

ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

Report to the Minister of Education

Textbooks and Teaching Materials

June 1993

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1. Introduction

The Advisory Board on English Education was asked to study the issues of the availability, accessibility and suitability of the textbooks and teaching materials provided and produced for the English language public school system in conformity with the objectives and programs of the Régime pédagogique. When the Advisory Board undertook this exercise, the most striking feature of the textbook "problem", as expressed in anecdotal form by all those consulted, was the unevenness of accessibility and a wide spread confusion about what was or was not available. These two factors have contributed to a sense of insecurity in the implementing of programs and a questioning of the suitability of the textbooks and teaching materials which do come on the market.

Wide consultation with Ministry officials, educators in the field, including a questionnaire sent out to Quebec's 300 English schools for an evaluation of the availability and suitability of the teaching texts at their disposal, confirmed the initial impression. It also brought to light areas of particular concern and helped focus the Board's attention on what could be done to put access to good English language teaching texts on a more simplified and secure footing.

The study was carried out keeping in mind the four principles of education: teaching, learning, doing, evaluating. It quickly became evident that there are many issues relating to the subject of textbooks and teaching materials in the English school sector.

The source of English language textbooks was therefore explored. The process for producing teaching materials for the English school sector was examined. And finally, the suitability question was addressed through the relationship of textbooks and teaching materials to the meeting of the pedagogical objectives of the curriculum.

2. The need for textbooks

It is the view of the educators whom we consulted that not all programs have uniform needs in the way of teaching materials. In other words, from a strictly pedagogical point of view, some courses need textbooks, some do not; some require different materials or a variety rather than a single text.

The need for an "official" textbook for the successful completion of the teaching-learning-knowing-evaluation process can also be a function of a teacher's methods and preferences. Many educators believe that some programs and subjects are best taught and learned using a multiplicity of material and that the "official" textbook adds little to the teaching-learning process. English language arts is one such area. Many subjects at the primary level fall into this category. In social studies, moral and religious education, a many-sourced approach is considered preferable. As the teaching guides to courses and programmes are detailed and specific, the flexibility needed to adjust the teaching-learning process to different kinds of classroom clienteles can be better achieved through a wide choice of teaching materials.

There is no question however that for core programs at the secondary level, other than language arts, a textbook in the hands of each student is not only the law, it makes good pedagogical sense. Core subjects, particularly mathematics, science and social sciences at the secondary level are among the areas for which textbooks are essential. A rule of thumb is that a textbook be required as part of any course sequence which ends with a provincial evaluation. As all students take the same examination, it is clear that they should all be working with a textbook that meets the program requirements. It goes beyond the issue of fairness. If an examination is based on the course as detailed in a particular textbook, the students for whom the book or a close substitute is not available are obviously at a disadvantage, so are their teachers.

Many teachers have to teach in areas which are not their specialty either because they teach in small schools and must teach several subjects or must teach subjects for which they were not originally trained. Having a textbook to guide them through the new material is an important factor in what is being taught, as well as what is being learned. While the MEQ recognizes that in service training for teachers prior to the introduction of new course material is essential; this does not obviate the need for the textbook.

Mention should be made here of the role textbooks play in a child's learning process away from school at both the primary and secondary level. For parents to be able to help their children, they need to know what the child is supposed to be learning. A textbook fills this need. The value of a textbook in this context cannot be underestimated.

3. Textbooks, new curriculum and provincial examinations

Programs already in place in the French sector often move into the English sector under the pressure of course requirements for the purpose of provincial examinations but without the corresponding textbooks covering the objectives and contents of the program. The introduction and implementation of new programs requires planning which must include the availability of textbooks and teaching materials. While no officially approved book is available, school boards are in a dilemma about purchasing course materials. They may choose to delay rather than invest in other materials in the interim, leaving teachers and their students at a disadvantage.

We therefore recommend that a new curriculum for which a textbook is needed be implemented only if at least one approved textbook covering the course is available and that a provincial examination be given only after an approved text book has been available for a year. Local examinations would be a substitute in the interim.

4. Sources of English textbooks

The next step will be to find a solution to the absence of suitable English textbooks at certain levels in some of the core programs. The most glaring gaps are to be found in the areas of mathematics and science. For example, teachers have had to produce materials to compensate for the lack of a textbook for Math 436. But history, geography and economics are also cited as inadequately covered. If the objective is to have at least one book available for core subject areas, then modifying and improving existing procurement mechanisms is essential.

Programs guide the selection of a text. Once programs are established, their objectives are sent in detail form to publishers who undertake the gathering, compiling, organization and editing of the information required for an accompanying textbook. For the French sector this is a straightforward process and one that often produces several textbooks covering the same material. The captive market is large enough to warrant competition among publishers to bring out the most popular book. The same operation in the case of textbooks for the same programs in English is a different matter. The English market being one tenth that of the French, it is rarely worth a publisher's while to repeat the operation in English.

In some cases, the Ministry has subsidized translations of the French textbooks. By the time these translations are on the market, there is no guarantee that school boards will buy them in sufficient numbers to cover the cost. The outlay for school boards is considerable, an update of the original material may be in the offing and school boards hesitate to buy at that stage. School boards with the resources to undertake the preparation of textbook level course material have, at times, developed their own. In those instances, there are no mechanisms to ensure that the textbooks are readily available and accessible to the whole English network.

English textbooks are also available on the North American market. If these are written for other jurisdictions, they may not cover the course objectives adequately. Textbooks which adequately cover the course material are eligible for use once approved by the Ministry. Finding them and getting them approved is time consuming. The process leaves too much to chance.

A systematic process for acquiring English textbooks covering the Régime pédagogique courses being given in English must be found. A book which is below the standards of what is being used in the French sector or which becomes available so long after the program has been initiated that the French sector is already using a corrected, updated version, is simply not good enough. Furthermore, translations often are not the most appropriate approach.

We recommend that the Minister take the necessary steps to ensure accessibility to at least one approved textbook within a reasonable delay and comparable time frame to the French sector after a new program is authorized and that school boards be reminded of their obligation to provide them.

Experienced consultants/teachers can identify appropriate material in a relatively short time. If no existing book is found to be appropriate and if no publisher is found to produce a new book for a particular program, a collaborative process should come into play bringing together expertise from across the English school network. A committee composed of educators from the Committee of Anglophone Curriculum Responsables, subject associations and consultants/teachers in conjunction with a publisher should be invited to oversee the production of a suitable book. In this case, publishers would need a subsidy to make the project worthwhile for them to undertake. Publishers would submit bids, and for the subject matter in question, only one project/publisher would be chosen in order to maximize the available market and minimize the size of the subsidy.

As the choice of material emanating from such an operation would be heavily influenced by educators from the sector to which the book is destined, those educators and the network to which they belong would be more accountable for the suitability of the product than they are under the present arrangements or lack of them. With accountability comes a feeling of ownership that can have nothing but a positive effect on teaching and texts alike. The relative purchase costs of English textbooks must be the same as the French textbooks if subsidies are given for publication.

We recommend that the MEQ subsidize the production of English textbooks and facilitate the collaboration between publishers, teachers and consultants.

5. Teaching materials

Teaching materials of a more general kind are also of some concern. As teaching approaches and methods have a direct bearing on learning, English schooling would benefit greatly from more participation in the formulation of material by its educators. One very obvious sector of linguistic deprivation is the paucity of materials for vocational training. They are predominantly English world wide. And yet, they are not available here.

As mentioned above, there is concern that a single text is limiting in certain subjects, especially interpretative subjects like social studies. Complaints are heard about the lack of world perspective in geography and history. Enriching material to supplement the basic objectives of a course can be produced by school boards but only the big boards have the resources to do this on any significant scale.

More flexibility is needed in the gathering and choice of teaching materials to off-set cultural disparities and give full rein to the professionalism of teachers. For the English sector this means a more hands on approach to how subjects are taught in its schools. The how must necessarily include the what. Ways must therefore be found to give English-speaking educators more say in what teaching materials are best suited to the teaching of the broad objectives of the Régime pédagogique.

Teachers should be recognized as the backbone of a healthy education system. Greater use can be made of their expertise and experience in the searching out and production of teaching materials. Subject associations have been able to produce materials to share among schools. Committees of teachers organized by disciplines and established to research what is available in Canada and North America can be a cost effective approach. The "cooperative" model would be an effective mechanism for meeting the needs of Quebec's English schools.

This approach requires support from the boards and the MEQ. Teachers must be given the necessary time to participate in these activities. The experience would be one leading to professional growth. The resulting materials would then serve as teaching aides in giving courses more breadth, depth and cultural relevance as well as giving teachers more ownership in meeting the academic needs of the community they serve.

We therefore recommend that these cooperatives be established for core subject areas as required and that teachers across the network be engaged to serve on them.

This recommendation is inspired by the vision that teachers should be able to participate fully in the educational process. Such participation would remove the need for straight translation of teaching materials and related written matter which is an issue to which thought should be given, as this is rarely the most effective way of resolving the exchange from one language to the other. Objectives are more readily comprehended and mastered if their description and content originate in the language of their teachers and learners. It is a matter of attaining the same pedagogical objectives, of learning about the same things in the cultural idiom to which one relates. No new staff would be required, only the budget to cover release time. It is a matter of using the human resources already in place to provide more effective education.

6. Evaluation tools

A case in point is the approach to evaluation. In the interests of uniform evaluation, provincial exams are prepared in French and then translated into English for the English language sector. It is often an awkward, sometimes a hard to understand transposition. Even with identical text and teaching materials, the language differential in the wording of these evaluations puts English-speaking students at a disadvantage if the English examination is a literal translation of the French.

We therefore recommend that the course objectives to be evaluated in any set of exams be jointly established but that the exams themselves be conceived and prepared in English for the English sector and in French for the French sector, with a control group made up of both language components checking the compatibility of the two versions.

The control group will ensure that both English and French exams are testing the same objectives in order to avoid the perception that one set is somehow easier than the other. The variance between exams drawn up in English and in French should be no greater than the difference which already exists between the exams given in June and those offered in August evaluating the exact same course work.

7. Information exchange

One of the most widespread complaints heard from teachers in the English sector is the difficulty inherent in finding out what teaching materials are available in their disciplines. Increasingly, the availability of consultants to help teachers is limited to the larger boards and to the core subjects. Many schools report little or no access to consultants. Schools and teachers in some rural areas are especially isolated. The need for a method for sharing information and materials is obvious. Teachers should have access to information when they need it rather than simply receiving information at times when it is not relevant to them.

Electronic networking offers a solution which can be both affordable and relatively easy to use and could maximize existing consultant services. By providing a link and information for the whole system, such a network would be a lifeline for our schools. To begin, with it would provide an inventory of available textbooks and teaching materials of all kinds, including computer and audio-visual, with complete information as to sources and costs. The inventory would be readily updated and could grow with the addition of materials which teachers themselves have developed or found to be useful thus providing a dynamic process for teacher input and for sharing across the entire network of English schools.

We therefore recommend that an electronically accessible database be established which includes all authorized textbooks and teaching materials, including computer software and other electronic resources available, their sources and costs, and which incorporates a dynamic, interactive process for the addition of local teacher input to promote creativity and sharing.

As a partnership endeavor, with responsibility shared by faculties of education, school boards and the MEQ, the total community comprising the English sector will participate and benefit. It should be noted that McGill University's Faculty of Education has the expertise to provide the leadership.

8. Education and modern technology

Teachers need new tools to succeed in providing students in their classrooms with sources of information and the knowledge of how to access that information. They also need the training and support required to develop the necessary skills to make this possible.

Almost all of Quebec's English schools have some computer hardware, leading us to the conclusion that there is at least one person in each school who has some expertise in its use, even though lack of training for teachers is reported as a significant limitation. (Survey, Annex 2) The existing although limited availability of equipment and expertise is a small beginning which should be built upon. The possibility to link classrooms and therefore to share programs is feasible and cost effective. Even schools at considerable distances can be linked, making it possible to share information, expertise and resources among any number of sites.

A "National Network for Learning" is presently being organized under the leadership of a Toronto-area school board in collaboration with other school boards, universities, industry and governments. This network, linking teachers and learners across Canada, is intended to focus at first on improving performance in mathematics and science using the latest information technology to provide global access for teachers and learners. This is one of several such networks being proposed. By creating learning environments in which teachers and learners develop collaborative and communication skills and the ability to use technology for the world of tomorrow, participating schools will be able to support learning for students of all ages. Such a network is within reach of Quebec schools and it is important that our schools be part of such an endeavor.

Furthermore, the use of technology such as satellite communications or video conferencing in partnership with business must be explored in order to make progress in the area of distance education, professional development and to eliminate the extreme isolation of some English schools. Access to resources and support by linking schools and universities, for example, is realizable.

Radio Québec's English branch which is actively serving English schools has tremendous potential as an educational tool. It requires additional support to carry out its mission not only to seek and disseminate material but to put the latest technology at the disposal of our schools. The need to produce material specifically geared to English schools should be supported, as is done for French schools.

A few schools are making optimum use of their electronic capability to support teaching. One elementary school has reported a greatly enhanced science program across the grades and the elimination of science textbooks as the result of the use of computer and laserdisk technology. A number of schools are engaged in programs which link students across North America in science, mathematics and geography studies. In order to make better use of the limited resources available to our schools, a careful examination of the electronic teaching and learning resources is essential. Experts report that distance is only one of the obstacles which can be overcome through appropriate use of technology. Judicious use of computer technology supports individual learning and student confidence and motivation by offering flexible, interactive learning sequences, guided practice and coaching and by permitting instant feedback and self-assessment.

We therefore recommend that an action plan be developed to provide our schools and our students access to the full range of technological learning opportunities, to increase school learning resources and materials, to improve professional development opportunities and to provide mutual and professional support.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, Madam Minister, it is important to say that the Advisory Board's discussions have taken place within the context of English education as an integral part of the Quebec system of education. Our recommendations are made with a view to making English schools more self-sufficient and English system more cohesively supportive. This should make it more not less cost effective (always an issue in times of shrinking resources). It should also make it more of an asset to Quebec school education in general. It was never our intention to suggest any form of separate structural development for the English school system, only that the existing structures be made flexible enough to allow English educators some responsibility for the tasks that they can best perform in the interests of their students and of the excellence of pedagogical performance in general.

Several of the recommendations, although targeted to the terms of our English education mandate, are in no way exclusive. From our collective experience we have come to believe that technology will have to play a greater and greater role in the teaching, learning, knowing, evaluation sequences of traditional education. A pilot program in the English sector is of value to all Quebec schools. The technological sharing of information and knowledge as well as the use of technological tools in the teaching, learning and understanding of subject matter is becoming an increasingly important factor in the concept and delivery of schooling that can give students today the kind of skills they will need tomorrow. This is not an exclusively "English" issue. It is one which must be explored together in the interests of Quebec education at large.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretta Chambers, Chair

THE ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

Operation and Procedures February - June 1993

The Advisory Board on English Education, appointed by the Minister of Education in January 1993, held its first meeting on February 25, 1993.

At the request of the Minister, the subject of Textbooks and Teaching Materials: availability and suitability in the English schools was the focus of the Board's study and deliberations from February to June 1993.

The Advisory Board, composed of fifteen members representative of all aspects of English education in Quebec including teachers, parents, school and board administrators and commissioners, is chaired by Gretta Chambers. The members are Francesca Arpin, Hugh Auger, Maria Baldessare, Micheline Bouchard, Sylvia Chesterman, Ann Cumyn, Carl Dobbin, Donald Houston, Diane McLean, Michael Palumbo, Joseph Rabinovitch, Peter Riordon, Wendy Sturton, Leo Venditti, William Young and Janyne Hodder, ex officio.

The Board met with principals, teachers, consultants, administrators and members of the McGill Faculty of Education during the course of its first mandate. In order to facilitate consultation and to hear a variety of concerns and opinions, a number of meetings were held in schools and at McGill University's Faculty of Education.

A survey of all English schools in Quebec yielded further information on the availability and suitability of textbooks and teaching materials across the network, as well as the extent of computer access in the schools.

The Advisory Board gratefully acknowledges the assistance given by the following persons: Phyllis Koper Naggiar, Director, DPLA, MEQ; Michel DeCelles, Directeur, DGRDFD, MEQ; Bob Hardon, Principal, and teachers of Francesca Cabrini School; Rocco Barbieri, Consultant, CECM; John Weideman, Principal, District of Bedford; Anthony Lacroce, Principal, Rosemount High School; M. Bambek, Principal, and members of staff of St. Pius X High School; Graham Jackson, Gary Thompson, Dominic Martini, Lac Hanifi, William Corrigan of CACR; A. E. Wall, Dean, and Professors of the McGill Faculty of Education; Robert Moore and Kevin O'Donnell, Radio Québec.

**COMMISSION DE L'ÉDUCATION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE
ADVISORY BOARD ON ENGLISH EDUCATION**

**SURVEY of SCHOOLS
REPORT
JUNE 1993**

Total schools reporting _____ 163 _____

Elementary _____ 121 _____ Program: English _____ 102 _____ French Immersion _____ 49 _____ Dual program _____ 31 _____

Both (elem & sec) _____ 13 _____

Secondary _____ 56 _____ Program: English _____ 55 _____ French Immersion _____ 9 _____ Dual program _____ 8 _____

Small schools (under 200) _____ 61 _____

Elementary _____ 47 _____ Program: English _____ 45 _____ French Immersion _____ 8 _____

Secondary _____ 22 _____ Program: English _____ 21 _____ French Immersion _____ 0 _____

Both (elem & sec) _____ 8 _____

AVAILABILITY

Overall availability of textbooks and teaching materials:

| Good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Inadequate |
|----------------------|------|------|------|-----|------------|
| <u>Elementary</u> | | | | | |
| English | 26 % | 45 % | 21 % | 9 % | |
| Immersion | 43 % | 33 % | 18 % | 6 % | |
| <u>High school</u> | 25 % | 47 % | 24 % | 4 % | |
| <u>Small schools</u> | 25 % | 44 % | 26 % | 5 % | |

Missing textbooks & teaching materials, by subject(s) and grade level(s).

| | Grade 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| * | 10% | 10% | 15% | 19% | 19% | 20% | | | | | |
| English | | | 12% | 12% | 14% | 16% | 14% | 14% | 18% | 16% | 16% |
| French | 12% | 10% | 13% | 13% | 12% | 13% | | | | | |
| | 14% | 12% | 18% | 14% | 16% | 20% | | | 14% | 16% | 20% |
| Math | | | | 11% | 10% | 13% | | | | | |
| | | | 10% | 18% | 16% | 18% | | | 11% | 20% | 36% |
| Science | 14% | 14% | 19% | 24% | 23% | 27% | | | | | |
| | 18% | 18% | 27% | 33% | 24% | 31% | | | | | 23% |
| History | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Geogr. | | | | | | | 11% | | | | |
| Social | 18% | 25% | 31% | 35% | 36% | 35% | | | | | |
| Studies | 12% | 18% | 20% | 29% | 27% | 31% | | | | | |
| MRE | | | | 14% | 13% | 13% | | | | | |
| | | | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 16% | 16% |

SUITABILITY

Overall suitability of textbooks and teaching materials now available:

Good 1 2 3 4 Inappropriate

Elementary:

English 24 % 46 % 28 % 4 %

Immersion 38 % 35 % 23 % 4 %

High school: 14 % 46 % 37 % 2 %

Small schools 20 % 43 % 36 % 2 %

Textbooks & teaching materials considered unsuitable, by subject(s); grade level(s):

| | Grade 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---------|---------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| English | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * | | | 11% | 13% | 14% | 14% | | | | | |
| French | | | 12% | 16% | 18% | 18% | 11% | | 13% | | 13% |
| Math | | | | 10% | 12% | 10% | 11% | 14% | 18% | 34% | 20% |
| Science | | | | 12% | 13% | 13% | | | | | |
| | | | 10% | 18% | 12% | 14% | 11% | | | 14% | |
| History | | | | | | | | 11% | | 18% | |
| Geogr. | | | | | | | | | 25% | | |
| Econom. | | | | | | | | | | | 13% |
| Social | | | 14% | 23% | 20% | 23% | | | | | |
| Studies | | | 12% | 14% | 12% | 14% | | | | | |

Major characteristics/reasons for unsuitability:

Elementary: Quality of translation 10% Age suitability 21%** General quality 28% - 16% Imm

Other Outdated books - 20%; Don't match course objectives - 15%

High school: Quality of translation 26% Age suitability 34%** General quality 50%

CHOICE (all schools)

Choice of textbooks and teaching materials by:

School staff 71% Consultants 67% Board Administrators 31%

Consultants available to assist teachers with the introduction/use of new books and materials:

Yes 79%** No 19%

Subject consultants: Math 63% Language arts 73% French 70%

Science 52% Computers 46% Other 26%

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Access to computers and other technology for classroom teaching:

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Elementary: | <u>97%</u> |
| High school: | <u>91%</u> |
| Small | <u>93%</u> |
| All | <u>93%</u> |

Used by all grades:

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Elementary: | <u>22%</u> |
| High school: | <u>30%</u> |
| Small | <u>16%</u> |
| All | <u>28%</u> |

Reasons for limited use:

Elementary: Insufficient equipment 40% teachers not trained 40%(Engl); 50%(Imm)
programs lacking for certain levels 26%(Engl); 29%(Imm)

High school: Insufficient equipment 41% teachers not trained 46%
programs lacking for certain levels 18% other _____

Small: Insufficient equipment 39% teachers not trained 30%
programs lacking for certain levels 18% other _____

All: Insufficient equipment 39% teachers not trained ** 45%
programs lacking for certain levels 25% other _____

COMMENTS

The comments most frequently expressed were:

1. Availability of textbooks and teaching materials -
 - lack of adequate budgets were most frequently cited
 - high cost of textbooks are a major problem
 - the complex approval process limits choice
 - translation delays are problematic
 - choice of books and materials too limited to meet the individual needs and levels of students

 2. Suitability of textbooks and teaching materials -
 - outdated books
 - books that don't correspond to the objectives of the program
 - French books and materials too difficult for students in Immersion
 - books in poor condition
 - cultural bias and lack of ethnic orientation

 3. Availability of consultants -
 - consultants have limited time, rarely available to assist teachers

 4. Use of computer technology -
 - teacher reluctance, lack of confidence cited as a major problem
 - teaching timetable too full to allow for adequate use of computers in the curriculum
 - limited access because there are not enough computers
 - a need for appropriate software, especially for Immersion
- * Top line - English program; lower line - Immersion program
- ** See comments