

**Norton, J. and Buchanan, H. (Eds.) (2022). *The Routledge Handbook of Materials Development for Language Teaching*. Routledge: New York. 560 pp. ISBN: 9780815382577**

It may be questioned why there is a need for an academic book on this subject, given that materials development is typically focused on practical application and there are already many materials available to professional writers. While these existing materials can serve as a useful reference point, they may also encourage the creation of new materials that simply mimic what is already available in response to market demands. However, contrary to some opinions, materials development is not solely a practical pursuit but rather a field of study that involves principles and procedures for its development. Based on this definition, Julie Norton and Heather Buchanan collaborated to produce the current handbook with the goal of combining theory with practice by gathering insights from more than forty contributors from various international contexts.

The Routledge Handbook of Materials Development for Language Teaching, edited by Julie Norton and Heather Buchanan, is a comprehensive guide to the development of materials for language teaching. It aims to combine theory with practice by gathering insights from over forty contributors from around the world. This book covers a wide range of topics and challenges the idea that materials development is purely practical by emphasizing the connection between theory and practice. In comparison to other recent books on the topic, this handbook offers broader coverage and is not limited to the TESOL field.

Despite its title, this handbook is not just a manual but rather a comprehensive guide with thirty-four chapters organized into nine parts. It discusses four main ideas, each covering different aspects of materials development. The first idea provides an overview of the field of materials development and its history. The second idea focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of materials development, including principles of language learning and teaching. The third idea covers practical considerations in materials development, such as needs analysis and evaluation. Finally, the fourth idea explores emerging trends in materials development, such as digital technologies and open educational resources. Each chapter is written by a different expert in the field and provides valuable insights into their particular area of expertise.

The first part of this handbook is comprised of three chapters that outline the changes and advancements in language teaching materials. Chapter 1 details the rapid progress of materials development. Chapter 2 introduces criteria for evaluating technology-mediated materials. In contrast, Chapter 3 reviews the current status between theory and practice with regard to the four skills, vocabulary, and grammar. This chapter aligns more closely with the editors' objective as it examines critical issues, outlines theoretical principles, justifies rationales persuasively, and highlights challenges involved in producing theoretically informed materials.

The second part of the handbook discusses contemporary debates in materials development in six different chapters. These chapters tackle contentious topics like the significance of international course books (Chapter 4), the advantages of authentic materials (Chapter 5), language collection for materials writing (Chapter 6), modern approaches to ELT materials (Chapter 7), cultural content of materials (Chapter 8), and representation in course books (Chapter 9). These discussions warrant additional study, as the field of materials development evolves. However, there are still some outstanding issues that demand attention but were regrettably not included in this publication. For instance, humanizing materials are required, and undue reliance on computerized language-learning tools needs to be avoided.

In part three of this book, there are three chapters that examine the correlation between research and the development of materials. Chapter 10 focuses on studying the development of materials' content. The use of diverse research approaches to guide materials development is covered in detail in Chapter 11. Finally, Chapter 12 examines the advantages of utilizing spoken corpora for the creation of educational resources and material development. However, it is recommended that this handbook also takes into account stakeholder cooperation to carry out a longitudinal investigation on the results of using various materials based on SLA principles.

The materials for language learning and skill development are also covered in five different chapters in part four of this handbook. Grammar instruction with an emphasis on content and scope is the main topic of Chapter 13. Effective strategies for teaching vocabulary are covered in Chapter 14. In order to build proficiency in speaking, Chapter 15 examines various linguistic features for developing speaking skills. Chapter 16

emphasizes developing a realistic reader-text interaction for the improvement of reading skills, while Chapter 17 focuses on product, process, and sociocultural activity in developing writing skills. However, it is noted that a chapter on materials for developing listening skills is missing from this section.

In essence, part five of this handbook provides guidelines and procedures for instructors and material designers to assess and modify instructional materials. It is crucial for educators to evaluate the effects of the materials they employ on their students and make the necessary adjustments. Chapter 18 covers the two phases of competence needed for examining and evaluating teaching materials, while Chapter 19 explores approaches to adapting materials for future direction in global English. I suggest that the handbook should encourage a more inclusive approach that involves learners adapting their own materials with or without their teacher's guidance.

There are seven chapters in part six exploring the materials development in various contexts. For example, chapter 20 discusses the primary course book series in Turkish, Chapter 21 explores versioning course books for broader audiences, Chapter 22 reveals the writing skills required for English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Chapter 23 makes the case for more ESOL-specific materials that take learners, context, and pedagogical factors into account, Chapter 24 addresses the need for English-medium materials in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa, Chapter 25 concentrates on writing course books for monolinguals and teenagers in Spanish, and Chapter 26 considers the difficulties in writing materials for an English-speaking environment.

The most noteworthy section of this handbook, in my opinion, is part seven which includes two chapters about incorporating technology into language-learning materials. Despite the fast-paced and fleeting nature of technology, these chapters provide valuable information. Chapter 27 examines the development of blended learning materials and the ethical standards for producing both commercial and local content. Chapter 28 examines the current trend of mobile devices and how writers can evaluate the effectiveness of using mobile materials. Technology has provided teachers and learners with more options for teaching and learning outside of the classroom, especially during the pandemic when many students have access to their mobile phones but not their physical classrooms.

Part eight of this handbook is also commendable for including three chapters that give voice to underrepresented perspectives in materials development. These skilled industry professionals provide useful insights for individuals looking for a deeper comprehension of materials development. For example, Chapter 29 emphasizes the part that students play in developing and modifying commercial and other sorts of materials. Chapter 30 examines a recent development in publishing where authors and editors work together to create materials for for-profit publications. Finally, Chapter 31 offers suggestions for editorial training as well as potential directions for ELT editors and publishers in creating instructional resources for the publishing sector.

The handbook includes three chapters in Part Nine that focus on professional development and materials writing. Chapter 32 shares insights into print materials, digital media, and real-world writing projects. The ideas in Chapter 33 indicate ways for teachers to use the content from course books for professional development and how publishers could contribute. Finally, Chapter 34 suggests a creative curriculum to train authors in the creation of materials through multiple activities.

In conclusion, some recommendations based on the handbook that could improve future editions should be made. Firstly, the issue of humanizing materials should be addressed as it is crucial for affective and cognitive engagement in the age of artificial intelligence. Secondly, new technologies should not replace meaningful face-to-face classroom interaction and reliable resources should be ensured. Tomlinson (2020) emphasizes that materials development research should focus on making discoveries that benefit both teachers and learners, although concrete empirical evidence may be challenging to present. Thirdly, listening skills should be given the same weight as reading skills when developing materials for skills development.

Despite this, I believe that the standout features of this book lie in its comprehensive coverage and practical guidance. The book covers a wide range of topics related to materials development for language teaching, including theoretical frameworks, practical considerations, and case studies. Furthermore, it provides practical guidance on how to develop effective materials for language teaching, including tips on designing tasks, selecting texts, and incorporating technology. This collection is grounded in research and draws on current theories and best practices in materials development for language teaching. It includes useful resources such as

checklists, templates, and sample tasks that can be adapted for different contexts and languages. It is also relevant to language teachers working in different contexts (e.g., ESL/EFL, K-12 education, higher education) and with learners at different proficiency levels.

This handbook is also unique in three distinct ways. Firstly, it promotes greater collaboration among all stakeholders. This involves encouraging students, parents, teachers, course book writers, editors, and publishers to engage in critical discussions. Such collaborative practices are crucial as Xu et al. (2023) suggest that interactions and negotiations may lead to innovations in materials development. Secondly, it provides a platform for minority voices to be heard. The book includes contributions from a range of experts in the field, providing diverse perspectives on materials development. Many of the chapters are written by experienced practitioners, teachers, or even postgraduate students in materials writing who have yet to be recognized in this field. Lastly, since this book is a compilation of diverse individual perspectives, it enables readers to understand personalized and diversified principles and beliefs. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that this publication can facilitate joint collaboration, creative discussions, and innovative approaches toward advancing the field of materials development in the future.

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