

U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative



THE TEACHER COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Developed under the Algeria Partnership Schools Program



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL



World Learning
SIT Graduate Institute

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Introduction

The Partnership Schools Program has been funded through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). MEPI is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments. More information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov.

The Partnership Schools Program has been delivered in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of National Education, and implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. and World Learning/School for International Training (WL/SIT) Graduate Institute. The program began in 2005 and continued through summer 2010.

Central to the Ministry of National Education's goals for national education reform has been the development of school curricula aligned to a Competency-based approach. The major focus of the work of the MEPI/Partnership schools Program has been the facilitation of this process by working with the Ministry to ensure that English language education in Algerian schools is carried out by teachers and supervisors trained to the highest standards of international best practice in the delivery and supervision of a competency based language syllabus. The Algerian English curriculum was evaluated by WL/SIT specialists in curriculum design and assessment. Based on findings from the evaluation, MEPI/PSP organized a series of trainings for English curriculum writers to explore how the competency-based principles expressed within the curriculum might be made more readily available to a variety of educational stakeholders: Ministry officials, inspectors, teachers, students and parents.

At the heart of any effective curriculum is a statement of beliefs, or guiding principles about the content, the learners and learning and the role and responsibilities of teachers. Together with members of the Groupe Spécialiste d'anglais (GSD-anglais) and a pilot group of English inspectors, WL/SIT experts developed a set of nine Guiding Principles that could serve as the foundation of a newly revised curriculum plan. They are responsive to the social and educational context in Algeria, they derive from sound educational theory and they are appropriate for Algerian learners and teachers.

The Guiding Principles are organized around a view of language, a view of learners and learning and a view of teachers and teaching. The principles are closely intertwined and mutually compatible. The first two principles describe the purposes for learning English in the world today—to use it as a tool to participate in global information exchange and learning and to develop communicative abilities. As befits a curriculum focused on learner competence, many of the principles focus on learners and learning. The learning experiences provided in the classroom are the means for achieving the desired outcomes. The principles capture what learners need in order to learn, as well as the dispositions and

approaches to learning that they will cultivate. The last two principles are focused on what teachers need to know how to do in order to provide the kinds of learning experiences that will help learners attain the learning outcomes of the curriculum.

In order to enact the principles in classroom practice, teachers need to develop corresponding competencies. Following the Guiding Principles is a list of teacher competencies for each principle. Following that is a combined list of the thirty teacher competencies. These competencies act as a guide for teachers for how to teach, and for Inspectors in guiding and assessing teachers. They are designed to be used by teachers in self-assessment and goal-setting, and by Inspectors in planning teacher development workshops and during teacher observation visits.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN ALGERIA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1 English facilitates two-way communication with the world

English is a tool for communication that enables learners to make connections with the world and communicate something about one's self, community and country to others.

2 Communicative competence is the aim of language learning

Communicative competence in English involves interacting with others using receptive/ interpretive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (speaking and writing), supported by the ability to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately and employ a range of language strategies that help convey and clarify meaning.

LEARNERS & LEARNING

3 Successful learning depends on supported and purposeful development

Learners benefit and get more involved when each activity builds on previous material so that knowledge and skills build logically towards achieving and developing specific competencies.

4 Active Learners are successful learners

Learners acquire and retain language best when the topics meet their interests and when they are active participants in their learning: finding personal meaning, learning cooperatively with peers, and making connections to life outside of class.

5 Meaningful activities and tasks support and encourage learning

Classroom activities and tasks should draw on learners' lives and interests and help them to communicate ideas and meaning in and out of class.

6 Learning is an active, evolving process

Learning a language requires opportunities to use what one knows for communicative purposes, making mistakes and learning from them. The aim is to perform competently, while recognizing that errors may still occur.

7 Assessment is an ongoing part of learning

Ongoing, or regular, assessment should take various forms and address the competences that have been learned in class, so that the assessment can provide useful information on individual progress and achievement, which teachers and learners can review to aid learning.

TEACHERS & TEACHING

8 Teachers are facilitators of learning

Teachers support learners' learning by taking a primarily facilitative role in the classroom: designing and structuring learning experiences with learners' interests and needs in mind; guiding and monitoring learners' learning; assisting learners in contributing to their own learning in a learner-centered teaching environment.

9 Teachers foster a supportive learning environment and effective classroom management

Teachers have a positive impact on learner learning by creating a supportive and relaxed learning environment and using appropriate classroom management: communicating warmth and respect for learners, encouraging them to participate and work cooperatively and to develop self-confidence.

Teacher competencies

In order to enact the principles in classroom practice, teachers need corresponding competencies. Each principle is followed by the teacher competencies needed in order to develop learning experiences that are consistent with the principle. For example, in order to carry out principle 1, *English facilitates two-way communication with the world*, one of the teacher competencies is the following: *The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening*. This teacher competency is essential for this principle because in order to communicate something about themselves in English to people in other parts of the world and to learn about others, students need to engage in activities that develop real-life communication skills.

Because the principles are closely interrelated and mutually compatible, one teacher competency may appear with more than one principle. For example, the teacher competency *The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening* is related to Principles 1, 2, 4 and 5.

There are a total of thirty teacher competencies. These are listed after the table with the Teacher Competencies that support the Guiding Principles.

**TEACHER COMPETENCIES
THAT SUPPORT THE
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN ALGERIA**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1 English facilitates two-way communication with the world

English is a tool for communication that enables learners to make connections with the world and communicate something about one's self, community and country to others.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills¹ for reading, writing, speaking and listening (e.g. interviewing a classmate, writing about a past experience, reading an email, listening to a phone message).
- b. The teacher chooses topics and tasks that allow learners to develop skills in learning and communicating about themselves and their community, and about their country and the world.
- c. The teacher introduces a variety of topics of interest to the learners that are related to other cultures, comparison of cultures and international issues.

2 Communicative competence is the aim of language learning

Communicative competence in English involves interacting with others using receptive/interpretive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (speaking and writing), supported by the ability to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately and employ a range of language strategies that help convey and clarify meaning.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- b. The teacher chooses topics and tasks that allow learners to develop skills in learning and communicating about themselves and their community, and about their country and the world.
- c. The teacher plans lessons that have communicative objectives and whose steps build toward meeting them.
- d. The teacher introduces grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary in context, with a focus on communicating meaning.
- e. The teacher teaches learners how to use language strategies to aid in their learning and communication.

LEARNERS & LEARNING

3 Successful learning depends on supported and purposeful development

Learners benefit and get more involved when each activity builds on previous material so that knowledge and skills build logically towards achieving and developing specific competences.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher plans lessons that have communicative objectives and whose steps build toward meeting them.
- b. The teacher breaks down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic "chunks" of the language (or material) for learners to process.
- c. The teacher stages the lessons so that what the learner learns/practices in each step prepares for the next ones.
- d. The teacher plans lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short-term goals and long-term competencies.

¹ **Real-life communication:** the exchange of thoughts, messages or information that the people involved actually want to communicate; people exchanging thoughts, messages or information in situations that mimic situations found outside the classroom.

Real-life communication skills: the ability to exchange thoughts, messages or information in a situation that is true to life or could actually happen outside the classroom; skills for dealing with unpredictable conversations.

4 Active Learners are successful learners

Learners acquire and retain language best when the topics meet their interests and when they are active participants in their learning: finding personal meaning, learning cooperatively with peers, and making connections to life outside of class.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher supplements and adapts the textbook to plan activities related to learners' interests, prior knowledge and experience.
- b. The teacher sets tasks that allow the learner to discover how the language works in its *form, meaning and use*² and ensures that each is clear for students.
- c. The teacher plans lessons so that learners have to think and use their previous knowledge and imagination to prepare for and carry out classroom activities.
- d. The teacher sets tasks that develop cooperative learning and encourages peer help and readiness to exchange with others.
- e. The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- f. The teacher teaches learners how to use *language strategies*³ to aid in their learning and communication.

5 Meaningful activities and tasks support and encourage learning

Classroom activities and tasks should draw on learners' lives and interests and help them to communicate ideas and meaning in and out of class.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher supplements and adapts the textbook to plan activities related to learners' interests, prior knowledge and experience.
- b. The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- c. The teacher contextualizes⁴ the activities and provides a communicative purpose for them.

6 Learning is an active, evolving process

Learning a language requires opportunities to use what one knows for communicative purposes,⁵ making mistakes and learning from them. The aim is to perform competently, while recognizing that errors may still occur.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher provides a balance of activities that focus sometimes on accuracy and sometimes on fluency.
- b. The teacher plans activities within each lesson in which learners use the language freely without worrying about errors, so that they can focus on fluency and communication.
- c. The teacher plans activities in which learners use previously studied language and skills and incorporate new language and skills.
- d. The teacher gives learners opportunities to recognize errors and figure out for themselves how to correct them.

² **Form, meaning, use:** language has form (rules for grammar, spelling, pronunciation) and meaning (the ideas that the words represent) and use (the social or situational rules for when, where and with whom we use the various structures, words and pronunciations of the language).

³ **Language strategies:** planned actions that can help one learn or recall language; planned actions that can help one to better communicate ideas and information or to better understand the messages of others.

⁴ **Contextualizes/provides and communicative purpose:** puts language into a situation where people have a reason to exchange ideas and meaning (Language is best presented and practiced in a context or situation where it is needed.)

⁵ **Communicative purpose:** a communicative purpose is a reason to communicate in order to get information, to do something, or to get something.

7 Assessment is an ongoing part of learning

Ongoing, or regular, assessment should take various forms and address the competencies that have been learned in class, so that the assessment can provide useful information on individual progress and achievement, which teachers and learners can review to aid learning.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher plans lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term goals and long term competencies.
- b. The teacher regularly assesses learners' learning using a variety of assessment activities including more informal (e.g. monitoring during activities and peer/self-assessment) and more formal (e.g. tests, presentations and projects).
- c. The teacher plans and uses assessment activities that assess what learners know about language, and also what learners are able to do as speakers, listeners, readers and writers.
- d. The teacher teaches learners to assess themselves and their peers so that they are aware of their progress.

TEACHERS & TEACHING

8 Teachers are facilitators of learning

Teachers support learner learning by taking a primarily facilitative role in the classroom: designing and structuring learning experiences with learners' interests and needs in mind; guiding and monitoring learners' learning; assisting learners in contributing to their own learning in a learner-centered teaching environment.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher finds out the needs, interests, and language difficulties of the learners.
- b. The teacher selects and introduces activities and materials for language work that meet learner' needs and interests.
- c. The teacher fosters a group feeling (cooperation, respect, enjoyment, trust, etc.).
- d. The teacher organizes learners (using space, classroom furniture, time, etc.) to facilitate interaction so that the teacher is not the focus of the lesson.
- e. The teacher varies patterns of interaction (e.g. teacher eliciting from class, pair work, learners presenting to class, learners mingling) within the lesson to support the objectives of the class and the feeling/energy of the group;
- f. The teacher ensures that all learners find their involvement sufficiently challenging;
- g. The teacher teaches learners how to use language strategies to aid in their learning and communication.

9 Teachers foster a supportive learning environment and effective classroom management

Teachers have a positive impact on learner learning by creating a supportive and relaxed learning environment and using appropriate classroom management: communicating warmth and respect for learners, encouraging them to participate and work cooperatively and to develop self-confidence.

Teacher competencies:

- a. The teacher creates a friendly atmosphere (e.g. by using learners' names, encouraging them, using positive reinforcement like praising and rewards, employing games to practice and review material).
- b. The teacher uses effective techniques to build learner self-confidence (e.g. scaffolding so learners can succeed; using informal types of assessment that produce less anxiety, giving feedback to learners on their work in an encouraging way; employing self-assessment and goal-setting).
- c. The teacher fosters a group feeling (cooperation, respect, enjoyment, trust, etc.).
- d. The teacher sets tasks that develop cooperative learning and encourages peer help and readiness to exchange with others.
- e. The teacher manages the class so learners know what is expected of them (e.g., sharing the daily agenda and classroom rules, providing rubrics for learner performance, giving clear instructions appropriate to the level of the learners and checking that learners understand them).

A comprehensive list of the 30 teacher competencies

- 1 The teacher uses and plans activities that allow learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening (e.g. interviewing a classmate, writing about a past experience, reading an email, listening to a phone message).
- 2 The teacher chooses topics and tasks that allow learners to develop skills in learning and communicating about themselves and their community, and about their country and the world.
- 3 The teacher introduces a variety of topics of interest to the learners that are related to other cultures, comparison of cultures and international issues.
- 4 The teacher varies patterns of interaction (e.g. teacher eliciting from class, pair work, learners presenting to class, learners mingling) within the lesson to support the objectives of the class and the feeling/energy of the group
- 5 The teacher plans lessons that have communicative objectives and whose steps build toward meeting them.
- 6 The teacher introduces grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary in context, with a focus on communicating meaning.
- 7 The teacher teaches learners how to use language strategies to aid in their learning and communication.
- 8 The teacher breaks down functions, genres and skills into smaller components/ skills/parts in order to present realistic 'chunks' of the language (or material) for learners to process.
- 9 The teacher stages the lessons so that what the learner learns/practices in each step prepares for the next ones.
- 8 The teacher plans lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short term goals and long term competencies.
- 9 The teacher supplements and adapts the textbook to plan activities related to learners' interests, prior knowledge and experience.
- 10 The teacher sets tasks that allow the learner to discover how the language works in its *form*, *meaning* and *use* and ensures that each is clear for students.
- 11 The teacher plans lessons so that learners have to think and use their previous knowledge and imagination to prepare for and carry out classroom activities.
- 12 The teacher sets tasks that develop cooperative learning and encourages peer help and readiness to exchange with others.
- 13 The teacher teaches learners how to use language strategies to aid in their learning and communication.
- 14 The teacher contextualizes the activities and provides a communicative purpose for them.
- 15 The teacher provides a balance of activities that focus sometimes on accuracy, sometimes on fluency.
- 16 The teacher plans activities within each lesson in which learners use the language freely without worrying about errors, so that they can focus on fluency and communication.
- 17 The teacher plans activities in which learners use previously-studied language and skills and incorporate new language and skills.
- 18 The teacher gives learners opportunities to recognize errors and figure out for themselves how to correct them.
- 19 The teacher plans lessons that are interconnected and work together as a series to build toward short-term goals and long-term competencies.
- 20 The teacher regularly assesses learners' learning using a variety of assessment activities including more informal activities (e.g. monitoring during activities and peer/self-assessment) and more formal ones (e.g. tests, presentations and projects).
- 21 The teacher plans and uses assessment activities that assess not only what learners know about language, but also what learners are able to do as speakers, listeners, readers and writers.
- 22 The teacher teaches learners to assess themselves and their peers so that they are aware of their progress.
- 23 The teacher finds out the needs, interests, and language difficulties of the learners.
- 24 The teacher selects and introduces activities and materials for language work that meet learners' needs and interests.
- 25 The teacher fosters a group feeling (cooperation, respect, enjoyment, trust, etc.).

- 26 The teacher organizes learners (using space, classroom furniture, time, etc.) to facilitate interaction so that the teacher is not the focus of the lesson.
- 27 The teacher ensures that all the learners find their involvement sufficiently challenging.
- 28 The teacher creates a friendly atmosphere (e.g. by using learners' names, encouraging them, using positive reinforcement like praise and rewards, employing games to practice and review material).
- 29 The teacher uses effective techniques to build learner self-confidence (e.g. scaffolding, so learners can succeed, using informal types of assessment that produce less anxiety, giving feedback to learners on their work in an encouraging way; employing self assessment and goal setting).
- 30 The teacher manages the class so learners know what is expected of them (e.g., sharing the daily agenda and classroom rules, providing rubrics for learner performance, giving clear instructions appropriate to the level of the learners and checking that learners understand them).