



CAMBRIDGE

Contextualisation in action: textbooks and training

Cambridge education reform in Oman

Simple in concept, difficult in practice, contextualisations need an exceptionally high degree of organisation if they are to satisfy all stakeholders and arrive in the classroom on time. The strategies employed by Cambridge created high-quality books for Oman and ensured that they are properly used and understood by the wider community.



**TRANSFORMING
SOCIETIES THROUGH
EDUCATION**

The challenge

In 2016, Cambridge began working with the Omani Ministry of Education (MoE) to publish adapted textbooks and digital materials for Maths and Science for Grades 1 to 8. Cambridge assisted the MoE to develop a new curriculum before developing the textbooks, a key tool to implement the reform in the classroom and embed a new international pedagogical approach.

To achieve the quality goals, it was decided that rather than create the textbooks from scratch, Cambridge would localise existing and proven Cambridge resources. Together the components – Learner's Book, Activity Book, Teacher's Resource and CD-ROM – would form a complete guided learning experience for student and teacher.

Benefits of using contextualised materials



Cambridge materials are tried and tested in schools around the world.

Textbooks are sensitively localised to match students' culture and world experience.

Materials are aligned to the new curriculum.

The best in modern international pedagogy is reflected in the materials.

The teacher training helped the teachers to use the new textbooks effectively in the classroom. The communications support helped engage parents, ensuring that this critical stakeholder group understood the philosophy and vision of the reform.

In its fullest sense, the project was as much about reforming perspectives on teaching and learning as it was about delivering physical products.

The Cambridge–Oman project demonstrates both the scale and complexity of education reform projects and illustrates the fact that placing textbooks on students' desks is by no means the beginning or the end of the publishing journey.

Our approach

Contextualisation projects can appear a simple publishing process, but in reality, the textbooks are just one tool in a very complex system. Cambridge began with a vision that developed into a curriculum, assessment, teacher training, as well as classroom resources.

Strategies employed by Cambridge



The biggest publishing challenge was to manage the implementation and workflow of the adaptation process. It was conducted under a two-term structure, with a block of textbooks being adapted and published in time to support the teaching of each term.



It was very important that teachers were clear about what they were meant to do and felt confident about the content and activities they were expected to deliver.

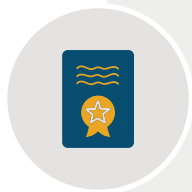
CUP ran an extensive programme of **Teacher Training** for MoE supervisors and teachers. This support was delivered in three stages with each cycle developing supervisors within the MoE to act as master trainers who could cascade their knowledge down to the rest of the teaching population.

Furthermore, new methods of assessing teacher performance were essential to developing and supporting teacher performance in the long term, so a new support system was created.



Parents and teachers are important stakeholders in education reform. Cambridge developed a full **Communications Plan** for the MoE.

The communications plan is already bearing fruit in Oman. What has been particularly encouraging is how pupils, teachers and parents have become near partners in promoting use of the textbook materials.



The MoE also needed to tie both the books and the new curriculum to effective formative and summative **assessments** in the classroom, if progress was to be understood and logged. Cambridge teams worked closely with the MoE to develop test specifications and sample tests, and delivered training to the MoE to support their creation of their own tests each year.

The results

A tangible measure of the Cambridge–Oman project is the textbooks produced. At the time of writing, Grades 1–9 have been delivered and are being used in schools and Grade 10 is in production.

The project has also brought strategic and tactical insights for both Cambridge and the Omani MoE, that will bring benefits to all future education reform clients.

- A more streamlined process for cross-language textbook adaptations, with a focus on risk reduction through effective set-up stages and the rationalisation of roles, responsibilities and schedules.
- Improved client service through the development of in-country teams who speak the local language.
- A powerful communications plan, designed to convey the key messages of specific education reform to the full spectrum of stakeholders.
- Effective methods of identifying risks before and as they occur, and of tackling these risks through shared objectives and agreed tactics.
- Targeted training programmes in publishing, assessment and pedagogy to support textbook development.

The learning curve has been steep on both sides of this project. What is clear from the outcomes is that while the complexity of large-scale educational reform projects is to some extent a given, this complexity 'can be managed'. Through an intelligent and evolving strategy of process and quality improvement, even the knottiest projects can be brought under control.

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