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REVIEW

Principles and Procedures of Material Development in the Evolving ELT Scenario

Principios y procedimientos de elaboración de material en un escenario ELT en evolución

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ABSTRACT

Course books reflect the writer's perspective and understanding of the world, and when used by language learners whom the writers don't know much about, there may be problems related to irrelevant content and subject matter, so material development has a key role in language learning, and the stages and processes of material development should not be overlooked. As far as language teaching and learning is concerned, material development signifies a role which cannot be ignored and the whole process of material development includes various steps such as the selection, adaptation, and creation of teaching materials and it is a very intricate procedure (Nunan, 1991). It is important to remember that these materials should cater to the needs of the targeted audience and the larger context of language learning, including the philosophical, cultural, and psychological aspects of the stakeholders. The main objectives of materials development should be to provide students with a meaningful experience of the language and opportunities to reflect on this experience. Key principles and procedures such as needs analysis, integration of skills, intellectual stimulation, and authenticity are essential in the development of any course material for language development. This article will explore these principles and procedures in detail.

Keywords: Material Development; Analysis; Curriculum; Principle; Procedure.

RESUMEN

Los libros de texto reflejan la perspectiva y la comprensión del mundo que tiene el autor, y cuando los utilizan estudiantes de idiomas de los que el autor no sabe mucho, pueden surgir problemas relacionados con contenidos y temas irrelevantes, por lo que el desarrollo de materiales tiene un papel clave en el aprendizaje de idiomas, y no deben pasarse por alto las etapas y los procesos del desarrollo de materiales. En lo que respecta a la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de idiomas, la elaboración de materiales desempeña un papel que no puede pasarse por alto, y todo el proceso de elaboración de materiales incluye varios pasos, como la selección, adaptación y creación de materiales didácticos, y es un procedimiento muy intrincado (Nunan, 1991). Es importante recordar que estos materiales deben satisfacer las necesidades del público al que van dirigidos y el contexto más amplio del aprendizaje de idiomas, incluidos los aspectos filosóficos, culturales y psicológicos de las partes interesadas. Los principales objetivos del desarrollo de materiales deben ser proporcionar a los estudiantes una experiencia significativa de la lengua y oportunidades para reflexionar sobre esta experiencia. Principios y procedimientos clave como el análisis de necesidades, la integración de destrezas, la estimulación intelectual y la autenticidad son esenciales en la elaboración de cualquier material didáctico para el desarrollo de la lengua. En este artículo se analizan en detalle estos principios y procedimientos.

Palabras clave: Desarrollo de Material; Análisis; Currículo; Principio; Procedimiento.

INTRODUCTION

There are many linguists who tried to define an important aspect of ELT which is the Curriculum. Curriculum refers to the specific blueprint for learning that is derived from desired results—that is, content and performance standards (be they state-determined or locally developed) (Dundar, 2017). According to Tomlinson, the term "material development" refers to all of the procedures used by professionals who create and/or utilize language learning resources, such as adaptation, design, production, exploitation, evaluation, and research. Curriculum designing in itself is a complex process which involves a lot of factors and not just writing or teaching a curriculum. As part of the development process, curriculum design and evaluation is crucial to the teaching of English and other subjects since it outlines the methodologies, procedures, strategies, and activities used to teach the language and its content. (Brown, 1995).

Reflecting on the historical context of English language instruction, we don't see much done before the 20th century. ELT gained popularity with migrants moving to English-speaking countries. The importance of English also increased in terms of business and trade. The expansion of and significant growth of various media sources such as radio, movies, and television, supported English to become more popular. Eventually, lots of research was initiated in the area of English language teaching methods and material development. In fact, many teaching methods have been tried and tested in the last one century in pursuit of the most effective method. The search for new methods is still on to improvise ELT in the current dynamic classrooms.

The main objective is to expose the learners to different aspects of language and have meaningful experience of the language which should take place in the language acquisition process. However, it would be incomplete if they do not get a chance to reflect on those experiences. So meaningful exposure as well as meaningful reflection are the key objectives of material development specifically in terms of ELT. Here we need to look at the major principles of material development.

DEVELOPMENT

PRINCIPLES OF MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ELT

Needs Analysis

A fundamental principle in material development is that a robust educational program should be founded on an examination of the requirements of learners. Essentially, needs assessment involves a methodical and continuous gathering of information about students' needs and preferences. It is essential for curriculum developers to evaluate and articulate the existing competency gap among learners, considering what is required both throughout the language program and in the future. (Nugraha, 2018). Therefore, the initial stage in curriculum development involves conducting a needs analysis, a concept centered around the learners and their considerations regarding the language structures that are anticipated to be necessary. (Brown, 1995). Hence, the methods employed to gather information about the requirements of learners are termed needs analysis. This evident and essential stage in educational program planning began to surface in the 1960s as part of curriculum development. In the context of language, needs analysis serves various purposes, such as discerning the disparity between students' current abilities and their required achievements. It also involves acquiring information about specific challenges learners might be facing and assessing whether an existing course adequately caters to the needs of prospective students, among other objectives. Top of Form

The developer should be able to identify the objective and subjective needs of the students. For Johns (1991), seeking the subjective and objective needs analysis of the students is the primary step in the design of a course and It can offer legitimacy and appropriateness to all the activities involved in designing the course. In assessing objective needs, as the first stage of material development, one can include information about the target group's background which includes their country, culture, education, family, languages spoken and the current proficiency in the language. In addition, we need to look at the demands of the students with respect to the use of the language outside the classroom. The writer needs to understand where and how the students want to use the language in the real world. When evaluating subjective needs, one may incorporate details regarding students' viewpoints on the target language and culture, as well as their inclinations regarding the manner in which they prefer to learn. After identifying the purposes of needs analysis, we need to look at the target population. The exposure and the experience of those engaged in the analysis can positively influence the needs assessment process. Top of Form

(Nation & Macalister, 2022). And they might include teachers, students, employers, parents, policy makers etc. And this specific group of people plays an integral part in designing material.

Situation Analysis

Situation Analysis refers to the evaluation of elements within the setting of a proposed or existing curriculum initiative, conducted to gauge their potential effects on the project. (Richards, 2001). Various aspects like social, societal, political, and economic constitute situation analysis. Social factors impact curriculum designing, as one must bear in mind the social or cultural norms of an area, city, or country as a whole. More often, the absence of a situational analysis during curriculum planning is observed to adversely affect its effective execution and the achievement of goals. (Kaur, 2017). Another important factor concerns educational institutions. A language education program is usually taught at an institution such as a university, high school, or college. Different types of organizations create an atmosphere or culture specific to a particular organization, in which people interact, and where communication and decision-making patterns emerge. So, while designing material, institutional factors must not be ignored. Student's behavior as well as how they adapt to certain supports must also be considered when designing the material. Above all, teachers play a significant role in the successful implementation of changes in the curriculum. Learners' behavior as well as how they adapt to certain materials should also be considered while designing material. Above all, teachers play an integral role in terms of successful implementation of curriculum changes.

Effective and Cognitive Engagement

The third significant principle of material development is the effective and cognitive engagement of students which plays a major role in achieving the targets involved in material designing. Material should be designed in a way which prioritizes the possibilities or opportunities for student's engagement and involvement. Good material makes the learners think out of the box and it can be achieved only if they have a clear understanding of what they read or listen to and respond to it. Tasks should be devised in a way that prompts students to engage in cognitive and emotional processes before, during, and after employing the target language for communication. Top of Form

Finn, Pannozzo, and Voelkl (1995) found that the greater the autonomy or initiative students demonstrate, the more profoundly they participate in learning activities. All the material should be closely linked with various student-centered activities (individual, pair or group work) which keep the students motivated, excited, and engaged during the whole language acquisition process. According to Kearsley and Schneiderman, students experience meaningful learning when they interact with fellow learners and accomplish significant tasks. Top of Form (1998).

Positive Reinforcement

Another major principle involved in the course of preparing materials is reinforcing potential learners positively. Language students who achieve positive effects are substantially more likely to gain skills than people who don't. It is very significant to create appealing activities for the learners. Text and tasks should be interesting, relevant, and enjoyable, so it can positively influence the learners. It is essential to establish realistic challenges and tasks adjusted to the intended level of the material. This approach can contribute to boosting the learner's self-esteem upon successful completion. A favorable learning environment frequently occurs when learners sense that they are acquiring knowledge and showing signs of progress. Top of Form

(Thorn, 2020). The material also should include possible opportunities to stimulate emotive responses with the use of music, song, and art to create a positive and conducive learning environment.

Developing objectives and learning outcomes

Developing objectives and learning outcomes is equally important as the other previously mentioned principles of material development. Objectives serve as a means to express the fundamental purposes and anticipated results of your course. (Graves, 2000). Mahajan (2017) compares the learning outcomes to a navigation tool such as GPS. When the driver sets the destination in the GPS, the device does take the passenger to the destination without fail. Though at times, even when the driver loses the way, the GPS assists the driver to get back to the main route to reach the correct destination. Similarly, learning outcomes act as the GPS of the course. Learning outcomes guide the course to attain the expected results. However, setting the destination in the GPS is highly crucial. If the driver sets the wrong destination, it can take the driver to a completely different end point. In the same way, setting the learning outcomes of a curriculum is significant too. In developing goals while designing material for educational programs, curriculum planners must understand and consider both the current and future requirements of learners and society. These short-term and long-term needs of the learners, based on certain cultural, social, and personal beliefs and values, set the platform for the professional foundations for developing any educational programs. They also need to identify the key areas and results that they expect after delivering a specific course or program. It will map the success rate of any curriculum by assessing the outcomes achieved by the program.

Procedures of Material Development

During the twentieth century, schools were described much different from today. Students' activities are mainly individual and very seldom for collaboration. Teachers assess learners based on summative with some formative elements which is best described by using percentage or numerical.

Classroom was teacher-centric wherein the source of information was only the teacher. Learning was predominantly content with some few processes in the twentieth century, school and university education was very different from today. The activities of students were mainly individual and there weren't many opportunities for collaboration. Classrooms were mostly teacher-centered wherein the source of information was only the teacher (Joseline,2017). However, the 21st century language classroom is very dynamic and utilization of technology in teaching and learning is inevitable. Contrary to the traditional methods used in the classrooms, teaching and learning has diversified its focus and it is more student-centered. The environment around us is undergoing significant and rapid changes. The world has become increasingly interconnected, and our interaction with obtaining information is constantly evolving due to technological advancements. Switching global circumstances insists that we rethink what, but even more crucial how and where we learn (Shah,2013). Nowadays students are expected to be more autonomous and independent to find their way through. However, it is observed that there are students who face many challenges to adapt to the recent changes in the classroom. To address these challenges, students must be provided with the necessary competences to be able to compete and survive. Here comes the significance of the course material which can cater to these target students.

Traditional vs modern curriculum models

Designing a language course has undergone various changes when compared to the past years. Traditional curriculum models are curriculum designs that emphasize strategies that help the students acquire the content that they are being given, mostly in a hypothetical manner. It has a specific emphasis on the educational process, and the ability to graduate from school after mastering the knowledge that is taught is very important. The major aim of the traditional curriculum model is to ensure that the learner has successfully finished the expected level of learning and graduated (Tyler, 1951). However, recent models of curriculum design focus more on activities. They stress student-centered models wherein students learn by doing rather than theory-based. As Biggs notes, "knowledge is constructed by the activities of the learner" (Biggs, 2014, p. 9.). According to him activity-based teaching design is outcome-based, and assessment is necessarily criterion-referenced. Though there are these significant differences in both models, they agree on most of the components. Both models may give different names and split them into various sections. Let the models vary but there are many components and aspects involved in every model of curriculum design. It should be noted that there is no ranking in the procedures, and their implementation does not follow a chronological order. Hence, it is fine to begin with any of the stages as long as it does make sense. A material designer designs a course depending on the beliefs and understandings of the target audience one has in mind. According to E, Barnett, one has to ask this question "What should my students learn or be able to do as a result of taking this course?" before designing a curriculum. Deciding where to begin will depend on how one determines the challenges that can be effectively addressed within the specified framework. However, as one of the best practices suggested by many curriculum designers, such as Jerri Maning and Kathleen Graves, it would be better to do a needs assessment as the initial step of curriculum design. Kathleen Graves says 'In 1996, when I set out a course development framework in the book I edited, *Teachers as Course Developers*' (1996), it was a list of components with questions as a way of explicating them. The first component was called Needs Assessment, and the accompanying questions were 'What are my students' needs? How can I assess them so that I can address them? (Graves,2000).

Needs Assessment

This marks the planning phase, during which the developer has the opportunity to Top of Form prioritize and organize areas to reflect. The developer needs to set an aim for the students to learn the course, assess the existing course, and then do a comparative study on the existing material with the identified learning outcomes. Thus, needs assessment seeks and interprets information received about the target group, and eventually the course will address them effectively. The needs assessment process should follow certain procedures. To begin with, as Bouchrika (2023) says, It should consistently engage the appropriate individuals, present pertinent questions, and employ suitable tools. Later on, the designer needs to analyze and analyze the data and finally move to the next stage of constructing the course. When we think of the right people to involve, it should be, according to Richards(2002), individuals from whom the data will be gathered may encompass policymakers, officials from the Ministry of Education, educators, students, scholars, employers, specialists in vocational training, parents, influential figures, academic experts, and community organizations.

Top of Form

They should be posed the right questions as well such as:

- What is the training or course intended to accomplish?
- At the end of the course, what skills must trainees or students possess?
- What kind of language proficiency is required?
- What is the pupils' English proficiency right now, and where do they need to improve?
- What needs to be improved in their language?
- How long can they be taught before they have to go on to the next level?
- What kinds of language are required of pupils for their coursework and employment?
- What level of experience do the educators possess? • What kind of resources would be most beneficial?

After framing the questions, it is necessary to decide on the right instruments to conduct the needs assessment. What tools, approaches, or methodologies could a designer employ to obtain responses to essential inquiries concerning needs assessment? There exist diverse instruments or methodologies available for conducting this evaluation, including tests, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observations, and discourse analysis, among others. Top of Form

. After the designer conducts any of the above methods, it is time to analyze and make sense of the available data. The designer looks at the patterns and trends, goes through the various perspectives, and then decides on what the stakeholders expect in the course. The needs of students can vary significantly, and the information gathered through needs assessment can help a designer of the curriculum, to make choices as to what to write and suggest ways to teach the same. After completing the needs assessment, the next stage is to set the learning outcomes or objectives of the course.

Setting Learning outcomes

In accordance with the need's assessment, explicit and quantifiable learning goals and objectives are formulated. These objectives outline the specific accomplishments learners are expected to achieve upon completing the curriculum (Gupta, 2023). How does one choose goals and objectives or learning outcomes? To arrive at the goals, the designer can ask a question, what are the goals and anticipated results of this curriculum? The answer may be prompted by the answers of the need's assessment, and how the content is conceptualized by the designer. Therefore, conceptualizing the content is the next stage in designing a curriculum.

Conceptualizing the content of the course material

While the teacher or course designer conceptualizes, he or she is trying to reach a conclusion on which aspects of the language and language learning, he or she can add, emphasize, and incorporate into the course. Until the last century, language teaching was highly influenced by a structural view of language, and this resulted in a 'one size fits all' method of material preparation and delivery, meaning, material can be used anywhere with any students with various backgrounds. According to Evanick (2023), this approach is effective in delivery, but it does not take into consideration individual differences in learning styles, preferences, or prior knowledge. However, much has changed in the years later, in terms of language teaching. The introduction of the communicative approach and the arrival of ESP have provided the designers of the curriculum with many more options to consider in deciding the core of the curriculum. The modern curriculum requires the material designers to contextualize, and the course has to be prepared based on factors such as the students' identity and their aims and anticipations in learning English. So, conceptualizing the content depends on the latest innovations in technology and the students' exposure to information at their fingertips.

Ideally, for curriculum designers, ideas about the course in action are primary before determining objectives or conceptualizing content. They think about the material the teachers will use, the activities their students will do, and the techniques the teachers will employ. They would want the students to learn independently and guide the teachers to understand their own role in the classroom. Curriculum and courses should be constructed with activities and resources that encourage students to actively reflect on their own learning, participate in determining the course content, and pursue projects aligned with their interests. This approach can lead to the development of materials where the focus is not solely on the materials but on the actions and engagement of the students with them.

In designing how to organize the content of a curriculum, one can consider advancing from uncomplicated to intricate, shifting from the more tangible to the more abstract, or something similar. Once this organization is complete, the following stage is to do a piloting of this course.

Piloting

This is a significant step involving the design of a curriculum. This is carried out to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the created material, enabling necessary corrective measures to be taken before its complete implementation. Pilot testing goes through multiple activities that let the course designer evaluate the different

aspects of the course material ahead of time. It functions as a test run or rehearsal to help discover any hitches or gaps in the course before its execution (Longe, (2021). The developer is required to: create monitoring tools for the pilot phase; select institutions and/or learners for the pilot; and collect feedback from learners and trainers on aspects like structure, content, approaches, duration, and assessment strategies. After the material undergoes piloting, the developer must: adjust it, as needed, in alignment with feedback from those engaged in the trial to cater to the requirements of learners, trainers, and the industry, drawing from data obtained during the pilot phase; and lay the groundwork or promote it for complete implementation.

Evaluation (How to evaluate)

The process of curriculum development is continuous, adapting to changes in the classroom, advancements in technology, and feedback from students. Consequently, it is not a standalone process; rather, it requires nearly constant input to enhance and refine it year after year. (Neendoor, 2023). Hence, once the piloting is done and the curriculum is implemented after integrating the proposed changes, it is time for evaluation by the users of the curriculum. Generally speaking, a curriculum is evaluated to promote and improve its effectiveness. Revision and review of the material should be done regularly. It helps the designer to determine the relation between the identified needs and the impact of the material on the learner's performance. Evaluation in curriculum development also includes evaluation of the course itself. Was the course effective? In what ways? Where did it fall short? Finding where the fault lies would be one of the purposes of evaluation and would involve having students suggest why they did not make the progress expected. It will help the designer to incorporate the suggestions and to improve the content.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, curriculum development is a multifaceted process involving the creation and enhancement of courses offered across different educational institutions. Given the breadth of this subject, navigating through the abundant information which is available to identify current best practices can be challenging. Moreover, there exist various schools of thought regarding the optimal approach to the curriculum development process. In these modern days, the development of a curriculum can vary according to the target students' group. We need to have materials or content which is customized for certain cultures or regions. Moreover, it is more challenging now as technology is used more and more in the classrooms. These days, we also have various modes of teaching and learning too. However, the designers of the curriculum shouldn't forget that technology cannot create content, it can only enhance the reach of the content to the students in an appealing way.

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