

*Language Learning Materials
Development: Getting to the heart of
language pedagogy*

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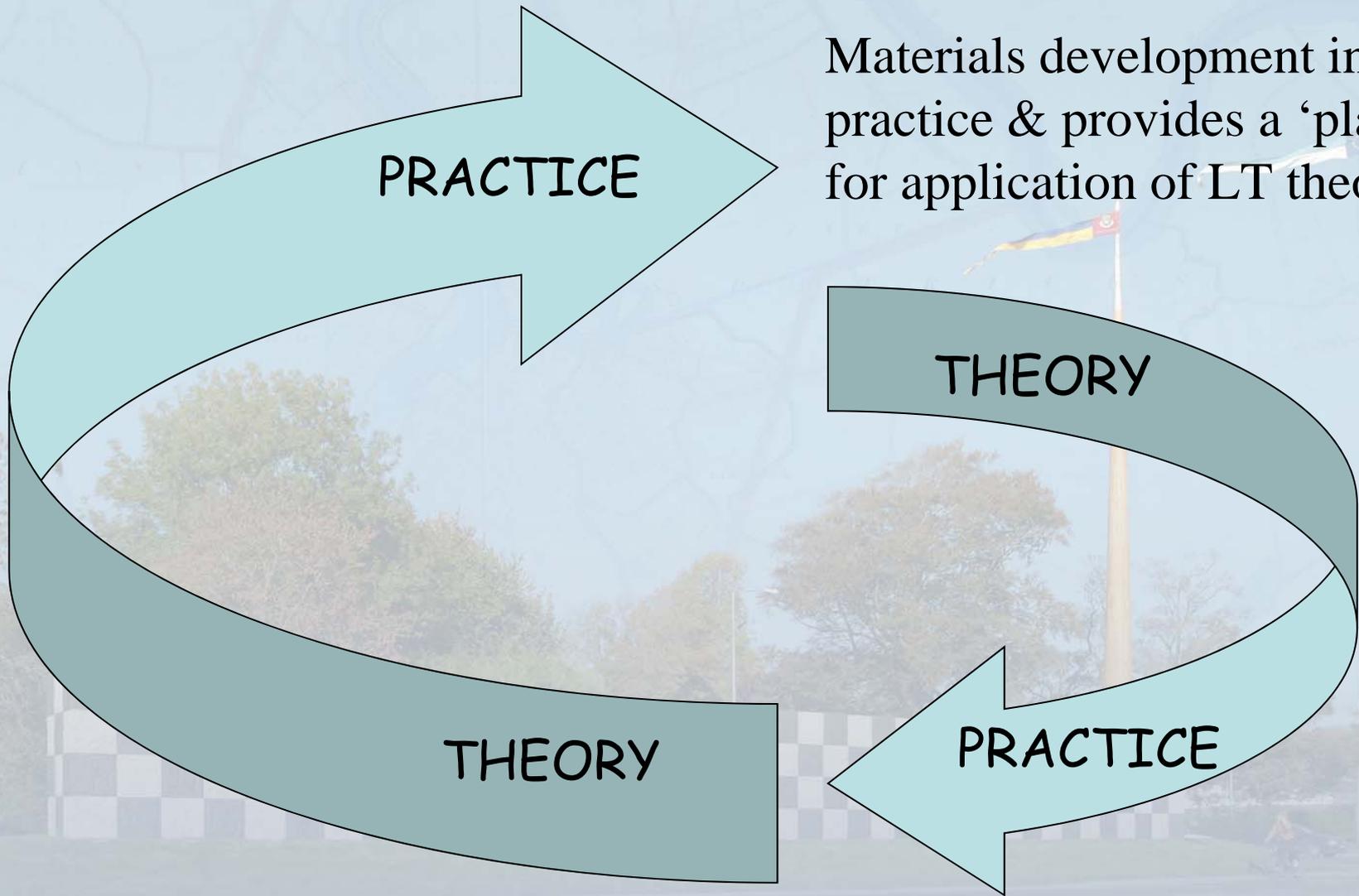
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Materials Development: Getting to the heart of language pedagogy

- In language learning, materials ARE the learning
- Materials the portal to TL/TLC learning
- ➤ Materials development at HEART of language teaching & learning
- ➤ *Principled* development of materials
- Grounded in SLA research & theory
- ➤ *But what about the course book?*
- The processes of materials development
- Technology and language learning
- Localisation



Materials development informs practice & provides a 'place' for application of LT theory



? *What are materials?*

Anything which is *used* by teachers and learners to facilitate the learning of a language *Tomlinson 2011, p2*

The defining characteristic of materials is that the materials designer builds in a pedagogic purpose. *Timmis, forthcoming.*

Texts vs Materials

? *What is materials development ?*

Materials development refers to all the processes made use of by practitioners who produce and/or use materials for language learning, including materials evaluation, their adaptation, design, production, exploitation and research.

Tomlinson 2012, p143-4.





<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Materials Development: Getting to the heart of language pedagogy

Materials design is a special case of the application of the sophisticated kind of thinking that expert teachers possess. Includes

- Analysing potential lesson content (e.g realia, text) and identifying how to transform into teaching resource
- Identifying linguistic goals
- Developing instructional tasks as basis for the lesson
= 'TRANSFORMATION'

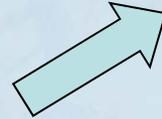
This is also one of the core skills of an expert materials writer

Richards 2010, px



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Materials Development



Course book writing



Creating tasks/activities for
language classroom

Substantial differences exist between the acts of writing whole books and other materials intended for publication and the more common activity of creating materials intended for use in a specific class *Byrd 1995, p7*



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History of Materials Development

mid-90s onwards e.g.

Byrd 1995 *Materials Writer's Guide*

Cunningsworth 1995 *Choosing Your Coursebook*

McDonough & Shaw 1993, 2003 (2012) *Materials and Methods in ELT*

Tomlinson 1998a, 2011 *Materials Development in Language Teaching*

---2003a *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*

---2008a *English Language Learning Materials: A Critical Review*

McGrath 2002 *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching*

Harwood 2010 *Materials in ELT: Theory and Practice*



Why develop **materials** when we have **course books**?

The global coursebook 'all-singing all-dancing glitzy multimedia package'

Bell & Gower 2011, p137

- the double bind - All things to all men?

Sex 'n' drugs 'n' rock 'n' roll ?

'PARSNIP'

PG-rated nature of the ELT coursebook *Wanjryb, 1996, p291*

soft, fudgey, sub-journalistic, woman's magaziney

Rinvoluceri 1999, 14

A course book is what it is because of what it has to do *Wala 2003*



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Course books still stand at centre of pedagogy

‘Washback effect’ Process whereby:

New coursebooks are based on previous
successful* models (* = ‘best sellers’??)

There may be a closed circle at work here, wherein
textbooks merely grow from and imitate other
textbooks and do not admit the winds of change
from research, methodological experimentation, or
classroom feedback *Sheldon, 1988, p. 239*



Washback cont/.

Teachers' own-designed materials follow coursebook unit structures

→ → 'Coursebook-defined pedagogy'?

What the majority of teachers teach and how they teach [...] are now determined by textbooks.

Akbari 2008 p. 647

= **Washback...**

A three-pronged effect

Tail wagging the dog?



Basis for language learning materials?

Principles drawn from what we know of SLA

Washback results in ‘Chinese whispers’ effect?

→ → Dilution of SLA principles



Materials Development: Getting to the heart of language pedagogy

Materials Development: ‘Back to basics’

SLA-based principles for language learning materials development

Are findings of SLA ‘sufficiently robust...to warrant applications to language pedagogy’? *Ellis 2010, p34*

‘We should not expect definitive answers from SLA research, nor should we expect one research-based model of language acquisition to triumph over others’
Tomlinson 2011, p.6



But this shouldn't stop us applying what we DO know

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What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Affect

➤ Motivation

➤ Engagement

➤ Anxiety

99% of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material
Chomsky 1988, p181

We know that affective engagement is vital for long-term learning. Tomlinson 2003, p.234

Laughter, joy, excitement, sorrow and anger can promote learning. Neutrality, numbness and nullity cannot. Tomlinson 2003, p18

Grim determination and struggle are not part of the language development process Krashen 2009, p.184



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Principle 1: Affective challenge: Materials need to engage the learner affectively – HOW?

INTERESTING, MOTIVATING, CHALLENGING, RELEVANT

Principle 2: Materials need to help learners feel at ease – HOW?

HUMANISE – ENGAGE ALL INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES



New Boy

Reference: Doyle. R. 2008.
'New Boy' pp78-80 from
short story collection '*The
Deportees*', Penguin.

*You are Joseph.
How do you
feel...?*

*You are one of
the children in
the class. How
do you feel...?*

*You are the
teacher. How do
you feel...?*



New Boy

culture

behaviours (including classroom conventions)
culture-specific references
culture-specific language

**teacher
education**

teacher: dealing with ‘new boy’
consider how you might use this story with an ESOL class, including
‘culture’ factors (see above)
language focus

literature

Sociological commentary
Language (style etc.)



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Input

- Rich meaningful, comprehensible input consisting of
Authentic language in authentic use
- Cognitive challenge

Input serves not just to *teach* language but to *release* it

Tomalin

Input → Output continuum

Output: both a *product* and *process* of language acquisition

Swain 2005



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Krashen - the Movie

<http://www.xtranormal.com/>

Based on the email:

We acquire language by understanding, by input, by listening and reading: The ability to speak a language is the result of language acquisition not the cause. If this is true, the path to spoken fluency and accuracy is increasing input ... so increasing speaking practice does not result in increased speaking fluency and accuracy'

[Krashen 2008, email on Krashen discussion list]



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~ Untitled ~

What a wonderful bird the frog are.

When he sit he stand almost.

When he hop he fly almost.

He ain't got no sense hardly.

He ain't got no tail hardly neither

When he sit, he sit on what he ain't got almost.

Hardly!



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~ Poem ~ Untitled ~

Draw the ‘frog’ from the poem
(where is it, what colour is it, how big is it
etc?).

Describe the ‘frog’ from the poem
(where is it, what colour is it, how big is it,
etc?).



~ Poem ~

- Paraphrase the poem in your own words.
- When you paraphrase the poem, do you change any of the words (vocabulary, grammar)?
- Analyse what you change and why.
- Compare the ‘paraphrase’ with the original poem. Which do you prefer and why?



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Principle 1: Affective challenge: materials need to engage the learner affectively - HOW?

INTERESTING, MOTIVATING, CHALLENGING, RELEVANT

Principle 2: materials need to help learners feel at ease –

HUMANISE – ENGAGE ALL INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

Principle 3: Cognitive challenge: Input needs to engage the learner cognitively - HOW?

Principle 4: Materials need to provide opportunities for meaningful, purposeful language use

RICH MEANINGFUL INPUT/STIMULUS – AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE IN USE



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Language acquisition order

➤ Teachability hypothesis (Pienemann 1985) – ‘readiness’

➤ Teaching \neq Learning

➤ Language acquisition metaphors:

a growing garden

a spiral NB Repetition ... over time (delayed effect of instruction)

building a wall

➤ Learning stems from perceived need

➤ *Implications for the syllabus?*

Students learn what they need to use, rather than what they are told to

learn Tomlinson et al 2001

provide opportunities to learn

➤ *Organic, text-driven syllabus (retroactive ‘checklist’)*



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

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INTERESTING, MOTIVATING, CHALLENGING, RELEVANT

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HUMANISE – ENGAGE ALL INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

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meaningful, purposeful language use

RICH MEANINGFUL INPUT/STIMULUS – AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE IN USE

Principle 5: Articulate syllabus retrospectively: materials

generate organic, text-driven syllabus



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

The Noticing Hypothesis [Schmidt 1990 onwards]

Input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, i.e. consciously registered Schmidt 2010

People learn about the things that they pay attention to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to *ibid*

Subliminal language learning is impossible [...] noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake
Schmidt 1990

- ‘Noticing-the-gap’
- Directing learners’ attention (awareness-raising)
- Inductive process (OHE)

c.f. Data-driven learning (DDL)



DDL sample

Missing word in
each concordance?

There weren't many _____ villages in Kent
She's _____, right, and really skinny
She showed me the _____ room
It's only a _____ piece of carpet
Well, I just wanted a _____ box
Oh! But the hole's too _____
Now that number is _____ and decreasing it seems to me
They are very _____ sums, about 10 thousand or

You silly _____ thing
She's a _____ angel
I forgot those _____ green men
You gonna eat that _____ bit of cake?
She's just a _____ bit older than David
D'you want the same as Mum or a _____ bit of each
They're out in that _____ cupboard
They're moving into this beautiful _____ cottage



What Materials Development draws from SLA Research and Theory

Principle 1: Affective challenge: materials need to engage the learner affectively – HOW?

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HUMANISE – ENGAGE ALL INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

Principle 3: Cognitive challenge: input needs to engage the learner cognitively - HOW?

Principle 4: Materials need to provide opportunities for meaningful, rich input

RICH MEANINGFUL INPUT – AUTHENTIC LANGUAGE IN USE

Principle 5: Articulate syllabus retrospectively: materials generate organic, text-driven syllabus

Principle 6: Learners need to be encouraged to *notice* linguistic features of input – HOW?

LANGUAGE AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

c.f. Tomlinson 2011, 6-23



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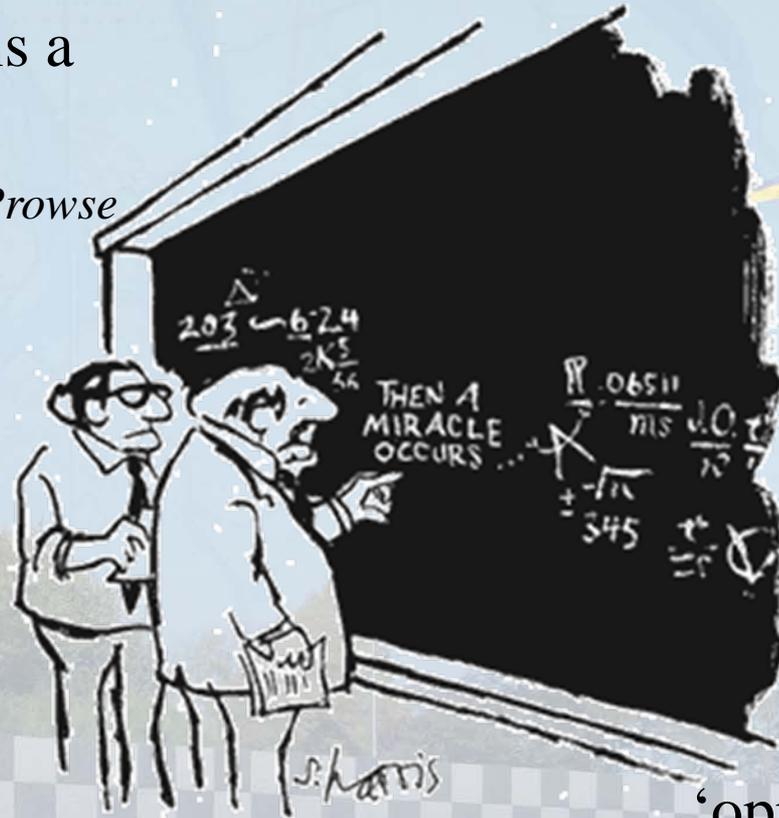
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The Materials Development process

Coursebook writing is a creative rather than a mechanical process *Prowse 2011, p172*

‘inspiration’

‘creative’



‘intuition’

‘opportunistic’

"I THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE EXPLICIT HERE IN STEP TWO."



Materials development ‘templates’

<http://www.ouowebste.com/materialstemplate.aspx>

<http://www.ouowebste.com/>

See also: Tomlinson 2003 *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*, pp112-7



Technology-based language learning tasks

Task: free-standing, goal-focused, learner-driven

Task based learning
Web 2.0 – collaborative web



Technology-based language learning tasks

Web 2.0 Participatory web culture

Wikipedia: the poster child for the collaborative construction of knowledge [...] that the new interactive Web facilitates *Richardson 2006 p.61*

Social constructivism: ‘learning’ as a process of constructing knowledge in social environments

The emphasis on community and social networks in Web 2.0 has a strong connection to theories of social constructivism *Sturm et al., 2009, p. 371*

→ → ‘philosophy in action’?



Technology-based language learning tasks

TBL and CALL* share a series of theoretical antecedents, including [...] constructivist and social constructivist thought *Thomas & Reinders, 2010 p.5*

synergie

Task based learning
Web 2.0 – collaborative web
Social Constructivism



Technology-based language learning tasks

Illustration of the TBL/CALL/Constructivist synergie:

Webquest

A scaffolded learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the Web and an authentic task to motivate students' investigation of a central, open-ended question, development of individual expertise and participation in a final group process that attempts to transform newly acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding.

March 2008

An inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that the learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet.

Dodge 1997

= WebQuests emerge as an example of a powerful means for supporting the principles of constructivism [...] in language teaching.

Zlatkovska 2010, p19



Technology-based language learning tasks

Illustration of the TBL/CALL/Constructivist synergie:

Webquest

Webquest sample: Culture Shock

Webquest portal



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Localisation

Ongoing shift towards *localisation**:

Local versions of global course books (e.g. *Essential Grammar in Use, 2009*, review Romero 2012)

Local course books e.g. Ates 2012 (Turkey), Bacha et al 2008 (Middle East), Bolitho 2008 (Eastern Europe)

...Demonstrating the boundless creativity of practitioners who look to the field of **Materials Development** for principled practice and inspiration

*Ref: Tomlinson 2008, review of ELL materials from around the world



- Task design – some top tips!**
- 💡 Text responsiveness: let text inspire task: ‘this text would be great for...!’ (c.f. *organic, text-driven syllabus*)
 - 💡 Start task design from the premise of giving learners a genuine *reason* to act (to listen, to read, to speak, to write, to solve a problem, to create something...) = ask yourself ‘why?’ NB ‘*to enjoy*’ is a reason!
 - 💡 Garner Response (‘Affect’ principle)
 - 💡 Derive language focus from text (not vice versa)
 - 💡 Grade the task not the text
 - 💡 ‘The thrill of the first time’ - design *discovery* into tasks
-



Invited speakers:

Kathleen Bailey
Anne Burns
Michael Byram
Andrew Cohen
David A. Hill
Annie Hughes
Chris Kennedy
Ben Fenton-Smith
Irma Ghosn
Alan Maley

Thank you!

MATSDA

Conference fees:

**MATSDA and ACELS
members €140 (€100
for one day)**

Students €100 (€75 for

Principles and Procedures of Materials Development

Interaction Between Applied Linguistics and

Contacts:

Conference information and registration

http://www.matsda.org.uk/conferences/annual_conf/limerick_2012.htm

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