

How do quality
learning resources
fit into a wider
policy context?



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Locating quality materials within education and training

An analytic view – theory-driven and informed by international comparisons

Not for me to determine what is good and what is not

Should customers decide?

Protected design – balance of common goods and legitimate interests

Establishing quality through ‘reflection and self-regulation’ –
Leveson experience re balance of self-regulation and legal constraint

Framing the debate



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- in England, during the 1980s and 1990s, there was a tendency towards a carefully-managed linkage between qualifications and textbooks/resources (Nuffield Biology, Suffolk Science, SMP Maths) – although an anti-textbook orthodoxy began to consolidate
- textbooks seen as ‘part of the steering mechanism’ of education in Finland, and many high performing jurisdictions use an ‘approved textbook’ model
- England had no experience of the precise impact of high accountability arrangements; they have driven extreme instrumentalism into resources and textbooks
- Textbooks and resources are not simple, nor should they be seen as ‘an afterthought’
- Stigler and Stevenson, Reynolds and Farrell find that highly effective teachers welcome high quality textbooks



Fitting learning resources into a wider policy framework

- 1 curriculum content (nc specifications, support materials, etc)
- 2 assessment and qualifications
- 3 national framework for qualifications
- 4 inspection
- 5 pedagogy
- 6 professional development
- 7 institutional development
- 8 institutional forms and structures (eg size of schools, education phases)
- 9 allied social measures (linking social care, health care and education)
- 10 funding
- 11 governance (autonomy versus direct control)
- 12 accountability arrangements
- 13 labour market/professional licensing
- 14 allied market regulation (eg health & safety legislation; insurance regulation)

Conclusion?

The power of textbooks and resources (as encoding of good practice, as support, needs to be recognised fully

Jump straight to State-approved textbooks? State approval not the only route to quality

There should be far greater deliberation over design content and use – resources are central to appropriate ‘curriculum control’



Why the current debate on textbooks and resources?

because it shone out of the transnational analysis

because it broke assumptions

because pleas for the status of the ‘enacted curriculum’ miss the role of textbooks

because ‘curriculum control’ is widely misunderstood

because instrumentalism has become rife in the English system



Select Committee inquiry 2012 – the administration of public examinations

No linkage?

Some linkage?

Exactly what linkage?

Ofqual inquiry

Oates T 2012 *The role of high quality textbooks in raising educational standards – how we need to link textbooks to curriculum and to assessment – the evidence from transnational analysis*. Submission to the Education Select Committee March 2012



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You would say that....

‘...it is not the form of the relationship or the legal relationship between publisher and examination body which determines quality. Quality is dependent on other crucial factors...’

Oates T 2012 The role of high quality textbooks in raising educational standards – how we need to link textbooks to curriculum and to assessment – the evidence from transnational analysis. Submission to the Education Select Committee March 2012

Teaching quality – perhaps the most vital factor of all (John Hattie)

How do textbooks relate to the quality of the enacted curriculum?

Misinterpreting Singapore – missing learning models and principles, misunderstanding surface features such as repetition

Hong Kong – secondary maths

Pre-requisites

Review

Different forms of the equations of circles

Features of circles from the equations

Equations of circles from the different given conditions

Intersection of a straight line and a circle

Learning objectives

Problems

Check through assessment: 6 problems, 1 practice exam Q, 1 *lively maths problem*

Clear concepts/constructs

Good elaboration through application

Checking understanding

Spiral curriculum model



Singapore – secondary maths

Chapter overview – story, topic – engagement

Discover – learning outcomes

Use of diagrams explained

Key ideas – concepts/constructs – margin notes – focus on concepts

Worked examples

Did you know – interesting facts

Guidance on the use of a calculator

Exercises

‘Time out activity’

Journal writing task

Summary – recap and revision – checking main concepts

Revision paper

Ten-minute concept check

Review paper

Enrichment maths

IGCSE textbook

Old fashioned – high expectations, flexible

Matches the National Curriculum –School Curriculum distinction in
Could Do Better

IGCSE text presupposes high quality teaching
Singapore text embodies good teaching

GCSE textbook – KS4 Geography

Varied structure – complex

Higher tier elements

Lower tier elements

299 pages

Sample GCSE exam paper p11



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Who should buy them?

The State through directed grant

The school

The family

Loss

Cost - inequity



Giving people what they want rather than what they need

Are market forces enough?

Asymmetry and imperfections

Competing on 'quality' – but what does 'quality' mean?

The need for action

The need for moral purpose and ruthless self monitoring

The need for discussion and constant analysis

Textbooks count

There is an unacceptable level of market failure

A degree of collectivism may be an antidote

Quality needs to be defined and asserted through mutual critique and re-oriented competitive focus

The long game asserts the public good

End





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Hong Kong

Singapore

Japan

Korea

Alberta

Massachusetts

France

Finland



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Domestic evidence

1970's and 1980's

SMP maths

Nuffield science

Wessex Science

Schools' History Project



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Schmidt and Prawat

- curriculum coherence
- curriculum control

Policy potential: understanding the relative performance of different national systems through 'control factors'

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Case #1

Singapore

The aims diagram

Textbooks

Tutoring

Innovation

The importance of curriculum aims

‘White space’

‘Teach less learn more’

Case #2
Finland

Dirigiste control to effect a fully comprehensive system\
Regulation of textbooks until 1990/94
Student association review of textbooks
Textbooks theorised as part of the ‘steering system’ of general education



Case #3

Japan

Relaxing and tightening

National standards

Textbooks

Central prescription of 'loosened elements'

2002 crisis



Japan and Korea

Crisis in textbooks – content and interpretation

Textbook screening from 1947, produced by private providers and authorised by the Ministry of Education, with final decision by local education authorities

Four-year cycle of textbook approval

History of controversy and tension: Korea, China:

Forced suicides

Territorial ownership

Imperial military policy

Reynolds and Farrell Worlds Apart

The counterintuitive finding – high quality teachers like textbooks

Case #4

France

‘...One of the criteria for selection is usually expected to be that the textbook stands alone, that is, that it does not depend on the provision of support documents. Groups of teachers in each subject area meet under the chairmanship of the school principal (or equivalent) to discuss their proposed criteria for the selection of textbooks and their proposed list of textbooks. These criteria and the list are then put before the school's *Conseil d'administration* (board of governors), which includes some parent members. This *Conseil* makes its opinion known, but the final decision is that of the 'teaching council' (the council of all relevant subject teachers). Their decision must be made public no later than the June preceding the start of the relevant school year. ***Textbooks must leave teachers free to choose their own teaching methods***, which can be suitably adapted in accordance with the needs of different groups of students.

It is generally expected that a school's list of recommended textbooks should not be changed too often. Four years is the recommended replacement period for textbooks in France. Any change of textbook or purchase of supplementary textbooks during the course of the school year is prohibited. Teachers are also expected to use the same textbooks for classes of the same level...’



Who are textbooks for?

Directly

teachers

pupils (writing in them)

Indirectly

parents

awarding bodies

publishers

the State

society