described in the *Appropriacy* concretised goals. The practice part of the model should help students develop the abilities described in the *Fluency* concretised goals, as fluency is a result of indirect acquisition. In other words, fluency is a result of speaking practice. There should be both interactive and non-interactive fluency practice so that students can develop the abilities described in both *Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency* and *Appropriateness and Fluency*.

Bejarano et. al (1997:205-206) describe a number of strategies that solve communication problems and help improve communication. Not only are these strategies relevant to the concretised goals in *Strategies* but the use of these strategies can aid students in improving their abilities described in the concretised goals of *Effectiveness of Communication*.

### 5. Conclusions

I would suggest that an effective teacher is a well prepared teacher. If a teacher aims to be well-prepared, such teachers need a broad overview of the courses they teach. The present overview encompasses core content and attainment levels to measure students’ progress and ability. If teachers need an even broader overview of their subject, it may be of help to know the extent to which the required content changes as the courses progress. Moreover, it may be of help to know the goals required of students on each course and the extent to which these goals change as the courses progress.

This study may give English teachers that overview. The list of concretised goals specifies every type of student skill that has to be assessed during each English course. Moreover, the tabular format highlights the extent to which the required content and concretised goals change over the courses. By referring to the list of concretised goals, the teacher can ensure that instruction related to every type of
the assessed language skill is included in a course outline. Also, by referring to the table which shows the evolution of course contents, a teacher can decide which reading text, listening text, written exercise or speaking activity would be suitable for the respective concretised goal.

The curriculum as it stands requires from the teacher an effort in synthesizing relevant instructional information from its lists. Yet, some may not persevere and plan courses guided by personal inclinations rather than curriculum requirements. For teachers who find it difficult to synthesize information from the curriculum, this project can be a user-friendly helping hand.

References


## Appendix 1

### Content of Communication across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subjects related to students’ education as well as related to society and working life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>theoretical, complex, scientific or chosen specialisation area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>events and the course of events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concrete and abstract subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thoughts, opinions, ideas, experience, feelings, ethical issues</td>
<td>thoughts, opinions, ideas, experience, feelings, ethical issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existential questions</td>
<td>existential questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>content and form in fiction ...</td>
<td>content and form in fiction ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... film and literature</td>
<td>... film and literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theme, ideas and authors</td>
<td>theme, ideas and authors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary periods</td>
<td>literary periods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contemporary and historical cultural expression</td>
<td>contemporary and historical cultural expression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Issues in the English Speaking World

- social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and different parts of the world where English is used
- spread and position of English worldwide
- living conditions, attitudes, values, traditions
- societal issues and historical conditions
## Appendix 2

### Reception across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receptive Varieties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spoken Types</strong></td>
<td><strong>Literature Texts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoken English, even with social and regional accents (even from film or other media)</td>
<td>instructed, summative, explanatory</td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>written texts - narrative, discursive, reports, argumentative (even from film or other media)</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td>other fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructive, summative, explanatory</td>
<td>complex / formal</td>
<td>poems, drama, songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>investigative</td>
<td>contemporary and older literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fiction in different genres, e.g. drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spoken Types

- Coherent speech or discussions of different types
  - interviews
  - debates and lectures
  - in-depth reports

### Literature Texts

- literature
- other fiction
- poems, drama, songs
- contemporary and older literature
- fiction in different genres, e.g. drama
Expository Texts

- texts of different types and purposes
  - e.g. manuals and reportage
  - e.g. popular science
  - e.g. reviews
  - e.g. contracts, in depth articles, scientific texts

Study Strategies

- strategies to listen and read in different ways and different purposes
- ways to search, select & evaluate spoken / written texts
- strategies for source-critical approaches
- strategies to search for info in longer discourse and ...
- ... to understand implied meaning & perspective
- strategies to take in and structure information in longer discourse
- strategies to interpret implied meaning, perspective, attitude, purpose & values
Consciousness-raising

- words & phrases that create structure and context
- structure, context, attitude, perspective & style in different genres
- how language, picture and sound influence (e.g. advertising & speeches)
- genre analysis
- use of stylistics and rhetoric for different purposes; language as power
Appendix 3

Production across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productive/Interactive Varieties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assesss, give opinions and reasons for them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruct, narrate, explain, discuss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summarise, comment and argue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply, reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>investigate and negotiate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within chosen specialisation area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repairing own and others’ language, adapted the discourse to purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to give variety, clarity, precision and structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for example, language to clarify connections and time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adapting to situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improving structure &amp; adapting discourse to genre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even in more formal contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or complex contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and adapted to discourse style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interactive Strategies
- strategies for contributing to and actively participating in discussions related to society and working life
- debates related to society and working life
- strategies to lead & participate in various spoken/written discourse types
  - e.g. work processes and negotiations
  - use of basic rhetoric and stylistic devices

Documentation and Citation
- different ways to comment and take notes on discourse from different sources
- source-critical awareness & appropriate citation
- documentation of communication e.g. work processes and negotiations
## Appendix 4

### Concretised goals for Reception across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition, Comprehension and Reorganisation</strong></td>
<td>show understanding of, by giving an account of, discussing and commenting on, the main ideas, details, or even the entirety of written English in different genres</td>
<td>of spoken English at varying tempo of spoken English at (relatively) faster tempo in more formal contexts of a more advanced nature as well as understanding implied meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation, Interpretation and Appreciation</strong></td>
<td>react to the message and instructions and draw conclusions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Strategies</strong></td>
<td>use strategies to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assimilate and evaluate contents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>seek relevant information and assess the reliability of the source and organise the information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

Concretised goals for Production / Interaction across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness of Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>express with variety, clarity, (structure)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coherence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Appropriateness and Fluency **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>express with fluency and adjusted to purpose,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audience and situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive Appropriateness and Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interact with clarity, fluency (and freely),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjusted to purpose, audience and situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even in contexts that are more formal ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... and complex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-repair</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repair and improve own accounts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use strategies to solve problems and improve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interaction (and develop it in a constructive way)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Speaking World</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss features concerning parts of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking world and compare with own</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

Concretised goals for Reception and Production / Interaction across English 5, 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English 5</th>
<th>English 6</th>
<th>English 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose and use spoken/written materials from different media in own production and interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>