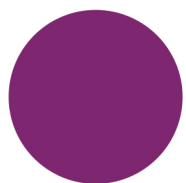


# EVALUATION OF ELT TEXTBOOKS:

A Handbook for Trainee Teachers

Monika Černá



ELT



MASARYKOVA  
UNIVERZITA



# **EVALUATION OF ELT TEXTBOOKS: A Handbook for Trainee Teachers**

Monika Černá

Masarykova univerzita  
Brno 2022



EVROPSKÁ UNIE  
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy  
Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání



Publikace Evaluation of ELT Textbooks: A Handbook for Trainee Teachers vznikla v rámci projektu OP Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání (OP VVV) Zkvalitnění a Inovace Přípravy budoucích učitelů na MUNI (ZIP MUNI) na Pdf MU. Registrační číslo projektu: CZ.02.3.68/0.0/0.0/19\_068/0016170



Tuto učební metodiku Evaluation of ELT Textbooks: A Handbook for Trainee Teachers, jejíž autorkou je Monika Černá, která je dostupná z: Databáze výstupů projektů OP VVV (<https://database.opvvv.msmt.cz>), lze užit v souladu s licenčními podmínkami Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 International (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>).

Uvedené se nevztahuje na díla nebo jiné předměty ochrany (např. obrazovou či fotografickou dokumentaci), které jsou ve výstupu užity zejména na základě smluvní licence nebo výjimky či omezení příslušných práv, jak je uvedeno u konkrétního jednotlivého předmětu ochrany.

Odborná recenze: Mgr. Irena Reimannová, Ph.D.  
Mgr. Ing. Eva Ellederová, Ph.D.

© 2022 Masarykova univerzita  
ISBN 978-80-280-0220-6  
ISBN 978-80-280-0219-0 (brožováno)

# CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	RATIONALE FOR THE DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT	5
2.1	THE TEXTBOOK AND ITS FUNCTIONS AND LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM	5
2.2	ELT TEXTBOOKS	6
2.2.1	TEXTBOOKS AND CHANGING ELT METHODS AND APPROACHES	6
2.2.2	SPECIFICS OF ELT TEXTBOOKS	7
2.3	APPROACHES TO TEXTBOOK EVALUATION AND ITS METHODS, TECHNIQUES, AND TOOLS	9
2.3.1	READABILITY FORMULAE AND OTHER METHODS/TECHNIQUES	9
2.3.2	CHECKLISTS	11
3	FORM, STRUCTURE, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELT TEXTBOOKS EVALUATION CHECKLIST	17
4	INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE	21
5	CONCLUSION	22
6	REFERENCES	23
	APPENDIX	25

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Textbooks, not excluding English textbooks, represent an important source of material in education even nowadays, with the increasing opportunities that exist to use new technologies. Concerning English language teaching (ELT), hundreds of textbooks are available on the market for different purposes and diverse learners in terms of their age, communicative competence in English, and needs.

Teachers may feel overwhelmed by the abundant output of publishing houses when they are required to select textbooks for their school.<sup>1</sup> Every textbook has its strong points and weak points; no single ideal textbook exists. We may only search for an optimal textbook for a particular teaching/learning situation, i.e. a textbook that is likely to help a certain group of learners to achieve given curricular objectives. Therefore, prospective English teachers need to be prepared to evaluate textbooks; they need to be familiar with the theory, methods, techniques, and tools used in evaluation. This handbook aims to provide teacher trainees with a rationale for the design of evaluation instruments for English textbooks in the context of school education<sup>2</sup> and a sample instrument, including guidelines for its use.

First, the rationale for the design of the evaluation instrument is presented, starting with the theoretical and methodological background, and then the form, structure, and characteristics of the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist* are introduced, including the instructions for use and the *Checklist itself* (Appendix).

- 
- 1 In some countries, however, teachers are not involved in selecting textbooks, since the process is more centralised and state or local authorities control the choice of textbooks (Průcha, 2009a, p. 302). For example, in the USA, a total of 20 states choose at the state level what textbooks can be used (ECS, 2013), while in the remaining states the process is decentralised.
  - 2 This handbook is primarily designed for Czech students in initial English language teacher education in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, Erasmus students, for example, are encouraged to compare the features of the Czech educational setting with the situation in their own country.

## 2 RATIONALE FOR THE DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

This chapter focuses on the rationale for the design of the instrument for the evaluation of English language textbooks. In order to clarify the theoretical background of the instrument, the following issues are discussed: the textbook and its functions and links to the curriculum; the specifics of ELT textbooks, and approaches to textbook evaluation and its methods, techniques, and tools.

---

### 2.1 The textbook and its functions and links to the curriculum

---

In his chapter aptly titled “Textbooks: The future of a nation”, Mikk (2007, p. 13) emphasises the importance of textbooks, given their impact on school education; at the same time he admits that defining a textbook is quite a difficult task. For example, Průcha (1998, p. 13) characterises the textbook as an educational construct which is designed for the specific purposes of education. In another publication, Průcha (2009b, p. 265) defines the textbook as a printed publication, the content, structure, and functions of which are adjusted to didactic communication. Its functions as part of the curriculum (i.e. it constitutes a certain component of the projected educational content), and as a didactic means (i.e. it controls and stimulates the learning of learners and introduces pedagogical steps). A textbook is not a stand-alone teaching aid but belongs to a system of didactic means along with posters, workbooks, readers,

dictionaries, atlases, maps, etc. Maňák et al. (2008, p. 40) emphasise the dominant position of a textbook in this system because it acts to bring together a comprehensive selection of the subject matter of a particular school subject for a specific school and grade.

The textbook assumes various functions in the teaching and learning process, for example, heuristic, informational, motivational, systematising, controlling, integrating, coordinating, and self-directing (Průcha, 1998, pp. 19-20; Skalková, 2007, pp. 104-105). Maňák (2008) argues that the textbook will continue to perform its important functions even in competition with new, technology-based forms of learning (e-learning, mobile learning, etc.). It even appears that some of the functions of the textbook are currently coming to the forefront; this especially concerns its systematising, coordinating, and integrating functions, which ensure that learners do not learn isolated pieces of information but integrate new knowledge into a system (Maňák, 2008, p. 23). Mikk (2007, p. 13) claims that the most important function of current textbooks is to motivate students to learn. Furthermore, Maňák (2008, p. 24) suggests that the textbook will gain new functions, such as a normative (unifying) function, since it should assist in outlining the subject matter and setting requirements/norms for individual school subjects and grades. This means that textbook research is therefore needed which will focus more on defining the curriculum in textbooks and defining/selecting the core curriculum<sup>3</sup> and the ways in which teachers and pupils work with textbooks. On top of that, it would be a necessity to establish groups

---

<sup>3</sup> Defining/selecting the core curriculum has always been a topical issue (Skalková, 2007, p. 104).

of experts who would be authorised to accept or reject textbooks for particular subjects and grades. The process of evaluation would have to be very different from the current procedure run by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), which results in granting or withdrawing an approval clause for textbooks<sup>4</sup>. For instance, the list of approved ELT textbooks is very extensive; it contains 267 items (MoEYS, 2021). Some titles on the list may raise doubts about the validity and reliability of the evaluation procedure, since textbooks of varying quality are included on the list.

In conclusion, the textbook is closely linked to the curriculum. Apart from other important functions, textbooks deliver the subject matter that is outlined at a general level in the respective framework education programmes. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the contents of the textbook match the contents of the curricular documents.

---

## 2.2 ELT textbooks

---

This section of the text considers how changing approaches, methods, and techniques in ELT relate to the design of textbooks for teaching and learning English. Furthermore, it discusses several questions concerning various aspects of the use of textbooks in English lessons.

---

<sup>4</sup> Following Act No. 561 of 24 September 2004 on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education, the Ministry grants or withdraws an approval clause for textbooks and teaching texts for basic and secondary education on the basis of an assessment as to whether these comply with educational goals stipulated herein, in Framework Educational Programmes and legal regulations (Czech Republic, 2011). The schools, however, may use textbooks without an approval clause, if they are in alignment with the listed documents.

---

### 2.2.1 Textbooks and changing ELT methods and approaches

Every textbook reflects the period in which it was “born”. Current English language teaching practices are significantly different from the practices half a century ago, when there was a quest for “the best method”.<sup>5</sup> Brown (2014) argues that methods, as they were conceived about fifty years ago,<sup>6</sup> are “too narrow and too constrictive to apply to a wide range of learners in an enormous number of situational contexts” (p. 18). ELT nowadays appears to be in what Richards and Rodgers (2014) label a post-communicative period. Generally, communicative competence has been accepted as the aim of ELT but there is not just a single method to achieve it. Instead, a principled basis should be developed on which teachers can choose particular techniques for teaching English in a specific context; such an approach is called principled eclecticism (Mellow, 2002, in Brown, 2014, p. 18). An array of current teaching techniques is available in the ELT literature (e.g. Brown, 2014; Burns & Richards, 2012; Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Harmer, 2015; Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012).

Consequently, the roles and nature of textbooks and other teaching materials have been changing in response to the shifting approaches, methods, and techniques in ELT<sup>7</sup>, since, according to Skalková (2007, p. 103), the presentation and organisation of the subject matter in textbooks depends on the didactic conceptions that the authors follow. According to Tomlinson (2012), until the middle of the 1990s, materials

---

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Audiolingual Method, Total Physical Response, the Silent Way, etc.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Method’ is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach (Anthony, 1963, in Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 21).

<sup>7</sup> Approaches, methods, and techniques in ELT have reflected changes in theories of the nature of language and of language learning, i.e. changes in linguistics, psychology, second language acquisition, etc.



were usually introduced as examples of methods in action; since then materials development has become (a) a practical undertaking, which involves the production, evaluation, adaptation, and delivery of material; and (b) a field of academic study.

Tomlinson (2012) argues that nowadays most universities and teacher training institutions run materials development modules. Books for (trainee) English language teachers approach materials development in different ways. They usually cover all four stages of the process – the production, evaluation, adaptation, and delivery of material (e.g. Celce-Murcia et al., 2014, Harmer, 2015; Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012). The focus of this text is on textbook evaluation. Unlike Scrivener (2011), who deals with the teacher’s tools in general, Celce-Murcia et al. (2014), Harmer (2015), and Ur (2012) include sections in which they specifically concentrate on textbook evaluation (see Section 2.3.2). Moreover, there are books that focus solely on the process of textbook selection (Cunningsworth, 1995).

### 2.2.2 Specifics of ELT textbooks

ELT textbooks are designed to support learning the English language. Compared to the textbooks that deliver all kinds of disciplinary knowledge, e.g. mathematics or history, ELT textbooks display several specific features. First, they are either monolingual or bilingual. Monolingual textbooks are written in English, which is the language/code the learners are learning. The learners’ mother tongue is not used at all. In other words, the English language is both the aim and the means of instruction. Bilingual textbooks usually use the learners’ mother tongue for giving instructions, explaining grammar, conveying the meaning of new lexical units, etc.

Second, there is not just one variety of English that is codified in textbooks, but there are many “World Englishes”. In the Czech Republic, traditionally, the preferred variety is British English.

Third, ELT textbooks are currently conceived not as single volumes but as “coursebook packages”, which involve “all elements related to a coursebook and produced in-house by a publisher, including associated websites and digital resources” (Allen, 2015, p. 249). Typically, such a package consists of a Student’s Book, Teacher’s Book, Workbook, audio/video recordings, and additional digital resources. Some packages also contain a test booklet. Coursebook packages for young learners may also contain posters, flashcards, puppets, etc. Thus, when talking about an English textbook in this material, we are actually referring to the whole package.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of the textbook and its functions in education are discussed in Section 2.1. Nevertheless, some researchers propose contradictory views. Putting together a variety of opinions, Tomlinson (2012, pp. 270-274) raises several issues concerning ELT textbooks. In the next part, three of them are discussed: To use or not to use textbooks? Global or local textbooks? Printed textbooks or new technologies?

#### To use or not to use textbooks?

For more than 40 years, there have been discussions on whether or not textbooks represent an effective way of delivering language learning materials to learners (Tomlinson, 2012). Unlike working with freestanding (digital) resources, using a textbook offers both teachers and learners a number of benefits, especially “providing a coherent syllabus and structure to the teaching and learning process” (Allen, 2015, p. 250).

---

<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the terms textbook, coursebook, and coursebook package are used as synonyms in this text.

Thus, teachers do not have to worry, for example, about the choice and sequence of vocabulary items, grammar structures, and texts, since they are given by the syllabus of the textbook. Proponents of the textbook also mention its cost-effectiveness in providing the learner with security, system, progress, and revision (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 271). Furthermore, they emphasise that using a textbook saves teachers' precious time (Harmer, 2015, p. 71). In some institutions, the textbook may assume a standardising function.

Contrary to that, opponents of textbooks claim that textbooks disempower the teacher and the learners, cannot cater to the needs of their users, and provide only an illusion of system and progress (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 271). Moreover, Harmer (2015, pp. 71-72) suggests that learners consider textbooks boring and offers a summary of arguments for and against coursebook use.

This handbook reflects the opinions of those who consider the textbook an essential educational resource and proposes the use of textbooks, though not a dogmatic one. Teachers as active agents are encouraged to conduct textbook evaluation in order to identify the strong and weak points of the textbook. Knowing the textbook well is a prerequisite for successful planning. However, how the textbook is used in teaching and learning English is critical, in other words, whether its potential is fully utilised and its possible drawbacks compensated for.

## Global or local textbooks?

Unlike other textbooks, coursebook packages for teaching and learning English in this country are not often designed specifically for Czech learners of English in Czech schools, but they are global textbooks. They have been designed for the "generalized needs and wants of virtual groups of learners" (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 272) and as such they can hardly respond to the needs of students who are learning English in specific

educational settings with specific aims. Addressing non-specific learners with non-specific needs is the main disadvantage of global textbooks, which leads to compromises in terms of the authenticity of topics, choice of language, etc. (see Section 2.3.1) on the part of the textbook authors.

There is no doubt that publishing ELT coursebooks is a profit-making business. Allen (2015) argues that since the 1960s, when global ELT as a large-scale educational and commercial enterprise emerged, the production of printed coursebooks, associated teaching materials, and learner dictionaries has assumed a central role in a worldwide multi-billion dollar industry.<sup>9</sup> There has been much criticism of this ELT enterprise. The ideological dimension of the spread of global coursebooks has been reiterated in relation to linguistic imperialism (e.g. Canagaraj, 1999) and consumerism; in his critique, Gray (2010) uncovered the effects of the global coursebook as a consumer product. The professional dimension is challenged by the research; in addition to the studies presented in Section 2.3.1, Tomlinson (2003) reveals that many experienced textbook writers rely on their intuitions of what "works" and on their repertoire of activities rather than on a prior articulation of learning principles.

In spite of all the criticism, global textbooks attract teachers all over the world. The reasons are, according to Tomlinson (2012), high production values and the face validity of textbooks. However, the effects of promotion and marketing also pay off. Concerning Czech schools, Project (e.g. Hutchinson, 2012, 2014) seems to be a widespread global textbook for lower secondary learners.<sup>10</sup> The third edition of the series (e.g. Hutchinson, 2012) was customised for Czech lower secondary learners to a certain extent. Similarly, Maturita Solutions (e.g. Davies & Falla, 2017) is

---

<sup>9</sup> ELT coursebooks are published by international publishing houses. Large ELT publishers include, for example, Oxford University Press English Language Teaching, Cambridge English, Macmillan English, and Pearson ELT. An extensive list of publishers is available at <https://teflastic.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/full-list-of-elt-publishers/>.

<sup>10</sup> Based on students' small-scale research projects conducted for the purpose of their bachelor's and diploma theses and on trainee teachers' clinical practice experience.

an example of a global textbook which has been customised to the needs of Czech upper secondary students preparing for the school-leaving, i.e. matura, exam. There are also local publishers of English textbooks in the Czech Republic, especially Fraus. Their output includes, for example, the Your Space series (e.g. Keddl et al., 2020), which has been designed by an international team of authors including Czech scholars. The series of textbooks for Czech basic school learners reflects their needs and the requirements imposed by the Czech curricular documents (MoEYS, 2017). Tomlinson (2012) promotes a different strategy; he suggests developing materials locally and gives examples of successful materials design projects in several countries. He also emphasises the support of Ministries of Education that such projects need.

### Printed textbooks or new technologies?

One might argue that the importance of textbooks is diminishing nowadays when an unlimited amount of materials for teaching and learning English is available online and people can interact at a distance. The question whether to use printed textbooks or the new technologies is very closely linked to the musings as to whether to use the textbook or not (Section 2.2.2.1); the benefits of using the new technologies represent one of the arguments against the use of coursebooks. However, there is evidence that textbooks have their place in lessons; Bednárek et al. (2021) summarise the research findings concerning the use of printed textbooks and conclude that teachers use textbooks in lessons to a considerable extent, i.e. with a high frequency and for a long time. Similarly, Sikorová (2010, pp. 73-76) claims that 70% of English teachers of Czech lower secondary learners follow a textbook in a systematic way and that 100% of those teachers use the textbook as a source of content and methodological guidance. Furthermore, a study conducted in a Swedish context (Allen, 2015) suggests that the preference for a printed textbook might be linked to teacher experience. Allen (2015)

concludes that pre-service English teachers, unlike more experienced in-service teachers, work with coursebooks when structuring their lessons. In-service teachers are increasingly embracing external digital resources at the expense of coursebook packages.

Obviously, the textbook is likely to maintain a certain position in English classrooms, though its functions may change dynamically (see Section 2.1). At the same time, it is desirable to complement the textbook through the involvement of new technologies in lessons, building on some of the benefits they bring, including “multimodal representation of the language, observing proficient language users communicating [...], interaction at a distance” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 274).

---

## 2.3 Approaches to textbook evaluation and its methods, techniques, and tools

---

This section introduces approaches to textbook evaluation and its methods, techniques, and tools. Textbook evaluation is one of the areas of evaluation in education (Průcha, 1996). With reference to other researchers, Sikorová (2007, p. 31) proposes that there are two main techniques of textbook evaluation: (a) application of readability formulae, and (b) checklists.

---

### 2.3.1 Readability formulae and other methods/techniques of measurement

Concerning the former, researchers have applied various readability formulae in order to investigate the difficulty and complexity of texts

(e.g. Průcha, 1998, 2009a). Moreover, researchers deploy other methods of measurement (Fuchs & Bock, 2018; Knecht & Janík, 2008; Maňák & Knecht, 2007; Průcha, 2009a), though rarely to explore ELT textbooks. The specific aims of investigating ELT textbooks frequently require, for example, specific techniques and tools of corpus linguistics.

In order to present English textbooks in the light of research, this section introduces selected research studies exploring global textbooks of English in a variety of contexts, and a study investigating a Czech textbook of English. All the studies implement a “curricular approach” (Knecht & Janík, 2008, p. 10) because they focus on the textbook as a product and investigate the subject matter, i.e. the language, in textbooks.

The aim of ELT textbooks is to support the development of learners’ communicative competence in English. Not surprisingly, the language presented in textbooks has been subject to investigation. Meunier and Gouverneur (2009) review recent work in the field of corpus linguistics, which examines the distance/closeness of textbook material to the target language. They conclude that there seem to be significant mismatches between native production and the language in texts and dialogues in textbooks. For example, Koprowski (2005) investigated the usefulness of lexical phrases in contemporary coursebooks. He concluded that the lexical phrases selected by textbook designers are of limited usefulness for prospective textbook users since they represent low-frequency items with a very limited range,<sup>11</sup> although computerised corpora are available for reference. The results are alarming because in many educational contexts, the textbook becomes the syllabus and, thus, what goes into it should be extremely useful for learners.

Similarly, Gilmore (2004) contrasted textbook dialogues, more specifically, service encounter dialogues, with comparable authentic interactions. Results suggest that textbook dialogues differ considerably

---

<sup>11</sup> Range “relates to the number of text types in which a lexical item can be found” (Koprowski, 2005, p. 324).

from their authentic counterparts across a range of discourse features, for example, length, turn-taking patterns, lexical density, the number of false starts and repetitions, pausing, the use of hesitation devices, etc. The author argues that at some point students should be shown the true nature of conversation, given that their goal is to be able to operate independently in L2 outside the classroom. He also reports that more recent textbooks seem to incorporate more of the discourse features found in authentic data.

Additionally, Clavel-Arroitia and Fuster-Márquez (2014) analysed 60 texts from selected English textbooks for advanced learners (the B2 and C1 levels) and investigated the extent to which the authenticity of these texts has been preserved, the kinds of changes they have undergone when found in textbooks, and the rationale for these changes. The main findings reveal that the texts are mostly descriptive or expository; they represent a native variety, British English (BrE), and they have undergone alterations in terms of length and linguistic substitutions.

Furthermore, Siegel (2014), who collected, categorised, and compared topics from eleven textbooks and naturally occurring conversations between Japanese and non-Japanese students at a university dormitory, investigated the authenticity of textbook topics. Major discrepancies between the treatment of some topics, including students’ school lives, became evident. The findings imply that topics which are realistic and practical should be incorporated into English classrooms to prepare students better for the world outside the class.

In addition to authenticity, Ren and Han (2016) explore representations of pragmatic knowledge in recent ELT textbooks. Though the recent textbooks in their study offer a variety of linguistic expressions for speech acts and some books include the degree of formality of certain expressions, their study also uncovered many problems. The findings suggest that pragmatic information is still under-represented in most

textbooks and the range of speech acts across most of the textbooks they studied is quite limited.

While the previous studies focused on the language in textbooks, the following studies deal with the representation of foreign cultures, ideological aspects of English textbooks, and identity issues. Yuen (2011) investigated two global English textbooks to find out whether the representation of foreign cultures in these textbooks reflected the status of English as an international language. References to foreign cultures were categorised into four aspects: products, practices, perspectives, and people. It was found overall that there is an imbalance in the representation between the cultures of different regions; the cultures of the English-speaking countries appear more frequently than Asian and African cultures. Concerning the four aspects, products are the most frequently depicted cultural aspect and perspectives the least. Yuen (2011) admits, however, that a lack of comprehensiveness and depth can hardly be avoided in those textbooks since they are designed to support learning the English language, not foreign cultures.

Using Eco's classification of open and closed texts, Kubrická (2013) examines the ideological content of global English textbooks used in the Czech Republic. The author analyses ideological aspects of texts and exercises related to environmental topics in English textbooks and uncovers to what extent the textbook texts manipulate their readers.

Lastly, a study dealing with identities portrayed in a Czech textbook of English, *Time to Talk* (Kubrická, 2015), is presented. The study describes various aspects of the identities that are portrayed and the ways in which the interpretation of cultural content in texts and tasks is restricted. The findings reveal the dominant role of British culture and the authority of British native speakers, though the textbook reflects the current intercultural discourse, which involves the presentation and confrontation of diverse cultures.

In conclusion, the studies presented above implemented a range of methods and techniques (analyses of corpora, content and discourse analyses, etc.) and yielded research findings that shed light on features of selected global coursebooks. The findings inspire the design of criteria for teacher-led textbook evaluation and underscore its importance. Even the products of well-established publishers need to be approached critically, since global textbooks can only be effective locally to a certain extent (Section 2.2.2).

---

### 2.3.2 Checklists

Checklists are lists of evaluation criteria. The items on the list are either questions, open-ended or closed, or statements complemented by a Likert-type scale. They are used in situations in which it is desirable to choose an optimal textbook for a particular educational setting. In this case it is "evaluation for suitability" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7), which involves matching the textbook against specific criteria. Nevertheless, the process of textbook evaluation may be perceived as discovering the potential of the textbook. Strong and weak features emerge from evaluation; conducting "evaluation for potential" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7) happens without any reference to a specific English class working towards given curricular objectives.

As regards textbook evaluation, it may range from small-scale projects in one class/school to projects at a national level. Designing a checklist of criteria is a demanding and responsible procedure, since important decisions are made on the basis of evaluation. The resources that informed the design of the *ELT textbooks evaluation checklist* which is introduced in this handbook (Appendix) are presented below.

Sikorová (2007) describes the designing of a checklist which should be used to approve or reject textbooks, irrespective of the school subject. The checklist (Sikorová, 2007, pp. 35-38) contains 13 categories:

(1) Clarity<sup>12</sup>; (2) Adequate difficulty and range of content; (3) Correctness of the content; (4) Motivational characteristics; (5) Managing learning; (6) Visual materials; (7) Alignment with the curricular documents; (8) Price (availability of the textbook); (9) Ergonomic and typographic characteristics; (10) Complementary texts and materials; (11) Differentiation of the subject matter and tasks; (12) Values and attitudes; (13) Presentation of the subject matter. The categories are sequenced in descending order according to their perceived importance. Each category contains two to four criteria in the form of closed questions. The user should answer whether the textbook meets the criterion fully, i.e. the answer is *Yes*, *Partly*, or not at all (*No*). Points are allocated for each answer to each question. The principle of weighting is applied in order to distinguish the importance of individual categories, the most prominent being the first three.

Examples of questions from the prominent categories (Sikorová, 2007, p. 35):

(1) Clarity

*Is the textbook structured clearly (chapters and topics are linked logically, the textbook is clearly organised)?*

YES (6 pts) PARTLY (3 pts) NO (0 pts)

(2) Adequate difficulty and range of content

*Are the instructions for tasks and formulations of questions clear and comprehensible?*

YES (5 pts) PARTLY (2.5 pts) NO (0 pts)

---

12 The original categories in the Czech language: Přehlednost, přiměřená obtížnost a rozsah učiva, odborná správnost, motivační charakteristiky, řízení učení, obrazový materiál, shoda s kurikulárními dokumenty, cena (dostupnost učebnice), ergonomické a typografické vlastnosti, doplňkové texty a materiály, diferenciacie učiva a úloh, hodnoty a postoje, zpracování učiva.

In comparison, in the last category, the number of points for *Yes* is 1, and for *Partly* 0.5. The maximum number of points is 112; the textbook should not be awarded less than 70 points to be considered acceptable (Sikorová, 2007, p. 35).

Similarly, Nogová (2008) describes the design and application of a set of textbook evaluation criteria which respect the requirements of curricular documents in Slovakia in the first stage of their implementation. Thus, textbooks assume a key role during the introduction of a new curriculum.

Furthermore, checklists that were designed specifically for evaluating ELT coursebooks (Byrd & Schuemann, 2014; Cunningsworth, 1995; Harmer, 2015; Tomlinson, 2012; Ur, 2012) also inspired the *ELT textbooks evaluation checklist*, especially in terms of categories of criteria and the formulations of individual criteria.

Byrd and Schuemann (2014) present a checklist suggesting three Textbook Fitness Categories (Figure 1): curriculum, students, and teachers. Reviewers use the criteria in each category to judge whether the textbook is appropriate to a particular teaching/learning situation.

Reviewer Name:  
 Course Name:  
 Text Name:  
 Author(s):  
 Publisher/Year of Publication:  
 Level and Skills Focus:

	0	1	2	3	4
<b>Note:</b> For survey ranking of textbook fit, consider "0" poor fit/ mismatch, "1" minimal fit, "2" average/potential fit, "3" good fit, and "4" superior fit.					
<b>Textbook Fitness Categories</b>					
<b>a) CURRICULUM:</b> The textbook content is appropriate with respect to ...					
1. overall program curriculum/goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. language learning material for level/course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. thematic/topical content & course objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. pedagogical/SLA philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. length & unit size versus program time frame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CURRICULUM TOTAL</b> _____ /5 items: _____					
<b>b) STUDENTS:</b> The textbook is appropriate and will foster student learning at this level with respect to ...					
1. logically sequenced unit-by-unit presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. design & visual elements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. cultural & age-group sensitivities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. explanations & instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. activities/exercises/tasks for in-class and homework (varied and copious)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. examples in explanations & sample items in exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. periodic tests/learning checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. multi-media support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. thematic/topical content & student interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>STUDENTS TOTAL</b> _____ /10 items: _____					
<b>c) TEACHERS:</b> The textbook is appropriate for the teachers of this program with respect to ...					
1. teaching styles and preferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. teaching experience levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. level of English (for NNS teachers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. designing a syllabus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. teaching from provided explanations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. ease of using & expanding examples & activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. accessing & using ancillaries including guides with advice, tests, and answer keys, and/or multi-media supplements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>TEACHERS TOTAL</b> _____ /7 items: _____					
<b>TOTAL FOR ALL THREE CATEGORIES</b> _____ /22 items: _____					
<b>NOTES FOR FINAL SUMMARY/DECISION:</b>					

Figure 1. Checklist for ESL/EFL textbook selection (Byrd & Schuemann, 2014, p. 389).

In order to analyse the textbook, reviewers may further refer to the guidelines for ESL/EFL textbook implementation (Figure 2), which contain nine clusters of open-ended questions and statements targeting various areas: 1. Analysis of Linguistic Content; 2. Analysis of Thematic Content; 3. Analysis of Activities for In-Class Use; 4. Analysis of Activities for Homework; 5. Analysis of Activities for Testing Purposes; 6. Analysis of Activities for Review Purposes; 7. Analysis of Activities; 8. Analysis of Unit Connections and Review Points, and 9. Analysis of What to Skip.

Reviewer Name:  
 Course Name:  
 Text Name:  
 Author(s):  
 Publisher/Year of Publication:  
 Level and Skills Focus:

<b>1. Analysis of Linguistic Content</b>	<p>What language areas are being taught? In which chunks and what sequences? What adjustments must be made to fit the program's curriculum? Are there any adjustments that I would like to make in content and sequencing to better fit my course and my students?</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>2. Analysis of Thematic Content</b>	<p>What topics are used in each unit? What topics recur throughout the whole book? What connections can I make between these topics and the backgrounds/interests of my students? How can I enrich the use of these themes?</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>3. Analysis of Activities for In-Class Use</b>	<p>Which of the activities provided in the textbook will I do in class? I am looking for a variety of activities that can be used to meet the needs of different learners and to achieve the pedagogical goals of the course. Initial decisions can be made about using individual, pair, or small-group configurations for the activities. (Experienced teachers also look for change-of-pace activities—a high-energy task requiring a lot of moving around, balanced by something more contemplative.)</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>4. Analysis of Activities for Homework</b>	<p>Which of the activities provided in the textbook could be assigned as homework? This decision needs to be made on the basis of the purpose that homework has in this particular class. Generally, teachers use homework for follow-up practice and for activities that may have students engaging in "outside of class" use of English. Some teachers use homework to prepare students for new work, not just to review and practice things already presented.</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>5. Analysis of Activities for Testing Purposes</b>	<p>Which of the activities provided in the textbook could be held back to use for testing? If no tests are provided by the text or the publisher, some activities might be reserved to use for assessment.</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>6. Analysis of Activities for Review Purposes</b>	<p>Which of the activities provided in the textbook can be used for review later in the term? Some activities might be reserved for review, or a variation on an activity might be used for review later in the term.</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<b>7. Analysis of Activities</b>	<p>Which of the activities provided in the textbook require special equipment that has to be ordered ahead of time? In most settings specific equipment requires extra effort and planning time.</p> <p>Comments:</p>

(continued)

Figure 2. Guidelines (areas 1-7) for ESL/EFL textbook implementation (Byrd & Schuemann, 2014, p. 390).

The work by Cunningsworth (1995) represents a major contribution to the topic of textbook evaluation. He presents a Quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection (Figure 3), which consists of criteria in eight categories: Aims and approaches, Design and organisation, Language content, Skills, Topics, Methodology, Teachers' books, and Practical considerations.



## ■ Quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection

### Aims and approaches

- Do the aims of the coursebook correspond closely with the aims of the teaching programme and with the needs of the learners?
- Is the coursebook suited to the learning/teaching situation?
- How comprehensive is the coursebook? Does it cover most or all of what is needed? Is it a good resource for students and teachers?
- Is the coursebook flexible? Does it allow different teaching and learning styles?

### Design and organization

- What components make up the total course package (eg students' books, teachers' books, workbooks, cassettes, etc)?
- How is the content organized (eg according to structures, functions, topics, skills, etc)? Is the organization right for learners and teachers?
- How is the content sequenced (eg on the basis of complexity, 'learnability', usefulness, etc)?
- Is the grading and progression suitable for the learners? Does it allow them to complete the work needed to meet any external syllabus requirements?
- Is there adequate recycling and revision?
- Are there reference sections for grammar, etc? Is some of the material suitable for individual study?
- Is it easy to find your way around the coursebook? Is the layout clear?

### Language content

- Does the coursebook cover the main grammar items appropriate to each level, taking learners' needs into account?
- Is material for vocabulary teaching adequate in terms of quantity and range of vocabulary, emphasis placed on vocabulary development, strategies for individual learning?
- Does the coursebook include material for pronunciation work? If so what is covered: individual sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation?
- Does the coursebook deal with the structuring and conventions of language use above sentence level, eg how to take part in conversations, how to structure a piece of extended writing, how to identify the main points in a reading passage? (More relevant at intermediate and advanced levels.)
- Are style and appropriacy dealt with? If so, is language style matched to social situation?

Figure 3. Quick-reference checklist for evaluation and selection by Cunningsworth (1995, p. 3), selected parts.

In addition to the basic quick-reference checklist, Cunningsworth (1995) provides numerous complementary checklists that focus in detail on particular aspects of the textbook, for example, Checklist for the organisation of coursebooks, Checklist for grammar items, Checklist for phonology, Checklist for grading, Checklist for listening, Checklist for communicative interactions, Checklist for teachers' books (Figure 4). Altogether, the checklists represent a comprehensive tool for textbook evaluation. All the criteria are formulated as open-ended and/or closed questions; no accompanying scale is provided.

## ■ Checklist for teachers' books

- How comprehensive and flexible is the teacher's book?
- Is it written so as to be comprehensible to less experienced teachers?
- Is it suitable for native and non-native speaker teachers?
- Is the underlying approach of the writers expressed clearly and explicitly, or does it have to be inferred?
- Does the teacher's book provide enough detailed information on the language items to be taught?
- Does the teacher's book give enough guidance on the teaching procedures advocated?
- Is there enough cultural explanation to enable teachers unfamiliar with, for example, British lifestyles to interpret and exploit appropriately the situations portrayed in the coursebook?
- How prescriptive is the guidance provided (bearing in mind that a moderately prescriptive approach may be appropriate when teacher expectations require it)?
- Are there clear objectives for each unit/lesson?
- Are new language items explained intelligibly in terms of their form and meaning/use?
- Are there outline plans for each unit/lesson?
- Are teaching procedures clearly explained?
- Are learning difficulties predicted and appropriate advice given?
- How detailed is the information and advice given?
- Is the same detail given for every unit, or only for sample units?
- Can the contents of the teacher's book be related easily to the relevant sections of the student's book?
- Is advice given on informal monitoring of students and on using correction techniques?
- Are keys to exercises and other activities provided?
- Are there regular progress tests and advice on when and how to use them, and how to follow them up?
- Does the teacher's book make a positive contribution to heightening and sustaining learner motivation?
- Are teachers encouraged to note down their own ideas in the teacher's book?
- Are there any guidelines for evaluating how well lessons went?

Figure 4. Checklist for teachers' books (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 115).

Ur (2012, pp. 199-200) provides a less extensive checklist containing 20 general criteria (Figure 5), which (trainee) teachers are invited to use for evaluating a textbook. Using a five-point scale, (trainee) teachers decide how important a particular criterion is for them: *essential – quite important – not sure – not important – totally unimportant*. The criteria concern the following aspects of a textbook: Objectives; Approach; Layout; Appearance; Interest; Variation; Instructions; Syllabus; Organization; Review and Test; Pronunciation; Vocabulary; Grammar; Listening, speaking, reading and writing; Learner independence; Teacher’s guides; Audio recordings; Visual materials; Websites; Availability. Furthermore, (trainee) teachers may complement the list with their own criteria, which reflect the specifics of their local contexts, or they may make the general criteria more specific.

**Checklist for coursebook evaluation**

Importance	Criterion	Applied
	1. The objectives are clearly explained in the introduction, and implemented in the material.	
	2. The approach is educationally and culturally acceptable to the target students.	
	3. The layout is clear (both the book as a whole and single pages) and the print is easy to read. If digital, then it is easy to 'navigate' from page to page.	
	4. The material is attractive.	
	5. The texts and tasks are interesting.	
	6. The texts and tasks are varied, appropriate for different learner levels, learning styles, interests, etc.	
	7. Instructions are clear.	
	8. There is an explicit syllabus, which is covered systematically.	
	9. Content is clearly organized and graded.	
	10. There are regular review and test sections.	

Figure 5. Checklist by Ur (2012, p. 200), criteria 1-10.

Harmer (2015, p. 75) does not provide a checklist, but he suggests areas to consider when choosing a coursebook: Price and availability; Layout, design, and ease of use; Instructions; Methodology; Syllabus; Topics (and content); and Teachers’ guides and teacher support.

Tomlinson’s work (2012) is also a source of inspiration for designing the checklist, though in a different way. He raises several general issues concerning the use of textbooks (Tomlinson, 2012, pp. 272-273), some of which were mentioned above. Furthermore, he formulates universal criteria underpinning his idea of materials development, which may also be utilised in textbook evaluation.

1. Learners should be exposed to a rich, meaningful, and comprehensible input of language in use.
2. In order for the learners to maximize their exposure to language in use they need to be engaged both affectively and cognitively in the language experience.
3. Learners who achieve positive affect are much more likely to achieve communicative competence than those who do not.
4. L2 learners can benefit from using those mental resources that they typically utilize when acquiring and using their L1.
5. Language learners can benefit from noticing salient features of their input.
6. Learners need opportunities to use language to try to achieve communicative purposes.

(Tomlinson, 2012, p. 271)

All the resources referenced in this section inspired the design of the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist*, which is described in detail in the next section.

### 3 FORM, STRUCTURE, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELT TEXTBOOKS EVALUATION CHECKLIST

This handbook provides an instrument for evaluating English textbooks, the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist*. The instrument is intended for trainee teachers in English departments who are learning to evaluate textbooks as part of their education. The checklist has been designed as a tool for “evaluation for suitability”, i.e. whether a textbook is suitable for a particular grade and class at a basic/secondary school in the Czech Republic. The purpose of evaluation is not to approve or reject a textbook (cf. Sikorová, 2007; Nogová, 2008), but to consider whether it fits a particular teaching/learning situation or not, i.e. which criteria the textbook fails to meet. The outcomes of evaluation become a basis for adapting and/or supplementing the textbook.

For the sake of trainee teachers’ learning, the checklist has been designed with the intention of covering all the most important aspects of textbooks. This feature makes it comparable to the quick-reference checklist by Cunningsworth (1995); however, the categories of criteria and the form of individual items are different. Inspired by various categorisations of evaluation criteria (Table 1), the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist* contains nine categories of criteria: Aims, Design, Layout and organisation, Visual aspects, Approaches, Language content, Skills, Topics, and Practical considerations.

Table 1

Textbook evaluation: categories of criteria

Categories of criteria for textbook evaluation irrespective of the subject		Categories of criteria for evaluation of English textbooks		
<b>Sikorová (2007, pp. 35-38)</b> 13 categories, 34 criteria	<b>Nogová (2008, p. 40)</b> 6 categories, 18 criteria	<b>Cunningsworth (1995, pp. 3-4)</b> 8 categories, 45 criteria	<b>Ur (2012, pp. 201-203)</b> 20 categories, 20 criteria	<b>Harmer (2015, p. 75)</b> 7 categories, no criteria
Clarity	Alignment with the state educational programme <sup>13</sup>	Aims and approaches	Objectives	Price and availability
Adequate difficulty and range of content	Personality development	Design and organisation	Approach	Layout, design, and ease of use
Correctness of the content	Didactic aspects	Language content	Layout	Instructions
Motivational characteristics	Choice of content	Skills	Appearance	Methodology
Managing learning	Graphics	Topics	Interest	Syllabus
Visual materials	Political correctness	Methodology	Variation	Topics (and content)
Alignment with the curricular documents		Teachers' books	Instructions	Teachers' guides and teacher support
Price (availability of the textbook)		Practical considerations	Syllabus	
Ergonomic and typographic characteristics			Organisation	
Complementary texts and materials			Review and Test	
Differentiation of the subject matter and tasks			Pronunciation	
Values and attitudes			Vocabulary	
Presentation of the subject matter			Grammar	
			Listening, speaking, reading, and writing	
			Learner independence	
			Teacher's guides	
			Audio recordings	
			Visual materials	
			Websites	
			Availability	

<sup>13</sup> The original criteria in the Slovak language: Súlad so štátnym vzdelávacím programom, Rozvoj osobnosti, Didaktické spracovanie, Vyber obsahu, Grafické spracovanie, Spoločenská korektnosť.

The checklist was piloted with 60 full-time and 30 combined students of the Lower Secondary English Language Teacher Training Programme at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in November 2021. On the basis of the student teachers' detailed comments, the number of criteria was reduced considerably, and certain items were reformulated in a more specific or simplified way. The first version of the checklist turned out to be too demanding for a 90-minute seminar. Given the time limitations, the items that required a deeper knowledge of the textbook were removed (e.g. the items which targeted the underlying theories of second language acquisition) or reformulated. As a result, the instrument comprises 63 items in nine categories; each of them includes two to 14 items/criteria.<sup>14</sup> The criteria are formulated as yes/no questions<sup>15</sup> (one criterion, one question, e.g. *Is there enough variety of topics?*). Answers to the questions are noted down using a scale: Yes/Partly/No. The instrument involves a section for additional criteria which trainee teachers may include. On top of that, each category contains a section for comments, which allows commentaries, explanations, etc. to be added. Thus, when the evaluation is completed, a sort of textbook profile emerges; one can clearly see how the answers are distributed across the individual categories. There is also an introductory part, in which background information is provided, and a space for final/overall comments.

---

14 It does not matter that the number of criteria differs substantially between the individual categories, since points are not allocated for answers and the principle of weighting is not applied. This is different from the checklist by Sikorová (2007), though there are also shared features (the form of criteria, scale) between the tools.

15 Using just yes/no questions was a certain limitation; consequently, it was very difficult or even impossible to address certain issues.

Description of the instrument:

- Introductory part

This part contains basic information about the textbook which will be subject to evaluation and about its users, the students and a trainee teacher.

- Aims (3 criteria)

The criteria in this category are designed to direct student teachers' attention to the aims of the textbook in terms of whether they are explicitly stated by the textbook writers and whether they are in alignment with the curriculum.

- Design (5 criteria)

The purpose of this category is to help trainee teachers realise what components the coursebook package includes.

- Layout and organisation (10 criteria)

The criteria in this section raise the student teachers' awareness of what elements make up the textbook and how those elements are organised. Moreover, the layout and readability of individual pages is in question. The criteria also aim to find out about the nature of the syllabus and ways of organising learning tasks.

- Visual aspects (4 criteria)

This category allows trainee teachers to consider the visual aspects of a textbook.

- Approaches (6 criteria)

The criteria in this category make trainee teachers think about the theoretical background of the textbook, including some general pedagogical approaches and ELT approaches and methods.

- Language content (14 criteria)

The criteria in this section target the language content of the textbook. They make trainee teachers think about grammar items, vocabulary, pronunciation features, and pragmatic aspects of English. Several criteria might be included in a distinct methodology section (e.g. *Does the inductive way of teaching grammar prevail?*). Nevertheless, a decision was made to keep all the questions concerning, for example, phonology, together.

- Skills (12 criteria)

The skills section contains criteria addressing all four skills, i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing, either together or separately or distinguishing productive and receptive skills. Similarly to the language content section, the criteria that are linked to teaching skills remain in the skills category.

- Topics (7 criteria)

The purpose of the criteria in this section is to make trainee teachers consider the textbook topics from several perspectives.

- Practical considerations (2 criteria)

The last category draws attention to the practical considerations of textbook selection, those of price and availability, which are also important.

- Additional criteria

This section provides space for trainee teachers to personalise the instrument by including additional criteria. By extending the checklist, trainee teachers may respond to their learning needs during their practicum, to the specifics of the teaching/learning situation, etc.

Apart from responding to the criteria, trainee teachers may write their commentaries in the comments section which concludes each category.

The commentaries may concern the criteria, personal response to the criteria, uncertainties about the results of the evaluation, etc. Having finished their textbook evaluation, trainee teachers may also summarise the outcomes in the overall comments section. The summary may include conclusions concerning, for example, the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook, its suitability for a particular context, the necessity of supplementary materials for developing a particular aspect of English, etc.

## 4 INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist* has been designed for the purposes of initial teacher education in the Czech Republic, specifically for students in English language teacher education programmes, i.e. future basic school and secondary school teachers. Presumably, trainee teachers will work with the instrument during their teaching practicum or during foreign language didactics seminars. Since the checklist has been designed to evaluate ELT textbooks for suitability, it is vital that

trainee teachers have a specific group of learners, or at least a particular grade, in mind.

The procedure may be modified in response to the objectives and the content of the course in which the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist* is to be used.

Stages of the evaluation procedure:

- a) Choose a textbook to evaluate and fill in the background information in the form.
- b) Collect all the components of the course package.
- c) Read the *ELT Textbooks Evaluation Checklist* carefully.
- d) If you find some criteria irrelevant to your situation, explain this in the comments section and leave them out.
- e) If you wish to add your own personal criteria, write them in the additional criteria section.
- f) Evaluate the textbook. The evaluation procedure is suggested as a *two-step process*:  
STEP 1: Focus on the selected sections (Aims, Design, Layout and organisation, Visual aspects, and Practical considerations) only. Follow one category of criteria after another and fill in the evaluation form; put a tick in the appropriate column (Yes/Partly/No). If you wish, add your own comments in each category.  
STEP 2: Being able to evaluate the textbook in the remaining categories (Approaches, Language content, Skills, and Topics) requires an in-depth knowledge of the textbook. Therefore, it is advisable to delay the evaluation of these categories until after you have worked with the textbook for some time during the teaching practicum or after you have studied it carefully. The procedure is the same as in Step 1.
- g) Write a summary of your findings in the overall comments section. Reflect on the learning experience.
- h) If possible, compare your findings with those of your fellow-trainees and discuss them.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, textbook evaluation represents a crucial area of the curriculum of initial English language teacher education. This handbook is meant to contribute to future English teachers' professional development in this area. It is not supposed to cover all aspects of ELT textbooks evaluation but to show how one possible type of instrument, a checklist, may be used. Using checklists appears to be effective in initial teacher education for its accessibility, straightforwardness, and flexibility. In further education, however, teachers may want to become more competent in materials development and textbook evaluation; joining Materials Development Association ([www.matsda.org](http://www.matsda.org)) may help them to achieve this goal.



## 6 REFERENCES

- Allen, C. (2015). Marriages of convenience? Teachers and coursebooks in the digital age. *ELT Journal*, 69(3), 249–263. doi:10.1093/elt/ccv005
- Bednárek, A., Mynářová, G., Václavík, M., & Červenková, I. (2021). Typy a způsoby využívání výukových zdrojů žáky osmých tříd. *Pedagogika*, 71(1), 101-119. DOI: 10.14712/23362189.2020.1871.
- Brown, D. H. (2014). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (2012). *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Byrd, P., & Schuemann, C. (2014). English as a Second/Foreign Language Textbooks: How to Choose Them – How to Use Them. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 380-393). Boston: National Geographic Learning.
- Canagaraj, A. S. (1999). *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Snow, M. A. (Eds.) (2014). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: National Geographic Learning.
- Clavel-Arroitia, B., & Fuster-Márquez, M. (2014). The authenticity of real texts in advanced English textbooks. *ELT Journal*, 68(2), 124-134. doi:10.1093/elt/cct060
- Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your Coursebook*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Czech Republic (2011). Act No. 561/2004 Coll. of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2004 on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education. Available at <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/act-no-561-2004-coll-of-24-september-2004-on-pre-school>
- Davies, P. A., & Falla, T. (2017). *Maturita Solutions 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Intermediate Student's Book, Czech Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Educational Commission of the States [ECS]. (2013). State Textbook Adoption. Available at <https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/09/23/10923.pdf> (21.4.2021)
- Fuchs, E., & Bock, A. (Eds.). (2018). *The Palgrave handbook of textbook studies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gilmore, A. (2004). A comparison of textbook and authentic interactions. *ELT Journal*, 58(4), 363-374.
- Gray, J. (2010). *The construction of English: Culture, consumerism, and promotion in the ELT global coursebook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Harlow: Pearson.
- Hutchinson, T. (2012). *Project 3 Third Edition Student's Book, Czech Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, T. (2014). *Project 4 Fourth Edition Student's Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keddle, J. S., Hobbs, M., Wdowczynová, H., & Betáková, L. (2020). *Your Space 1*. Plzeň: Fraus.
- Knecht, P., & Janík, T. (Eds.). (2008). *Učebnice z pohledu pedagogického výzkumu*. Brno: Paido.
- Koprowski, M. (2005). Investigating the usefulness of lexical phrases in contemporary coursebooks. *ELT Journal*, 59(4), 322-332. doi:10.1093/elt/cc1061
- Kubrická, J. (2013). Možnosti a limity posuzování ideologických prvků v učebnicích. *Studia paedagogica*, 18(2-3), 157-166. DOI: 10.5817/SP2013-2-3-10
- Kubrická, J. (2015). „Time to talk“ aneb Čas mluvit o tom, komu patří angličtina v české učebnici. *Pedagogická orientace*, 25(2), 169-187. DOI: 10.5817/PedOr2015-2-169
- Maňák, J. (2008). Funkce učebnice v moderní škole. In P. Knecht & T. Janík (Eds.), *Učebnice z pohledu pedagogického výzkumu* (pp. 19-26). Brno: Paido.
- Maňák, J., Janík, T., & Švec, V. (2008). *Kurikulum v současné škole*. Brno: Paido.
- Maňák, J., & Knecht, P. (Eds.) (2007). *Hodnocení učebnic*. Brno: Paido.
- Meunier, F., & Gouverneur, C. (2009). New types of corpora for new educational challenges. Collecting, annotating and exploiting a corpus of textbook material. In K. Aijmer (Ed.), *Corpora and Language Teaching*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Mikk, J. (2007). Učebnice: budoucnost národa. In J. Maňák & P. Knecht (Eds.), *Hodnocení učebnic* (pp. 11-23). Brno: Paido.
- Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, MoEYS]. (2017). *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání*. Praha. (ve znění účinném od 1. 9. 2017) Available at <http://www.msmt.cz/file/43792/>
- Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, MoEYS]. (2021). Schvalovací doložky učebnic. Seznam učebnic pro základní, střední a speciální vzdělávání. Available at <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/schvalovaci-dolozky-ucebnic?lang=1>
- Nogová, M. (2008). Hodnotenie kvality učebnic v súlade s novým kurikulumom. In P. Knecht & T. Janík (Eds.), *Učebnice z pohledu pedagogického výzkumu* (37-52). Brno: Paido.

- Průcha, J. (1996). *Pedagogická evaluace*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Průcha, J. (1998). *Učebnice: Teorie a analýzy edukačního média*. Brno: Paido.
- Průcha, J. (2009a). *Moderní pedagogika* (4. vydání). Praha: Portál.
- Průcha, J. (Ed.). (2009b). *Pedagogická encyklopedie*. Praha: Portál.
- Ren, W., & Han, Z. (2016). The representation of pragmatic knowledge in recent ELT textbooks. *ELT Journal*, 70(4), 424-434. doi:10.1093/elt/ccw010
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scrivener, J. (2011). *Learning Teaching. The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Macmillan.
- Siegel, A. (2014). What should we talk about? The authenticity of textbook topics. *ELT Journal*, 68(4), 363-375. doi:10.1093/elt/ccu012
- Sikorová, Z. (2007). Návrh seznamu hodnotících kritérií pro učebnice základních a středních škol. In J. Maňák & P. Knecht (Eds.), *Hodnocení učebnic* (pp. 31-40). Brno: Paido.
- Sikorová, Z. (2010). *Učitel a učebnice: užívání učebnic na 2. stupni základních škol*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, Pedagogická fakulta.
- Skalková, J. (2007). *Obecná didaktika* (2. vydání). Praha: Grada.
- Tomlinson, B. (2003). Developing principled frameworks for materials development. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Developing materials for language teaching* (pp. 107-129). London: Continuum Press.
- Tomlinson, B. (2012). Materials Development. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching* (pp. 269-278). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ur, P. (2012). *A Course in English Language Teaching* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yuen, K. M. (2011). The representation of foreign cultures in English textbooks. *ELT Journal*, 65(4), 458-466. doi:10.1093/elt/ccq089

# APPENDIX – THE ELT TEXTBOOKS EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Before working with this instrument, it is recommended to read the Instructions for use (Chapter 4) carefully.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
<b>TEXTBOOK</b>	
Author	
Publisher	Year
<b>SCHOOL</b>	Class
<b>STUDENT</b>	Date

Aims	YES	PARTLY	NO
1. Are the aims clearly articulated in the textbook?			
2. Do the aims of the textbook correspond to the aims of ELT (expected outcomes) formulated in the respective framework/school education programmes (e.g. CJ-9-2-01 a pupil is able to ask for information and react adequately in common formal and informal situations (MoEYS, 2017, p. 27))?			
3. Does the textbook reflect general educational aims formulated in the respective framework/school education programmes (e.g. to enable pupils to acquire learning strategies and to motivate them for life-long learning (MoEYS, 2017, p. 8))?			
Comments:			

Design	YES	PARTLY	NO
4. Do audio and/or video recordings supplement the textbook?			
5. Does the package include additional exercises and tasks for the students (e.g. a workbook)?			
6. Does the package include materials for the teacher (e.g. Teacher's Book)?			
7. Do digital materials (textbook-related websites, online practice activities, online tests, etc.) supplement the textbook?			
8. Are any other materials provided in the package (e.g. flash cards, posters, puppets)?			

Comments:

Layout and organisation	YES	PARTLY	NO
9. Is the structure of a unit obvious?			
10. Is the layout of individual pages clear?			
11. Is it easy to find your way in the textbook?			
12. Is the font easy to read?			
13. Does the textbook contain a syllabus providing information how the content is organised in terms of structures, functions, topics, etc.?			
14. Are tasks and task items meaningfully sequenced (e.g. elements of the language before complex tasks)?			
15. Does the textbook contain regular revision sections?			
16. Does the textbook involve a list of vocabulary?			
17. Does the book provide a reference section for grammar?			
18. Is the layout and organisation of the textbook suitable for learners with dyslexia (navigation, clear layout, legible font, text organisation, etc.)?			

Comments:

Visual aspects	YES	PARTLY	NO
----------------	-----	--------	----

- 19. In your opinion, is the textbook visually appealing?

---
- 20. Do the visual components (pictures, drawings, graphs, etc.) support learning English?

---
- 21. Are the visual components comprehensible?

---
- 22. Is there a balance of visual and textual components in the textbook?

---

Comments:

Approaches	YES	PARTLY	NO
------------	-----	--------	----

- 23. Do the writers formulate the basic principles underlying the textbook explicitly (e.g. adherence to the principles of a particular ELT method or approach)?

---
- 24. Does the textbook allow a variety of teaching techniques?

---
- 25. Do the tasks in the textbook engage learners with different learning styles and strategies?

---
- 26. Does the textbook support learner autonomy (through tasks targeted at learning strategies, self-assessment, etc.)?

---
- 27. Does the textbook support differentiation of the subject matter and/or tasks?

---
- 28. Does the learners' mother tongue play a role in the textbook?

---

Comments:

Language content	YES	PARTLY	NO
29. Does the textbook present one variety of English (e.g. British English)?			
30. Are the instructions clear?			
31. Does the textbook include material for pronunciation work?			
32. If pronunciation work is included, does it aim at both individual sounds and suprasegmental features (intonation, rhythm, etc.)?			
33. Are the presented pronunciation features relevant for Czech learners of English?			
34. Is the pronunciation work integrated with teaching other aspects of English, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening?			
35. Is the selected vocabulary relevant for the learners?			
36. Does the textbook include exercises targeting various aspects of a word (e.g. meaning, written form, spoken form, grammatical functions, collocations, register)?			
37. Is there an emphasis both on language form and language use (e.g. how to form the present continuous tense and how to use it)?			
38. Is grammar taught mainly deductively (i.e. rules are given first, practice follows)?			
39. Does the inductive way of teaching grammar prevail (i.e. sample sentences are provided first, then learners are encouraged to hypothesise a rule)?			

Language content	YES	PARTLY	NO
40. Is there a variety of exercises that engage the learners in the controlled practice of grammar items?			
41. Is there a variety of exercises that provide the learners with opportunities to practise grammar items communicatively?			
42. Does the textbook introduce pragmatic aspects of English (e.g. linking form and function)?			
Comments:			

Skills	YES	PARTLY	NO
43. Does the textbook provide the learners with opportunities to use language to try to achieve communicative purposes?			
44. Is there space for the development of all four skills, i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing?			
45. Are there opportunities for integrated skills work?			
46. Does the textbook make use of authentic texts and tasks when developing the skills?			
47. Is there a variety of reading texts and associated activities in terms of reading sub-skills (e.g. skimming, scanning, study reading)?			
48. Do the listening activities enable the learners to use different listening sub-skills (e.g. listening for specific information, for main ideas, for gist)?			
49. Is the technical quality of audio/video recordings appropriate?			
50. Are there pre-reading and pre-listening activities that prepare the learners for reading/listening comprehension?			
51. Do the speaking activities provide opportunities for the learners to develop their spoken production (e.g. to give information, to describe experience)?			
52. Do the speaking activities engage the learners in spoken interaction (e.g. information exchange, informal discussion)?			
53. Does the textbook contain a variety of writing activities in terms of text types?			

Skills	YES	PARTLY	NO
54. Do the speaking/writing activities require the learners to consider the social setting and participants in communication (formal/informal language)?			
Comments:			

Topics	YES	PARTLY	NO
55. Are the topics in the textbook in alignment with the curricular documents?			
56. Is there enough variety of topics?			
57. Do the topics match the learners' life experience?			
58. Are the topics likely to stimulate the learners' thinking?			
59. Are the topics likely to engage the learners emotionally?			
60. Do the topics include representations of Czech culture?			
61. Do the topics introduce representations of foreign cultures?			

Comments:

Practical considerations	YES	PARTLY	NO
62. Is the textbook easily available on the market?			
63. Is the price reasonable?			

Comments:



Additional criteria

YES PARTLY NO

Overall comments

---

Comments:

**Evaluation of ELT Textbooks:**  
A Handbook for Trainee Teachers

Monika Černá

Vydala Masarykova univerzita, Žerotínovo náměstí 617/9, 601 77 Brno  
1., elektronické vydání, 2022  
Jazyková korektura: Simon Gill  
Návrh obálky: Alena Poláčková

ISBN 978-80-280-0220-6



EVROPSKÁ UNIE  
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy  
Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání



MUNI  
PRESS

MUNI  
PED