TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE FITNESS OF THE HONG KONG NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL (NSS) CURRICULUM

by

Wong Pak Wing Lawrence

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Teaching English as a Second Language

Department of English
City University of Hong Kong

May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to express sincere thanks to my thesis supervisor Dr Belinda Ho for her careful mentoring. She spent endless hours giving me professional advice and reading different draft versions of this thesis. This piece of work would have never come to its existence without her input and creative inspiration. Also, I would like to thank Dr Matthew Peacock for inspiring me to research on the area of textbook evaluation. I would like to express my gratitude for his patience, guidance and inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEXTBOOK EVALUATION: A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE FITNESS OF THE HONG KONG NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL (NSS) CURRICULUM

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

Wong Pak Wing Lawrence

Department of English, City University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

It has been widely accepted that a textbook is an essential component of the EFL classroom. Evaluation of textbooks, therefore, is of utmost importance so that its pedagogical contribution to the teaching and learning process can be assured. In the context of ELT in Hong Kong, textbook evaluation is even more of an important issue given the recent implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum (NSS). Can the newly written NSS textbooks help teachers deliver the new curriculum objectives?

It seems that in the relevant literature, there is a lack of empirical studies showing how curriculum fitness can be evaluated. In addition, despite repeated emphasis on the benefits of a post-use textbook evaluation by a number of researchers (eg. Ellis 1997&1998, Tomlinson 2003, Tomlinson & Masuhara 2004), relevant empirical studies, however, seem lacking as much of the available literature is biased towards pre-use evaluations (Mukundan & Ahour 2010).

This empirical study, therefore, attempts to respond to the two research gaps mentioned above by first proposing a framework on how curriculum fitness of textbooks can be evaluated. The theoretical framework is then empirically tested by engaging in a post-use textbook evaluation with local teachers within the Hong Kong ELT environment. Results have shown that the teachers do find the proposed evaluation framework an effective tool in determining fitness with the new curriculum. However the teachers have also suggested that using the framework to engage in post-use evaluation of textbooks is a pedagogically unsound concept, which is self-contradictory in essence. Despite their criticism of the

pedagogical value of post-use evaluations, the teachers suggested that the framework is still a valuable invention, and should be used in other areas of the ELT context.

List of Acronyms

C&A Guide	Curriculum and Assessment Guide
CDC	Curriculum Development Council
Edb	The Education Bureau
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
NSS	New Secondary School Curriculum
RTL	Recommended List of Textbooks
SALL	Self-access Language Learning

List of Appendices

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Recent Introduction of the New Secondary School Curriculum

"Coursebooks are perceived by many to be the route map of any ELT programme"

(Sheldon 1988)

At the time of writing of this thesis, relevant literature about the New Secondary School (NSS) English curriculum, because of its fairly recent introduction, was scarce and not extensive.

In 1999, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) recognized that there was a great shift towards an increasingly globalised economy. This demands flexibility, openness of the mind, and the ability to think critically. Good language and communication skills were also heavily emphasized as high global mobility was in demand. In order to cope with such a constantly changing and interdependent world of the 21st century, the CDC saw that there was a need to reform the basic education curriculum (CDC 2001). The New Secondary School (NSS) Curriculum was then developed with an overall aim to prepare local students for whole-person development, equipped with life-long skills that can be used outside schools (CDC 2009). The curriculum has been in its full implementation since September 2009.

The NSS English Curriculum as summarized by Wong (2009) has the following main objectives:

- The use of learning tasks to promote "learning by doing" and to involve students in "three interrelated strands which define the general purpose of learning English." Interpersonal Strand

(for interpersonal communication), Knowledge Strand (for developing and applying knowledge), Experience Strand (for responding and giving expression to real and imaginative experience);

- The development of specific learning targets to provide a clear direction for learning;

- The need of catering to individual learner differences so as to adopt teaching and learning to different student abilities and learning styles;

- The promotion of learner independence and lifelong learning so that students can become more actively involved in constructing knowledge and skills in classroom activities and in their own time;

- The use of task-based learning as an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment;

- A greater emphasis on school-based assessment rather than one-off assessment based on public exams;

- An incorporation of an elective part of modules to allow for more creative approaches in learning English.

The introduction of the NSS curriculum brings the local ELT curriculum in line with modern ELT teaching trends, such as the use of task-based teaching and learning approaches (Wong 2009). At the classroom level, teachers are expected to take up the important role, acting as the agent delivering the curriculum objectives through appropriate teaching approaches and strategies (CDC 2007:71).

1.1.2 Overview of the Textbook Situation in Hong Kong.

Citing the work of Reynolds (1974), Fu (1975) suggested that Hong Kong was an extremely small market from the publisher's point of view, as there was a small number of the total in-school population. Most of the textbook writers did not have full familiarity with the indigenous Cantonese language as well as expertise in English language and teaching (Fu 1975). "Textbooks are apparently written in the abstract and are basically unrelated to the needs and requirements of Hong Kong learners and society" (Fu 1975:89). Yet in the Hong Kong EFL language classrooms, textbooks remain

an important teaching and learning element (Edb 2010). Reynolds (1974) suggested that the heavy reliance on textbooks indicates that local teachers are generally inadequate in their English language proficiency, as competent teachers would break away from the use of textbooks. Local secondary school English teachers tend to display a strong reliance on textbook usage. In a survey conducted by Richards, Tung & Ng (1992) with 149 local secondary school English teachers, it was reported that textbooks were one of the primary sources of teaching materials. Only 28% percent of the total respondents have claimed that they have made a significant use of self-developed teaching materials. McGrath (2006)'s study revealed a similar trend. The study involved 75 teachers of English, mainly English teachers of secondary schools, and several hundreds of secondary school students. It was found that teachers mostly think that the use of textbooks is important (McGrath, 2006). Since the learning culture in Hong Kong EFL classrooms is also primarily public-examination-driven, additionally, exam-drilling supplementary textbooks,are especially popular amongst teachers (Evans 1997).

The wide use of textbooks in the local ELT classrooms is understandable as given the fact that, "materials [textbooks] are not simply the everyday tools of the language teacher, they are an embodiment of the aims, values and methods of the particular teaching / learning situation" (Hutchinson 1987), It is therefore of utmost importance for us to evaluate newly written NSS English textbooks so as to ensure that they are not only suitable, but also capable of helping teachers to realize the pedagogical goals of the NSS curriculum.

1.2 Purpose of This Study

This study attempts to evaluate and enrich the two following areas of the literature.

1.2.1 The Lack of a Detailed Systematic Framework in Evaluating Curriculum Fitness

Firstly, it seems that in the literature much has been discussed on how to evaluate or assess the contents of a textbook in the respect of training of the 4-skills. Very few studies, however, have discussed how fitness of a textbook's content with the curriculum can be assessed. The identification of such a research gap can be well supported by the study of Mukundan & Ahour (2010) in which a total of forty-eight major published textbook evaluation frameworks, produced within the period of 1970 to 2008, were examined. It was found out that only Byrd (2001)'s framework had given priority to fitness of the textbook with the curriculum (pp.343). Subsequent in-depth examination of the work of Byrd (2001) has revealed that only one generic evaluation criteria has been established to examine such issue. A more detailed and deeper evaluation framework would be deemed necessary to investigate the issue, as curriculum fitness is a wide and sophisticated concept.

1.2.2 A Shortage of Post-Use Evaluation Empirical Studies in the Literature

Secondly, a number of researchers in the area of materials evaluation (eg. Ellis 1997&1998, Tomlinson 2003) have also stressed on the importance of post-use evaluation of a textbook, since it can provide data regarding the actual effect of the materials on the users (Tomlinson 2003, Tomlinson & Masuhara 2004). However, empirical studies in post-use evaluation appear to be limited in the literature, with many of them biased towards pre-use evaluations (Mukundan & Ahour 2010).

The recent introduction of the new curriculum has therefore provided a natural platform for a post-use textbook evaluation to emerge, because of the importance given to textbooks in the Hong Kong EFL classrooms, where a post-use evaluation can yield the most relevant data concerning the extent to which newly written NSS textbooks can assist current teachers in delivering the fundamental of the new curriculum. This study not only can help to enrich the literature by providing an empirical post-use evaluation study, but it can also help to provide a perspective as to what are the strengths and weaknesses of a current NSS textbook. The evaluation results can help to enhance the effectiveness of the use of the textbook by helping teachers to understand what areas of the textbook need further

modification, or to what extent adaptation of other new teaching materials is necessary.

In order to provide answers to the above two research gaps, this study first proposes a self-constructed evaluation framework for evaluation of curriculum fitness. The evaluation framework is then empirically examined by piloting the framework in a post-use evaluation of a current NSS textbook. Two research questions have subsequently emerged. The first research question seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the framework. Can the framework serve as a useful textbook evaluation device? The second research question aims to look into how the framework can be improved. What are the necessary changes that have to be made in order to further improve the practicability of the framework?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

At the time of writing of this thesis relevant literature about the NSS English curriculum is scarce and not extensive, because of its fairly recent introduction. While literature on the area of ELT materials development may seem to be in readily available quantity, the area of ELT textbook evaluation seems to be under-researched, with a limited supply of relevant literature (Dendrinos 1992, Sheldon 1988, Litz 2005). Literature coverage as a result is not extensive.

2.1 The Important Role of Textbooks in the EFL / ESL Classroom

A textbook can be referred to as a published book specially designed to help language learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities (Sheldon 1987). In addition to being a learning instrument, textbooks are also used as a supporting teaching instrument (O'Neil 1982, Ur 1996). The student's book usually comes with other materials such as a workbook, a teacher's book or even additional multimodal texts for reference as a textbook package (Masuhara & Tomlinson 2008). They are "designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction,

support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students"
(Mares, 2003) and foster effective and quick learning of the language (Cunningsworth 1995).

The wide spread use of textbooks in different ELT contexts requires little further explanation. It
continues to play an essential role in ELT classrooms all over the world (Dendrinos 1992, Lee 1997,
Williams 1983). The importance of textbooks in the ELT classroom is so extensive that it is almost a
universal element in ELT teaching (Hutchinson & Torres 1994) and it is crucial to any ELT program
(Litz 2005, Sheldon 1988). Research has suggested that it is extremely common to see ELT
professionals incorporating the use of textbooks for daily teaching purposes and very few of them
would not use published ELT materials at some stage of their career (Byrd 2001, Cunningsworth 1984,
Harmer 1991, Litz 2005, McDonough & Shaw 1993,).

Even though the importance of use of textbooks in ELT has been justified by many different
researchers, opinions on whether textbooks can actually help or hinder the teaching and learning
process seem to polarize. In view of this, I would like to provide also a literature review on both pros
and cons of using textbooks in EFL teaching.

2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Use of Textbooks

First and foremost, textbooks provide a readily available source of ELT materials for teachers to focus
on doing the real work of teaching, and not having their energy dispersed by preparation of teaching
materials (Edge & Wharton 1998). The way textbook chapters are designed and structured can provide
a blueprint of how lessons shall be conducted (Hutchinson & Torres 1994). Textbooks can also serve
as a tool to motivate and stimulate language learning (Allwright 1981, Lee 1997, Skierso 1991). In a
learning environment in which learners are motivated and positive about their learning environment,
the speed of language acquisition can be greatly enhanced, making language learning more effective
(Tomlinson 2008:5). Secondly, textbooks can serve as a reference point for teachers managing their

teaching progress, and also help to provide a focus for teaching (Tomlinson 2008). One of the major motivations in using textbooks in the ELT environment is that textbooks can serve as a good monitor for measuring progress of teaching and learning. Textbooks can have a similar function of a map, showing the teaching progress (McGrath 2002, O'Neil 1982, Ur 1996) and can provide for direction and ideas in how lessons can be delivered (Tomlinson 2008) .They are effective tools in terms of allowing for carefully planned and systematic presntation of the syllabus of an ELT program (Ur 1996) and can facilitate curriculum change (McGrath 2002). Thirdly, textbooks are particularly useful in providing support and security for new inexperienced teachers or teachers, who have relatively low confidence to deliver ELT lessons in a communicative way (Edge & Wharton 1998, Mares 2003, Tomlinson 2008, Ur 1996).A good textbook can be an extremely valuable ELT device, especially in situations where interesting and motivating authentic materials are difficult to compile in an organized manner (McDonough & Shaw 1993).

Students can also benefit from using textbooks in many different ways. Similar to the case of teachers, textbooks can act as a reference point for their learning process and keep track of their development (O'Neil 1982). Students can use the textbook as a tool for revision of previously taught items, and at the same time, familiarize themselves with the new items that will be taught soon. Textbooks are also one of the more economic and convenient forms of access to carefully structured packaged learning materials (O'Neil 1982, Ur 1996). According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbooks provide additional benefits to students as they are an efficient collection of materials for self-accessed learning and for knowledge consolidation. Textbooks can also potentially save learners from teacher's incompetency and deficiencies (O'Neil 1982, Litz 2005).

With the many advantages that textbooks may have as an essential tool for ELT, a number of researchers (eg. Allwright 1981, Harwood 2005, Swales 1980) have highlighted the disadvantages regarding the use of textbooks. At one extreme, the wide use of textbooks can be seen as an educational failure (Swales 1980). Harwood (2005) attempted to neutralize the situation, based on his

review of previous literature, by arguing that there are "Strong" and "Weak" versions of anti-textbook attacks (Harwood 2005:154). Nonetheless, we shall explore the rationale behind the anti-textbook voices to better understand the potential downside of using textbooks.

One of the advantages as suggested by Hutchinson et al. (1994) was that textbooks can provide a basic framework on how a lesson can be delivered. In reality, many teachers would, therefore, develop reliance on the textbook and become uncreative in teaching (Tomlinson 2008, Ur 1996) and uncritical of content and values portrayed by the textbook (McGrath 2002). Although textbooks can function as a framework for the learning and teaching process for both students and teachers (O'Neil 1982), no one textbook can effectively address individual learning styles, differences of learners, and the requirements of every classroom setting (Tomlinson 2003, Ur 1996, Williams 1983). At its worst, the teachers may become totally reliant on the textbook (Ur 1996), and not spend time preparing their lessons (Tomlinson 2008). This would ultimately lead to an adverse situation which the teacher "teaches the book" rather than teaching the language itself (McGrath 2002, Reynolds 1974). Also, in ELT contexts which constitute a strong exam-oriented culture, such as Hong Kong, textbooks are often regarded as exam practice sessions rather not a facilitation tool for successful language acquisition. (Lee 1997, Tomlinson 2008). Allwright (1981) argues that textbooks, in some situations, may affect learner involvement in the language acquisition process. He suggested that pre-packaged textbooks are inadequate to sufficiently cater for the complex dynamics of the process of language acquisition. The structure of the textbook may inhibit creativity and imagination during the learning and teaching process (Ur 1996). Teachers may even be led to believing that the activities and tasks of the textbooks are always superior to their own ideas (McGrath 2002). Also, learners may dislike the topics covered by the textbook and this may lead to association with boredom in English lessons (Lee 1997, Ur 1996). After all, language learning should be interactive and shall not be limited to the structure imposed by the textbook (Tomlinson 2010). No matter how pedagogically sound the textbook is, learners will quickly lose interest if they find the materials dull and not interesting (Cunningsworth 1995). Tomlinson (2010) points out that a big potential disadvantage of using textbooks is that only a

minority of textbook writers have actually applied language acquisition principles when writing the materials (Reynolds 1974, Tomlinson 2010). Many of them instead rely on their intuition as to what they perceive is best for language learning (Tomlinson 2008).

2.3 The Need for Textbook Evaluation

The ever increasing number of textbooks on the market makes formulating the right choice in textbooks difficult (Cunningsworth 1995, Green 1926). Textbook selection can have a massive impact on the teaching and learning process as teachers would make references to the textbooks (Cunningsworth 1995, Harmer 1991, McGrath 2002) or even design the entire EFL syllabus around it (Garinger 2002, Harmer 1991). In that sense, the quality of a textbook might be so important that it can determine the success or failure of an ELT course (Green 1926, Mukundan 2007). However, textbooks are often purchased without careful analyses (Green 1926, McGrath 2002). Frequently, a textbook selection is not based on its intrinsic pedagogical value, but of the perceived prestige of the author and or the publisher (Green 1926, McGrath 2002), or skillful marketing by the publishers (McGrath 2002). Preference is given to books printed in attractive covers or that teachers would blindly use the best-selling textbooks which are used in many other places (Green 1926, McGrath 2002, Tomlinson 2010).

A number of studies have suggested that most current global, local ELT textbooks are developed for commercial purposes but are not based on principles of language acquisitions and development recommended by scholars and educators (Tomlinson, 2003, 2008 & 2010). Financial success has become the primary goal of textbook publishing (Sheldon 1988, Litz 2005, Tomlinson 2003: 3). "Textbooks, like any other book that publishers print, are pieces of merchandise; the ultimate objective of their production is [for] commercial success" (Dendrinos 1992:35). Instead of contributing positively to student's development in the acquisition of the English language, many textbooks are in fact leading to learner's failure in acquiring the language and in the worst case, contain serious

pedagogical flaws and practical shortcomings (Litz 2005, Tomlinson 2008:3).

According to Tomlinson (2008), the cause of learning failure is twofold. The first cause of failure is that possibly motivated by the need of commercial success, publishers would have to produce according to the public demand. Textbook writing as a result is moulded according to the liking of teachers, parents and administrators with a heavy focus on teaching of linguistic items instead of creating opportunities for students to acquire the language (Tomlinson 2008). Also, teachers tend to choose textbooks that are designed to allow for minimal preparation for their classes (Dendrinos 1992, Tomlinson 2008 & 2010). The second cause of failure is that instead of focusing on how learners could actually benefit from using the textbook, textbook writers relied on their intuition and produce materials what they think would work best for their intended users (Tomlinson, 2008:7). They are biased towards perceived rather than actual needs of learners (Tomlinson, 2003:3). Though the textbook written by professional writers are usually of good quality in terms of organization, packaging and design, they tend to be lacking in qualities of being creative and imaginative (Tomlinson 2003). Litz (2005) also suggested that some more recent scholars in the area of ELT materials development expressed concerns for the cultural content of textbooks which are "inherently social and culturally/ biased" and help to perpetuate a form of "gendered" English (Banegas 2011, Litz 2005:6).

In view of the above, it is therefore very important for us to conduct EFL textbook evaluation so as to ensure ELT textbooks can effectively facilitate the attainment of our teaching objectives, and at the same time, be economically viable to teachers and students. Wrong choice of textbooks would be likely to negatively affect both teaching and learning. Financial resources would also be wasted (Mukundan 2007, Sheldon 1988).

2.4 A Review of Textbook Evaluation as a Pedagogical Process

ELT materials evaluation or more precisely textbook evaluation, "involves measuring the value or (potential value) of a set of learning materials [textbooks] by making judgments about the effect of the materials [textbook] on the people using them" (Tomlinson & Masuhara 2004). The area of ELT textbook evaluation seems to be under-researched, with a limited supply of relevant literature (Dendrinos 1992, Sheldon 1988, Litz 2005). As summarized by McGrath (2002:25) and Litz (2005:10), many researchers (eg. Cunningsworth 1995, Ur 1996) have suggested that it would be best for textbook evaluation schemes to adopt a "leveled" approach in evaluation in which a first level overview "impressionistic" evaluation should be first conducted followed by an in-depth evaluation.

The work of Cunningsworth (1995) has helped to provide a good brief summary of how a leveled evaluation can be conducted. When applying the impressionistic method, we take the literal meaning of the method by quickly looking through the textbook cover to cover, to try and get an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the book (Cunningsworth 1995:1). The overview can provide formation of a quick opinion as to the design and structure of the textbook, such as how attractive the cover is, what ancillary materials come with the textbook, and how the textbook is sequenced. Textbooks found unsuitable for use would have been screened out after this process (McGrath 2002, McDonough & Shaw 1993). An in-depth evaluation will be undertaken subsequently to provide a detailed evaluation of specific items in each textbook on areas such as how the exercises can cater for the syllabus and learners' needs (Cunningsworth 1995, McDonough & Shaw 1993). An example of an in-depth evaluation would be to select one or two chapters and look at the balance of skills and activities contained in each unit (Cunningsworth 1995:2).

Although different labels have been used by different theorists referring to the "leveled" approach of evaluation, for example the "CATALYST" approach of Grant (1987), "First glance and Arm-chair evaluation" of McGrath (2002), "Internal and External evaluation" of McDonough & Shaw (1993) and

"General and Specific evaluation" of Ur (1996). In essence, they are all stressing the importance of a combination of impressionistic and in-depth evaluation of a textbook in order to help bring about a quality evaluation process.

A number of researchers (eg. Daoud & Celce-Murcia 1979, Ellis 1997, Grant 1987, Mukudan 2007) have also expressed different opinions regarding when a textbook evaluation should take place. There are generally three different stages at which a textbook can be evaluated: pre-use, whilst-in-use and after-use. As suggested by McGrath (2002), each stage of evaluation bears its own significance. Pre-use evaluations can facilitate the textbook selection process by gaining an impression as to the potential educational value of the textbook (Tomlinson 2003:23). It is especially a quick and useful way for textbook selection if done by experienced teachers (Cunningsworth 1995). Whilst-in-use evaluations can help to examine the suitability of the textbook while using them or by observing how it is actually being used (Mukundan 2007, Tomlinson 2003:24). Lastly, post-use evaluations can help to assess comprehensively the short and long term implications of continued use of the textbook (McGrath 2002, Tomlinson 2003). Harmer (2001:301) has provided further clarification by explaining that during the pre-use stage, we are to use impressionistic evaluation methods to form a judgment on how well the textbook will perform in class by "assessing" a textbook, while we would try to determine how well a book has performed by "evaluating" a textbook during the whilst-in-use and post-use stages. In its most ideal form, it is suggested that textbook evaluation shall be a "cyclical" process. The pedagogical values and suitability of the textbook should be continuously evaluated in all of the above three stages of usage (Allwright 1981, McGrath 2002, Mukundan 2007).

We should all be reminded that regardless of the framework applied to evaluate a textbook, and also regardless of at which stage the textbook is evaluated, the process of textbook selection and evaluation ultimately is a subjective practice (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski 2008, Green 1926, Sheldon 1988). We shall point out and stress that however, textbook evaluation remains an important process, since through evaluating a textbook, teachers can know the fundamental merits and drawbacks of the

textbook itself, thereby being able to select the most appropriate textbooks for the learners (Green 1926, Harmer 1991, McDonough & Shaw 1993, Mukundan 2007). After all, textbooks have a very important role to play in the EFL classroom and teachers must equip themselves with knowledge in conducting textbook evaluations (Williams 1983).

2.5 The Importance of Conducting Post-Use Textbook Evaluation

Post-use evaluation of a textbook is the least administered type of evaluation (Ellis 1998, Tomlinson 2003) to an extreme that most teachers are even unaware of such an evaluation scheme (Mukundan 2007). There is very little literature about how such an evaluation can be conducted (Ellis 1997).

Post-use textbook evaluation does not seem to enjoy similar prominence in textbook evaluation literature (Ellis 1997 & 1998, Litz 2005, McGrath 2002). Most of the literature pays heavy emphasis on pre-use evaluation. In fact, there is a limited amount of literature available for further investigation of this topic (Ellis 1998:221).

Ellis (1997 & 1998), McGrath (2002) and Harmer (2001) suggest that the major reason for such a bias is that post-use evaluations are difficult to carry out. Ellis (1998) provides a detailed explanation of the problem. First, "Teachers see no need for a systematic and principled post-programme evaluation". (Ellis 1998:221). The main reason for this is that having used the textbook for a prolonged period, teachers would develop a tendency to think that they would intuitively know whether a textbook works or not as they have been using it continuously over a period of time. Also, during the evaluation process, most of the time teachers would be invited to provide feedback, which would then be used as empirical data for evaluation. Many teachers would feel "daunted" by the sheer amount of time and effort one would have to put in.

Despite the above mentioned hurdles, Tomlinson (2003) suggests that post-use evaluation is probably

the most valuable type of evaluation as it can measure both short and long term effects of the use of the textbook. Ellis echoes this view and recommended that post-use evaluations are highly desirable (Ellis 1998:222). Moreover the value of post-use evaluations has actually been recognized by a number of researchers advocating the use of pre-use evaluation scheme. Daoud & Celce-Murcia (1979), Grant (1987), Harmer (2001) and Skierso (1991) for example, recommend that the same pre-use evaluation scheme, most of the time a checklist, can be used again for post-use evaluation so as to provide in-depth conclusive information regarding the suitability of the textbook. "A re-evaluation of the selected text, perhaps using the identical checklist both times, would help the teacher to decide whether to continue using the adopted text or to look for a new one" (Skierso 1991: 441). Particularly concerned with the importance and desirability of post-use evaluation, Sheldon (1988) has also suggested that "the success or failure of a textbook can be determined during its use and after use". Daoud & Celce-Murcia (1979) have offered very similar proposition suggesting that "the ultimate evaluation of a text [should] come with actual classroom use." It would indeed be most useful if the textbook is evaluated after its use.

2.6 The Use of a Checklist as an Evaluation Tool

Textbook evaluation seems to be an under researched area in ELT with a limited supply of relevant literature. A large number of textbook evaluation framework researchers, such as Byrd (2001), Cunningsworth (1979, 1984 & 1995), Daoud & Celce-Murcia (1979), Ellis (1997), Harmer (1991,2001), McDonough & Shaw (2003), Sheldon (1988), Skierso (1991), Tomlinson (2003, 2008), Ur (1996), Williams (1983), have used the checklist based approach in helping teachers evaluate ELT textbooks, though the literature coverage is not extensive (Sheldon, 1988. Litz, 2005). One major advantage of using the checklist approach is that it can provide a very economic and systematic way to ensure all relevant items are considered for evaluation (Cunningsworth 1995, McGrath 2002). A well-designed checklist should contain evaluation criteria that are clear and concise. Evaluation items can also be customized according to one's needs so as to provide flexibility during the evaluation

process (Mukundan & Ahour 2010).

A number of researchers such as Sheldon (1988), Harmer (1991), Skierso (1991), Cunningsworth (1995) have proposed the use of checklist or checklist like evaluation forms to see how textbook materials can match up with student needs. Harmer (1991) suggested that the use of evaluation forms would be useful to see whether it is appropriate for students. Following a quick impressionistic evaluation, detailed checklists can be constructed to perform in-depth evaluation on a textbook, to enable examination of the appropriateness of the textbook in serving demands of the syllabus and educational needs of the students (Cunningsworth, 1995). The checklist is a good channel to make different opinions of evaluators explicit. When opinions are explicitly shown on the checklist, it can allow for easy comparison between different sets of textbook materials, and thereby facilitate decision making (McGrath 2002:27).

While most of the more popular checklists cater to pre-use evaluation (Ellis 1997, Mukundan 2007) the same checklist can actually be used for post-use evaluation to measure the actual outcome of the use of the textbooks, which would help to arrive at a more reliable and comprehensive evaluation result (Daoud & Celce-Murcia 1979, Ellis 1998, Skierso 1991).

In conclusion, the checklist is a very economical way for textbook evaluation. It can provide a systematic way to ensure all relevant items are considered (Cunningsworth 1995, McGrath 2002). It is also a convenient and flexible evaluation tool as evaluators have the total freedom to add or drop different evaluation items according to individual and situational needs.

2.7 The Construction of a Localized Checklist Based on the NSS Curriculum

There is no universal checklist for ELT textbook evaluation because of many real life variables affecting the teaching and learning process. Teachers should identify their own teaching needs and

develop different evaluation criteria for different contexts (Cunningsworth, 1995:2, Mukundan 2007). It is therefore necessary to make modification to an existing checklist, or to draw up an entirely new checklist to accommodate their individual needs as "global lists of criteria can never really apply in most local environments, without considerable modification" (Sheldon 1988).

Literature on textbook evaluation is a good source to look at for readily available checklists. However many of these "off-the-shelves" checklists do have inherent deficiencies (McGrath 2002, Swales 1980), making it seem more justifiable in using a self-constructed checklist. Checklists readily available from literature have a principal problem of encouraging users to make quick impressionistic judgments of a textbook. Many of the evaluation criteria contain implicit assumptions which tend to lead evaluators into believing how an ideal textbook should look like (Littlejohn 1998). Also, the criteria can either be unspecific and too general , or that they are too abstract and complex, making it very difficult to apply to actual evaluation (McGrath 2002, Sheldon 1988). In Skierso (1991)'s checklist for example, Mukundan (2007) suggests that some evaluation criteria would very likely be an unrealistic and is very difficult to respond to, such as: *To what extent are new structures controlled to be presented and explained before they appear in drills, dialogues or reading material.*. Littlejohn (1998) has also suggested that using these "off-the-shelf checklist" for actual textbook evaluation, leaves users compelled to make an impressionistic judgment and arrive at an "unguided" evaluation result. McGrath (2002) also agrees with Littlejohn (1998) and suggests that many of the above suggested frameworks seemed to have reached consensus in practical considerations of the use of a textbook (eg. content coverage, design layout and organization). Instead, what is important for textbook evaluation frameworks is to help its users to arrive at their own conclusion but not to decide for them on what are the desirable qualities of a textbook (Littlejohn 1998).

In the light of the above, instead of relying on "off-the-shelves" checklists, it is important for evaluators to develop their own evaluation criteria so as to effectively assess the suitability of a textbook with a particular group of learners (McGrath 2002, Tomlinson 2003). When evaluating a

textbook, the first area that should be assessed is its fitness with the curriculum (Byrd 2001:416). This is because the selection and preparation of teaching materials is an integral part of the implementation of a curriculum (Richards 2001). It is important to evaluate the textbook's fitness with the curriculum as textbooks can directly affect the teaching and learning process which in turn, affects classroom instruction (Johnson 1989). Richards, citing the work of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), has also stressed the importance of assessing to what extent the material matches the stated learning objectives. While it can be argued that curriculum objectives are most of the time utopian in nature (Johnson 1989) and that they may not always be clear and specific (Brown 1995), it is still important for material writers to at least demonstrate formally how curriculum specifications have been met (Johnson 1989:7).

The curriculum can be generally defined as specific skills and knowledge to be delivered to students (Cheng 1994). More specifically, it is a plan for the continued process of teaching and learning which serves as a blueprint for how instructional acts of the teaching and learning process are to be conducted (Pratt 1994). As summarized by Print (1993:64), Tyler (1949) suggested that the development of curriculum is a systematic and logical process, which can provide answers to four fundamental questions regarding the administration of the teaching and learning process in the following sequential order. 1) What educational purposes should be attained? 2) What education experiences are likely to attain these objectives? 3) How can these educational experiences be organized effectively? 4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

According to Tyler (1949), curriculum developers (usually personnel from the relevant government authorities), in order to facilitate an efficient and effective teaching and learning process when planning the curriculum, would need to first consider and decide what are the objectives and what the ELT program wants to achieve. This part of the curriculum, which illustrates the main intention and theoretical aspects of the ELT program, can be referred to as "the Intended Curriculum" (Morris & Adamson 2010). In the case of Hong Kong, the Intended Curriculum would be the NSS English

Language Curriculum & Assessment Guide issued by the Curriculum Development Council in 2007 (Morris & Adamson 2010).

One of the roles of the teacher, in the local language classroom, is to deliver the curriculum (CDC 2007:71). In order to determine the effectiveness of curriculum implementation at the classroom level, one should look at how the teaching process is helping learners gain the appropriate learning experience (Cheng & Tsui 2000). Print (1993) elaborating on the work of Tyler (1949), suggests that the Intended Curriculum cannot be realized until its philosophies and recommended approaches are implemented by teachers at the classroom level through instruction. Therefore, after having decided on the general program philosophy, the next logical step will be to plan for the appropriate use of instructional strategies so that the program philosophies can be realized at the classroom level.

A good language program should have relevant instruction which teaches what it claims to be offering (Brown 1995). According to Sowell (1996) the term "Instruction" is a term that describes the process of how the curriculum is delivered to a particular group of students. It describes how the teacher, who acts as an agent between policy makers and the learners, can use various different teaching strategies and required resources to realize the stated learning objectives set by the policy makers by helping students reach the intended learning outcomes. Curriculum and instruction, therefore, as according to Sowell (1996), are systematically related in which instructional strategies are used to realize the theoretical aspects of the Intended curriculum.

In view of the above, we can see that the success of curriculum implementation is initiated at the classroom level through instruction. As a result, teachers are viewed as being primarily responsible for implementation of curriculum change and are central to the whole reform and implementation process (Man 2000, Marsh & Willis 2003:346, Morris & Adamson 2010). The urgency to evaluate ELT textbooks written for the new curriculum on its pedagogical fitness with the recommended instructional strategies has therefore become an urgent concern as many local English teachers have

displayed heavy reliance on textbooks in their daily teaching. The degree of reliance is so strong that Reynolds (1974:41) suggests that "the textbook is taught, but not the students."

One possible way to evaluate curriculum fitness of textbooks is to develop tailor-made evaluation criteria, based on the recommended approaches of the instructional component of the curriculum, which are illustrated in chapter four of the C&A guide. By using chapter four of the C&A as the primary pedagogical reference, different stipulated instructional strategies can be transferred to a checklist. The checklist will then be used as the evaluation device allowing evaluators to express their opinion on to what extent, a particular NSS textbook's pedagogical fitness matches with the recommended instructional strategies. It thus can immediately provide teachers with a basis for evaluating the role of the textbook. As suggested by Richards (2001) "evaluation, however, can only be done by considering something in relation to its purpose". If the evaluation results show that the textbook has minimal fitness with the curriculum, the teacher will be prompted to decide whether there is a need for adaptation of new materials, or should he/she simply stop using the textbook and start to look for new alternatives.

Using the instructional part of the curriculum as the primary pedagogical reference can also lead to a principled evaluation process. The curriculum can act as a compass, guiding the direction and help evaluators to understand the important principles evaluation criteria should seek to assess. As such, a principled evaluation can, therefore, help to lower the possibility that the evaluation is ad hoc and also help to minimize the number of mistakes made by the evaluator (Tomlinson 2003:22). In addition, if the evaluation is concentrated with a particular focus, it would make the whole process of textbook evaluation easier and more practical. (Richards 2001:259). Moreover, as suggested by Skierso (1991), "before one even begins the process of evaluating textbooks or just looking for potentially appropriate texts, one needs to establish a basis of comparison". One major advantage of using the curriculum as a guiding principle is that the official curriculum can serve as a basis for comparison. When different curriculum objectives are transformed into different evaluation criteria, a logical evaluation framework

can be realized and can help to guide teachers through the evaluation process, highlighting important areas, to which specific attention has to be paid. Teachers can thereby logically assess the pedagogical value of a textbook by making a comparison between the approaches of the textbook to the approaches suggested by the official curriculum.

Another advantage of linking evaluation criteria to the contents of the official curriculum is that one can also avoid the problem of, as suggested by Swales (1980:16), the list of criteria to be evaluated growing forever, making the whole evaluation process self-defeating, as it would be difficult to conclude the evaluation.

In sum, as textbooks are regarded as an indispensable tool in the local ELT language classroom, in addition to the general criteria of what attributes a textbook should possess, textbooks ultimately need to be evaluated on the basis of its contribution and pedagogical value (Littlejohn 1998, Sheldon 1988). By using a self-constructed contextualized checklist for textbook evaluation, different local variations and fitnesses to the pedagogical goal of the curriculum therefore could be reasonably assured.

2.8 A Review of Previous Research Studies

As mentioned in earlier sections, one of the major research focuses of this study is to enrich the literature by carrying out an empirical post-use evaluation study of a textbook, since literature in this area seems lacking. As a result, only relevant previous research studies related to post-use evaluation are reviewed. The small amount of readily available literature in the area of post-use evaluation is expected, since post-use evaluations are generally more difficult to carry out (Ellis 1997 & 1998, Harmer 2001, McGrath 2002, Tomlinson 2003).

Litz (2005)'s study evaluated a university level textbook used in one of the language courses at a university in South Korea. A total of eight university instructors teaching that particular language

course and five hundred students had been surveyed. The study adopted a post-use evaluation approach focusing on how the textbook can meet student's and teacher's needs. "[This] research project needed to be initiated in order to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of this book towards this important component of the university language program". Questionnaires were sent to both students and teachers to survey their post-use experience on their perceived pedagogical value of the content of the textbook and also practical considerations such as layout and design. A student learning needs analysis had also been conducted as the researcher felt that such analysis can help course designers to ensure that the teaching objectives of the language course are aligned with student needs.

Al-Yousef (2007)'s master thesis evaluated secondary level third grade intermediate English textbooks used in Saudi Arabia. The study used the checklist-method for evaluation which, based on the work of Cunningsworth (1995), was a modified checklist suitable for the local environment. The checklist which was termed by the author "Textbook Evaluation Tool" or simply "TET" was then sent to a group of one hundred and eighty four research participants consisted of teachers and students as a questionnaires for a post-use evaluation of the textbook. Quantitative methods were applied to analyze the evaluation results. Two unstructured interviews were also conducted with two administrators in the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education to provide supporting data to the evaluation findings.

These studies were designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the overall pedagogical value of the textbook content. Using different specifically designed post-use textbook evaluation devices, the researchers were able to reveal some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the content of different textbooks. While the use of post-use evaluation can yield the most valuable type of evaluation data (Ellis 1998, Tomlinson 2003), these studies are not without their limitations.

One of the major limitations of these studies is that little light has been shed upon how to evaluate a textbook's pedagogical fitness with the official curriculum. After all, as suggested by a number of

researchers (eg Byrd 2001, Richards 2001), we shall check first the pedagogical fitness of the textbook with the curriculum. Litz (2005) has minimal coverage investigating such an area. Only one question (no.37) in the teacher's questionnaire (Litz 2005: 45) was designed to investigate the pedagogical fitness of the textbook with the curriculum. Al-Yousef (2007)'s study has specifically dedicated one research question to investigate the fitness of the design of the textbook in relation to the national curriculum (Al-Yousef 2007:5). However, the checklist used in the study (pg 120) did not contain any evaluation items to evaluate this. Also to a certain extent, even though the researcher has answered the research question by providing an analysis in the Result section, the researcher did not indicate what data source the analysis was based on to arrive at the conclusion. Is it based on evaluation responses gathered from the sample of one hundred eighty four participants using the modified checklist? Is it based on interview data? Or is it only based on his/her personal opinion? Given that the modified checklist did not contain any evaluation items, concerning evaluation of curriculum fitness, it is highly possible that the research question has not been adequately answered.

Another limitation is that these studies would be deemed highly localized as it is only evaluating suitability of textbooks used in a particular local EFL language program. As suggested by McGrath (2002) and Skierso (1991), teachers should develop their own evaluation schemes suitable to their local environments, evaluation schemes used in these studies may not be applicable to the situation here in Hong Kong.

Another important issue is that assuming we have checked and can conclude that the textbook does have an acceptable level of fitness with the curriculum, it would be logical to proceed next to evaluating the content of the textbook. However, at this stage of the evaluation, one may ponder how the pedagogical validity of the content can be determined? Tomlinson (2003:51) suggest that evaluators can make reference to findings from the most relevant and up-to-date Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research studies to help validate the content design of textbooks. However, Tomlinson (2003) has also warned that SLA research studies can be far from conclusive and can

stimulate disagreements. Pursuant to this point of view, a high level of knowledge in the area of SLA research is therefore demanded from the evaluators, although, it is difficult to measure the level of SLA knowledge of the researchers. It is therefore possible that SLA research referred to in these studies may not be the most appropriate. For such reason, this study has opted not to evaluate the content of the textbook based on SLA research studies. This study will focus instead on evaluating the content of the textbook in terms of its fitness with the curriculum.

To summarize, it seems that few studies have touched on how a post-use evaluation can be conducted (Ellis 1997). Even though the previous post-use evaluation studies were able to discover the strength and weaknesses of the contents of the textbook, the important question of textbook's fitness with the curriculum seems to have remained unanswered. Indeed minimal research has been done to show how the fitness of a textbook with a particular ELT curriculum can be evaluated.

2.9 Research Questions

Many published checklists contain a large number of unspecific generic questions (McGrath 2002). In some cases, the questions can be very difficult to answer making the evaluation process self-defeating (McGrath 2002, Mukundan 2007). The construction of a tailor-made evaluation scheme would certainly be deemed necessary (McGrath 2002, Skierso 1991). This study, therefore, came into its existence by suggesting an evaluation framework, based on which a self-constructed checklist tailor-made to the ELT teaching and learning situation in Hong Kong is produced. The focus of the evaluation framework is to attempt to provide a suggestive framework as to how a textbook's fitness with the curriculum can be evaluated in detail using the checklist approach. Such an evaluation framework can provide answers to two research questions:

(1) How well does the framework function as an evaluation device?
(2) How can the evaluation framework be further improved?

By answering the two research questions above, this study can help to fill and enrich the two following research gaps in the literature.

(1)   The lack of empirical studies addressing how curriculum fitness of a textbook can be evaluated.

(2)   The shortage in the number of empirical post-use textbook evaluation studies.

3   METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the first research question, it is important to first ensure the pedagogical validity and the practical applicability of the evaluation framework. The checklist is, therefore, first piloted with two current in-service NSS English teachers. Such trialing of the self-constructed checklist is very important so as to "ensure that the criteria are sufficient, answerable, reliable and useful" (Tomlinson 2003:32). Empirical data are then collected by using the self-constructed localized checklist as the evaluation instrument to conduct a post-use evaluation on a NSS textbook used by the two teachers. Two separate structured interviews were then conducted with the teachers to collect qualitative data to: 1) obtain verbal explanation and further elaboration of the evaluation results to answer research question number one; and 2) to invite teachers' comments regarding the construction of the self-constructed checklist so as to answer the second research question.

3.1 Subjects and Data Collection

3.1.1 The Target Textbook under Evaluation

The target textbook under evaluation is "Theme Book" of the NSS ELECT series published by Pearson Longman. The ELECT series is a collection of textbooks designed for the NSS curriculum. Similar to the structure of the curriculum, the ELECT series textbooks are divided into sub-series

catering to the "core" and "elective" part of the curriculum. There is also a sub-series of textbooks named "Skills Book". These are practice books containing a large amount of exercises and practices for the training of the 4-skills.

The Theme book is one of the textbooks in the series specially designed for teaching the "core" part of the curriculum.

3.1.2 The Teachers

Two current in-service NSS English language subject coordinators (subject A and B) from a Band 1 local secondary school are invited to participate in this study. The two subjects were chosen as convenient samples because their school is currently using the target textbook for teaching the NSS curriculum.

Each of the subjects has a total of six years of experience in teaching the English language subject at local secondary schools, where the two most recent years of experience involved teaching of the NSS curriculum. The subjects are qualified teachers having majored in English in both their undergraduate and diploma of education studies. Subject B has also attained master level studies holding a master degree in education majoring in English language teaching. They are both currently involved in teaching form four and form five NSS English classes.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Empirical qualitative data are collected from: 1) evaluation results from post-use evaluation of the target textbook using a self-constructed checklist and 2) Interview data from the interview sessions conducted subsequently after the evaluation. They are the primary data sources used as reference for the analysis.

A checklist adapted to the local curriculum needs is first constructed and is subsequently used for a post-use evaluation of the target textbook. The checklist (see Appendix 1) was constructed on the basis of chapter four of the C&A guide (2007:73-98), which provides the recommended approaches for each of the target teaching and learning objectives. Since the function of the guide is supposed to give directions and instructions and therefore it is necessary to, for the purpose of evaluation, to rewrite the instructions into statements so that the subjects can express their opinions on the five point Likert-scale. The wordings and terminologies are strictly referenced and followed during the transformation process so as to preserve the originality of the C&A guide.

The target textbook is an Edb recommended textbook implying that it has strictly followed the recommended approaches of the NSS curriculum, a high frequency of "strongly agree" to "agree" evaluation responses are therefore expected. The author feels that while it is important for a textbook to be written according to the stated curriculum, given the essential role textbooks play in the EFL classroom, it is more important for the textbook to demonstrate congruency with the instructional objectives of the curriculum so as to make sure that the new curriculum is delivered in the intended way.

Having completed the evaluation, the subjects were both subsequently interviewed. To answer the first research question, the subjects were asked to elaborate on their respective evaluation results and also to provide comments and recommendations as to what extent it can help teachers to deliver the recommended approaches of the new curriculum.

To answer the second research questions, a different set of questions were asked in the interview. The questions attempted to elicit the teachers' perception as to how the checklist can be improved. The teachers were encouraged to share the problems and difficulties while using the checklist.

The interviews were structured face-to-face interviews at the school of the subjects where they had the easiest access to the target textbook they were evaluating. Each of the subjects was interviewed respectively at a different time, with each session lasting for about two hours. The interviews were tape recorded and supplemented with extensive notes taken by the author during the interviews.

Prior to the interview, the subjects were given time to complete the evaluation using the self-constructed checklist. The main reason for such planning was to allow time for a deeper reflection on the experience of using the target textbook.

The interview questions were primarily targeted to seek for elaboration on the choices made in the checklist and also invite comments and recommendations regarding the construct of the checklist. Other questions which were deemed relevant and appropriate were also asked during the interview. Interview questions were adopted and modified from the following sources: Cooker (2008), Cunningsworth (1979, 1984 & 1995), Ellis (1997 & 1998), Fredriksson & Olsson (2006), McGrath (2002) and Tomlinson (1998 & 2003).

Results are summarized, presented and analyzed in a two–level (twin-level?) analysis. The first level is the presentation of "consensus opinions" (see Appendix 2) which are evaluation items to which the subjects have given the same opinion (eg both agreed or both disagreed). The results in this section are presented in three different sub-categories: 1) Consensus agreement 2) Consensus neutral opinion and 3) Consensus disagreement. Data in this section are most valuable as we can see the obvious strengths and weaknesses of the textbook from the teacher's perspective..

The second level of analysis is the presentation of "differentiated opinions" (see Appendix 3) which the two subjects gave through different responses on the same evaluation criteria. There are two types of differentiated opinions. The first type belongs to responses to which one of the subjects remained neutral and the other expressed either agreement or disagreement. Subjects are interpreted as having

shown "general agreement" when results over a certain evaluation criteria displayed "one agree / strongly agree and one neutral". The same logic applies to the interpretation of responses which showed "general disagreement". Data at this level of analysis are also very important as we can see what the potential strength and weaknesses of the textbook.

The second type of differentiated opinions are opposing responses given by the subjects (eg. one agree, one disagree). Analysis of this type of responses can help to elicit the grey areas in which further fine-tuning of the textbook content are needed. When these issues are addressed, the overall quality of the textbook can be ensured.

Owing to the scope of this study, it should be noted that: 1) consensus neutral opinions and 2) differentiated opinions – opposing responses will not be discussed due to the small sample size used in this study. It would deem necessary to increase the scale of this study in order to yield relatively more conclusive explanations regarding the matter. Results of this kind however can serve another purpose of being a good starting point for further studies in the future.

4 RESULTS

This section aims at providing an in-depth interpretation of the results as to how the collected data can help to answer the two research questions in this study. Evaluation results gathered from the piloting of the checklist, and also the feedback gathered from the subjects in the two interviews serve as the major source of data for answering the research questions. Data relevant to each of the two research questions are grouped and presented using the above mentioned two-level analysis for clarity (see Appendix 2 & 3).

The results are presented in two parts. The first part summarizes the evaluation result gathered from piloting of the self-constructed checklist supplemented by the evaluation feedbacks gathered during

the interviews. The second part presents the relevant interview data to provide detailed explanation as to how the self-constructed checklist can be improved, as suggested by the teachers.

Following the approach of two-level analysis, data are summarized and interpreted under two subsections of: 1) strengths and weaknesses and 2) areas for improvement. On the one hand, results having demonstrated a pattern of consensus agreement and disagreement can be interpreted as the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook. On the other hand, results having demonstrated a generally agreed or disagreed pattern can therefore be recognized as indicators of different areas within the textbook that are subject to further improvement.

4.1 Textbook Evaluation Results

4.1.1 Strengths:

4.1.1.1 User Friendly and Well Resourced

The textbook Longman ELECT series: "Theme Book" is one of the NSS English textbooks available in the market. The teachers have first noted that the textbook is well designed in terms of general practical functionality, in that it is flexible and easy to use. A good amount of free supplementary teaching materials such as CD-Roms and Online-language practice facilities are also supplied along with the textbook as a package. The textbook is also published by a highly reputable international publisher Pearson Longman, so the quality of the textbook to a certain extent can be assured.

4.1.1.2 Encouraging the Use of the Task-Based Approach in Teaching and Learning

The teachers suggested that the textbook is very effective in meeting the curriculum initiative of using a task-based teaching and learning approach. In relation to the question of "what is a task?", the C&A

guide has listed the five following features in relation to what a task should constitute:

- The tasks have a purpose;

- The tasks have a context from which the purpose for using language emerges;

- The tasks can involve learners in a mode of thinking and doing;

- The tasks are purposeful activities in which the carrying out of a task should lead towards a product;

- The tasks require the learners to draw upon their framework of knowledge and skills and should also enable them to strengthen or extend this.

(CDC 2007:75)

Both subjects agree that task activities provided in the textbook can generally meet the first three criteria. Regarding the final two criteria however, the subjects provided different opinions and failed to reach a consensus opinion. The differences in their opinions will be further illustrated in a following section.

In relation to the design of tasks, the teachers agree that the tasks can generally satisfy the qualities of what a task shall constitute as stated by the curriculum. The tasks are generally related to the context of the teaching text and are systematically organized into different themes. When using the theme-based approach, students generally find that the learning of vocabularies easier. This is because different vocabularies are grouped into different themes. The teachers suggest that such a clear categorization has made vocabulary learning much easier for students.

The teachers also find that the tasks, in general, are flexible to use. They are also provided with clear and easy-to-understand instructions and examples for both teachers and students. The different tasks for training can provide students with an acceptable range of exercises for the 4-skills. They all have a clear purpose, context and can engage learners to think. There is generally a good balance of pre, while

30

and post learning tasks and are effective in engaging learners into active class participation. Writing activities, for example, are designed according to the process approach prescribed by the curriculum. The tasks and activities can help students to elicit different linguistic features of different text types. Clear instructions are provided to assist students to master different skills for each of the writing processes. The purpose of writing and the target audience are all clearly specified in the task.

4.1.1.3 Promotion of Independent and Creative Language Learning

The textbook is also effective in satisfying the curriculum requirement of helping learners to become autonomous by providing self-assessment activities towards the end of each of the textbook chapters. Suggestive answers, skills and progress checklists are provided in those sections, in order that students can monitor their own learning progress.

The task activities can also encourage creative language use by providing plenty of opportunities for students to give their own ideas, by including a large number of open-ended questions, and can effectively arouse interest in learning. The teachers suggest that the tasks and exercises can help to stimulate learner's creativity as there are no standard answers. While concerns have been voiced regarding language abilities of the weaker students, the coverage and progression of the task activities are still considered appropriate.

The teachers suggested that the promotion of independent and creative language learning skills is in evidence particularly in the writing tasks. To help students to develop independent learning skills, the textbook provides "mind-maps" and self-evaluation checklists for students to develop writing ideas and also to assess their own learning progress. Students are also given the freedom to use language imaginatively.. For example, they can choose how they are going to respond to a complaint when asking to write a letter of reply to a complaint letter. The subjects all agreed that it is good that the textbook did not limit students to produce one type of "model answers" and has given room for

creative thinking.

4.1.1.4 A Good Selection of Authentic Texts of Different Topics and Genre

A wide selection of authentic reading text is also a major strength of the textbook. The authentic texts can effectively expose learners to appropriate language use and style in different real life contexts. Unit 2 "Communication in the workplace" is a good example of introducing language usage styles in the workplace. The electronic version of the textbook (the "E-Book"), which is only available to the teachers, can especially help teachers to stimulate learning interest, as students were fascinated by the graphics and the embedded video-clips. They do find the texts generally useful in helping learners to learn authentic real life English as the texts do contain colloquial "informal" language. The texts are also able to explain a topic from various different angles to stimulate learner's thinking. The teachers also added that as the book is a textbook, it is highly unlikely that students would like it. Still, the teachers suggested that based on their observations, students do generally find the themes and texts interesting. The texts are also effective in helping to raise the students' awareness on global issues such as "animal conservation" and "global warming". Subject A has pointed out that the students are fascinated by the embedded multimedia contents of the E-book. In one of the teaching texts, about the hunting of Bear bile, the teachers were surprised to see that having watched one of the embedded videos, the students were sympathetic to the Bears, and the cruel treatment they had to endure.

The subjects do think that the listening texts are also very authentic as they have strong relevance with a various number of real life contexts. For example, students found one of the listening texts about interviewing students of a fashion school highly interesting. The accompanying E-book also provided supplementary video and voice documentaries of the topics covered in the textbook, and that can let students listen to how spoken texts are used in real life.

4.1.1.5 A Good Balance between Language Arts and Non-Language Arts Materials

The teachers suggested that the textbook contains a fine balance of reading texts between language arts and non-language arts materials. With reference to the C&A guide, teachers are encouraged to use different imaginative texts for the teaching of Language Arts. The term "Imaginative text" has been frequently used throughout the C&A guide. Although there is no formal definition of what an imaginative text is, the guide suggested that texts such as poems, novels, short stories, dramas, films, advertisements are good examples of imaginative texts (CDC 2007:87). The teachers are generally happy with the choice of imaginative texts which include poems, songs and film reviews. They have also suggested that the texts are able to arouse the student's interest in learning.

One subject suggested that the imaginative texts can help to develop student's critical thinking skills and also their creativity by including many open-ended questions in the task activities. The density and pace of the language are also appropriate to the learners.

4.1.1.6 Well Designed Integrated Skills and Reading Tasks

As highlighted earlier, one of the major strengths of this textbook is the availability of a wide variety of authentic texts. The publisher was able to leverage on this area of strength and has produced integrated skills practices of the same quality. The integrated skills practices are well designed. It requires students to listen, read and then discuss about different real world issues. The contexts and situations are also authentic enough as the tasks resemble real world situations, such as conducting an interview, listening to complaints, and writing of memos or complaint letters.

The teachers suggested that the best part of the textbook is its Reading tasks. The tasks can provide a good mix of activities during the pre, while and post reading stages. Subject B has also noted that pre-reading tasks are especially useful as they can help students to develop effective skimming skills.

The textbook is also generally effective in catering for learning diversity in reading tasks. For example in reading comprehension questions, Subject A has praised the publishers because different sets of questions divided into different levels are provided in the teacher's manual to cater to the needs of the stronger and weaker students. There are also guidelines giving ideas to teachers about how they can check student's understanding of the texts.

4.1.1.7 Use of Technology Facilitating Language Learning

The teachers suggested that the publisher has done a good job in this area. The suggestive multimedia resources provided along with the textbook are generally of good quality and can facilitate the use of technology in language teaching. The teachers particularly find the accompanying CD-Rom, which contained the electronic version of the textbook, useful. Many of the students are fascinated by the different embedded videos and sound tracks. The teachers suggested that the embedded videos are especially useful in helping students build up understanding and familiarity with a reading text.

4.1.2 Weaknesses

The textbook is not without its limitations however. The research data suggested that there are three major weaknesses in the textbook. The teachers have suggested that if the textbook is not used in conjunction with supplementary materials, the textbook is highly unlikely to facilitate teachers to deliver the C&A guide's recommended approaches, since the textbook 1) has failed to provide a sufficient amount of "language input"; 2) lacks an orientation with public-examination requirements; and 3) contains pedagogical coverage that is only on the "surface level". The teachers have repeatedly stressed that textbook publishing ultimately is a commercial activity. These weaknesses can be regarded as "manufactured weakness". They are the products of the publisher's marketing strategy deliberately created to induce the need of purchasing another sub-series of supplementary textbooks

within the same ELECT series.

4.1.2.1 The "lack of language input"

"Language input" is referred by the teachers as the necessary language knowledge and guidance needed to be provided to students in order to achieve the intended learning objectives. An insufficient amount of language input during the pre, while and post teaching and learning may deem detrimental to the students capability of reaching the intended learning goals.

The teachers suggested while the integrated skills tasks are well designed, there is a general feeling that there should be more language inputs provided in the student's book. The teachers have suggested that listening tasks, to a certain extent, is least affected by this problem as they are designed to test the student's listening comprehension ability, but not the ability to interpret or to produce written texts. However, when evaluating the textbook content in relation to training other skills, the language input to students is generally insufficient for the reading, writing and speaking tasks. The teachers as a result have to spend a large amount of their time identifying such possible learning difficulties and subsequently prepare a large number of tailor made materials to supplement their teaching. The teachers suggested that a list or glossary of the relevant "language input" can be provided in the student's book. More guidance and examples should also be given to students so that the textbook can better serve as an effective learning aid. Below is a detailed discussion of the problem.

4.1.2.1.1 Speaking Skills

The teachers suggested that proficiency in oral English skills is one of the most difficult areas to work on. A large number of variables would affect one's oral English proficiency. It is therefore understandable that the textbook can contribute to a relatively smaller extent to one's oral English skills proficiency. According to the teachers, while there are reading texts that contain colloquial

English, minimal guidance is provided to students showing them how to improve their overall oral English skills.

4.1.2.1.2 Reading Skills

The teachers also suggested that the problem of the "lack of language input" applies here. The textbook should provide more guidelines and tips to help students to understand the passages better. It would be very helpful to provide a glossary of new terms and phrases for the student's reference.

4.1.2.1.3 Writing Skills

The teachers suggested that the "lack of language input" problem is the most serious for writing tasks. One subject gave an example in which the students are to write a formal reply to a complaint letter. There are sample letters provided in the textbook but little guidance is provided regarding what phrases and expression shall be used in relation to the context of the writing task. While it may look simple and could be taken for granted to produce a simple expression such as "I am writing in regard to…." the reality is that most students do not possess such knowledge. It is worth quoting the interview responses to further exemplify the problem:

"How should the students write? There are samples from the teacher's copy like "I am writing in regard" to your letter. We teachers look for phrases like "in regard to" but students do not know it. We have to provide a lot of inputs."

"There should be more examples of phrases and expressions or otherwise, the students do not know how to write."

"They [the students] will give you a letter anyway but they don't have the language that is

[appropriate] for a formal letter or for that genre……and that's why there are always tailor-made materials".

The teachers suggested that the use of the process approach is good and can theoretically benefit students in many ways. However, on many occasions in the actual EFL classroom, students do not have the language to express their ideas at different stages of development of the writing. As suggested by one teacher *"But they [the students] don't have the language, how can they express themselves?"*

The teachers have repeatedly stressed that without proper teacher support (eg. providing tailor made materials) it would be highly unlikely to bring about the theoretical benefits of the process approach in writing skills training.

Therefore, despite the strength of having a sound design of task activities, as mentioned in the earlier section, the "lack of language input" problem remains a strong potential weakness. The problem has to be addressed in order to enhance the overall quality of the writing tasks.

4.1.2.2 Lack of Orientation with Public-Examination Requirements

Across the 4-skills, the teachers think that only writing and reading tasks are prepared according to the public examination format. The orientation with public examination requirements should have been properly addressed across all of the 4-skills.

The teachers suggested that the speaking section especially has very little relation to do with the public exam. While speaking tasks provided in the self-assessment sections of each unit are relatively more exam oriented, most speaking tasks are not in alignment with the public examination requirement. The teachers suggested that such a problem maybe due to the publisher's intention of 1) using these speaking tasks as warm up practices for writing tasks, or simple speaking activities or for

brainstorming purpose; or 2) as a marketing strategy, to let teachers realize the need of purchasing the Skills book. The subjects suggest that speaking tasks tend to restrict the responses that students can give. Such a task requirement according to the teachers is very different from the public examination requirements. In the public examination, students are instead required to provide spontaneous responses which can "make and justify a choice, decide on and explain a course of action, and argue for or against a position" (CDC 2007:118). To counter this problem, tailor-made materials have to be provided separately for exam skills training.

Listening tasks generally are also not prescribed for the pubic examination format. The teachers suggested that in the public-examination, students are required to respond to a series of integrated skills questions. According to the C&A guide, integrated skills questions require students to "process information by selecting and combining data from spoken/written sources in order to complete various listening/writing tasks in a practical work or study situation" (CDC 2007:118).

As no practices of this kind are provided in the textbook, the teachers therefore concluded that the listening tasks are not aligned with public examination requirements. The teachers also tend to find that the practices are too easy in relation to the standard of the public examination. The coverage and depth of grammatical items also share the same problem. The teachers have also highlighted that if no specific guidance was given to the students, they could be easily misled, believing that the textbook listening tasks are aligned to public examination requirements.

4.1.2.3 "Surface level" Pedagogical Coverage

Textbook publishing ultimately is a commercial activity looking at profit maximization. In order to do so, the teachers suggested that the publisher is using a marketing strategy by which exercises and drills are deliberately omitted and subsequently published in the "Skills Books" series, a sub-series of the ELECT series. As a result, most examination practice and exercises are contained in the Skills books

but not in the Theme book. The teacher suggested that as a result of such a marketing strategy, one major weakness of the textbook is that the Theme Book only just "touches on the surface" on various aspects of ELT. There are minimal opportunities provided to learners to practice the language.

4.1.3 Areas for Improvement - Recommendations

The following areas have been noted by the teachers that can help to further improve the quality of the textbook. It should be noted that as the evaluation items used in this study are based on the official curriculum, some suggestions are more related to aspects of the curriculum.

4.1.3.1 On the textbook

There is a strong need for the textbook to provide more "language input", guidance and exam oriented language practices. The teachers suggested that in order to help maximize the effectiveness of the student's learning, they would first need to be provided with the relevant language. As explained in earlier sections, relevant appropriate expressions, phrases, vocabularies should be provided in the textbook to prepare students for completing different task activities. The teachers suggested that these "language input" can be provided in the form of glossaries, lists or even included as additional electronic learning materials in the accompanying CD-Rom.

The teachers have also stressed that it is understandable, that for marketing purposes, the publisher has included a minimum amount of exercises in the Theme book. However, it is still for the benefit of students to feature some exercises in the Theme book so as to serve as warm-up practice before heading for specific skills drilling. They suggested that in order to prepare students better for the public examination, more advanced grammatical items such as adverbials and inversions should have been included. Practices should have more depth, and cover a wider range of grammar items. The teachers have also suggested that given the highly public examination driven culture in Hong Kong,

the textbook activities should have at least been prepared according to the public examination format.

One teacher has advised that although the task design is generally good as most of the different writing processes are covered, for writing tasks it would be better to include guidance to show students how to arrive at a sensible and logical argument. Although what is considered sensible and logical can be highly debatable, the teacher suggested that it would be especially helpful to provide guidelines to help students to think about what is generally feasible, and what is not, when building their argument.

For speaking tasks, the teachers feel that there should be more guidance, and examples to show how students can speak more real life English rather than "textbook-ish" English. The teachers proposed that it may be useful, for example, to provide a table explaining how discourse markers can be used in spoken English. One teacher suggested that the video demonstrations featured in the current accompanying CD-ROM is very useful in teaching the use of eye contact and accurate pronunciation. However, there should be more guidance provided in the textbook helping students to develop group interaction skills. The teachers suggested that it is understandable that it is very difficult to teach how students can improve oral English fluency merely by referring to the textbook. It is still useful to provide more exercises and "language input". A good example would be to include a list of commonly used vocabularies in daily spoken language, so that students can have a quick source of reference for the appropriate use of language in different real-life contexts. The teachers suggested that the publisher can consider providing the additional language materials in the form of an accompanying CD-ROM.

4.1.3.2 On the Design of Tasks

In order to satisfy the curriculum initiatives of catering to individual learning differences, the teachers have noted that the textbook could have provided more coverage on helping teachers deal with the problem. The teachers feel that adequate guidance have been provided for Reading tasks. For example, as suggested by one subject, for comprehension questions, there are two sets of questions. One is for

stronger students and the other one is for weaker students. Guidance on the other 3-skills, however, is generally lacking. The subjects have also noted that while it is good that the textbook has provided a lot of open-ended questions to encourage the creative use of language, one subject is unsure whether it can satisfy the curriculum initiative of encouraging the creative use of language mainly because weaker students do not possess such levels of language proficiency. Again, the teachers recommended that such problems can be eased if the publishers can provide suggestive guidelines to teachers in catering to learner diversity.

The teachers have also advocated that the tasks tend to introduce new items and concepts too often. Task activities should allow more recycling of previous knowledge so as to satisfy the curriculum initiative of "tasks require learners to draw upon their framework of knowledge and skills and should also enable them to strengthen or extend this." (CDC 2007: 75).

One of the subjects has also highlighted that while teachers have the full control on how a task is to be performed; a majority of the textbook activities are individually based. One teacher thinks that it would be better to have more pair work activities. Based on her observation, female students tend to be passive in task activities. Pair work tasks are especially effective addressing such a problem as they can provide good opportunities for students to first practice and develop confidence before using the language in a group setting of more than two persons.

For writing tasks, the teachers generally think that they are effective in teaching planning and content development in process writing skills. One of the subjects suggested that the overall quality of the writing tasks can be improved greatly, if activities, that can cultivate the student's ability to begin and end a passage interestingly and conclusively, are included. The teachers have also suggested that the wide-selection of reading texts of the textbook has helped to familiarize students with the different linguistic features of texts of different genres. There should be relevant writing activities for students to test that knowledge has been acquired.

4.1.3.3 On Text Selection

The teachers suggested that the range and length of the listening texts can be improved. The teachers have felt that owing to the marketing policy, the publisher has deliberately included only a small amount of listening tasks in the Theme book. Feeling this to be inadequate, the teachers may, as a result, be compelled to purchase relevant supplementary textbooks, also from the "Skills books" series. The teachers, therefore, suggested that it is highly unlikely for the publisher to improve on this area by working on it.

The teachers have also noted that the publisher can further improve its reading text selection by providing more poems and songs in different styles and topics. The teachers have suggested that the publisher could have included moving images such as films as part of language material for teaching of language arts. Popular culture items such as fashion and movies can also be used as topics of the theme to arouse the student's interest and also can help to relate students with elective modules of the NSS curriculum. Also, the current teaching texts tend to focus on helping to raise student's awareness towards global issues, but additionally, it would be better to include texts which can expose students to different world cultures and heritage so as to satisfy curriculum initiative of "increase [students] cultural understanding and expand their knowledge and world-views" (CDC 2007:2).

4.1.3.4 On the Curriculum

The subjects have expressed that they find some of the terms contained in the checklist evaluation items ambiguous and difficult to understand. There seems to be a need for policy makers to provide further guidance to minimize ambiguity of some of the technical terms. For example, the teachers are confused by the term "aesthetic sensitivity" (CDC 2007:74). Also, regarding the curriculum definition (see CDC 2007:75) of what constitute a "task", the technical terms of "purposeful activities" and the concept of a "task product" are difficult to comprehend. More illustrations should be provided.

As the terms used in the checklist items are strictly referenced from the C&A guide when constructing the checklist, it may infer that many local teachers are having the same problem. It may be deemed suitable for official policy makers to provide further illustrations for clarifying possible misconceptions, so as to facilitate the implementation of the stated recommended approaches in practice.

4.1.4 A Summary of the Evaluation Results

The textbook ELECT series: Theme Book is one of the NSS English textbooks available in the market, produced by one of the most reputable international publishers, Pearson Longman. The textbook is easy to use, flexible and is well designed according to the curriculum initiative of using a task-based teaching and learning approach. The task activities contain clear and easy to understand instructions illustrating clearly how a certain task can be completed. In the task activities, most questions are open-ended questions which can effectively arouse learning interest and also stimulate learner's imagination and creativity. There is generally a good balance of pre, while and post learning tasks and these are effective in engaging learners into active class participation.

A wide selection of authentic reading texts is also a major strength of the textbook. The authentic texts can effectively expose learners to appropriate language use and style in different real life contexts. There is also a fine balance of reading texts between language arts and non-language arts materials. The wide variety of texts can also help learners to understand the structure and style of written language of texts in different genres. The accompanying electronic version of the textbook (the "Ebook") is able to provide valuable additional multimedia teaching resources and can effectively arouse the reading interest of the students. The theme-based organization approach can also facilitate learning by providing a learning focus for each textbook unit.

The textbook is not without its limitations however. The teachers suggested that if the textbook is not used in conjunction with supplementary materials, the textbook is highly unlikely to facilitate teachers to deliver the C&A guide's recommended approaches as: 1) the textbook has failed to provide a sufficient amount of "language inputs" and 2) the textbook content design has a low alignment with public-examination requirements and 3) it's pedagogical coverage is only on the "surface level". The teachers have repeatedly stressed that these weaknesses can be regarded as "manufactured weakness" which are the result of the publisher's marketing strategy. Language skills practice and exam drills which are regarded as necessities by the teachers are, therefore, not included as a result. Echoing the view of Reynolds (1974 cited in Fu 1975), the teachers suggested that Hong Kong is an extremely small market for textbook publishing and there are only a handful of choices for NSS textbooks. The teachers suggested that they are not left with many options, and are compelled to continue to use the Theme book, not because of its overall pedagogical soundness, but because the wide collection of teaching texts of different genres provided in the textbook, can suit the needs of the school syallbus. The teachers further suggested that owing to the above inherent weaknesses, the Theme book, therefore, can only serve as a "guiding" text. For specific language skills drilling, one would have to purchase supplementary textbooks from the Skills books from the ELECT collection. If the Theme Book is used in conjunction with the Skills book, it is highly likely that the above weaknesses would become far less apparent.

4.2 User Feedbacks on the Self-Constructed Checklist

So far, we see that the self-constructed checklist can help to yield insightful post-use evaluation data of the target textbook. The checklist is a useful device in collecting empirical data to elicit the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook and also in the search for other potential areas for improvement. As noted by McGrath (2002) and Williams (1983), the evaluation items should be reviewed and improved periodically, to suit the pedagogical needs of the relevant teaching and learning context. McGrath (2002) suggested that one effective way is to seek advice from the end-users of the checklist. In this

study, the teachers are therefore also being interviewed on as how the checklist can be improved.

The teachers generally think that the checklist is a useful and handy device in helping teachers to familiarize themselves with the new curriculum needs. The point form presentation has helped to clearly highlight different aspects of the curriculum requirements. As the NSS curriculum has only been implemented recently (Sep 2009), teachers may still have to familiarize themselves with the new curriculum requirements. The checklist is also of appropriate length and coverage.

With regard to using the recommended approaches as listed in chapter four of the C&A guide, as the primary reference for construction of evaluation criteria, the teachers recommended that such a choice is very appropriate as it is essential to evaluate a textbook's fitness with the curriculum's recommended instructional approaches. It is necessary for a textbook to be prepared according to these different curriculum initiatives so that it can contribute positively towards the realization of NSS curriculum's teaching and learning objectives. Similar to the views of Johnson (1989), one teacher suggested that it is good to have focused on chapter four, as other parts of the C&A guide policy statements tend to be too theoretical and "utopian", and lacks focus in explaining the new expectations in relation to the appropriate instructional strategies.

The teachers also recommended that the checklist is very flexible to use as it is designed not to be used in its entirety. Teachers can easily delete or add in new evaluation items according to individual needs, making the checklist useful even to experienced teachers who tend to evaluate textbooks on an impressionistic basis without using a checklist.

Despite the majority satisfaction, the teachers have pointed out a few weaknesses. First, the checklist has contained a number of "double barreled" questions, where the teachers were asked to evaluate more than one item at the same time. As the checklist items were strictly referenced from the C&A guide during the construction of the checklist, the author feels that if the terminologies are separated,

the original meaning of the evaluation item will be obscured. The double barreled evaluation items have been hence retained. Similar concerns have also been raised regarding some of the terminologies used in the evaluation items. For example it is found that the term "aesthetic sensitivity" (CDC 2007:74) is ambiguous and difficult to understand. Such weaknesses are inherited from the original C&A guide while constructing the evaluation criteria, since the identical terminologies are used to preserve the C&A guide's originality.

The teachers have therefore recommended that one effective way to tackle the problem of both inherited weaknesses and "double barreled" evaluation questions is to offer detailed illustration within the checklist to help teachers visualize some of the abstract concepts that the C&A guide's philosophies. In light of this, the author would like to bring to the attention of the policy making authorities that it is highly possible that many other local teachers may share the same problem. More teachers would seem to benefit from curriculum training.

Another improvement the teachers would like to make is that an option "not applicable" or "NA" should be added to the five-point Likert scale, so that during an evaluation, the teachers can quickly identify the relevant evaluation criteria, making the entire evaluation process more efficient.

In sum, we can see that the teachers have generally given a very positive review of the checklist. Even though the checklist does contain some weaknesses in terms of a number of evaluation items being ambiguous and difficult to comprehend, it is easy to use and pedagogically sound for evaluating curriculum fitness. However, it is saddening to learn from the teachers that they suggest that detailed post-use textbook evaluations have little practical value, owing to reality of constraints. The teachers advised that it would be very time consuming to perform a detailed evaluation of a textbook. It is suggested that on many occasions, teachers with the power to make textbook selection choices are very often panel-chair persons, who have to shoulder many job responsibilities. Such a rigorous evaluation procedure can only serve to inflict more stress and pressure. Also, the teachers advised that

in reality, they use a very different set of textbook evaluation criteria, contrary to what the checklist suggests. The teachers believe that the most important evaluation criteria should be not only the overall level of difficulty but also individual task difficulty. The teachers would generally not select a textbook that cannot satisfactorily meet these two evaluation criteria mentioned above. Curriculum fitness is not at all an issue as the teachers presumed that all Edb approved textbooks are well written, according to curriculum requirements.

It is well documented in the literature that post-use evaluations can yield the most valuable evaluation data, so the teachers believe that post-use evaluations can offer little practical significance is surprising. Similar to what Ellis (1997 & 1998) and Harmer (2001) have discussed the real difficulties in conducting post-use evaluations, the teachers also felt that there is a weak justification of conducting post-use evaluation, arguing that they have discovered the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook as a result of prolonged usage. The teachers would automatically know whether the use of the textbook should be continued or not. A post-use evaluation of a textbook would therefore deem highly unnecessary as it would be associated with wastage of valuable time and resources. The use of a checklist to select or evaluate textbooks is also unnecessary in most occasions. Only the panel-chair persons have the power to select textbooks, and he/she, given their seniority, should be able to use their knowledge and experience to select the most suitable textbook. This matter will be further discussed in the last chapter.

Despite having suggested that post-use textbook evaluation has little practical use value, the teachers still recommended that nonetheless, the checklist developed in this study is a useful invention and should be retained for future use in other areas. The teachers proposed that the checklist can serve as an effective tool for training junior teachers, and to help familiarize them with the new curriculum requirements. Instead of being used in a post-use evaluation stage, the checklist can actually be used for textbook selection panel discussions, during which different opinions can be presented and illustrated in an organized manner, thereby contributing to a more efficient and effective textbook

selection process.

5 DISCUSSION – RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The current study seeks to propose a textbook evaluation framework which adopts the checklist approach to assess a textbook's pedagogical fitness with a prescribed curriculum. In order to pilot the proposed evaluation framework, in order to find out how well it works and to further improve the framework, two research questions have been constructed to collect empirical data, which will provide further validation. The first research question seeks to find out how well the evaluation criteria of the framework can be used to evaluate a textbook's pedagogical fitness with the curriculum. This is achieved by piloting the evaluation framework to evaluate one current NSS textbook. The second research question seeks to investigate how the self-constructed checklist could be further improved by inviting in-service teachers to provide feedback on the strength and weaknesses of the checklist.

So far, we can see that by answering the first research question, the piloting of the checklist has demonstrated that the evaluation framework is a useful and effective tool to help elicit clearly the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook. As suggested by Tomlinson (2003), the aim of conducting textbook evaluation is to ensure that the textbook is devised and selected in reliable and valid ways. It is, therefore, important to discuss the possible implications of this study on how the self-constructed checklist can contribute to the process of textbook evaluation.

5.1 Providing an Empirically Tested Framework for Post-Use Evaluation

A number of researchers, such as Ellis (1997, 1998) and Tomlinson (2003) have suggested that post-use evaluations can yield the most valuable evaluation data, since post-use evaluations can measure the actual effect of the materials on the teachers and his/her learners (Tomlinson 2003:25). However, owing to many real-world constraints, such as the reluctance of teachers to perform such

evaluation, very few empirical studies had been performed at the time (Ellis 1998:221), and probably

is also true for now, as Mukundan &Ahour (2010) echoes Ellis's view that "what is lacking in most

literature with regard to materials evaluation is the retrospective aspect of evaluation" (pg 349). This

study has filled this research gap by using a self-constructed checklist to conduct an empirical

retrospective evaluation of a textbook. However, one may question the validity of the self-developed

checklist. As suggested by Mukundan (2007), self-constructed evaluation instruments, such as

checklists, are largely neither tested for reliability nor validity, which in turn has led to a

"proliferation" of checklists. Being aware of such a potential problem, following the suggestion raised

by Tomlinson (2003) that what is self developed should be empirically tested, this study has, therefore,

addressed the problem in the first research question by piloting the checklist with teachers. The

post-use evaluation framework proposed by this study is thus of reasonable practical value.

While the checklist is considered to be a practical textbook evaluation device, the value of conducting

a post-use evaluation has been heavily questioned by the teachers. To make post-use evaluation a less

daunting task, and also to be able to match with the teachers own evaluation criteria, the teachers can

perhaps follow the suggestions of Ellis (1998) by performing task evaluations. Ellis (1998:222)

suggested that empirical post-use evaluation is an enormous commitment for teachers. In order to

make the evaluation less daunting and more manageable, , the same evaluation framework can be

applied to evaluate a particular task, instead of evaluating the entire textbook.

Whichever method the teachers may feel appropriate, we should all be reminded that, as suggested by

Sheldon (1988), textbook evaluation itself is ultimately a subjective process, it is therefore for the

users of the textbook to determine what evaluation criteria are reliable and valid but not a third party.

The most important factor, as suggested by Tomlinson (2003), is that in a self-constructed evaluation

framework, proper discussion, trialing and updating of the evaluation criteria, certainly, have to be

undertaken. The practicability of the evaluation criteria would then be appropriate for empirical use for

textbook evaluation purposes.

5.2 Introducing a Framework as to how Fitness with the Prescribed Curriculum Can be Evaluated

To date, it seems that the literature has provided little guidance and discussion as to how fitness between materials and the curriculum can be evaluated.

On the theoretical aspects of the literature, Ellis (1998) suggested that the major reason for conducting textbook evaluations is to raise one's awareness on what aspects of the materials should be considered. In the light of this, a number of researchers such as Tomlinson (1999, 2003) and Ur (1996) have proposed different groups of specific aspects of a textbook one could look at when conducting materials evaluation. For example, Tomlinson (2003:30-32) suggested that four categories of specific criteria can be established: 1) Media-specific criteria; 2) Content-specific criteria; 3) Age-specific criteria and 4) Local criteria. However, quite surprisingly, there is little guidance or discussion regarding how the material's fitness with the curriculum can be assessed.

Mukundan & Ahour (2010) also agree that there is little coverage in the literature to show how to evaluate a textbook's pedagogical fitness with the curriculum. In the work of Mukundan & Ahour (2010), they have reviewed a total of forty-eight published checklists which are "selected based on references made to them by writers in journals and other academic publications" across four decades spanning from year nineteen seventy to year two thousand and eight. Amongst those forty eight checklists, Mukundan et al. have found only one study (Byrd 2001) that has given priority to evaluate curriculum fitness. Byrd (2001) suggested that "the first area included in textbook analysis is [should be] the fit between the materials and the curriculum". Byrd's argument was based on the observation that the fitness between the textbook and curriculum should be evaluated, as there may not be a reasonable fitness with the textbook content with the stated curricular guidelines (Byrd 2001:416). Having pointed out the importance of evaluation of curriculum fitness, Byrd, however, was unable to show how such a problem can be investigated. In her checklist, only one unspecific general evaluation criteria is available for the investigation of the problem which is deemed to be inadequate. The

evaluation criteria has asked one to provide his/her opinion on whether the textbook "fits curriculum/goals" by rating Yes, Perhaps, Probably Not or Absolutely Not (Byrd 2001:427). It is, therefore, easy to discern that such general "one-off" evaluation criteria have over-simplified the problem and have provided little insight so that fitness with the curriculum can be analyzed scientifically. It would be believed sensible and logical to ask: "what if only certain parts of the textbook comply with curriculum requirements but not others?" " What if the curriculum contains many ambiguous and abstract terminologies making interpretation difficult?" All these questions are possible real-world scenarios and worth further investigation. It is somewhat disappointing to see that these questions have not been addressed properly in the literature.

This study has therefore another major significance. It has proposed an evaluation framework that can scientifically analyze curriculum fitness of a textbook. In order to systematically and comprehensively evaluate curriculum fitness, the author proposed that one can construct evaluation criteria by making a strict reference to curriculum documents. As demonstrated with piloting of the self-constructed checklist, different curriculum guidance can be transformed to statements or questions for the evaluators to express their opinions as to what extent they think that a certain aspect of the textbook agrees with a particular curriculum initiative. Such an approach can be "globalized" to perform analysis of curriculum fitness of textbooks prescribed to official curriculum of different jurisdictions. On many occasions, the textbook itself is the curriculum which determines the learning objectives, the content and skills students will study (Richards, 1998:125). However, the primary motivation of publishing is for financial success (Dendrinos 1992, Tomlinson 2008) and that most of the time teachers do not have the power to make textbook selection (Dendrinos 1992, Nunan & Lamb 1996). Pursuing this point of view, it is understandable that while no one would purchase a textbook that bears zero curriculum fitness, it is however still important to examine the degree of fitness with the curriculum that a textbook does constitute, given that there is a strong tendency for the publishers to produce what the market wants, rather than what can truly benefit learners (Tomlinson 2008). With financial success being the primary motivation of commercial publishers, curriculum fitness may be

overlooked if it is not a major concern of the consumers. I argue, for that reason, textbook evaluation, particularly evaluation on curriculum fitness, is important so that feedback can be heard by the central authority and relevant revision can be made accordingly (Mukundan 2007).

5.3 Providing a Platform for a Scientific Collaborative Textbook Evaluation

The evaluation device proposed in this study can help to provide a systematic standardized evaluation framework, making team evaluation possible and scientific.

During the interview, when being asked about how the teachers would select textbooks in real life practice, the teachers suggested that they generally prefer an impressionistic "implicit" model of textbook evaluation, owing to reality constraints of having limited time to perform a detailed "explicit" evaluation proposed in this study. Regarding the use of the impressionistic approach to evaluation, Cunningsworth (1995) and Mukundan (2007), for example, suggest that it would be a quick and effective method for selection of materials if only done by an experienced teacher. The comments made by the teachers have demonstrated similarities to what have been suggested in the literature in this respect. The teachers suggested that an evaluation checklist, much less a post-use evaluation would be unnecessary for textbook selection, since only the panel-chair persons have the power to make a selection. Using his/her experience and given his/her seniority, he/she should be able to make the most appropriate choice. Mukundan (2007) suggested that however, such a view is potentially dangerous, as in general, nowadays many teachers are involved in teaching a particular level of students, and team evaluation of textbooks would be judged necessary. Mukundan (2007) further explained that the main problem of using the impressionistic approach of evaluation is that evaluation criteria would become "implicit" and hidden, thereby prohibiting team evaluation as it would become difficult to communicate the evaluation criteria across the team. Impressionistic evaluations may not be reliable, as significant weaknesses and important omissions can be left undetected. It is indeed, all things considered, relatively weak in giving detailed evidence as to how the fitness between a textbook

and the requirements of a learning/teaching situation can be attained (Cunningsworth 1995). Instead of relying on one or two person's implicit impressionistic judgment, teachers can sit down together and decide on what criteria would be used to assess a textbook, starting at a macro level than at a micro level (Richards, 1998).

In light of the above, this study is significant in terms of providing a common platform allowing for team evaluation. In relation to team evaluation, a checklist is particularly useful as the checklist can make the evaluation criteria contributing to a standardized evaluation explicit (Mukundan 2007:81). Combining the use of impressionistic and an in-depth checklist evaluation approach in examining textbooks, it would allow for a sound decision making, with regard to the choice of textbooks (Cunningsworth 1995:2). Most evaluations after all are certainly subjective, but however, it is important to have the evaluation based on different sets of principles to achieve greater reliability and validity (Tomlinson 2003).

5.4 Extending the Range of Users and Usage of the Evaluation Framework

"Most of the literature in the area of materials development has so far focused on materials evaluation" (Tomlinson 2003). It seems that in the literature, spanning across four decades, there is a bias towards predictive evaluation which is to help teacher's selection of textbooks (Mukundan & Ahour 2010). It seems that teachers are the primary research targets. There are a few instances, such as Donovan (1998), whose research study caters to non-teachers. Owing to the comprehensiveness of Mukundan & Ahour (2010)'s study, it is, therefore, fair to suggest that most published works are targeted towards teachers as the end-user of an evaluation framework. With evaluating curriculum fitness as a basic premise of the proposed evaluation framework, this study is thus significant in the respect that it has helped to make available the evaluation checklist useful to curriculum developers and government education policy makers. Policy makers can use the checklist to monitor the local textbook situation. For example, authorities can use the checklist to collect data from schools to see whether the teachers,

as the end-users, think that the textbooks are written according to curriculum requirements. The evaluation framework proposed in this study can act as a bridge, bridging the gap between views of the policy makers and the ultimate end-users of textbooks. It is important as it provides a channel for feedback to reach government authorities so that it can reassess the suitability of the use of the textbook in a formal education setting (Mukundan 2007).

In the real world context, the implication of evaluating a textbook's fitness with the prescribed curriculum is therefore immensely profound, since all teachers do not have the power to select the textbook of their choice for teaching. According to a confidential study conducted by Tomlinson (2008:7), a total of twelve undisclosed countries were surveyed. It was found out that eighty-five percent of the surveyed countries have ELT textbooks selected by government administrators. In Malaysia for example, book selection is done by the government's Ministry of Education (Mukundan 2007).While one may presume that the policy makers would make the best possible textbook selection, there are only a few studies on such a selection procedure, not mentioning how a textbook fitness with the curriculum evaluation is administered.

In Hong Kong, teachers can freely select textbook of their liking. The Edb, which can be regarded as the equivalent of the state's Ministry of Education, has issued guidance regarding selection of textbooks. A sub-unit of the Edb, the "Textbook Committee", has a Reviewing Panel which examines teaching materials "in terms of coverage, content, sequence, exercise, language, illustration and format" (Edb, 2011). Textbooks deemed suitable are then included in the "Recommended Textbook List" (RTL), the list of which is updated on a monthly basis. Teachers are advised to use textbooks of the RTL, but adherence is not compulsory. Referring to the latest (at the time of writing of this thesis) relevant online official document (Edb 2011:3), it is advocated that when selecting textbooks, teachers should refer to the "Guiding Principles" which can be accessed online. It is interesting to see that in the relevant online document: "Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks" (Edb 2003), there is no specific detailed guidance on how to evaluate textbook's curriculum fitness. For example in Edb

(2003), one generic statement (see item C-1) guiding the assessment states that, "The aims, targets and objectives are compatible with those laid down in the relevant curriculum or subject guide". While it can be argued that such a statement is not an evaluation criteria but just a general guiding statement, the statement itself, nevertheless, still can be difficult to answer. It left evaluators puzzled, asking the level of compatibility that is considered acceptable. How do we evaluate compatibility? What if the materials are compatible with the relevant curriculum but not the subject guide?

We can see that the above example can provide a good illustration of one of the key problems of evaluation criteria, as suggested by McGrath (2002:31) that there is a lack of specification in the criteria. It would ultimately make textbook evaluation self-defeating if the problem is left uncorrected. Evaluation criteria should be answerable and should not be so large and vague that it cannot be answered (Tomlinson 2003). The question of compatibleness can be seen as one of those questions of this kind, which is highly undesirable. Also, Tomlinson (2003) suggests that "each question should only ask one question". We can see a "double-barreled" question that had been asked in the Edb (2003) example. What if the materials are compatible with the relevant curriculum but not the subject guide? Again, this is also a highly undesirable attribute that evaluation criteria should be constituted with.

In the light of the problems listed above, the evaluation framework proposed in this study would deem highly suitable for the Textbook Committee as the criteria are constructed in strict accordance with the stated objectives of the relevant curriculum document, the C&A guide. Also, the evaluation framework can provide a clear and concise way to help serious evaluators, such as curriculum developers, government officials, and panel-chairpersons to visualize to what degree an item or a specific area of a textbook fits with the pedagogical focus of the curriculum. Different opinions of the evaluators can be transformed into scaled responses to the self-constructed checklist, with their points of view are clearly illustrated. Not only can this allow for easy interpretation of different opinions, but it can also allow for the quick elicitation of strength and weaknesses of the textbook, as evaluators are using the same evaluation criteria. If the evaluation results revealed that a particular textbook is not up to curriculum

standards, the Edb can quickly react by deleting the textbook from its recommended list of textbooks to minimize the degree of damage done to the formal education setting because of poor selection of teaching materials.

5.5 Provide a Link between Teacher Development and Textbook Evaluation

Despite the availability of materials of different kinds, commercial textbooks are still extensively used at least in the school context (Richards 1998). The problem seemed to be even more complex considering the sheer number of commercial materials available in today's market (Green 1926, Tomlinson 2008). It is therefore not surprising to see that textbook selection and evaluation remains one of the most important items teachers want from their training. Given the strong prominence of the use of textbook in the language classroom (Hutchinson and Torres 1994) and that there is no "perfect" textbook that can satisfy every need of the teachers and learners (Nunan & Lamb 1996), it is important for teachers to know how to evaluate textbooks so that the choice of textbooks can best fit a particular EFL teaching and learning situation, or to make necessary adjustments by adapting the material (Brown 1994). I would like to contend that textbook evaluation is an important pedagogical skill. Engaging in a systematic evaluation process itself is a form of teacher development. Teachers should see textbook evaluation as part of their professional development (Mukundan & Ahour 2010) so that they can have a better understanding of the role textbooks play in the classroom (Richards 1998).

Even though the literature has suggested many of the benefits of textbook evaluation, it is still often regarded as a time-consuming and difficult task (Tomlinson 2003), particularly post-use evaluation, as teachers often see no reason for doing since they know "inside out" the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook after prolonged usage (Ellis 1998, Harmer 2001). Empirical data collected during the interview unfortunately reveals the same problem. The teachers have spoken about the difficulties in engaging in a detailed textbook evaluation process owing to a number of reality constraints of logistical problems. In addition, contrary to what the literature has suggested that post-use evaluation

can yield the most valuable evaluation results (Tomlinson 2003), post-use evaluation of textbook is seen as a counter productive evaluation strategy and there is little claim whether the required time and resources should be invested in conducting such a rigorous evaluation procedure. The teachers argue that detailed evaluation frameworks, such as the one proposed in this study, is largely impractical as a quick impressionistic evaluation done by experienced teachers would serve the same purpose. Although there is some validity to the statement given the workload of English teachers, we shall look beyond the context. We can evaluate a textbook for teacher education rather than evaluate just for the sake of evaluation.

While pointing out that detailed evaluation framework, such as the model proposed in this study, is generally impractical for real life textbook evaluation purposes, the teachers recommended that the evaluation framework can be a useful tool for teacher training. Researchers such as Cunningsworth (1995), Tomlinson (2003) and McGrath (2002) have stressed that teachers should develop their own evaluation criteria for evaluation and that the criteria should be specific and transparent. However, especially for new teachers, these tasks would be daunting. By participating in an evaluation process, teachers would then be able to obtain an understanding of potential difficulties and the implications of how evaluation criteria are constructed. By using an explicit and systematic evaluation framework like the one proposed in this study, internalized impressionistic selection criteria can also surface and be visualized, providing valuable education to new teachers to see what are the relevant criteria, and the importance of the criteria in relation to textbook selection. In addition, a detailed systematic post-use evaluation can facilitate to elicit clearly the areas where adaptation of materials are deemed necessary, and it can also help to raise the teaching awareness of new teachers. A good example is that the framework used in this study can indirectly familiarize new teachers with the new NSS curriculum requirements, as the framework is prepared strictly according to curriculum guidelines. Several other interesting questions – such as: (a) is the use of authentic language suitable? (b) Is the use of theme-based approach appropriate? (c) How communicative are the communicative tasks? – can be raised during the evaluation process, and in return help new teachers to develop his or her own

professional insights.

6 CONCLUSION

This research study has attempted to provide a suggestive textbook evaluation framework on how a textbook's pedagogical fitness with the NSS curriculum can be evaluated. Two research questions were established in order to find out 1) how well the framework works as an effective evaluation tool? and 2) how the evaluation framework can be further improved? The first research question seeks to provide a textbook evaluation framework based on which a textbook evaluation checklist was first constructed. The checklist has been subsequently empirically trialed to evaluate one current NSS textbook "Theme Book" of the Longman ELECT series to examine the validity and practicability of the evaluation criteria used in the checklist. The trialing of the checklist has proved the evaluation framework is an effective evaluation device capable of eliciting systematically the strengths and weaknesses of the target textbook.

The second research question seeks to investigate whether the self-constructed checklist needs to be further improved by inviting in-service teachers to provide feedback on the strength and weaknesses of the checklist. The teachers have generally been given a very positive response to the design of the checklist. The teachers suggested that it is a rightful decision to have constructed the evaluation criteria on the instruction part of the curriculum as it is most relevant, detailing how the NSS teaching objectives can be achieved in daily teaching. The checklist has done a good job in materializing abstract curriculum concepts for ease of reference. The checklist is also very user friendly as it allows for expression of opinion on the five point Likert-scale and that evaluation criteria are grouped under a different section, allowing for a principled and concise team textbook evaluation procedure. The teachers have also suggested that the evaluation framework is a useful invention as it can be used as a tool to familiarize new teachers with the requirements of the new curriculum.

Despite the majority satisfaction, the teachers recommended that some minor problems have to be corrected so as to further improve the practicability of the checklist. First, the problem of "double barreled" and ambiguous technical terms contained in evaluation criteria have to be addressed. The author feels that separating the evaluation criteria or to attempt to provide the author's own interpretation of ambiguous technical terms would possibly lead to distortion of the original meaning of the curriculum guidance. More curriculum training to teachers provided by the policy making authorities would seem appropriate to help clarify any misunderstandings.

The author does agrees with the teachers that an option "not applicable" or "NA" shall be added to the checklist to facilitate quick processing of the evaluation procedures. The checklist should be amended accordingly for future textbook evaluation purposes.

Post-use evaluation should not be deemed unworthy and impracticable without considering its potential significance. While the evaluation framework proposed in this study is regarded as pedagogically sound by the teachers, the use of the checklist for post-use evaluation however, is determined to have a low real- world practicability owing to many different real world constraints. An impressionistic "on the surface" evaluation is generally considered an appropriate practice. Such research finding confirms with the findings of previous research studies (eg Ellis 1998, Harmer 2001) that post-use evaluations are generally difficult to carry out because teachers see there are no reasons to suggest that a systematic and principled post-use evaluation is needed (Ellis 1998:221). This study, however, has offered to investigate such phenomenon, and indeed illustrated the profound implication that post-use evaluation can have on the teaching and learning of EFL, thereby achieving the following significance:

- Contribute to the literature by conducting a post-use evaluation empirical study, which to date, is heavily under researched (Ellis 1998, Mukundan & Ahour 2010).

- Add onto the existing literature in textbook evaluation by introducing a framework as to how

pedagogical fitness of textbook content with prescribed curriculum requirements can be examined systematically.

- Provide an evaluation framework allowing for timely, collaborative and systematic elicitation of strengths and weaknesses of a textbook, thereby fostering efficient decision making regarding the use and choice of teaching materials.

- Expand the range of users of post-use textbook evaluation frameworks from traditionally focused on teachers, to official policy-makers and curriculum developers.

- Expand the function of textbook evaluation frameworks primarily for evaluation purposes to a devise for teacher development.

This study however is not without limitations. For this study to yield conclusive results, it is necessary to implement a larger sample size selection in future research. Due to the relatively small sample size and the scope of this study, there may not be sufficient input as to how the framework can be further improved. Similarly, it is possible to leave deficiencies of the framework undetected. A larger sample size selection might well be considered for further research to analyze such areas. In addition, with a larger sample size, it would be more likely to arrive at a more comprehensive evaluation result. With a larger size, it would be easier to obtain different perspectives to interpret grey areas, such as "consensus neutral opinions" and opposing opinions ("one agree, one disagree"). They are all evaluation results arrived at in this study, but have yet to be properly addressed owing to the small sample size. Given the scope of this study, a larger sample size was quite impossible. Indeed a possible future research direction is to try applying the checklist to not only a larger number of teachers but also policy makers. We can, for example, investigate whether the checklist can serve as an effective textbook evaluation tool in helping Edb's Textbook Committee to maintain the RTL.

So far, we can see that by piloting the evaluation framework proposed in this study, the framework is regarded to be an effective evaluation tool in helping teachers to clearly elicit the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook in an organized manner. It is hoped that the framework proposed in this study would be able to provide a common platform for its users to effectively make the best decision in selecting and evaluating curriculum materials. Textbooks are considered part of the ELT curriculum (Brown 1995, Richards 1998), not only for selecting appropriate teaching materials that can contribute to successful curriculum implementation, but also to truly bring to life the spirit of the NSS curriculum for the students, especially the good ones, of Hong Kong.

REFERENCES

Allwright, R.L. (1981). 'What Do We Want Teaching Materials For?'. *ELT Journal,* 36(1), 5-17

Al-Yousef, H.S.D. (2007). *An Evaluation of the Third Grade Intermediate English Coursebook in Saudi Arabia.* (MA dissertation). King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

Angell, J., DuBravac, S., & Gonglewski, M. (2008). 'Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Selecting Textbooks for College-Level Language Programs.' *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(3), 562 – 572.

Banegas, D.L. (2011). Teaching More Than English in Secondary Education. *ELT Journal*, 65(1), 80-82.

Brown, H.D. (1994). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The Elements of Language Curriculum: A Systematic Approach to Program Development*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Byrd, P. (2001). Textbooks: Evaluation for Selection and Analysis for Implementation. In M. Celce-Murcia (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed.,pp.415-427). US: Heinle & Heinle.

Cheng, Y.C. (1994). 'Curriculum Change in School: An Organizational Perspective'. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 8(3), pp. 26 -34

Cheng, Y.C. & Tsui, K.T. (2000). 'A Framework of Curriculum Effectiveness: Development and Research'. In Y.C. Cheng., K.W. Chow., & K.T. Tsui. *School Curriculum Change and Development in Hong Kong* (pp. xvii-xlviii). Hong Kong: The Institute of Education.

Curriculum Development Council. (2001). *Learning to Learn: The Way Forward in Curriculum Development.* Hong Kong: CDC publication.

Curriculum Development Council. (2007). *English Language Education Key Learning Area: English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6).* Hong Kong: CDC publication.

Curriculum Development Council. (2009). *The Student Programme to Achieve the Vision of the New Academic Structure: Whole-person Development and Life-long Learning.* Hong Kong: CDC publication.

Cooker, L. (2008). Self-Access Materials. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *English Language Learning Materials: A Critical Review* (1st ed., pp. 110-132). London: Continuum.

Cunningsworth, A. (1979). Evaluating Course Materials. In S. Holden (Eds.), *Teacher Training* (1st ed.,pp. 31-33). Hong Kong: Modern English Publications Limited.

Cunningsworth, A. (1984). *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Teaching Materials.* London: Heinemann Educational Books

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your Coursebook.* UK: Heinemann English Language Teaching

Daoud, A.M. & Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). Selecting and Evaluating Textbooks. In M. Celce-Murcia & L. Mc-Intosh (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 302-307). New York: Newbury House.

Dendrinos, B. (1992). *The EFL Textbook and Ideology*. Greece: N.C. Grivas Publications.

Donovan, P. (1998). Piloting – A Publisher's View. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.). *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (1st ed., pp.149-189). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Edge, J. & Wharton, S. (1998). 'Autonomy and Development: Living in the Materials World'. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.) (1998). *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (1st ed., pp.295-310). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Education Bureau. (2003). *Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks.* Retrieved from http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=2842&langno=1

Education Bureau. (2010). *Notes of Selection of Textbooks and Learning Materials.* Retrieved from http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=2980&langno=1

Education Bureau. (2011). *Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 67/2011*. Retrieved from

http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_3011/CM_Debundling_Eng_20110413_FINALI SED.pdf

Ellis, R. (1997). 'The Empirical Evaluation of Language Teaching Materials'. *ELT Journal* 51(1), 36-42

Ellis, R. (1998). 'The Evaluation of Communicative Tasks'. In B. Tomlinson (Ed), *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (1st ed.,pp.217-238). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, S. (1997). Communication in the Classroom: A Hong Kong Perspective. In V. Berry., B. Adamson., & W. Littlewood. (Eds), *Applying Linguistics: Insights into Language in Education* (pp.69-82). Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.

Fredriksson, C & Olsson, R. (2006). *English Textbook Evaluation: An Investigation into Criteria for Selecting English Textbooks.* (MA dissertation): Malmö högskola, Swden.

Fu, G.B.A. (1975). *A Hong Kong Perspective: English Language Learning and the Chinese Students*.(PhD dissertation): The University of Michigan, USA.

Garinger, D. (2002). 'Textbook Selection for the ESL Classroom". *Eric Digest,* no volume and page numbers given. Retrieved from http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest_pdfs/0210garinger.pdf

Grant, N. (1987). *Making the Most of your Textbook*. Hong Kong: Longman Group UK Limited.

Green, A. (1926). 'The Measurement of Modern Language Books'. *The Modern Language Journal*, 10(5), 259-269

Harwood, N. (2005). 'What Do We Want EAP Teaching Materials For?'. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, vol. 4, 149-161.

Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Publishing.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman Publishing.

Hutchinson, T. (1987). 'What's Underneath?: An Interactive View of Materials Evaluation'. In L. Sheldon. (Ed). *ELT Textbook and Materials: Problems in Evaluation and Development* (pp.37-44). Oxford: Modern English Publications.

Hutchinson, T & Torres, E. (1994). 'The Textbook as Agent of Change'. *ELT Journal*,48(4), 315-28

Johnson, K. (1989). *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

Lee, W. (1997). 'The Role of Materials in Classroom Language Use'. In V. Berry., B. Adamson., & W. Littlewood. (Eds), *Applying Linguistics: Insights into Language in Education* (pp.69-82). Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.

Littlejohn, A. (1998). 'The Analysis of Language Teaching Materials: Inside the Trojan Horse". In B. Tomlinson (Ed), *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (pp.190-216). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Litz, D. R.A. (2005). Textbook Evaluation and ELT Management: A South Korea Case Study. *Asian EFL Journal,* no volume and page numbers given. Retrieved from

http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/Litz_thesis.pdf

Man, Y.F. (2000). 'New Professionalism and Old Practices: Voices of Language Teachers'. In D. Li., A, Lin., & W.K. Tsang (Eds), *Language and Education in Postcolonial Hong Kong* (1st ed., 239-262). Hong Kong: Language Society of Hong Kong.

Mares, C. (2003). 'Writing a Coursebook'. In B. Tomlinson (Ed), *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (pp.130-140). London: Continuum.

Marsh, J. & Willis, G. (2003). *Curriculum: Alternative Approaches, Ongoing Issues.* New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Masuhara, H. & Tomlinson, B. (2008). Materials for General English. In B.Tomlinson (Ed), *English Teaching Materials: A Critical Review* (pp. 17-37). London: Continuum.

McDonough, J & Shaw, C. (1993). *Materials and methods in ELT: a teacher's guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

McGrath, I. (2002). *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

McGrath, I. (2006). 'Teachers' and Learners' Images for Coursebooks'. *ELT Journal* 60/2: 171-80

Morris, P. & Adamson, B. (2010). *Curriculum Schooling and Society in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Mukundan, J. (2007). 'Evaluation of English Language Textbooks: Some Important Issues for Consideration'. *Journal of NELTA*, Vol 12 No1&2: 80-4

Mukundan, J. & Ahour, T. (2010). 'A Review of Textbook Evaluation Checklists across Four Decades (1970-2008).' In B. Tomlinson & H. Masuhara. *Research for Materials Development in Language Learning: Evidence for Best Practice* (1st ed.,pp. 336-352). London: Continuum.

Nunan, D. & Lamb, C. (1996). *The Self-Directed Teacher: Managing the Learning Process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Neil, R. (1982). 'Why Use Textbooks?'. *ELT Journal* 36(2), 104-111

Pratt, D. (1994). *Curriculum Planning: A Handbook for Professionals*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers

Print, M. (1993). *Curriculum Development and Design* (2nd ed). St. Leonards, N.S.W., Australia : Allen & Unwin

Reynolds, P.D. (1974). *English Language Teaching and Textbooks in Hong Kong*. Research Unit, Department of Education, University of Hong Kong.

Richards, J.C. (1998). *Beyond Training: Perspectives on Language Teacher Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C., Tung, P., & Ng, P. (1992). 'The Culture of the English Language Teacher: A Hong Kong Example'. *RELC Journal*, 23(1), pp.81-103.

Sheldon, L. (1987). *ELT Textbook and Materials: Problems in Evaluation and Development*. Oxford: Modern English Publications.

Sheldon, L. (1988). Evaluating ELT Textbooks and Materials. *ELT Journal*, 42(4). 237-246.

Skierso, A. (1991). 'Textbook Selection and Evaluation'. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (2nd ed.). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

Sowell, E.J. (1996). *Curriculum: An Integrative Introduction*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Swales, J. (1980). ESP: The Textbook Problem. *The ESP Journal*, 1(1). 11-23.

Tomlinson, B. (Ed.) (2003). *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. London: Continuum.

Tomlinson, B. (Ed.) (2008). *English Language Learning Materials: A Critical Review*. London: Continuum.

Tomlinson, B. (2010). 'Principles of Effective Materials Development'. In N, Harwood (Ed.) (2010). *English Language Teaching Materials: Theory and Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tomlinson, B. & Masuhara, H. (2004). *Developing Language Course Materials*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Tyler, R.W. (1949). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and theory*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, D. (1983). 'Developing Criteria for Textbook Evaluation'. *ELT Journal* 37(3), 251-255

Wong, M.L.Y. (2009). Perspectives on the English Language Education of Hong Kong's Senior Secondary (NSS) Curriculum. *Asian EFL Journal*, 35, no page number given. Retrieved from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/pta_April_2009.pdf

Textbook Evaluated:

Potter, J., Rigby, S., & Wong, K. (2009). *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary: Theme Book*. Hong Kong: Longman.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1 – The Self-Constructed Checklist Used for Textbook Evaluation

This checklist serves as an aid to help teachers of the English language subject of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum to identify how far a NSS English textbook has helped the fulfillment of the recommended teaching strategies and approaches in sections 4.3.1(pg.73) to 4.3.6 (pg.98) of the English Language Curriculum & Assessment Guide (2007) issued by the Curriculum development council (CDC).

This checklist is not designed for evaluation of the teacher's edition of a textbook. One textbook shall be evaluated at a time using this checklist.

This checklist is designed to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. Users are recommended to adapt this checklist to different situational needs and consider the appropriateness regarding the use of this checklist in its entirety.

Please read each of the following statements and choose the best answer which is closest to your opinion by ticking(✓) the box which corresponds to your choice.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Recommendation section 4.3.1 – Use of task-based approach* teaching and learning strategies (CDC 2007:73) ** Tasks are activities in which learners are required to draw together and further develop their knowledge and skills. They are characterized by an emphasis on activity, participation and communication among participants through a variety of modes and media." (CDC 2007:75)*					
Learner-centered instruction (pg. 73)					
The tasks suit my learner's needs					
Tasks encouraged group work or pair work					
Tasks can help my students apply suitable questioning techniques to stimulate thinking					
The task can give opportunities for students to give their own ideas					
Target-oriented English learning (pg. 73)					
Tasks have clear and appropriate targets and objectives					
Tasks have a balanced progression and comprehensive coverage of learning targets for all three Strands					

69

Integrative and creative language use (pg.74)					
There are different theme-based materials for me to choose from the textbook					
Tasks can introduce students to a variety of different text-types (eg. Informational , persuasive)					
Tasks can enhance learner's communicative competence through realistic contexts					
Tasks can stimulate learner's imagination and sharpen their aesthetic sensitivity					
Tasks encouraged student's creative use of English					
Learning grammar in context (pg.75)					
Exercises are devoted to different stages of a task (Pre-task, while-task and post-task)					
Language support is given to learners to carry out different tasks					
Exercises can help learners to master the target structures and items effectively					
Ample opportunities are given to learners to apply their knowledge of grammar					
Exercises can help students to see the connection between forms and functions					
Tasks and exercises (pg.75)					
The task activities of the textbook have the following five features which satisfy the definition of a task:					
1.The tasks have a purpose.					
2.The tasks have a context from which the purpose for using language emerges					
3.The tasks can involve learners in a mode of thinking and doing					
4. The tasks are purposeful activities in which the carrying out of a task should lead towards a product.					

5. The tasks require learner to draw upon their framework of knowledge and skills and should also enable them to strengthen or extend this.					
There is a judicious combination of tasks and supporting exercises for learners					
Exercises are sequenced systematically and integrated with each other to support the task					
Extended tasks and project learning (pg.76)					
Suggestive extended learning tasks are provided so that teachers may engage students in extended tasks or projects					
Extended tasks are suitable to my students					
Recommendation section 4.3.2 Integrated skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (CDC2007:77)					
Integrated skills (pg.77)					
Activities encourage learners to learn and exercise integrated use of skills for authentic purposeful communication					
Listening (pg.77)					
The textbook materials offered a broad range of listening texts					
Listening materials have used authentic (real life) English language					
Listening materials can draw learner's attention to spoken English in their daily lives					
The activities can help students to develop different listening skills (eg. Skills of anticipation, understanding instructions or an idea).					

Speaking (pg.79)					
Textbook activities can help learners to acquire a range of speaking skills. These include (items 1-6):					
1.Accuracy: the skill of using pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to correctly communicate ideas					
2. Fluency: the skill of linking what one says together and producing it at a reasonable "normal" speed					
3. Appropriateness: the skill of using the right language to suit particular situations					
4. Cohesion: the skill of producing utterances which "hang together" grammatically					
5. Coherence: the skill of producing spoken utterances that "hang together" semantically and logically					
6. Interaction strategies: strategies such as asking for clarification, seeking further information					
A wide range of activities are provided to help learners to develop the ability to present information and feelings clearly and coherently and to interact effectively					
Reading (pg.81)					
Reading activities can motivate learners					
Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-reading activities are provided to help learners to become effective readers					
Activities can enhance pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading skills					
There is a wide range of different reading texts with different subject content					
Reading materials help learners to relate English Language learning to daily life.					

Writing (pg.83)					
Activities encourage the use of a process approach to writing					
Activities can help to develop skills at various stages of the writing process (eg. Idea generation, planning, drafting and revising)					
Activities can help students to apply the whole process when they have gained mastery of all strategies					
Activities can help students to identify writing purpose and audience of different text types					
Activities can develop skills in effective beginning and ending of different text-types					
Reading tasks are provided in the writing activities to allow learners to develop insights into the structure of various text-types					
Activities can help learners to enhance their power of structuring writing					
Activities can allow learners to practise writing a broad range of text-types					
Peer review writing activities are provided					
Guidance is given in the textbook to guide learners through the review process					
Recommendation section 4.3.3 The Teaching of Language Arts[*] (CDC 2007:87-88) [*] The term "Imaginative text" has been frequently used in the C&A guide. Examples of imaginative texts are films, songs, lyrics, movies, dramas, novels and short stories.					
The place of language arts in the English Language Curriculum (pg.87)					
Imaginative texts can help learners progress towards the objectives of the Experience Strand					
Imaginative texts can help to develop learner's critical thinking skills					

Imaginative texts can help to develop learner's creativity					
A wide range of language arts materials and activities are provided for teachers for the teaching and learning of English through Language Arts					
Considerations for selecting language arts materials (pg.88)					
Imaginative texts provided are suitable for the language classroom in terms of (items 1-8):					
1. Appropriateness of content					
2. Likelihood of interest to the readers					
3. Amount of cultural knowledge required					
4. Density, pace, level and clarity of language					
5. How the materials are related to the learning objectives, themes of the learning units and students learning in other areas					
6. Degree of visual support (in a film/documentary)					
7. Clarity of sound and picture (in a film/documentary)					
8. The techniques employed (in a film/documentary)					
Recommendation section 4.3.4 Promoting Independent Language Learning (CDC 2007:93)					
What Self Access Language Learning (SALL) is and why it should be promoted (pg. 93)					
Learners can choose materials that suit them					
Developing SALL materials (pg. 94)					
SALL materials supplied with the textbook (items 1-9):					
1.helps to cater for learner diversity					
2.can motivate learners to take more responsibility for their learning					
3.can giver learners wide exposure to English					
4.are relevant and interesting to learners					

5.are categorized carefully and systematically					
6.are graded and arranged from easy to difficult					
7.contain instructions on how to use the learning materials					
8.all have built-in assessment tools					
9.have transcripts included					
Recommendation section 4.3.5 - Information Technology for Interactive Learning (CDC 2007:97)					
The textbook and supporting learning materials encourage the use of technology in learning English					
Online resources are available for students to motivate English language learning					
Suggestive multimedia resources are provided for teachers					
Students find the technological learning aids interesting					
Recommendation section 4.3.6 – Life-wide Learning (CDC 2007:98)					
The textbook provide students wide exposure of authentic (real life) English					
Activities can encourage students to learn authentic English					

OVERALL FITNESS WITH THE RECOMMENDED APPROACHES & STRATEGIES					
The textbook can deliver the recommended approaches and strategies without much need of adaptation of new materials					
In sum, I think this textbook has fully satisfied the approaches and strategies recommended by the NSS English Curriculum and I would like to use this textbook again (Please circle)	Yes No If no, reason is: _____ _____				

Notes

Appendix 2 - Textbook Evaluation Results

Evaluation results: Consensus opinions

AGREEMENT (both agree)	DISAGREEMENT (both disagree)
Recommendation section 4.3.1 – Use of task-based approach teaching and learning strategies (CDC 2007:73)	
The task can give opportunities for students to give their own ideas	Ample opportunities are given to learners to apply their knowledge of grammar
Tasks have clear and appropriate targets and objectives	
Tasks have a balanced progression and comprehensive coverage of learning targets for all three Strands	
There are different theme-based materials for me to choose from the textbook	
Tasks can introduce students to a variety of different text-types (eg. Informational , persuasive)	
The task activities of the textbook have the following five features which satisfy the definition of a task: 1. The tasks have a purpose. 2. The tasks have a context from which the purpose for using language emerges 3. The tasks can involve learners in a mode of thinking and doing	
Recommendation section 4.3.2 Integrated skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (CDC2007:77)	
Integrated Skills: ● Activities encourage learners to learn and exercise integrated use of skills for authentic purposeful communication	
Listening Skills: ● Listening materials have used authentic (real life) English language	
Reading Skills: ● Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-reading activities are provided to help learners to become effective readers ● There is a wide range of different reading texts with different subject content	

Writing Skills: • Activities encourage the use of a process approach to writing • Activities can help to develop skills at various stages of the writing process (eg. Idea generation, planning, drafting and revising) • Activities can help students to identify writing purpose and audience of different text type • Reading tasks are provided in the writing activities to allow learners to develop insights into the structure of various text-types	
Recommendation section 4.3.3 The Teaching of Language Arts* (CDC 2007:87-88)	
	Imaginative texts provided are suitable for the language classroom in terms of amount of cultural knowledge required
Recommendation section 4.3.4 Promoting Independent Language Learning (CDC 2007:93) (Not applicable as this study is focused on evaluating the textbook but not its accompanying Self Access Learning materials.)	
Recommendation section 4.3.5 - Information Technology for Interactive Learning (CDC 2007:97)	
Online resources are available for students to motivate English language learning	
Suggestive multimedia resources are provided for teachers	
Recommendation section 4.3.6 – Life-wide Learning (CDC 2007:98) No consensus opinions in this section	
OVERALL FITNESS WITH THE RECOMMENDED APPROACHES & STRATEGIES	
	The textbook can deliver the recommended approaches and strategies without much need of adaptation of new materials

Appendix 3 - Textbook Evaluation Results

Evaluation results: Differentiated opinions

GENERAL AGREEMENT (one agree & one neutral)	GENERAL DISAGREEMENT (one disagree & one neutral)
Recommendation section 4.3.1 – Use of task-based approach* teaching and learning strategies (CDC 2007:73)	
The tasks suit my learner's needs	Exercises are devoted to different stages of a task (Pre-task, while-task and post-task)
Tasks can help my students apply suitable questioning techniques to stimulate thinking	Exercises can help learners to master the target structures and items effectively
Tasks can stimulate learner's imagination and sharpen their aesthetic sensitivity	Exercises can help students to see the connection between forms and functions
Tasks encouraged student's creative use of English	
The task activities of the textbook have the following five features which satisfy the definition of a task: 4. The tasks are purposeful activities in which the carrying out of a task should lead towards a product. 5. The tasks require learners to draw upon their framework of knowledge and skills and should also enable them to strengthen or extend this.	
There is a judicious combination of tasks and supporting exercises for learners	
Suggestive extended learning tasks are provided that teachers may engage students in extended tasks or projects	
Recommendation section 4.3.2 Integrated skills – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (CDC2007:77)	
Listening Skills: ● The textbook materials offered a broad range of listening texts ● Listening materials can draw learner's attention to spoken English in their daily lives	
Speaking Skill: ● Fluency: the skill of linking what one says together and producing it at a reasonable "normal" speed ● Appropriateness: the skill of using the right language to suit particular situations ● Interaction strategies: strategies such as asking for clarification, seeking further information	● Accuracy: the skill of using pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to correctly communicate ideas ● A wide range of activities are provided to help learners to develop the ability to present information and feelings clearly and coherently and to interact effectively
Reading Skills: ● Reading materials help learners to relate English Language learning to daily life.	

Writing Skills: • Activities can help learners to enhance their power of structuring writing • Activities can allow learners to practise writing a broad range of text-types	• Peer review writing activities are provided • Guidance is given in the textbook to guide learners through the review process

Recommendation section 4.3.3 The Teaching of Language Arts[*] (CDC 2007:87-88)

Imaginative texts can help to develop learner's critical thinking skills	Imaginative texts provided are suitable for the language classroom in terms of the techniques employed (in a film/documentary)
Imaginative texts can help to develop learner's creativity	
Imaginative texts provided are suitable for the language classroom in terms of • appropriateness of content • likelihood of interest to the readers • density, pace, level and clarity of language • how the materials are related to the learning objectives, themes of the learning units and students learning in other areas	

Recommendation section 4.3.4 Promoting Independent Language Learning (CDC 2007:93)

(Not applicable as this study is focused on evaluating the textbook but not the accompanying Self Access Learning materials.)

Recommendation section 4.3.5 - Information Technology for Interactive Learning (CDC 2007:97)

The textbook and supporting learning materials encourage the use of technology in learning English	
Students find the technological learning aids interesting	

Recommendation section 4.3.6 – Life-wide Learning (CDC 2007:98)

The textbook provide students wide exposure of authentic (real life) English	
Activities can encourage students to learn authentic English	

OVERALL FITNESS WITH THE RECOMMENDED APPROACHES & STRATEGIES

No differentiated opinions in this section