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A Coursbook Evaluation

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COURSEBOOK EVALUATION
"THE NEW YOU & ME 2"

Introduction

This paper deals with the evaluation of an ELT coursebook (CB) named **"The New You & Me 2"** which is currently widely used in Austrian secondary schools. I use the term coursebook here as an overall term to refer to both, *textbook* and *workbook* of the series.

The ability to effectively evaluate an ELT CB is a very important one. First, most teachers do use them during their teaching career and in contexts where they have a choice, this choice should be based on sound theoretical and practical considerations. Second, such an evaluation can not only facilitate the selection of new materials, it can also be used to reconsider older ones on a regular basis. This paper mainly seeks to reconsider the use of **"The New You & Me 2"**, especially by examining its compatibility with the new state curriculum and my developing teaching approach.

Section 1 clears the ground by first **defining some terms**, like *curriculum* and *syllabus*, which figure prominently in various CB evaluation checklists. It then briefly outlines the **context** of this evaluation, namely the *school system*, its *curriculum* and the *school*.

In **Section 2** I argue for the use of a **three stage evaluation model** comprising a *macro*, *micro* and *summative evaluation*. In the discussion of the outcome of the evaluation I will tackle some important issues like the **role of authenticity** in ELT teaching materials. This section finally concludes with a proposal for either reusing and adapting the CB in question or choosing to select another one instead.

Section One

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

The use of a specific **terminology** is a natural part of any academic work and discussion. However, a term can have a variety of meanings mainly depending on its context and people`s different perceptions. In section 1.2 I thus discuss and define some terms which play an important role in this evaluation.

Regarding the role of **context** in the selection and evaluation of ELT materials I agree with Nunan, who emphasises its importance in that process (Nunan 1991: 211).
Section 1.3 therefore briefly outlines some essential facts about the Austrian **state curriculum**, its underlying **school system**, and **the school** the CB is being used at. I have decided to use the Austrian terms "Volksschule", "Hauptschule" and "Gymnasium" for the brief description of the Austrian school system, since they carry certain connotations a translation could never do.

1.2 Terminology

1.2.1 Curriculum and Syllabus

Curriculum and *syllabus*, the way these terms are popularly used in Britain, are both usually concerned with specifying content. The main difference between them is that the former specifies the totality of content for all school subjects taught in a particular type of school, and the latter indicates the content of a specific school subject (White 1988: 4).

Regarding syllabus design White proposes two types, respectively, **Type A** and **Type B**. Roughly speaking, Type A syllabuses "give priority to the pre-specification of linguistic or other content or skill objectives" and usually incorporate a list of these, whereas in Type B syllabuses "content is subordinate to learning process and pedagogical procedure"(White 1988: 44-47). I believe, that the division into Type A and B can basically also be applied to curricula.

Type A syllabuses and curricula are, at least in Austria, by far the more popular and widely used ones. The reasons for this are probably partly rooted within a strong tradition and the unwillingness of the majority of teachers to radically change their views of language and learning, the latter being at least to some extent due to a teacher training which does not provide them with the appropriate means to do so. Not surprisingly, thus, the curricula and syllabuses this evaluation is concerned with are exclusively of Type A.

Many recently published textbooks are based on what is commonly referred to as a *mixed syllabus*. I will use the term **multidimensional syllabus** instead, which is based on Stern`s term **multidimensional curriculum**. According to Stern such a curriculum comprises a

> Language syllabus,
> Culture syllabus,
> Communicative activities syllabus,
> General language education syllabus (Stern 1992: 26)

Table 1.1 briefly outlines the main features of the four content areas of the multidimensional curriculum.

Table 1.1	STERN'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL CURRICULUM
SYLLABUS	**FEATURES**
Language	objective, analytic study of the elements of language (e.g. grammar, pronunciation and lexis)
Culture	focus on the people and culture of the target language
Communicative activities	focus on activities, topics, experience to establish personal contact with the target language community
General language education	topics on language, culture, society and language learning in general (Stern 1992: 26-29)

Regarding the weighting of the four content areas Stern observes

> "Together the four areas represent a multidimensional approach to the target language curriculum. Whether the emphasis is spread equally over all four areas or restricted to mainly one or two should be a decision deliberately made and justified by the curriculum developer." (Stern 1992: 29)

Section 2.3 shows if and to what extent the four syllabuses mentioned above have been realised in the book.

1.2.2 Topics and Skills

Concerning the notion of *topic* White quotes Brown and Yule who regard *topic* as 'a very attractive pre-theoretical notion.' What "they are, in effect, saying", according to White is "that the concept in question is messy, imprecise and insufficiently rigorous as a basis for

scientific study" (1988: 65). Theoretically *topic* is very difficult to define, mainly because it is a meaning concept. Practically, if we consider the main interests of the age group this evaluation deals with (11 to 12 years old), typical *topics* emerge, e.g. friends, pets, chatting and surfing on the internet. It is these age related *topics* this paper is concerned with and which will have to be closely examined to determine their motivational value for the age group in question.

In addition to the traditional category of ELT **skills**, i.e. listening and reading, speaking and writing, White considers another way of looking at skills. This second category of *skills* includes the ability

> "to use the language code (as in articulating stress patterns within words); cognitive skills (such as planning and organising information in expository language); study skills (such as skimming to obtain gist)" (White 1988: 71)

In this paper the term is used in its traditional sense.

After having discussed and defined some important terms as one condition for successfully evaluating an ELT CB the next section deals with another prerequisite for an effective CB-evaluation, respectively the context of its usage.

1.3. Context

1.3.1 School System and State Curriculum

School system

Table 1.3 shows some important facts about the Austrian school system at secondary school level. For the purpose of this paper the following needs to be pointed out.

The main differences between "Hauptschule" and "Gymnasium" concerns admission requirements, teacher education and streaming. After elementary school only the best students can chose between attending "Hauptschule" or "Gymnasium". This has lead to a concentration of children from immigrants and socially distressed families in "Hauptschule". As a consequence the curriculum change in 1984 lead to the introduction of a three stage streaming system for *German*, *Mathematics* and *English*. Many students, teachers and parents have gradually become tired of this system because of a multitude of reasons like the "ghetto syndrome" where the students in third streaming feel isolated from and inferior to the others. Although there is a tendency nowadays to abandon the streaming system, ELT teachers in my

school still prefer it. To narrow down the focus of this evaluation I have therefore decided to mainly deal with first streaming, since I have exclusively used the CB there.

Table 1.3   AUSTRIA`S STATE SCHOOL SYSTEM

school		student age	admission requirements	teacher education	specific features
Elementary	"Volksschule"	6-9/10	no	teacher training college (TTC)	no
	"Hauptschule"		no	TTC	streaming in German, Maths, English
Secondary		**10-13/14**			
	"Gymnasium"		mainly As in elementary leaving diploma	University	no

State Curriculum

A new state curriculum will be effective from the autumn of 2000 on. The book I am evaluating in this paper was published in 1995 and is therefore based on the curriculum from 1984. One of my major concerns while evaluating the CB was to examine if it is compatible with the new curriculum (NC).

It needs to be emphasised at this point that every CB used in Austrian schools must first be approved by the state`s educational department. In other words, what is stated in the curriculum, must basically be realised by the CB. This does not only concern contents, but also methodological principles. Hence, teachers will be restricted in their choice of an appropriate ELT coursebook.

Table 1.4 shows an account of the most important differences between the curricula of 1984 and 2000 (for a brief comparison of the way the two curricula are structured see Appendix 1).

Table 1.4   CURRICULA 1984 AND 2000: THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

	CURRICULUM 1984	CURRICULUM 2000
LENGTH	very detailed and lengthy, includes a lot of behavioural objectives	more general, includes general goals in favour of behavioural objectives
CONTENT	no real choice of content to	there is a CORE content (2/3 of

	enhance flexibility	whole content) which has to be supplemented by the individual teacher according to his/her learners` needs and interests
GRAMMAR	based on a more traditional view about teaching grammar and its function in communication	based on Michael Lewis "The English Verb" (1986), which proposes a more comprehensive way of looking at grammar and a a change of the so-called meta-language (e.g. *Past Simple* becomes *Expressing distance and factuality*.)

The new language curriculum seems to be in line with White who, after a detailed discussion about the place of behavioural objectives in curriculum design and language teaching concludes that

> "there will certainly be a place for aims, the nature of which will depend on the level of behaviour concerned. However, we must not forget that such aims are, as Skilbeck observes, are 'part but not the whole' of what is meant by communicative competence." (White 1988: 33)

Moreover, both language curricula state the development of an age-related **communicative competence** as the major objective of language teaching and learning. But this is a rather vague objective and Rutherford, in his discussion about "Curriculum and 'Communication'" observes that it seems to be 'en vogue' to state **communicative competence** as major curricular objectives pointing out that "seldom is the term itself given a very precise definition", however (Rutherford 1987: 147). It seems therefore obligatory to critically examine how this objective is trying to be realised by the book to be evaluated.

1.3.2 The School

On average there are about 60 students per year. Out of these about 15 end up studying English in first streaming, 35 in second (split into two groups) and 10 in third streaming. During the first two years there are 4 English lessons a week, afterwards only 3. This certainly is not much and teachers, CB writers and publishers need to be absolutely realistic about what goals to pursue and achieve.

After having provided a framework for everything which follows let us now turn to the main theme of this paper.

EVALUATION

2.1 Introduction

McDonough and Shaw (1993: 63) point out that "the ability to evaluate teaching materials effectively is a very important professional activity for all EFL teachers". In the introduction to this paper I have briefly outlined why this is so. The question to be raised at this point is

how this effectiveness may best be realised, especially when considering, to put it in Nunan`s terms, that "evaluating and selecting commercial materials is not an easy task". Nunan advocates "the use of systematic materials evaluation procedures". There is a range of CB-evaluation checklists in the ELT literature. In **Section 2.2** I will argue for the use of a three stage evaluation procedure which is roughly based on Mc Donough and Shaw`s model and which I deem appropriate not only for my context, but also for state school contexts in general.

Section 2.3 and **2.4** continue by succinctly presenting the most important results of the evaluation (for the detailed evaluation see Appendixes 3 – 8), together with a brief discussion of these, partly in relation to the new curriculum, the authors` claims, current views on SLA and methodology and my views on language and learning.

Section 2.5 concludes with a *summative evaluation* of the CB which mainly seeks to reconsider its usage within my context.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria

According to McDonough and Shaw (1993: 65) a coursebook assessment should be "brief, practical to use, and comprehensive in its coverage of criteria". Based on these standards they propose a three stage model consisting of an external evaluation, internal evaluation and overall evaluation (see Table 2.2). I believe that their model though basically useful, has some major weaknesses. Table 2.1 presents a brief description of what I think are the major weaknesses of their model plus my suggestions for their improvement.

Table 2.1   **MAIN WEAKNESSES OF MCDONOUGH AND SHAW`S MODEL**

TYPE OF WEAKNESS	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WEAKNESS	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
USABILITY	exclusively designed for the selection of new course materials	a model, that can be used for a selective evaluation of new materials **as well as** an evaluation for materials already in use
QUESTION RANGE	inclusion of criteria which are not needed for certain contexts like	a range of **core** criteria which can be supplemented

	intended audience and proficiency level; some important criteria are missing (e.g. teacher and student roles implied by the book)	by further criteria (e.g. intended audience and proficiency level) and questions depending on context	
TYPES OF QUESTIONS	the way a question is posed tends to influence the way it might be answered and thus might restrict flexibility and open-mindedness	questions should be posed as generally as possible, allowing for more **freedom of thought** when being answered	

Regarding the types of questions in evaluation checklists I present the following example to prove my point. A question like "Where listening skills are involved, are recordings 'authentic' or artificial?" (McDonough and Shaw 1993: 76), appears to imply that **authentic** materials might be better then **artificial** ones. Swan (1985), however, argues that this is not necessarily the case (see Section 2.4.2) and shares, I believe, the opinion of many ELT teachers. I have therefore decided to pose the majority of the questions (see Appendix 2) in a more general way to allow for more freedom and flexibility of thought. This, however, is not a dogma, and after some trial evaluations I might choose to alter it. Moreover, it might be helpful to add some hints for the inexperienced teacher as to what to pay attention to during the evaluation
(see Appendix 2a).

For the evaluation of **"The New You & Me 2"** (TNYM 2) I have used a model which is roughly based on McDonough and Shaw`s model, but which tries to avoid the weaknesses I have pointed out in table 2.1. I have changed, omitted and added certain criteria and questions and thus created a model, which suits my context (see 1.3).

Table 2.2 compares McDonough and Shaw`s model with the model I am using for this paper.

Table 2.2   **A COMPARISON OF TWO EVALUATION MODELS**

MCDONOUGH AND SHAW			PETTER`S MODEL		
stage	main purpose	main features examined	stage	main purpose	main features examined
EXTERNAL EVALUATION	examination of organisation as	-intended audience - proficiency level	MACRO EVALUATION	"warming up" to get acquainted	- contents syllabus, unit organisation

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	claimed by the author/publisher on the cover, in the introduction and the table of contents (possible exit point of selection process)	- context of usage - presentation and organisation into units/lessons - author`s views on language and learning		with the overall organisation of the book (possible exit point during a selection process)	and connection, author`s main claims about what the book does to the learner and the learning process - layout - availability and usefulness of additional materials
INTERNAL EVALUATION and teachers	in-depth investigation of 2 or more units to compare the author`s claims with the internal consistency	- grading and sequencing - treatment and presentation of the four skills - appropriacy of tests and exercises - learning styles - student/teacher motivation to use the book	MICRO EVALUATION	in-depth investigation of 2 or more units mainly to find out what the book expects the learner and teacher to do	- grading and sequencing within a unit - treatment of the 4 language skills. grammar and lexis - roles of learners implied by the material
OVERALL EVALUATION	overall assessment about the suitability of the materials	**- usability factor** integration into particular syllabus **- generalisability f.** useful core features **- adaptability factor** **- flexibility factor** rigidity of grading and sequencing	SUMMATIVE EVALUATION	final decision making for a) selection and adaptation, considering another book (with a new book) b) further usage or abandoning materials and select new ones (with a book already used)	- usability factor - adaptability factor - teacher`s individual approach or - learners` interests

On one hand I agree that an evaluation model facilitates the assessment of materials, on the other hand I believe since

> "'it is clear that coursebook assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick'"
> (Sheldon, 1988: 245, in McDonough and Shaw 1993: 65),

we should not become too lost in such an activity and keep in mind that where rationale has its limits, intuition, based on professional experience, steps in and closes the gap. Moreover, experience comes with practice which means that the form an evaluation model takes is not static but will change with time and experience.

Let us now turn to the discussion of the outcome of the *macro evaluation* of TNYM 2.

2.3 Macro Evaluation

2.3.1 Contents

Syllabus

The evaluation (see Appendix 3) revealed that the book is based on a **multidimensional syllabus** (see 1.2.1). Its main syllabus is clearly a **communicative activities syllabus** comprising topics and the four language skills. It also includes a **language syllabus**, which is

integrated into the communicative activities syllabus mainly consisting of grammar and lexical items. Apart from one unit about British and American Autumn festivals there is no real **cultural content** included. However, a variety of general language study hints in both, textbook and workbook points at least partly to the integration of a **language education syllabus**.

Multidimensional syllabuses are heavily criticised by some linguists on the grounds that they include too much and that their co-ordination within a syllabus/book lacks ordering. Sinclair and Renouf for instance, observe that

> "Typically the books contain a recurrent series of activities which imply a syllabus
> that mixes skills, structures, lexis, notions, functions and tasks. The variety is often
> bewildering, and the actual co-ordination minimal." (1988: 140)

Nunan, moreover, points to "the possibility that language lessons may become a fragmented 'cabaret' of unintegrated activities" (1991: 214). His concern is certainly a valid one, especially, when teachers resolve to teaching materials instead of students.

Using TNYM 2 a teacher needs to exercise much caution and skill not to run into the risks mentioned above.

Grading and Sequencing

The 20 regular units cannot be exited at any point but need to be treated one by one since they are **graded** according to the cognitive simplicity of the grammar they include. Moreover, there is no semantic connection of the topics whatsoever.

According to D. Willis **grading and sequencing** of ELT coursebooks is often "taken on grounds of cognitive simplicity and utility." Cognitive simplicity, however, must no be mistaken for acquisitional difficulty (D. Willis 2000: 54). SLA research seems to suggest that learners learn certain things at a certain time and instruction does not appear to alter the order in which this happens (e.g. question formation stages) (J. Willis 1996: 6-7). The grading of a multitude of textbooks and the way they are used by teachers is based on the assumption as D. Willis (2000: 55) put it "that the language is learned an element at a time". I believe, however, that there is nothing inherently wrong with grading materials according to cognitive simplicity, mainly because useful alternatives seem to be missing. But this should not be done on the assumption that what is taught, is automatically learned, and consequently attitudes and procedures towards the evaluation of learners need to change.

Publisher`s and Authors` claims

The **publisher** (Langenscheidt and Longman) and the **authors** exercise very strong claims as to what the books helps the learner to achieve and concerning its contents. Some of these claims, like the one about the incorporation of the latest knowledge from SLA research can generally be investigated. Regarding TNYM 2 this seems at least partly true. A closer examination of the above claim does not lie within the scope of this paper, however. Other claims, like the one about the systematic anchoring of language into the long term memory of the learners cannot really be tested. Moreover, the claim that the book helps the learner to achieve an age-related communicative competence as stated in the NC is simply exaggerated. Communicative competence cannot be acquired by the use of a CB alone, but depends on such factors as the beliefs and approach of the teacher, attitudes of the students and the time being spent on a course. Publishers and authors should be more realistic about what a book can **help to** do and about what it cannot help to do.

2.3.2 Layout

The table of contents appears randomly structured and messy. Moreover, certain materials like study hints and pronunciation exercises are not even mentioned there.

Concerning the overall layout of TNYM 2 an examination revealed the use of a variety of age-related stimulating and colourful photos and drawings. Experience has shown that students generally do find them quite motivating. Teachers can usefully integrate them into their teaching and features like picture dictionaries seem to facilitate and support learning. Moreover, regarding the use of picture dictionaries the teacher handbook provides a variety of methodological hints on how to integrate them into ones teaching.

The quality of the layout of a CB should be an important criteria for any evaluation. A successful layout is motivating, arouses students` interest and helps to facilitate understanding and learning of the material it presents.

2.3.3 Additional Materials

There is a variety of useful additional materials available for both, classroom use and self-study. The resultant costs are quite high, though, and therefore it appears unrealistic that a given school can purchase them all.

The introduction of the NC has lead to many changes (see Table 1.4 and Appendix 1). One of the most obvious and important ones is the introduction of a CORE which comprises what is

stated in the curriculum and takes up two third of the entire classroom lessons, and a SUPPLEMENTARY which mainly depends on the teaching context (e.g. students` interests) and takes up one third of all teaching time. Publisher and authors` of TNYM 2 have published a booklet which gives hints on how to adapt TNYM 2 so it fits the NC. The additional materials do play an important role there, especially for its SUPPLEMENTARY part. This clearly means, that the book cannot effectively be used by itself within the NC, but rather needs to be supplemented by additional materials. This also means that the above certainly needs to be kept in mind during the summative evaluation of this paper.

Let us now turn to the discussion of stage 2 of my evaluation process, namely the micro evaluation of TNYM 2.

2.4 Micro Evaluation

Table 2.3 summarises topic, structures and skills emphasis of the units I have mainly used during the micro evaluation (see Appendix 4) of the book. Units 1 and 14 are enclosed as appendixes 7 and 8.

Table 2.3   MICRO EVALUATION UNITS

UNIT	TOPIC	STRUCTURES	SKILLS EMPHASIS
Unit 1	Back from our holidays	Past simple, questions and negations, regular and irregular past forms	Listening skills

Unit 4	Autumn festivals	some - any	Mixed skills
Unit 6	Strange stories	Ways of expressing time, location, movement	Reading
Unit 12	Midnight surprise - a play	Future: will - going to	Speaking
Unit 14	The driver of the year - a comic strip	Present Perfect	Mixed skills

2.4.1 Unit grading and sequencing

The units are mainly graded and sequenced according to **cognitive difficulty** and the **type of skills** involved. Receptive skills are first, productive skills follow.

There seems to be a lack of published guidance on unit grading and sequencing. White lists some criteria which, however, provide hints on how to select and grade language and exercises across units only. The criteria he mentions comprise a structural focus (e.g. frequency and simplicity/complexity), topic focus (e.g. interest and relevance) and functional focus (e.g. utility) (White 1988: 48). As I have already mentioned in the macro evaluation of TNYM 2, teachers who use a CB that is based on a multidimensional syllabus tend to run the risk of fragmentation of their lessons. This becomes especially evident after a close examination of the CB units mentioned in table 2.3.

2.4.2 Skills

A close examination of the type of skill exercises and the way they are weighted and integrated reveals the following.

a) The exercises are exclusively designed for the age group in question.
b) A majority of exercises include comprehension skills.
c) The integration of the skills seems somewhat arbitrary, unnatural and unrealistic.

Swan in his discussion about the role of **authentic** materials in ELT very clearly argues for an inclusion of both, authentic and scripted ones. One of his main concerns seems to be directed towards the use of well scripted materials as opposed to badly scripted ones. Moreover, Swan recognises the limits of both, scripted and authentic material by emphasising that

> "If students are exposed only to scripted material, they will learn an impoverished version of the language, and will find it hard to come to terms with genuine discourse when they are exposed to it. If

they are exposed only to authentic material, however, they are unlikely (in the time available for the average language course) to meet all the high-frequency items they need to learn." (Swan 1985: 85)

"The New You and Me" series exclusively contains scripted materials, many of which I would consider *"badly"* scripted, and as J. Willis (1996: 13) points out "exposure to a restricted diet of simplified or specially written texts, sentence-level examples and scripted dialogues is not enough".

2.4.3 Grammar and Lexis

Grammar

The role grammar plays within the language learning process is not always obvious. As Stern points out:

> "Just as communicative language teaching has cast doubts on the value of pronunciation teaching it has also led, even more forcibly, to similar doubts about grammar teaching. (127)

The way grammar is dealt within TNYM series increases these doubts because its role in the learning process does not really become clear, although the teacher handbook stresses its importance for language learning. *Creative grammar practice* and *grammar rhythms* are somehow vague regarding what they help to achieve. Especially the latter appear to be based on a behaviouristic theory of learning which in my opinion has only limited value in the learning process.

Concerning the teaching of grammar the teacher training college I attended did not give and teach any options to the still dominating *Present – Practise – Produce* paradigm. Thus, teachers do not have an alternative if they are not given any other choices. Rutherford offers such an alternative by suggesting the following criteria for a grammatical syllabus:

> "It must be consonant with the 'metamorphic' aspects of language development,
> it must be such as to accommodate a group of learners who are learning different things at different times, and in different ways,
> it must be conceived in such a way the learner is enabled progressively to convert his language 'chunks, prefabricated routines, or unopened packages' into analysed language and thereby extend his range of grammatical competence." (Rutherford 1988: 160)

Instead of providing a list of language content Rutherford argues for a specification of HOW the language content should be exploited. He advocates the use of *Consciousness Raising* (CR) exercises, which are based on a more organic view of language learning. Learners constantly adjust their internal system if they are exposed to a wide range of input and given time and means to explore it and form hypothesises (Rutherford 1988: 159-160). The

emphasis lies on recognising certain grammatical features rather than on the ability to instantly produce them. CR exercises, I believe, should be part of any textbook from beginning to intermediate level. Students` attitudes towards grammar might be improved through the use of such exercises, because their emphasis lies on the improvement of grammatical awareness and not on the instant production of grammatically correct language.

Lexis

Regarding the approach to lexis the book contains a variety of useful ways of presenting vocabulary like *wordfields* and *picture dictionaries*. Experience has shown that students enjoy using them, an important prerequisite of learning. However, there is, I believe, an insufficient amount of fixed expressions and collocations in the book. As J. Hill (2000: 47) observes

> "When I first started teaching English, we were encouraged to think of grammar as the bones of the language, and vocabulary as the flesh to be added. We now know that language consists largely of prefabricated chunks of lexis.

CB writers should acknowledge what we now about language by including a multitude of such chunks in their books. This would probably also lead to the use of more authentic language in ELT coursebooks, even at a lower proficiency level.

2.4.4 Learner and Teacher Roles

The book the way it is mainly used, very clearly supports a dominant teaching style, where the teacher makes all the decisions and the students act according to what the teacher thinks is best for them. That in my experience is at least the way it is mostly used.
Regarding teacher domination J. Willis points out that

> "A methodology which depends on teacher presentations encourages learners to rely on the teacher. It says to them, 'I am the teacher. I will explain the language system to you. Listen to me and you will learn." (J. Willis 1996: 113)

Though I generally agree with J. Willis caution needs to be exercised not to generalise the above statement. Certain students, depending on their personalities and preferred learning styles and culture might even prefer a more dominant teacher.

The streaming system (see 1.3.1) as exercised in Austrian "Hauptschule" requires a variety of different language exercises to accommodate a range of proficiency level within one school year. There is much in terms of materials which enables effective differentiation, especially when considering the additional materials available.

Concerning the motivational value of the material, experience has shown that there are some units, like *Autumn festivals*, which tend to motivate and interest students by nature, and others, like *Buildings*, which generally bore them. However, the way the material is presented and exploited by the teacher will also play a crucial role in arousing student interest and encouraging motivation. Moreover, we are living in rapidly changing times. This means that what is considered fashionable and interesting today, might be regarded out of date and uninteresting tomorrow.

2.5 Summative Evaluation

The main question to be answered at this point is whether I choose to reuse and adapt TNYM 2 or whether I resolve to evaluating and choosing another book. The summative evaluation (Appendix 5) clearly points to the latter mainly for the following reasons.

- The book itself is not compatible with the NC because it does not meet many of its criteria like the inclusion of a multitude of fixed expressions, cultural content and authentic materials.
- Its exercises and some of its topics do not support the development of an age-related communicative competence, the main objective of the NC.

- To adapt the book for the NC would be too expensive and not really useful. If the book needs to be supplemented by such an amount of additional materials, I rather choose to use another one instead.

- The book is not compatible with my own approach. There are no authentic materials whatsoever, only few fixed expressions and collocations and there is almost no cultural content included. Moreover the role of grammar in the learning process is not really clear.

- Most students find many of the topics not very stimulating.

Now that I have decided to select another ELT CB instead of reusing the *"old"* one, the main difficulty lies in convincing my colleagues to take that step, which could turn out to be a *mission impossible* partly because of their unwillingness to change and partly because they might not share my views on language and learning.

Conclusion

Teachers, CB authors and publishers need to be realistic about what a CB can do, and about what it cannot do. What it certainly can do, is to provide topics that tend to motivate students. It can also provide a variety of generally motivating and stimulating exercises. What it cannot do, however, is to decide what students finally end up learning. A CB can be likened to a pair of hair cutting scissors. Their quality is of crucial importance and a prerequisite to effectively using them. But without the experience and knowledge of a skilled hairdresser they become useless. It is the teacher who finally decides how to use the book and thus breathes life into it. However, it is the learner, who in the end consciously or unconsciously decided what he/she acquires. Regarding the role of materials in the language learning process J. Edge (1993: 43) remarks that "our purpose is not to teach materials. Our purpose is to teach students, and to use materials in that process." If teachers choose to use a coursebook (CB) for a given

context, and most do, this very clearly defines its purpose. It should be used as a core and be supplemented by other materials, for no given CB can satisfy the needs of all contexts.

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Appendix 1:   A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE AUSTRIAN LANGUAGE STATE CURRICULUMS 1984 AND 2000

	CURRICULUM 1984	**CURRICULUM 2000**
STRUCTURE	**Introduction:**	**Introduction:**
	General teaching objectives	General teaching objectives
	1. Content	**1. General methodol. principles**
	a) 4 Skills	
	b) Topics and lexis	**2. CORE content**
	c) Grammar	a) 4 Skills
	d) Functions	b) Communicative functions,
	e) Pronunciation	topics and lexis
	f) Writing	c) Grammatical and
	g) Testing	lexical elements

d) Target language culture

2. Methodological Principles   **3. Differentiation**
a) General comments
b) 4 Skills   **4. Testing**
c) Translation
d) Grammar and lexis
e) Learning Strategies

3. Differentiation
a) Working with weak students
b) Study environment
c) 4 Skills

Appendix 2: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MACRO EVALUATION

Contents

What kind of syllabus is the book based on?

How is it organised into units and how do the units connect?

What claims are made about the books approach and methodology?

Layout

Does the table of contents facilitate orientation?

What visual material does the book contain and does it help in the learning process? What

about the layout in general?

Additional Materials

What kind of additional materials are available?

What about resultant costs and can they usefully be integrated into the classroom work?

MICRO EVALUATION

Unit grading and sequencing

How are the materials graded and sequenced?

Skills

a) Receptive

Listening skills:

What type of listening materials does the book contain?

Reading 'discourse' skills:

What type of reading materials does the book contain?

What kind of reading strategies are advocated through the subsequent comprehension exercises?

b) Productive

Writing skills:

What type of writing exercises does the book contain?

Which view on writing do the exercises encourage?

Speaking skills:

What type of speaking materials/exercises does the book contain?

c) Integration of skills

How are the skills integrated?

What about the weighting of the 4 language skills?

Grammar and Lexis

What kinds of grammar activities are there and what is their purpose/role in the learning process?

What approach to lexis does the material take?

Learner and Teacher Roles

What role/s is the learner expected to play?

Are the topics and exercises likely to interest and motivate students?

Are the materials suitable for different learning styles?

Do they allow for differentiation?

What role/s is the teacher expected to play?

Appendix 2a: EVALUATION QUESTIONS INCLUDING GUIDELINES

MACRO EVALUATION

Contents

What kind of syllabus is the book based on?

MULITDIMENSIONAL:

a) LANGUAGE (comprising structural and lexical syllabuses)

b) CULTURE

c) COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES (comprising topic and skills based syllabuses, and notional-functional syllabuses)

d) GENERAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

How is it organised into units and how do the units connect?

GRADING AND SEQUENCING OF STRUCTURES ACROSS THE UNITS

What claims are made about the books approach and methodology?

WHAT IT CONTAINS AND WHAT THAT CONTENTS HELPS LEARNERS TO
ACHIEVE

Layout

Does the table of contents facilitate orientation?

HOW IT IS STRUCTURED

What visual material does the book contain and does it help in the learning process?

What about the layout in general?

E.G. PICTURES, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS

AMOUNT OF TEXTS AND VISUAL MATERIAL ON ONE PAGE AND HOW IT IS
STRUCTURED

Additional Materials

What kind of additional materials are available?

E.G. GRAMMAR BOOKS, CD ROMS, VIDEO TAPES

What about resultant costs and can they usefully be integrated into the classroom work?

TIME FACTOR IS IMPORTANT

MICRO EVALUATION

Unit grading and sequencing

How are the materials graded and sequenced?

GRADING = list items according to difficulty on a continuum from easy to difficult

SEQUENCING = what comes first, second, third

Skills

a) Receptive

Listening skills:

What type of listening materials does the book contain?

AUTHENTIC = not changed for pedagogical purposes

ARTIFICIAL = changed to facilitate comprehension ...

Reading 'discourse' skills:

What type of reading materials does the book contain?

LENGTH, DIFFICULTY, CONTENTS

What kind of reading strategies are advocated through the subsequent comprehension exercises?

READING FOR GIST OR DETAIL

b) Productive

Writing skills:

What type of writing exercises does the book contain?

DIFFICULTY, IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR THE AGE IN QUESTION

Which view on writing do the exercises encourage?

WRITING AS A PROCESS OR PRODUCT

Speaking skills:

What type of speaking materials/exercises does the book contain?

AUTHENTIC = what we know about the nature of spoken communication

ARTIFICIAL = changed to facilitate the learning and teaching process

c) Integration of skills

How are the skills integrated?

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

READING AND WRITING

What about the weigthing of the 4 language skills?

MORE RECEPTIVE OR MORE PRODUCTIVE

Grammar and Lexis
What kinds of grammar activities are there and what is their purpose/role in the learning process?

INDUCTIVE VERSUS DEDUCTIVE

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

What approach to lexis does the material take?

INCLUSION OF COLLOCATIONS, FIXED EXPRESSIONS, WORDS IN CONTEXT

Learner and Teacher Roles

What role/s is the learner expected to play?

ACTIVE VERSUS PASSIVE

Are the topics and exercises likely to interest and motivate students?

SURVEY AMONG STUDENTS, EXPERIENCE

Are the materials suitable for different learning styles?

COGNITIVE AND PERSONALITY STYLES

Do they allow for differentiation?

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY WITHIN A GROUP OF LEARNERS OF THE SAME AGE

What role/s is the teacher expected to play?

ACTIVE VERSUS PASSIVE, MANAGER, GUIDE, FACILITATOR

Appendix 3: MACRO EVALUATION – QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Contents

What kind of syllabus is the book based on?

FEATURES:

The book`s underlying syllabus is clearly a multidimensional/mixed one. When looking at the table of contents the primary organising principles appears to be topics. A closer look at the table of contents reveals the following secondary organising principles: skills and grammar. What the table of contents does not show, is that there is also, though only of minor importance, a pronunciation and lexical syllabus included. Moreover there are many study hints given in both, textbook and workbook which, however, is not stated in the table of contents. There is no real cultural syllabus included apart from one unit which deals with British autumn festivals. To sum up, using Stern`s terminology, the books main syllabus is a

communicative activities syllabus (topics and skills), followed by a language syllabus (grammatical and lexical) and a general language education syllabus (language learning tips). There is no real cultural syllabus included.

NEW CURRICULUM:

The NC allows for more flexibility within a given context through the introduction of a so-called CORE. It stresses the paramount importance of the study of the 4 language skills as a basis for meaningful communication, especially of spoken communication. It also acknowledges the importance of functions, topics and lexical items in meaningful communication. Moreover it emphasises that grammar does have its place in an ELT curriculum but only to achieve meaning and not by itself. It also recognizes the role of a cultural syllabus.

COMMENTS:

By applying a multidimensional syllabus, one risks to lose orientation. In an effort to put into a book whatever might be considered important the danger of risking fragmentation of content is evident. In other words, such a book might include a variety of different exercises which are, however, not always usefully connected and integrated. I believe that regarding contents, this is what can be noticed after browsing through the table of contents and the book. Moreover, he role of grammar appears somewhat vague and has led to a lot of criticism from a majority of behaviouristic orientated teachers who believe that there are not enough grammar exercises in the book for effectively learning the structures in question.

How is it organised into units and how do the units connect (grading and sequencing across units)?

FEATURES:

The book comprises 20 regular units which are expected to be treated one after the other and an extra unit (Christmas) which can be treated just before the Christmas holidays. Topics are the main organising principles. The topics do not really connect but seem to be rather arbitrarily sequenced. Grading appears to have taken place regarding grammar on the assumption of cognitive simplicity (e.g. Unit 1: **past simple**, Unit 14: **present perfect**).

NEW CURRICULUM:

No suggestions about grading and sequencing.

COMMENTS:

The grading of structural elements according to cognitive simplicity is a feature of behavioural thinking. It does not account for acquisitional difficulty and is based on the assumption that what is taught, is automatically learned. Research and experience suggest that learners do not acquire items in the order determined by syllabus designers and teachers. It also suggests that certain items are best taught in combination and not isolation like the past simple and the present perfect, mainly because of their meaning concepts.

What claims are made about the books approach and methodology?

FEATURES:

The authors` claim that the use of the book leads to an age related communicative competence through the integration of the 4 language skills. They also state some reasons for their claim like an intensive trial stage in various schools across the country, the inclusion of the latest knowledge from didactics, linguistics (SLA research) and cognitive psychology. The authors also maintain that when using their book the language will be systematically anchored in the long term memory of the learner.

NEW CURRICULUM:

Since the book needs to based on the new curriculum which states the development of an age-related communicative competence mainly in speaking but also in writing as its major objective, it appears logical that this must be included in the authors` claims, too.

COMMENTS:

Their claims are very strong. Some like the inclusion of the latest knowledge from cognitive psychology demands close examination. Others like the systematic anchoring of the language in the long term memory of the learner are, it seems to me, not only very strong but also not really testable since this is a long term objective which can only be evaluated after the completion of all 4 books of the series. Concerning the former some browsing together with a couple of years of experience in the usage of this book series reveals the following: it seems true that part of the latest knowledge of various fields is included. However, I believe that the

inclusion of this knowledge is not enough, more important seems the way this knowledge is integrated into the materials. This integration did not really appear to have taken place. Moreover, when testing their claim about the inclusion of the latest knowledge from SLA research against what J. Willis states as 4 very important findings of SLA research for successfully acquiring another language (exposure to language, meaningful use of language, motivation of learners, focus on form to prevent fossilisation) their claim seems at best only partly justified.

Layout

Does the table of contents facilitate orientation?

The main purpose of a table of contents (see Appendix 7) is to allow the reader to quickly browse through it to discover what the book has to offer in terms of contents and how this is connected. This seems best to be achieved by visual means.
The table of contents of The New You & Me 2 does not really facilitate orientation in this way.
It is too randomly structured, somewhat messy and moreover part of the exercises or materials actually contained in the book are not listed, e.g. the kind of study hints and pronunciation exercises.

What visual material does the book contain and does it help in the learning process? What about the layout in general?

There is a variety of colourful and stimulating photos and drawings integrated into the layout of the book. Especially the picture dictionaries at the beginning of the majority of the units have proven to be very motivating and helpful. The teacher handbook provides a variety of hints as to usefully and motivationally exploiting them for classroom work. Since the picture dictionaries do not include a German translation of the new words students have the opportunity to build up a basic vocabulary in their minds separately from their L1. The importance of visual materials in facilitation of the learning process must not be underestimated since it can help to anchor new words and phrases into the learners` long term memory. Therefore, regarding the quality, types and usage of visual materials and the way the layout is generally structured do certainly help in the learning process, especially when the teacher knows how to integrate them into his/her work.

Additional Materials

What kind of additional materials are available?

There is a variety of additional materials available for classroom use, but also for use outside of class to encourage self-study. The following list provides an overview of them:

> **a) The New You & Me Grammar Practice,**
> **b) The New You & Me Holiday Booklet,**
> **c) The New You & Me Open Learning,**
> **d) The New You & Me Testing File,**
> **e) The New You & Me CD-ROM,**
> **f) The New You & Me Music Bar.**

Especially a, b and e have proven very valuable to encourage student to do some additional studying at home. The New You & Me Holiday Booklet includes exercises which students can do to brush up on their English during summer holidays. The New You & Me CD-ROM includes the same units like the book and a variety of stimulating exercises.

TEACHER HANDBOOK

Contains a lot of useful information on how to best use the book in class and on the rationale that lies behind the book.

What about the resultant costs and can they usefully be integrated into the classroom work?

Money certainly is a factor, but most of the time there has been some money left which was used to purchase some of the above. The main problem, I think, poses a useful integration into the classroom work partly because of the time factor and partly, regarding the use of the CD-ROM because of the facilities factor.

Concerning the former, the new ELT state curriculum demands teachers to spend about two third of their teaching time on what the curriculum contains and about one third on what each individual teacher deems appropriate for his/her context/group and also according to his/her own knowledge and expertise. Moreover, 4 lessons a week certainly do restrict what can be done in class.

Regarding the latter, experience has shown that all the other teachers at school regularly want to use the computer facilities since students really like to work with the CD-ROM and teachers have a lot of time, walking around and assisting individual students. This of course is restricted by the amount of computers (16) available. In other words, I believe that there is too much available in terms of additional materials, since it cannot really be effectively integrated into classroom work at all times.

Appendix 4: MICRO EVALUATION – QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Unit grading and sequencing

How are the materials graded and sequenced?

FEATURES:

Exercises 1 to 10 of Unit 1 (see Appendix 8) form a unit within a unit and advisably should be treated one after the other. The first seven exercises (preparation of sketch) are cognitively more simple then exercises 8 to 10. Moreover the workbook contains additional exercises to allow for further practise, either at school, or at home for self study.

The sequencing and grading of the remaining exercises is not that straightforward. Particularly exercises 12 and 13 seem to be more demanding and are designed for further practise for the "more advanced" students. The teacher can basically decide if he/she wants to include or exclude these exercises from his/her teaching.

A distinct feature of each unit in the book is the inclusion of a so-called *picture dictionary* and a brief description of the grammar point of a unit at its end.

Unit 4 (Hallowe'en) is very similar to unit 1 with respect to grading and sequencing. Exercises 1 to 5 need to be done one after the other and exercises 6 to 7 offer some further practice but are not really mandatory .

In Unit 1 grammar is presented before the main exercises whereas in Unit 4 grammar is practised and probably explained after the main exercises since there it does not appear to be a prerequisite for successfully accomplishing them.

The sequencing of the stories in Unit 6 appear at first glance somewhat arbitrary. A closer examination, however, reveals that they are graded according to cognitive difficulty and type of skills. Listening and reading dominate in the first 6 exercises, speaking and writing in the remaining exercises.

Units 12 and 14 are similar. The first couple of exercises are again preparation exercises which are designed to be done one after the other again graded according to cognitive difficulty and the type of skills involved.

COMMENTS

At first glance the exercises within the units appear quite usefully graded and sequenced. Especially the inclusion of a range of more demanding exercises proves to be useful in the light of streaming. What does cause difficulties, though, is that a teacher has to be very skilled to usefully connect the various exercises. Also, students very often do not really understand the purpose of the preparation exercises, tend to get confused and there is a potential of the fragmentation of lessons.

Skills

a) Receptive

Listening skills:

What type of listening materials does the book contain?

FEATURES

There are a lot of sketches, plays, songs and grammar rhythms which are included on the assumption that they motivate learners and facilitate acquisition.

The listening exercises are especially designed for the purpose of the book and the age group in question. They are thus artificial, mainly on the assumption that this facilitates comprehension and in the long run leads to acquisition.

All of the speakers are British English native speakers, most of them children, who speak at natural speed which especially second and third streamers find discouraging at times.

Most of the units also contain Total Physical Response exercises (Radio London) which is a method designed by Asher and which attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. Its main purpose lies on the development of comprehension skills as a basis for the production skills. Students generally love TPR exercises. They are a distinct feature of the first two books of the series, thus designed for the younger learners (10 to 12 years old).

NEW CURRICULUM

The type of texts used should be of communicative value and at least be close to authentic texts.

COMMENTS

The new ELT curriculum emphasises the importance of the communicative value of listening materials. SLA research stresses the importance of much exposure to a range of meaningful input. The textbook contains many listening exercises, exclusively designed for the age in question. What learners hear certainly shapes the way they view language. I do not suggest that scripted dialogues in particular and specially written teaching texts in general should be completely omitted, especially at the beginning stage of language learning. However, this material should be supplemented by a variety of authentic/semi authentic texts to gradually lead the learner to shape a view of the new language that reflects its actual usage.

Regarding the use of TPR exercises, grammar rhythms and songs it needs to be pointed out that they are designed for more outgoing, extrovert personalities. Experience has shown that students who are more introvert and shy might hesitate to participate and thus the inclusion of such exercises becomes at least questionable.

Reading 'discourse' skills:

What type of reading materials does the book contain?

FEATURES

The book contains a variety of texts, appropriate in lengths and difficulty. The type of reading materials mainly consists of a variety of stories, certainly appropriate for the age group in question. Reading materials also include sketches, a comic, plays, a cultural text, information from a tourist brochure, letters, newspaper articles.

NEW CURRICULUM

The choice of texts should be made according to their communicative and cultural value. Types of texts should comprise short factual texts and messages, simple and personal letters, dialogues as a basis for the development of spoken communication, simple fictional texts, poems and songs.

COMMENTS

There is a variety of text types included in the book. Their communicative value though is not always clear. The difficulty of the texts certainly is appropriate for that age group. However some texts should be included that provide learners with more authentic English since the exercises mainly feature those structures which have not been used in one of the units before and might deprive learners from important input.

There are many stories on the assumption that they enhance student motivation. This is very difficult to judge though, since not everybody likes to read fictional texts. Moreover, apart from the text about Hallowe'en there are no cultural texts included. One major concern of the NC, however, is to provide a range of texts including cultural information.

What kind of reading strategies are advocated through the subsequent comprehension exercises?

The reading comprehension exercises encourage both, reading for gist and reading for detail. This is also included in the new curriculum and also part of the way people read in real life.

b) Productive
Writing skills:

What type of writing exercises does the book contain?

FEATURES

The book mainly contains guided writing exercises. Study and change for example provides the learners with brief, personal sample texts about a topic and students are asked to change them so they reflect their opinions or life. Creative grammar practice starts with another brief sample texts. Students cover it up and try to reconstruct it and then write their own texts. Other examples for writing types include summary and story writing.

NEW CURRICULUM

Development of writing as a skill through changing simple texts, letters, messages and descriptions.

COMMENTS

The type of writing very much influences the learners` motivation. Study and change and creative grammar practice do not really reflect the way people write in real life and not surprisingly thus students tend to be rather repelled by these exercises.

Summary writing is a skill in itself and I believe it might be a bit early to introduce it for 11 year olds. There are no exercises in the book that encourage students to write letters or email. Moreover the workbook contains grammar exercises where students are expected to write correct grammatical sentences using the '*going to* future' (67/4) for example. This is done under the behaviouristic assumption that practice makes perfect. Unfortunately this kind of exercises do have a variety of disadvantages: they do not carry meaning, they are sentence level exercise, students very often are able to produce them correctly in tests but not under time pressure (no acquisition takes place), they make students believe that what can be practised, can also be instantly learned, so many students are discouraged when they continue to make the same errors over and over again. I do not suggest that these exercises are absolutely useless. What I do suggest though, is that they should not be included in tests.

Which view on writing do the exercises encourage?

Certain exercises like the *study and change* ones or the *creative grammar practice* ones tend to encourage a view of writing as a product. Writing in real life though is more often a process, but there might be the possibility of time pressure, too (for professional purposes).

In schools I believe writing should be mostly viewed as a process. Students need to be explicitly taught this. Writing as a process views the making of errors as natural part of that process. Students who are used to writing as a product very easily get discouraged because very often they continue to make the same mistakes again and again.

Speaking skills:

What type of speaking materials/exercises does the book contain?

FEATURES

The book exclusively consists of sketches, plays and brief artificial dialogues as speaking materials. There are also some pronunciation exercises, usually towards the end of a unit.

NEW CURRICULUM

The use of the target language in class is mandatory. Students should be able to talk about topics and texts they find interesting, about their opinions and desires. Students should also acquire culturally accepted communication skills for relevant daily situations. Moreover, the NC emphasises the role of pronunciation and intonation.

COMMENTS

Speaking materials and exercises tend to make learners believe that they have to get it right from the very beginning. Moreover the texts usually do not really reflect the learners` attitudes and opinions and learners are not encouraged to convey real meaning. This does not mean that students will not learn to speak the language, but what it might mean is that they probably do not sound very natural in their conversations.
The development of an age-related communicative competence is a long-term goal and SLA suggests that one of the features required to achieve that goal is much exposure to a range of materials.

c) Integration of skills

How are the skills weighted and integrated?

The majority of the exercises are based on listening and reading material which lead to speaking and writing exercises. There is a restricted amount of writing materials and speaking materials which is not necessarily bad for the age group in question. But books 3 and 4

comprise many reading and writing exercises. Spoken communication exercises are rare and do not really encourage the development of an age-related communicative competence. Concerning the integration of skills the following can be observed. Some units tend to concentrate on one skill which is supplemented by exercises where other skills are used. However, there is no realistic or natural integration of the skills.

Grammar and Lexis

What kinds of grammar activities are there and what is their purpose in the learning process?

The main grammar activities comprise *grammar rhythms (learners are asked to listen to and repeat grammatical structures (e.g. some and any) either in isolation or in context)*, *creative grammar practice (learners have to read two texts, study them, cover them up, try to reconstruct them and write their own texts), sentence level exercises* and *fill in the gap* exercises. The latter two do not really encourage and feature meaningful communication. Creative grammar practice might accomplish this, since students are asked to change texts according to their real life situation. Some students like doing grammar rhythms depending on their preferred learning styles.

Teachers mostly use these grammar exercises within a *Present – Practise - Produce* methodology, based on a rather behaviouristic view on learning. The role of grammar within the whole approach of the book does not appear very clear. Teachers have not been satisfied with the amount of grammar exercises and the way the are featured in the book. They have resolved to purchasing and using books that feature exclusively sentence level examples of the grammar in question on the behaviouristic assumption that practice makes perfect. The publisher and the authors have reacted and created an additional grammar booklet to satisfy most teachers needs and wishes.

There seems a hidden grammatical syllabus since grammar dictates the structuring and grading of the book and the creation and selection of appropriate materials.

The purpose of grammar according to the NC: Where appropriate, grammatical structures should be better introduced as fixed lexical items without explicit explanation of rules. This criteria is certainly not fulfilled by the book.

What approach to lexis does the material take?

The selection of words and phrases feature in the vocabulary book at the end of each workbook unit is based on the textbook exercises which are specifically designed for the learners. The main type of presenting these words and phrases comprise *picture dictionaries* and the textbook and *wordfields* and *words in context* in the workbook.

There is an emphasis on treating the words in context and using a variety of tables and exercises which are presumably based on knowledge from cognitive psychology. There are some collocations and fixed expressions but not very many.

In my opinion, especially in the light of what is known or assumed about the role of lexis in language learning there should be much more fixed expression (especially at this stage) and collocations.

<u>Learner and Teacher Roles</u>

What role/s is the learner expected to play?

The role a learner is expected to play is only partly dependent on the book being used. It is mainly a reflection of the conscious or unconscious approach to language and learning a teacher pursues. However, a CB usually does imply or favour certain roles. This could be best shown on a continuum with teacher centredness on one end, and learner centredness on the other. In this respect concerning learner roles TNYM seems to favour a more dominant teacher role, where all the important decisions are made by the teacher.

Are the topics and exercises likely to interest and motivate students?

A survey would probably reveal very accurate data about interests and motivational value of the materials regarding the group being asked. But interests tend to differ from group to group and so this survey what have to be undertaken a couple of years in a row, with different groups of students to allow for generalisations. Experience is another good way to determine if the materials in question are generally interesting or motivating. However, similar to the brief discussion of learner roles implied by the materials, it is again the teacher who at least by the way he/she uses the materials, influence the way students are motivated or interested. TNYM 2 has a range of age-related topics as required by the curriculum. Experience has shown that certain topics are more likely to motivate and interest students and others are not.

Examples for the former are *Autumn festivals, Ghosts, Sports and games*, examples for the latter *Science fiction* and *Buildings*.

Are the materials suitable for different learning styles?

The authors do claim that this is so. There is a variety of learning styles which can be roughly divided into cognitive (left/right brain dominance for example) and personality styles (extroversion and introversion). Regarding the former, the authors` claim seem at least partly justified, concerning the latter it is again the teacher who basically determines if personality styles are catered for. However, certain kinds of exercise tend to influence personality styles, too, mainly because of the way the are designed. Grammar rhythms and songs, for example, which figure prominently in the book, tend to be rather discouraging for extroverts.
The CB gives a variety of hints for a range of learning strategies, which is in general very helpful and useful.

Do they allow for differentiation?

The exercises in the book are graded according their cognitive difficulty into 3 types from easy, moderately difficult to difficult. This certainly facilitates differentiation. Moreover, the use of additional materials does help to enable differentiation, too. Especially because of the streaming system in Austria`s "Hauptschule", the possibility for differentiation according to language proficiency is crucial.

What role/s is the teacher expected to play?

As already mention in the discussion about learner roles, the book seems to favour a dominant teacher role. He/she is the one who basically make all significant decisions, not recognising, that more learner centredness might by conduice to learning, too. The teacher handbook provides a lot of methodological hints on how to best exploit the book, partly on the assumption that what is taught is also learned. Research has shown that this is not necessarily true.

Appendix 5: SUMMATIVE EVALUTATION

For the final decision making the following needs to be investigated:

a) Usability factor

To what extent is the book compatible with the NC and does it really lead to the development of an age-related communicative competence as stated in the curriculum and claims of the publisher and the authors`?

The CB by itself is not compatible with the NC. Some of the main reasons are listed below.

- There is no real cultural content included.

- There are no real authentic materials used.

- The use of grammatical metalanguage in the book is different to the way
  it is advocated by the NC.

- The NC emphasises the role of fixed expressions which, especially in the early stages of language learning should be memorised as chunks. In this respect there is an insufficient amount of collocations and fixed expressions used and highlighted in the CB.

- The book would have to be supplemented by additional materials because of the division of content by the NC into a CORE and a SUPPLEMENTARY.

Regarding the inclusion of cultural content the teacher would have to search for appropriate materials. This would certainly result in very high costs and probably confusion of students.

Concerning the development of an **age-related communicative competence** the following needs to be emphasised. First, the term *age-related communicative competence* is not further specified, mainly because it is very difficult to define. Second, if we assume that age-related communicative competence refers to the ability to effectively listen to, speak, read and write about topics, feelings, wishes, interests and many more then the CB certainly has its limits. No one coursebook can help to achieve this by itself, mainly because of the time factor (4 hours a week in an EFL context is simply not enough) but also because this also depends on the way a teacher views language and learning and therefore the way he/she uses the book. Moreover, I think that there is quite an amount of topics which children at that each generally do not find very stimulating.

b) Adaptability factor
Can the CB be successfully adapted to fit the NC and the teacher`s personal approach?

I believe the CB can be adapted to fit the NC. It cannot, however, be adapted to fit my own personal approach. First, if in order to be compatible with the NC such an amount of additional materials need to purchased I had rather chose another one where this can be avoided. Second, there are many features about the book I consider at least questionable in the light of what I deem important. For example, there is no authentic and not enough cultural material included whatsoever, and many of the topics do not really encourage students to talk because they simply find them boring.

c) Teacher's individual approach
Is the CB compatible with the teacher`s own approach to teaching and his/her views on language and learning?

This question has partly been answered together with the above question. The coursebook I use as a teacher will probably never be a hundred percent compatible with my own teaching approach. However, it is sensible to choose a book that comes very close to what I need. Also, students are quite different from group to group. Sometimes a topic that interested one group,

did not excite another one a year or two later. The teaching situation, I believe, is constantly changing because the world is in a constant process of change. As teachers we need to be aware of that and willing to frequently review our materials and adjust to new situations.

d) Learners' interests
Are the choice of topics and the kind of exercises likely to arouse most students`
interests?

Experience has shown that the book contains too many topics that students do not generally find stimulating. Especially with book 3 and 4 of the series I resolved to omitting many units and started adding my own materials which I partly found in other books, newspapers and booklets for example.

Appendix 6: UNIT GRADING AND SEQUENCING

Unit 1: Back from the holidays

PREPARATION OF SKETCH

Exercise 1: starts with a picture dictionary which introduces new words and some phrases.

Exercise 2: practising of the new words and phrases with a song including a comprehension exercise

Exercises 3+4: Total Physical Response as a preparation for the sketch (exercise 8)

Exercise 5: Grammar rhythm 1 - practising regular and irregular past tense forms with music

Exercise 6: Grammar rhythm 2 - practising past simple questions and negations

Exercise 7: Listening exercise - regular and irregular past forms in context

SKETCH

Exercise 8: A sketch - silent reading for gist, then listening for detail

Exercise 9: Reading and listening comprehension exercise

Exercise 10: Acting out the sketch

Learning to
learn: Pronunciation tips

Exercise 11: Short conversation about holidays

Exercise 12: Holiday postcard - breaking the code

Exercise 13: A guessing game - Asking and answering

Study and
change: Writing

Grammar: Past simple; questions, negations, verb forms

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Unit 4: Autumn festivals

HALLOWE'EN

Exercise 1: picture dictionary
Exercise 2+3: TPR - Radio London: Bobbing the apple
Exercise 4: Hallowe'en - a text about Hallowe'en in the USA and Britain

Unit 6: Strange stories

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Unit 12: Midnight surprise

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Unit 13: The driver of the year

A COMIC STRIP

Exercise 1:   **Read 3 sentences and match them with one of the pictures.**
Exercise 2:   **Listen to three dialogues and match them with one of the sentences.**
                       Listen again, fill in the missing words and act them out.
Exercise 3:   **Picture dictionary**
Exercise 4:   **Listen to scenes and find a word for each scene from the picture dictionary.**
Exercise 5:   **A comic strip - The driver of the year - Reading for detail**
Exercise 6:   **Mark the statements true or false.**

Exercise 7:   Grammar rhythm
Exercise 8:   Creative grammar practice

Pronunciation

Grammar   Present Perfect; Irregular verb forms

Appendix 7:   **PART OF THE TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Appendix 8: **TEXTBOOK UNITS 1 AND 14**