

Issues and Options in Textbook Development and Use

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kurtz
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Education is not something that you have.

It is something that you are.



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Textbooks play an important role in foreign language learning and teaching. In many instructional contexts, they constitute the syllabus teachers are inclined (or expected) to follow. Furthermore, exams are often based on textbook content (see Harwood 2013: 2). Viewed from this perspective, textbooks need to be given much more attention in TEFL research.



Aims and Objectives

- familiarize you with some basic terms and concepts used in this particular field of interest/research
- discuss the role of the textbook in EFL classrooms (as a learning and a teaching aid)
- provide you with the basic know-how necessary to use textbooks and related materials and media effectively and efficiently
- draw your attention to current issues concerning the future of the textbook and the textbook of the future



Brief Contextualization of the Presentation:

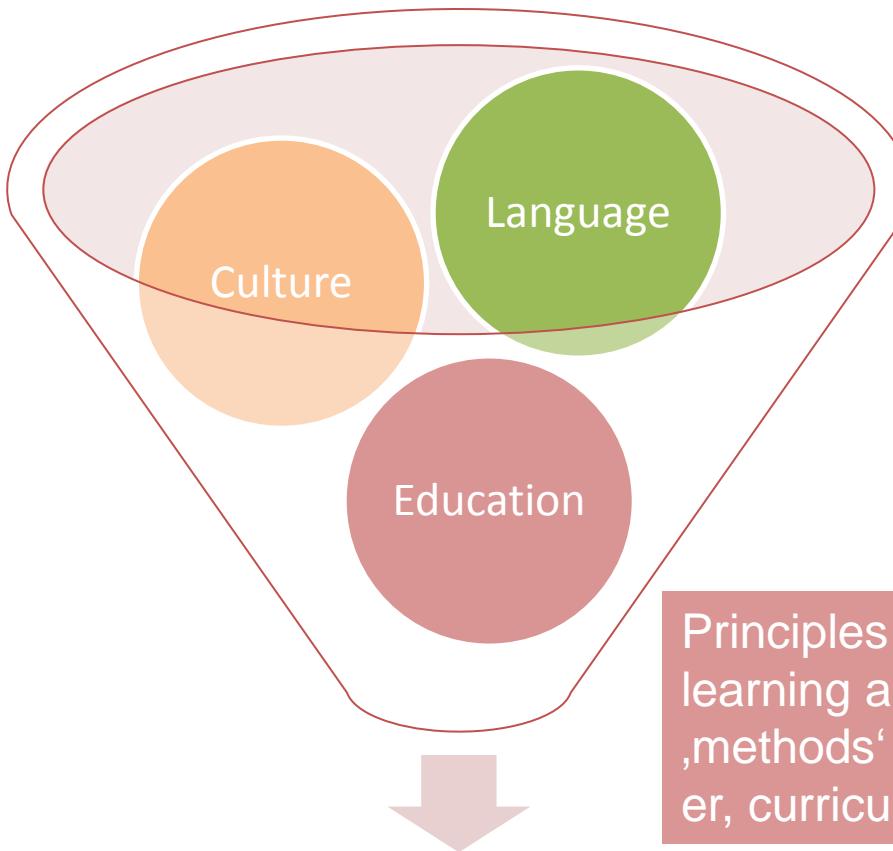


TEFL as an Academic Discipline

Relationship of language and culture

E.g.: How do language and culture determine our views of the world?

Example:
Greeting conventions



Basic Skills
Grammar
Vocabulary
Pronunciation
Orthography, etc.

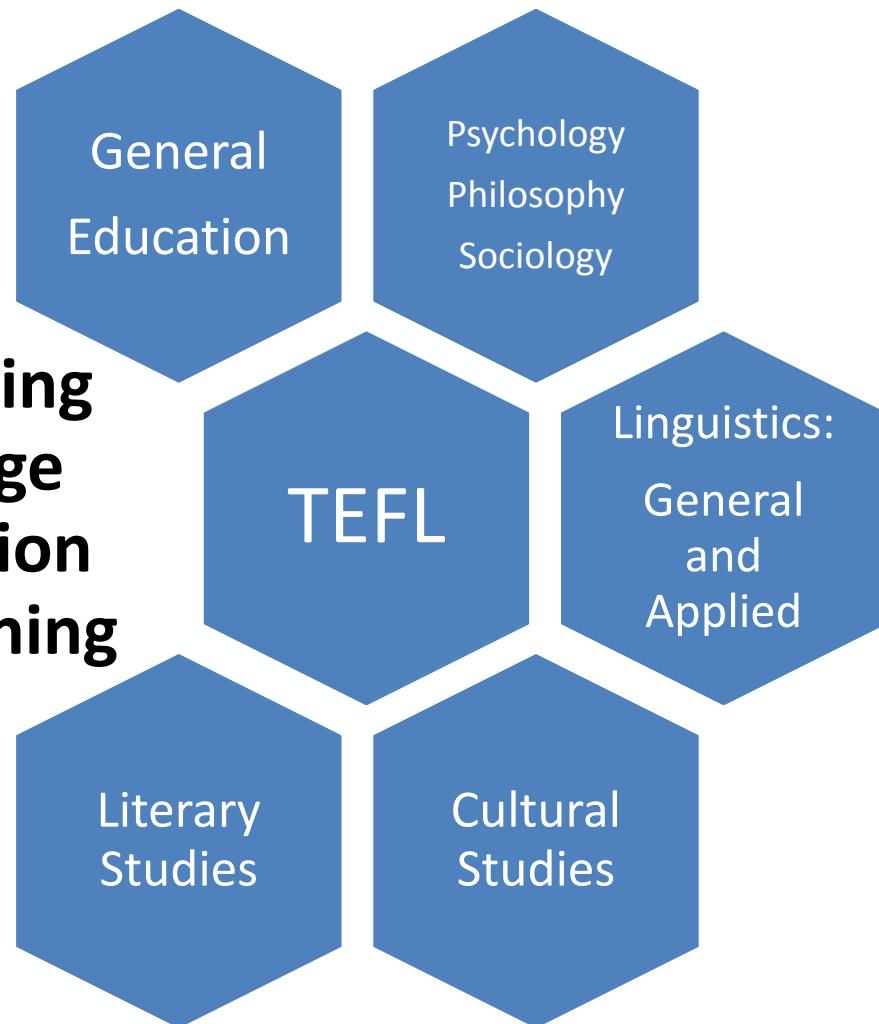
Written / Spoken
Fiction / Non-Fiction
etc.

**Theory and Practice of Learning and
Teaching English as a Foreign Language**



TEFL as a Field of Research

**Optimizing
language
instruction
and learning**



Fremdsprachenforschung
Fremdsprachendidaktik
Sprachlehrforschung
Applied Linguistics
SLA-Research
L2-Research



“English Language Education (*Englischdidaktik*) is a relatively young academic discipline in Germany. After the Second World War it gradually developed, particularly in West Germany, and reached a first peak in the 1960s, when a significant number of Teacher Training Colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) were established. [...] **Interdisciplinary** orientation as well as the relationship between **theory and practice** were salient factors in the evolution of English Language Education [...] “

Doff (2010)



Teaching English: Current Challenges and New Directions

Cultural Changes

- globalization, internationalization
- migration, multiculturalism, multilingualism
- individualization and diversification of lifestyles
- digitalization and internet communication



Teaching English: Current Challenges and New Directions

The Digital Age

- From text to hypertext
- From mono-modality to multimodality
- From personal to virtual communication
- From institutional to free knowledge



Teaching English: Current Challenges and New Directions

Individualization and Pluralization

- Institutions (churches, schools, political parties) are losing influence
- Heterogeneity
- no reliable ‚basic knowledge‘ any more
- Dynamics of cultural and medial change



Teaching English: Current Challenges and New Directions

Changes in the Educational System

- Outcome Orientation, Education Standards, Focus on Competence
- Early English Language Teaching (establ. in all *Bundesländer*; problem: not many primary school teachers educated at university)
- CLIL/Bilingual Teaching (Content and Language Integrated Learning)



Research Background

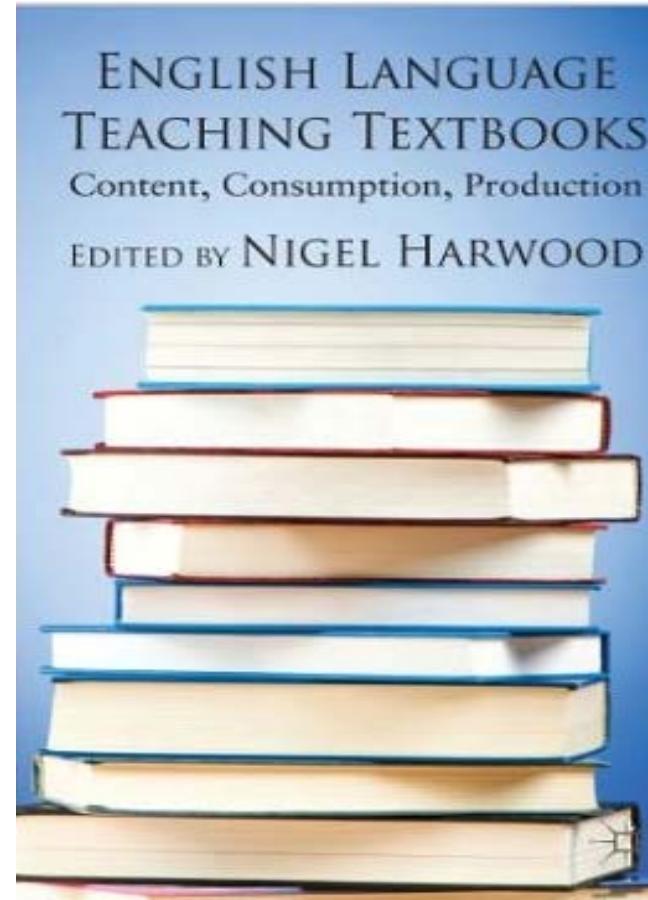
Three Main Areas of Textbook Research

Germany	English-speaking World
Lehrwerkanalyse/-kritik (Textbook analysis/critique)	Textbook content analysis, critique and/or evaluation
Lehrwerkverwendung (Textbook use/incl. choice)	Textbook use/consumption (incl. textbook selection)
Lehrwerkentwicklung (Textbook development)	Textbook production





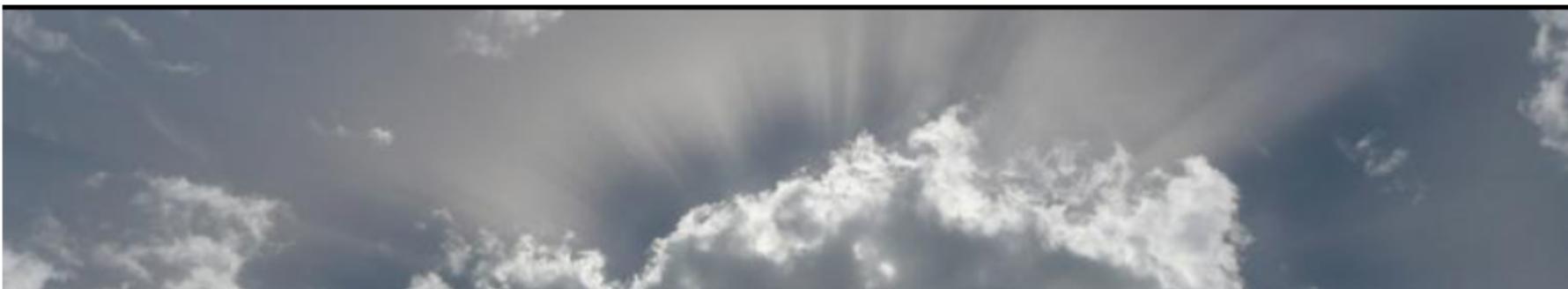
Kurtz, Jürgen (Koord.) (2011): Lehrwerkkritik, Lehrwerkverwendung, Lehrwerkentwicklung. *FLuL* 40 (2).



Harwood, Nigel (Ed.) (2013): *English Language Teaching Textbooks*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foreign Language Education in the 21st Century

HOME



SEARCH RESULTS FOR: THE ROLE OF THE TEXTBOOK

The Role of the Textbook in the EFL Classroom (8)

Posted on December 9, 2010 | 4 Comments

by Jürgen Kurtz, Karlsruhe University of Education, Germany A few days ago, I stumbled upon yet another example of figurative language related to using textbooks and related materials in the SL/FL classroom (see also parts 1 and 3 of this ... [Continue reading →](#)

ABOUT

Jürgen Kurtz -- I am a scientist who is interested in the theory and practice of foreign and/or second language learning and teaching. Within this thematic context, my blog focuses on a diverse range of issues and pressing questions, especially: foreign language teaching 'methods', classroom interaction, intercultural education, standards and assessment, foreign language education in all-day schools.

[The role of the textbook](#)

CLUSTERMAP



LIVE TRAFFIC FEED



< <http://juergenkurtz.wordpress.com> >



Basic Terminology (1)

Textbook	Any book used to teach a subject.
Coursebook	A specific textbook adopted officially in a course.
Schoolbook	A book that is used in schools.

In the international discussion, the first two terms are often used interchangeably.



Basic Terminology (2)

Germany	English-speaking World
Lehrbuch	Textbook, coursebook, mainly: student textbook
Lehrwerk	Comprehensive pedagogical packages containing a student textbook, a teacher's book/manual, workbooks, computer CD-ROMs, DVDs, and accompanying websites that serve as an e-learning platform



English G 21 A (cf. Thaler 2011: 19-20) (32 Components)

Schülerbuch (kartoniert oder Festeinband), Schülerbuch – Lehrerfassung, Workbook mit CD, Workbook mit CD-ROM (e-Workbook) und CD, Workbook mit CD-ROM (e-Workbook) und CD – Lehrerfassung, CD-ROM zum Workbook, Vokabeltaschenbuch, Wordmaster (Vokabellernbuch), Lösungen und Materialien zur Leistungsmessung, Kompetenzdiagnose, Arbeitsblätter, Freiarbeitsblätter, Roadshow, DVD, CD-Rom, Welcome Guide, Material zum Umgang mit dem Schülerbuch, Unterricht mit CD, Unterrichtsmaterial zum Umgang mit dem Schülerbuch für Kinder ohne Grundschulkenntnisse, Textsammlung/Kopiervorlagen, Schulwörterbuch English G 21, Digitaler Unterrichtsplaner (DVD-ROM), Software für Lehrkräfte English G 21 – Digital Teaching Aids, Interaktive Präsentationen, Onlineangebot: www.englishg.de

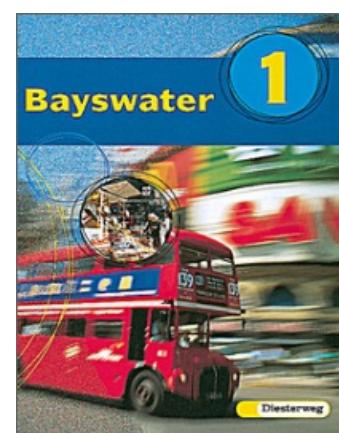
This is just to illustrate the large spectrum of textbook-related materials and media available today!



Local vs. Global Textbooks



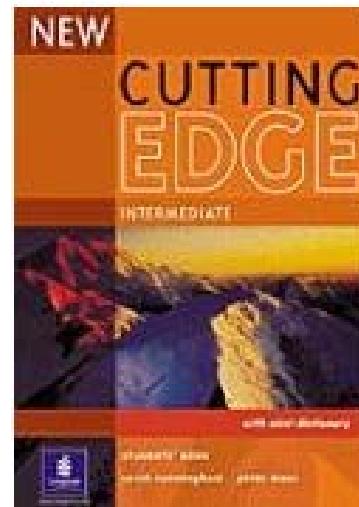
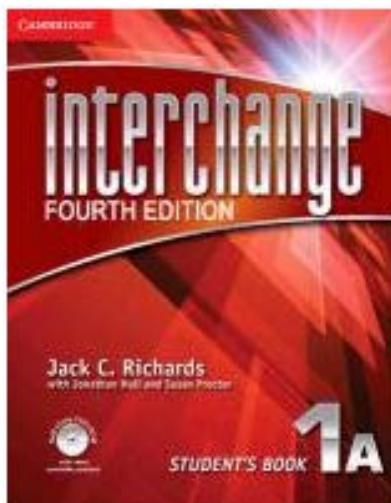
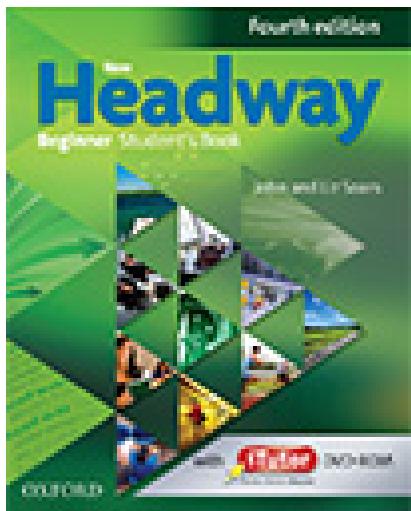
Some Local EFL Textbooks – Produced for Teaching English in Germany



Major German textbook publishers: Cornelsen (Berlin), Diesterweg (Frankfurt), Klett (Stuttgart) – all textbooks need approval by local state authorities!



Some Global EFL Textbooks – Produced for Teaching English Around the Globe



Major textbook publishers in the UK/USA: Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Pearson (Harlow)



EFL/ESL Textbooks from a Commercial Perspective

“The industry of English language teaching (ELT) textbook publishing is (...) big business. (...) In the year 2011, among the top four publishers of [global, JK] ELT textbooks, total sales were in excess of £1 billion. (...) *New Headway* (...) has sold over 100 million copies.”

Hadley (2013: 206) in
Harwood (2013)



... in other words, we are talking about a highly competitive and, at the same time, very profitable market ...

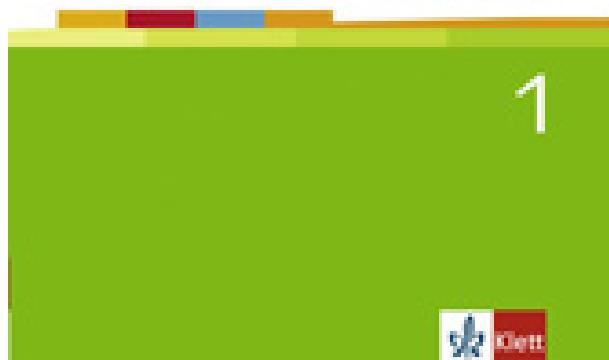
... with teachers and learners as customers or consumers ...



Example: Klett's Selling Proposition



Green Line



Verkaufskatalog des Klett-Verlags (2011):

- Sie benötigen kein weiteres Unterrichtsmaterial, „um auf der Höhe der Zeit zu sein“.
- Sie können sich „einfach an einem einzigen topaktuellen Unterrichtskonzept“ orientieren.
- Mit Green Line lässt sich „jederzeit reibungslos unterrichten“ und „Zeit sparen“. Denn:
- „Der selbst erklärende, lineare Buch- und Unitaufbau“ spiegelt „den Unterrichtsablauf wider“.

“You don't need any other teaching aids to be ,up to date‘ ...” (?)

The Importance of the Textbook in the EFL Classroom

“(...) Textbooks structure up to 90 per cent of what goes on in school classrooms (in the US). Whatever the figure in English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) contexts, textbooks are similarly important: indeed, in many contexts, textbooks constitute the syllabus (...), with end-of-course exams being based exclusively on textbook content.”

(Harwood 2013: 1-2)



Rivers (1968: 475): „The importance of the textbook cannot be overestimated. It will inevitably determine the major part of the classroom teaching and the students' out-of-class learning.“

Williams (1983: 251): „In situations where there is a shortage of trained teachers, language teaching is very closely tied to the textbook. (...) The textbook can be a tyrant to the teacher who, in his or her preoccupation with covering the syllabus, feels constrained (...).“

Sheldon (1988: 237): „ELT coursebooks evoke a range of responses, but are frequently seen by teachers as necessary evils. Feelings fluctuate between the perception that they are valid, labour-saving tools, and the doleful belief that masses of rubbish is skilfully marketed.“



Teacher Images (Similes/Metaphors) for EFL Textbooks

„A textbook is like oil in cooking – a useful base ingredient.“

„Textbooks are like ladies' handbags because we can take what we need from them and ladies tend to take handbags wherever they go.“

„A textbook is the stone from which a sculpture will be made (needing bits chopped off, added on and occasionally a little crushing.“

McGrath, Ian (2006): “Teachers’ and learners’ images for coursebooks”. *ELT Journal* 60 (2), 171-180.



Three Types of Teachers (cf. Kurtz 2011)

1. Teachers who completely rely on the textbook
(book-based teaching; textbook over- or misuse)
2. Teachers who use the textbook in a selective way.
3. Teachers who don't use a textbook at all.

However: In practice, no clear-cut boundaries;
varying patterns of textbook usage!



Three Types of Teachers (cf. Harwood 2013)

1. **Curriculum-transmitters** (strictly adhere to their textbook, proceeding exercise by exercise, page by page, rarely if ever changing the task order. The teachers' guide is consulted regularly.)
2. **Curriculum-developers** (freely adapt their textbook to best suit their learners, creating materials if they felt the textbook fell short. The teachers' guide is seldom or never used.)
3. **Curriculum-makers** (rarely if ever use a textbook, creating their own materials in response to an initial needs analysis. The teachers guide is never consulted.)



Do you use a textbook in your FL/SL classes? (Poll Closed)

I don't use any textbook at all. 6.9%

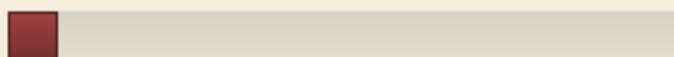


I use the textbook in a selective manner.

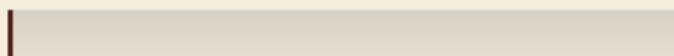
86.21%



I only use material from the textbook. 6.9%



Other: 0%



Comments (0) Share This

Create Your Own Poll

See: „The Role of the Textbook in the EFL Classroom“



<http://juergenkurtz.wordpress.com>

Factors Contributing to Variation in Textbook Use

- **The textbook** (quality of content; attractiveness of layout)
- **The teacher** (e.g., beliefs, training, pedagogical and content knowledge, experience, preferred teaching style, perception and evaluation of the textbook, attitude toward top-down mandates (e.g., the state syllabus, directives from school principal))
- **The learner** (e.g., level, aptitude, previous learning experiences, preferred learning styles)
- **The classroom** (e.g., physical layout, electronic equipment)
- **The school** (e.g., timetable constraints, attitude toward EFL or foreign language education as a subject)



Learner Images for EFL Textbooks

„A coursebook is a pair of glasses (which help me to see what the teacher is talking about).“

„A textbook is a beggar (no one likes to approach it).“

„A textbook is an angry barking dog that frightens me in a language I don't understand.“

(McGrath 2006)



Advantages and limitations of textbooks

Principal advantages:

- they provide structure and a syllabus for a program
- they provide a variety of learning resources
- they can provide effective language models and input
- they can train teachers and help saving time
- they are visually appealing

Disadvantages:

- they may contain inauthentic language
- they may distort content
- they may not reflect students' needs
- they can deskill teachers
- they are expensive

Richards (2002)



Textbooks in the EFL Classroom: Major Pros and Cons (Thaler 2010)



System

With textbooks you know where you are, what you have done, where you are going.

Syllabus

Textbooks provide a built-in language syllabus.

Guideline

Textbooks provide a plan of work for the teacher.

Security

Textbooks provide a clear programme of study for the student

Sense of progress

With textbooks students see that they have improved.

Language core

Textbooks present a common core of language which learners in different contexts may share.

Revision

With textbooks students and teacher can go back at any time and review material.

Extras

Textbooks are accompanied by enriching components (keys, workbooks, CDs, Schulaufgabentrainer etc.).

Irrelevance

Textbooks may not be relevant to the needs of a particular group of learners.

Homogeneity

Textbooks ignore the heterogeneity of pupils we find in most classrooms.

Length

Textbooks include texts which may be too long or too short.

Difficulty

Textbooks include texts which may be too difficult or too easy.

Publication

Textbooks quickly go out of date.

Boredom

Textbooks deal with topics that are not interesting, humorous or relevant to pupils.

Routine

Textbooks can be repetitive (same character, same topic, same format for every unit).

Passivities

The activities in textbooks don't deserve their name, do not really activate pupils and do not automatically guarantee acquisition of learning input.

Pros

Timesaver

Textbooks save busy teachers time.

Compactness

Textbooks are compact – can be easily stacked, stored and carried, are collated within a book binding, so the sheets don't fall out and get lost.

Layout

The materials in textbooks usually look professional.

Alternative

There are no real alternatives to textbooks.

Cons

Bias

Textbooks present a middle-class view of reality – sanitized, elitist – and avoid controversial topics or present them in too formalized a way.

Dependence

Textbooks prohibit the learners' freedom of choice and act against spontaneity in the classroom.

Straitjacket

Textbooks threaten the teacher's freedom of action.

Economic interest

Textbooks are merely money-spinners for publishers.

Thaler 2010



**„Optimale Lehrwerkverwendung
bedeutet nicht maximale
Lehrwerksbindung.“** [Optimal textbook use ≠
maximum textbook reliance.]

Kurtz (2011: 6-7)



Textbook Research / The State of the Art

“As yet, there is no universally recognized theory of the textbook. Empirically, too little is known about how and when teachers use textbooks; how textbooks influence the learning process in comparison with other instructional materials; what research instruments are most reliable in the field of textbook research; how visual materials influence the learning process; how effective textbooks are in transmitting knowledge or promoting the acquisition of independent learning skills, to give but a few examples.”

(Sercu 2004: 627)



My Personal Views on the Current State of Textbook Research

Past research has focused primarily on the quality of textbook content (in terms of textbook analysis, critique, and evaluation), rather than on actual textbook selection, use or consumption in the FL/SL classroom, resulting in an abundance of textbook evaluation instruments (guidelines, lists or grids), such as, for instance, the *Mannheim*, the *Stockholm* or the *Brno* checklists for textbook analysis and critique (see Krumm & Ohms-Duszenko 2001), or, in the US, the Indiana Standards-based Textbook Evaluation Guide (see Hood-Cisar 2002). All in all, textbook research has largely been theoretical (i.e. concept-driven, top-down, ‘armchair research’), rather than empirical (i.e. data-driven, bottom-up, classroom-based research), or a mix of both (in terms of quantitative-qualitative, mixed-method studies).



**Future EFL textbook research will
have to take a closer look at**

“The context-bound, mediated nature
of textbook use”

Harwood (2013: 13)



Anti-Textbook Movements (1)

Externally imposed syllabuses, textbooks and examinations all define educational values and set certain standards which are important from the standpoint of the individual as well as for national and social purposes: however, they make the spontaneity, flexibility and diversity which are an equally important part of education much more difficult to achieve.

Skilbeck in Hedge (2000: 337)



Anti-Textbook Movements (2)

“Many ELT materials (especially global coursebooks) currently make a significant contribution to the failure of many learners of English as a second, foreign or other language to even acquire basic competence in English and to the failure of most of them to develop the ability to use it successfully. They do so by focusing on the teaching of linguistic items rather than on the provision of opportunities for acquisition and development. And they do this because that’s what teachers are expected and required to do by administrators, by parents, by publishers, and by learners too.”

Tomlinson (2008: 3)



The Dogme Movement (1)

Critique: “Over-reliance on materials and technology”

What we need is (?) ...

- “A pedagogy of bare essentials”
- “Teaching unplugged”
- “Learning as improvised drama”

(Meddings & Thornbury 2009)

[<http://www.thornburyscott.com/tu/sources.htm>]



The Dogme Movement (2)

“[...] materials, especially coursebooks, can come between me and my students, preventing me from directly experiencing and responding to the moment by moment energy and vitality of their own learning experience. If I’m not careful I reduce myself to a ‘materials operator’, separated from my learners by a screen of ‘things to do’.”

Underhill (1997: 8)



The Dogme Movement (3)

Teaching – like talk – should centre on the local and relevant concerns of the people in the room, not on the remote world of coursebook characters, nor the contrived world of grammatical structures. (...) No methodological structures should interfere with, nor inhibit, the free flow of participant-driven input, output and feedback.”

Thornbury (2000: 16)



Apple™ Worldwide Developers Conference, January 19, 2012:

„Dead tree textbooks are a
thing of the past (...).“



19.01.2012

„iBooks 2“ vorgestellt Apple erfindet Schulbuch neu

„Apple™ reinvents the
schoolbook“ (???)

Apple will den Schulbuchmarkt aufmischen. Der Konzern will mit digitalen Lehrbüchern und Kooperationen mit bekannten amerikanischen Lehrbuchverlagen das Geschäft mit dem iPad ankurbeln.

<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/technik-motor/computer-internet/ibooks-2-vorgestellt-apple-erfindet-schulbuch-neu-11614714.html>



[Standards-Based] Textbook Evaluation Competence: A Vital Part of Professional Teaching Competence

Example 1:

Some fundamental textbook evaluation criteria related to developing functional communicative skills

Example 2:

Focus on developing intercultural competencies (referred to as „soziokulturelles Orientierungswissen“ in the German Education Standards , KMK 2003)



Are there opportunities for learners to communicate with each other, a native speaker, or the teacher in the target language in meaningful and authentic situations?

Are the opportunities for learners to practice interpersonal writing and speaking balanced throughout the text?

Are the opportunities for learners to practice presentational writing and speaking balanced throughout the text?

Do the activities include language that is authentic, accurate, and current?

Are the communicative activities set in a real-world context or represent a real-world task?

Do the activities allow learners to personalize their responses or provide their own meaning?

Do the activities allow learners to provide their own form and structure (grammar formation)?

Are the activities age-appropriate?

Are the activities developmentally appropriate?

Are there expanded opportunities for learners to practice listening comprehension?

Do the text and supplemental materials identify and encourage learners to use strategies that facilitate communication and comprehension?

Do the activities allow learners to demonstrate or showcase their knowledge of and/or skill in using the target language?

Indiana Department of Education: *Standards-based Textbook Evaluation Guide*. 2007



Are the visual images and cultural information current and pertinent?

Are the visual images and cultural information authentic?

Does the text reflect diversity within the target cultures?

Are the accents and/or dialects used within the book varied across cultural groups within the target cultures?

Are a variety of regions/countries where the target language is spoken represented?

Is the cultural information presented in the target language whenever possible and/or appropriate?

Are the connections between culture and language emphasized?

Is the culture embedded in communicative activities and prompts, as well as sections pertaining to grammar?

Do the text activities associated with cultural images and information invite learner observation, identification, discussion or analysis of cultural practices, products, and perspectives?

Do learners have opportunities to participate in entertainment representative of the target cultures (ex. games, story telling, songs, etc.)?

Are learners asked to identify, experience, analyze, produce, or discuss tangible (toys, dress, foods, etc.) and expressive (artwork, songs, literature, etc.) products of the target cultures?

Do the images depict different people/cultures who use the target language for communication?

Indiana Department of Education: *Standards-based Textbook Evaluation Guide*. 2007





Workshop:

In groups of up to four students, try to identify the theoretical framework of language learning and teaching underlying one particular textbook of your choice. Be prepared to present your results in class.

Two years ago, I took an EFL textbook for intermediate learners, produced in Germany (for the German textbook market), with me to Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada, asking my students to analyze a unit entitled 'Growing up in Canada' from their perspective. These are some of their observations and comments:



- The unit does not reflect authentic language use.
- Culture is not presented in a modern context.
- Information is not relevant or interesting to learners of EFL, seventh grade.
- Parents are represented as being more harsh and negative towards their children than is common.
Canadian parents are generally more permissive than strict.
- Add last names to show family backgrounds.
- Remove “Hongcouver”.
- Better communicate First Nation topics; choose more iconic or well-known First Nation community (nobody knows Nemaska).
- We question the significance of dragon boating as a symbolic of Canadian culture. However, it is famous for breast cancer fundraising.



Emerging Trends in Textbook Development and Production

- Digitization vs. Dead-tree textbooks?
- (Multimodality vs. Mono-modality)
- Maximization vs. Minimization?
- Hybridity vs. Purity?
- The textbook as a complex navigation system?
(see Kurtz 2014)
- Ex.: “*New Headway*” (iTutor – digital workbook; iChecker – electronic portfolio; iTools – digital teacher manual and toolbox



Qualitätsmaßstäbe für interkulturelle Lernangebote

in fremdsprachenunterrichtlichen Bildungsmedien

In den vergangenen 25 Jahren haben sich die Ansprüche und Erwartungen an den schulischen Fremdsprachenunterricht gewandelt, vor allem in Bezug auf das interkulturelle Lehren und Lernen. Zugleich können wir heute auf elektronische Medien und digitale Technologien zugreifen, die es vor einem Vierteljahrhundert noch gar nicht gab.

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kurtz
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen



(Kurtz 2014, in *Praxis Fremdsprachenunterricht* 1: 9-12)



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The following research bibliography is by no means exhaustive. It is, perhaps, unique in that it brings together some important research reported on and published in English and in German (for the first time).



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