

## LESS MEANS MORE

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“The more the better” seems to be a certain aphorism that can be related to any circumstance; however, when dealing with teaching a



subject such as English or any other foreign or second language, we doubt whether it can be so useful as it has traditionally been considered. We tend to believe in which apparently seems to be contradictory: “less means more.” Next, some points of view will be stated so as to try at least, to get you to consider them when planning activities for an academic period.

Both teachers and students may take advantage of planning and developing fewer units or contents throughout the semester. Firstly, when you devote enough time to any activity, you will probably have more opportunities to succeed; the lack of success is the most striking characteristic of adult or youngster's foreign language learning. Students who have more time to grasp, to analyze, to compare, to exemplify on specific subjects will likely learn more meaningfully than those who cover huge lists of contents and units.

We dare to state that many foreign language students, not only from universities but also from high schools, try to "learn" to demonstrate teachers (not themselves) that the objectives have been completely achieved; I think that one of the reason why this happen is the wide lists of subjects that can only be covered but not meaningfully learned. Students who realize they are really learning specific and determined grammar aspects or language functions from the very beginning of a course, will indeed learn for themselves.

Students involved in studying fewer topics, can go deep into each one of them because they might devote more energy and interest to concrete things avoiding, in this way, spreading too much without any precise purpose or limit, thus, learners may be more interested and more willing to do bibliographic reviews or to ask teachers to go deep in each subject.

When covering a reasonable short program, you have time left to do further activities concerning the same topics; in other words, students have more possibilities to practice more, go to the laboratory, exchange learning experiences with other students, or any other activities involving learning English as a foreign or second language.

Secondly, teachers can also take advantage of developing short programs because they may offer the students quality rather than quantity; The "super programs" may provoke teachers' and students' frustrations because of the lack of time to fulfil what has been promised and expected since the beginning of a course. Sometimes, you may hear students say they have only learned a little in relation to what had been widely explained in the program before starting the course.

An English teacher who reduces the contents of a program might have more chances to know the students as human beings and to identify their differences, needs, weaknesses, strenghts, and expectations; therefore, the teacher can

do the necessary adjustments to reorient the methodology or even the contents themselves.

The development of relatively short contents may provide the students uniformity of criteria because teachers have more opportunities to constantly revise what has been taught, what is going on in the class as well as to be aware of the students' different rhythms of learning; this would be helpful since the learners might be assigned particular types of tasks in order to overcome possible difficulties or limitations.

In addition, teachers may also know the students' levels of learning in terms of oral /written comprehension as well as oral and written expression and may evaluate the learners in more valid and reliable terms.

Another advantage of diminishing or redistributing contents along an academic period is that contents overlapping can be avoided since themes are clearly organized in such a way they can be taught progressively at its due time.

To conclude, we want to clarify that we don't mean to state that "less means easier". On the contrary, the less you teach the more complex levels of conceptualization you can get and the deeper your students may go in terms of meaningful learning.

"Less means more" stands for selecting appropriately what is more relevant and necessary to be developed in a sequence as better and profound as possible; We believe that it would be more useful for the students to "learn meaningfully a few things than to cover hundreds of subjects."