Chapter 4

CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

Introduction

‘Curriculum’ means the subjects that are included in a course of study or taught in a school, college etc. (Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary of Current English). Syllabus means a list of the topics, books etc. that students should study in a particular subject at school or college (Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary of Current English). In a curriculum, subjects are selected. If it is Science, then normally physics, chemistry, Mathematics, Biology etc. are studied. If it is Arts, then History, Political Science, Economics, Philosophy, Education etc. are taught. In a syllabus, books and topics are selected and given for study. Hence the entire course of study depends upon curriculum and syllabus. Therefore, the curriculum or syllabus makers carefully select subjects and topics so that the proper education can be imparted and the students acquire knowledge out of it. Sometimes the syllabus is defective and as a result students suffer in the long run. Sometimes it is found that a syllabus is vast and cannot be finished within the stipulated time and sometimes the syllabus is very small and not suitable for the students. Hence the researcher has tried to dissect and display the existing syllabus of Assam University particularly General English for Degree pass course students which is compulsory for them. It is because the undertaken field of research is Barak Valley and the colleges of Barak Valley are under Assam University, Silchar. The following are the existing syllabi of Assam University General English papers carrying 100 marks for Arts, Science and Commerce.
4.1 Assam University Syllabus for Arts

TDC Syllabus for General English

(For B.A. Students)

First Semester

Engg (Arts) -101

Full Marks-50 Pass Marks -17

Objective : To familiarize the students with some of the selected areas of English Grammar which are known to cause difficulty to learners, to help them overcome some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skill of written communication.

Unit- I : Grammar Marks: 25

Articles, prepositions, verbs, tenses, subject-verb agreement (concord), voice, direct/indirect speech, tag questions, sentence structure (simple, complex, compound), synthesis and splitting up of sentence.

Unit –II : Short Stories Marks :15

Stories to be studied :

1. O Henry : ‘A Service of Love’
2. Ruskin Bond : ‘The Thief’
3. Hemingway : ‘A Day’s Wait’

Unit III: Poetry Marks:10

Poems to be studied:
1. Shakespeare: ‘The Marriage of true Minds’

2. Donne: ‘Death’

3. Milton: ‘On his Blindness’

**Scheme of Examination:**

**Unit I:**

- Correction of sentences 1x5=5
- Use of correct tense 1x5=5
- Construction and transformation of sentences 1x5=5
- Voice change and use of preposition and tag question 1x5=5
- Narration 5

**Unit II:**

- A. One essay type question carrying ten (10) marks 10x1=10
- B. One short question carrying five (5) marks 05x1=5

**Unit III:**

- A. One essay type question carrying ten(10) marks 10x1=10

Text prescribed: Unit I.

Bijram K. Das, Functional Grammar and Spoken and Written Communication (Orient Longman)

Unit II & III

Objective: To familiarize the students with some of the selected areas of English grammar which are known to cause difficulties to learners, to help them avoid some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English prose and poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skills of written communication.

Unit I: Reading Comprehension & Written Communication

Unit II: Short Stories

Stories to be studied:
2. W.S. Maugham ‘The Verger’

Unit III: Poetry

Poems to be studied:
1. Wordsworth: ‘Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower’
2. Keats: ‘To Autumn’
3. Eliot: ‘Journey of the Magi’
4. Dickinson: ‘Because I Could not Stop for Death’

Scheme of Examination:

Unit I: Reading Comprehension

Marks: 25
Paragraph/Report Writing Marks 10

Unit II:
A. One essay type question carrying ten (10) marks 10x1=10

Unit III:
a. One essay type question carrying ten (10) Marks 10x1=10
b. One explanation from asterisked text carrying five (5) marks 05x1=5

Text prescribed : Unit I
Bikram K. Das, Functional Grammar and Spoken and Written Communication (Orient Longman)
Unit II & III

4.2 Assam University Syllabus for Science

TDC Syllabus for General English
(For B.Sc. & BCA Students)
First Semester
Engg (Science ) -101

Full Marks-50 Pass Marks -17

Objective : To familiarize the students with some of the selected areas of English Grammar which are known to cause difficulty to learners, to help them overcome some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English
prose and poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skills of written communication.

**Unit I: Grammar**

Marks: 25

Article, prepositions, verbs, tense, subject-verb agreement (concord), voice, direct/indirect speech, tag questions, simple, complex, compound, synthesis and splitting up of sentence.

**Unit II:**

Marks: 15

Selected Pieces:

1. Verrier Elwin, "A Pilgrimage to Tawang"
2. Stephen Hawking, "Our Picture of the Universe"
3. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Letter to My Daughter"
4. Marcel Junod, "The First Atom Bomb"

**Scheme of Examination:**

**Unit I:**

Correction of Sentences 1x5=5 marks

Use of correct of tense 1x5= 5 marks

Construction and transformation of sentences 1x5= 5 marks

Voice change and use of preposition and tag question 1x5= 5 marks

Reported speech Marks : 5

**Unit II:**

A. Two essay type questions carrying ten (10) marks each 20

B. One short question carrying five (5) marks 5

Text prescribed:
Unit I:
Bikram K. Das Functional Grammar and spoken and Written Communication
(Orient Longman)

Unit II:
Prose for Our Times (Orient Longman)

Second Semester
Engg (Science) -201

Full Marks -50 Pass Marks-17

Objective: To familiarize the students with some of the selected areas of English
grammar which are known to cause difficulties to learners, to help them avoid
some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English
prose and poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skills of
written communication.

Unit I: Marks :25
Reading Comprehension & Written Communication

Unit II: Marks :25
Selected Pieces:
1. Gerald Durrel: ‘Vanishing Animals’
2. Jim Corbett: ‘Kunwar Singh’
3. Romain Rolland: ‘Vivekananda: The Great Journey to the West’

Scheme of Examination:

Unit I:
Reading Compression Marks :15
Paragraph/Report Writing Marks : 10
Unit II:
A. Two essay type questions carrying ten (10) marks each. 2x10-20
B. One short question carrying five (5) marks 1x05=05

Text prescribed:
Unit I:
Bikram K. Das, Functional Grammar and Spoken and Written Communication (Orient Longman)
Unit II:
Prose for our Times (Orient Lognman)

4.3 Assam University Syllabus for Commerce

TDC Syllabus for General English
(For Commerce Students)
First Semester
Engg -101

Full Marks-50 Pass Marks -17

Objective: To familiarize the students with some of the selected areas of English Grammar which are known to cause difficulty to learners, to help them overcome some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English prose and poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skills of written communication.

Unit- I : Grammar Marks: 25

Article, prepositions, verbs, tense, subject-verb agreement (concord), voice, direct/indirect speech, tag questions, simple, complex, compound sentences, synthesis and splitting up of sentence.
Unit II: Marks: 25

Selected Pieces:

1. Lynn Doyle: ‘Banking Without Blarney’
3. Marcel Junod: ‘The First Atom Bomb’

Scheme of Examination:

Unit I:

Correction of sentences 1x5=5
Use of correct tense 1x5=5
Construction and transformation of sentences 1x5=5
Voice change and use of preposition and tag question 1x5=5

Reported speech

Unit II:

5

A. Two essay type questions carrying ten (10) marks each 20
B. One short questions carrying five (5) marks 5

Text prescribed

Unit I:

Bikram K.Das, Functional Grammar and Spoken and Written Communication (Orient Longman)

Unit II:

Prose for One times (Orient Longman)
Second Semester
Engg-201

Full Marks -50
Pass Marks -17

Objective: To familiarize the students with some for the selected areas of English Grammar which are known to cause difficulties to learners, to help them avoid some common mistakes and also to teach them the skill of appreciation of English prose and poetry through the study of the prescribed texts, and develop the skill of written communication.

Unit I: Reading Comprehension & Written Communication

Unit II: Selected Pieces:
1. General Durrell: ‘Vanishing Animals’

2. Jawaharlal Nehru: ‘What is Culture?’

Scheme of Examination

Unit I:
Reading comprehension Marks : 15
Paragraph/Report writing Marks : 10
Business Correspondence Marks : 10

Unit II:
A. One essay type question carrying ten (10) marks 10
B. One short question carrying five (5) marks 5

Text prescribed
Unit I:
Bikram K. Das, Functional Grammar and spoken and Written Communication (Orient Longman)

Unit II:
Prose for our times (Orient Longman).

4.4 Discussion on the Syllabus

Each of the above syllabi shows that Assam University, Silchar follows the semester system in Degree courses. In Arts Stream, prose, poetry and grammar are prescribed in first semester. In Grammar, 25 marks, in prose (short stories) 15 marks and in poetry 10 marks are allotted. In second semester, prose, poetry and composition are prescribed. Composition includes reading comprehension and paragraph/report writing carrying only 25 marks and prose (short stories) carrying 10 marks but poetry section carries 15 marks. Total 50 marks for each semester. Here, it is seen that there is general English only in First year and there is no English subject in second or third year pass course. It is also seen that drama or novel is not prescribed in the syllabus. Although the degree students are mature students yet there is no scope for them to study drama or novel in the existing syllabus of this university.

A similar type of syllabus is given for Science and Commerce students where poetry section is not included and also there is no general English subject in second and third year science and commerce. For Commerce students, one extra topic named Business correspondence carrying 10 marks is prescribed.
On grammar and composition 50% of the total marks are allotted. Only one grammar book, namely, “Functional Grammar and Spoken and Written Communication”, by Bikram K. Das (Orient Longman) has been prescribed. It seems that only one book is not sufficient for the purpose and hence two or three more books on grammar and composition are necessary for better understanding of the chapters by the students. ‘Prose for our times’ the text book for science and commerce prescribed by Assam University is actually compiled by the Board of studies of Mizoram University. It is expected that the Board of studies (English), Assam University will compile a text book for Assam University under graduate students. Moreover, a very few questions are given in the exercise. In each topic there are only two or three questions whereas more questions are necessary to understand the topics.

Brookside Musings, the text book for Arts although compiled and edited by the Department of English, Assam University, Silchar has no question in the exercise. So questions are to be included in the exercise for students’ better understanding of the topics. Only short stories are prescribed, no essays are there in the syllabus for Arts. However, both the text books for Arts, Science and Commerce are good selection and hence the members of the board deserve lots of thanks for it.

The general English is limited to first year only. But this is to be extended to second year also so that Drama and Novel can be accommodated in the syllabus. The present syllabus is to be changed and communicative English may be prescribed in which there will be a part for spoken English. It has been observed that majority of the students at the under graduate level or even at the post graduate
level cannot speak English which is essential nowadays. It is also observed that even after passing the university examinations and getting employments in their respective fields, they feel very uncomfortable when they are required to speak English. Even in colleges, many teachers prefer to teach in local dialect as they do not feel easy to speak English. As a result, students are the losers as they do not listen English inside the class room. No one can deny the status of English today. Moreover, the medium of instruction is only English in Assam University and there is no alternative to it. Hence it is an important issue and all concerned must think about it.

It may be remembered that Assam University had a syllabus earlier to this syllabus where English was compulsory in second year also and there were drama and essays in that syllabus. Of course, for science and commerce, this subject was restricted to first year only. So the earlier syllabus was a better one, logical and thus suitable for the degree pass course students. Hence that type of syllabus is to be reintroduced.

Moreover, semester system is a problem for undergraduate students of Assam University. The system is no doubt good but other factors are creating problems. There is Higher Secondary section in all the colleges under Assam University. When the final examination of Higher Secondary Council starts, there is no scope for degree students for classes as all the teachers are engaged in the examination process. More than one month time of degree students is spoilt during H.S. I and H.S. II final examinations. Moreover, two long vacations are there along with other holidays. So the degree students are not getting more than three months time.
Again forms are submitted to the Controller of Examinations earlier. After submission of forms, a situation is created where students are reluctant to attend classes. As a result, many students fail in the examinations and there are many back papers which are to be cleared by the students later on. Students also lose academic days for frequent examinations under Assam University. So one can realise how many days the students are getting actually for the preparation of the course which is prescribed for them.

The semester system is suitable for P.G. students where ratio of students and teachers is reasonable. But in colleges, ratio of students and teachers is not upto the mark otherwise the entire examination could be entrusted to the colleges and the controller of examinations would declare only the results portion. So these are some of the problems related to the examinations and time constraint of the under graduate students under Assam University, Silchar which came to the mind of the researcher for his long teaching experience. Hence the learned persons involved in the academic and the examination affairs should ponder over the matter for the interest of the under graduate students of this University.

There are many universities in India and each university has its own syllabus and they are of different standards. Various experiments were done on syllabus but till today a national syllabus could not be introduced and that type of syllabus would be of one standard which is necessary for common assessment of students in the examinations.

There is another problem which is the national problem also. The present UGC norms for appointment of a teacher in the college or university is 55% marks
in master’s degree with a NET or SLET or PhD and Honours in degree level is not necessary. Earlier, Honours was must in the relevant subject and the same subject in P.G. level. So there was the attraction and necessity to take Honours at degree level. Since it is not necessary nowadays, students are not interested to take Honours in a subject. Moreover, students get admission in P.G. course without having Honours. So this is also an important issue for all concerned.

**Conclusion**

This age is an age of specialisation. In our country, specialisation comes after graduation. This should start very early as in some other countries of the world. Upto school final examination, there are common and compulsory subjects. A student may not like Mathematics but he or she is to take it or a student may not like social science but he or she is to take it as it is a compulsory subject. So specialisation should be started earlier at least from class IX or even earlier. If a student wants to study literature he was to be given the scope earlier so that he may be a specialised in this field. If one is willing to study science then that one should start it early in academic life. After a long time study of a subject, a person can be a master of that subject or branch.