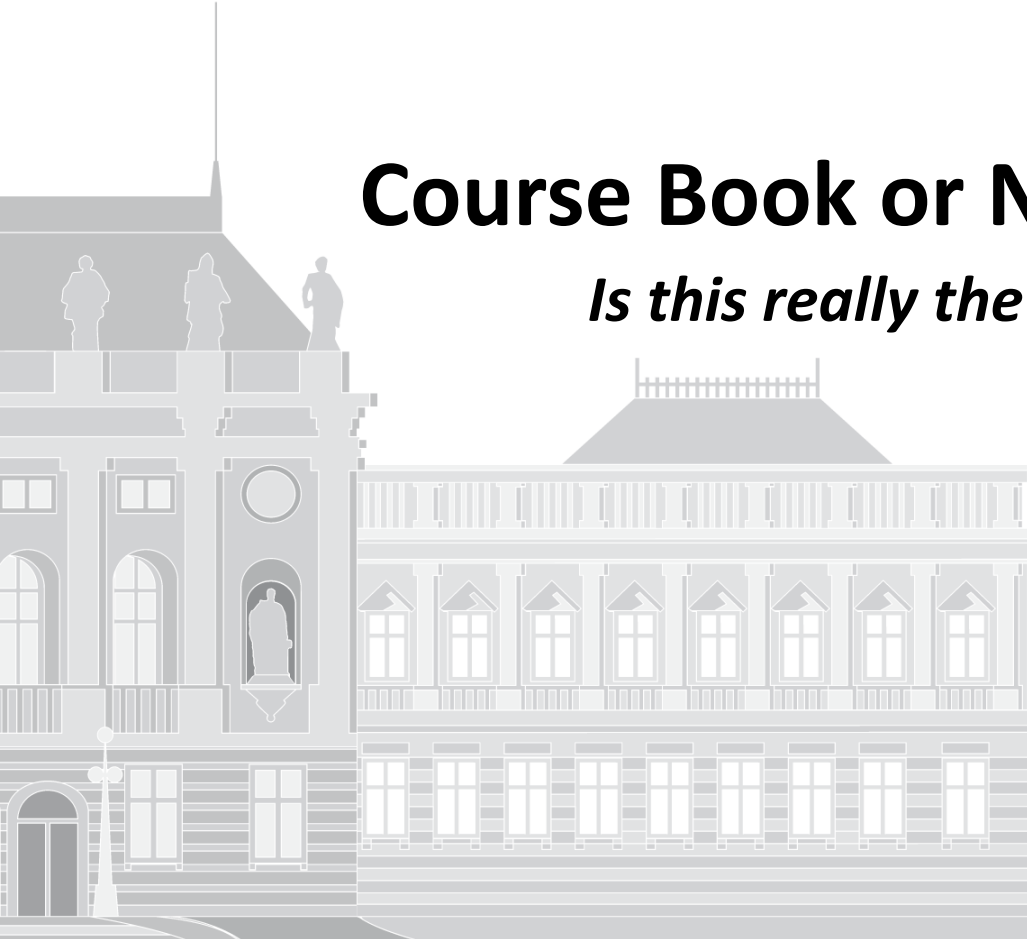


Course Book or No Course Book?

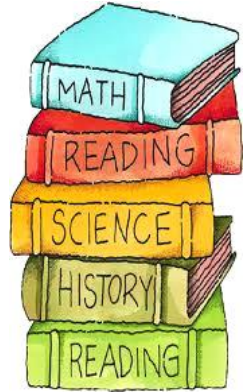
Is this really the question?

Nancy Campbell &
Jennifer Schumm



Course books & You ...

- Do you use a course book now?
- Have you used one in the past?
- Do you have a favourite course book? Why?
- Are they widely used in your institution?



What are the pros & cons of working with course books?

(Harmer, 2015, pp. 71-72)

+ Pros

Attractive layout

Multimedia

Carefully researched

Coherent syllabus

Appropriate sequencing (e.g., grammar)

Focus on integrated skills

Range of materials & activities

Teacher's book (inexperienced Teachers)

Saves time for teachers & saves money

Useful reference for students - autonomy

- Cons

Impose certain learning styles

Often rely on ppp - default

Stifle teacher creativity

Bland topics – not about Ss' current interests

Unrelenting, outdated format

Boring + unmotivating

Go out-of-date quickly (topics)

Cultural inappropriateness

Course Book or No Course Book?

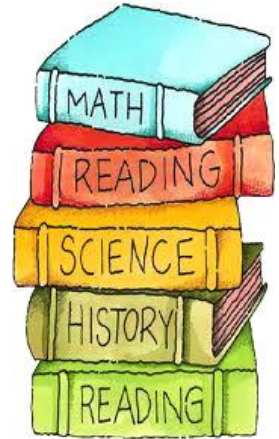
“Love them or hate them, commercially produced coursebooks are with us and will remain with us for the foreseeable future. As our profession continues to grow and evolve, so too must these coursebooks and our attitudes to them.” (Levrai, 2013, p.4)

Course Book or No Course Book?

Is this really the question? No.

What is a course book?

What is it not?



What is a course book?



A Resource:

Valuable tool (Scrivener, 1998; Ur, 2016)

“[U]ntil you feel secure, use your course books exactly as intended by the author. When you are ready, then experiment a bit; ..., by personalizing a few exercises, choosing not to do some of them, etc. Gradually assume control over the book and use it increasingly as a resource rather than the centrepiece of the course” (Scrivener, 1998, p. 43).

What is a course book?

A Resource:

Scaffold for what happens in
classroom (Levrai, 2013, p. 5)



“Course books are written:

- to give less experienced teachers support and guidance and the control of a well-organised syllabus
- to give more experienced teachers material to work from” (Scrivener, 1998, p. 43).

What is it not?

- Substitute for methodology
- Straightjacket for teachers



“[I]t will be put into operation in different ways by different teachers in different contexts.” (Levrai, 2013, 6)

Analysing units

- To assess suitability for a specific group of learners
- To be selective and critical
- To consider where supplementary materials are needed

Five strands of communicative competence - relevant to language teaching (Richards 2006)

Accuracy (correct grammar/pronunciation – also correct and accurate vocabulary use))

Fluency (communication flow)

Complexity (language development)

Appropriacy (context-related use)

Communicative capacity (range of topics, depth etc.)

Teaching materials analysis

More Unit Four: Dangerous Animals

Accuracy

2, 6, 9, 11, Essential English 1/2/3

Fluency (speaking/writing)

1,3, 4,7,10, DVD 2, Essential English 4

Complexity

2,6,7,11 Essential English 1/2/3

Appropriacy

DVD– 3 everyday English

Communicative capacity

all exercises/tasks



Positive features of unit

Focus on fluency, complexity, communicative capacity

Integrated skills: speaking, reading (but only very short texts, no extensive reading), listening, writing



Negative features of unit

Limited focus on appropriacy

Focus on accuracy? – insufficient explanation; not explicitly systematic (but see workbook).



Conclusion

1. Course books are only a starting point – teachers need to see what is missing & produce local solutions. (Levrai, 2013)
2. Course books, including supplementary materials, should be chosen depending on which aspect(s) of communicative competence the teacher wishes to promote.
3. Following a course book does NOT substitute for careful consideration of methodology.

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