Chapter II

Curriculum and the Need for Evaluation of Curriculum
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2.1. Introduction

The art of language learning depends on the interest of the learner. The more motivated the learner; the sooner is the language learning process. Learning related languages, where ‘transparency’ between known and unknown languages exists learning becomes easier and faster. Another factor that determines this process is the situation in which the language is learnt. The more a person is exposed to the language the faster becomes his language learning process. Such exposure can be in the spoken form where the person has moved into a new language situation.

Language learning, in a controlled environment is brought about through many steps. The learning process itself is designed thoroughly. The planning of such a process involves the teachers, students and the people who design the course. There are various stages that are involved in planning, such as, curriculum, syllabus, designing a course material etc, which will be dealt in detailed in this chapter.

2.2. Curriculum

Curriculum according to the Oxford Dictionary is “the subjects that are studied or prescribed for study in a school”. “Educators around
the country will tell you, that the curriculum and the textbook are not
the same thing. In practice, however, the textbook is the curriculum.
Everybody knows it and few will admit it” [Mark Montogomery, 2006). Scholars are of the opinion that the school curriculum all over the world
is in a state of flux and in the developing countries it is inadequate and
outdated. They, so as to bring in progressive impact in the existing
educational system suggest sweeping curricular changes in school
education.

Curriculum has to be designed step by step. According to Fraida
Dublin and Elite Olshtain (1986) goals are to be established before
designing a curriculum. The following steps are to be followed:

- Information should be gathered on the objectives of the
  language program.
- The learner should be identified as ESL, EFL or ESP.
- Information on the school system and community are to be
gathered and the need of the learner should be defined.

Once the goal is set the existing program has to be analysed, such
as syllabus, textbooks and other materials. The new system can replace
the existing one or just be an addition to the existing one. Based on the
curriculum the syllabus is framed.
Learners in second language situation learn science (physics, chemistry and biology), history and other subjects in English, and also use the language outside the classroom. So a language program should help in attaining both these needs of the learner. “The course must setup goals that incorporate both academic-professional and survival situations faced by students”. (Fraida Dublin and Elite Olshtain, 1986)

“In describing a program currently in operation, five basic components of the program should be examined.

1. The existing curriculum and syllabus
2. The materials in use
3. The teacher population
4. The learner and
5. The resources of the program.”

(Fraida Dublin and Elite Olshtain, 1986).

This kind of investigation will help in finding out, in what ways the program has succeeded or failed? Based on the conclusion, the strength and weakness of the existing program can be judged and rectified in the future.

Dua (1985) suggests a geometric design while giving a typology of language problems, which is essential while designing curriculum.
The design centers on who, defines what, when, how and social context of language problem. These problems have been linked with five factors:

1. Language Material
2. Language User
3. Language Use
4. Language Structure and
5. Language Symbol

A curriculum should consider all these five aspects; only then can it be successful. Even if one of these aspects is overlooked, it will have a direct, negative influence on the learner.
The curriculum also suggests the method of teaching to be adopted by teachers in the classroom. It is witnessed that the teacher rarely puts into practise what has been specified to them in the prescribed manuals or materials in language classrooms. Though it seems that teachers practice similar teaching methods it differs from teacher to teacher, and class to class, depending on the many 'logistical, cultural and institutional forces at play'. The best method for teaching, which could be applied to all language-teaching classrooms, is yet to be discovered. Because of this teachers are pushed into a situation where they give up the predefined/prepackaged methods and devise a creative method from the bottom upwards to suit their specific classroom conditions. This sometimes becomes a stumbling block to the effective teaching of the course materials but on the whole it is advantageous.

Once the students enter the colleges it becomes difficult for both the teacher and the student and much time is wasted in college for what should have been done at school. So school curriculum should be upgraded, deepened and be made more challenging especially in the higher secondary level. The curriculum defines, the goals and the content of the new programmes in terms, meaningful to the learner. They lend substance and significance to the proposed changes, as they are the actual tools used by not only the teacher but by the pupil as well.
2.3. Syllabus

Syllabus is a detailed description of what is to be taught, how it is to be taught with special mention to the time frame, teaching methods etc. Syllabus is a course outline that provides list of course requirement, grading criteria, course content, expectation and miscellaneous information. Generally, a syllabus is considered as a list of topics or units, which the learner is taught. There is no direct contact between the learner and the syllabus. Christopher Brumfit (1998) says “The syllabus is seen as having two roles. It is a means of activating and motivating the capacities of students to acquire language and thus provide a structure for initial teaching of linguistic tokens (either as ‘language’ items, or through ‘content’ selection). On the other hand, it is a device to enable teachers to check coverage and appropriateness of material”. The textbook links the syllabus and the learner. Thus, the materials are implemented in the syllabus. Fraida Dublin and Elite Olshtain, (1986) insist that syllabus should describe

1. What the learner are expected to know at the end of the course, or the courses objectives in operational terms?

2. What is to be taught or learned during the course, in the form of an inventory of items?

3. When it is to be taught and at what rate of progress, relating the inventory of items to the different levels and stages as well as to the time constraints of the course?
4. How it is to be taught, suggesting procedures, techniques, and materials?

5. How it is to be evaluated, suggesting testing and evaluating mechanisms?

In addition to this John Dougil (1987) has formulated a framework for syllabus.

**Syllabus**

1. The type (e.g. Structural / Functional / Multi-syllabus etc.)

2. How comprehensive is it?

3. How relevant to the stated aims?

**Progression**

1. Is the course linear or cyclical?

2. How steep or shallow is it (compared to other courses)?

**Revision and Recycling**

To what extent is this built-in or provided for?

**Skills**

1. Is there an integrated skills approach?

2. To what extent are all four skills catered for?

**Cohesion**

1. Does the course hang together as a whole or is there an imbalance?

2. Is there undue weighting on certain aspects?
Thus the function of a syllabus is, what is to be learnt? How it is to be taught? Apart from this the learner, his background (linguistic), what he has to achieve? (aim) are to play an important role in syllabus design. The previous experience (if any) of the learners in the target language is essential. A syllabus designer should select the teaching methods suitable for the syllabus and which can be practicable in the classroom. They can suggest various methods required to teach and learn the various tasks in the syllabus. The teachers and the students can select the method, which is more apt in their environment. A syllabus should always be divided into units so as to make the teaching learning process a meaningful one. Proper care should be taken while ordering the topics, which should be in the order of increasing complexity. An evaluation of the syllabus, by getting the feedback from the teachers and the students should be implemented while revising a syllabus.

2.4. Course Material Designing for English

Material in the language environment includes reference materials for grammar, learning materials, dictionaries, glossaries, thesaurus, translation of manuals, textbooks, abstracts, legal documents or official records, textbooks and creative and journalistic or scientific literature in a language. According to N.S. Prabu (1987) “Any collection of tasks acting as materials for task-based teaching can only have the status of source books for teachers.”
In most Indian schools the only place where students are exposed to English is the classroom and the primary source and the only source in English, is the material that is provided. If the learner wishes for exposure to the language beyond the textbook there are no additional materials available to them. A course material should be designed accordingly to fulfill the needs of such underprivileged students. The material plays a crucial role in the learning environment and so, much care should be taken in the production.

The course book has to be designed in accordance with the syllabus, which should be framed based on the curriculum. When a course material is designed a number of parameters are to be investigated on the course. The course can be of extensive or intensive in nature. Courses usually assess the learners while some do not assess the learners. The courses may be to achieve immediate goals while some courses aim at delayed needs as in the case of long term course. Whatever be the nature of the course the teacher usually is the provider of knowledge through various activities. But in certain cases where the learner sets the goals in the language learning situation, the teacher is only a facilitator of activities in the classroom according to the learners expressed wants. The courses have either broad or narrow focus. The material has a common core or it is specific to learners’ study or work. The learners are homogeneous or heterogeneous in a particular course. The course design is what the institution, teacher and the
learner decides. In some cases the learners alone design the course according to what they wish to learn. Depending on all the above said criteria course material has to be designed.

0-Content, 1-Culture, 2-Moral, 3-Literature, 4-Society, 5-Hearing, 6-Speaking, 7-Reading, 8-Writing, 9-Grammar of Language, 10-Classical Grammar (P.V.Ravi, 1998)

In addition to this any language textbook should have content. The content should give due importance to the culture, moral, literature and the society of the particular language. Listening, speaking, reading and writing should be given importance. Finally the grammar of the language should be given importance along with the classical grammar.
Material that are disjointed and collected from various existing ELT materials is either too limited or too generalized in a superficial and flashy manner and such “single edition, now defunct [text] books produced during the past ten years testifies to the market consequences of teachers’ verdicts on such practices” (Sheldon, 1988). Too many textbooks are often marketed with grand artificial claims by their authors and publishers yet these same books tend to contain serious theoretical problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings.

2.4.1. Other Factors that Determine Language Learning

Though the textbook plays a vital role in English language education, there are other quarters which need due attention. Kumaravadivelu (1994) defines the following classroom techniques:

- Maximize learning opportunities
- Facilitate negotiated interaction
- Minimize perceptual mismatches
- Activate intuitive heuristics
- Foster language awareness
- Contextualize linguistic input
- Integrate language skills
- Promote learner autonomy
- Ensure social relevance.
Another important factor that determines the effectiveness of the learning process is the teacher. "The teachers command of the target language, the teacher's training, background, level of higher education, exposure ideas concerning the nature of language and language learning, teaching experience, the teacher's attitude towards changes in the program" (Fraida Dublin and Elite Olshtain, 1986). The role of the textbook in the language classroom cannot be defined perfectly and exactly. However, both the teachers and students for language learning need a framework and the textbooks undoubtedly provide this. In addition to this some theorists like O'Neill, (1982), Williams, (1983), Kitao & Kitao (1997) have alluded to the "inherent danger of the inexperienced teacher who may use a textbook as a pedagogic crutch, such an over reliance may actually have the opposite effect of saving students from such a teacher's deficiencies".

2.4.2. Importance of Course Material

The course book is designed with language policies in mind, and great care has to be exercised in this regard, because its flaw may make its learners unlearn what they have already learned. "The textbook is an almost universal element of (English language) teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in various countries. No teaching-learning situation, is complete until it has its relevant textbook." (Hutchinson.T 1994). Thus, the course material is placed in the limelight around which the activities in the classroom take place. It is an authentic support for the learners.
Sheldon (1988) identified three main reasons on why teachers rely on the textbook and utilize them so heavily. “Firstly, developing their own classroom materials is an extremely difficult, arduous process for teachers. Secondly, teachers have limited time in which to develop new materials due to the nature of their profession. Thirdly, external pressures restrict many teachers. Each of these is an accurate analysis of the strains teachers feel and using a textbook is one of the most efficient and readily available ways in which to relieve some of these pressures. They lessen preparation time, provide readymade activities, and provide concrete samples of classroom progress through which external stakeholders can be satisfied.” Hence it is to be noted that the teachers also rely heavily on the textbooks for their daily activity in the classroom. It saves much of their time. They can channelize their time towards teaching instead of spending on material production.

While designing material for English language teaching it has to follow a framework. Jolly and Bolitho (1998) have designed a procedure to be followed whilst formulating a textbook.

They are

- Identifying the need for materials
- Exploring the need
- Contextual realization of materials
- Pedagogical realization of materials
• Production of materials
• Student use of materials
• Evaluation of material against agreed objectives.

Thus, after a careful designing of the framework a textbook has to be produced taking into consideration the teachers, students, the age level and the expected level of proficiency a learner has to accomplish at the end of the course. The material production should strictly fall in line with the curriculum. Nunan (1988) has identified the following principles to be heeded during material production. They are:

• Material should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve
• Material should be authentic in terms of text and task
• Material should stimulate interaction
• Material should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of language
• Material should encourage learners to develop learning skills and skills in learning
• Material should encourage learners to apply their developing skills to the world beyond the classroom.

1. By whom and where were the materials developed?
That is who are familiar with that particular educational system and the students’ population.
2. Are the materials compatible with the syllabus?

The procedures, techniques and presentation of items must be in harmony with the specifications given in the syllabus.

3. Do most of the materials provide alternatives for teachers and learners?

Alternatives in terms of learner – tasks, learning styles, presentation techniques, expected outcomes, etc. Effective materials should enable experienced teachers and learners to develop their own alternatives according to their needs and personal preferences.

4. Which language skills do the materials cover?

Are they presented separately or are they well integrated?

5. How authentic are the text types included in the materials?

6. How do learners and teachers who have used the materials feel about them? How teachable or learnable the materials really are?

2.4.3. Need to Evaluate Course Material

Cunningsworth (1984) asserts, “course materials for English should be seen as the teacher's servant and not his master” this leads to the issue of how texts are or should be used in a classroom.

After much effort a textbook is being designed and produced. The effectiveness of the textbook can be judged only after it is being administered to the learner. The textbook has to be validated for the impact it has on its learner. “The textbook is a ‘problem’ evincing a
complex of difficulties in its creation, distribution, exploitation and ultimately, evaluation” (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1987). The pros and cons of the course design will be visible only then and it is essential to cross check so as to bring in necessary changes the textbook needs.

The textbooks usually claims to suit all students, at all levels which is not so. The textbook usually becomes something to be endured rather than enjoyed or used effectively. Only assessments of the published materials frequently, “represent a deeply felt, grassroots complaint about the published materials status quo.” (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1987).

The teams that produce the material at times do not appreciate contribution of others. “Authors, publishers, educational administrators and teachers are often ignorant of one another’s true priorities and constraints” (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1987). “The textbooks and the ancillary aids are seen as commercial ephemera”. They are marketed as a commercial product because of this commercialization brought about in the pedagogy, the teacher’s opinion and learners who are indeed the very centrality of and are not considered in the integral part of the educational process. The validity of any “course will rest upon the selection and faithful application of a relevant classroom tome.” (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1987).

Grammatical explanations in the textbook should not be filled with unfamiliar terminologies. The workbook should not force students to adopt microscopic handwriting. It should provide proper spacing for the
students to practice with ease. The text and diagrams should not hold
the learner in a trap. They should be easily manageable by the students.
The achievement tests should be linked properly. Omissions in the
material should be avoided, as it would look like a cobbled collection of
disjunct.

The teacher’s handbook in some cases is the student’s edition of
the material with only answer key inserted to it. It should explain to the
teacher all the aspects of the textbook. Only then will the teacher be in a
position to use the material effectively (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1987).
The discrete handouts and photocopies, which are generated by the
teachers, are made to believe as educational exercises. These kinds of
material production lack expertisation and evince teacher disorganization.

Evaluation is essential to establish whether the material suits the
age, student type, the availability of the material in the market and
economic feasibility of the material.

Robert O’Neill has formulated four cardinal points for evaluating a
material.

i) **Face Validity**

The extent to which the course is ‘transparent’, that is, the aims
and underlying intentions are clear.
**ii) Generative Push**

The extent to which the course enables students to generate language outside the classroom.

**iii) Coherence or pattern**

The extent to which the course hangs together as a package.

**iv) Affective depth**

The extent to which the content touches the inner person.

The textbook has to be evaluated keeping in mind a few things. First and foremost it has to fulfill the goals set at the time of designing the framework for the textbook. It has to be error free at syntactic and lexical level. The topics selected should suit the age and linguistic capability of the learner. It should be motivating, easy and the ideas projected in the textbook should be enjoyable to the learner. It should satisfy the need of both the learner and the teacher. The design of the textbook should utilize teaching methods that are feasible in the existing classroom. It should not be vague and should be to the point. Language teaching has to be relevant and meaningful, only then will the students be interested and motivated to participate in the activities that happen in the language classroom.

An over-packed school curriculum that keeps including more and more significant items can be discarded and a more stimulating, dynamic material that develops the language learner can be adopted. Textbooks
that appear sound on the surface, often lack many of the criteria which a truly superior book should possess. It is therefore necessary for individuals who are making the choices on behalf of the learners to carefully examine all aspects of the text and compare it against an assessment tool, which is a pre-designed one or the one designed by them.

Last but not the least, books should not be judged by the cover but by the weight of the book needs to be considered. The course designers in their enthusiasm to produce a book to cater to all the needs of the learner develop an overstuffed, heavy book, which lacks coherence and cogent instructional design. Weight of the textbook is to be in accordance with the age of the learner. The look, feel and content of the textbook are also to be taken into account while producing material.

Teachers can be said to have self-development and professional growth only if they could evaluate their textbooks. They should develop an insight on the nature of the textbook that they use against the learner. The assessment should be accurate, systematic only then will the evaluation be worthwhile. Textbook evaluation should be an integral part during the teacher-training program. Apart from this the teachers can familiarise themselves with various publishers available and can look for important features in textbooks.
2.4.4. Course Material Designing for English as a Second Language in Tamilnadu

Remnants of the British educational system, totally irrelevant to the emergence of the Indian nation, still hold the Indian education in its grip. The school curriculum is very narrowly conceived and out-of-date in India while striking curricular developments are witnessed abroad. Imparting knowledge, developing skills and inculcating proper interests, attitudes and values are the processes that take place in education. The schools and colleges are only imparting knowledge in an unsatisfactory way. The curriculum demands, a premium on bookish knowledge and rote learning makes inadequate provision for practical.

An eminent educationist comments and outlines the mechanics of India's continuing textbooks printing racket which has bedeviled the lives of hundreds of millions of midnight's children: “Politicians in all states have perfected the textbooks publishing and printing racket. First they encourage the establishment of strong Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Hindi, Manipuri etc., language lobbies, which insist upon the local language as the medium of instruction. This creates great opportunities of auctioning contracts for printing millions of textbooks of indifferent quality, which are sold or gifted to first generation learners whose parents are too poor and illiterate to complain. This racket, which totally ignores the rights and future of millions of children, has been going on uninterrupted for
decades. And since the middle classes don’t send their children to vernacular medium government schools, nobody is complaining. It’s a national disgrace.” (Srinidhi Raghavendra, 2005)

The Indian educational system still remains teacher-centered and syllabus and examination oriented. The educationists decide on what a student should acquire, from the pre-school to higher secondary level and a curriculum is designed to fit this decision for each level. Texts are prepared in bits to accord with the curriculum. The curriculum designers set a time frame and a timetable for the teacher to teach all the lessons and the teacher teaches the lessons accordingly. Teachers are even guided to teach the lessons. The students are assessed based on the textbook in examinations. The entire educational administrative setup, from top to bottom, is geared towards this end. Due to this process the learners even in the beginning, lose real learning interest. The student enters the school with eagerness and enthusiasm to learn new things, which disappear in course of time. The entire learning/teaching process should be student centered, but on the contrary the learner becomes just a unit in this monolithic structure. The real learning needs of the students are never taken into consideration. By the time the student completes the formal education, the freshness is drained and curiosity with which they started their education is lost forever. Often rather than choosing course books that fulfill the goals of the curriculum, “an approved textbook may easily become the curriculum in the classroom.” [Lamie, 1999].
Secondary education is more or less terminal in the education programme. These two years are crucial as the students leave school once for all in search of a general or professional higher education. All the four systems that exist in the state namely, State Board, Matriculation, Anglo-Indian and Oriental schools, confluence in the higher secondary education in Tamilnadu. The higher secondary education curriculum that has been designed proposed to cater to the diverse needs of the students from various streams. The textbook aims at developing communicative competence rather than achieving simple and straight objectives. Not merely achievement but more importantly proficiency in English is the focus of all the lessons and tasks. High scores in the examination in the subject should in effect correspond with independent ability to use English for academic, occupational and even social purposes. This book guides the learners to apply the linguistic competence developed through this book in communicative contexts in real life, academic or professional.

The syllabus was revised and the textbooks were designed accordingly. The competency-based curriculum for school education was introduced in the academic year 2003-2004. The competency-based language teaching is adopted in the course book. It is need based and addresses to the needs of the students. Innovative methods are to be employed by the teachers for teaching. Using this one, the teacher has
to drill the students to achieve their best in the classroom. It is an approach and an attitude than a method as it is more student-friendly and less stressful not only for the teachers but also for the students.

In this method the acquisition of English is “less artificial, conscious and nerve-racking than getting the Latin-based rules of grammar under one’s control” (Iris Devadason, 2005). Students should handle real life situations or use the task-based approach as a natural process and acquire the language through it. Unlike traditional methods of teaching where the concentration was on developing the writing and a bit of reading skill, here the intention is to develop all the four skills. English is practiced in real-life situations and thus grammar is used with precision and gradually the language is also acquired. Language acquisition is a whole and it is not segregated into parts in this method.

The textbook that is prepared at the State level is imposed on all the schools in the state. The teachers, the headmasters and the students are curbed of their want in the textbook. The curriculum is revised only infrequently and with great difficulty because of the large number of learners who use it. This is an acute problem, which is faced at the school level. Curricular revision should be implemented based on research by experts and should be done frequently. They should take views of both the students and the teachers into consideration and evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the existing material and try
to overcome the hurdles faced by the users. The success of a curriculum depends on the preparation of suitable textbooks, teachers’ guides and other teaching and learning materials that are user friendly.

2.4.5. Textbooks Taken for Evaluation

The following textbooks and supplementary readers were taken up for evaluation.

1. **English Reader, Higher Secondary First Year, Part II English.**
2. **Supplementary English Reader, Higher Secondary First Year, Part II English.**
3. **English Reader, Higher Secondary Second Year, Part II English.**
4. **Supplementary English Reader, Higher Secondary Second Year, Part II English.**

The authors of the “English Reader, Higher Secondary First Year, Part II English” and “Supplementary English Reader, Higher Secondary First Year, Part II English” are Priscilla Josephine Sarah S., Dr.A. Joseph Dorairaj, S. Muthukrishnan, Nirmala Jairaj and K.V. Renganathan. Dr. V. Saraswathi and Dr. Noor Jehan Kother Adam have reviewed these books.

The authors of the “English Reader, Higher Secondary Second Year, Part II English” and “Supplementary English Reader, Higher Secondary Second Year, Part II English” are Dr.A. Joseph Dorairaj and
Nalini Parthiban. Priscilla Josephine Sarah S. and Dr. Premalatha Rajan have authored and reviewed these books. R. Venkata Krishnan and Prof. R. Sankara Subramanian are the reviewers of these books.

The overall reviewer of all the four books is S. Gomathinathan and the chairperson is Dr. S. Swaminathan Pillai. The Directorate of School Education on behalf of the Government of Tamilnadu has prepared these textbooks.

The following chapter will deal with the various aspects of the textbook and the supplementary reader in detailed.