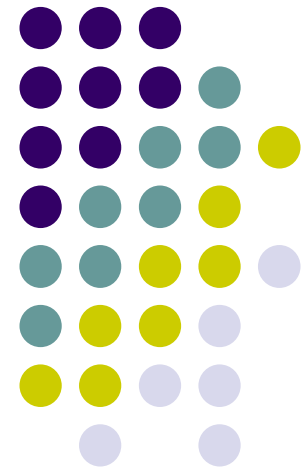
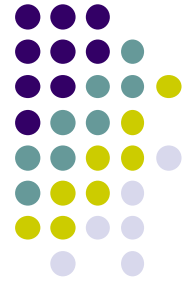


Chapter 3:

The secret life of methods

Jack C. Richards (1987)



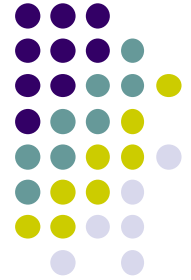


Methods and language theory

First, methods are discussed concerning

- The nature of a language syllabus (**The syllabus route**).
- The nature of language learning processes (**The instructional theory route**).
- (The difference between *language-centered* and *learning-centered* methods are discussed)

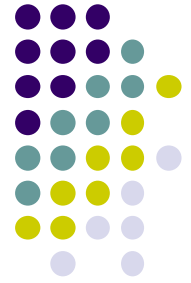
Secondly, the reason of adoption and influence of methods (***The factors that give a method its secret life***) are discussed.



- *The form a method takes*
- *Publish*
- *Support networks*

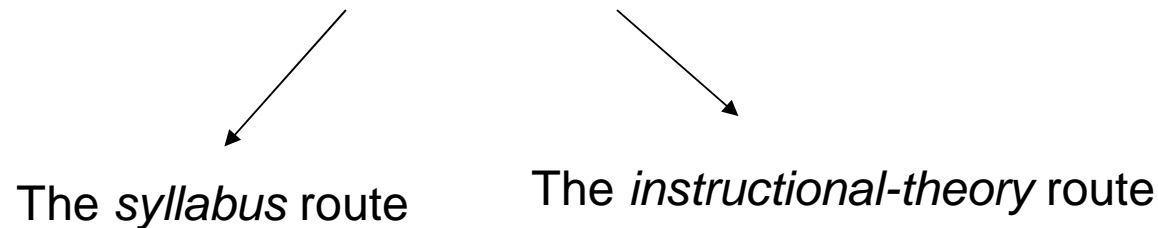
*Finally, methods in **curriculum development** are discussed.*

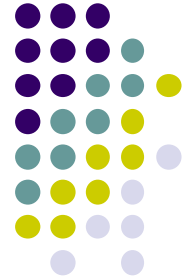
What does Richard refer in using the term *method*?



- “In using the term *method*, I refer to language teaching philosophy that contains a standardized set of procedures or principles for teaching a language that are based upon a given set of theoretical premises about the nature of language and language learning.”
(Richards, 1987)

- **Two routes to the development of methods**

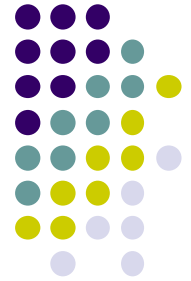




The syllabus route

- Considers how language (language content) is defined and how it is related to a method.
- focuses on the influence of particular accounts of language content in program designing. (for example, ESP)

The first attempts in the twentieth century



- In 1920 and 1930's → Vocabulary control

The major component of a language syllabus was ***vocabulary***.

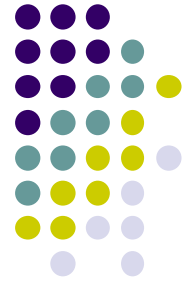
At that time, people like *Palmer and West, Bongers, and Ogden* attempted to introduce a scientific basis to syllabus design .

Their products (word lists)

-Basic English (Ogden,1930)

-Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection (Faucett,West,Palmer, and Thorndike,1936).

-General Service List (West, 1953)



*Palmer had a parallel interest in grammar.

- He considered grammar as “the system underlying the patterns of speech.”
(Richards, 1987)

This view affected the development of his substitution tables and his book ***A Grammar of Spoken English*** (Palmer & Blandford, 1939)

Hornby, Mackin, and others also worked on *grammatical syllabuses*.



- The development of systematic approaches and grammatical content of language, and the efforts of specialists led the foundations for ***TEFL (Teaching of English as a foreign Language)***.
- The syllabus → **Structural**
- What did a ***syllabus*** include?
 - graded sequence of sentence patterns and structures.

In order to contextualize and practice syllabus items, ***structural syllabus*** used with a ***situational approach***.



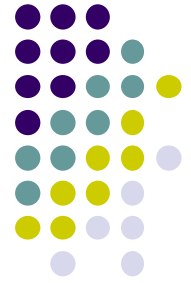
- ***Structural-situational approach.***

After the British effort, several decates developed. This time...

- Charles Fries and his colleagues produced word lists.
- The “***substitution tables***” became “***the frames***”.
- He applied ***structuralism*** to language teaching and syllabus
- As a result of it, “aural-oral method” developed. (Fries&Fries,1961)

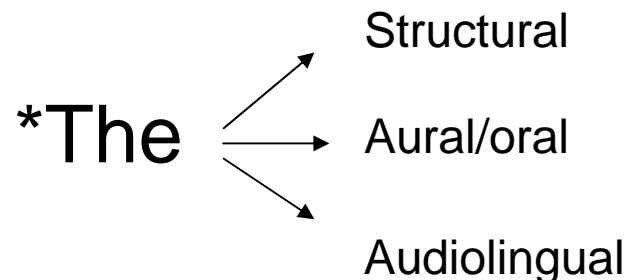
*Defining language content in terms of vocabulary and grammar has great influence on methods. However.....

Rejections to the (lexico)-structural syllabus.



- First challenges to this view (late 1960's)
Both the concept of notional syllabuses and the ESP movement reject the lexico-structural syllabus model.

Why?

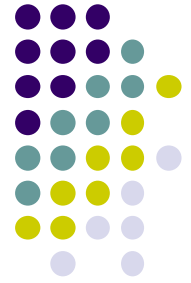


Methods were design to teach English for **general** purposes.

- It is assumed “once the basic vocabulary and grammar of the target language had been learned, the learner would be able to communicate effectively in situations where English was needed for general, unspecified purposes.”
- “Is that possible?”
- Wilkins (1976) argue that including only grammar and vocabulary is not enough to communicate effectively in target language.



There is a need for...

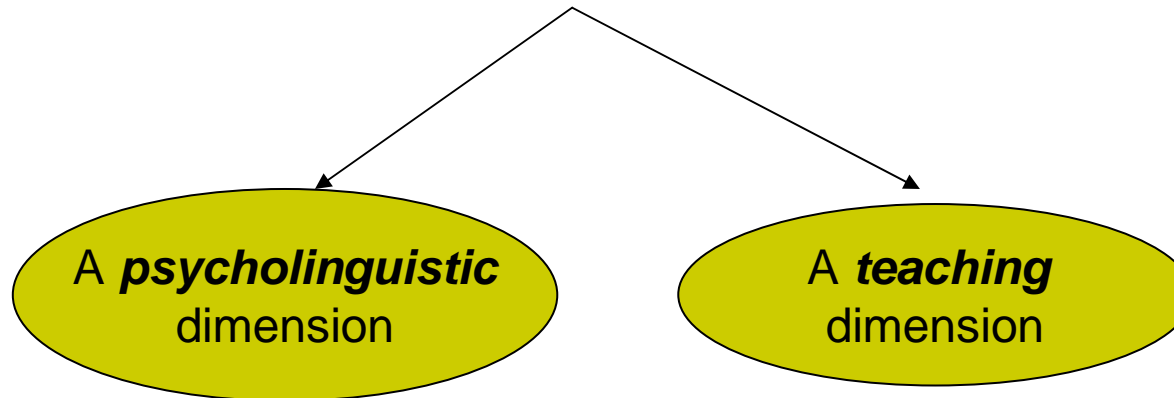


- notions or concepts the learners need to communicate about.
- the functional purposes for which the language is to be used.
- the situations in which the language will be used.
- the roles the learner might typically play.

From grammatical → ***Communicative***

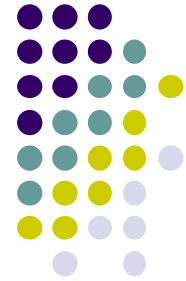
Threshold Level (syllabus) (Van Ek & Alexander, 1975): **description of the content of English to be taught for general communicative purposes.**

The instructional-theory route



- a theory of learning that describes learning strategies and processes
 - The conditions necessary for these processes.
- Teaching and learning procedures to be followed
 - Role of teachers and learners in the instructional process.
 - (i.e., the tasks and activities they are expected to carry out, the role of learners as performers, ...)

Method developers like **Asher (1977), Curran (1972), and Gattegno (1976)** studied on how individuals learning potential can be maximized.



Asher

- **TPR** (designed to provide language- learning experiences that reduce the stress and anxiety adults experience in language learning.)
- “His method depends on published materials, but rather allows teachers to **develop their own syllabuses** and materials as long as the recommended instructional procedures are followed.”
(Richards, 1987, p36)

Curran

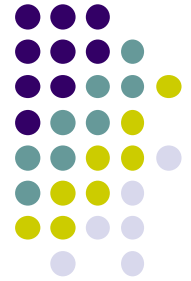
- **Counseling-Learning** is predicted upon assumptions about **how people best learn.**
- For him learning is a social phenomenon that takes place within the supportive environment of a “community” of fellow learners.
- Total dependence on the teacher.
- Content isn’t specified.

Gattegno

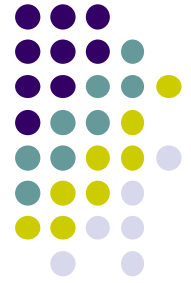
• **Silent Way**

- Concious use of one’s intelligence to heighten learning through listening, generalization, and expressing oneself.
- The teacher is relatively silent.
- Language is presented through pictures, objects, or situations....
- There is a strong linguistic focus, but mastery of language is not the only goal, becoming a proficient learner is also important.

Factors that give a method its secret life

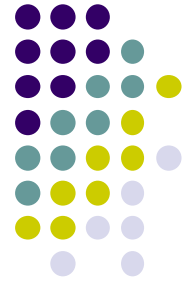


1. The form a method takes
2. Publish or perish
3. Support Networks



1. The form a method takes

- Some methods exist ***primarily in the form of materials.*** (A textbook)
 - They are available in a form (A textbook) to those who wish to use it.
 - For example, structural/situational approaches to syllabus design provide principles that can be used in writing textbooks.
- *This helps to make decisions on instructional philosophies*** that depend on teacher's skill.



the text-based methods can be used

Without additional training

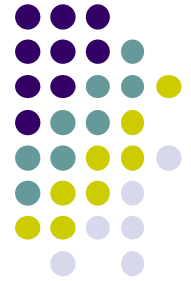
With additional training

For instance, audiolingual and communicative methods doesn't require a special training; ***a teacher buys a text and read the teachers manual.***

However, Lozanov or Gattegno's methods require ***special training.***

* Methods that lead to texts have much higher adoption and survival rate. For this reason, audiolingual and communicative methods are widely known.

Are the texts enough?



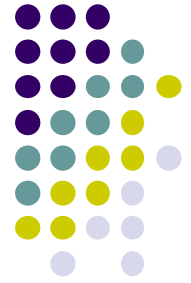
2. Publish

- Publishers have everything to gain by making concepts (i.e. Notional syllabus) ***comprehensible*** and ***widely known***.

- ***How do they do this?***

Through.....

- promoting texts at conferences, book exhibitions.
- direct visits to schools and institutions.
- financing workshops and lectures by people who developed instructional philosophies the texts follow.



- Following attractive offers, new editions can be published.
For instance, considering the offers to work over audiolingual or structural course, a new edition can be published bearing a notional/functional or communicative label.
- Publishers associated with **notional/functional or communicative approaches** are major international publishing houses.
- The publishers of Asher's, Curran's and Gattegno's works are **do-it-yourself presses** like Sky Oaks Productions, Apple River Press, and Educational Solutions.



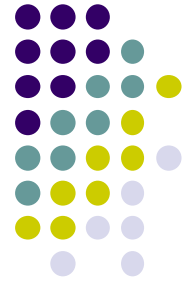
Is “Publish” enough?

3. Support Networks

Methods need...

- The support of academics
- The sanction of professional teaching organizations.
- The visibility that adoptions by universities and educational agencies afford.

Examples:



- The French Minister of Education gave official approval to the ***Direct Method***.
- It became the only approved method for teaching languages in France and in Germany in the same year.
- It failed to survive despite the support. One reason is “*like the Silent Way and Counseling Learning, it could not readily be translated into textbooks and materials,...*”
(Richards, 1987)



(Second example)

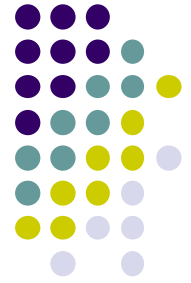
- The Audio-visual Method received the sanction of the Département de la Coopération through its widespread use of the series ***Voix et Images de Drance*** for teaching French Abroad.
- It has been the ‘official’ method for so many years.

Universities and academics also played a significant role on the fate of methods.



- Gattegno's Silent Way or Curran's Counseling Learning attracted so much attention in the 1970's in the US with the sanction of Stevick's uncritical treatment of them in his books *Memory, Meaning, and Method* (1976) and *A Way and Ways* (1980).
- The well known Michigan series- the blue, red, green, and yellow books (based on the principles of the aural/oral method) were supported by
 - *Fries' definitive texts on language learning and teaching*
 - *Lado's work on contrastive analysis.*

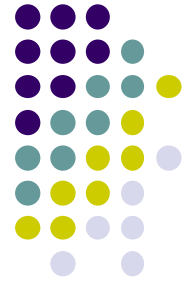
The philosophy behind the materials was spread through Michigan's journal



Language Learning

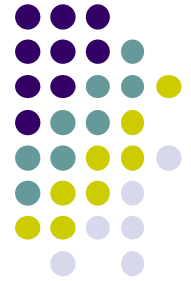
- (The first journal devoted to the new science of applied linguistics.)
- In the 1950's the Michigan approach and its materials became nothing less than the “**American way**”, the ***orthodox methodology*** of American English specialists. So it was hard to question the materials.
- In the late 1950's and 1960's –**audiolingualism** (another American orthodoxy)

National atyles of thought and practice also had an important role in speading “**British**” views of methodology.



- British approach (***communicative language teaching***) to syllabus and program design established so rapidly with the British Council's help.
- ***Since 1930 British Council has played a significiant role in promoting the teaching of English the British way.***
- **How?**

- With the various activities of the council in the direct teaching of English in many parts of the world.
- Advisory and consultancy services to the governments and their agencies.
- Joint publication with Oxford University Press of the English Language Teaching Journal (The British journal of English language teaching thought and practice.)

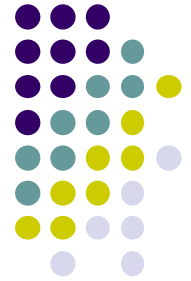


The British Council has served the interests of British methodologists by providing...



- an instant and international outlet for their ideas
- Funds to present their latest speculations at international forums and conferences.
- Example; John Munby (a British Council employee). Even before the publication of his book *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978), the Munby model had been presented in British Council-sponsored workshops and used as the basis for several council consultancy projects in different parts of the world.

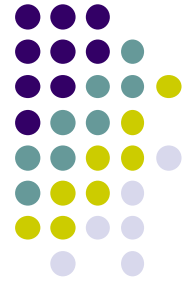
Curriculum and evaluation: *the missing element*



- What are the *procedures* of curriculum development?
 1. *Situational analysis:*
 2. *Needs analysis:*
 3. *Task analysis:*
 4. *Goal setting:*
 5. *Selection of learning experiences:*
 6. *Evaluation:*

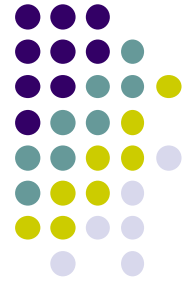
*Which **procedure (s)** is/are more related to methods?*

Interrelated aspects of language program design:



- goal setting, the development of objectives, the specification of the communicative and linguistic processes and skills to attain these objectives, the selection of teaching procedures, and the evaluation of the outcomes.

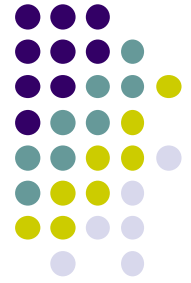
- Important issues:
 - ↗ *Not which method to adopt*
 - ↘ *But how to develop procedures and instructional activities that will help to reach the objectives.*



The claim of the methods:

- *The adoption of a specific method will lead to higher levels of language achievement than the use of another methods.*
- *Why?*
 1. *We can look for the evidence of effectiveness of the method (results achieved as a result of the method) .*
 2. *We can seek evidence for its relative effectiveness. (Long, 1983)*

An experimental design to test the claims of a method.

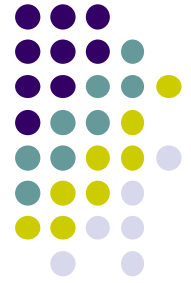


- **Wagner and Tilney's Study**

- 21 subjects assigned

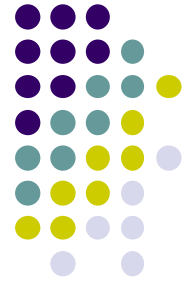
The method they examined was derived from Suggestpedy (Lozanov, 1979) → utilizes music, parapsychology, and other techniques to enhance the learning powers of students.

Superlearning (Ostrander&Schroeder, 1979) → learners can learn 2,000 lexical items in 23 days by studying just three hours a day.



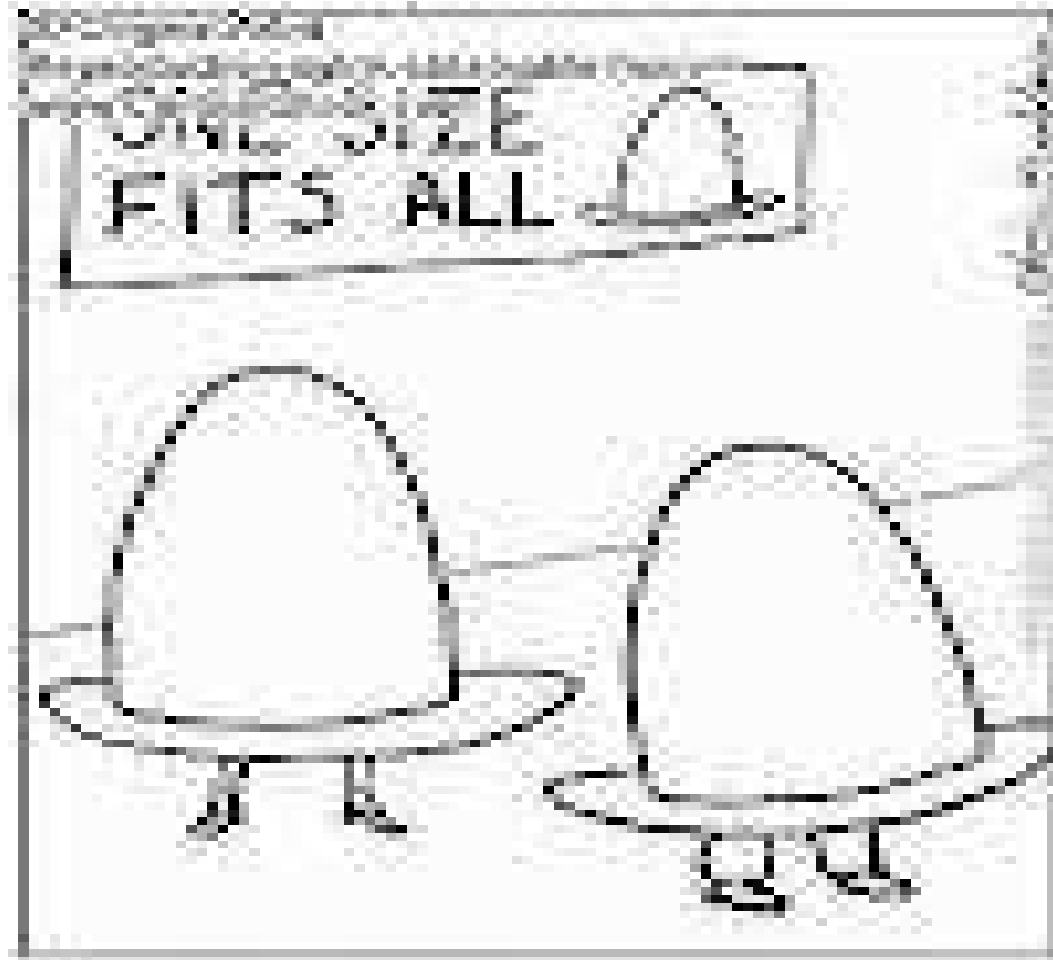
- The experimental group received German language training with Superlearning methodology.
- Second group received the same Superlearning methodology but without use of Baroque music (which is a feature of Lozanov's method).
- Third group receiving language training in the classroom served as a ***no-contact group***.
- After five-week experimental period, levels of vocabulary learning in each group were compared.

The results:

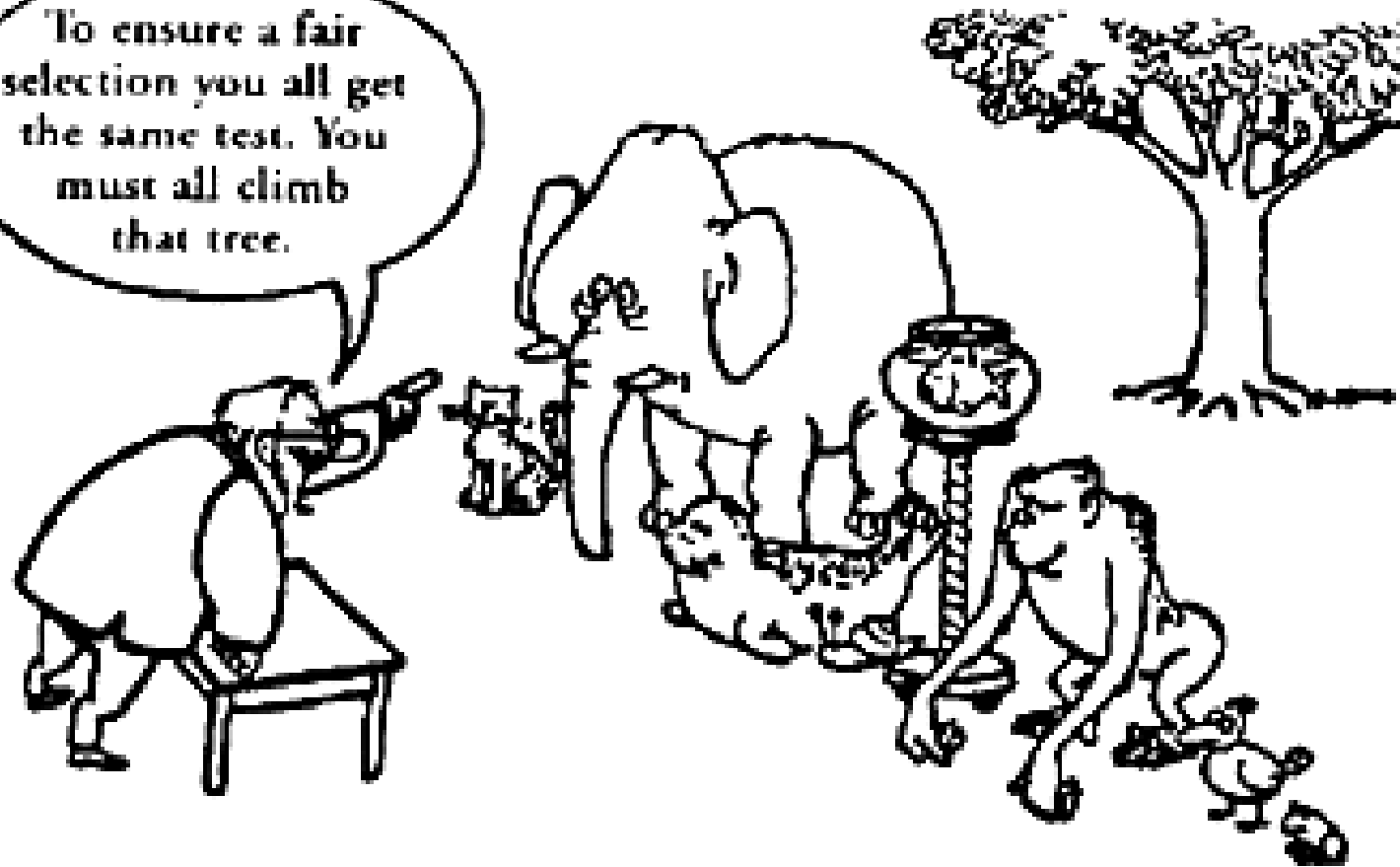


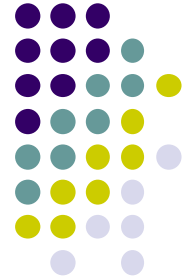
- Subject taught by a traditional classroom method ***learned significantly more vocabulary*** than those taught according to Superlearning principles.
- So, the important point is not which method to follow in curriculum development, it is being aware of the procedures of curriculum design and adopt a method considering these procedures. Otherwise.....

- “one size fits all”



To ensure a fair selection you all get the same test. You must all climb that tree.





- 1) What is the relationship between methods and language theory?
- 2) What are/were the reasons for the rise and fall of methods?

