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CONSIDERATIONS IN COURSEBOOK CREATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CORPUS-ASSISTED SELF-STUDY

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Abstract
In EFL classrooms, materials have been influential in facilitating effective student learning. When given the opportunity to create an in-house coursebook on English for online content creation, I conducted this self-study as the first author and sole participant to examine my considerations and professional development throughout the materials writing process. The second researcher collaborated as a critical friend who provided feedback on the materials and consultations during data analysis. While developing a coursebook unit, I wrote 14 diary entries to record my reflection. Afterwards, the Diary corpus was constructed and the keyword analysis was applied. The analysis yielded 19 keywords, with "content", "students", and "reading" as the top three, representing the aboutness of my considerations. Then the qualitative analysis was applied for deeper insights. The findings revealed six major aspects of my considerations such as students' proficiency and world knowledge, text selection and adaptation, and coursebook practicality. Four areas of professional development were identified; for example, developing materials helped a teacher "learn to apply language teaching principles more critically." This study illustrates a methodological design combining a corpus-assisted keyword analysis with a self-study approach. Its findings offer an understanding of in-house materials writing as situated professional development for EFL teachers.

Keywords: English language teaching, ELT materials development, keyword analysis, self-study research, teacher professional development

Introduction
In the Thai higher education context, academic programs are required to be reviewed and revised periodically to ensure the quality of the programs and graduates (Announcement of the Ministry of Education: Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education B.E. 2552, 2009, p. 19). According to Richards (2017), renewal of institutional language curricula has been driven by external influences, deriving from the government, policymakers, and employers who are seeking graduates with desired attributes. The other group is the world of academia itself, that is, innovative approaches and principles in applied linguistics and

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language teaching. During the curriculum revision, new courses are developed to fulfil those stakeholders' needs which stem from changing social and economic contexts. To implement new courses, some teachers choose to use commercial coursebooks from global publishers because they service teachers and learners with well-organized lessons and content (Tsiplakides, 2011), resulting from extensive market research and experienced publishers and authors (Yildiz & Harwood, 2024).

Nevertheless, these commercial materials fail to cater to the needs in particular contexts, so some teachers transform themselves from materials users into developers. For example, Iamsirirak (2022) developed his English Grammar for Teachers coursebook to be used in an open university in Thailand. The topics were carefully selected based on English teacher majors' needs of grammatical knowledge, and the book was designed to be conveniently used both in class and as a self-study material. Besides, writing an in-house coursebook provides benefits for classroom implementation. The writing process raises teachers' awareness of learners' needs and proficiency, "bringing teachers a step closer to students" (Lubina et al., 2015, p. 1198).

SLA-informed coursebook development

To produce good-quality in-house coursebooks, what teachers as writers consider while creating them is of critical importance. Scholars have proposed that second language acquisition (SLA) principles should be taken into account while designing tasks, courses, and coursebooks since they play a vital role in facilitating language learning (e.g., Ellis, 2005; Nation, 2007; Tomlinson, 2023). Ellis (2005) formulated 10 SLA-based principles for language instruction. Nation (2007) introduced a list of 10 teaching principles, accompanied by four balanced components of activities in a language course, popularly known as the Four Strands. To make the materials development process more principled, Mishan and Timmis (2015) extracted these SLA-based concepts that should underpin materials design, namely input, interaction, output, noticing, affective engagement, and cognitive engagement.

Variations can be noticed among these lists of principles. Our comparison of the principles proposed by Ellis (2005), Mishan and Timmis (2015), Nation (2007), and Tomlinson (2012) reveals two shared principles for language teaching and materials development. First, learners should be exposed to extensive and comprehensible input. Large quantities of input mean recycling of language features and then fosters learners' awareness of how language is used (Nation, 2007). Good-quality input must be slightly beyond learners' proficiency (Krashen, 2003). Second, learners have opportunities to provide output and interact with others. The output production allows learners to cognitively notice linguistic gaps while verbalizing an intended meaning and to modify the output for mutual understanding between interlocutors (Pannell et al., 2017).

The application of SLA principles in developing materials has been advocated by these scholars. However, Tomlinson (2012) analysed six representative global coursebooks and found that these coursebooks vaguely reflected SLA theories. It suggests that there is a mismatch between theories proposed by scholars and practices of materials developers. Moreover, the use of SLA theories was evaluated by examining the coursebook products, but the literature still lacks empirical evidence of principled decisions made by authors, especially teachers who develop

in-house materials, during the writing process. In addition to theoretical considerations, practical considerations still need to be explored together, and this study aims to respond to Harwood's (2021) call for more research on materials production in non-commercial contexts to enrich the field.

Coursebook creation and teacher professional development

Teacher professional development is an ongoing process of reflection, learning and action by teachers, either individually or collectively, starting from a teacher education program and continuing throughout their professional life (Angus-Cole, 2021; Sancar et al., 2021). Since evidence- and inquiry-based learning for teachers was fostered when they involve in an authentic development experience (Desimone, 2009; Li, 2022), writing in-house EFL coursebooks can be regarded as effective professional development. Graves and Garton (2019, pp. 423-427) proposed four interrelated areas that teacher educators should help teachers cultivate to become effective materials users and developers. The skill areas include: (1) developing informed understandings of the principles and assumptions that underlie materials, (2) understanding one's own beliefs and assumptions about materials, (3) learning to adapt or develop materials to meet the needs of students in specific contexts, and (4) using technology to enhance and extend learners language learning and use within and beyond the classroom.

Apart from the existing literature, empirical evidence on how in-house materials creation can contribute to professional development is still scarce. Further research is therefore necessary to offer useful insights for teachers as materials developers and instructors developing courses on materials development for English language teaching (ELT).

Self-study research in English language teaching

According to LaBoskey (2004), self-study refers to a qualitative research method used to study professional practice settings with the aim of promoting teacher professional development. This approach is employed to study inquiries of teachers as reflective practitioners who also act as researchers of the study (Pithouse-Morgan, 2022). The way they set inquiries can lead to new understandings of their identities and practices, contributing to improving students' learning, institutions, and curriculum (Pithouse-Morgan, 2022). Besides developing themselves professionally, teacher-researchers can contribute personal insights to the community, allowing for a critical evaluation of findings and applicability of the findings to other contexts (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Self-study requires not only the practitioner themselves but also critical friends as research partners to provide constructive feedback on teachers' professional actions, discuss different perspectives, and validate data interpretations (Garin & Harper, 2016).

Self-study, narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and single-case study might be viewed as overlapping approaches in ELT and Teacher Education. In fact, there are some differences between these qualitative approaches. As suggested by LaBoskey (2004), self-study focuses directly on improving researcher-teachers' own professional practice as well as discovering exemplar-based findings for the disciplines. Narrative inquiry and autoethnography similarly focus on studying and understanding personal stories. However, the former is employed to explore lived experiences through storytelling, examining how the experiences relate to the past-

present-future moments as well as contextual factors (Zhang, 2019), whereas the latter analyses how cultures or discourses shape teacher identity based on personal autobiographical experiences (Yazan et al., 2023). Unlike these three approaches, a single-case study focuses on an in-depth investigation of a specific case within its real-life context, as illustrated by Pontillas (2021)'s study of a Filippino teacher working from home for an online ELT company. Consequently, self-study is considered one suitable approach for examining teacher professional development, especially in ELT.

Previous studies in ELT have employed self-study research to examine teachers' experiences in different situations. Asaoka et al. (2020) conducted self-study research with two novice EFL teachers joining an online journal forum. After they shared viewpoints and challenges with each other, they found a way to adjust their teaching practices. Therefore, this collaboration could promote professional development of EFL teachers. Moreover, Liu et al. (2025) examined the first author-teacher's emotional regulation strategies used in online English classes for a semester during COVID-19. She realized that she experienced both positive and negative emotions but could regulate those emotions and maintain relationships with her students and colleagues. While these studies suggest self-study as another research approach to explore EFL teacher professional development regarding teaching practices and emotional regulation, self-study research on in-house materials production remains scant.

To address all gaps aforementioned, when I (the first author) was tasked with creating a coursebook unit for a new course on English for online content creation, I started to question what I actually considered as a teacher-materials writer and whether I improved my professionalism through the process. Therefore, self-study was considered as an appropriate approach for this research. To establish the trustworthiness, the initial stage of corpus analysis and the involvement of a critical friend in qualitative analysis and reflective dialogues were applied in this qualitative self-study. These techniques can enhance trustworthiness in findings and mitigate subjectivity bias (Lay, 2021; Watson Todd, 2012). Moreover, transparent reporting of the research process and well-elaborated findings can enable readers themselves to evaluate the trustworthiness, whether the study is informative or applicable to their teaching/researching contexts or not (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). This self-study addressed two research questions:

1. What considerations informed my decisions while developing an English language coursebook unit?
2. How did the materials development practice contribute to my professional development?

Method

The participant-researcher, the critical friend, and self-study settings

At the time of the study, I (the first author) was one of the teachers in the English Program responsible for developing an in-house coursebook for the course on English for creating online content. I had been teaching at my university in Thailand for around one and a half years, after completing an M.A. in applied linguistics for English language teaching. Before that, I had been working as a freelance tutor where I began creating materials, most of which concerned grammatical knowledge and national exam preparation for high-schoolers. I have

been passionate about writing materials because I can plan my teaching steps vividly through the design, and I believed my materials greatly contribute to students' understanding and my teaching success. As a tutor, my goals were to cover as much content as possible and to explain knowledge in the simplest and most concise way.

My teaching philosophy gradually shifted while I was studying in the M.A. program. I tried to adopt a communicative approach more to my tutoring contexts and practicum classes. I expected my students to not only understand language but also use it to communicate effectively. Stepping into teaching in university, that I was responsible for various courses broadened my teaching expertise. However, my belief in the contribution of materials still has not changed.

Regarding the current study, because global coursebooks available did not align with the course goals, some colleagues and I developed an in-house coursebook for the English for Online Content Creation course. At that time, I volunteered to design Unit 1 as the model unit first, and only the diary data while I was developing the first draft of Unit 1 was used in this study. The data was considered abundant and meaningful enough, and I was solely responsible for the initial process, so the identity of my colleagues could be protected. The coursebook unit is provided in the Appendix section and is referred to as evidence to contextualize the findings.

The second researcher was invited to collaborate as a critical friend. She voluntarily provided verbal consent after being informed of the study's purposes, procedures, and relevant ethical considerations. Given the nature of self-study, we acknowledged that some of our identities had to be disclosed. The critical friend was a former colleague in my university, holding a Ph.D. in ELT, and currently she is teaching in Bachelor's and Master's programs at a distinguished university in Thailand. The involvement of critical friends in the qualitative self-study is beneficial to reviewing data and interpretations, thereby minimizing navel-gazing and gaining fresh perspectives or deepening reflections (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). In this study, the critical friend provided constructive feedback on my coursebook unit in a dialogue session, and she assisted in thematic identification process to ensure the credibility of the findings.

Data collection

I selected reflective diaries as the method to collect the data. This self-report instrument is effective for eliciting ongoing personal experiences and thoughts in contexts, fostering reflection and introspection (Rose, et al., 2020). My diaries followed an event-contingent design to minimize memory deterioration affected by the interval between the time of practice and writing up (Rose, et al., 2020). I committed myself to writing at the end of each day that I worked on my materials. It took 14 days intermittently between June 4 and July 20, 2023, to complete the first draft of Unit 1. As a result, I wrote 14 reflective diaries altogether, totalling 11,477 tokens or running words.

Dialogue was subsequently employed as another research instrument. After finishing writing the unit, I gave the draft to my critical friend for review (see Appendix). Then we had one dialogue session that lasted approximately 3 hours to discuss the materials development, when I received feedback, learned how to improve myself as a teacher-materials writer, and exchanged ideas on materials

writing with her. Key dialogue findings were integrated and analysed in the Discussion section.

Data analysis

Despite its qualitative nature, this self-study commenced with a quantitative, corpus-assisted keyword analysis, which informed the subsequent thematic analysis. The corpus-assisted initial phase can help mitigate unconscious biases that may arise when thematic analysis relies solely on the researcher's own interpretations (Watson Todd, 2012). 14 diaries were collected as the Diary corpus on #LancsBox X version 5.5 (Brezina & Platt, 2025). Keyword analysis was conducted first to elicit keywords arising from the diaries. Guided by each keyword occurrence in diaries, the first researcher used qualitative analysis to examine the data in depth. The overall procedures followed an inductive approach to allow findings to emerge from the data.

For the first research question, log likelihood (LL) and average reduced frequency (ARF) were used for keyword analysis. The LL measure was firstly used to elicit salient words in the Diary corpus through frequency comparison with a reference corpus. Since a reference corpus with a similar text genre and type was not available, the general corpus British National Corpus 2014 (BNC2014) (The ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science, 2025), containing approximately 102 million tokens in 2025, was a suitable reference, and the corpus was also available in #LancsBox (Brezina & Platt, 2025). The top 25 keywords were then selected for qualitative analysis, as suggested by Pojanapunya (2016) and Pojanapunya and Lieungnapar (2017) that the cutoff point yields sufficient keywords when comparing a content-specific target corpus against a general corpus. Listing the top n keywords was also less problematic than setting an LL threshold for identifying keywords, as LL values are influenced by different sizes of two corpora (Pojanapunya, 2016). The last parameter was including only nouns in the keyword list because this content word class, rather than function words and other word classes, best represented aboutness of considerations.

After identifying 25 keywords, I noticed some irregularities that the word "ChatGPT" ranked eighth, despite occurring only 19 times in five out of 14 diaries. Its LL value was unexpectedly high because the word was absent from BNC2014, which comprised texts until 2019 (Brezina et al., 2021). Also, I wrote ChatGPT 12 times in only the first diary. Another similar case was "TikTok", with 7 tokens in the 102-million-token BNC2014. Because of the overestimation, I decided to integrate average reduced frequency (ARF) measure. The higher the ARF is, the more important the word becomes; the ARF was measured by the word's absolute frequency and even distribution inside the target corpus (Brezina, 2018). Based on the ARF, the top 25 noun keywords were extracted from my Diary corpus and were compared with the earlier list. Consequently, 19 keywords appearing in both LL and ARF top 25 lists were extracted for further in-depth analysis.

Without the researcher's analytical lens, only the list of keywords cannot clearly demonstrate concepts of texts (Pojanapunya, 2016). Therefore, I employed the thematic analysis assisted by these keywords. In the first step, I examined each of my diaries. When I discovered some parts relevant to my considerations, I identified the keywords appearing there and labelled codes with the most significant keyword included. After that, coded categories were listed according to the

keywords. Similar codes were observed within the same keywords and across different keywords. For example, the code "students' proficiency" was labelled under the keyword "students" and was identified in several diaries. Then I conducted the analysis iteratively by reading my diaries and grouping related categories into themes. The critical friend then rechecked the conceptualizations by reading all diary entries and traced my thematic identification. Any disagreements or alternative perspectives were discussed and negotiated between the two researchers until a consensus was reached to ensure credibility.

For the second research question, thematic analysis was employed again to discover the contribution of materials writing to my professional development. Inspired by Popovici and Bolitho (2003), I identified some verbs semantically related to professional development, i.e. learn, study, develop, change, become, think, and realize. Then I began analysing diary parts where these predetermined verbs were found. The diary segments with keywords from the first research question were also revisited. Then the relevant parts were coded and themes were constructed through iterative reading.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

My considerations in coursebook development

These keywords in my Diary corpus analysed based on LL and ARF measures are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Analysis of noun keywords in my reflective diaries

Log Likelihood Rank	Keyword	Frequency in the Diary corpus (tokens)	Log Likelihood	Average Reduced Frequency And Top 25 Rank	Finalization as Keywords
1	content	89	631.21	44.54 [2]	Yes
2	students	101	618.68	56.42 [1]	Yes
3	reading	92	596.42	42.05 [3]	Yes
4	listening	71	544.63	24.18 [7]	Yes
5	coursebook	29	507.69	12.81 [24]	Yes
6	skills	59	381.97	30.57 [4]	Yes
7	coursebooks	20	363.86	8.73 [-]	No
8	ChatGPT	19	345.67	6.29 [-]	No
9	course	81	331.17	25.70 [6]	Yes
10	unit	50	312.29	23.06 [8]	Yes
11	text	48	289.08	19.40 [11]	Yes
12	language	52	285.19	26.23 [5]	Yes
13	teaching	41	254.93	17.74 [13]	Yes
14	speaking	41	246.75	15.69 [16]	Yes
15	topics	28	245.70	16.61 [15]	Yes
16	English	49	238.85	21.22 [9]	Yes
17	writing	43	229.97	21.02 [10]	Yes
18	assignment	23	216.44	5.39 [-]	No
19	vocabulary	23	214.35	12.43 [25]	Yes
20	TikTok	13	210.61	5.37 [-]	No
21	texts	29	209.38	9.68 [-]	No

Log Likelihood Rank	Keyword	Frequency in the Diary corpus (tokens)	Log Likelihood	Average Reduced Frequency And Top 25 Rank	Finalization as Keywords
22	section	41	193.90	12.84 [23]	Yes
23	media	40	185.64	17.45 [14]	Yes
24	materials	30	171.66	15.54 [17]	Yes
25	designing	18	156.01	11.53 [-]	No

From Table 1, 19 noun keywords ranked in both LL and ARF top 25 lists were finalized. The keyword list preliminarily reflected what I considered while developing a coursebook unit. The top three included "content", "students", and "reading". Several keywords concerned English skills and knowledge to be taught (e.g., reading, listening, skills, language, speaking, English, writing, vocabulary). Some were related to course and unit organization (e.g., course, unit, section). The two keywords, "coursebook" and "materials", referred directly to what I was developing. The remaining ones were "text", "topics", "media", and "teaching". The keyword "media" was often found because it referred to the content of the unit, which is social media.

For the omitted words, "ChatGPT" and "TikTok" were overrepresented and excluded by the ARF parameter. "Assignment" and "designing" were not ranked in the ARF top 25 list. Noticeably, "text" and "coursebook" were retained, but "texts" and "coursebooks" were not. Because the semantic content should be prioritized rather than word forms, I and the second researcher decided that nouns with different inflectional suffixes should be equitably investigated (e.g., text/texts, coursebook/coursebooks, student/students).

With 19 keywords assisting in discovering and formulating themes, the subsequent thematic analysis unveiled six considerations while I designed an in-house EFL coursebook.

Students' proficiency and world knowledge

One major consideration emerging from the corpus and thematic analyses was students' proficiency and their world knowledge. When I researched ideas for exercises or assignments from other universities' websites, I considered whether what I found would work for my target students with diverse proficiency levels. Some were found too challenging or should be adapted for my contexts. Thus, I designed some assignments for them to work as a group to scaffold learning for those with low proficiency, so they could achieve the tasks by learning from peers and were more likely to obtain sufficient scores to pass the course. Another scaffolding strategy was providing model sentences in language-focused activities to help them describe trends in graphs (see Appendix, p. 13).

Students' world knowledge was also taken into account. In the Writing section (Appendix, pp. 15-17), although the unit theme centred on social media platforms, I allowed learners to review any applications in the final writing activity as they could utilize their world knowledge in learning language, as evidenced in Diary 14.

> *The app they choose to review should be the one that they regularly use, so they have ideas to write or they are more into writing it.*

Furthermore, I worried that some students might not know Duolingo, but I finalized the inclusion of this application. I noted the reasons in the same diary:

> *I should believe that students can find and learn about Duolingo by themselves. Material designers or teachers should think about their materials as a way to introduce new things to them, not just building on their existing knowledge.*

Text selection and adaptation

One of my common grounds for selecting texts was authenticity. The academic reading article was about social media surveys found on www.pewresearch.org (Appendix, pp. 9-11), the listening text was a two-minute interview clip about social media preferences on YouTube, and the writing samples were taken from app reviews posted on Play Store (Appendix, pp. 15-16). Not only authenticity but also degree of comprehensibility was taken into account. I chose app reviews that are easy to follow the reviewers' ideas at first glance. For the reading text, a main idea sentence was directly stated at the beginning of each paragraph. Statistical survey results were accompanied by infographics to aid understanding.

In addition, I bore language genres in mind, as reflected in Diary 8, "Finally, I selected the interview clip because students will be exposed a lot to academic English from the reading text, so the selected listening would be better related to everyday English." However, colloquialism in the interview became my concern. I was not sure if the students should learn the statements like "I'm TikTok over Instagram." or "I'm more TikTok than Instagram." Eventually, I viewed it as authentic input and localized English casually spoken among American teenagers, rather than conforming to standard language.

Selecting authentic texts with ease of understanding resulted in slight adaptations as well. For example, the reading text was well-organized but too long, so I selected only the first ten paragraphs for reading practice. Some vocabulary and sentence structure in the introduction paragraph were simplified. Furthermore, dividing paragraphs for different exercises could facilitate learning as I noted in Diary 11.

> *The paragraphs presenting the first two findings were used to design the activity of using infographics for comprehension; the others presenting the third and fourth findings were for the scanning exercise. I didn't design the exercises that students need to read the full text from the beginning to the end.*

Teaching language and skills emerging from the text

While I was reading the article (Appendix, pp. 9-11) to draw ideas for designing the lesson, I was looking back and forth between the text and the infographics to make sense of statistical data. Based on my own interaction with the text, I recognized using infographics and scanning for specific information as

important, and thus the subskill and the technique were included in the unit. As for the Speaking section (Appendix, pp. 4-7), various meanings of "like" in conversations were selected to teach as it was frequently heard in the listening text. Also, I considered broadening my students' knowledge, as written in Diary 10.

> *More expressions or idioms [showing likes and dislikes] can be introduced apart from ones in the clip. What can be added more is giving reasons after saying that you like or dislike something. I also added how to develop ideas and use common linking words into this part. This was inspired from IELTS Speaking Task 1.*

Principles of language teaching

The analysis showed that writing the coursebook unit allowed me to review and apply some teaching principles into practice. The principle I applied most often was pre-, while-, and post-stages of teaching. The principle underlay the Listening and Speaking lesson and the Reading lesson, for which I designed speaking activities to serve as post-listening and post-reading activities. Another teaching concept I integrated into the Speaking lesson was Think-Pair-Share (TPS), hoping that it would encourage learners' spoken interaction. In Diary 10, I reflected:

> *I think speaking skills are difficult to teach since it is difficult to encourage students who are afraid of speaking to be confident in speaking or try to speak. As a materials designer, I hope that my materials will indirectly help teachers who use the coursebook, hoping that my activities are able to promote communication in English in class.*

Practicality of coursebooks

The analysis found coursebook practicality as another consideration. Before writing the materials, I consulted Mowmessie's (2012) study, which discussed novice teachers' problems of using a commercial coursebook and their solutions. I pondered how I could minimize the problems and make the coursebook as practical as possible. I stated in Diary 3:

> *I asked myself as a materials designer how these problems can be prevented or how our coursebook best facilitates teachers who use it. ... I thought that the finalized materials should help teachers clearly see the way to make use of it in class, and I should be open-minded, realizing that other teachers might use the coursebook but adapt somehow to suit their teaching methods or styles. They might not follow every teaching and learning step stated in the coursebook.*

Moreover, I anticipated possible problems of reading content and prepared a practical solution. The reading article was about social media behaviours, so these trends might change when the coursebook would be used. Making the content able to be used for the next several years, I designed a post-reading speaking activity to allow students to discuss current trends. The instructions were:

> *Social media use in your country might be different from what happens in the US. Also, the time when you take this lesson must not be the year 2022, when the survey was conducted, so the findings or teens' use of social media might change. Discuss or compare what you read to your current situation. (Appendix, p. 12)*

Unit layout and organization

Based on the data, I planned sequence of skills in the unit through studying from several coursebooks and found various designs. In the end, I decided to follow a traditional way of receptive to productive skills (e.g., from reading to grammar and writing). Besides, I thought carefully about how to name the sections, whether to name them based on focused skills (e.g., Listening Skills) or content/tasks. Finally, I decided to balance the two approaches (e.g., Writing: Writing Application Reviews), and I justified the decision in Diary 9:

> *Showing the skills to focus is convenient for teachers to deliver lessons, and the students clearly understand what they are going to practice or learn. However, naming the sections as focused skills implies that language skills are emphasized more than tasks, content, or themes to be discussed. That is, students are just learning four language skills. That doesn't sound authentic, not reflecting real-world tasks about creating online content whose role of learning language is to support the task.*

My professional development through coursebook writing

I discovered four key areas of my professional growth shaped by experience in creating the in-house EFL materials.

Developing materials helped me extensively explore ideas for materials design.

Based on the reflective data, I learned considerably about learning activities, skills taught, and unit structure by attending a seminar, researching courses in other universities, and analysing commercial coursebooks. Studying assignments in similar courses allowed me to see teaching rationale behind the assignments. I discovered that inductive teaching, chunking, and scaffolding were applied in challenging assignments. Diary 2 evidenced my learning about inductive teaching:

> *In one class on components of movie review videos, instead of teaching deductively what kind of content a movie review clip should consist of or what the steps of reviewing movies are, the lesson begins with assigning students to watch two sample movie review videos. After that, they have to extract the main points in this video. I found the organization of this lesson interesting.*

Consulting commercial coursebooks assisted me in designing the Listening and Speaking section. I realized that listening skills did not refer to only listening for gist or listening for specific information, as I recently found in coursebooks the subskills of listening for discourse markers, listening for reasons, and listening for examples. For this reason, I chose to teach capturing questions while listening in

my unit (Appendix, p. 2). Moreover, I learned several unit structure patterns from commercial coursebooks. For instance, the sequence of receptive-to-receptive skills was found as interesting and effective as the common receptive-to-productive. I commented in Diary 5:

> *[the receptive-productive move] is not the only appropriate way to design unit lessons as long as the writer can justify the reasons. Reading tasks might be seen as the most effective way to give input to learners before doing listening tasks related to the same topic.*

Developing materials helped me learn to apply language teaching principles more critically.

The analysis showed that I integrated some principles that I had learned or applied in class into this coursebook, such as the pre-, while-, and post-teaching stages. Some principles were newly learned, i.e. the Think-Pair-Share concept. Besides, for the Writing section (Appendix, pp. 15-17), I chose to adopt the product approach because familiarizing students with authentic app reviews first was vital for them to write reviews concisely and naturally, as justified in Diary 14.

> *I applied the product approach in this section because some students might not often read or write reviews. Therefore, they should read examples, then analyse and discuss basic components of reviews, for example, positive comments, negative comments, and suggestions. So, they will understand what to do when they write their own reviews. The main point is they should have something to communicate and do so clearly. I don't want to focus on [traditional] paragraph structure too much since it might lead the students' reviews to be less authentic.*

Developing materials helped me broaden my linguistic knowledge.

The unit development afforded me the opportunity to listen to and read several texts to select the appropriate ones for creating lessons, which motivated me to study some structures and vocabulary further so that I could understand them well and transfer into the unit accurately. For instance, I was concerned whether the colloquial expressions in the listening video "I'm TikTok over Instagram." or "I'm more TikTok than Instagram." should be taught. Although I understood their meanings, I could not find explanations to support my understanding, and I worried that I might provide wrong information in the coursebook. Thus, I decided to post on WordReference.com and a native English speaker replied to confirm it. Another language point learned was the use of "like", repeatedly heard in the video but with different meanings. I created the subsection "Using "Like" in Everyday Conversations" (Appendix, p. 4) after learning about its use, as noted in Diary 10.

> *I also found that several ways of using "like" are not frequently taught in textbooks or commercial coursebooks, so I had to research this topic from several online sources instead until I could give comprehensive explanations and design exercises in the unit.*

Developing materials helped me improve my technology and GenAI literacy.

During the development process, I tried using Canva to design review pictures to resemble real application interfaces (Appendix, p. 16). Learning from YouTube, I could also transcribe the video in the Listening section using the VB Audio software together with Google Docs' Voice Typing tool. Although it saved time and effort, I realized that the transcription was not accurate. I had to listen to chunks of the video and recheck and edit the transcription for accuracy.

Before starting to write, I asked ChatGPT to generate ideas for course content, and I was not satisfied with its answers. What the AI chatbot suggested did not seem practical for my teaching contexts, even though it provided some useful teaching topics to consider further. I learned that teachers should be responsible for finalizing the course content, not allowing GenAI to do this task solely. While creating the Reading section, ChatGPT assisted me in checking grammar, simplifying complex sentences in the reading text, confirming my understanding, and writing sentences for the pre-reading vocabulary exercise. I often prompted it to suggest several sentences so that I could select the best ones or revise the selected ones to use in the vocabulary exercise. Writing materials with ChatGPT assistance increased my awareness of using GenAI, as reflected in Diary 11.

> *I found this AI tool very helpful. But I realized suddenly that if I use it too much, my cognitive skills will decrease or I will become lazier. I was aware that ChatGPT users should have expertise in the topics they are asking about as well. Sometimes ChatGPT could not give me satisfying answers or answers that totally fit the context I was dealing with. I needed to think carefully whether I would buy the answers.*

Discussion

Considerations in in-house EFL materials development

This self-study of an EFL university lecturer as materials developer portrays in-house coursebook writing as the process which intertwined a combination of considerations, namely students' proficiency and world knowledge, text selection and adaptation, teaching language and skills emerging from the text, principles of language teaching, practicality of coursebooks, and unit layout and organization. This supports Bouckaert's (2017) empirical evidence that each teacher reconstructed their unique, individual principles and possessed their own considerations while developing materials. However, our findings appear to mismatch the expectation proposed by Tomlinson (2012, 2020, 2023) that materials production should be driven by SLA principles since the materials serve as a language learning facilitator. Markedly, applying SLA principles was not as explicit in our study as applying teaching principles. This weak link between theory and practice is similarly found in the context of global coursebook production. Commercial coursebook writers were constrained to write for market share (i.e., what publishers thought teachers as customers expected), rather than applying innovative pedagogical approaches (Yildiz & Harwood, 2024).

This study also suggests that 'one-size-fits-all' principles of materials development do not exist. The rationale and considerations of teachers-materials writers are likely to be eclectic and context-based. Although SLA principles did not directly emerge as a consideration theme, they were still implicitly applied while

writing the coursebook. To illustrate, the output and interaction principle (Ellis, 2005; Mishan & Timmis, 2015) underpinned the attempt to 'push students' output' through the design of Think-Pair-Share speaking activities. Evaluating comprehensibility of the app review writing models and adapting the authentic reading text were also tacitly guided by the input principle (Nation, 2007; Tomlinson, 2012). Developing materials should not be simply regarded as following all principles in a set. Teachers-as-materials-writers should draw up their own consideration checklists since they understand their learners and teaching contexts best. Moreover, these self-study findings made me realize the degree of applications of SLA principles to my materials writing, and I agreed with Tomlinson's (2020) recommendations that teachers should broaden their SLA theories and knowledge to create materials with principle-driven criteria stemmed from the integration between this knowledge and classroom experience. A wider understanding of principles can enable teachers to select and apply the most suitable ones to their contexts.

One of the main considerations into in-house materials writing was identified as text selection. The data analysis indicated that authenticity, comprehensibility, and a variety of text genres were compromised while I developed materials. These language-focused findings supplement other text selection factors in previous studies. Bergstrom et al. (2023) found that one ELT coursebook development principle was selecting interesting texts that will engage learners. Another study outside the ELT discipline also discovered that textbooks should feature the content related to learners (e.g., both male and female characters, examples of students' work) (Atkinson & Corbitt, 2024).

Regarding text authenticity, this study revealed that all chosen texts in the unit were authentic texts providing clear idea organizations and being considered not too linguistically complex for target students. Variety of discourse was taken into account as academic English and everyday spoken English were both represented. Adaptations were applied later to increase accessibility for students. As reported by Atkinson (2024), learners' proficiency and syllabus specifications were addressed by the commercial coursebook writers when considering authenticity. Even though they integrated the writer-generated texts into their coursebooks, plausibility of authenticity (i.e. to what degree their self-written texts appear authentic) was still kept in view. Learners' exposure to not only their own texts but also texts written by different authors, providing a variety of language input, was another reason for including authentic texts, while this self-study indicated various discourse types as one factor instead. The results of the two studies suggest that the interplay between authenticity and other factors can result from teacher-as-a-writer beliefs and the working contexts. Furthermore, among seven conceptual definitions of authenticity synthesized by Gilmore (2019, p. 300), the two studies possibly illustrate the second definition most, stating that authentic texts are taken from real communicative events and are not primarily created for language teaching. Besides, my viewpoint appears to challenge the first definition, referring to authenticity as the standard language produced by native speakers, as the listening clip with colloquial and non-standard expressions (e.g., I'm TikTok over Instagram.) was selectively used in the coursebook unit.

The corpus analysis of keywords identified "students" as one of the most salient words in reflective diaries, and students' proficiency was later found as a

key consideration through the inductive thematic analysis. This emphasis on their proficiency is consistent with previous findings (Atkinson, 2024; Bergstrom et al., 2023; Carabantes & Paran, 2022). This study suggests that learner proficiency influenced not only text selection and adaptation but also activity design. Scaffolding was supplemented in various activities (e.g., working in pairs or groups, providing model sentences for writing) so students, especially those with low proficiency, could communicate more effectively and carry out these activities. This supports Timmis's (2022) principles for developing materials for teaching speaking and writing. Communicative activities should be deliberately scaffolded in terms of content (e.g. generating ideas before writing), target language (e.g., controlled practice of vocabulary and grammar before the activity), and activity structure (e.g., giving planning time). Whereas scaffolding practices in this study were integrated into materials design to promote learning, scaffolding was paradoxically repurposed in some previous research as a way to decrease students' learning because the teachers assumed they could not learn or complete tasks (Carabantes & Paran, 2022). They discovered that the in-class materials were simplified based on teachers' negative assumptions about students' low proficiency and motivation; for example, group work and close-ended questions were used so that some students did not need to write much. In turn, the materials with low cognitive load did not support but undermined students' language learning.

In addition to my reflective diaries, the dialogue session between my critical friend and me highlighted other considerations for future coursebook development. First, that I was responsible for developing this coursebook unit in isolation resulted in the lack of interaction and feedback from colleagues. We agreed that this kind of feedback was important in developing a coursebook unit. The feedback can help identify more appropriate methods and approaches in developing materials (Pardo et al., 2017). Furthermore, we discussed needs analysis. I considered my students' English proficiency; however, I did not focus on their needs and interests. Therefore, we agreed that not only can my experience help develop the unit, but needs analysis should also be taken into account. Needs analysis is considered the first step of coursebook creation as it determines learners' real-world communicative needs (Dou et al., 2023). The needs are then identified to establish the appropriate principles for coursebook design. As a result, needs analysis should be conducted in the future coursebook design.

Materials development and EFL teacher professional development

The findings of this self-study indicate that involving in materials development can effectively contribute to teacher professional development. The findings support previous studies (e.g., Bouckaert, 2019; Xu & Li, 2025). Specifically, the self-study results demonstrated four aspects of professional development through coursebook writing. That is, developing materials helps me (1) extensively explore ideas for materials design, (2) learn to apply language teaching principles more critically, (3) broaden my linguistic knowledge, and (4) improve my technology and GenAI literacy. These findings resonate with four areas proposed by Graves and Garton (2019), confirming that materials development can help teachers develop their understanding of teaching principles regarding materials, understand beliefs about materials, learn to develop materials based on students' needs, and use technology to enhance students' language learning.

Nevertheless, these self-study results offer a reinterpretation of one of the four areas suggested by Graves and Garton (2019), which is developing teachers' understanding of teaching principles regarding materials. The findings indicate that when I created some learning activities, I did not use traditional principles that I was familiar with. Instead, I adopted newly learned principles for those activities. According to Bouckaert (2017), teachers might learn to accept the incongruity between principles and practices; that is, teaching principles they have learned before might not be adapted to materials development within real working situations.

Furthermore, this self-study suggests that another area proposed by Graves and Garton (2019) regarding using technology to enhance students' learning should also be reinterpreted. Teachers' awareness of using technology, especially GenAI, in materials development should be focused more in this area. This aligns with Xin (2024), who argued that although generative AI tools could be effective based on the quality of prompts given by teachers, those tools sometimes showed inability to provide reliable suggestions.

This reinterpretation contributes to expanding what teachers learn and develop during the materials writing process. It argues that learning to accept the incongruity between principles and practices and raising awareness of using GenAI also play crucial roles in promoting a teacher's professional growth as a materials designer. These concepts are vital for designing EFL teacher training that provides knowledge of materials development and encourages teachers to apply teaching principles and technology based on different authentic working situations. Such concepts also invite EFL teachers, teacher trainers, and higher education institutions to rethink materials development, which might contribute to professional development, more critically and diversely.

Self-study in materials development

This self-study provides a close, insightful look at my cognition and practices during my novel experience in writing one unit for the ESP coursebook. This supports another self-study conducted by Asaoka et al. (2020). The self-study helped the researchers understand the participant-researcher's perspectives based on the new experience of incorporating a new speaking activity into speaking class. Moreover, the self-study highlights the crucial role of my critical friend in transforming my interpretations of the data. According to Doubet (2020), engaging with a critical friend helps a participant-researcher navigate data analysis by introducing new perspectives, asking questions, and challenging interpretations. The different points of view provided by a critical friend through discussion could create a shared vision, promoting teacher professional development (Gonzalez Smith, 2019). In this self-study, the dialogue between my critical friend and me demonstrated the contradiction between what I believed and what I did. For example, during the materials writing process, I focused on creating learning activities to be appropriate for my students' English proficiency. After discussing this topic with my critical friend, however, I found that this coursebook might not serve students' needs due to the lack of needs analysis. As similarly observed in the study of Cassandra et al. (2026), the critical friend could pinpoint the gap in the researcher-teacher's practice. Thus, the analysis of reflective diaries and the dialogue session in this self-study led to my enhanced knowledge of materials

development and other teaching and learning principles, fostering my professional development in ELT. Moreover, this self-study illustrates contextualized findings which could help other EFL teachers to rethink their principles, practices and professional development when they create in-house materials.

Conclusion

This self-study research contributes to deeper understandings of in-house EFL coursebook development by highlighting considerations into creating an English language coursebook unit. These findings could benefit teachers who are interested in developing in-house coursebooks. Furthermore, the findings present ELT materials development as effective self-directed professional development. By using their own initiative, teachers can sharpen their materials-development, pedagogical, and technological skills. However, fostering teachers' knowledge and skills for in-house materials development requires support from teacher trainers and higher education institutions. To complement their own experiences, teachers should attend training courses to be able to develop in-house coursebooks more effectively and in a theoretically-grounded way. Moreover, teacher trainers could gather information on teachers' considerations when creating coursebooks and use strategies that encourage them to be competent materials developers. In this way, higher education institutions should provide adequate financial support for teachers to attend materials development workshops so that they can develop in-house coursebooks to meet curriculum's expectations and practically serve their local contexts.

Despite offering useful insights, this qualitative self-study has some limitations. Given the nature of a single-participant design, readers should transfer these findings with caution concerning differences between this study context and their own settings. Nevertheless, this study provided rich, contextualized findings to enable teachers and researchers to assess the transferability. Moreover, in spite of the initial stage of corpus-assisted analysis and collaboration with the second researcher as a critical friend, the study could still be subject to potential self-report bias, as I engaged in this research as both the participant and the first researcher. The data were also collected from only reflective diaries. Future research should employ more research instruments for methodological triangulation, for instance, conducting a semi-structured interview before the writing process. Moreover, research on challenges during the writing process can be carried out. Exploring the challenges associated with this process could offer deeper insights into teachers' concerns when they are assigned to develop materials to meet requirements of language courses in specific contexts.

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The authors adhere to the LLT Generative AI Policy. Generative AI was used solely for language editing. The presentation of the findings and all other intellectual content are the authors' original work.

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Appendix

The complete coursebook unit that the first author developed in this self-study is available at this following link (https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.30993937).