A Critical Review of an On-going University English Curriculum Reform Project

Maiko Berger

Abstract

No curriculum is without theories, whether they are apparent or hidden. For instance, new programs are usually designed either to remedy the problems in existing curricula or to improve them (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). But is it always so? This paper will report on an English language curriculum reform that has taken place at a dual-language university from an insider's perspective. This project is aimed at creating a curriculum that will support students with various needs who will further their study in English-medium lectures on the university's multicultural campus and beyond. The report includes the backgrounds of and theories underneath the reform project; designs of the old and new English language curriculum; challenges the developers faced, and how the project should be evaluated holistically as it goes through the reform cycle. In particular, the aspects of evaluation and teacher development are closely examined. After merely one semester, it may be premature to assess its 'effects' using performance indicators. Yet, there is a certain obligation and pressure on the teachers to demonstrate that improvement has actually occurred (White, 1998). Therefore, the author argues that on-going and longitudinal program evaluation and development of pedagogy and materials is essential in order to deem the innovation meaningful.

Key terms: curriculum reform, curriculum evaluation, faculty development

1. INTRODUCTION

This review of curriculum is based at a relatively small university in Japan (hereafter University A) with around 5000 undergraduate students. Half of the students are international students from around eighty countries, and the other half are domestic students. The university employs a dual language curriculum, where English language courses are offered mainly to students whose stronger language is Japanese. For these 'Japanese-basis' students, English language classes represent a significant portion of their university life. On top of completing eight to twenty-four English language credits, students are required to complete twenty credits of content lecture subjects, which are offered in English, in order to graduate. Therefore, English language courses, which students take in the first few years of their study, are designed to prepare students for English-medium lectures later on in their academic path.

Definition of Key Terms

1.1 Curriculum

The term curriculum has mainly two definitions, according to *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* by Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.139).

> 1 an overall plan for a course or programme, as in *the freshman composition curriculum*.

> 2 the total programme of formal studies offered by a school or institution, as in *the secondary school curriculum*.

Many other definitions have been attempted by others, however, the Curriculum Reform project (hereafter CR) analysed here refers to the second definition above, within which there are a number of language courses that can be identified with their respective syllabi. The technical approach, according to Willis (1998), views curriculum as "a plan of what is to happen in school (p.340)" and that fits the view of the project. For a curriculum to be educational, according to McKernan (2008), it should lead students to unanticipated outcomes. At University A, teachers make the language curriculum based on their knowledge and values, and executives at the university are the ultimate policy makers who evaluate the planned curriculum, based on objective and visible results. Consequently, the curriculum is planned to reach those measurable goals.

1.2 Syllabus

I would like to borrow a line from van Lier (1996) here, who advises that the "teacher should have a very 'thick' curriculum available, but perhaps only a very 'thin' syllabus (p.205)." The term syllabus refers to "a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the other in which they are to be taught" according to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.532), or simply a design of what to teach and learn. You could even say it is a sort of travel guide (van Lier, 1996). At University A, in the past, English language syllabi were content-based, with topics such as environmental issues and intercultural communication. According to White (1998, p.110), when "the aim is to develop a flexible and adaptable control over the target language, a process or a procedural syllabus is likely to be more appropriate." The major syllabus type now is that of skills-based, or multi-skill instruction, which "follows the principles of the communicative approach" (Hinkel, 2006, p.113), with each chapter or module revolving around topics. Each class within one level although taught by different instructors, follows the exact same syllabus, and each level has a different syllabus but follows the same structure and shares many qualities. How teachers present the materials to classes is up to each teacher. A skills-centred course generally presents its learning objectives in terms of performance and competence (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987), and so do University A's syllabi.

1.3 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development, which is often synonymous with curriculum design and syllabus design, is "the study and development of the goals, content, implementation, and evaluation of an educational system" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.140). When curriculum is reformed, it is designed so as to change the contents, methods or outcomes of education (Johnson, 2009). This should include needs analysis, objectives setting and evaluation. I argue that University A's curriculum development, which is a process involving many stages, started with a rather weak needs analysis, but employed a thorough objective setting from the teachers' viewpoints. Johnson may have taken a technical view of curriculum development, but McKernan (2008) defines it clearly as something to improve the current practice, saying, "curriculum development is the process of planning, implementing and evaluating courses of study, or patterns of educational activity, which have been offered as proposals for improvement" (p.32). I agree with McKernan's viewpoint and believe that any curriculum change should not be called 'development' unless it 'improves' aspects of the current curriculum.

2. LANGUAGE CURRICULA BEFORE SPRING 2011

The language subjects at the university are planned and implemented by the Center for Language Education (hereafter CLE), which is an institute within the university but does not belong to either of the two major subject colleges. Within the CLE there are three sections, namely English, Japanese and Asia Pacific Languages. Under the curriculum implemented in 2006, many of the Japanese-basis students who need English instruction take two four-credit English courses each semester. Each course meets four days a week for a period of fifteen weeks. Students must complete Intermediate English 1 and 2, which can take one to three semesters depending on the level students are first placed in. In one semester, several hundred students receive 120 hours worth of English instruction in a four-month period. The table below shows its overall structure.
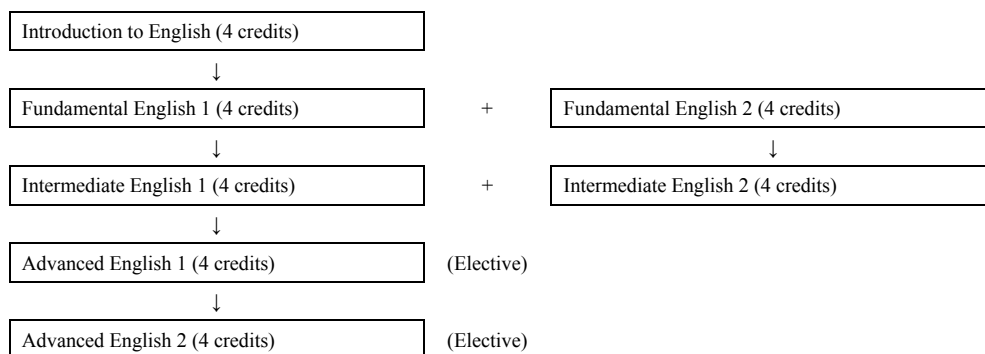
Introduction to English (4 credits)		

↓

Fundamental English 1 (4 credits)	+	Fundamental English 2 (4 credits)

↓   ↓

Intermediate English 1 (4 credits)	+	Intermediate English 2 (4 credits)

↓

Advanced English 1 (4 credits)	(Elective)

↓

Advanced English 2 (4 credits)	(Elective)

Table 1. English Program Overview under 2006 Curriculum

2.1 Theories Behind the 2006 Curriculum

The reviewer does not know exactly what educational theories the former curricula are based on. Slattery (2006) criticizes schools for proclaiming its philosophy for mission statements but not clearly articulating their real concerns and problems. In this sense, University A does articulate its mission statement, but whether they are addressed in the 2006 Curriculum is not known. The best indicators are found in internal documents such as minutes from executive reviews and directors' meetings. According to the director of CLE, University A's traditional idea has been as follows: "Because all the students are required to raise their English proficiency to the TOEFL 500 level at least, they must learn English until they reach this level in the compulsory subjects" (CLE meeting minute, 18 May 2010). The philosophy of education underlining this statement is that of curriculum as product, in which language is considered to be some kind of knowledge learners acquire and regurgitate in the form of test result. The university sets this benchmark, because a TOEFL Paper-Based Test score of 500 is considered to be the minimum requirement in order to study at North American universities. Bachman (1989) stipulates that standardized tests like TOEFL are unsuitable for formative evaluation, but at the same time indicates its usefulness for the summative evaluation of a program. TOEFL is originally a norm-reference test, the purpose of which is to "spread students out along a continuum of abilities or proficiencies" (Brown, 1995, p.115). However, the vast majority of educational institutions rely on the quality of TOEFL so much that people use it also as a criterion-reference test, to assess progress from the beginning to the end of a course, or to measure program effectiveness. Since the university supports this outcome-based education, the grade components in mandatory classes include certain target scores for TOEFL, even though lessons are not tailored toward this commercial test. It is clear that the university has an obsession with such assessment-based pedagogies and standardized outcomes.

2.2 The Ideal Shift

The CLE has used the TOEFL maximum score at the end of each semester as one measure of how much students improved their English ability. The CLE defines the highest score out of all the TOEFL and TOEIC scores that a student achieved by the end of each semester since his/her enrollment as the "maximum TOEFL score." TOEIC scores are converted into TOEFL equivalent scores. Considering the trend of recent university enrolees and the actual score growth over the course of their study, the TOEFL 500 benchmark seems obsolete. There are mainly two reasons for this argument. One is that the average English competency of the enrolees is on the decline. Japanese university students are reported to have lower competitiveness compared with students in other countries in recent years (Kaneko, 2008). The other is when we examine the TOEFL scores spread over the past decade we can easily find that students' English proficiency is becoming more polarized than ever before. Both the rate of students who score

above 500 and that of students below 400 are on the increase. Over the course of their study, however, more than half of the students improve their scores in one year, while some of them remain in the same proficiency level. Such trends in the data have helped CLE directors shift their focus away from TOEFL, as can be seen in a statement by the CLE director. According to the ideal of University A:

> *"Higher level students have to make efforts aiming at a much higher level without being satisfied with their current level, so we proposed that all the students must belong to either track, the Standard or the Advanced. At the same time, we insist that students need much more time to learn English continuously in order to reach the required level. In this sense, we propose to abolish the current exemption system that has allowed the students not to study in consecutive semesters. Ideally, every student should take 24 credits in accordance with their level, but this is unrealistic because the CLE will run short of faculty members. Therefore, we proposed the current structure with two streams in the Standard Track"* (CLE memo, 18 May, 2010).

As a result, certain decisions were made that reduced the weight of TOEFL scores.

2.3 Evaluation of the Old Curriculum

From the reviewer's perspective, the view of education the university executives hold is not compatible with the actual implementers, the teachers. As Graves (1996) exemplifies, two issues need to be considered for evaluation: how a teacher evaluates students' progress, and how she evaluates the course effectiveness. As has been displayed above, University A's means of evaluation has been through the TOEFL scores. However, language teachers are aware that the scores of a norm-referenced test that tests receptive skills only cannot evaluate the course effectiveness.

3. ENGLISH CURRICULUM REFORM PROCESS

3.1 Trend at University A

Although it is not explicitly stated anywhere, the university overall has a custom of following a five-year curriculum reform cycle. The reviewer joined the curricular program of the English section at University A in the spring of 2007, when a 2006 curriculum was on its second year. Changes to individual courses within the CLE happened constantly. For instance, in the fall of 2007, two teachers were tasked to create a new syllabus and teaching contents for an introductory level in about three months, to be implemented in the spring of 2008. The motivation for this change was two-fold. First, the classes were taught by outsourced lecturers, and there was a need to integrate teaching content with the main program. Second, the classes employed communicative language learning but did not focus on fundamental writing or grammar, which seemed to cause problems when students moved up to higher levels in the program. On another occasion, a group of teachers was formed to overhaul the syllabus for an intermediate English course in the fall of 2008, which was implemented in 2009. Since as early as the year 2008, there were talks among teachers who suspected that the whole university curriculum would change. The university-wide reform discussions did not materialize until 2009, but the CLE did not wait for the university to come down with decisions; rather, CLE prepared and proposed their ideal changes in order to make certain the changes would occur on time. The curriculum reform process was long and involved many members of the program. Below is a summary of the CR implementation phase.

Phase & Time	Action
Initiation Fall 2008	Creation of curriculum overview
Needs Analysis Spring 2009	Student survey Outlining target student profile Creation of mission statement, goals

	Outlining each track and electives
	Creating skills rubrics for current & new programs
Summer 2009	Proposal submission for summer review
Fall 2009	Discussion of fundamental policies to inform new curriculum
	Planning Faculty Development (FD) workshops
Phase 1: Finalization Spring 2010	Finalization of English Curriculum Proposal
	Publishers' visit
	Textbooks selection
Phase 2: Introduction Spring 2010	FD sessions to introduce and discuss aspects of the new curriculum
	Creation of syllabi
	Development of criteria to select supplementary materials and compilation of these materials
Phase 3: Preparation Fall 2010	FD sessions to discuss aspects of the new curriculum
	Forum presentation at a national conference on language teaching to introduce the reform process
	Compilation of supplementary materials
	Trial of selected materials, procedures and methods of evaluation in current courses
	Creation of Blackboard (web learning tools) sections to support courses in the new curriculum
	Creation of the timetable for the new curriculum
	Assignment of coordinators and teachers to courses in the program
	Preparation of schedules and other documentation for each course
	Creation of orientation materials for each course
	Orientation meetings to brief faculty on the new courses
	Development of a system for evaluating and revising the program, and individual courses within it.
Phase 4: Implementation Spring 2011	Full implementation of all aspects of the new curriculum
Phase 5: Evaluation and Revision	Assessing the curriculum

Table 2. Curriculum Implementation Timeline

The above phases were proposed early in 2010, and have been adhered to. It is expected that the curriculum will take two to three years to fully implement. In view of the fact that a major curriculum reform occurs approximately every five years at University A, the new curriculum is expected to last for three to five years. Therefore, at the three to four-year mark, a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum should be undertaken, and the five-phase process outlined above should be re-initiated.

3.2 Design of the New Curriculum

I concur with the statement made by Dubin and Olshtain (1986) that the new program should be an improvement to the existing one, but this was not exactly why University A developed a new one. As the whole university was trying to reform the entire curriculum, the decision initially came from the top, down. It is essential to begin the development process with a thorough survey of existing curricula. Dubin and Olshtain (1986) raise five basic components to be examined: (a) the existing curriculum and syllabus, (b) the materials in use, (c) the teacher population, (d) the learners, and (e) the resources of the program. These 5 components, however, were not covered in University A. Course developers should have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing program in order to develop a better one. In the paragraphs to follow, I will examine the most important components of the reform

process, namely, who contributed and how, what roles learners served, objectives of the reform, how materials were selected, and finally how all of these were managed.

Track	Placement	Subject Titles	Credits	Skill Objectives
Advanced (Elective)	Completed compulsory courses	Extensive Reading	2	Reading
		English Project 2	2	4 skills
		English for Business 1	2	4 skills
		English for Business 2	2	4 skills
Advanced (Compulsory)	TOEFL 525-550	Advanced English 2A	4	Debate, reading, writing
		Advanced English 2B	2	Critical thinking, writing
	TOEFL 500-524	Advanced English 1A	4	Listening, speaking, writing, academic skills
		Advanced English 1B	2	Reading, academic skills
↑ Students may take Advanced English 1A & B once they completed 2 Standard Track electives				
Standard (Elective)	Completed compulsory courses	English for Business Writing	2	Business writing
		English for Business Presentations	2	Business presentation
		English Project 1	2	4 skills
		Discussion and Debate	2	Speaking
Standard (Compulsory)	TOEFL 480-499	Upper-Intermediate English A	4	Listening, speaking, writing
		Upper-Intermediate English B	2	Reading
	TOEFL 460-479	Intermediate English A	4	Listening, speaking, writing
		Intermediate English B	2	Reading
	TOEFL 420-459	Pre-Intermediate English A	4	Listening, speaking, writing
		Pre-Intermediate English A	2	Reading
	TOEFL 310-419	Elementary English A	4	Grammar, reading, writing
		Elementary English B	2	Listening, speaking

Table 3. English Program Overview under 2011 Curriculum

3.3 Development Team Contributors: Who was involved?

I strongly agree with McKernan (2008, p.6) that teachers have "a role to play in curriculum decisions, inquiry and improvement" as professional educators. Troudi and Alwan (2010) also recommend involving teachers in the curriculum development process for affective factors. The English Curriculum Committee, hereafter ECC, was the driving force of the curriculum implementation. The committee consisted of the English section director, deputy-directors and level coordinators. During phase 2 and 3, level coordinators led groups of volunteers who worked on different skills. Later in phase 3, teachers grouped into different levels that they wished to teach, including elective classes. The preparation of the new syllabi and materials continued up until the very beginning of the implementation phase. During this time, some faculty members left their positions or new members joined the faculty. A great difficulty we faced with our curriculum innovation was an increase in teachers' workload, as is pointed out by White (1998, p.114) – "Such an increase can occur at all stages: in preparing for the change (through staff meetings, workshops, in-service courses); in planning lessons and materials; in the classroom itself (through having to adopt new roles and techniques); and after the lesson (in the marking of assignments and tests or processing questionnaire or interview data). Any important change in language

curriculum will – indeed, should – involve such extra work." All this has been experienced at University A.

As mentioned earlier, the process of this curriculum development began as a top-down innovation, or "power-coercive", to borrow the term of Nation and Macalister (2010, p.177), but the actual change agent were teachers in classrooms who assisted the innovation process. As the teachers saw reasons for the curriculum reform, and because they participated willingly to make the changes, the approach to CR was that of "normative-re-educative" (Nation and Macalister, 2010, p.177). White (1998, p.118) also notes, "If an innovation is indigenous to an institution, the process will tend to be from the bottom-up, whereas an innovation introduced from outside may follow a top-down process." In this case, the development teams identified their roles, specified their tasks, and introduced changes with the help of other instructors, which helped the innovation seem less top-down. Nunan (1988, p.14) advocates that effective "curriculum development is largely a matter of effective teacher development … that curriculum change will only find its way into the classroom if teachers themselves become the principal agents of curriculum change through critical analysis and reflection on their current performance." McKernan (2008) supports this by maintaining that "there could be no effective curriculum development without teacher development" (p.19). This is so true because it is the teachers who will change the materials, teaching and evaluation methods carried out in curriculum change.

Van Lier (1996) states that the first task in curriculum renewal is to examine and make explicit teachers' theory, so as to make pedagogical decisions. I do not think there were thorough discussions on teachers' theory of teaching. Nor do I know whether any of the development team members had received proper training to design course materials, which is a common issue all over (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986). Nevertheless, all of them had, to different degrees, had experiences coordinating the on-going program and there was no other choice but to get involved. Nunan (1988, p.172) assures us that "there is no such thing as an 'experienced' teacher, if by experienced is meant a teacher who can, at a moment's notice and with minimal support, plan, implement and evaluate a course in any area of the Program." Therefore, there is no need to feel "I am not experienced enough to create a new course" because we all need support from all sources. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that some teachers, including myself, often felt unprepared or inexperienced for this innovation to succeed. Therefore, I conclude here that in any curriculum innovation, if teachers are invited to contribute, these teachers need to be informed, encouraged and trained in the field of curriculum development and evaluation well ahead of time.

3.4 Preparing Teachers for the Upcoming Change

All teachers need to adjust their established beliefs or methodologies to the new curriculum, but this is not easy for most people (Wedell, 2009). At the early stage in 2010, ECC held two sessions that were fundamental to the implementation of the new curriculum. The first was to discuss and confirm the fundamental policies that would shape the new curriculum, such as the following.

   a. Teacher and learner roles and expectations
   b. Classroom procedures and techniques
   c. Use of educational technology in the classroom
   d. Classroom management, especially discipline, providing feedback, and motivating students
   e. Participation and attendance
   f. Language of instruction in the classroom
   g. Role of independent learning and the Self Access Learning Center
   h. Use of our multicultural campus
   i. Counselling and advising students
   j. Purpose of level meetings
   k. Policy on plagiarism
   l. Connection of English curriculum to University A's mission

Arriving at the same understanding among the ECC members was crucial since they are the ones who communicate the ideologies of the new curriculum to lecturers. For instance, some lecturers may have believed they are here to teach our students content, and it is ECC's job to make clear that we are heading toward a skills-focused syllabus. The other was to make a Faculty Development (FD) schedule for 2010 that would support the implementation plan. However, whether FD workshops did serve as a tool for individual teacher development was not assessed. Therefore, self-evaluation of this in-service training will be beneficial.

3.5 Surveying the Existing Program

If I am to point out the lack of other possible participants for the curriculum reform, it is the minimal involvement by students. Students' voices in this process were collected from selected samples. The development group conducted a student survey to analyse students' needs in the spring of 2009, which partially informed the decisions made later that year. A total of 225 students took the survey (Advanced level: 12, Intermediate: 124, Fundamental: 73, Introductory: 16). The summary of the survey revealed the following points:

- Teachers' beliefs about our students were fairly accurate.
- We should focus on having the core skills fore-grounded from the beginning of the 'track'.
- Lower level students are not finding implication or critical thinking to be of great importance, but it is necessary for their TOEFL study.
- We need to do a better job of making our goals clear to our students.

Based on the needs analysis and taking into consideration the university's goals, the team spelled out the following: linguistic profile of our target student, our own mission statement, goals of each "track", an outline of different courses, their objectives, order, the number of credits required, and the methods of evaluation. The proposal went through many versions, discussions and meetings until it was approved at the university review, where the CLE director presented the reform plans to the university executives.

3.6 Objectives of the New Curriculum

Objectives, in the words of van Lier (1996, p.3), are "specific outcomes or products of courses which are outlined in a syllabus" that guide teachers. At the same time, "they also help learners understand where the course is going and why" (van Lier, 1996, p.3). In order to express objectives, the curriculum reform team created rubrics, or scope and sequence charts, with proficiency scores, performance objectives such as language skill attainments in each level identified both through literature and through program knowledge, all of which did not exist under the previous curricula. Graves (1996, p.20) also comments, "The teacher's challenge is to figure out which ones are appropriate for her course and how she will integrate them. They will be described and then outlined in a syllabus grid, which will be added to with each successive component." We do this at University A to plan out the content of each course. As the courses have skills-based features, objectives for each level and skill were identified. In order to examine what is achieved now and what needs to be continued or added, each skill team – speaking, reading, listening, writing, grammar, and testing teams – identified both old and new goals, in the form of CAN-DO statements. We referred to various indicators available, such as TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, CEFR, and several more. We also paid attention to what skills are newly presented or reviewed. Hull (1996) stresses the importance of implementing achievement criteria "in a way that allows for creativity and initiative while providing for quality control" (p.192). This allowance of creativity was also one of our themes for the development, which was presented at a conference in 2010. Nunan's (1989) well-established idea seems to echo in that the planned curriculum should be used more as a general guide rather than a strict manual. Objectives of the English program, which actually did not change from the last curriculum, are spelled out in the English Teacher's Handbook.

> *"Taking into consideration the mission and objectives of the university, the University A English program aims to cultivate in each student the English language knowledge and skills that they will need in order to communicate clearly and confidently with their fellow students, participate in lecture courses in English during their programs of study and use English in their working lives following graduation. As part of their English language development, students will also receive support with test-taking*

skills and will work to achieve higher scores on standardized tests such as the TOEFL and the TOEIC" (English Teachers Handbook Spring 2011, p.2).

Since the English curriculum was planned around these objectives, one can say that it is the Objectives Model (McKernan, 2008). Considering the curriculum ideologies identified by McKernan (2008), I believe University A at the surface level at least follows a technical-behavioral ideology in which both students' and teachers' performances are accounted for, and the educational institution is considered to be a preparation ground for the outside world. In other words, the university degree is, for students, a way to employment. However, I also notice that teachers seek a personal-caring ideology, in which they are concerned with the development of their learners as a person, by promoting autonomous learning and nurturing confidence and leadership throughout the curriculum. The reviewer personally associates strongly with this ideology, and believes that teachers should be a carer and advisor even if that is not the main focus of their job description.

3.7 Use of Textbooks

There are three strategies to find the materials that meet the students' needs, called adopting, developing, and adapting. In adopting materials, 4 steps are suggested by Brown (1995): (1) deciding what kinds of materials are necessary, (2) locating the materials for consideration, (3) selecting the materials, and (4) reviewing the materials as the language program progresses. The use of new materials, as Nunan (1988, p.19) observes, "will almost certainly have an effect on methodology and the sorts of learning activities which take place in the classroom." Under the 2006 curriculum, only the lowest level used textbooks. Van Lier (1996) affirms many teachers "have a rather ambivalent attitude to language textbooks" (p.208). Some teachers cannot do without them, often because they are required to use them. However, textbooks can prevent teachers from being innovative and creative. At the same time, having textbooks helps create the balanced classroom as they "can provide the points of stability" (van Lier, 1996, p.208) for students. Textbooks also support teachers as an objective pointer that guides and shows them the way. Upon the curriculum development, the project leader was the one who suggested the use of commercially available series of textbooks. It would have mainly two benefits. One is that students' transition from one level to another would be smooth if we have a series that matched with our objectives and levels of the students. The other is that the teachers' class preparation time would be shortened once we obtain a textbook with teacher's manual. The members of the development team agreed, and the investigation to find the most suitable textbook series took place.

Selection of the textbook series took a long and systematic approach. ECC reviewed literature on textbook selection, collected textbook samples, invited several publishers to give presentations, and shortlisted several series that the English program would use in most of the core courses. Based on recent literature on textbook selection, ECC created its own textbook selection criteria. We considered appropriateness in light of the program, design and organization, usability, core skills, language foci, class activities and practical considerations such as price and availability of hundreds of copies. At one of the FD workshops, all the participating teachers reviewed books in groups using the selection criteria, discussing the pros and cons of each. We are all aware that "one size never does fit all," (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p.169) but in the end made the ultimate decision. Once a series of textbooks was chosen, the development of courses seemed to materialize.

3.8 Management and Leadership

Finally, I wish to discuss the roles of leaders who steered the whole project. Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein (1971, pp.210-211), in White (1998, p.142) suggest that subordinates have a right to expect management to do certain things:

1. "To take the steps necessary to provide them with a clear picture of their new role requirements;
2. To adjust organizational arrangements to make them compatible with the innovation;
3. To provide subordinates with necessary retraining experiences, which will be required if the capabilities for coping with the difficulties of implementing the innovation are to develop;
4. To provide the resources necessary to carry out the innovation;

5. To provide the appropriate supports and rewards to maintain subordinates' willingness to make implementational efforts."

I think the above were more or less covered. However, White (1998, p.142) also remarks, "an educational manager should

1. Take account of difficulties which teachers will probably be exposed to when they attempt to implement the innovation.

2. Provide for feedback mechanisms to identify and cope with barriers and problems arising during the period of attempted implementation."

The reviewer does not think these were considered, and would like to suggest taking them into account. Wedell (2009) discusses the roles of a leader in educational change. He mainly discusses state-level changes, but I think his observations also apply to local contexts. I agree with Wedell's points and feel the director of ECC fits perfectly well with the description, such as self-confidence, calmness, supportiveness and more. For the continuing efforts to evaluate and further develop the language curriculum presented above, a leader needs to bear in mind the role as a coordinator. White (1998) again reminds us, that a coordinators' role is not to impose their own ideas on the English curriculum we introduced, but "to elicit, clarify, encourage, summarize and to keep the group on target (p.146)." This is a task that can only be done with the assistance of other able members who may assume different roles, such as needs analyst, researcher, and contents developer.

4. CHALLENGES OF THE NEW CURRICULUM

4.1 Evaluation of the New Curriculum

Nunan (1988, p.116) tells us, "No curriculum model would be complete without an evaluation component." The act of self-evaluation is vital to the institution. It will help teachers improve their teaching. Simons (1998) holds that self-evaluation not only serves for its internal development, but also enables the school to "demonstrate and communicate the school's achievements to the broader community (p.366)." For universities, the public image of an institution is important, especially for admissions purpose. It would be ideal to advertise the effects of the new curriculum to the outside world. In the spring of 2011, the new curriculum was implemented, and now it is time to proceed to its evaluation. There are many factors to consider if we are to assess the success of the new curriculum. Even if we look at one course, several challenges can be addressed. At the micro level, for instance, problems with *Interactions Access* textbook (Thrush, Baldwin and Blass, 2008) for Pre-Intermediate English courses are:

- There is no explicit grammar focus. This has caused the lack of consistency in terms of grammar instruction.
- The teacher's manual is not helpful and contains many errors. Teachers need to create a lot of lesson plans, power point slides, writing components, speaking assessments, and supplementary grammar worksheets.
- The vocabulary targeted in the reading textbook is too easy for the learners.

At macro level, I could not say whether I was successful in involving all the teachers for course preparation. Dubin and Olshtain (1986, p.173) mention, "No matter the number of people involved, a joint or team effort brings out idealized personality types and special talents." I could not reach this stage before the implementation, but after one semester I understand it more and have successfully formed teams of reviewers and developers who are able and cooperative.

White (1998, p.115) also contends, "Finally, there is the question of evaluation. Since innovations are normally introduced so as to 'be more efficacious in accomplishing the goals of the system' (Miles 1964, p.13), there is some obligation on those involved to demonstrate that improvement has in fact occurred." However, tracking students' outcomes is quite difficult (Simons, 1998). I think that University A's CR was summative, but I am unsure as to whether it was based on an evaluation, and if so, what kind. This was experienced in the recent CLE review in early August, in which the CLE director requested an answer: whether students performed better or not. I consider the current situation as a formative assessment stage for the new curriculum. An important point to bear in mind, to borrow words from White (1998, p.115), is that "products – that is, students' learning – are supposedly to be assessed over a long span of time." If, for instance, we are assessing an effect of the country-wide compulsory education, looking

over a decade would be the norm. The short-term effects could be observed in visible measurements such as proficiency tests scores, or the success rate of job hunting for this university with students wishing to work at international venues. Still, effects of curriculum innovation may be viewed over a much longer term, perhaps even a lifetime.

4.2 Toward Teacher Development

One of the issues produced by the new registration system, which was already raised before implementation, was this: Because registration will be automatically made in the compulsory language subjects under the new curriculum, there could be complaints against faculty members. In the past, students were able to select for which teachers' classes they wanted to register. Since this is not possible anymore, some students might complain about the lack of choice. The best way to avoid this is to strengthen faculty development programs, so that all classes are taught at the same standard. I would like to suggest a few strategies to promote teacher development at CLE. Firstly, Carless (2004, p.640) advises us, "To begin to analyse an innovation's success, it is necessary to learn how teachers are carrying it out in classrooms at schools where the innovative curriculum is supposedly being implemented." As I referred to Nunan above at 3.3, teachers should critically analyse and reflect on their performances to really implement and digest the new curriculum. At the moment, the CLE does not have a structured class observation scheme. Although peer observation is encouraged, not many teachers do it, so this could be one area to pursue. Van Lier (1996) writes that teachers are given time to plan but not to reflect. Conducting peer review and sitting down with colleagues to reflect on lessons would be one step forward. Secondly, as Troudi and Alwan (2010) indicate, curriculum reform planners need to take into account the affective issues among teachers. I consider it is beneficial if we consider the curriculum reform as an on-going development process, and further promote action research among teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

This review of the on-going curriculum reform has led to the following recommendations. It is imperative to conduct on-going program evaluation over a long period of time, together with the development of teaching staff. The faculty can investigate the most suitable teaching materials and methodologies through peer review and action research, combined with a review of literature in similar contexts. The following questions can be researched in the future: (1) How do English language teachers feel about 'curriculum change'? (2) Did the teachers' practices change because of the new curriculum? (3) How do teachers' involvements in forming curriculum influence them as educators? These questions may be answered through an exploratory study among the English program teachers. Other considerations may include establishing a systematized evaluation cycle, and investigation of the effectiveness of the curriculum change on students' achievement.

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