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Teaching a world language for local contexts: The case of Namibian textbooks for the teaching of English

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Abstract

English was chosen as the official language when Namibia gained its independence in 1990. While many other countries use English language textbooks that have been produced for a world market, Namibian authorities set out to develop their own. Five textbooks for grades 8 – 12 were published during the years 1993-1999. These books have been described as unusually successful, not only in the way that they help students learn the language. Equally important is the fact that texts, topics and exercises have been selected in order to support the students' general education and help them develop the knowledge and skills they need as citizens of a new, democratic nation. The process of developing and producing the books has also been referred to as efficient and innovative. This article casts light on some aspects of the books as well as the production process. The aim is to provide documentation and also to present an example that textbook developers as well as teachers elsewhere can learn from and be inspired by.

Key words: English language textbooks, Namibia, Local contexts.