



CURRICULUM REVIEW & REVISION POLICY

Cultural Center for Language Studies

The Cultural Center for Language Studies (CCLS) Miami is committed to providing excellent language instruction based on functional and communicative language teaching approaches. The two main categories that drive learning outcomes are: linguistic performance indicators and grammar performance indicators.

CCLS is also committed to curriculum review and revision. The review and revision process involves the development, analysis, and revision of course materials and curricula for English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The school's Academic Coordinator and school Director carry out the development and revision process. This process, with regard to English and Spanish curricula, is informed and shaped by the influence of CCLS' parent companies, CCAA and WLE (d.b.a. CCLS) in Brazil. The terms are such that CCLS publishes and sells English and Spanish materials that are originally produced and edited by said companies.

Purpose

CCLS' Curriculum Review and Revision Policy exists to ensure quality curricula, materials, and pedagogical practices. WLE and CCLS share the responsibility of maintaining this quality, and faculty ensure the effective presentation of the content. This process relies on the collaboration and teamwork of the school President, Director, Academic Coordinator, CCLS faculty, CCAA faculty, and WLE Editorial Consultants and Editors-in-Chief.

The policy is designed to create a systematic and consistent process of review and approval at CCLS Miami. Emerging from this effort, CCLS has created and maintained a curriculum that aligns with current pedagogical theories, its own mission and goals, and ACCET requirements and standards.

Procedures

On a yearly basis, CCLS officers communicate with their counterparts at CCAA/WLE and submit recommendations for review to its parent companies, CCAA and WLE. Based on student, faculty, management, and staff feedback and review, CCLS informs WLE/CCAA of which series they believe are up for review. Both CCAA and WLE alike process and analyze said recommendations and consider them in the review process. All suggestions must be submitted for review and approval.

When implementing changes to curricula and assessments, WLE follows the external guidelines from TESOL, ETS (Educational Testing Service), and ELI (The English Language Institute of the University of Michigan).

Policy on Curriculum Review and Approval

CCLS follows a schedule of continuous review and revision of its materials. When the revision of one series is completed, the revision of the next immediately follows. All CCLS and CCAA schools are encouraged to submit their feedback, opinions, and suggestions for review. Feedback and suggestions are collected from affiliate schools and are in turn submitted to WLE for consideration. As a matter of course, CCLS schools send their feedback to CCLS Miami, and CCAA schools send their feedback to WLE.

Feedback includes but is not limited to:

Student surveys
Teacher surveys
Suggestions from faculty and staff

Business planning sessions
Board meetings
Industry trends

Pedagogical Theories & Revision

CCLS/WLE/CCAA are committed to meeting the latest standards and practices of language teaching and keep these criteria in mind as we select and develop textbooks, create online programming, and track professional development.

As a response to growing trends in Communicative Language Teaching, CCLS has worked towards developing curricula and choosing materials that emphasize expressive dialogue and communicative competence, as opposed to simple question-and-answer drills or rote memorization. Driven by these principles of CLT, our curricula prioritize rhetorical skills, situational performance indicators, and meaningful and purposeful usage of language. See *Textbook Selection* for more on the process of choosing materials.

Acknowledging the movement toward blended learning in today's classrooms, CCLS has initiated a project that connects each course to exercises, idioms, expressions, video clips, and cultural information. This extra corpus of work will greatly benefit students' learning and interaction with authentic, principled, and natural texts and videos.

Beyond these curricular developments, CCLS maintains a Professional Development Program (PD) to keep teaching staff up-to-date on pedagogical theories and practices. In this program, teachers are encouraged to participate in continuing education and track their PD in a comprehensive instructor plan. The plan targets six categories of development: methodology and pedagogical theories, linguistics and accent reduction, grammar and language functions, student assessment, classroom management, using resources, and technology. Administrative staff collects these sheets and the appropriate documentation annually.

Supervisors of Feedback & Revision

At WLE the following specialists share joint responsibility for implementing, managing, and overseeing the curriculum review and approval processes:

English

- Content Supervisor: Waldyr Lima (PhD in Education)
- Editorial Consultant: Thomas Edward Hasek (MA in Teaching)
- Editor in Chief: Melanie Littlewood (BA in English, Portuguese, and Education)

Melanie Littlewood and Thomas Hasek supervise the review process.

Spanish

- Content Supervisor: Waldyr Lima (PhD in Education)
- Editorial Consultant: Sonia González (BA in Education), Virginia Fernández (MA in Text Linguistics)
- Editor in Chief: Elena Fernández (BA in Spanish Language and Literature)

Textbook Selection

CCLS has a choice of course materials for a number of its courses of study, including all Communication Skills, Advanced English, and Portuguese courses. Each course's textbook is carefully selected for its communicative activities, authentic and principled texts, and engaging content. CCLS targets speaking and listening skills through interactive student involvement in class activities. To this end, our books and methodology target oral communication and application of course objectives.

CCLS' Academic Coordinator and Director select these materials with the following considerations:

- Four-integrated-skill approach (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for EEC advanced courses
- Listening and speaking approach for the Communication Skills courses
- Grammar structures that are appropriate for the specific level and needs of our students
- Methodology that is consistent with our own practices and approach
- Engaging and relevant lesson topics (themes, situations, vocabulary, and language functions)
- Content that suits the needs of our students, whether it is work-related, socially oriented, or for specific purposes

With these considerations and faculty input, the Director and Academic Coordinator carefully select course textbooks and materials.

Testing Materials & Revision

Each testing instrument at CCLS is specifically designed to match each course of study. The exams assess students' proficiency in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical structures, and writing. It relies upon listening comprehension, written, and oral components for the English and Spanish courses.

These materials have been successfully used in over 700 schools worldwide and have been periodically updated following the analysis of students' tests in order to ensure that the exams are both fair and accurate. Following this analysis, those questions that are found to be unclear (because of high error rates, for example) are rewritten for clarity or are replaced. Another instance of analysis-driven modification is found in CCAA's practice of removing answer choices that are infrequently chosen. These answer choices are then replaced by an option that appropriately measures the comprehension and assimilation of the course content.

WLE also makes a point of targeting high frequency words in both textbook material and in exams. In 2013, these sets of vocabulary were measured against the 2,000 most common words in the English language* (these words cover about 81% of texts). Spanish high frequency vocabulary for the Español Internacional series were based on the Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA) de la Real Academia Española.

* Paul Nation's adaptation of the classic high-frequency word list known as the *General Service List* (GSL) containing the 2284 most commonly used words in the English language, and the *Academic Word List* (AWL), consisting of 570 words selected because of the frequency with which they appear in a broad range of academic texts.