

Volume 12, Nomor 1, Juni 2006, ISSN : 1411-6278



JURNAL PENDIDIKAN



Diterbitkan oleh IKIP PGRI Madiun
Alamat Redaksi : Jalan Setiabudi 85 Madiun
Telp./Fax. (0351) 462986
e-mail : jurnal.pendidikan@yahoo.com

ISSN 1411 - 6278

JURNAL PENDIDIKAN

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JURNAL PENDIDIKAN diterbitkan sejak 4 Juni 1992, semula bernama Majalah Ilmiah Cakrawala dengan nomor ISSN : 0854-1183 oleh LEMBAGA IKIP PGRI Madiun

Berdasarkan SK Dirjen Dikti Depdiknas No. 34/Dikti/Kep/2003 tanggal 10 Juni 2003 tentang Hasil Akreditasi Jurnal Ilmiah Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Tahun 2003, Jurnal Pendidikan telah diakreditasi sebagai Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional

PENGANTAR REDAKSI

Dalam rangka meningkatkan mutu pendidikan, khususnya kualifikasi guru di tanah air, perlu segera dirumuskan kurikulum pendidikan profesi guru yang disertai dengan rambu-rambu sertifikasi yang berisi standar terukur dan sistematis guna mengevaluasi proses peningkatan kualifikasi itu.

Pendidikan, sertifikasi guru, dan akreditasi program pendidikan sama-sama menentukan berhasil-tidaknya upaya peningkatan mutu guru. Keluhan atas “kegagalan” universitas bekas IKIP dalam melahirkan guru bermutu harus dibaca dalam konteks tiadanya akreditasi yang mengevaluasi proses pencapaian tujuan pendidikan guru pasca-IKIP menjadi universitas. Begitupun semangat meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di LPTK harus dipandang kritis dalam bingkai akreditasi yang akan dipakai.

Dalam edisi ini, Jurnal Pendidikan akan menyajikan berbagai tulisan yang secara khusus membahas masalah-masalah di bidang pendidikan. Tulisan pertama berjudul “*Some Insight into Textbook Evaluation : A Pragmatic Approach*” ditulis oleh Leonardi Lucky Kurniawan. Tulisan kedua berjudul “Peningkatan Partisipasi Siswa dalam Mengikuti Pelajaran Melalui sistem STAD (*Students Teams Achievement Devision*)” ditulis oleh Agus Akhmadi. Tulisan ketiga ditulis oleh Harsubenowati dengan judul “Pendidikan Karakter dan Pola Kepemimpinan dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan”. Tulisan keempat berjudul “Implementasi Model Pakem dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbahasa Indonesia Siswa di Sekolah Dasar” ditulis oleh Agus Budi Santoso. Tulisan kelima ditulis oleh Muhammad Nur dengan judul “Pembelajaran Fisika (Teknologi Nuklir) dengan Pendekatan Sains-Teknologi-Masyarakat (S-T-M)”. Tulisan keenam ditulis oleh Sanusi dengan judul tulisan “Pembelajaran Pencapaian Konsep dalam Mengajarkan Persamaan Kuadrat di Kelas IMA/SMA”. Tulisan ketujuh berjudul “Korelasi antara Motivasi Belajar dengan Prestasi Akademis Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Teknik Elektro FPTK IKIP PGRI Madiun” ditulis oleh Prabakti Endramawan. Tulisan kedelapan berjudul “Memperbaiki Iklim dan Perilaku Berorganisasi di Sekolah” ditulis oleh Isharjadi. Tulisan kesembilan berjudul “Kecerdasan Emosional dalam Konteks *Hidden Curriculum*” ditulis oleh Soebijantoro.

Redaksi berharap semoga tulisan dalam edisi ini bermanfaat bagi seluruh pembaca sehingga mampu menambah wawasan di bidang pendidikan. Redaksi senantiasa menerima berbagai kritik dan saran demi sempurnanya jurnal ini.

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SOME INSIGHT INTO TEXTBOOK EVALUATION : A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

Leonardi Lucky Kurniawan
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Abstract :

Language teaching is a complex phenomenon involving a lot of factors including teachers, students, textbooks as well as appropriate learning and teaching strategies. The dimension of textbook evaluation seems to be frequently neglected in spite of its prime importance. Few teachers are really well-informed as how to choose suitable textbooks and how to evaluate them properly; moreover, literature on this topic is sparse. The most common view is that textbook evaluation is a matching process in which the students' needs and the available textbooks are compared in order to determine the degree of conformity between them. This paper attempts to convince language teachers to take a critical approach to textbook evaluation to make language teaching efficient and effective.

Key words : textbook evaluation, complex phenomenon, neglected, degree of conformity

A. Introduction

The success or failure of language teaching depends on several components: teacher, students, textbooks and methodology. Most language

Some Insight Into Textbook Evaluation : A Pragmatic Approach (Leonardi Lucky Kurniawan, Politeknik UBAYA Universitas Surabaya)

teachers rely heavily on textbooks as the main source of materials in teaching. In the past obtaining English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks was a problem since there were only a few available on the market. At present an ever-increasing number of books on ELT are being published to the point where one can become easily confused and overwhelmed by their sheer variety and by the competing claims for them. My preliminary survey shows that some institutions or some teachers keep changing textbooks without giving serious consideration why they have to do so.

Students, too, like to have a book in their hands when they are in class and they like to look at and read the book when they are at home. They are now becoming more sophisticated and demanding as they can be quick to lose interest in dull and uninspiring materials no matter how sound it may be methodologically. They expect high standards of production and also expect a textbook which is more enjoyable and teaches how to master the language "instantly".

Textbooks are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives which have been set in terms of learners' needs. They should not determine the aims themselves or **become** the aims. We are mainly concerned with teaching the language and not the textbook. We certainly could not agree more that the role of a textbook is to be at the service of a teacher and learners but not to be their master. Ardat (1981) states that appropriate textbooks, coupled with an effective methodology, can make a great deal of difference in teaching English.

The wealth of published material for English language teaching (ELT) available on the market makes selecting the right textbook a challenging task. Hutchinson (1987:33) claims that the selection of materials is the most important decision that a language teacher has to make. Materials are not just tools but they express aims, values and methods of particular teaching/learning situation. Selecting textbooks may also involve major strategic decisions. Decisions to use a particular series which are made in one year can have implications for using the more advanced level of the same series in subsequent years.

Reasons for materials evaluation activities are many and varied. Sometimes we may want to evaluate a textbook in general, without having

particular classes or learners in mind. We are simply interested in finding out what it might be good for and in what situations it could be expected to be successful. This is evaluation of materials for their potential, without any predetermined use in mind. This kind of evaluation is useful when we intend to select and adopt a textbook for classroom use. Another reason is to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use, so that optimum use can be made of their strong points, while their weaker areas can be strengthened through adaptation or by substituting material from other sources.

The dimension of textbook evaluation seems to be frequently neglected in spite of its importance. Some teachers see only the good points of a textbook without considering how well it matches specific requirements such as learners' background, the resources available, etc. Others undertake evaluation reluctantly since they are not sure what to base their judgements on, or how to qualify these judgements. Indeed they find themselves lacking an appropriate approach to evaluation as literature on this subject is sparse.

Most English language teaching textbooks are produced for general wide markets and will not completely meet the demands of or be absolutely ideal for every individual class. For this reason, it is crucial for a language teacher to be confident that the course materials selected are the best and most appropriate available.

Language teachers should consider the negative outcomes of not making a proper evaluation of textbooks and they should bear in mind that the aim of textbook evaluation is to find the best possible fit for a particular group of learners, together with potential for adapting or supplementing some of the material to make it more suitable and appropriate.

We often form a general impression of a textbook fairly quickly just by looking through the book, getting an overview of its strengths and weaknesses, noting significant features which stand out. This approach is useful when looking at new material which may be considered for adoption at a later date or when doing a preliminary sift through several textbooks before making a shortlist for more detailed examination. The impressionistic overview provides a general introduction to the book but does not give

enough detail to ensure a good match between what the textbook contains and the requirements of the learning/teaching situation. For a more penetrating approach, we need to undertake in-depth evaluation. Besides seeing the prominent features in a textbook, we also need to examine how specific items are dealt with, particularly those which relate to students' learning needs, syllabus requirements, how different aspects of language are dealt with and many others.

In fact, a combination of both approaches, involving the impressionistic overview of the whole and the in-depth evaluation will make a sound basis for evaluation and for the ensuing choice of the most suitable textbook for adoption.

B. Discussion

1. When and How to Conduct Textbook Evaluation

Evaluation can take place before a textbook is used, during its use and after use, depending on the purposes for which the evaluation is made. The pre-use evaluation is usually undertaken to see the potential adoption of a textbook for classroom use and seems to be the most common. The in-use evaluation, the evaluation of a textbook made while the material is in use, is intended to monitor a textbook being used whether it meets our expectations. The post-use evaluation refers to retrospective assessment of a textbook's performance and is necessary in helping to decide whether or not to use the same material on future occasion when running a program which is repeated from time to time.

In order to evaluate a textbook properly and select an appropriate material for a particular group of learners, I would like to recommend the following guidelines. They are intended as a framework which teachers can use to enhance the value of professional judgement; yet teachers are free to modify any steps to suit their circumstances and preferred way of working.

- a. First identify the aims and objectives of your teaching program. The aims and objectives must be defined clearly in both a general and a specific way
- b. Secondly analyse the learning/teaching situation in which material will be used. This gives you a profile of the context for which you select the

material and some of the requirements which the material will have to meet

- c. Then draw up a list of potential textbooks using information from publishers, views or comments from colleagues, supplemented by your own previous experience gained from trying out parts of the material. At this stage we recommend applying the impressionistic overview to eliminate those that are noticeably unsuitable. The resulting shortlist which may consist of approximately three to four books should be subjected to in-depth evaluation process using criteria which are most relevant to the needs of the teachers and learners concerned. These criteria need not be limited to aspects of language but could include topics and subject contents, approach to learning, organizations of contents, teaching techniques employed and others.

When evaluating a textbook for suitability for a particular class, we need to build up a picture of the teaching/learning situation in question, so that the material can be matched against it to see if there is a reasonable fit. With this in mind, we provide a list of questions below which can be used as a starting point for looking at the context in which the teaching materials will be evaluated. For practical purposes I include only a manageable list of the most important criteria.

2. Specifying Aims and Analysing the Learning/ Teaching Situation for Materials Evaluation and Selection

a. Aims and approaches

- 1) What are the aims of the English program ?
- 2) Note any specific objectives (in terms of language items, functions, topics, skills, etc).
- 3) Are there prescribed or recommended textbook for use in class ?
- 4) Is there a detailed syllabus ?
- 5) What methods are used for testing ?

b. The learning/teaching situation

- 1) What is the status and role of English in the students' home country ?
- 2) What are the main purposes for learning English ?

- 3) How intensive is the program ?
- 4) What resources are available ?
- 5) What is the size of the classes ?
- 6) Are the classes homogeneous in level, age, ability, etc ?
- 7) What are the predominant values of the educational system (e.g.: emphasis on knowledge/practical skills; emphasis on individual development of students) ?

c. The learners

- 1) How old are the learners ?
- 2) What is their level of English ?
- 3) What previous learning experience have they had in English or other FL ?
- 4) What are the attitudes and motivation of the learners ?
- 5) What are their interests ?

d. The teachers

- 1) What is the accepted role of teachers in the educational system ?
- 2) What methodological approach do teachers usually adopt ?
- 3) How free are teachers to vary the content and methods of their teaching ?
- 4) Do teachers have the time and expertise to adapt or supplement teaching material to suit their particular students ?

Textbook evaluation is a complex matter. Many variables affect the success or failure of a textbook when it is in use, so it is important to limit the number of criteria used, the number of questions asked, to manageable proportions. As different criteria will apply in different circumstances, it is best to identify your own priorities and draw up your checklist, perhaps using some of the items outlined here and adding others of your own, based on your requirement and situation.

VS	Criteria (General)	MS	VMP
	1. Fit in with the objectives (objectives of TB correspond closely with aims of the language learning program)		
	2. Meet the needs of the students		
	3. Match the students (age, ability and interest)		
	4. Prepare the students for the real world(TB discuss and identify areas of SS's needs and SS will be able to relate to the social and cultural contexts presented in TB)		
	5. Adopt approach/methods/techniques suitable for SS (content properly sequenced; content organization suitable for SS; new language items adequately recycled)		
	6. Have an interesting motivating aspect (enough variety and range of topics; sufficient materials of genuine interest; SS encouraged to use language creatively)		
	7. Integrate the four skills (practice in 4 skills included and balanced)		
	8. Comprehensive (cover most of what is needed; good resource for SS and T)		
	9. Provide practice in language content (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, style: proportionally discussed and adequately practiced)		

VS	Criteria (Speaking, Reading and Writing)	MS	VMP
	1. provide adequate practice in Speaking		
	2. students practise what they are expected to learn		
	3. provide variety of reading texts (ads, news, reports, and other authentic material)		
	4. provide graded reading texts (from easy to more difficult)		
	5. provide practice on the development of reading skills and strategies		
	6. provide short texts		
	7. provide graded listening material (from slow to natural speed; longer texts come later)		
	8. Provide model writing		
	9. Make students work in task-based activities		

Having built up a clear picture of the teaching/learning situation and determined the criteria, you are now ready to evaluate different textbooks. Two scales are used for the rating purposes. The first of these, the Value Scale (VS), appears in the first left column on the rating form. This scale consists of the scores zero (0) through five (5). Each criterion is assigned a score from zero (0) through five (5) reflecting its relative importance in the teaching situation for which the book is being considered; the most important criteria receiving a score of 5, less important criteria below 5. The second scale is the Merit Scale (MS) appearing immediately to the right of the criteria which consists of the scores zero (0) through four (4). If you think the book, measured by a specific criterion, appears virtually ideal in respect to that criterion, it should be given a score of 4. On the

other hand, if the book reveals a total lack of merit in some respects, it should obviously be given a score of 0. For convenience, you may consider 1 as weak, 2 as fair and 3 as very good. The next step is multiplying the VS and the MS and entering the product under the VMP column. Now you can produce a graphic display of the evaluation by placing a dot at the point on the line which corresponds to the numerical value of the VMP score. For example, for the criterion "Fit in with the objectives" whose VS score is 5 and MS score is 3, the VMP score is 15. Thus a dot should appear on the graph to the right of the VMP score under number 15. By connecting the dots, you can produce a line graph of the total evaluation.

In order to show graphically how near or how far the textbook from the ideal on any criterion, another line graph is drawn displaying the hypothetical ideal version of the textbook. This is obtained by first multiplying the VS score for each criterion by a perfect merit score of 4. A dot then is entered on the graph at the point which corresponds to the resulting VMP score.

If the evaluation of several people must be compared and contrasted in order to reach a concensus, several opinions of a single book may be displayed on a form. Also, if a mean evaluation is desired, it can be added on the form Thus, a committee can compare individual opinions, the mean of these opinions and ideal profile.

3. Adapting Published Materials

When evaluating a textbook, you look for its strengths and weaknesses and for how well it matches your requirements. You can also explore how far it lends itself to adaption and if it offers possibilities of further development.

As suggested earlier, despite the range and variety of published material on the market, it is rare to find a perfect fit between the learner needs and course requirements on the one hand and what the textbook contains on the other hand. Every learning/teaching situation is unique and depends on various factors such as the dynamics of the classroom, the constraints imposed by the syllabus, the motivations and expectations of the learners, the availability of resources etc. Therefore teachers can improve materials by adapting them to suit the particular situation where they are being used.

Materials adaptation can be a very worthwhile activity, giving added life and impact to even very ordinary textbooks. It was a great satisfaction to see an exercise or activity really take off because the teacher adapted the material to appeal to his students' interests and imagination. What often happens in the classroom is that too many teachers accept every word and activity in the textbook. They follow the book very closely and in the exact order and every text is carefully studied and each exercise is meticulously worked through.

Many textbooks contain a lot of good ideas for teaching but the actual examples or some exercises/practices may not be quite right for a particular class. The book then can take on a new role, as an "ideas book", source of practical examples of ideas for teaching and an inspiration stimulating teacher's creative potential. Adapting materials involves one or more of the following:

- 1) leaving out some parts of the material
- 2) adding material (published or your own)
- 3) replacing material with something more suitable
- 4) changing the published material to make it more suitable for your use

C. Conclusion

Language teaching is a complex phenomenon involving a variety of factors such as students, teacher, textbooks, learning and teaching styles and others.

The dimension of textbook evaluation seems to be frequently neglected in spite of its importance. The textbook, after all, is the main source of materials for most language teachers. Language teachers should consider the negative outcomes of not making a proper evaluation of textbooks. They should take a critical approach to textbook evaluation.

In order to make language teaching more conducive to learning, the needs of students and how their teachers view learning should be in harmony with the materials in hand. If there is a mismatch, some adaptation is necessary. It should be kept in mind that there is no ideal textbook for a particular class and teachers should use textbook as a springboard for class activities.

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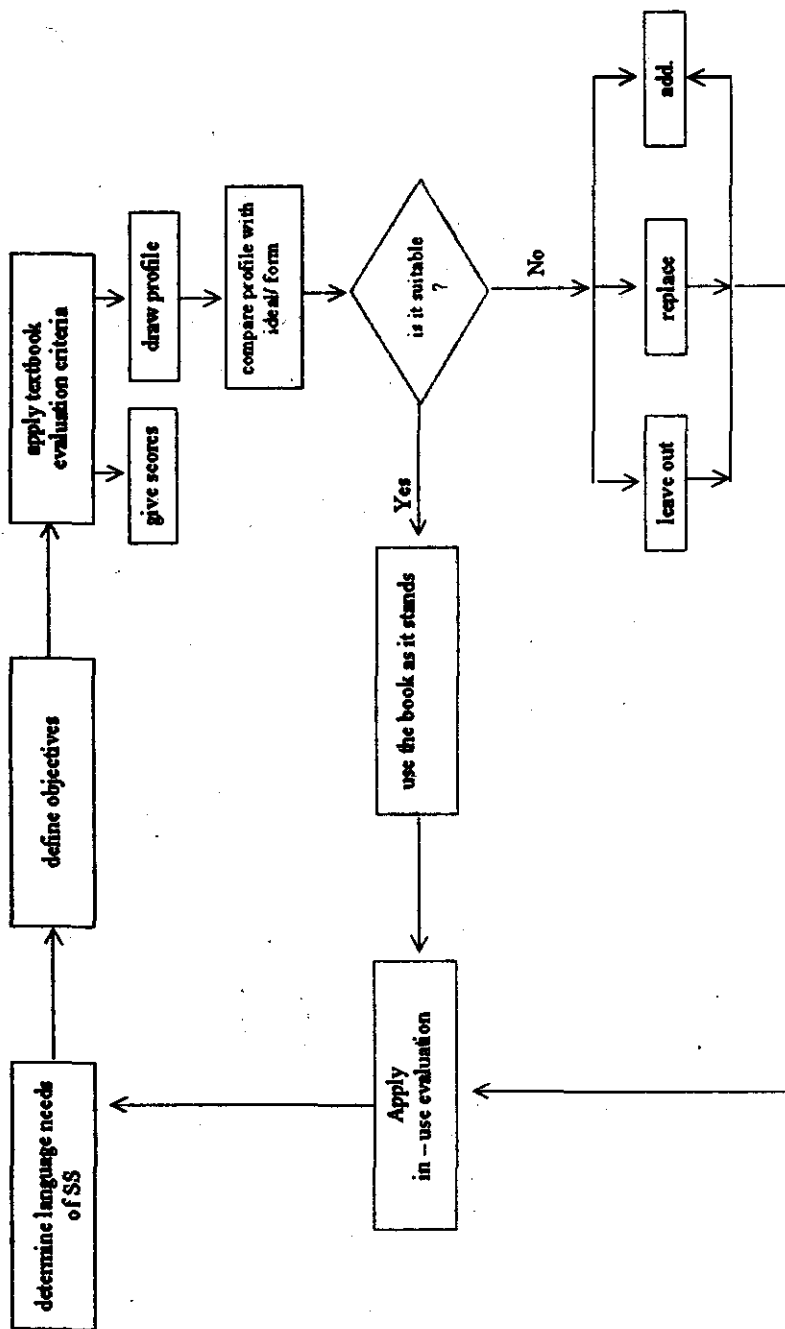
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Appendix A

COMPARATIVE DISPLAY FORM
For Textbook Evaluation

VS	Criteria	MS	VMP
4	1. accept the current methods of teaching	3	
5	2. suit the students' needs (age, level, background, interest, etc)	3	
4	3. fit in with the objectives	3	
4	4. prepare students for the real world	3	
3	5. have an interesting motivating aspect	2	
4	6. integrate all the necessary skills	4	
4	7. provide up-to-date contemporary material	4	
4	8. authenticity of language	3	
4	9. well-organized	4	
5	10. provide model writing	3	
4	11. make students work in task-based activities	4	

Appendix B



Suggested model for general evaluation of textbook