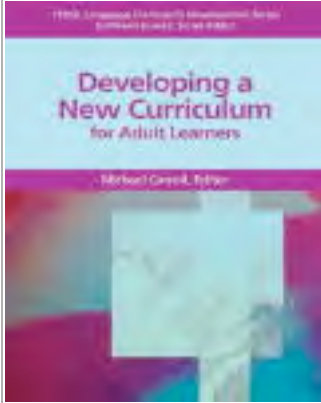


<i>Developing a New Curriculum for Adult Learners</i>		
Author:	Michael Carroll (2007)	
Publisher:	Alexandria, VA: TESOL	
Pages	ISBN	Price
Pp. ix + 254	978-193118545-5	\$39.95 U.S.



Developing new curricula can seem a daunting task for language teachers and program administrators. As Carroll discusses in the introductory chapter, all too often a curriculum designed by an institution's administration can feel too restrictive for some teachers and at the same time not provide enough guidance for others. In response to this challenge, he states that "curriculum development cannot be simply imposed from above; rather it depends absolutely on the people who implement it" (p. 10). This book collects nine articles that describe schools where the educators and the administration recognized the importance of implementing a curriculum. Each article describes how they worked together to develop new curricula in their respective institutions.

As part of the TESOL Language Curriculum Development Series, this book frames curriculum development in terms of various adult learner contexts and programs. According to the series editor, Kathleen Graves, this series delves into "how educators bring about change" in the programs in which they participate around the world (p. vii). Each article in this book demonstrates successful change, such as the university in Brazil which achieved their goal of integrating teacher education into their English program. The institutions represented range from community centers in the United States to universities in Japan. The central connecting thread in all of these articles is recognizing "the importance of one or more people with a strong vision of what the program might be, as well as effective communication among the various stakeholders" (Carroll, p. 7). If there is a principal idea that can be taken from this book, it is the centrality of "vision" and "communication" to the process.

After an introduction by the series editor and the author's introductory chapter about the challenges and various models of curriculum design, the remainder of the ten chapters in

this book are grouped into three thematic sections. The first is University and Vocational Preparation, which contains four articles describing English-medium coursework at various domestic and international institutions of higher education. The articles describe (1) an academic English program at Black Hawk Community College in Iowa, (2) an intensive English-medium program at a new university in United Arab Emirates, (3) a new EFL curriculum for the Military Language Institute in United Arab Emirates, and (4) a new computer literacy course for Albany Community Center in Chicago. The second section, EFL Study, is made up of three articles about universities and junior colleges in Japan where the curriculum was completely reinvented to update and improve the English course of study. The final section, Teacher Preparation, contains two articles: one focused on a Brazilian undergraduate languages and literature program redesigned to emphasize teaching, and the other about restructuring the undergraduate language-teacher training program at Kent State University in the United States.

The book is not designed as a step-by-step guide on how to build curricula; rather it presents ten descriptive articles about successful programs from across the globe that have either been created from scratch or completely restructured. The major strength of this book is the variety of programs represented in the ten chapters, making it appealing to a broad audience. It may be particularly useful for those educators and administrators seeking advice and insight from a range of curriculum partners or teams on the process of successfully designing a new program or course of study. Moreover, each article includes much advice on troubleshooting and overcoming the limitations of each writer's institution.

In the first section, "Please don't Shake the Mouse: A CALL Curriculum for Adults With Zero and Low Levels of Computer Literacy," Kucia explains why computer-assisted language learning lab (CALL) teachers must meet their students' computer literacy needs before addressing their second-language activities. The Albany Park Community Center in Chicago, Illinois, has developed a successful computer literacy program to prepare their students for learning English language literacy skills. This article reminded me that the importance of finding out what the true needs of the learners are and developing a curriculum that serves those needs.

In "Pulling a Curriculum Together: Addressing Content and Skills Across English and Japanese" Swenson and Cornwell discuss the issues facing schools with shrinking enrollments and changing social norms by developing curricula aimed at achieving a specific mission with far-sighted and adaptable goals in the second section of the book. As part of a team to redesign the English program, they demonstrated how to meet both the overarching institutional goals those specific to the program.

In the final section, "Focusing on Teaching from the Get-Go: An Experience From Brazil," de Abreu-e-Lima, de Oliveira, and Augusto-Navarro discuss the critical need for teacher training to be integrated into the English language program for the joint EFL and teacher preparation programs to be successful in Brazil. They restructured their program, which originally separated the two, so that they could integrate language learning and teaching into a more cohesive program that placed more emphasis on teacher training.

This book could have been even stronger had it included an article from a literacy-level adult program for refugees, immigrants, and/or migrant workers. Although this was touched on in chapter two on Black Hawk Community College's attempt to structure their new academic English program and in chapter five describing the development of the computer literacy course in Chicago, it would have been beneficial to see a model from a program that specifically focuses on literacy-level learners. In addition, had the editor included at least one example from a low-resource language program abroad, this book truly would be applicable to any language program. Finally, while each of the Japanese institutions in the EFL Study section faced different challenges and underwent different processes, this section would have been more balanced had it included an article or two from a context outside Japan.

Developing a New Curriculum for Adult Learners is an inspiring and well-compiled book, with every article contributing to the book's richness. Most importantly, I would agree with Carroll that each curriculum change or invention "has resulted in improvements in the quality of language education and in opportunities for the students fortunate enough to have been involved" (p. 9). In my own setting as part of a team developing a new English education and continuing education curriculum for teachers, I had thought the final section would provide the most advice and wisdom. However, I found that each chapter gave me some insight or awareness of value to my own context - whether it was the importance of gathering student feedback systematically, as at Aoyama Gakuin University, or simply that other institutions also facing the challenge of multi-level classes have found ways to reform their program to redistribute students to the appropriate level (the universities in U.A.E. and Albany Community Center). Therefore, I would not hesitate to recommend this book as a model to any stakeholder in the designing (or redesigning) of an ELL program in his or her own educational institution.

Stephanie Wilton-Kumagai
SIT Graduate Institute, Vermont
<stephanie.wiltonkumagai@mail.sit.edu>

© Copyright rests with authors. Please cite TESL-EJ appropriately.