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Alignment of Coursebook and Curriculum: Effective Business English Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

Confronted with the challenges of an interconnected work environment, students often have difficulties in connecting theoretical knowledge with practical communication skills. This article examines the potential of business English coursebooks to be reimagined as transforming tools that equip students to traverse the business environment effortlessly. Previously seen as purely theoretical resources, these coursebooks may now be recognized as valuable assets for students. We contend that meticulously crafted coursebooks, when used proficiently, may serve as gateways to developing essential communication aptitudes, cultural consciousness, and pragmatic negotiation proficiencies. Through interesting case studies, interactive activities, and simulations, students obtain genuine experience in composing emails, making presentations, and participating in negotiations, increasing confidence and enhancing their employability potential. In conclusion, we emphasize the many advantages of using coursebooks not just as reservoirs of information but also as dynamic tools for molding self-assured and accomplished corporate communicators. This article only concentrates on the compliance of the coursebook to the aims of the course of the English major students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade.

Keywords: Business English, Coursebook, Confidence, Communication Skills, Employability

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Introduction

In the dynamic world of education, the simple mention of "coursebook" may provoke a furious argument. Proponents praise it as an organized guide, a knowledge library, and a path to learning triumph (Harmer, 2015). While no teaching philosophy is fundamentally good or evil, each has both the potential for brilliance and danger. To perfect their profession, instructors should critically reflect on their behaviors, intents, and the underlying viewpoints (including strengths and shortcomings) that shape them. Beyond the constraints of "one size fits all" solutions, varied teaching views can serve as helpful lenses for this self-evaluation and continual improvement (Pratt, 2002). But tucked at the core of this discussion lies a vital

truth: the usefulness of a coursebook rests not on its mere appearance but on its alignment with the curriculum it serves (Oates, 2014).

This study finds into the complicated swing between coursebook and curriculum, demonstrating how their harmonic alignment forms the bridge to optimal learning outcomes. We explore below the surface sparkle of engaging activities and polished lessons, to analyze the underlying linkages between material, instructional techniques, and evaluation methodologies. Through this research, we hope to illustrate the potential of a well-aligned coursebook as a dynamic driver for student engagement, critical thinking, and ultimately, the effective accomplishment of targeted learning objectives.

Our trip starts with a careful analysis of the theoretical basis of alignment. We study how alignment creates clarity and transparency, providing students with a roadmap for knowledge acquisition and application (Cunningsworth, 1995). This, in turn, fosters motivation and active engagement, converting passive learners into involved navigators of their learning path (Ellis, 1997).

Furthermore, we enter into the world of critical thinking, a cornerstone of 21st-century education. We deconstruct how a well-aligned coursebook pushes students to evaluate, synthesize, and apply information via different viewpoints and sophisticated problem-solving assignments.

And last, we address the practical difficulties of educators struggling with the broad landscape of coursebook selection. We propose methodologies and frameworks for analyzing and maximizing alignment within current courses, relying upon research in textbook review (Sheldon, 1998) and curriculum development models. We allow instructors to make educated decisions that adapt to the individual requirements of their students and learning situations.

Through this extensive examination, we attempt to shatter the dichotomy of textbook hero and villain, instead establishing alignment as the fundamental prerequisite for accessing the transformational potential of coursebooks. This paper, therefore, serves as a call to action for educators, curriculum designers, and coursebook creators to join hands in constructing bridges of alignment, paving the way for a future where textbooks become not simply tools, but potent partners in the journey toward effective and meaningful learning.

Literature Review

Definitions

As (Tomlinson, 2011) notes, a textbook is "any resource used to assist instructors in teaching students." This spans a broad variety of forms, including student books, workbooks, instructor aids, and digital tools.

Within ELT, (Sheldon, 1998) raises the textbook to the "visible core of any curriculum." It serves as the authoritative source of material, working as both a basis for students' studies and a crucial instructional tool.

Typically, textbooks give thorough treatment of a topic, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and skills development tasks spanning reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

A coursebook, as described by (Tomlinson, 2011), is the "essential reading" for a language-learning class, shared by both instructor and student. It works as the major resource for the course, seeking to compress all relevant knowledge into one book.

In ELT, coursebooks typically become the core text, creating the curriculum and driving both teaching and learning. They give a structured framework with specific learning goals and activities matched with the expected results.

The word "materials" spans the largest category, embracing any resource that aids language teaching and learning (Littlejohn, 1998 & 2011); (McGrath, 2013). This covers classic media like textbooks and workbooks but also extends to digital tools, realia, and even presentations.

Materials provide flexibility and may be utilized in numerous combinations to improve and complement the fundamental material supplied by textbooks and coursebooks.

While textbooks and coursebooks may be regarded as kinds of resources within the ELT environment, important differences exist. Textbooks provide greater information and may be utilized across multiple courses, whereas coursebooks are more firmly matched with particular learning goals and curricular frameworks.

Ultimately, the usefulness of any resource resides in its alignment with the learning objectives and context. Understanding the distinctions between textbooks, coursebooks, and resources helps educators make educated decisions and create a rich and engaging learning environment for their students.

The Benefits of coursebooks

Textbooks have long been a mainstay in schools, providing as a cornerstone for education, learning, and classroom relationships. Beyond merely having pages loaded with information, textbooks provide many advantages for both instructors and students.

At their essence of a wealth of knowledge and resources, textbooks are knowledge vaults, giving a systematic and complete overview of the subject matter. This is further supplemented by supplementary resources including teacher's manuals, workbooks, and audio-visual components (Donoghue, 1992) and (Littlejohn, 1998 & 2011). This complete bundle ensures teachers have the necessary materials to properly present the curriculum and students have many opportunities to interact with the subject.

With empowering teachers and students, textbooks go beyond merely delivering knowledge; they operate as training grounds for both instructors and pupils. (Tomlinson, 2003) contends that textbooks may "re-skill" both parties. For instructors, the plethora of images, activity sheets, and lesson plans inside textbooks and manuals gives significant tools for constructing interesting lessons and tailor-making

materials for their pupils. This allows teachers to be more than simply instructors; they become co-creators of the learning experience.

For students, textbooks operate as roadmaps directing their progress through the course. They give clarity on learning goals, enabling students to monitor their progress and highlight areas requiring more attention. This provides a feeling of direction and ownership of their learning path (McGrath, 2013).

By boosting efficiency and engagement, the organized form of textbooks frees up significant time for both instructors and learners. Teachers should spend less time preparing basic materials and concentrate on providing engaging activities and tailored assistance for their students. Students, in turn, may dedicate more time to active learning and applying their knowledge, rather than striving to master essential ideas.

While the educational environment continues to shift, textbooks remain a significant tool in the classroom. Their abundance of information, resources, and organized approach create a strong foundation for both instructors and students, allowing them to learn, develop, and attain their targeted learning objectives.

Business English Course Description

Context and Coursebook:

This Business English course covers two semesters within a four-year curriculum, given six credits. It leverages a book that was produced in conjunction with the Financial Times and Pearson Longman. This multi-level resource contains extensive resources, including 12 courses addressing essential international business concepts. Teacher's guides, student resources, and self-study materials

Audio, video, and other multimedia aspects. Accredited material with correct and up-to-date information Integrated development of all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and unit-specific exercises to increase general business English skills

Key Features and Benefits:

- Real-world relevance: Extracts and case studies from the Financial Times increase business vocabulary and polish critical thinking abilities.
- Practical skills development: Role-playing, simulations, and group presentations strengthen communication and teamwork abilities.
- Engaged learning: Students actively engage in interactive activities, producing a good learning atmosphere.
- Updated content: The redesigned coursebook follows current developments and helps students understand appropriate business language.
- Confidence boost: Mastering corporate communication boosts employability and opens doors to professional prospects.

Course Objectives:

- Gain knowledge of workplace lingo and basic business scenarios.
- Develop cognitive and communication abilities linked to career planning.
- Explore themes including corporate development, operations, culture, customer behavior, workplace initiatives, and stress management.
- Master fundamental corporate communication skills including bargaining, presenting, phone etiquette, socializing, introducing ideas, expressing views in meetings, problem-solving, and brief report delivering.
- Begin basic two-way translation and interpretation (English-Vietnamese, Vietnamese-English).
- Cultivate a self-directed attitude to learning and professional growth.

Assessment:

- This course uses the university's normal evaluation format:
- 50% summative evaluation during the 15-week semester.
- 50% final test.

Methodology

Data Collection and Instruments Informant Sources:

This research relies on data acquired directly from students actively engaged with the materials throughout the research time and the researcher, using and studying the resources, contributed to data gathering and interpretation. They assessed both the curriculum and materials, performed a survey, and analyzed the acquired data to evaluate the materials' effectiveness.

Research Instruments:

Two major data-gathering devices were employed:

Questionnaires: To analyze the coursebook's conformity with teaching techniques, student requirements, and contemporary learning methodologies, different questionnaires were prepared for students. Each questionnaire contained five components, with the student version accessible in Vietnamese and English.

Likert scales have been used to raise the following questions.

<i>Completely inappropriate</i>	<i>Inappropriate</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Appropriate</i>	<i>Completely appropriate</i>
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1. *How do you assess how much the curriculum fulfills the course's objectives? The content aligns with the goals of the course.*

2. *How do you assess how much the curriculum fulfills the course's objectives? The textbook includes vocabulary and specialized terminology.*

3. *How do you assess how much the curriculum fulfills the course's objectives? The textbook's content aligns with the course's goals and objectives.*

4. *How do you evaluate the degree to which the curriculum meets the following objectives of the course? The curriculum encompasses the four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.*

5. *How do you evaluate the degree to which the curriculum meets the following objectives of the course? [Develop individual, pair/group working capabilities]*

6. *How do you evaluate the degree to which the curriculum meets the following objectives of the course? [Develop English ability to start utilizing independently]*

Results and Discussion

Statistics

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6
N	96	96	96	96	96	96
Valid						
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation	.5557	.5489	.5982	.6142	.7070	.7179

The data suggests that for each of these criteria, there's a reasonable consensus among respondents, as indicated by the moderate standard deviations. However, the slightly higher values for Q.5 and Q.6 suggest more diverse opinions or experiences regarding these specific aspects of the survey or evaluation. So this data could be used in various contexts, such as educational curriculum evaluation, employee performance reviews, customer satisfaction surveys, etc. The key takeaway is understanding where there is more agreement or consensus (lower standard deviations) and where opinions are more varied (higher standard deviations), which can guide improvements or address specific issues.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Val 3.0	8	8.3	8.3	8.3
	4.0	64	66.7	66.7	75.0
	5.0	24	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	
Invalid					

The data reveals a generally favorable reaction towards whatever is being assessed, with a significant leaning towards the higher score of 4.0. It's a valuable tool for evaluators to understand the impact and reception of their subject and to make informed decisions based on Business English learners' feedback.

Q.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Val 3.0	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
	4.0	58	60.4	60.4	64.6
	5.0	34	35.4	35.4	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	
Invalid					

The data shows that the curriculum, via its textbook, is mainly effective in adding appropriate language and specialist terminology, fitting well with the course's goals. The tiny fraction of lower ratings might be studied further to determine particular faults or areas for development in the textbook's content. For curriculum developers or educators, such data is crucial as it provides direct feedback on the effectiveness of educational materials in meeting learning goals, enabling targeted improvements.

Q.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Val 3.0	10	10.4	10.4	10.4
	4.0	59	61.5	61.5	71.9
	5.0	27	28.1	28.1	100.0
Invalid					

	Tot			
al	96	100.0	100.0	

The data indicates a generally positive view of how well the textbook content aligns with the course's objectives, with a substantial number of respondents indicating satisfaction. The occurrence of lower ratings, however minimal, implies there are places where the textbook may be changed to better fit with the course goals. For educators and curriculum designers, such feedback is invaluable. It emphasizes the strengths in the textbook alignment with course goals and points out areas where revisions might boost educational efficacy.

Q.4

		Frequen	Percen	Valid	Cumulative
		cy	t	Percent	Percent
id	Val 3.0	10	10.4	10.4	10.4
	4.0	56	58.3	58.3	68.8
	5.0	30	31.3	31.3	100.0
	Tot				
al	96	100.0	100.0		

The curriculum is generally viewed as successful in teaching the core language skills, which is necessary for language acquisition. The lower scores highlight probable areas where the curriculum could be weak. Further research might identify particular parts of listening, speaking, reading, or writing that require greater attention or better integration. This input is vital for instructors and curriculum creators to modify their approach, guaranteeing a balanced and complete language learning experience that successfully strengthens all four basic abilities.

Q.5

		Frequen	Percen	Valid	Cumulative
		cy	t	Percent	Percent
id	Val 1.0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	3.0	9	9.4	9.4	10.4
	4.0	51	53.1	53.1	63.5
	5.0	35	36.5	36.5	100.0

	Tot			
al		96	100.0	100.0

The data shows that, generally, the program is successful in promoting individual, couple, and group working capacities. This is significant since these abilities are vital for collaborative work situations and personal growth. The existence of average and extremely low scores, however minimal, indicates particular areas where the curriculum may be further strengthened to facilitate skill development in all students more effectively. For educators and curriculum designers, identifying the particular requirements and gaps as seen by these respondents might aid in refining the curriculum to better promote the development of collaborative and independent work abilities.

Q.6

		Frequen	Percen	Valid	Cumulative
		cy	t	Percent	Percent
Val	1.0	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
id	2.0	2	2.1	2.1	3.1
	3.0	4	4.2	4.2	7.3
	4.0	56	58.3	58.3	65.6
	5.0	33	34.4	34.4	100.0
Tot					
al		96	100.0	100.0	

The evidence shows that the program is typically successful in promoting the capacity to use English independently, an important result in language acquisition. The existence of lower scores shows that there may be certain sections or components of the curriculum that might be enhanced to benefit all learners in developing autonomous English use abilities. For educators and curriculum creators, it would be good to understand why a small subgroup of respondents believes the curriculum is less successful and address these areas to increase the overall effectiveness of the language learning program.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "Alignment of Coursebook and Curriculum: Effective Business English Learning Outcomes," gives a complete assessment of how well-aligned coursebooks may considerably boost learning

outcomes in Business English courses. The research emphasizes the relevance of coursebooks not just as stores of information but as dynamic devices that support the development of practical communication skills, cultural awareness, and negotiating abilities. The study conducted at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade for third-year students of Business English reveals that when coursebooks are properly linked with the curriculum, they become strong instruments in changing students into confident and skilled communicators, hence enhancing their employability.

The data gathered and evaluated in this research demonstrates a generally good response to the coursebook among students and teachers, showing its usefulness in satisfying course goals and developing fundamental language abilities. The coursebook, Market Leader Preintermediate produced in conjunction with the Financial Times and Pearson Longman, delivers a combination of academic knowledge and practical skills via real-world case studies, interactive exercises, and simulations. This technique not only develops students' business vocabulary and critical thinking abilities but also raises their confidence in real-world business circumstances.

However, the research also reveals places for development, as indicated by diverse answers in specific parts of the coursebook's usefulness. These results show the necessity for continual refining of the coursebook to ensure it satisfies the various needs of all learners and stays connected with the newest trends and requirements in the corporate sector.

To sum up, this work presses the revolutionary potential of well-aligned coursebooks in business English teaching. It argues for a collaborative effort among educators, curriculum designers, and coursebook makers to continually develop and modify these resources, ensuring they serve as effective bridges in the path toward successful and meaningful learning outcomes in corporate communication.

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