CHAPTER 11

A Case for the English Home Language Textbook: A South African Perspective in the Further Education Training (FET) Phase in High School

Mark FRANK
Sivakumar SIVASUBRAMANIAM [1]

INTRODUCTION: A POINT OF CONCERN

> *Books, the lifeblood of an education system.*
> *John Samuel*

In this chapter, we hope to convey the significance of the English Home language textbook. At the outset, we wish to affirm that this chapter should be seen as a call for South African English home language teachers and learners in high schools not to neglect the textbook. This, we believe will raise awareness of the importance of the English Home language textbook, thereby pointing to the translatability of those issues and insights to contexts farther afield where English language teachers envisage a dynamic role for themselves as social actors with a view to bringing about constructive socio-educational changes in their immediate communities. By the same token, the issues and insights that we propose to present in this chapter assume particular prominence and substance given the inevitable social context of the classroom and the possible dynamizing role that the English Home language textbook can play (Candlin and Mercer, 2001).

[1] Dr Mark Frank, South Peninsula High School, English Language Education, Cape Town, lemark77@ yahoo.com & Dr Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam, Extraordinary Professor of Language Education, Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za

this, the English Home Language textbook, for that matter any English language textbook, could be likened to a broad-spectrum drug that can attest to its efficacy in the treatment of a range of ailments. By the same token, it can help both teachers and students promote textbook citizenship in which their semiotic mediations are synonymous with the centrality, immediacy and primacy of their role as social actors in envisaging constructive social changes in their communities near and far instead of letting them languish in categorical stupidity and incurable illiteracy for want of an ability to read the word and read the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

In closing we would like to reaffirm our position, which resonates with what Hutchinson & Torres (1994, p. 315) argue:

> *Textbooks have a vital and positive part to play in the everyday job of teaching and learning English, and that the importance of the textbook becomes even greater in periods of change.*

Therefore, we are inclined to believe that the issues and insights that we have examined and expressed in this chapter are well placed to enlarge our understanding of using the textbook as an effective vehicle for English Home language teaching in the context of South Africa and the translatability of its underlying issues and insights to English language teaching contexts farther afield for the prevalence and permeation of democratic citizenry and constructive social changes.

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