

# CHAPTER ONE

Introduction:  
Materials, the roles of teachers and learners, and teacher education

a. . . far too many institutions seem to view materials and equipment as being more important than students and/or teachers. . . We are, after all, teaching students—not materials.

(Edwards, 2010: 73)

As teacher preparation increases, the importance of the textbook diminishes.

(McElroy, 1934: 5)

## 1. Introduction

The Preface highlighted the importance of materials in language teaching and the need to gain a better understanding of how teachers select and use materials. It also hinted at a key role for teacher education. The three sections of this chapter reintroduce each of these themes. **Section 2** takes a closer look at what we mean by ‘materials’, the arguments for textbooks and criticisms of textbooks; **Section 3** examines teachers’ roles in relation to materials and learners; and **Section 4** deals with teacher education.

## 2. Materials

### 2.1 What do we mean by ‘materials’?

If you ask 100 English language teachers who are teaching learners of different ages, with different needs and in different contexts what materials they use in their teaching, their individual answers will vary considerably. Some lists may contain only one item; others will be much more extensive.

Certain items will appear in most lists; others may be much less frequent. The master list, containing all the items from the individual lists, will almost certainly include:

- **A textbook**, produced by a commercial publisher (i.e. for profit), a Ministry of Education or a large institution (e.g. university language centre, private language school chain); this will normally be accompanied by some combination of the following: teachers' notes, a student workbook, tests, visual aids (e.g. wallcharts, flashcards), a reader, audio and video material/computer-based (CALL) exercise material/Smartboard software/web-based materials.
- **Commercial materials that are not provided as part of the textbook package**: for example, reference material (dictionaries, grammar books, irregular verb charts) and practice material (supplementary skills books, readers).
- **Teacher-prepared materials**, selected by or devised by the teacher or a group of teachers working together:
  - authentic print materials (e.g. newspaper and magazine articles, literary extracts, advertisements, menus, diagrams and other print materials downloaded from the Internet which were not designed for language teaching)
  - authentic recordings (e.g. songs, off-air recordings, recordings of academic lectures; Internet sources such as YouTube)
  - worksheets, quizzes and tests downloaded from the Internet or photocopied from other sources
  - teacher-developed materials (e.g. oral or written activities developed to accompany authentic or textbook materials, self-standing tasks and exercises, tests, overhead projector transparencies, PowerPoint presentations, CALL materials)
  - games (board games, Bingo, etc.)
  - realia (real objects, including classroom items) and representations (photos, drawings, including drawing on the board).

Some teachers will also enlist the aid of learners to supply or create materials. Indeed, we might broaden the notion of materials to include all use of the target language by learners and the teacher in that this is a potential input to learning, especially when it is captured by a recording or takes a written form. If we stretch the notion of materials still further, we might also

add any other visual or auditory means (e.g. facial expression, gesture, mime, demonstration, sounds) used by the teacher or learners to convey meaning or stimulate language use. Tomlinson (2001) takes this kind of broad view of materials, defining them as ‘anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette, CD-ROM, DVD or the Internet’ (p.66).

## 2.2 Some distinctions

The list above has been organized in such a way that certain distinctions are immediately apparent: between, for example, textbook packages, other (supplementary) commercial materials and materials prepared by teachers themselves; between reference material and practice material; and between various types of teacher-prepared materials. McGrath (2002: 7), writing specifically about text materials, differentiates between four categories of material:

those that have been specifically designed for language learning and teaching (e.g. textbooks, worksheets, computer software); authentic materials (e.g. off-air recordings, newspaper articles) that have been specially selected and exploited for teaching purposes by the classroom teacher; teacher-written materials; and learner-generated materials.

We might also wish to distinguish on the basis of where materials were produced (‘global’ vs ‘local’ textbooks), their intended audience (General English—sometimes dubbed Teaching English for No Obvious Reason (TENOR)—or English for Specific Purposes (ESP)) or their linguistic focus (on a language system such as grammar or phonology, or a language skill such as listening or speaking).

However, there are other distinctions which are perhaps more important because they concern the roles that materials play: that between non-verbal and verbal materials, for instance, that between materials-as-content and materials-as-language, and the four-way distinction made by Tomlinson (2001) between materials which are ‘*instructional* in that they inform learners about the language, . . . *experiential* in that they provide exposure to the language in use, . . . *elicitative* in that they stimulate language use, or . . . *exploratory* in

that they facilitate discoveries about language use' (p.66, emphases added).

Non-verbal materials such as representations can help to establish direct associations between words and objects and clarify meanings; they can also be used to stimulate learners to produce language, spoken and written. However, for language learning purposes they are much more limited than verbal (or text) materials: spoken language in the form of classroom talk or recordings, materials containing written language and multimedia materials (literally, anything combining more than one medium). The form in which ideas are expressed in these materials may serve as examples of language use—and, indeed, of discourse structure; this language also carries content, ideas to which learners may react and from which they may learn.

The importance of materials-as-content should not be underestimated. One of the beliefs which links the communicative approach to methods of a century and much earlier, such as the Direct Method, is that learning to speak a language is a natural capacity which is stimulated by three conditions: 'someone to talk to, *something to talk about*, and a desire to understand and make yourself understood' (Howatt, 2004: 210, emphasis added). In language classrooms, that 'something to talk about' may be a subject selected by the teacher or initiated by a learner, including some aspect of the language itself, or it may be a topic, text or task in the materials. In language learning terms, what matters is that it should trigger in learners the 'desire' to understand and make themselves understood. The implication is clear: the more engaging the content is, the more likely it is to stimulate communicative interaction. Learning thus takes place through exposure and use—or in Tomlinson's (2001) terms—through experiencing the language or responding to elicitation. Content selected for its relevance to learners' academic or occupational needs can, of course, also fulfil broader learning purposes, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has aroused much interest in recent years.

In reference materials such as dictionaries and grammar books, language *is* the content; and explicit information about the language, plus exercises, also forms the bulk of student workbooks and some textbooks. Tomlinson refers to this as the 'instructional' role of materials. Helpful though this approach to the language may be for analytically inclined learners, it needs to be complemented by text-level examples of language in use. These texts, spoken and written, together with all instructions and examples, must illustrate language which is accurate, up-to-date and natural. They can then serve both as language samples in which rules of use can be 'discovered' by learners—

Tomlinson's 'exploratory' role for materials—and as a model for learners' own production. We might describe this way of looking at materials as a materials-as-language (rather than materials-as-content) perspective.

### 2.3 Coursebooks and their advantages

As far as language learning is concerned, then, the importance of materials-as-content lies primarily in their value as a stimulus for communicative interaction, and of materials-as-language as the provision of information about the target language and carefully selected examples of use. The modern textbook, now normally referred to as a 'coursebook' because it tends to be used as the foundation for a course, is designed to combine these functions.

It is easy to understand why coursebooks are so popular. Their advantages include the following:

- 1 **They reduce the time needed for lesson preparation.** Teachers who are teaching full-time find coursebooks invaluable because they do not have enough time to create original lessons for every class.
- 2 **They provide a visible, coherent programme of work.** Teachers may lack the time and expertise to design a coherent programme of work. The coursebook writer not only selects and organizes language content but also provides the means by which this can be taught and learned: 'the most fundamental task for the professional writer is bringing together coherently the theory, practice, activities, explanations, text, visuals, content, formats, and all other elements that contribute to the finished product' (Byrd, 1995b: 8). Coursebooks are also reassuring for the parents of younger learners who are keen to know what their children are doing and to offer their help if it is needed.
- 3 **They provide support.** For teachers who are untrained or inexperienced, textbooks (and the Teacher's Books that normally accompany them) provide methodological support. Those who lack confidence in their own language proficiency can draw on linguistically accurate input and examples of language use (Richards, 2001b). At times of curriculum change, coursebooks offer concrete support for the inexperienced and experienced alike (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994).
- 4 **They are a convenient resource for learners.** The visible coherence—

or sense of purpose and direction—referred to above is also helpful for learners. Because coursebooks enable a learner to preview or review what is done in class, they can promote ‘feelings of both progress and security’ (Harmer, 2001: 7). In short, they provide a framework for learning as well as for teaching—‘A learner without a coursebook is more teacher-dependent’ (Ur, 1996: 184). Compared to handouts, coursebooks are also more convenient.

- 5 **They make standardized instruction possible.** If learners do the same things, at more or less the same rate, and are tested on the same material (Richards, 2001b), it is easy to keep track of what is done and compare performance across classes. From this perspective, coursebooks are thus a convenient administrative tool.
- 6 **They are visually appealing, cultural artefacts.** The attraction for learners of the modern global coursebook lies in no small part in its visual appeal—the use of colour, photographs, cartoons, magazine-style formats. Cultural information is conveyed by these means as well as through the words on the page (Harmer, 2001).
- 7 **Coursebook packages contain ‘a wealth of extra material’** (Harmer, 2001: 7). Beyond the student book, the modern coursebook package makes available a range of additional resources for both classroom use and self-access purposes.

This last point is graphically illustrated in McGrath’s (2007) analysis of eight global coursebook packages (see Table 1.1). The materials surveyed were as follows:

Cambridge	<i>face2face</i> (1)	<i>Interchange</i> (3rd edn) (2)
Longman	<i>Cutting Edge</i> (3)	<i>Total English</i> (4)
Macmillan	<i>Straightforward</i> (5)	<i>Inside Out</i> (6)
Oxford	<i>New English File</i> (7)	<i>New Headway</i> (8)

As McGrath (2007: 347–348) notes, one feature of such packages is that they provide *integrated* resources for teachers. For example, Teacher’s Books (or resource packs) may now contain photocopiable activities, supplementary materials offering ‘extra support/challenge’ for mixed groups and warm-up activities (*New English File*), and further resources for teachers include:

- Teacher’s Video Guide (*Inside Out* contains guidance and worksheets)
- customizable texts (*face2face*)

**Table 1.1 Content of coursebook packages**

	C		L		M		O	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Student’s book	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teacher’s book	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teacher’s resource pack		√			√	√		√
Workbook (various versions)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Audiocassettes	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Audio CDs	√	√	√		√	√		√
Lab audio CDs		√						
Videocassettes		√		√		√	√	√
DVD		√					√	
Teacher’s Guide to video						√		
Tests		√			√	√		√
CD-ROM	√	√					√	√
Linked website	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
Other website resources (T)	√	√			√	√	√	√
Other website resources (S)							√	√

(McGrath, 2007: 347–348)

- customizable tests on CD (*Inside Out*)
- publishers’ websites linked to specific courses (Oxford sites include articles, downloadable worksheets and activities, and discussion groups)
- publishers’ websites available to any teachers (e.g. Macmillan’s *onestopenglish.com*).

Additional materials for learners are also provided—for example:

- a CD-ROM to accompany the student’s book (*face2face*) or workbook (that for *New English File* includes video extracts and activities, interactive grammar quizzes, vocabulary banks, pronunciation charts

and listen and practise audio material; the workbook for *Inside Out* comes with either an audio cassette or an audio CD)

- publishers' websites for students linked to specific courses (e.g. *New English File*)
- publishers' websites available to any learner.

Linked resources which can be used in combination with specific courses are also available. These include specially designed supplementary materials and stand-alone resources. Examples include:

- business Resource Books (*New English File*)
- pronunciation course; interactive practice material on CD-ROM (*Headway*)
- bilingual (Dutch/French/German) 'Companions' containing listing of words/phrases with pronunciation, translation and contextualization (*Inside Out*).

Such developments are impressive: '25 years ago, who would have dreamed of website resources linked to courses or freely available general website resources for teachers and learners? And more is being offered almost daily. For instance, whiteboard software is available to accompany the two Cambridge titles, and learners can register for free e-lessons with Macmillan' (McGrath, 2007: 348). At the time of writing, e-books and e-readers have begun to have an impact on ELT publishing. Macmillan's Dynamic-Books software will reportedly allow teachers to edit e-book editions of Macmillan coursebooks in order to tailor them to the needs of their students (Salisbury, 2010). In a few years' time, other innovations will no doubt have been introduced.

## 2.4 Doubting voices

Given these potential benefits, it is hardly surprising that, despite occasional warnings of the demise of printed coursebooks in the face of technological development, coursebooks continue to be published and, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language by non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs), 'whether we like it or not, represent for both students and teachers the visible heart of any ELT programme' (Sheldon, 1988: 237). Yet Sheldon's interpolated 'whether we like it or not' is telling. Despite their obvious appeal, coursebooks have attracted a



number of criticisms, most of which are aptly captured by Rinvolucri's (2001) phrase 'a human, cultural and linguistic disaster' (cited in Harmer 2001: 5).

**Coursebooks do not cater for the whole person; nor do they do take adequate account of differences in learning preferences.** Underlying the humanistic approaches of the 1960s was the belief that, to be effective, teaching must engage the learner on an affective level as well as a cognitive level, and the same belief underpins one line of criticism of coursebooks. Tomlinson (2003b: 162) notes that many of the coursebooks he has used 'concentrated on the linguistic and analytical aspects of learning and . . . made insufficient use of the learners' ability to learn through doing things physically, to learn through feeling emotion, to learn through experiencing things in the mind', and the same criticism is implicit in the title of Rinvolucri's (2002) resource book *Humanising the Coursebook*. Tomlinson (2011b: 18) also claims that although 'most current coursebooks . . . favour learners with a preference for studial learning [i.e. focussed on linguistic form and correctness] and an apparent assumption that all learners are capable of benefiting from this style of learning', such learners are actually in a minority, and that other learning styles (or preferences), such as the auditory and experiential, also need to be catered for. A similar point in relation to the need to cater for multiple intelligences is made by Botelho (2003).

Global coursebooks (i.e. those produced for an international market) derive from an anglocentric view of the world and cultural realities that have little relevance for the majority of learners studying English outside English-speaking countries; native speaker norms predominate. The transmission of 'western' values is a form of cultural imperialism. The charge of anglocentrism is typically voiced by teachers working outside Britain, Australasia and North America (abbreviated to BANA by Holliday, 1994) or those representing their views (see, for example, Canagarajah, 1993; Altan, 1995; Gray, 2000). It draws attention to the fact that when marketing materials UK and US publishers tend to blur very real differences between the learning environments and learning purposes of those studying English within BANA—who comprise both immigrants and long-term/short-term student visitors—and those outside BANA (Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2008). While it is perfectly logical for materials intended for use within BANA to be oriented towards interaction with native speakers and familiarization with the culture of a specific BANA region (and this is appreciated by students—see, for example, Crawford, 2002), it is difficult to justify such an emphasis in materials intended for use

in contexts where most English use is between non-native speakers of English. Specifically on the level of language, the debate on the role of English (as a lingua franca/international language) may rage over the question of appropriate models and exposure to relevant varieties, but the issues are complex (see, for example, Gilmore, 2007) and how this might translate into textbooks is as yet uncertain. Two recent studies of the accents used in recordings accompanying Finnish textbooks for English language learners (Kopperoinen, 2011; Kivistö, 2005) suggest that in the meantime native speaker norms continue to dominate.

The issue is not simply one of relevance. Global textbooks originating in ‘the west’ inevitably embody western values, which are reflected in both their content and their underlying pedagogical approach. Seen from the perspective of societies where such values are not simply alien but potentially malign in their influence, they have been characterized as a vehicle for cultural imperialism (see, for example, Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Dendrinos, 1992; Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999). Pennycook (1994) has argued forcefully that global textbooks, through both their content and their recommended teaching practices and implied classroom role relationships, represent a belief in and ‘advocacy for a particular way of life, a particular understanding of the world’ (p.178). He concludes, nevertheless, that ‘there are . . . possibilities . . . for resistance, appropriation and change’ (p.179). This may take the form of teachers encouraging learners to engage critically with textbooks and other sources of materials (see, for example, Paran, 2003; Haig, 2006) or an instinctive learner response. Altan (1995) observes: ‘When both the materials we use and the way we use them are culturally adverse, then inevitably learners switch off and retreat into their inner world to defend their own integrity’ (p.59). Retreat may not be the only strategy. In some contexts, learners may resist more overtly. For instance, the Sri Lankan students described by Canagarajah (1993) not only demonstrated reluctance to participate in the role plays and conversation activities that featured in the global textbook they were using, but also showed what they expected of the teacher by moving the chairs he had placed in a circle before the lesson back into the more traditional rows.

Though the global textbook may have been the focus for such criticisms, it is important to note that ideology may also be explicit in ‘national’ textbooks, which deliberately promote national values and culture to further the aim of social cohesion (see, for example, Lund & Zoughby, 2007)—and one could, of course, envisage more sinister aims. Moreover, national textbooks are no different from other materials in embodying, in their rubrics

and activities, implicit messages about the nature of language learning and the relationship and roles of teacher and learners. Graves (2000: 202) suggests a number of questions to be asked when analysing the hidden curriculum of a textbook. See also Jazadi (2003) and Littlejohn (2007, 2011) on what task analysis can reveal.

**Coursebooks do not reflect the findings of research into language, language use or language acquisition; and their representation of cultural realities is limited, biased or inaccurate.** Critics of the language content in coursebooks have argued that coursebooks do not represent authentic language use, illustrating this view with reference to reported speech (Barbieri & Eckhardt, 2007), the language of modality (Holmes, 1998), suggestions (Jiang, 2006), complaints (Boxer & Pickering, 1995), conversation strategies (McCarten & McCarthy, 2010), closing conversations (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahon-Taylor, Morgan & Reynolds, 1991), telephone conversations (Wong, 2001) and differences between spoken and written grammar (Cullen & Kuo, 2007); Harwood (2010b) provides a useful overview of such content analyses. Other writers have looked at whether the treatment in coursebooks of a specific skill appears to take account of applied linguistic research. McDonough and Shaw (2003: Chapters 6–10), for example, summarize research on each of the main skill areas and integrated skills and examine how far this research is reflected in teaching materials. Studies of ESP textbooks have revealed a similar divide between the findings of linguistic research and teaching materials. Ewer and Boys (1981) drew attention to the fact that textbooks, particularly in ESP, were based on shaky linguistic foundations. Twenty years on, Candlin, Bhatia and Jensen (2002: 300), searching for suitable materials to teach legal English writing, concluded that of the 56 books they studied ‘few, if any, are premised on any type of research-based linguistic analysis of legal texts and language’ (cited in Harwood, 2010b: 10). Harwood’s (2005) review of EAP textbooks found only one book (Swales & Feak, 2004) based on corpus research (see also Hyland, 1994 and Paltridge, 2002 on writing in EAP). Angouri (2010: 373) found ‘a discrepancy’ between the language used in Business English materials concerned with meetings and that used in real contexts (see also Williams, 1988 and Chan, 2009). Gilmore (2007), who provides a usefully wide-ranging review of studies comparing authentic and textbook discourse, distances himself a little by arguing that authenticity should not be seen as inherently ‘good’ and contrived examples/discourse as ‘bad’; instead, the basis for judgement should be ‘fitness for

purpose' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 159).

The language syllabuses in coursebooks and such aspects of their pedagogy as task design have also been a focus of critical attention. Auerbach and Rogers (1987, cited in Graves, 2000) drew attention to the fact that the language functions in US 'survival' textbooks for adult learners emphasized an acquiescent role as regards the status quo rather than one which involved questioning, analysis and problem-solving, and therefore represented a 'hidden curriculum'. More recently, a major impetus has been research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), which has called into question the validity of the traditional grammatical syllabus and the presentation-practice-production (or 3 Ps) approach on which the coursebooks of the late 1960s and many of their 'communicative' successors were based. Thornbury and Meddings (2001: 12), for example, comment: 'Unfortunately, there is not a lot of research evidence to suggest that grammar McNuggets are internalized in the order and at the pace that they are delivered', and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010b), surveying the results of 23 research projects, conclude that 'none of the researchers seems to provide any evidence supporting either the typical textbook approach of Practice/Presentation/Production or the typical textbook procedures of listening and repeating, dialogue reproduction, filling in blanks or answering comprehension questions' (p.399). This may have been because their focus was not so much on evaluating the effectiveness or otherwise of such procedures but rather on researching, for example, the effect on motivation of using authentic texts, of exposure to extended language use through reading and listening or of discovery learning. While all the research described appears to have achieved positive results, these fall short of a clear cause and effect relationship between procedure and evidence of acquisition. A recent review of the effects of SLA theorizing and research on grammar teaching (Ellis, 2010) is similarly inconclusive. While arguing that the design of communicative tasks and techniques for grammatical consciousness-raising have been influenced by work in SLA, Ellis concedes that little else of this research can be applied directly to language teaching. The 'typical' textbook approach and procedures may now seem questionable, but as yet no clear research-based alternative has emerged.

A further very common criticism is that coursebooks perpetuate gender and other stereotypes and misrepresent reality—for instance, by excluding minorities and by depicting a world that is free of problems and sanitized (see, for example, Littlejohn & Windeatt, 1989; Thornbury, 1999,

2010; Gray, 2002; McGrath, 2004; Arikan, 2005; Lund & Zoughby, 2007). Global textbook publishers try to counter stereotypes in their guidance notes for authors, but their whitewashing approach to textbook content is clearly pragmatic rather than principled. This is not only an issue for global textbooks, of course.

Underlying many of these criticisms is the feeling that in the world of textbooks little changes. As Sheldon (1988) observed, in the course of a wide-ranging critique, ‘textbooks merely grow from and imitate other textbooks and do not admit the winds of change from research, methodological experimentation, or classroom feedback’ (p.239). The development of large language corpora means that as far as *language* research is concerned, this is perhaps less true now than at the time Sheldon was writing (see, for example, Stranks, 2003; Richards, 2006; and papers in Harwood, 2010a). However, complaints of bland content in textbooks persist (Masuhara, Haan, Yi & Tomlinson, 2008) and researchers are still finding evidence of stereotyping (e.g. Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008).

**Coursebooks marginalize teachers. Coursebooks should be replaced by resource books. All external materials are an obstacle to real communication.** On the face of it, the variety of resources offered by a modern global coursebook package is one of its major strengths. However, concerns about this ever-increasing provision have also been expressed. Writing more than 20 years ago, Rossner (1988) commented: ‘Current materials tend to overburden the user with an embarrassment of riches . . . [and] create more work for the teacher, who is forced to spend more time coming to grips with these materials’ (p.214). One result of this increased complexity is that ‘the structure of the textbook is becoming much tighter and more explicit—more like a prepared script. Less and less appears to be left to the teacher to decide and work out’ (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994: 316), a point echoed by Littlejohn (2011): ‘The extent to which materials may now effectively structure classroom time from a distance has . . . increased considerably’ (p.180). According to this view, teachers risk being marginalized.

The argument, then, is not simply about the expansion in the resources available. More fundamentally, it is about the roles of textbook and teacher. Brumfit (1979: 30) expresses the view that ‘even the best textbooks take away initiative from teachers by implying that there is somewhere an “expert” who can solve problems’ for teachers and learners. The consequence of taking away (or lost) initiative is ‘de-skilling’ (Shannon (1987), cited in Richards 1993,

1998a). If teachers hand over responsibility for decision-making to textbooks, the argument goes, this reduces their role to that of mere technicians. When the selection of a textbook is the starting-point for course planning, rather than a stage which follows consideration of aims, learners' needs and teachers' capacities and preferences, the teacher (or whoever else takes decisions for course-planning) has abdicated from a key responsibility: there is now a real danger that it is the coursebook which determines course aims, language content and what will be assessed. In effect, the book becomes the course and the teacher teaches the book. Swan (1992) warns against the resulting false sense of security:

. . . textbooks . . . can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach, it is easy just to sit back and operate the system, secure in the belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us. Unfortunately this is rarely the case. (Swan, 1992: 33, cited in Hutchinson & Torres, 1994: 315)

Allwright (1981) presents two contrasting perspectives on the role of materials and the teacher-textbook relationship. If teachers are seen as *deficient*, the textbook becomes a form of insurance against their deficiencies (limitations). Materials therefore need to be teacher-proof. From the *difference* perspective, the teacher is seen as having expertise which is different from but complementary to that of the materials writer. Materials are therefore seen as a resource. Siding with this latter perspective, he concludes that 'the management of learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily catered for by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching materials' (p.9).

As alternatives to the textbook, Brumfit and Allwright make rather similar proposals. Brumfit (1979: 30) envisages 'resource packs, sets of materials with advice to teachers on how to adapt and modify the contents', while Allwright (1981: 9) conceives of a 'guide to language learning' for learners and 'ideas books' and 'rationale books' for teachers, supported by learner training and an appropriate focus within teacher training, all within a framework of the cooperative management of learning by learners and teachers—effectively a process syllabus.

In essence, these are arguments for replacing a textbook by other types of materials. A more extreme view dispenses altogether with what might normally be thought of as materials. In a short and undated paper in which he traces the shifts in his own use of and attitudes to coursebooks, Underhill

writes: ‘I have . . . found that materials, especially coursebooks, can come between me and my students . . . If I’m not careful I reduce myself to a “materials operator”, separated from my students by a screen of “things to do”’. Acknowledging this paper as an influence, Thornbury published in 2000 the first of several papers on ‘dogme’ in ELT (the term ‘dogme’ comes from the manifesto Dogme 95 published by a Danish film collective, which called for a return to basics in film-making). Pointing to the vast array of published resources now available, Thornbury (2000) asks, ‘Where is the inner life of the student in all this? Where is real communication?’ Questions such as these led him to call on ELT colleagues to join him in ‘a vow of EFL chastity’ enshrined in the dictum that ‘Teaching should be done using only the resources that teachers and students bring to the classrooms—that is, themselves—and whatever happens to be in the classroom’ (Thornbury, 2000). Although the burning of textbooks, following the example of Sylvia Warner, seemed to be advocated at one point (Thornbury & Meddings, 2001), a later paper accepts that textbooks might be among the resources that teachers or learners bring to the classroom and, indeed, offers a number of interesting ideas for exploiting coursebooks:

A ‘Dogme’ approach doesn’t necessarily exclude the use of a coursebook . . . The idea is to use the coursebook, but sparingly . . . It does *not* mean, however, propping up the book’s weaknesses by bringing in yet more materials in the forms of photocopied exercises, for example . . . The idea is to include activities that provide optimal exposure, attention, output and feedback, thereby maximising the chance of language emergence. (Thornbury & Meddings, 2002: 36–37, original emphasis)

The occasional use of coursebooks might be tolerated, but technology is a definite taboo, and this ‘pedagogy of bare essentials’, to use the strapline from the group’s archived website, now tends to be promoted as ‘Teaching Unplugged’. The website, at <http://www.thornburyscott.com/tu/sources.htm>, offers convenient access to a variety of the early papers, including that by Underhill, and a number of resources; a discussion group can be accessed at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dogme>; and the book ‘Teaching Unplugged’ (Meddings & Thornbury, 2009) has developed the argument. Edwards (2010) concludes her review of this book with the comment that it is unlikely to lead to the disappearance of the coursebook or to affect the growth of technology, but points out in support of the underlying Dogme concerns: ‘As a teacher, one of my major worries is the fact that far too many institutions seem to view

materials and equipment as being more important than students and/or teachers . . . We are, after all, teaching students—not materials’ (p.73).

Given all these criticisms, it is perhaps surprising that, as Hutchinson and Torres (1994) put it, ‘the textbook not only survives, it thrives’ (p.316). Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for this is, as noted earlier, its convenience. As Hutchinson and Torres point out, textbooks provide ‘the structure that the teaching–learning system—particularly the system in change—requires’ (p.317). We also need to distinguish, of course, between the first three of these criticisms, which relate to the coursebook as a product, and the final criticism, which relates to the way in which the coursebook is perceived and used. Harmer argues that fears of teachers being led by the nose have been somewhat overstated:

Coursebook critics, it seems to me, focus on *unthinking* coursebook use to make their case—as if all teachers used them in this way all the time. Yet that is to suggest that all teachers see coursebooks in the wrong light—as monolithic manuals which have to be followed to the letter, like playscripts. But coursebooks are not like that and never have been. Like any lesson plan or succession of plans, they are *proposals* for action, not instructions for use. Teachers look at these proposals and decide if they agree with them, if they want to do things in the way the book suggests, or if, on the contrary, they are going to make changes, replacing things, modifying activities, approaching texts differently, or tackling a piece of grammar in a way which they, through experience, know to be more effective than the exercise on page 26. You can use a textbook without slavishly following every word; you can love a friend without agreeing with everything they say or doing everything in the same way they do. In the hands of engaged teachers, coursebooks, far from being straitjackets, are spurs to creativity, somewhere to start, something for teachers to work with and react with or against. (Harmer, 2001: 8, original emphases)

Many teachers do, as Harmer claims, make changes to coursebook materials based on their beliefs or experience, and engaged teachers may simply use the materials as a springboard. As we shall see in later chapters, however, there are also teachers who, for one reason or another, treat a coursebook as a manual or playscript to be followed.

Rather than simply condemning this as inappropriate, we might ask why this is, and who is responsible if teachers do treat coursebooks as playscripts. Where elements of a coursebook package, including technology,



are closely integrated, this may be a factor (McGrath, 2007), but there are also implications for institutional management and teacher education.

## 2.5 Teaching without a coursebook

Not all teachers use a coursebook. Confident, experienced teachers working in environments which give them freedom to use whatever materials they like may prefer to draw on materials from a wide variety of commercial and authentic sources, and create their own. Teachers involved in specific-purpose teaching, and especially 1:1 courses, who feel that no suitable textbook exists may find themselves in the same situation through necessity rather than choice. Other teachers, who are working towards a specific examination, may base their teaching largely on previous examination papers. Yet other teachers may be using an approach or method which is not based on a textbook. In Singapore, for example, the Ministry of Education has been phasing out the use of English language textbooks in primary schools in favour of an approach based on the shared reading of Big Books. The books provide a context for target language items and a stimulus to discussion and writing; and additional resources are supplied by the Ministry. In effect, this is a rejection not only of textbooks but also of teaching based on a textbook. Further examples would be three of the innovative ‘humanistic’ methods that emerged during the 1960s. For instance, Community Language Learning (CLL—also known as Counseling Learning) is based on the language produced by learners, recorded by the teacher, and then written up for analysis. The early stages of both Total Physical Response (TPR) and Silent Way are purely oral: in TPR learners follow oral instructions; and Silent Way makes use of Cuisenaire rods (the small coloured wooden sticks originally designed for mathematics) and other materials specifically designed for this method, such as sound/colour charts, which contain blocks of colour representing phonemes. (For further discussion of these methods, see, for example, Stevick, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 2001.) Richards (1985) makes the interesting point that the lack of a textbook has limited the spread of these methods.

In some contexts, traditional resources of all kinds may be non-existent. Gebhard (1996) cites a personal communication from Ed Black: ‘I was teaching English to Chinese immigrants in Jamaica. There was no chalk, no paper, no books. Me, no Chinese. They, no English’ (p.107). Gebhard comments:

I am very familiar with such settings . . . it is often difficult to obtain materials and media through which to teach. But . . . I enjoy the challenge of creating materials out of everyday things. For example, we can teach students to write in the air and on the earth, make use of clouds (what do you see? I see a horse) and of folded leaves and sticks (e.g. to form a town to practice giving directions), and use our fingers to practice counting. (Gebhard, 1996:107–108)

He adds:

I believe that those who are fortunate enough to teach in difficult settings have an advantage. They are challenged to reach deep within their creative selves and observe everyday things as possible teaching materials. This is an education within itself, one that provides an awareness that teaching first of all concerns what goes on between people, as well as an awareness that at our fingertips there is an infinite number of materials that are possible resources for teaching. (Gebhard, 1996:108)

Gebhard's enthusiasm is infectious. He is right, of course, that teaching is essentially an interaction between people and teachers need to exploit fully whatever means are available to make that encounter as useful and memorable as possible. He is no doubt also right that difficult circumstances, which include large classes as well as limited or non-existent resources, bring out the best in responsible and creative teachers, and in this way contribute to their professional development. Whether teachers working in such circumstances or their less resourceful colleagues feel themselves to be 'fortunate' is much less certain. Faced with a choice between a book and no book, most teachers would probably choose the book, on the grounds that it is another resource, at least. Sadly, this section was omitted from the second edition (2006) of Gebhard's book, thus giving the impression at least that such difficult settings no longer exist. Two short papers by J. Hadfield and C. Hadfield (2003a, 2003b) offer not only a corrective but also a range of practical suggestions for teachers working with 'almost nothing' (defined as paper, pens and blackboard) or nothing at all in the way of provided resources. The papers also raise interesting questions about teachers' wants and needs as far as technology is concerned—questions that will be taken up in Chapter Four.

There are, then, situations in which for one reason or another teachers are not using a textbook as the basis for a course. Ultimately, of course, what is important is not what kinds of material are used but whether they help to accomplish the desired learning outcomes; and this will depend in part at least

on how they are viewed and used.

### 3. Teachers and learners

#### 3.1 Teachers' relationships with materials and learners

Drawing on his discussions with teachers, Bolitho (1990) outlines four ways of representing symbolically the relationship between teachers, learners and materials. Slightly reorganized, these are illustrated below:

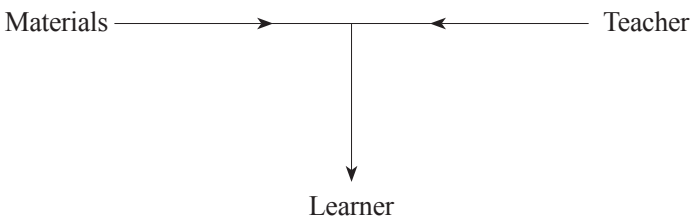
- (i) The most common representation, Bolitho notes, is of a line from materials through teacher to learner (Figure 1.1):



**FIGURE 1.1**

(Bolitho, R. 1990. 'An eternal triangle? Roles for teacher, learners and teaching materials in a communicative approach'. In Anivan, S. (ed.) *Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties* (pp.22–30). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. © SEAMO RELC, reprinted with permission.)

- (ii) In Figure 1.2, the relationship between teacher and materials has changed. The teacher now has equal status with materials:

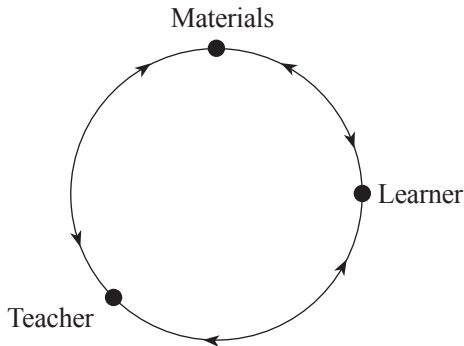


**FIGURE 1.2**

(Bolitho, R. 1990. 'An eternal triangle? Roles for teacher, learners and teaching materials in a communicative approach'. In Anivan, S. (ed.) *Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties* (pp.22–30). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. © SEAMO RELC, reprinted with permission.)

Bolitho comments: ‘the teacher and the materials are seen as superordinate, conspiring (as one teacher put it only half-jokingly) to make the learner’s life difficult’ (p.23). Notice that there is no arrow between learner and materials.

- (iii) The third representation (Figure 1.3), with arrows going in both directions between the three points on the circle, differs from the first two most obviously, as Bolitho observes, in that it recognizes



**FIGURE 1.3**

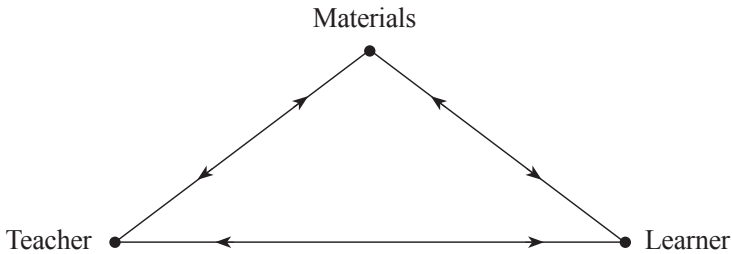
(Bolitho, R. 1990. ‘An eternal triangle? Roles for teacher, learners and teaching materials in a communicative approach’. In Anivan, S. (ed.) *Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties* (pp.22–30). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. © SEAMO RELC, reprinted with permission.)

the importance of learners being able to access materials directly as well as through the teacher’s mediation.

We might also comment on four further aspects of this particular representation. First, the materials are not shown as deriving from an external source; they might therefore include not only commercial materials but also materials created by teachers or supplied by learners. Second, materials are represented as a source for both teacher and learners on one side of the diagram, but on the other, teacher and learners are free of any influence of external materials—implying that such materials do not determine all classroom interaction. Third, if we take a broad view of materials as anything which contributes to learning, we might wish to see that unfettered interaction between teacher and learners (or between learners) as resulting in *co-constructed* materials, and assign these materials their own place on the empty side of the diagram. Finally, this circular representation also takes

account of the fact that materials do not have to be treated in a serial fashion ('We've done Unit 3. Let's go on to Unit 4.'). Both learners and teachers may wish to review what has already been 'done'; learners may also wish to preview what will be done in future lessons.

- (iv) On the face of it, the triangle depicted below (Figure 1.4) says exactly the same as the circle in (iii).



**FIGURE 1.4**

(Bolitho, R. 1990. 'An eternal triangle? Roles for teacher, learners and teaching materials in a communicative approach'. In Anivan, S. (ed.) *Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties* (pp.22–30). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. © SEAMO RELC, reprinted with permission.)

However, not all triangles are equilateral. If the base were shorter than the two sides, this might imply that both teacher and learner were distant from the materials, either because they are too difficult or, perhaps, not used very much. If the side linking materials and teacher were short, on the other hand, that might imply that the teacher identifies closely with the materials. The teachers surveyed by Bolitho also pointed out that triangles like the one depicted have an apex and a base, which suggests a hierarchy, with materials dominating; one teacher felt that the diagram illustrated 'the tendency that teachers have to blame materials (or learners) when things go wrong, and the similar tendency displayed by learners to blame teachers (or materials)' (p.23).

At the heart of this discussion, of course, are the attitudes of teachers and learners to materials. Richards (1998a: 131) has commented on the danger of 'reification' ('the unjustifiable attribution of qualities of excellence, authority and validity') of textbooks by teachers, adding that in some parts of the world this tendency may be reinforced by cultural conditioning: 'Teachers . . . tend to assume that any item included in a textbook must be an important learning

item for students, and that explanations (e.g. of grammar rules or idioms) and cultural information provided by the author are true and should not be questioned' (ibid.). Moreover, 'they assume that they do not have the authority or knowledge to adapt the textbook' (ibid.). Learners, similarly, may perceive published materials as more authoritative than those produced by their own teachers and therefore attach more value to them.

### 3.2 New roles for learners

Bolitho (1990) makes a number of important points about the relationships between materials, teachers and learners.

Let us start with *materials*, which means textbooks first and foremost. Here the weight of tradition is heavy. Ever since the advent of the printed word in the Middle Ages, textbooks in education have represented knowledge. The handing over of a set of textbooks by a teacher to a class is an act with symbolic significance: 'Here is your textbook. If you learn what is in it you will succeed' is the implication. This tradition still holds good in the overwhelming majority of educational contexts, worldwide. (Bolitho, 1990: 23)

The book, in this tradition, constitutes the course. The teacher's role is to teach—and finish!—the book. Learners know that they will be tested on what is in the book (in some cases, not only on the language but also the content of texts). The book defines what is to be taught and learned.

Learners . . . have been able to take the book home, to revise from it perhaps with the help of parents educated in the same tradition, and to go into end-of-year examinations confident of having covered all the materials necessary for success. Vocabulary lists and grammar rules could be learned by heart and applied in tests of linguistic competence. Set texts could be memorised and liberally quoted in literature examinations. Learning a language had more to do with acquiring knowledge than with developing skills. (Bolitho, 1990: 24)

With the advent of the communicative approach, materials changed and expectations of teachers and learners changed. As Bolitho notes:

. . . publishers, methodologists and textbook authors have been encouraging teachers to see a communicative textbook as a resource to draw on in teaching a course, even as a point of departure for classroom activities, rather than as a convergently conceived framework for study. But has anyone bothered to tell learners this? . . . Learners are entitled to know *why* they are asked to behave in certain ways . . . and *how* they can learn most effectively. Yet how many teachers

go into classrooms and simply expect learners to do as they are asked without a word of explanation? (Bolitho, 1990: 24–25)

Bolitho is right, of course. These days, many textbooks do include sections on ‘learning to learn’, but especially when what is expected of learners represents a break with cultural tradition, an explanation needs to be offered, and the teacher is in the best position to give this. This point applies even more strongly to attempts to give learners more responsibility. For instance, it has been proposed that learners should:

- be involved in textbook evaluation and selection or decisions about which parts of a textbook should be studied
- be shown how to make independent use of both classroom materials and out-of-class resources
- be encouraged to interact critically with the content of textbooks and other materials
- provide supplementary materials to be used in class
- generate materials that can be used by other learners.

(See, for example, Wright, 1987; Clarke, 1989; Tudor, 1993; Deller, 1990; Campbell & Kryszewska, 1992—and McGrath, 2002 for reviews of these and other sources.)

What lies behind all these suggestions is the belief that motivation is enhanced when learners have some control over and investment in their own learning, when decisions about what is done and how it is done are not imposed but taken with teachers or by learners themselves. For these ideas to take root, however, teachers have to be prepared to share responsibility with learners; learners have to be willing to accept these new roles; and both teachers and learners have to look at materials with fresh eyes. We return to the topic of learners and materials in Chapter Seven.

### **3.3 Teacher roles**

#### **3.3.1 Choice**

In situations where more than one textbook is available, or a course is based on materials other than a textbook, there is a need to choose. Choice is generally held to be a good thing, but it is not always simple. Even when there was much less choice than there is now, the selection of a textbook might be influenced by a variety of factors, as the following quotation from an American

educator makes clear:

The color of a salesman's necktie and the crease in his trousers, the beauty of binding and illustrations, and the opinions of officious administrative officers have all been potent factors in choosing books. More consequential have been the prestige of author and publisher, and the influence of wide current use.

(McElroy, 1934: 5)

Almost half a century later, British commentators were still warning about teachers being taken in by skilful marketing (Brumfit, 1979) and jazzy covers (Grant, 1987: 119); and popularity, as evidenced by sales figures (Sheldon, 1988), and the reputations of the major publishers and writers of best-selling textbooks continue to be seen as guarantors of textbook quality. McElroy himself is in no doubt, however, that 'whether the author be great or small, the publisher powerful or unknown, the final determinant should be the book itself: what it contains and how the material is presented' (ibid.).

Much rests on the choice of book, and care therefore needs to be taken over the selection process. As McElroy points out:

To experiment haphazardly with new books is expensive. In former times the Board of Education took sole responsibility for selecting books. In larger school systems today, the Superintendent, the High School principal, or a supervisor exercise practically final authority. Preferred practice delegates this authority to a small textbook committee representing not only those who are responsible to legal authorities but classroom teachers as well. (McElroy, 1934: 5-6)

The financial implications of a bad decision referred to in the first part of this quotation are certainly one consideration. Where institutions or parents are buying textbooks in the expectation that they will be reused, they are seen as a kind of investment. However, the choice of an inappropriate textbook will also affect teachers. Whenever a new book is adopted, teachers spend time familiarizing themselves with it; and the less appropriate it proves to be, the more time will be needed to compensate for its inadequacies. For learners, moreover, an inappropriate textbook has limited value as a learning resource. The consequences are less serious when courses are not based on a single textbook, but time has still been wasted and learning opportunities lost, and the search for suitable materials has to begin again.

Bad decisions can, in theory at least, be avoided if proper processes are in place. As can be seen from the quotation above, 'preferred practice'



in America in the 1930s delegated textbook selection to a small committee on which classroom teachers were represented. These days, materials may be selected by an institutional manager, a group of teachers, or the teacher teaching a particular class. In the latter case, the impact of a bad decision may affect fewer people, but it will be just as great on those it does affect. Teachers therefore need to be able to make or contribute to informed selection decisions. We return to textbook selection processes and materials evaluation more generally in Chapter Three.

### 3.3.2 Control

Commercial coursebooks are written to appeal to as wide a population as possible and even national coursebooks have to cater for some degree of variation in learners, teachers and learning environments. If we therefore accept that the perfect coursebook for a particular teacher and group of learners not only does not but cannot exist, and that a coursebook should be seen primarily as a *resource* book, then it follows that the responsibility for deciding what to use from the coursebook and how to use it lies with the teacher:

The coursebook should never be allowed to assume an authority it does not merit and consequently be blamed for failing to ‘work’, but rather seen as a friendly guide, suggesting areas of study and approaches, but always open to manipulation by the teacher who ultimately will have the best opportunity to ‘know’ his/her students and their particular needs. (Acklam, 1994: 13)

In short, it is the teacher and not the coursebook who should control or manage what happens, and one of the ways in which that control can manifest itself is through creative use (or ‘manipulation’, in Acklam’s terms) of the coursebook.

### 3.3.3 Creativity

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998), writing about ESP, state that ‘practitioners have to be . . . good providers of materials’ (pp.172–173). A good provider, for them, needs to have the ability to:

- 1 select appropriately from what is available
- 2 be creative with what is available
- 3 modify activities to suit learners’ needs and
- 4 supplement by providing extra activities (and extra input) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998: 173).

This list of abilities is applicable not just to ESP but to all forms of English language teaching, of course, and corresponds very closely to the teacher roles identified in earlier sections: (1) may be understood as both selecting from material that has been provided (e.g. a textbook) and the process of selecting a suitable textbook, where this is possible; (2) refers to exploitation—that is, getting something extra out of the material; (3) to adaptation; and (4) to supplementation which is designed to provide more exposure to the language or more opportunities for practice, which, at its least adventurous, may involve no more than borrowing from other published materials. However, point 4 could extend to selecting authentic texts and designing suitable exploitation activities or creating wholly original practice materials such as worksheets or tasks. A curriculum document for Hong Kong secondary school teachers cited in Samuda (2005: 236) states that: ‘All English teachers must take on the responsibility for selecting and adapting suitable tasks from different materials or designing tasks for their own learners’ (Curriculum Development Council, Hong Kong, 1999: 48). Samuda (*ibid.*) notes: ‘The clear expectation is that both redesign and original design work will be incorporated into a second language teacher’s “normal” professional repertoire’. There is no explicit reference in Dudley-Evans and St John’s list of roles to creating original materials; indeed, they state explicitly that ‘one of the myths of ESP has been that you have to write your own materials’. Nevertheless, aspects of creative design run through the set of roles they specify; even the decision not to use certain elements of a textbook can be seen as an act of reshaping or redesign. As Madsen & Bowen acknowledge:

Every teacher is in a very real sense an adapter of the textbook or materials he uses. . . . He adapts when he adds an example not found in the book or when he telescopes an assignment by having students prepare ‘only the even-numbered items’. He adapts even when he refers to an exercise covered earlier, or when he introduces a supplementary picture, song, realia or report. (Madsen & Bowen, 1978: vii)

With experience, all teachers will instinctively adapt materials in many or all of the ways described by Madsen and Bowen. However, if we wish them to go beyond such low-level adaptation and supplementation to forms of provision which are more demanding in terms of creativity, expertise and potentially time, we may need to persuade them of the need and help them to develop the necessary confidence and skills. We may also want to encourage

them to accept learners as active partners rather than as recipients of materials and teaching. The implications for teacher education are clear.

## **4. Teacher education in materials evaluation and design**

### **4.1 The need**

The need for teacher education in materials evaluation and design and the focus of this may have been implicit in the discussion of teacher roles in the last section, but this need has also been explicitly recognized. In an international survey of perceptions of teacher needs (Henrichsen, 1983), a questionnaire was sent to 500 teachers and employers in the United States of America and more than 30 other countries. Recipients were asked to rate the importance of 60 content areas (e.g. educational psychology, American literature, intercultural understanding, transformational grammar, Total Physical Response) divided into eight uneven groups (e.g. Education, Linguistics, Literature, TESL/TEFL Methods, TESL/TEFL Materials). TESL/TEFL Materials consisted of just two items: Materials Selection and Evaluation and Materials Development and Production. 153 responses (a return rate of 31%) were received from a total of 30 countries. These were analysed along a number of dimensions. Overall, training in materials selection and evaluation ranked top for respondents from outside the United States of America and second when all respondents were considered; when respondents were broken down by institution type or geographical area, materials selection and evaluation generally came out ‘considerably’ higher than materials development and production.

That very strong message from both teachers and employers about the importance of teacher education relating to materials endorses Cunningsworth’s (1979) view that ‘trainees on EFL teacher training courses need to be shown what to look for when evaluating course materials, and should be helped to develop criteria against which they can make a professional judgement when confronted with new or unfamiliar material’ (p.31). Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest that the scope of such programmes should be broader, arguing that ‘a central feature of all teacher training and development’ should be to help teachers ‘to be able to evaluate textbooks properly, exploit them in the class, and adapt and supplement them when necessary’ (p.327); Richards (2001b) goes still further: ‘teachers need training and experience in adapting

and modifying textbooks *as well as in using authentic materials and in creating their own materials*' (p.16, emphasis added). This combined set of stated needs corresponds perfectly to that articulated by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) cited in the previous section. Many years ago, McElroy (1934), who was thinking of both formal teacher education and the value of experience, observed: 'As teacher preparation increases, the importance of the textbook diminishes' (p.5). As an argument for teacher education in materials evaluation and design, this is just as true now as it was then.

## 4.2 Provision

Such calls notwithstanding, the study of materials does not as yet constitute a universally accepted core component of even pre-service teacher education programmes. None of Fredriksson and Olsson's (2006) small-scale sample of four experienced Swedish teachers of English and other languages 'had ever heard of any guides or literature on this topic' (p.7) and the authors conclude that in Sweden 'materials evaluation . . . is not a well known concept' (ibid). González Moncada (2006), who surveyed 12 undergraduate teacher education courses in Colombia, found that only one other than her own provided training in materials. Writing about the Arab Gulf, Bahumaid (2008) notes that though there is a materials production component in the MA TESOL programme at the American University of Sharjah, there is no comparable component in undergraduate or postgraduate programmes in TEFL at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, The United Arab Emirates University or Kuwait University, and concludes that training in both materials evaluation and development is needed for teachers and inspectors in the region. Writing more generally, Canniveng and Martinez (2003) claim that 'teacher training courses give little importance (or even sometimes ignore this area) in their programmes' (p.479).

One explanation for this apparent invisibility may lie in the fact that materials are treated as one element of the larger picture (e.g. within courses dealing with 'curriculum development' or 'syllabus planning') or, as Tomlinson (2001) has suggested, seen as a subsection of methodology. Block (1991) was thinking of lacunae in the professional literature when he commented: 'The assumption seems to be that materials selection, adaptation and development will take care of themselves' (p.211), but he might have been referring to language teacher education. The argument that will be advanced in this book is that even if teachers are expected to carry out no more than

three of the roles identified by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998)—selecting appropriately from what they are given, being creative with what is available (i.e. exploiting it) and modifying activities to suit learners' needs—they need guidance and hands-on practice in the form of a dedicated course. If, in addition, they are expected to supplement the core materials by providing extra activities (a minimal interpretation of Dudley-Evans and St John's fourth role) or develop their own materials, as advocated by some writers (e.g. Block, 1991; Richards, 1998a; Tomlinson, 2003c; Jolly & Bolitho, 2011) and required in Hong Kong, then that argument is even stronger. We return to the theme of teacher education in Chapters Four and Ten.