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'I enjoy teaching by writing': experiences of Kenyan secondary school English textbook authors

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Abstract

This paper examines secondary school English textbook authors' experiences in Kenya, where English is an official language and the main language of education. Textbook authorship is presented as a production process. Production, one of five processes within the Circuit of Culture (Gray 2007), helps make meaning of the textbook as a cultural artefact. Through interviews, authors indicated that their textbook authorship experiences had involved them in research and planning, drafting and moderation, team-building efforts, informal trialling and, later, opportunities to write different types of teaching and learning materials. Among the challenges they experienced were bonding, syllabus interpretation, meeting deadlines, matching content to learner level, work-life balance, negotiating royalties, copyright issues and access to/handling of consumer feedback. The author concludes that the national curriculum development body, together with publishers and authors, ought to jointly address these various challenges, and thereby improve the overall process of textbook development.

Keywords: textbook authorship, Circuit of Culture, English language education, materials development, globalisation