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BOOK REVIEW: LANGUAGE CURRICULUM DESIGN

Title	: Language Curriculum Design
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Abstract
This book review analyzes "Language Curriculum Design" by I.S.P Nation and John Macalister, published in 2010 by Routledge. The review examines each chapter of the book in detail, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each section. The book provides a comprehensive and practical guide to language curriculum design, covering all aspects of the process from beginning to end. The authors present a variety of approaches to curriculum design, including negotiated syllabuses, adapting existing course books, and introducing change, and provide numerous examples, case studies, and sample materials to illustrate their points. The review notes that while the book is primarily focused on classroom-based language programs and may be less useful for other contexts, it draws on a wide range of research and theory in the field of language teaching and learning, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in the subject. The review concludes that "Language Curriculum Design" is a useful and informative guide to curriculum design for language teachers and educators.

Keywords: curriculum, design, language, review

The book is organized into 14 chapters, each of which focuses on a different aspect of curriculum design. The first chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" provides an introduction to the topic of language curriculum design. It outlines the purpose of a language curriculum, which is to provide a framework for language learning that enables learners to achieve specific goals. The authors also provide an overview of the different stages involved in the design process, such as needs analysis, goal setting, content and sequencing, and assessment.

One of the strengths of this chapter is that it provides a clear and concise overview of the topic, which is useful for readers who may be new to language curriculum design. However, it could have been more engaging if the authors had

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included more examples to illustrate the key concepts and principles they introduced.

The second chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on environmental analysis, which involves examining the social, cultural, and institutional factors that influence language learning. The authors argue that it is important to take these factors into account when designing a language curriculum, as they can have a significant impact on the success of the program.

This chapter's key advantage is that it presents a complete summary of the various elements that can impact language learning. Additionally, the authors offer useful recommendations on how to conduct an environmental analysis, which includes gathering data through interviews and observation. However, as noted by Richards and Rodgers (2014) the chapter could have been more focused and structured, as it covers a lot of ground without always providing clear links between the different topics.

The third chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on need analysis, which involves identifying the specific language needs and goals of the learners. The authors argue that need analysis is a crucial stage in the design process, as it ensures that the curriculum is relevant and effective for the learners. It is in line with Brown and Rodgers (2002) who emphasize the need to conduct thorough research into learners' needs and goals to create an effective curriculum that meets their specific requirements.

This chapter has a strong point in that it offers an extensive and pragmatic manual for conducting a need analysis. The authors provide several methods and instruments that can be utilized to collect data on learners' requirements, including questionnaires and interviews.

This is in line with what was conveyed by Ur (1996) in his book A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory which provides various techniques and tools for collecting data about student needs, such as questionnaires and interviews, which are recommended by the author as a useful method for do a needs analysis. They also provide advice on how to analyze and interpret the data collected.

The fourth chapter of this book provides a list of 20 principles that can be used as a framework for developing curricula. However, the list may not be completely comprehensive, and some items on it may be biased because they are not all included. The chapter aims to illustrate that following certain principles can provide a strong basis for instruction and course design, but these guidelines must be supported by research and theory and must be flexible enough to be applied in various situations.

The 20 principles discussed in the chapter were previously explained to provide clarity on their use in curriculum design. However, these principles have a broader range of applications beyond curriculum design. They can serve as a foundation for teacher development, curriculum design, and evaluation. The principles were selected and ranked based on personal opinions regarding language teaching.

These principles have also been identified by other experts in the field of language curriculum design. McGrath (2002) highlights the importance of materials evaluation and design in language teaching. Nunan (1988) focuses on syllabus design as a crucial element in language curriculum design.

However, one potential limitation of this chapter is the lack of engagement with alternative perspectives on language curriculum design. While the authors provide practical examples and explanations of each principle, they do not consider alternative views or critiques of these principles.

The fifth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on setting goals, selecting content, and sequencing the curriculum. The authors argue that these are key aspects of curriculum design, as they determine what learners will learn and how they will learn it. This chapter's strength lies in its comprehensive and practical approach to goal setting, content selection, and sequencing. The authors offer various techniques and tools to determine appropriate goals and choose relevant content while also guiding how to sequence the content logically and effectively.

The sixth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on the format and presentation of the curriculum. The authors argue that how the curriculum is presented can have a significant impact on learners' engagement and motivation. They suggest that the curriculum should be presented in a way that is visually appealing, easy to navigate, and accessible to all learners.

This chapter's advantage is that it offers useful guidance on designing a visually appealing and easy-to-use curriculum. The authors suggest techniques like using clear headings, appropriate font sizes, and consistent formatting to create a curriculum that is simple to navigate. They also propose incorporating visuals, such as images and diagrams, to enhance learners' understanding and involvement. Moreover, the authors provide tips on ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities.

However, the chapter could have been more critical in its analysis of the impact of format and presentation on learning outcomes. While the authors make several recommendations based on common sense and best practices, they do not engage with any empirical evidence to support their claims. Furthermore, the chapter could have benefited from more concrete examples of effective curriculum presentation to illustrate the principles outlined.

The seventh chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on monitoring and assessment, which involves evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and measuring learners' progress. The authors argue that monitoring and assessment are crucial aspects of curriculum design, as they enable teachers to identify areas where learners need additional support and adjust the curriculum accordingly.

A positive aspect of the chapter is that it offers useful and practical advice on how to create and execute effective monitoring and assessment methods. The authors provide a variety of tools and techniques that can be employed, including tests, quizzes, and observation, to evaluate the progress of learners. Nonetheless, the chapter could benefit from a more critical approach, as it fails to consider alternative perspectives on monitoring and assessment.

The eighth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on the evaluation, which involves assessing the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. The authors argue that evaluation is a crucial stage in the design process, as it enables teachers to identify areas where the curriculum can be improved and make adjustments accordingly. This chapter has a valuable contribution in providing an understandable and comprehensive summary of the various types of evaluation

employed in designing a language curriculum, which includes formative, summative, and needs-based evaluation (Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

The ninth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on different approaches to curriculum design. The authors argue that various approaches can be taken, depending on the context and goals of the curriculum. The chapter's advantage is that it presents a detailed summary of various curriculum design approaches. The authors also provide practical illustrations and clarifications of each approach, which facilitates comprehension of their importance.

The tenth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on negotiated syllabuses, which involve learners and teachers collaborating to design the curriculum. The authors argue that negotiated syllabuses can be effective in promoting learner autonomy and motivation. This chapter's advantage is that it presents a comprehensive and hands-on guide to executing a negotiated syllabus. The authors offer illustrations of various difficulties that may arise during the implementation of a negotiated syllabus, stemming from both learner and teacher factors. They also provide recommendations on how to guarantee that the negotiation process is constructive and efficient.

The eleventh chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on adopting and adapting an existing course book. The authors argue that course books can be a useful resource for language teachers, but that they should be used judiciously and adapted to meet the needs of the learners. This chapter's advantage is that it offers practical guidance on how to assess and choose course books, as well as how to customize them to fit learners' needs. The authors present various examples of adaptation techniques, including adding or removing content and adjusting activities.

The twelfth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on the challenges and opportunities involved in introducing change to an existing language curriculum. The authors argue that change is often necessary to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and effective, but that it can also be difficult to implement.

This chapter's advantage is that it offers a straightforward and useful manual for introducing change. The authors suggest several tactics and methods that can be employed to streamline the change process, such as involving stakeholders, effective communication, and managing resistance. They also guide how to evaluate the success of the change process. However, the chapter could have been more analytical since it does not consider any alternative viewpoints on the subject of change management

The thirteenth chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on planning an in-service course, which is a course designed for teachers who are already working in the field. The authors argue that in-service courses are important for professional development and for ensuring that teachers can implement the curriculum effectively.

This chapter's advantage is that it offers a comprehensive and practical manual for organizing an in-service course. The authors furnish an array of methods and resources that can be used to identify teachers' needs, prepare suitable content, and deliver the course efficiently. Additionally, they provide recommendations on how to evaluate the course's effectiveness.

The final chapter of "Language Curriculum Design" focuses on the relationship between teaching and curriculum design. The authors argue that effective teaching depends on the design of the curriculum and that teachers play an important role in implementing and adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of their learners.

This chapter's benefit is that it presents a straightforward and brief summary of the link between teaching and curriculum design. The authors offer practical recommendations on how educators can execute and modify the curriculum, and how they can use evaluation to track learners' advancement. However, the chapter could have been more analytical since it does not consider any alternative viewpoints on the relationship between teaching and curriculum design.

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Conclusions

Overall, "Language Curriculum Design" by I.S.P Nation and John Macalister is a comprehensive guide to designing effective language curricula. The book covers all of the key stages involved in the design process, from needs analysis to assessment, and provides practical advice and tools for each stage. One of the strengths of the book is that it is grounded in current research and best practices in the field, and the authors draw on their extensive experience in language education to provide useful insights and guidance.

However, one weakness of the book is that it can be overly technical and dry at times, which may make it less accessible for some readers. Additionally, while the authors do provide some examples and case studies to illustrate key concepts, there could be more of these throughout the book to make it more engaging and relatable for readers.

Another potential weakness of the book is that it takes a somewhat prescriptive approach to curriculum design, presenting a set of principles and guidelines that may not be universally applicable to all contexts and learners.

Despite these limitations, "Language Curriculum Design" is a valuable resource for language teachers, program administrators, and curriculum designers who are interested in developing effective language curricula. The book provides a wealth of practical advice, tools, and resources, and is likely to be useful for anyone who is involved in designing, implementing, or evaluating language programs.

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