



An Analysis of Grade 4 Reading Textbooks used in Mainland China: Do the Texts and Activities Support Higher Order Reading Comprehension Skills?

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Abstract

The current study focused on the required Grade 4 reading textbooks published by Mainland China's People's Education Press. Using the construction–integration model (C–I; Kintsch in *Psychol Rev* 95:163–182, 1988; *Discourse Process* 39:125–112, 2005) as the theoretical framework, we analyzed the texts and activities in the textbooks on the following domains: (1) genre, (2) top-level structure (TLS), the C–I model activated in a (3) passage comprehension and (4) a word comprehension activity, and (5) whether the activities addressed the TLS to help students integrate prior knowledge under appropriate schemata. Our results suggested that among the 63 texts, only 2 had a comparison text structure. Also, only 20% of the 125 activities addressed a situation model of comprehension. Moreover, only 10 word comprehension activities were included in the textbooks (five promoted word comprehension in a situation model). Lastly, while many texts contained a problem and solution or cause and effect structure, most activities did not help students to identify the correct TLS. Therefore, the textbook design was not aligned with the C–I theory to promote higher-order reading comprehension skills. We suggested that textbook designers should consider a balanced representation of different TLSs, and teachers need to provide other activities that can guide students to comprehend a word and text in a TLS-appropriate situation model.

Keywords Construction–integration · Reading comprehension · Textbook analysis · Top-level structure · Word comprehension

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