中学英语课程标准与教材分析

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卓越教师教育精品丛书
学科课程标准与教材分析系列

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内 容 简 介

本书是"卓越教师教育精品丛书·学科课程标准与教材分析系列"中的一本，是为适应教师专业化的要求和培养高素质的英语教师而编写的。全书由八章构成，分别是 Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook in English Teaching；Curriculum and Curriculum Standards；Case Studies of English Curriculum Standards；Course Syllabus；Case Studies of English Course Syllabuses；Evaluating a Textbook；Adapting a Textbook；Case Studies of Evaluating and Adapting a Textbook。

本书可以作为普通高等师范院校英语教育专业本科和研究生的教材，也可以作为中学英语教师进修和教学的参考资料，还可以供新课程改革培训之用。

Preface

Background to the Textbook

There are two reasons that spurred the production of this textbook. The first reason was to meet the global and national trend of teacher education reforms earnestly under way. Internationally, there have been large scales of reforms in teacher education to upgrade teachers' professional expertise to transform school education. Likewise, several waves of reforms in teacher education have been initiated to accelerate the development of China's education substantially. The curriculum reform initiated in 1993 has been under way in earnest in China in order to promote quality-oriented school education to fulfill each student's potential as a well-rounded citizen. This initiative has given rise to reforms of syllabuses and textbooks in the education system and has seen some methodological changes in schools along with the country's social, political, and economic developments in the past 20 years (Wang, 2007), especially in well-resourced and advanced regions, such as Shanghai, Hong Kong and Shandong. However, much empirical evidence also shows that limited change has been made hitherto in under-resourced and conservative regions in teachers' instruction and students' learning because of the prevalent influence of exam-oriented learning culture in the Chinese context. This lack of success has spurred considerable skepticism among schools and teachers about the intent of the curriculum reform. Many teachers simply regard the curriculum reform as idealistic.

What needs to be done is not to switch back to the previous exam-oriented education, but to address the causes for the temporary lack of success. It entails us along with teachers examining the constraining factors in the school contexts where the curriculum reform is being implemented, ranging from the factors from the policy level to those at the school level. Undoubtedly, policy makers have their role in fine-tuning the curriculum standards to the school contexts. On the other hand, teachers, whether veterans or novices need to re-examine their role in educating their students. To achieve this purpose, they need relevant professional expertise to sensibly interpret and enact curriculum standards flexibly, creatively exploit their textbooks and judiciously manipulate pedagogies to serve their students' needs, which is the one of the major goals of the curriculum reform. In this change process, teachers need to redefine their

roles as change agents rather than change recipients, redefine curriculum, syllabus and textbooks as learning media rather than ultimate goals.

We fully appreciate the challenges and dilemmas teachers have been going through in their effort to implement the new curriculum ideas. The realities echo the global scenarios even in developed countries. For example, as Wolk (2013: 15) described, American school teachers confront the realities of classroom with various constraints, including "lack of resources, large class sizes, pressure to raise test scores and conform to obsolete instructional practices, limited time, and ever more content to teach, and a society that does not really reading and thinking".

However, as Mercier, Philpott and Scott (2013) suggested, becoming a successful teacher in secondary education entails fulfilling the multi-faceted roles in the career-long professional development, in particular a strong understanding of a wide range of professional teaching issues, including practical concerns such as curriculum development and learning through observation in the classroom, alongside key conceptual aspects such as critical reflection and understanding the nature of learning. We would very much like to help them cope with the obstacles to reap successful educational experiences. We hope to use this textbook as a medium of communication with teachers to share our understanding of the major concepts and issues in school education. We also hope to provide a direction and avenue for teachers to progress forward as confident and competent professional educators "to make learning and thinking thrive in the classroom" (Wolk, 2013: 1).

The second reason for producing this textbook was the intent to provide a learning resource for master's-level teacher education programmes and teachers who have been actively engaging in their professional development and need support. In recent years, master's-level study for teachers and student teachers has been widely promoted in many countries (e. g. , UK and Finland) in primary and secondary PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) courses. As Mercier, Philpott and Scott (2013) noted, the programme served as a means of encouraging a particular kind of approach to the linking of theory and practice in initial teacher education, as a vehicle for experienced teachers' professional development to improve their classroom practice, and as a way of teachers implementing government education policies. It was envisioned that creating the "master's-level profession" would raise the status of teachers in society and thus attract higher qualified applicants, which in turn would lead to better educational outcomes for pupils. Against this international background, such master's-level initial teacher education programmes were initiated in 2009 and have been on the increase ever since to cultivate high-quality teachers for schools.

The intended primary audience of this textbook are practice-focused audiences, in particular, the student teachers on such master's-level programmes, who are either prospective teachers without any teaching experience, or practising teachers with varying years of school work experience who desire some input of theories and practical guidance for their teaching. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they share similar aspirations of achieving the highest possible professional standards as school teachers. The textbook aims to offer them a package of knowledge and skills needed for a range of professional activities such as curriculum design, syllabus design, curriculum implementation, textbook evaluation, textbook selection and textbook adaptation, etc.. The knowledge and skills acquired thereby hopefully prepare them well for their future practical career. The textbook can also be used as a reference book for whose who are interested in English teaching and aspire for further professional education, and school administrators who actively endeavour to make positive changes in schools.

Distinguishing Features of the Textbook

This textbook has three peculiar features, which distinguishes it from conventional academic textbooks. The first feature is its practical orientation in contrast with theory-based and theory-focused textbooks. It is theory-embedded with important relevant concepts and points of view being introduced, and more importantly examined and re-constructed instead of being blindly and uncritically worshiped and followed as rigid dogmas. In view to school teachers' common misconceptions of and resistance to theories, it encourages its users to obtain valuable and meaningful inspirations from the theories which were derived from the conscientious practice of committed educators in different parts of the world, apply the theories, modify them to develop their own personalized theories. In this sense, the theories covered in this textbook serve as a medium with which the teachers deal with their practical work more competently. In Barker's (2011: 137) terms, this textbook is a practitioner-oriented material. The conceptual foundations are present, but only in a "just-enough" manner so that the reader can stay focused on practice.

With its focus placed on curriculum standards and textbook evaluation, this textbook addresses the practical issues they are inevitably confronted with in their day-to-day teaching practice in implementing the curriculum reform and using their textbook. By looking at both the theories on these two dimensions and practices in the classroom, it is hoped that school teachers can critically reflect on their practice and transcend their obstacles through their reflective practice and insights from the theories covered in the textbook. It is also hoped that it will enable school teachers to develop as

change agents rather than passive recipients of the externally imposed mandates a critical view about the curriculum reforms and practical competence in enacting new curriculum standards and using their textbooks. Teachers' positive stance towards the various obstacles in the new curriculum implementation and adaptations of their practice to achieve optimal learning outcomes for students are what this textbook strives to achieve. To increase the accessibility of the theories to practically-oriented school teachers, case studies are supplied succeeding the relevant theories chapter. Authentic artifacts are used for the purpose of evaluating different curriculum standards, textbooks and teachers' practices of using the textbooks reflected in their teaching plans.

The second feature is its user-friendliness. Despite its academic nature, the textbook was generally written in a lively, engaged, communicative and personal manner. To allow its users to capture the main concepts and issues in each chapter, learning pointers are provided in the forms of learning objectives, key words and points for reflection. The language used is English for the purpose of increasing teachers' exposure to English reading materials, and thus enhancing to some extent their English reading proficiency, which is one of the essential professional qualities for an English teacher. The style is less formal than that of conventional academic textbooks to reduce the level of difficulty to readers. Users are encouraged to relate their own teaching or learning experiences to the concepts and issues covered in the textbook to construct their own understanding and scaffold their own practices.

The third feature is its newness with an inclusion of a large amount of cutting-edge research carried out both in China and abroad. It puts its lens on the most relevant and thorny issues in the Chinese context that frontline teachers are currently faced with in implementing curriculum reforms. It also has a far-reaching significance with its indication of new trends and strategies to be adopted to tackle the various challenges in the ever-changing educational environments at the school level. The issues concerned in the textbook are insightful not only to school English teachers in China, but also teachers in other cultural and educational contexts.

Components of the Textbook

The textbook consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an overview of the major interrelated elements which constitute an entity in teachers' daily practice: curriculum, syllabus and textbook. Chapters 2 and 3 concern curriculum standards. Chapter 2 focuses on the major concepts, whilst Chapter 3 provides case studies of different curriculum standards at secondary school level. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with course

syllabus from both conceptual and practical perspectives. Chapter 4, similar to Chapter 2 covers the main concepts, whilst Chapter 5 addresses case studies of course syllabuses. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are concerned with evaluating and adapting textbooks. Again, Chapters 6 and 7 deal with concepts and principles, and Chapter 8 includes case studies of textbook evaluation and adaptation. The arrangement of theories and practice in tandem serves the purpose of providing concrete models of applying the theories in practice through the practical case studies that immediately follow them.

The team was made up of university-based teacher educators at normal universities and frontline school teachers. We cherished this great opportunity to share our knowledge and expertise with teachers and teacher educators, and enjoyed the whole process of writing despite the experiences of frustrations and challenges. It is hoped that this textbook can help you to some extent re-examine your prior perception of their role in your teaching, and construct an active role in undertaking your professional responsibilities through looking at the issues with regard to English curricula and textbook use, and relating them to your own practices. We do hope you will find the textbook relevant and useful to provide you with a more broadened and active perspective on your teaching, and some professional knowledge and skills to enhance your practical teaching against all daunting and frustrating odds. Meanwhile, we would very much appreciate your perspective of the textbook after use, which would definitely help us improve it in our future revisions.

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Chapter 1

Curriculum, Syllabus and Textbook in English Teaching

Learning objectives

1. To enable students to develop a clear conception of the relationships among curriculum, syllabus and textbook;

2. To enable students to construct their own understanding of the aims of curriculum, syllabus and textbook and make informed decisions in their teaching.

Key words:

curriculum, syllabus, textbook

1.1 How are curriculum and syllabus defined in general education

Do curriculum and syllabus concern teachers? What are the relationships among curriculum, syllabus and textbook? We suppose many teachers tend to disregard these two questions as irrelevant to them, who assume that curriculum and syllabus are not their business, but policy makers', book-writers' and school administrators'. As Kelly (1999: 7) puts it, teachers "have regarded issues of curriculum as of no concern to them". They consider themselves as passive recipients of mandates from the management at the school level and beyond.

Many teachers still equate a curriculum with a syllabus. This lack of knowledge of their differences is understandable as even within the literature, as Nunan (1994: 6) noted, there is some confusion over the terms "syllabus" and "curriculum". In language teaching, there has been a comparative neglect of systematic curriculum development. Language curriculum specialists have tended to focus on only part of the total picture— some specializing in syllabus design, others in methodology, which he called "fragmented approach" to curriculum development.

They are different in nature. Curriculum includes the philosophy, purposes, design and implementation of a whole programme. Kelly (1999: 6) considers it as inclusive of

"all the learning which is planned and guided by the school whether it is carried on in groups or individually inside or outside the school". McKimm (2007: 2) suggests that a curriculum usually defines the learning that is expected to take place during a course or programme of study in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In other words, it specifies the main teaching, learning and assessment methods and provides an indication of the learning resources required to support the effective delivery of the course. A curriculum is more than a syllabus. Most curricula are not developed from scratch and all operate within organizational and societal constraints. Nunan (1994) suggests that a curriculum as a holistic entity can be studied from different perspectives, such as its planning, its implementation in class, its assessment and evaluation, institutional resources, etc.. Detailed discussions on curriculum and curriculum standards are provided in Chapter 2.

A syllabus describes the content of a programme and can be seen as one part of a curriculum. It refers to the content of what is to be taught and the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are to be deliberately fostered, together with stage-specific objectives (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006: v). A syllabus for a particular stage could be generated from a given/accepted curriculum "stage-specific objectives" and "principles of content selection and organization", a selection of well-connected concepts, information, principles of knowledge construction, validation criteria, skills, values, attitudes, etc.. What is to be included and what is not to be included in the syllabus will also be informed by the methods of teaching that are going to be used, or in other words, decisions on methods of teaching would have to be made simultaneously with the choice of content. But then, there can also be occasions when it might seem to be desirable that a particular topic should be taught (on the basis of implication of objectives and/or principles of content organization) at a certain stage, and subsequently one looks for selection of appropriate ways of teaching it.

1.2　How are curriculum and syllabus defined in language education

As Cheng (2012) observed, in the existing literature on language education there has been a chaotic use of the two terms *curriculum* and *syllabus*. They are sometimes used interchangeably, sometimes differentiated, and sometimes misused and misunderstood. The reasons for this confusion were two-fold. The first reason was caused by the different uses of the British and American uses of the two terms. Interestingly, White (1988: 4) noted the existence of controversy between British and American educators on whether there is any distinction between language curriculum and syllabus. British educators generally refer to a curriculum as "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system", and a

syllabus as "the content or subject matter of an individual subject". In contrast, the USA counterparts consider curriculum as synonymous with syllabus. The other reason was the changing of the concept of curriculum in the past years.

Let's look closely at the distinction between language curriculum and syllabus perceived by British educators. Robertson (1971: 566) defined the language curriculum as "including the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs"; and syllabus as "a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself". Dubin and Olshtain (1986: 3) contended that curriculum includes a syllabus, but not vice versa. Krahnke (1987: 2) maintained that "a syllabus is more specific and more concrete than a curriculum, and a curriculum may contain a number of syllabi". Yalden (1987) emphasized that in the Western ESL context, language courses are often offered for a particular group of learners who may require an alternative syllabus with unique goals, objectives, and resources. Candlin (1984) suggested that a curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation, and the role relationships of teachers and learners. It contains banks of learning items and suggestions about how these might be used in class. Syllabuses, on the other hand, are more localized and are based on accounts and records of what actually happens at the classroom level as teachers and learners apply a given curriculum to their own situation. These accounts can be used to make subsequent modifications to the curriculum. This curriculum development process is ongoing and cyclical.

The following quotes are revealing of the distinction between language curriculum and syllabus.

··· [the syllabus] replaces the concept of "method", and the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of "fit" between the needs and aims of the learner (as social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom. (Yalden, 1984: 14)

··· the syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning. It only becomes a threat to pedagogy when it is regarded as absolute rules for determining what is to be learned rather than points of reference from which bearings can be taken. (Widdowson, 1984: 26)

...curriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program. Syllabus, on the other hand, refers to that subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught (as distinct from how they will be taught, which is a matter for methodology). (Allen, 1984: 61)

Syllabi, which prescribe the content to be covered by a given course, form only a small part of the total school program. Curriculum is a far broader concept. Curriculum is all those activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school. This includes not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment, and in what kind of facilities. (Rodgers, 1989: 26)

We endorse the view of the British educators that "curriculum" is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of education programmes; "syllabus", on the other hand, focuses more narrowly on the selection and grading of content. As Cheng (2012) argued, a *syllabus* is part of a *curriculum*. A syllabus is a specification of what takes place in the classroom, including the aims and contents and teaching, as well as suggestions of teaching methodology. A curriculum provides 3 elements as follows:

(1) general statements about rationale about the language, language learning and teaching;

(2) detailed specification of aims and objectives;

(3) implementation of a programme.

Therefore, syllabus design is more of a pedagogical nature, whereas curriculum is more of a planning issue. Syllabus is often used to refer to something similar to a language teaching approach in a more narrow sense, such as the tables presented at the beginning of an English textbook indicating the learning units, topics, language items, functional items and assessments, etc.; whilst curriculum refers to a specific document of a language programme developed for a particular country or region. The Chinese Ministry of Education adopted the term *curriculum* in 2001 for "the English Curriculum Standards" as a replacement of the previous *syllabus* probably for this reason.

1.3　What's the role of textbooks

There has been a controversy on the role of textbooks. One view is that textbooks

are no longer necessary in a 21st-century classroom because they are not able to keep up with constantly changing standards, they stifle teacher creativity, and they drain an already tight budget that could be better spent on other resources such as novels, which are also more likely to promote a love of reading. The opposite view is that teachers should rewrite their own curriculum for classroom chaos. Schools should select only the most effective textbooks. There are various teacher attitudes towards textbooks. As Jobrack (2012) observed, for some teachers, textbooks provide a comprehensive curriculum in which content requirements are developed in a systematic and organized way. Textbooks can give teachers ideas for sequencing, presenting, and assessing content, skills, and concepts. Some teachers, especially new teachers often depend on textbooks. For other teachers, textbooks represent scripted, uninspired lessons that turn teachers into slaves and strip them of their creativity with a one-solution-fits-all approach. In China, as Cheng (2011: 153) pointed out, textbook is regarded as analogous to the "Bible", thus the belief is prevalent that everything in the textbook is correct and should be taught and learned. Textbooks are not only taken as a teaching tool, they also represent aims, values, methods and philosophy in foreign language teaching and learning. This misconception may have been caused by the potentially misleading fact that textbooks are the most tangible and visible aspect of the curriculum (Cheng, 2012).

The different attitudes towards textbooks pose two challenges to be addressed. The first one is developing new and high-quality textbooks in alignment with the curriculum reforms. The other is enabling schools and teachers to choose and exploit textbook in relation to the new curriculum requirements. This has implications for teacher development in various forms to help teachers gain a good understanding of the expectations of the curriculum standards and employ effective strategies to use the textbooks creatively.

1.4　How should teachers mediate the relationships among curriculum, syllabus and textbook

In China, curriculum/syllabus-textbook conundrum exists widely represented by schools' and teachers' heavy reliance on textbooks as national standards, a situation that has remained for decades which received Bell's critique (1983) thirty years ago—teachers are still consumers of others' syllabuses. In other words, the textbook has assumed a sacrosanct position in the school and the classroom, marginalizing the role of the curriculum and the syllabus. The common expectation is that the "nationally produced" textbook would "far more precisely" indicate the national standards. The

textbook thus becomes an embodiment of syllabus—all that is in it has to be taught, and that is all that is to be taught. It becomes a methodological guide to be read and its substantial portions are memorized through repeated reading. It also becomes the evaluation system—questions at the end of each chapter have to be answered orally and in writing, reproducing the text from the book itself. Here the textbook is an embodiment of the syllabus and of all aspects of classroom practices, which is referred to as curriculum-textbook conundrum.

However, teachers are those people at the grassroots level who translate curriculum, syllabus and textbook into teaching actions and behaviours. Without a good knowledge of these concepts and understanding of their relationships, they may lack the awareness and motivation to develop their professional competence to deal with them, which is likely to render their teaching to be a passive, unproductive and mundane routine. Demirbulak (2011) pointed out that teachers are expected to take an active role in curriculum evaluation, course evaluation and improvement of the teaching and learning within a classroom context. They need to liberate themselves and their students from the oppressive tyranny of the mundane routine imposed by such an unreflective use of textbooks. Only then can they become dynamic decision makers in the classroom and be able to engage not only with the textbook but also with the children's minds. They not only need to understand the wants, needs and deficiencies of their students and to enhance the quality of education, but also to develop professionally. When teachers start working with students in the classroom, they should make maximal academic preparation.

Therefore, teachers need to develop their awareness of the conceptual difference between the syllabus and the textbook, which are the two important conditions that enable them to look beyond the textbook which is a tool. The syllabus defines the goals and objectives, the linguistic and experiential content, while textbooks can put flesh on the bones of these specifications (Nunan, 1991: 208). Teachers must have in mind a syllabus, appropriate methodology, a set of teaching-learning materials, and a system of evaluation. What is needed is not a single textbook but a package of teaching and learning materials that could be used to engage the child in active learning. The textbook is a part of this package and not the only teaching and learning materials. Therefore, a large number of packages should be developed at state and district levels with adequate provision for cluster and school level modifications and supplementary materials. The National Council of Education Research and Training (2006) in America emphasized the necessity of ensuring multiplicity of syllabuses and textbooks as follows: