

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A THEORY-BASED PRACTICE METHOD IN TEACHING ENGLISH MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT (EMD) COURSE

Erna Iftanti

IAIN Tulungagung, East Java

ernataufic@yahoo.com

Abstract: An English teacher should be able to develop English instructional materials which are more culturally appropriate to his students' cultural context. This is important to help them learn English in their own areas in terms of either the context or the content of instruction which then bring about producing the joy of learning English. Therefore, this paper discusses about my journey of implementing a theory-based practice method to teach students of teacher training education of English Program of IAIN Tulungagung in developing English Instructional Materials. In implementing this method I explained some theories related to developing English instructional materials and the students were guided to do need analysis and to practice developing the materials of English instruction. With this method the students focus on practicing English materials development based on the theories taught. The results of this research indicate that the students have rich learning experiences in developing instructional English materials in accordance to their own selected level of education compared to using fully theory based method to teach English Material Development (EMD).

Key words: *Theory Based Practice Method, EMD*

I believe that the success of teaching and learning English is under the responsibility of parents, students, governments, and teachers as well. A teacher teaching English at any level of education should not only capable of teaching but he/she should also be skillful in selecting and even developing English instructional materials appropriate to their students. Therefore, students of teacher training education should be trained to be able to select and to develop teaching materials. Hence, I, the one responsible to teach English Materials Development (hereafter EMD) in English Program of Islamic State Institute of Tulungagung have been thinking on how to teach this course effectively, so that my students have sufficient capability of developing EMD suitable for teaching English attractive arousing to their students.

However, the instructional materials for teaching English Materials Development course appropriate for students of English Department of IAIN Tulungagung, East Java who are mainly from suburban areas and will much possibly teaching English in their areas are not available yet. Accordingly, it is

significant to develop an instructional material to teach English Material Development. This study is intended to answer a question of how to equip the students of teacher training education in English with knowledge, skill and experience of developing EFL instructional materials, what instructional materials appropriate for teaching students of English Program who are going to teach English in suburban schools and how to develop the English instructional materials for students in suburban areas.

INSTRUCTIONAL ENGLISH MATERIALS

As stated by Kitao & Kitao (1997), basically, there are four groups of people who are responsible for developing materials used in EFL contexts. They include publishing companies, government agencies, curriculum development teams at the school level, and classroom teachers.

Commercial materials, as stated by Gebhard (2000), which include EFL/ESL texts, audiotapes with accompanying workbooks, videotapes with worksheets for students, and computer programs are usually used in private language school or business. In fact, there are now various commercially made texts and other materials on the market for teaching English skills, vocabulary building, and many more. In addition, publishing companies such as Addison-Wesley/Longman, Academic and Professional Book Centre, Cambridge University Press, and some others are producing a full series of texts, from beginner through advanced proficiency levels.

Commercially made EFL teaching materials have some advantages, namely saving time and as a guide which will systematically take teachers new to teaching and students step-by-step through a series of lesson. However, there are some disadvantages of commercial materials. The first is that there is a possible problem of ideological conflict in which each text is usually based on the author's ideas about teaching. For example, some texts writers believe that students should memorize words and grammar rules before they practice speaking, writing, or reading. The others think lots of practice in meaningful contexts is significantly more important. Given a prescribed text, the teacher has to accept the beliefs of the authors. Conflict between the teacher's and author's beliefs about teaching and learning (even conflict at an intuitive level, from language-learning experience) can have negative consequences on what goes on in the classroom. The ideological conflict might also be resulted in the beliefs of those who create the materials.

Materials as according to Kitao & Kitao (1997) differ according to the beliefs of those who create them.

Study of Language in Situations

Those who create materials that focus on the language used in particular situations believe that students can learn English by considering that language used within different social contexts, for example, in doctor's office, shoe store, post office, market, food stalls, or some other contexts.

Developing Communicative Skills

Those who create materials that focus on developing communication skills believe that the primary goal of the materials is to teach communicative competence, that is, “the ability to communicate in English according to the situation, purpose, and roles of the participants. Materials that emphasize the development of communicative competence combine topics, functions (making suggestion, asking for and giving advice, requesting, etc), grammar, and development of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Exploration of Personal Feelings and Attitudes

The writers of the materials that explore personal feelings and attitudes believe that students gain much by expressing their feeling ad attitudes in the target language. Their aim is to teach students self-expression, so that the students’ use of the language might reflect their personalities.

Problem Posing

Writers who create problem posing materials believe that students learn English by solving everyday problems in English

Use of Language for Specific Purpose

Other writers of materials focus on the study of English for specific purposes. They believe that students in specific fields need to focus attention on the kind of language used within their particular field. These materials are geared specifically toward people working in different service industry occupations such as hotel employees, restaurant chefs, factory workers, physicians as well as towards students in academics. In classes teaching English for academic purposes, students study listening and note taking or how to give oral presentation. In classes for people already established in a profession, materials can be given specific content- such as recommendation on how to pass a medical board certification exam.

Yet, when the teachers blindly follow their assigned texts, they are trivializing the experience for students, and if teachers accept their roles as simply taking students step-by-step through a book, their roles are marginalized to that of little more than a technician. Finally, commercially made textbooks are prepared for a wide audience, one that is culturally diverse and geographically dissimilar. Accordingly, the “qualities which give teacher-made and audience specific materials their authenticity and relevance are usually removed. Indeed, the materials do not fit with the teachers’ and students’ needs.

Meanwhile, teachers in a public school in a country with a centralized education system such as Indonesia use instructional materials produced or selected by a government education agency or committee. Some countries establish special committees that either produced their own texts or solicit proposals from teachers to produce texts. After being approved by this central committee, these texts are produced and used in the schools. However, in well established private language schools and corporations with language programs, teachers find their own teaching with locally designed materials which are called as “in-house” materials. They are usually developed by teachers who have some

EFL/ESL teaching experience. Sometimes the writers of the materials are also members of a team who are responsible for designing the curriculum for the language program. As a result, classroom teachers are sometimes given a day-by-day lesson plan, which includes goals of the lesson, steps in implementing it, and the materials needed to teach it. In short, teachers who are not satisfied with the texts, they probably adapt the text or design entire lessons with materials created by themselves.

Further to the types of EFL instructional materials and the ones who are responsible to produce the materials, there are some other things to be taken into account before developing EFL instructional materials such as integrating educational values which are reflected in curriculum and syllabus into the developed instructional EFL materials, steps of developing materials, sources and the availability of the materials, ways of selecting materials, characteristics of the materials and those of the learners.

Everyone has his or her own ideas about the purpose of education. One should not be surprised to find out that different societies assign different purposes to education. People have certain expectations of education, and those expectations in turn influence their teaching and learning approaches. As according to Littlewood (1991), education is done with a purpose and tends to relate to three values, (1) passing on valuable knowledge and culture, (2) preparing learners as members of the society, and (3) developing learners as individuals.

Often an education system is based on a combination of these values, sometimes focusing more on one than the other. These values which are reflected in instructional materials set the goals for the different subjects. Language instruction has five important components, namely students, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation. These means that as being argued by Allwright (1990) that materials should teach students to learn, that they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do. From this point of view, textbooks are too inflexible to be used directly as instructional material. O'Neill (1990), in contrast, argues that materials may be suitable for students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, that textbooks make it possible for students to review and prepare their lessons that textbooks are efficient in terms of time and money, and that textbooks can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation.

Allwright emphasizes that materials control learning and teaching. O'Neill emphasizes that they help learning and teaching. It is true that in many cases teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks, and textbooks determine the components and methods of learning, that is, they control the content, methods, and procedures of learning. Students learn what is presented in the textbook, and the way the textbook presents material is the way students learn it. The educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning process. Therefore, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989) argue that materials have a hidden curriculum that includes attitudes toward knowledge, attitudes toward teaching

and learning, attitudes toward the role and relationship of the teacher and student, and values and attitudes related to gender, society, etc. Materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural information. That is, choices made in writing textbooks are based on beliefs that the writers have about what language is and how it should be taught. Writers may use a certain approach, for example, the aural-oral approach, and they choose certain activities and select the linguistic and cultural information to be included. Each school should develop its own criteria for selecting materials for inclusion in English language arts programs, but virtually all criteria relate to two general requirements for selections: materials must (1) have a clear connection to established educational objectives and (2) address the needs of the students for whom they are intended. Materials must be selected with an eye toward coordinating instruction within and between grade levels, courses, and disciplines.

Clarke (1989) argues that communicative methodology is important and that communicative methodology is *based on authenticity, realism, context, and a focus on the learner*. However, he argues that what constitutes these characteristics is not clearly defined, and that there are many aspects to each. He questions the extent to which these are reflected in textbooks that are intended to be communicative.

To develop English textbooks, the writers should consider the language which should have *correct, natural, recent, and Standard English*. Since students' vocabulary is limited, the vocabulary in textbooks should be controlled or the textbooks should provide information to help students understand vocabulary that they may not be familiar with. For lower-level students, grammar should also be controlled. Many textbooks use narratives and essays. It would be useful to have a variety of literary forms (for example, newspaper articles, poetry, or letters), so that students can learn to deal with different forms.

In addition, information on culture which is correct and recent should also be included in English textbooks. It should not be biased and should reflect background cultures of English. It should include visual aids to help students understand cultural information. Moreover, content English textbooks should be *useful, meaningful and interesting for students*. While no single subject will be of interest to all students, materials should be chosen based, in part, on what students, in general, are likely to find interesting and motivating.

In developing materials, the degree of difficulties, instructional issues, and the relevance of students' needs should also be taken into account. As a general rule, materials should be *slightly higher in their level of difficulty than the students' current level of English proficiency* because this will allow them to learn new grammatical structures and vocabulary. Concerning instructional issues, English textbooks should have *clear instructional procedure and methods*, that is, the teacher and students should be able to understand what is expected in each lesson and for each activity. Textbooks should have support for learning. This can take the form of vocabulary list, exercises which cover or expand on the content, visual aids, etc. Language teaching materials should not be only made up mostly of text, with few, if any, visual aids, but with the development of

technology, photos, visual materials and audio materials as well. Teachers need to learn how to find them, and how to best exploit these characteristics. Materials are getting more complicated and instructional philosophy, approach, methods, and techniques are getting more important. Teachers need to be able to evaluate materials involving photos, videos, and computers now. Finally, materials should be examined for level of difficulty. They must be readable if they are to be truly accessible to students. Because readability formulas tend to be simplistic measures, such formulas should be used cautiously, if at all. Teachers' judgments about the difficulty of a work are more soundly based on complexity of plot, organization, abstractness of the language, familiarity of vocabulary, and clarity of syntax. Also, because the average classroom includes children reading at several levels of proficiency, materials judged as inappropriate for whole-class instruction might be suitable for small-group use or individual book reviews by the more capable readers.

Reading materials which draw upon students' backgrounds are desirable. Both comprehension and motivation are often enhanced when students can activate relevant background knowledge as they read, connecting their personal experiences with vicarious experiences. This does not deny the value of reading about the unfamiliar and even the fantastic. But the relevance of a work to students' daily lives or to the lives of their imaginations is worthy of consideration in the selection process. "Age-appropriateness" alone is never sufficient reason to include particular materials in the English language arts program; nevertheless, materials should be suited to the maturity level of the students for whom they are intended. Although evaluating "age-appropriateness" can be problematic, they can weigh the value of the material as a whole, particularly its relevance to educational objectives.

MODEL OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

A model of an instructional material development helps the writer to make sense of the world, visualize the problem, to break it down into discrete and manageable units. It also offers its users a means of comprehending an otherwise incomprehensible problem. It is then used as an underlying basis of developing an instructional material. There are several models of instructional materials development, such as ADDIE with its variations, the Dick & Carey, and Kemp Instructional System Design.

According to the ADDIE model there are some steps to develop instructional materials which cover Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. In the steps of **Analysis**, the writer should conduct need analysis to determine the basis for all future decision such as the gap in between the ideal and the factual of the instructional materials, and identifying the users, limitation, opportunities, and other important points useful in the design process. Meanwhile, in **the Design process** or a brainstorming step, the writer will make use of the information collected in the need analysis step to create an instructional material that meets the needs of the users. Subsequently, in **the Development phase**, the writer focuses on building the outcome of the design phase. This process consumes much of the time spent in creating a sound educational program or course which includes various steps such as initial

drafts, reviews, re-writes, and testing. The next step- **the Implementation step**- covers more processes than simply presenting the materials developed. While the concepts and materials have been tested throughout the process, the implementation phase can uncover topics that require further development or re-design work. The processes for this phase vary based on the size of the organization, the complexity of the program or course, and the distribution of the materials. This includes such concepts as test pilots, train-the-trainer sessions, and other delivery methods to present the materials. The last step- the **Evaluation phase** plays an important role in the beginning and at the end of the process. The objectives of the evaluation step reflect much of the discoveries found in the Analysis process. These discoveries include the objectives and expectations of the learner (<http://www.instructionaldesignexpert.com/addie.html>).

THEORY-BASED PRACTICE

The term theory-based practice is used to describe the strategy of teaching and learning activities by integrating and linking theory to practice. With this strategy, the learners are not only learn the theoretical information and knowledge, but also implementing them in practices. The strategy which integrates theory into practice has taken place in UK in the past few years (Galton, 2000). This is useful to develop critical thinking skills via a learner-centred approach and to integrate clinically relevant material into the basic science component of the vertically integrated curriculum.

In applying this strategy, students will have the opportunity to apply theory and principles from these earlier courses and put them to practical use. With this theory-based practice, a large part of class time will be used for workshops where students will work together in groups, in pairs and individually to evaluate, adapt and design materials, based on the needs of their students, with the help of the lecturers/tutors. Some of the outputs from these workshops may be included in students' assignments and project. The students will be expected to find time between sessions to do further work on materials development tasks that they start in the workshop sessions, in addition to reading hand out provided by the lecturers and some other supporting texts related to material development. It is also recommended that during the course participants spend some time looking carefully at published materials as a source of ideas on content, topics, task types, layout and design, methodology and syllabus. The assignment for this course can be in the form of a piece of professional work in materials design or materials evaluation, rather than a traditional academic essay.

In addition, with the implementation of the theory-based practice, a lecturer is not anymore the center of instructional activities. Instead, he will act as a facilitator, consultant, and a guide toward the achievement of learning objective. Hence, he will take about 40 % of the class time. This means that if there are 16 meetings in one semester, then he will take about 6 to 7 meetings to deliver the knowledge of how to develop instructional materials. Thus an effective pedagogy requires that educational

theory needs to be integrated with teacher's *craft knowledge*, that is knowledge of *what works in practice*.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEORY-BASED PRACTICE

To implement this theory based practice, there are some procedures, namely teaching preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Teaching Preparation

In the first meeting, the teacher invites the students to make a teaching and learning contract by which both the teacher and the students know what they are doing in what condition for how long. The instructional contract which is written in the form of course outline (written as an attachment) is used as the guideline to conduct the instructional practice. The contract is then shared to each student.

Implementation

Prior to the development of English instructional materials, I spend about 5 first meetings to deliver and explain about theories of English materials development which are broken down into 7 parts - EFL/ESL materials, educational values and material development, selecting and developing teaching/learning materials, guidelines for selection of materials in English language arts programs, how to develop a course criteria for high school English class, 15 criteria for a good kindergarten English song, criteria for a good pre-school English class, models of instructional material development. The variety of the materials learned will help learners to develop instructional materials based on their own interest either those for students of elementary school, those of secondary, or those of university students.

Each part is divided into several sections. Part one –EFL/ESL materials- consist of several sections such as Who create the Materials Available to EFL/ESL Teachers? How Do Materials Reflect the Beliefs of Those Who Create Them? What are the advantages and disadvantages of commercial materials? What are authentic materials? What types are available? Advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials, Sources of Authentic Materials, and How to use authentic materials. Part two – Educational values and material development- consists of several sections such as introduction, two education systems two different values, Kenyan primary education example, the purpose of education related to the language curricula, and the implications for material development. Part three - Selecting and developing teaching/learning materials- comprises some sections namely selecting and developing teaching/learning materials, the Role of Materials in Relation to Other Elements, What are Characteristics of Materials? Good article criteria, What is not a good article? Language and information on culture, From Learners' Viewpoints, How Can We Learn About Materials? and How do we Get Materials? Part four - guidelines for selection of materials in English language arts programs- consists of some parts such as Importance of Instructional Material, Scope of the Policy for Selection of Instructional Materials, criteria for selecting materials, Connection to Educational Objectives, Relevance to Student Needs, Procedures and

Responsibility for Selection of Instructional Materials, and Opportunity for Informal Selection. Meanwhile part five - How to develop course criteria for high school English class- discusses about the steps to consider in planning high school English course criteria and part six discusses 15 criteria for a good kindergarten English song. Part seven discusses about criteria of a good pre-school English class. Finally, part eight discusses about models of developing English instructional materials such as Dick and Carey system approach model, Kemp instructional design model, and ADDIE model.

Following classroom activity of explaining the theories included in the hand-book, in the seventh meeting, the students are assessed by doing written test. This test is intended to measure the students' understanding on the development of English instructional materials. Since the students of teacher training education program in English will get much involved in English teaching practices at any level of education they are interested in, to equip themselves with ability of developing English instructional material is demanding. Therefore, to integrate the students' knowledge on the theories the students have learned in the first six meetings, with my guidance, they are assigned to develop English instructional materials. Because of the time limitation available in one semester, the steps conducted in developing English instructional materials does not thoroughly follow the Models of developing materials as they have learned. There are only three steps done to develop supplementary English instructional materials: doing need analysis, designing the process of developing instructional materials, and developing English instructional materials.

In doing need analysis, the students are assigned to analyze the values of Indonesian education in order that they can reflect those values in their developed materials, evaluate curriculum and syllabus of English so that they have an underlying basis in the development of supplementary English instructional materials, and to evaluate the existing English instructional materials which aims at identifying the gap between the ideal and real fact of the English instructional materials. To get rich information on the needs of the English learners and teachers from their points of view, the students are also assigned to interview both the students and the teachers. This need analysis can be done together with their peers sharing common interest in the level of education and the academic year the English learners are staying in. Then they are assigned to report the result of their need analysis and to discuss it with their peers before being individually consulted to me. On the basis of the result of the need analysis, then I guide the students to start writing the first draft of the English instructional materials. They are assigned to write both teacher's book and student's book which consist of at least three units. Each unit covers all four English skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing-. Vocabulary section is integrated in 'Reading' and grammar section is integrated in 'Writing'. In drafting the supplementary English materials, the students are suggested either to compile or to evaluate the existing materials or to develop the materials by using authentic materials. The important thing is that product should be different from the existing English instructional materials.

I invite the students to show me their first draft and consult it in order to get my feedback. Their consultation is done individually in the class time. The students schedule themselves on who should consult when. In each consultation stage, there are only about seven students in one meeting -100 minutes. While waiting for other groups to consult their first draft, for those who already consulted their first draft, they are assigned to revise the draft based on the feedback I give. The feedback covers the appropriateness of the instructional materials with the values of education and curriculum / syllabus, the language usage, the content, lay out, the level of difficulties, and the local culture. Since in each class there are about 30 students, so I need about 4 meeting to check the students' first draft. The rest four meetings is spend to recheck the students' revised draft. Finally, the students' final product of English material development which consists of one student's book, one teacher's book, and CD is submitted as the final project.

Evaluation

To evaluate the conduct of the theory based practice, in the final meeting I invite the students to give comment on the implication of this teaching and learning technique. The students' written comment mainly reveals that using a theory-based practice is first considered to be difficult and requires working hard. However, they regard that this instructional technique is believed to be more effective to teach English Material Development for students of teacher training education than using a whole theory-learning basis because the lecturer can facilitates effective teaching and learning practices. The students are not only able to understand the theories of English instructional materials but also able to answer the challenging of developing effective English instructional materials when they come to be English teachers. This instructional technique encourages meaning-making by connecting scientific phenomena to students' lived experiences and knowledge. However, since this theory-based practice approach needs more time for lecturers to guide the students in developing English instructional materials, the technique will not be effectively done in a big class. Moreover, both the lecturer and the students should work based on the planned schedule if they want this theory-based practice to be well and effectively done.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The overall findings can be summarized that candidate teachers are pedagogically innovative with the implication of theory based practice approach to teach English Material Development. Regardless the limitation in terms of time and the higher requirement of working harder to achieve either the general and specific objectives of the course – English Material Development- this theory based practice approach leads the learners mainly the students of teacher training education to have rich experience as instructional materials designers which are later useful for them to get involved in teaching and learning English at any level of education they are interested in. This teaching technique is then considered to be applicable in any colleges offering common characteristics with

what has been in IAIN Tulungagung. However, it is suggested that anybody applying this theory-based practice should strictly hold the instructional contract. Moreover, this teaching and learning technique is better implemented in a small class of about 20 students. Since, it takes more time to well implement this instructional technique, it is better to provide the students with longer time – ideally it takes two semesters.

References

- Allwright, R. L. (1990). What do we want teaching materials for? In R. Rossner and R. Bolitho, (Eds.), *Currents in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, D. F. (1989). Communicative theory and its influence on materials production. *Language Teaching*, 22, 73-86.
- Gebhard, J.G.2000. *Teaching English as Foreign or Second Language*. Michigan: The Michigan University Press
- Kitao, Kenji and Kitao, S. Kathleen. 1997. Selecting and Developing Teaching/Learning Materials. *The Internet TESL Journal*, IV (4). (Online), (<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-Materials.html>), accessed on February 20, 2013
- Littlejohn, A., & Windeatt, S. (1989). Beyond language learning: Perspective on materials design. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Littlewood, W. 1991. Curriculum design. *Applied linguistics and language teaching*, by R. Bowers, and C. J. Brumfit. London. Macmillan and The British Council, 11–22.
- O'Neill, R. (1990). Why use textbooks? In R. Rossner and R. Bolitho, (Eds.), *Currents in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.