EFL/ESL Textbook Selection in Korea and East Asia - Relevant Issues and Literature Review

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Abstract

EFL/ESL departments periodically face the problem of textbook selection. Cogent issues are that non-native speakers will use L2 English mainly to communicate with other non-native English speakers, so an American accent is becoming less important. L2 English will mainly be used in computer-mediated communication, hence the importance of L2 Digital Literacy. The convergence of Information Communication Technologies is radically impacting Second Language Acquisition, which is integrating web-hosted Assessment and Learning Management Systems. EFL/ESL textbooks need to be compatible with blended learning, prepare students for a globalized world, and foster autonomous learning. I summarize five papers on EFL/ESL textbook evaluation and selection, and include relevant material for adaptation. Textbooks are major sources of contact with the target language, so selection is an important decision. Educators need to be systematic and objective in their approach, adopting a selection process that is open, transparent, accountable, participatory, informed and rigorous.

Keywords: EFL/ESL, Textbook evaluation and selection, online literacy assessment, L2 digital literacy, Second Language, SLA, Convergence, E-learning, Learning Management Systems, LMS, blending learning, autonomous learning, Information Communication Technologies, Korea, East Asia.

1. Introduction

EFL/ESL departments periodically face the problem of selecting a textbook series for their courses. In Section 2, I raise certain cogent issues that are relevant to the process of textbook selection, and which should be taken into consideration.

These include firstly the kind of English taught, and the (lack of) importance of accent, given that most L2 English use is in communication with other non-native speakers. Secondly, L2 digital literacy is of emerging importance given that most L2 English use will be in computer-mediated communication. As I elsewhere address [1], the future of EFL pedagogy should also be taken into account, given the radical impact that Information Convergence Technologies and their Convergence are having on Second Language Acquisition, particularly the integration of newly developed web-based assessment systems such as Cognero [2], popular Learning Management Systems such as Moodle [3], and the rapid development of hybrid L2 education. The blending of textbooks with digital media should be considered, in tandem with the use of the computer and the Internet in the classroom and the growing importance of ancillary digital resources. Thirdly, the textbook selection process itself needs to be transparent and accountable, encourage teacher participation, and allow for a change in direction that offers students a more relevant preparation for a rapidly globalizing world that confronts students and new graduates with critical issues that urgently need to be addressed. Fourthly, the primary aims in textbook selection should be considered, and I suggest these include the importance of diversity, the recognition of multilingualism and bilingualism as normal, and the fostering of autonomous language learning.

In Section 3, I summarize five papers from the extensive literature on textbook evaluation and selection, with the intention of providing an entrée for teachers wishing to explore this literature further. Sample checklists and criteria are included which can readily be adapted for use with custom textbook evaluation and selection. I then conclude with general recommendations for the textbook selection process.

2. Relevant Considerations for the Choice of a Textbook Series for Native English Teacher EFL Programs in East Asia

2.1 Should students be learning American or International English?

Graddol argues that, as the number of non-native speakers of English in the world surpasses the number of native speakers, non-native speakers are increasingly likely to use their English as a medium of communication with other non-native speakers, and *not* with native speakers - whose presence may in fact inhibit their use of English [4]. Korean learners of English express frustration at not being able to converse with native speakers; at a recent KATE conference, Professor Obari observed that in a similar Japanese situation, accent has become much less important, and Japanese EFL learners at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, are being taught International English, with a diverse range of accents from teachers of various nationalities [5].

2.2 What is the future of EFL pedagogy?

Profound transformations throughout society, which stem from new Information Communication Technologies and their evolutionary Convergence, are beginning to radically impact EFL theory and practice.

a. My research [6] suggests that the primary use of English by non-Native speakers will increasingly be in *digital computer-mediated* communication - rather than face-to-face - and in *online* research, business and publishing. Hence, at a variety of conferences and publications, I am strongly advocating the intentional teaching of L2 English Digital Literacy skills within EFL/ESL pedagogy [7], [8], [9].

b. My experience in Korean EFL suggests that as yet only a few native English-speaking teachers (NEST) currently use Learning Management Systems (LMS). I use the Moodle LMS, together with the Cognero online assessment system (which I am beta-testing), so that all tasks, quizzes and exams in all courses are computer-based [10], with all tests web-hosted. More native faculty will likely adopt LMS, so demand for classroom computer facilities and for Internet-friendly educational material will rapidly rise. Textbooks therefore need to be compatible with the developing provision of e-learning and m-learning, and publishers such as Cambridge University Press are implementing LMS sites that complement texts [11].

c. It is critical therefore that the texts chosen are forwardly compatible with this profession-wide shift to computer-based LMS that enable blended learning environments. In a textbook choice made by Gyeongsang National University some years ago, publishers provided teachers with free exam-writing software together with question banks on the textbooks, which were useful to prepare quizzes and exams. A recent textbook choice made by Sejong University favored texts with digital resources such as interactive presentation whiteboard software and video DVDs.

d. In similar fashion, texts need to be technologically up-to-date, and Internet savvy, with scope for digital User Generated Content to be developed and integrated. Provision for multimedia presentation in class and online access to relevant study resources are similar factors that can greatly enhance textbook value.

2.3 How are the textbooks to be selected?

The textbook selection process provides an opportunity to signal a shift in political ambience in Korean educational culture, which has historically tended to place what Westerners may regard as a bewildering weight on non-productive administration at the expense of critically needed innovation [12]. This shift could encourage what Obama in his first speech as President identified as key factors of transparency and accountability. Important in this is the provision for and support of informed debate, recently identified by Shaffer at a recent KATE conference as a quality noticeably absent in the native English-speaking teacher education of English in Korea [13].

a. Thus, teacher involvement in the choice of textbook series should be encouraged. Gyeongsang National University faculty formed an ad hoc textbook committee to which any interested teacher could join. Staff individually and collectively explored options, and arranged presentations by interested publishers and distributors. Final recommendations were made, and acted upon by the Administration.

b. Does a single choice of textbook series even need to be made? An alternative would be to have a period of trying the best three recommendations in different classes and at different levels for perhaps a year; or even to decide to use diverse textbook series in different classes by different teachers.

c. This potential change of textbook offers an excellent opportunity for university departments to change direction and offer their students a more relevant discourse and preparation for an

increasingly globalized world. It is now evident that *"steady as she goes"* and the concomitant *"après moi les deluge"* philosophies are simply inappropriate and even irresponsible when confronted with the pressing realities of global warming, global pollution, environmental degradation, the mass extinction of species, falling birth rates, aging societies in Korea and Japan, local and regional uncertainties including critical shifts in Korean attitudes and society, fluctuating tensions with North Korea concerning their nuclear weapon program and alternative de facto unification with South Korea, and the anticipated rise of China to Super-Power status. Textbook selection could and should favor content-based instruction that addresses such critical issues among others.

2.4 What then are the primary aims in textbook selection?

In addition to providing an excellent pedagogical tool, the textbook series would, I trust, celebrate and strengthen diversity, no easy matter given Korea's tradition of ethnic homogeneity [14].

a. As presented at Suzanne Flynn's keynote speech at SICOLI-2009, multilingualism and bilingualism are being recognized as natural and normal, with monolingualism emerging as merely a restricted case of multilingualism [15].

b. Selection of a suitable textbook series could help contribute to what Obari has identified as a key issue in second language acquisition - that of fostering autonomous learning in the foreign language classroom [16].

Table 1. Garinger's Checklist for ESL Textbook Selection [17]

Yes/No   A. Program and Course

_____ Does the textbook support the goals and curriculum of the program?
_____ Is the textbook part of a series, and if so, would using the entire series be appropriate?
_____ Are a sufficient number of the course objectives addressed by the textbook?
_____ Was this textbook written for learners of this age group and background?
_____ Does the textbook reflect learners' preferences in terms of layout, design, and organization?
_____ Is the textbook sensitive to the cultural background and interests of the students?

        B. Skills

_____ Are the skills presented in the textbook appropriate to the course?
_____ Does the textbook provide learners with adequate guidance as they are acquiring these skills?
_____ Do the skills that are presented in the textbook include a wide range
      of cognitive skills that will be challenging to learners?

        C. Exercises and Activities

_____ Do the exercises and activities in the textbook promote learners' language development?
_____ Is there a balance between controlled and free exercises?
_____ Do the exercises and activities reinforce what students have already learned
      and represent a progression from simple to more complex?
_____ Are the exercises and activities varied in format so that
      they will continually motivate and challenge learners?

        D. Practical Concerns

_____ Is the textbook available?
_____ Can the textbook be obtained in a timely manner?
_____ Is the textbook cost-effective?

I do not regard these considerations as exhaustive, but trust they will contribute towards a helpful discussion and open debate.

I turn now to a brief review of research literature that addresses the processes of textbook evaluation and selection.

3. A Survey of EFL Textbook Selection Literature Relevant to Korean and East Asian Native Teacher EFL/ESL Programs

There is an extensive literature on the process of textbook selection for EFL/ESL purposes. This section is intended to serve merely as an entrée to that literature, in the hope that the decision-making process may be better informed, and result in an appropriate choice that properly serves the needs of students and teachers. I summarize five papers on the selection of EFL/ESL textbooks, and include relevant checklists and criteria. The full papers can be accessed from the links provided.

3.1 Textbook Selection for the ESL Classroom

Dawn Garinger, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.
Eric Digest, EDO-FL-02-10, December 2002.
http://www.cal.org/resources/Digest/
0210garinger.html

Garinger [18], in a concise insightful guide, observes that researchers have advocated a variety of approaches, but in practice the process is often based on personal preference, and affected by factors unrelated to pedagogy including limited awareness of available texts, budget restrictions, and limited availability. A practical, thorough and straightforward method is to analyze the options according to program issues, working from broad to specific, and eliminating unsatisfactory texts at each stage.

Matching the Textbook to the Program and the Course. Educators should thoroughly examine the curriculum, and decide whether to choose a textbook series or to use individual texts for each course. They should then consider how well the text and course objectives match one another, and identify the appropriateness of the text for the intended learners. Layout, design and organization should be considered, as students and teachers want visually stimulating material that is well organized and easy to follow. Textbook content should be sensitive to cultural backgrounds, and allow for comfortable and safe discussion of cross-cultural experiences and concerns.

Review the Skills Presented in the Textbook. While improving learner language skills is generally the main purpose of ESL programs, the skills taught and how they are taught differs by course and program, so the effectiveness of each text in helping learners acquire necessary skills must be considered, by asking questions such as whether the text focus on the skills it claims to focus on, and whether it actually teaches these skills or merely provides practice for existing skills? The importance of cognitive skills should not be overlooked, particularly higher order skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Several published evaluation checklists use Bloom's taxonomy [19] to assess the processes and skills that textbooks require learners to perform.

Review Exercises and Activities in the Textbook. Four key questions need to be answered: Do the exercises and activities contribute to learners' language acquisition? Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice? Are the exercises progressive as students move through the textbook? Are the exercises varied and challenging?

Weighing Practical Considerations. Such issues, including availability and cost, are often deciding factors and must be acknowledged.

Garinger concludes that the textbook selection decision affects teachers, students and the overall classroom dynamic, and it is probably *one of the most important decisions facing ESL educators*. She provides a checklist (see Table 1 above) that may be adapted as a tool to help ESL educators decide which textbooks may be most appropriate for their classes.

3.2 Universal Characteristics of EFL/ESL Textbooks: A Step Towards Systematic Textbook Evaluation

Hasan Ansary and Esmat Babaii, Shiraz University.
The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. VIII, No. 2. February 2002.
http://iteslj.org/Articles/Ansary-Textbooks/

Ansary and Babaii [23] outline a summary of common-core characteristics of standard EFL/ESL textbooks, after investigating whether a de facto consensus exists over what makes a good text. They scrutinize textbook reviews and evaluation checklists, hoping to achieve a "canonizing discourse", which may lead to universal textbook evaluation schemes.

Checklist Approach to Textbook Evaluation. Any textbook should be used judiciously; teachers have not been confident about judgment methods and qualifying decisions, and textbook selection has generally been made in haste and with a lack of systematically applied criteria. The literature on textbook selection and/or evaluation procedure is considerable, with scholars suggesting different ways to help teachers become more systematic and objective in their approach. Checklists have been offered based on generalizable criteria, using various methods of

assessment. They compare two checklist approaches as samples, and identify the fundamental problem of such checklists as being their dependence on swings of the theoretical pendulum.

The Current Study. They consider prior checklists to have had little practical utility, and textbook selection so far to have been ad hoc: teachers make decisions on unreliable and simplistic criteria such as appropriateness of grammar presentation, functional load, competence of the author, and even popularity.

They indirectly explore whether a de facto consensus exists over what makes a good EFL/ESL textbook, aiming to lead to the development of universal textbook evaluation schemes.

Method. Ten EFL/ESL textbook evaluation schemes and ten EFL/ESL textbook reviews served as their corpus and were carefully scrutinized, with points made by reviewers for and against being recorded. The same procedure identified the elements that checklist producers introduce as important evaluation and selection criteria. Common summary characteristics were sought.

Table 2. Ansary and Babii's Set of Universal
Features of EFL/ESL Textbooks [20]

APPROACH
- Dissemination of a vision (theory or approach) about
    - the nature of language
    - the nature of learning
    - how the theory can be put to applied use

CONTENT PRESENTATION
- Stating purpose(s) and objective(s)
    - For the total course
    - For individual units
- Selection and its rationale
    - Coverage
    - Grading
    - Organization
    - Sequencing
- Satisfaction of the syllabus
    - To the teacher
        - Providing a guide book
        - Giving advice on the methodology
            - Giving theoretical orientations
            - Key to the exercises
        - Supplementary materials
    - To the student
        - Piecemeal, unit-by-unit instruction
        - Graphics (relevant, free from unnecessary details, colorful, etc.)
        - Periodic revisions
        - Workbook
        - Exercise and activities
            - In the classroom
            - Homework
            - Sample exercises with clear instructions
            - Varied and copious
        - Periodic test sections
        - Accompanying audio-visual aids

PHYSICAL MAKE-UP
- Appropriate Size & weight
- Attractive layout
- Durability
- High quality of editing and publishing
- Appropriate title

ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS
- Macro-state policies
- Appropriate for local situation
    - Culture
    - Religion
    - Gender
- Appropriate Price

Table 3. Ansary and Babii's
Scheme #1 of Tucker's Criteria [21]

C. A. Tucker (1975)

I. INTERNAL CRITERIA	VS	MS
PRONUNCIATION CRITERIA		
Completeness of presentation		
Appropriateness of presentation		
Adequacy of practice		
GRAMMAR CRITERIA		
Adequacy of pattern inventory		
Appropriate sequencing		
Adequacy of drill model & pattern display		
Adequacy of practice		
CONTENT CRITERIA		
Functional load		
Rate & manner of entry & reentry		
Appropriateness of contexts and situations		
II. EXTERNAL CRITERIA		
Authenticity of language		
Availability of supplementary materials		
Adequate guidance for non-native teachers		
Competence of the author		
Appropriate level for integration		
Durability		
Quality of editing and publishing		
Price & Value		

Table 4. Ansary and Babii's
Scheme #2 of Ur's Criteria [22]
ELT Textbooks Evaluating Scheme
Penny Ur (1996)

Criterion	importance	
Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the material		
Approach educationally and socially acceptable to the target community		
Clear attractive layout; print easy to read		
Appropriate visual materials available		
Interesting topic and tasks		
Varied topics and tasks, so as to provide for different learners levels, learning styles, interests, etc.		
Clear instructions		
Systematic coverage of syllabus		
Content clearly organized and graded (sequenced by difficulty)		
Periodic review and test sections		
Plenty of authentic language		
Good pronunciation explanation and practice		
Good vocabulary explanation and practice		
Good grammar explanation and practice		
Fluency practice in all four skills		
Encourages learners to develop own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning		
Adequate guidance for the teacher, not too heavy preparation load		
Audio cassettes		

Results. They present a set of features they consider universal to EFL/ESL textbooks (refer Table 2 above, see also Tables 3 and 4 above), according to Approach, Content Presentation, Physical Make-up, and Administrative Concerns.

Discussion and Application. While no neat formula or system provides a definitive way to judge, the application of a set of universal characteristics may help make textbook evaluation coherent, systematic and thoughtful. A system of textbook evaluation should thus include:

- a predetermined data-driven theory-neutral collection of universal characteristics of EFL/ESL textbooks, discrete and precise enough to help define one's preferred situation-specific criteria,
- a system within which one may ensure objective, quantified assessment,
- a rating method that can provide the possibility for a comparative analysis,
- a simple procedure for recording and reporting the evaluator's opinion,
- a mechanism by which the universal scheme may be adapted and/or weighted to suit particular requirements,

- a rating trajectory that makes possible a quick and easy display of the judgments on each and every criterion, and
- a graphic representation to provide a visual comparison between the evaluator's preferred choices as an archetype and their actual realizations in a particular textbook under scrutiny.

Ansary and Babaii conclude with a reminder that there is a limit to what teaching materials can do, as texts are just simple tools. What is important is what teachers can do with them - the emphasis being not on providing interesting materials, but on doing interesting things with those materials.

3.3 ESL Textbook Evaluation Checklist

Joshua Miekley, University of Cincinnati.
The Reading Matrix, Vol. 5, No. 2, September 2005.
http://www.readingmatrix.com/reading_projects/
miekley/project.pdf

Miekley [24] provides educators with valuable checklists for evaluating ESL/EFL reading textbooks, and explains how to use them, with the intention of making the textbook selection process more efficient and reliable. Textbook choice is important, as teachers spend much time using textbooks in class. Checklist questions are based on recent research or developed checklists.

Checklist Approach to Textbook Evaluation. While textbooks have dramatically improved in quality, the selection process has not become easier. The vast array of textbooks means textbook selection gravitates between the two extremes of educators asking too many questions, and of educators choosing a textbook with little or no evaluation - which then becomes the center of the curriculum until another haphazardly chosen textbook replaces it. In contrast, his checklists provide administrators and teachers with the tools necessary for making an informed evaluation, balancing the need for thorough evaluation with the need for efficiency. These checklists are based on recent second language instruction research, and on checklists for general textbook evaluation. The most vital aspect is Byrd's emphasis [25] on the text being a good fit for teachers, students and the curriculum.

Miekley's checklists I. Textbook and III. Teacher's Context are provided here in Table 5 (space does not permit replicating his useful II. Teacher's Manual checklist); although these are specifically tailored for the evaluation of ESL *reading* textbooks, they could readily be adapted for general EFL texts. He concludes by recognizing that while his checklists are effective as is, educators should add additional

questions when appropriate. Each context will require adaptation. Since reading is so important in second language learning, research on L2 reading should be utilized both in classroom instruction and during the textbook selection process, and these checklists provide valuable assets towards accomplishing that goal.

3.4 Textbook Evaluation and ELT Management: A South Korean Case Study

David R. A. Litz, UAE University Al Ain.
Asian EFL Journal, 2005.
http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/Litz_thesis.pdf

Litz [29] observes ELT textbooks play an important role in language classrooms, but there has been widespread debate in the ELT profession on their actual role. Texts need to be of acceptable quality, and appropriate to the learners for whom they are being used. It is essential therefore to establish and apply a wide variety of relevant and contextually appropriate criteria for textbook evaluation. A complex evaluation process undertaken at SungKyunKwan University was used to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the book towards their specific language program.

Appendices include forms for Student Profile, Student Needs Analysis, Student Textbook Evaluation Form (with Practical Considerations, Layout and Design, Activities, Skills, Language Type, Subject and Content, and Overall Consensus), and in Table 6 above, Teacher Textbook Evaluation Forms (with similar headings). (N.B. numerical scales of 1-10 for each item are not included here for reasons of space). These could readily be adapted for further research, evaluation and selection.

3.5 Examining the Importance of EST and ESL Textbooks and Materials: Objectives, Content and Form

Nooreen Noordin and Arshad Abdul Samad, Universiti Putra Malaysia.
International Educators Program (no date).
http://rumutha.ru.funpic.de/
Examining_the_Importance_of_EST_and_ESL_
Textbooks_and_Materials.doc

Noordin and Samad [30] examine just how far the prescribed textbooks used in ESL classrooms provide the necessary tools in preparing learners for the transition of language skills across disciplines. For most teachers, textbooks provide the foundation for the content of lessons, the balance of the skills taught,

and the kinds of language practice the students engage in during class activities. The textbook becomes the major source of contact ESL learners have with the language, apart from teacher input.

Table 5. Miekley's Textbook Evaluation Checklists: Textbook [26] & Context [27]

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Absent	Mandatory	Optional	N.A.
I. TEXTBOOK								
A. Content								
i. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, etc.)? (2,18)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language? (5,10)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview? (1,2,3,7,21)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures? (1,13)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
B. Vocabulary and Grammar								
i. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways? (2,3,12)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so the text is understandable and students able to retain new vocabulary? (1,2,3,5)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words? (7,8,9,11)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
C. Exercises and Activities								
i. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate? (1,2,3,5)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Does the textbook instruct students to read for comprehension? (6)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used? (17)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension? (7,8,9,10)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
v. Do the activities facilitate students' use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
vi. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts? (2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
vii. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text? (2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
D. Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up								
i. Is the cover of the book appealing? (1,2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality? (1,2,3,14)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iii. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it? (15)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
III. TEACHER'S CONTEXT								
A. Is the textbook appropriate for the curriculum? (1,2,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
i. Does the text coincide with the course goals? (1,2,3,19,20)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
B. Is the textbook appropriate for the students using it? (1,2)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
i. Is the text free of material that might be offensive? (1,6,16)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
ii. Are the examples and explanations understandable? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N.
iii. Will students enjoy reading the text selections? (1,2,3,15)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
iv. Will the content meet students' felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose? (2,3)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
C. Are the textbook and teacher's manual appropriate for the teacher who will be teaching from them? (1,2,4)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N
i. Is the teacher proficient enough in English to use the teacher's manual? (1)	4	3	2	1	0	M	O	N

Table 6. Litz's Teacher Textbook Evaluation Form [28]

TEACHER TEXTBOOK EVALUATION FORM
*** PLEASE NOTE:1 = HIGHLY DISAGREE   10 = HIGHLY AGREE ***

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

A   Practical Considerations:
1.   The price of the textbook is reasonable.
2.   The textbook is easily accessible.
3.   The textbook is a recent publication.
4.   A teacher's guide, workbook, and audio-tapes accompany the textbook.
5.   The author's views on language and methodology are comparable to mine
     (Note: Refer to the 'blurb' on the back of the textbook).

B   Layout and Design:
6.   The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions,
     structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit.
7.   The layout and design is appropriate and clear.
8.   The textbook is organized effectively.
9.   An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.
10. Adequate review sections and exercises are included.
11. An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.
12. The teacher's book contains guidance about how the textbook can be used to the utmost advantage.
13. The materials objectives are apparent to both the teacher and student.

C   Activities:
14. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of
     free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).
15. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.
16. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.
17. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.
18. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.
19. The tasks are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language.
20. The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.

D   Skills:
21. The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice.
22. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.
23. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills -
     i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.
24. The textbook highlights and practices natural pronunciation (i.e. - stress and intonation).
25. The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.

E   Language Type:
26. The language used in the textbook is authentic - i.e. like real-life English.
27. The language used is at the right level for my (students') current English ability.
28. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.
29. The grammar points are presented with brief and easy examples and explanations.
30. The language functions exemplify English that I/my students will be likely to use.
31. The language represents a diverse range of registers and accents.

F   Subject and Content:
32. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs
     as an English language learner(s).
33. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.
34. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.
35. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.
36. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.

G   Conclusion:
37. The textbook is appropriate for the language-learning aims of my institution.
38. The textbook is suitable for small-medium, homogeneous, co-ed classes of university students.
39. The textbook raises my (students') interest in further English language study.
40. I would choose to study/teach this textbook again.

Under *Framework*, they cover Syllabus, Progression, Integration of Skills, and Cohesion; under *The Units*, Length of Unit, Presentation, Practice, Variety and regularity, and Clarity of purpose; under *Subject Matter*, Interest; under *Form*, Visual Appeal, and Illustrations. They conclude that EST materials must create an interest that will assist learners in acquiring linguistic competence and increase their confidence levels. Although the goals of EST (English for Science and Technology) include increasing language proficiency, the materials used in its teaching should not be completely language based. Instead it should have a prominent visual bias. EST materials need to enhance students' visual literacy, and audio-visual elements such as video clips and sound files should be a compulsory element in all EST materials.

4. Conclusion

I have first raised a number of general considerations that are relevant to the evaluation and selection of EFL/ESL textbooks, and which I trust will stimulate debate. Issues that should be considered include the kind of English taught whether American or International, the need for L2 Digital Literacy in English, the future of EFL pedagogy and the radical impact of Information Communication Technologies and their Convergence. These effects include blended language education, digital media, and online assessment and learning management systems. Diversity, multilingualism and autonomous learning are also relevant issues. There is a wide scope of research literature addressing the evaluation and selection for textbooks for EFL/ESL purposes, of which I have then provided just a brief survey, with the intention of providing interested teachers with an entrée to the field. This research is pertinent to the selection processes of textbook series (or individual textbooks) for Korean and East Asian native teacher programs, and should inform them. Bearing in mind that - other than native teacher input - the textbook is the major source of contact with the target language, textbook selection is clearly one of the most important decisions facing EFL/ESL educators. That process benefits from teachers becoming more systematic and objective in their approach. I therefore argue that the selection process should be - and needs to be - open, transparent, accountable, participatory, informed and rigorous.

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