Investigating expertise in textbook writing: Insights from a case study of an experienced materials writer at work

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Abstract

Although there is a body of literature dedicated to the theme of materials design, resources focused on the empirical investigation of textbook development are lacking. This factor provided the impetus for a study of expertise in textbook writing, to discover how an experienced materials designer went about his work, in order to identify how the writer approached textbook development. The aim of this work was to offer a research-informed view of expertise in textbook design.

In studying expertise in textbook design, the researcher gathered data – via the use of interviewing, concurrent verbalisation and stimulated recall – from this established educational materials developer for the purpose of forming a case study of his writing practices. Using a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to data analysis, themes were teased out from the data which provide a look at how expertise in textbook writing is manifested. Preliminary results of this analysis point to certain strategies and techniques that the experienced designer used when engaged in the work of textbook development.

In this paper, the author will focus on how empirical research can inform textbook design. With this aim in mind, the motivation for the project will be described, followed by a description of the study. Lastly, characteristics of the writer will be discussed in the section on research findings.

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The centrality of textbooks

In recent years, the number of English language teaching (ELT) materials produced for commercial purposes has grown at a steady rate to take account of the multitude of learning situations that exist in the world today. Materials writers and publishers are keen to address the needs and desires of learners, teachers, administrators, governmental bodies, and parents and to capitalise on areas of the ELT market which as yet remain unexploited. And while some educators may lament the use of these mass-produced teaching tools – Allwright (1981, p. 9) postulates that "The whole business of the management of language learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily catered for by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching materials" – the reality is that teaching materials, particularly textbooks, play a vital role in most language learning contexts. In fact, Davison (1976) says that "After the teacher, the next most important factor in the foreign-language classroom is the textbook" (p. 310). And Sheldon (1988) contends that textbooks "represent for both students and teachers the visible heart of any ELT programme" (p. 237).

Rationale for the research project

As a result of the growth in the ELT textbook market, as well as the importance placed on these products within the classroom context, there seems to be increasing interest in the development of textbooks (see, for instance, Tomlinson, 2003; and McGrath, 2002). Yet, despite this interest, relatively little is known about how textbooks are written in practice. With regard to this point, Samuda explains that "Most accounts of what is involved in the process of materials development have been largely based on experienced writers' own intuitions of what they do, and examples from published materials" (2005, p. 235). And while this literature may provide a basis for instruction on textbook development, it nevertheless offers scant research-based insight into how textbooks are actually written by seasoned professionals who work in the trade.

The one notable exception to this situation is research in the area of expert pedagogic task design (Samuda, 2005; Johnson, 2003; Johnson, 2000; Ormerod & Ridgway, 1999; Ridgway, Ormerod & Johnson, 1999; Samuda, Johnson & Ridgway, 2000). This work has mainly involved empirical study of the principles that experienced task designers use when developing language learning activities, which has provided a foundation for understanding the writing proficiencies of experts. But textbook design is, in fact, much more than task design; it involves the development not only of tasks, but of whole units which must fit together seamlessly in order reflect a coherent end product. Thus, there is room to expand the research on materials production to take into account whole textbook design. It is this niche that I aimed to address by carrying out an empirical study of expertise in ELT textbook writing – expertise being characterised as "effortlessly acquired abilities, abilities that carry [individuals] beyond what nature has specifically prepared [them] to do" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 3) – in order to discover how an experienced textbook designer

went about his work; i.e. what "criteria and skills" were used by this author when composing materials (Ridgway, Ormerod & Johnson, 1999, p. 8). In so doing, I addressed the following areas of inquiry in the research:

1. How did the experienced textbook writer who participated in the study go about his work; what processes and procedures did the writer follow when developing a textbook?
2. What facets of expertise were revealed in the work of the experienced textbook writer who participated in the study?

Using an expertise approach

In a project like this one, which focused on the empirical study of an experienced participant, "the analysis of expertise is characterised by the examination of the cognitive processes employed by subjects classified as experts…in a particular subject-matter domain as they perform domain-specific tasks," in this case textbook development (Housner & Griffey, 1985, p. 46). The empirical nature of this project seemed appropriate since I was interested in discovering what the established textbook writer who participated in the study actually did in his work. This was important because, "If we know what constitutes expertise in an area, we will be provided with essential information on which to base the training of experts" (Johnson, 2003, p. 6). And although it is not yet known whether expertise can be taught, part of the reasoning behind this research – similar to the investigation of expertise in pedagogical task design described in Johnson (2003) – was to explore that prospect.

The role of experience in participant selection

In order to study textbook writing expertise, I collected empirical data from the participant –TW1 (or Textbook Writer One) – as he was composing a series of units for a European-oriented ELT textbook-development project designed for special needs students with cognitive learning disabilities. This was a cooperative endeavour whereby TW1 worked along with a group of special needs teachers and psychologists who consulted on the project. When the project commenced, TW1 had been writing ELT textbooks and materials for more than five years on a professional basis. In addition to his textbook-writing duties, he was also teaching materials development to graduate students. In total, he had been employed as a teacher and teacher trainer for 21 years both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

TW1's amount of design experience as specified above – five years – is consistent with the criteria for identifying experts as set out in Johnson (2003). In that research, while Johnson notes that independent means of expert verification are important, he does initially identify expert participants in his study as those individuals who have been engaged in task design full-time for five years (2003, p. 16-

17). In relying on this type of "'external' or 'social' criteria" for the identification of experts, the implication is that "an expert is someone who is recognised as one within society," very often by length of service in a particular field (Johnson, 2003, p. 138). This is consistent with a number of other expertise studies like Housner and Griffey (1985); Sabers, Cushing and Berliner (1991); and Clarridge (1990) which use five years of service – as well as participant observation and colleague nominations in the case of the second two studies – as the means for identifying experts. And while there are problems with equating expertise with experience, "it is impossible to develop expertise without experience" (Tsui, 2005, p. 169).

A multidimensional approach to data collection

Constructing a case study of the textbook writer

In this project, I collected data from the participant introduced above through the use of interviews, concurrent verbalisation and stimulated recall to formulate a case study of him in action. It was hoped that by combining these data-collection techniques instead of just relying on one research method, a fuller picture of what was involved in textbook writing could be achieved. This was because the approaches chosen were designed to address various aspects of expertise in textbook design which, when used in combination in the development of a case study, provided unique insight into the whole nature of textbook authoring, thereby addressing the research questions asked in the study.

While multiple methods were chosen specifically to address different issues in this study, the principle of triangulation was also thereby addressed. In the context of social science research, "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2003, p. 148). But, since case studies are essentially not repeatable, it also "serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen" (Flick, 1998; Silverman, 1993; and Smith, 1994 as cited in Stake, 2003, p. 148).

The choices regarding methodology in this research study were made after having dedicated much thought to the goal of the project – to develop a better understanding of expertise in textbook writing in order to help others to master the craft – since, "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake, 2003, p. 134). In essence, the phenomena of expertise in this study seemed to call for the employment of this qualitative approach, whereby the richness of the data gathered helped to build an understanding of the processes and practices followed by TW1. In other words, "utilizing the case study method is useful specifically in cases [like this one] where one is trying to identify essential and detailed features from individual programmes and projects" (Patton, 1987, p. 19 as cited in Virtanen, 2002, p. 97).

I will now move on to focus on the individual research techniques that were used to gather data for the case study under discussion.

Interviewing

In order to delve into the practice of textbook writing from the point of view of the participant (for the purpose of constructing a case study of his work), I interviewed TW1 before his think-aloud sessions in order to gain a clearer understanding of his educational background, his teaching and textbook-writing experience, his own views on his work, and his approaches to the project at hand, and after the periods of concurrent and retrospective verbalisation – of which there were four in total – to clear up any uncertainties about his writing processes. And since this research focused on the process of the experienced textbook writer's efforts, it was crucial that I captured some glimpse of his cognitive musings. For this reason, I chose to restrict my questions to the open-ended variety during the interview sessions that occurred in order to collect as complete a picture of the textbook writer's thought processes as possible while attempting to reduce the impact of the researcher's impressions of the development procedure on TW1's responses. This is in line with the conception of interviewing within the interactionist tradition in which "interviewees are viewed as experiencing subjects who actively construct their social worlds; the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences; the main ways to achieve this are unstructured, open-ended interviews" (Silverman, 1993, p. 91). It was also hoped that this style of interviewing would help to add validity to the study by allowing TW1 to reveal himself through the course of the interview interactions.

Concurrent verbalisation

In order to study the participant's cognitive processes, I chose to utilise the research technique of concurrent verbalisation, which helped to ensure the provision of a rich data set from which to extract observations about textbook development. This data collection technique has been widely used in studies of expertise (see, for example, Ball, Evans, Dennis & Ormerod, 1997; and Swanson, O'Connor & Cooney, 1990) and is valued for its ability to allow the researcher at least some glimpse of what is happening inside the minds of participants, even if that glimpse is sometimes incomplete and somewhat distorted due to the fact that it is self-reported data.

In concurrent verbalisation, a participant is asked to say aloud everything that comes to mind while he or she is engaged in a certain activity, thereby producing a think-aloud protocol of their cognitions from which the researcher can deduce conclusions regarding the subject under investigation. This particular introspective method was chosen in order to help capture, with some degree of immediacy, the cognitive activities of TW1 as he worked on his textbook development project. In particular, the technique "has the advantage of gaining access to a deep and broad pool of information about the writing process without unduly distorting it" (Swarts, Flower & Hayes, 1984, pp. 55-56).

The point has been raised, with respect to verbal protocoling, that the data from such reports is extensive, requiring a great deal of time and effort to transcribe, code, and analyze. It seems that "Protocols offer so much information that it is sometimes hard to know how to design productive research questions that are manageable" (Swarts, Flower & Hayes, 1984, p. 56). For this reason, I chose to focus on one textbook writer for the case study project, following the advice of Ericsson and Smith (1991): "Analysis of think-aloud verbalisations is time-consuming, and therefore researchers in expertise using these types of data tend to collect data on…individual subjects for a large number of tasks (case studies)" (p. 20).

Stimulated recall

In an attempt to build a more complete understanding of the cognitive elements involved in textbook writing, I also decided to use the technique of stimulated recall in data collection. With stimulated recall, a participant carries out a task and is then asked to verbalise on the act once it is finished. Often, the subject is video taped while he or she is performing the activity, which allows the researcher to play the tape back for the informant during the recall period. The participant is then given the opportunity to stop the video at suitable times to report on their thought processes during the act of completing the task. Gass and Mackey (2000), in citing Bloom (1954, p. 25), explain the reasoning behind this procedure: "Through the use of stimulated recall, 'a subject may be enabled to relive an original situation with great vividness and accuracy if he [or she] is presented with a large number of the cues or stimuli which occurred during the original situation'" (p. 17).

In the case of my study, by viewing a video tape made of a design session – during which concurrent verbalisation also occurred – TW1 was encouraged to experience again the act of textbook writing in order to comment upon it, which provided him with the opportunity to reveal aspects of his thinking with regard to textbook development. And by supplementing the data collected in the think-aloud protocols with that gathered via the use of stimulated recall, the attempt was made to comply with the suggestion put forth by Smagorinsky (1989) that, "A composite picture from both retrospective and concurrent protocols might yield the corroboration necessary to draw strong conclusions" from introspective data (p. 472).

Transcription and examination of the research data

Transcription

After collecting data for the project via the methods set out above, the results were set out for analysis using a broad system of transcription, which "[provided] a level of detail similar to that found in scripts of plays and in courtroom proceedings" (Edwards, 1995, p. 20). This level of specificity seemed adequate for the phenomena I was studying since the nature of the research demanded a focus on TW1's

vocalisations about the act of textbook composition rather than on other features of his utterances.

Coding

Following transcription of TW1's textbook-writing sessions, I looked closely at the data to identify prominent motifs in the work and initial coding categories were developed based upon these subjects. In this way, categorisation of the data adhered to the "*coding paradigm*" described by Strauss (1987) in which this first sweep of the data could be described as "open coding" or "unrestricted coding of the data" where "[the] aim is to produce concepts that seem to fit the data" (pp. 27, 28, emphasis in original). Given that the coding themes were extracted directly from the data in this manner, coding proceeded via a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This mode of data analysis seemed to fit with the objectives of the study since the research essentially addressed a new avenue of inquiry within expertise study and ELT research.

Following the above-described process of open coding, whilst perusing the data on subsequent occasions, I refined the codes by engaging in "*axial coding*" or "intense analysis around one category at a time" which produced "cumulative knowledge about relationships between [one] category and other categories and subcategories" (Strauss, 1987, p. 32, emphasis in original). As this process proceeded, "linkages" were made between the categories that were identified as "'core'" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). The resultant useable system of categories was then subjected to "selective coding" whereby I "[delimited] coding to only those codes that [related] to the core codes in sufficiently significant ways as to be used in a parsimonious theory" of expertise in textbook writing (Strauss, 1987, p. 33).

Analysis

In the next stage of the project, the core coding categories and the parts of the data to which they referred were reviewed to identify meanings which were thought to be important to the emerging theory of expertise in textbook writing. The core codes were then grouped together according to their relationship to one another and to the parts they had to play in TW1's textbook design practices. And while it could be argued that this process began during the selective phase of coding described above, it indeed continued during the analysis stage of the project; this is in keeping with the tradition of qualitative research whereby stages of the research process oftentimes proceed in tandem (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, pp. 147, 148) due to the characteristically "holistic" nature of qualitative data (Brock-Utne, 1996, p. 609). Overarching headings were then assigned to the groups of codes in order to further organise the data for purposes of the case study write-up (see Appendix A for a list of these coding categories).

A close review of the aspects of the data listed above revealed a number of findings about the research topic. And while the generalisability of these findings is

limited due to the small-scale nature of the study, the results nevertheless point to areas of importance in developing a theory of expertise in textbook writing.

The research findings

Prior to addressing the research findings, I would like to note that TW1's approach to design was complex; therefore, I have had to be selective in the choice of topics under consideration here in order to keep within the limits of what is practicable within a paper of this length.

TW1's design process was cyclic in nature

In looking at the design process that TW1 followed, it must be stressed that his style of writing was characteristically cyclic in nature. This meant that rather than TW1 progressing through the design route in whole discrete steps, he instead tended to work through certain steps together in small repeated segments, sometimes repeatedly returning to what he had previously done in order to make changes or amendments for the sake of those principles which were important to the design of the book. TW1's adherence to this cyclic style of textbook designing indeed seemed to be evident, for example, in his attempts to address what he considered to be "bittiness" in the textbook (TW1, 2006b, line 295). In that case, his concerns with continuity, substance, variety and repetition – all design principles – led him to revisit certain activities on multiple occasions during data collection. In fact, during one concurrent verbalisation session (TW1, 2006b), TW1 took up the "bittiness" issue four separate times (lines 151, 295, 464, 620). In his efforts to remove this perceived "bittiness," TW1 engaged in trying out several ideas for activities but eventually problematised certain aspects of these possibilities – this was in the midst of engaging in other various steps in the design process. TW1 returned to the "bittiness" issue again during the stimulated recall session which followed, at which time he was still trying to work out how to address the problem:

> TW1: Ya I…think in relation to what I've said…before about it being a bit bitty and repetitive…I really…wanted some way of changing…the mode of it because it seemed to be all sort of listen react listen react…listen react produce a bit produce a bit and so on…And I wanted something that…they could just do more at their own pace like a reading text or something like that but it's difficult to do that because I don't think they've got much reading…ability in…L1 so what I'm…searching for is something which is a bit…less intensive on their concentration. (TW1, 2006b, lines 1042-1062)

In his efforts to alleviate what he perceived to be a "bittiness" problem in certain textbook sections, TW1 worked in a cyclic manner, re-examining these sections several times, thereby working through certain steps in the design process on multiple

occasions; this was done to ensure that the textbook indeed fitted with the design principles of the project and was appropriate for the intended audience of special needs learners.

The observance that good task designers sometimes design "*cyclically*" was made by Johnson (2003) in his study of pedagogic task design (p. 134, emphasis in original). This idea also seems to apply here, since the practice allowed TW1 to refine areas of the textbook in small sections while also taking into consideration the larger details that impacted upon the development of the entire book, such as the task of infusing continuity, substance, variety and repetition into the book, as mentioned above, as well as the need to introduce new concepts or vocabulary in little steps – another design principle – so as to avoid overloading the special needs learners for whom the textbook was being written. While designing in a cyclic fashion, TW1 engaged in constantly reviewing what had already been written, which constituted a step in the design process. For instance, when considering the matter of bittiness in the textbook, he repeatedly reviewed the activities he had written whilst attempting to refine them: "I think I need something with a bit more substance with all these mini dialogues. Let's go back through it and see what it looks like" (TW1, 2006b, lines 365-368). This practice of reviewing was also used by the good task designers in the research conducted by Johnson (2003) and effectively helped TW1 to avoid "[becoming] bogged down in consideration of one variable, losing track of the whole" since in materials design "a large number of variables have to be juggled with at the same time" (p. 113). Furthermore, as Johnson (2003) notes, cyclic design coupled with continual reviewing allows for an "'even descent into detail'" which guards against the occurrence of "a single variable [being] highly developed at an early stage" with the likely result "that the variable will control the task's development, possibly to an undesirable extent" (p. 134).

TW1's understanding of the design process helped him to clarify issues that arose during the writing of the textbook

Whilst TW1 was engaged in a seemingly complex design process when writing, he was also cognisant of the various stages of textbook development as he was working. Consequently, his transcripts were peppered with talk about these stages of design and the textbook-development cycle in general. Piloting was indeed a stage that was given some importance within the construction of the textbook. This was because TW1 seemed to rely at times on what was discovered during piloting in order to help him to proceed with design: "It might be a little bit of overkill on TPR but ah it seems to have gone down well in the practice lesson the pilot lesson" (TW1, 2006b, lines 462-463). In what follows TW1 makes it known why piloting was so important in a materials-writing endeavour of this nature.

> TW1: I mean one of the things that…some of the partners wanted was this…you know lessons must fit into a ninety minute block and so on and that was one of the things I was quite strongly against because I think when you're writing materials especially for a group

> you don't know at all…you just haven't got a clue…how long it will take…and as we're in the pilot stage I think we'd we'd be much better trying them out and the teacher saying this took 25 minutes…so then we can say to other teachers when it was piloted in Ulm with this group it took 25 minutes there's a what you would call a ball-park figure. (TW1, 2006c, lines 2093-2115)

In a case such as this where TW1 had no history of working with the group of learners for whom the book was designed, piloting was vital to working out the logistical aspects of the textbook.

TW1 acknowledged that piloting was also important when taking account of design principles. For instance, at several points during data collection he discussed how "varied repetition" (TW1, 2006c, lines 1451, 1169-1171) was an important aspect of design when writing for the intended audience of special needs learners: "And we've been told to take them in very little steps and that they need lots of repetition" (TW1, 2006b, lines 1030-1031). He further elaborated in relation to this point: "So ya this is they get multiple repetitions of the question but with different answers so they are getting that continuity but with a bit of variety which is really what we are trying to achieve with these" (TW1, 2006c, lines 1169-1171). But while repetition was a plus in the materials, TW1 was wary of adding too much of it to the textbook, thereby building monotony into the units. He commented that piloting was useful in helping to determine where to draw the line with repetition: "It would be helpful if you could watch watch somebody do this with a class and see if it is too repetitive work them all out or if the continuity's is actually a good thing" (TW1, 2006b, lines 656-658).

In TW1's awareness of the design process, as exemplified by his recognition of the value of piloting, the author was displaying what Johnson (2003, p. 133) describes as "metacognition" or "strategies used to monitor, assess and manage behaviour." Johnson notes that "[metacognition]…is generally thought to be associated with expertise" and, indeed, in the case of TW1, the metacognitive statements made with regard to piloting seemed to help him to clarify issues within the design of the textbook (p. 133).

TW1 took guidance from outside sources in order to meet learners' needs when writing the textbook

While TW1 was writing a textbook designed for individuals with special needs, he acknowledged during data collection that he himself had never had any experience with teaching or designing materials for such students. Furthermore, when asked what sort of cognitive learning disabilities the students had, he said that "It seems to cover quite a range and this is something that we're really not sure about until we pilot them" (TW1, 2006c, lines 105-106). Although TW1 admitted that he was flying blind in this area of textbook design, this factor did not seem to hamper his ability to envisage ideas for the textbook or for how it would be used. This was because TW1 abided by the design principles which had been set out during conceptualisation of the project by the previously-mentioned team of seven psychologists and special needs teachers who

had had contact with groups of learners similar to those for whom the textbook was intended. And in his capacity as ELT Specialist on the project, TW1 was able to mesh these design principles with certain methodological concepts in English language teaching – like Total Physical Response, for instance – in order to develop workable ideas for the textbook. In the following transcript selection TW1 outlines some of the principles adhered to in the project for learners with special needs:

> TW1: Well the materials were amply justly received by the first pilot class which I'm pleased about because I don't think they're particularly revolutionary I just think that I think what we're doing is just to make things extra clear and extra systematic and build in a lot more physical activity than I normally would do but other than that I don't think there's anything in the principles which is very different from mainstream teaching perhaps I like to say that it's the same the same ingredients but a different recipe. (TW1, 2006c, lines 5-11)

Here TW1 acknowledged that "Supporting learners who have difficulties is not usually about making radical changes in the classroom, but about ensuring that the materials, environment and teaching methods are adapted, if necessary, to match different needs" (Smith, 2007, p. 181). And the design principles TW1 discussed during data collection were indeed intended to reflect the needs of the target group of learners, which, along with the needs of the teachers – the other end users of the textbook – were his uppermost priority. This was regardless of his knowledge of their learning challenges, since "putting a name to a difficulty is not always necessary; as teachers it is not usually our job to diagnose, but to respond to the needs of the individuals in our classes" (Smith, 2007, pp. 180-181).

While it was the principles of the textbook project which guided TW1's writing practices, it was his willingness to follow those principles, as well as the advice of the other individuals working on the book, that provided a view of his expertise. In other words, TW1 was experienced enough to know when his experience was insufficient and was open to looking to outside sources for the materials writing guidance he needed when he deemed it necessary or desirable.

TW1's variety of experience helped him to see how the textbook would be used in practice

As stated above, TW1's focus was on the end users of the textbook, and his efforts were directed towards making the package of materials as user friendly as possible not only for students but also for teachers. Furthermore, it seemed that his experience as a teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer helped him to conceptualise how the book would ultimately be used by educators. In fact, his ability to view the act of textbook development from several vantage points enabled him to articulate the intended teacher training function of the textbook.

> TW1: I think that one of the main aims is actually to to give teachers…an idea what kind of materials you can use what kind of activities…might work what kind of methodology…might work so rather than us producing masses of coursebooks I think we're just trying to produce something which will be a good source of ideas…An exemplar which is a bit too strong a word but…A framework. (TW1, 2006c, lines 1900-1919)

As a teacher and teacher trainer he recognised the influential role that materials play in the classroom, and as a textbook writer he was able to translate this knowledge into a comprehensible format. It seemed that his expertise, which had been shaped by his various employment experiences within the field of education, helped him to visualise the roles that the textbook would play.

TW1 respected teacher and student autonomy while also satisfying educational aims

Given that TW1 had extensive experience not only as a creator, but also as an end user of teaching materials, it seemed natural that there was evidence in the transcripts of his respect for those teachers who would be using the developing textbook. In those instances, he placed some degree of importance on teacher autonomy within the design of the textbook and its package components, i.e. the teacher's notes, teacher's manual, accompanying video, and so forth.

> TW1: I think the idea is…to really get over to the teachers that it's meant to be used flexibly…and that there might be eight activities in a unit but that they're not necessarily meant to use all of them if they don't want to…They can slot in. (TW1, 2006c, lines 255-265)

In this way, TW1 acknowledged the professionalism of the teachers, promoting the idea that how they made use of the textbook in the classroom was just as important as the textbook itself.

While TW1 actively promoted teacher autonomy in designing the textbook package, he did so with a guiding hand. This was done not only to provide for teacher training but also to help to ensure that the learning objectives of the textbook were fulfilled. The transcript segment to follow exemplifies how TW1 accomplished this balancing act:

> TW1: "Make two groups." I'll make it absolutely explicit. Um "the first group" …"to put" all the body parts all the sticky parts "all the sticky labels in the right place is the winner." Alright. Now what do we do with all these when they go in the right place? Um something like Simon Says but I've done that in a previous unit but can put it there as an option. Oh ya I need to say I need to say which words as well don't I or do I should I give them the freedom? But it might even in future activities so I need to specify at least a few of those

> um. Um. Alright ya ok. I'll give them the option but I'll specify some um role plays um…"Consider how many body parts to teach. Please include" what do you want "head back knee stomach" head back knees stomach shoulder how can you "shoulder tooth." (TW1, 2006b, lines 577-590)

Here, although TW1 provided for some degree of independence in how the textbook activities were used in the classroom – in this case by supplying options – he did make specific suggestions to the teachers in order to ensure that certain target vocabulary was recycled within the book, thereby helping to advance one of the educational aims of the textbook: L2 lexical development. This practice also helped contribute to continuity within the book, which was one of the principles promoted in its design.

Just as TW1 was proactive in supporting teacher autonomy within the design of the textbook, so too was he committed to the idea of promoting independent learning among students who would be using the book. Once again, this tendency reflected his overall concern for those who would be engaging with the textbook when it was completed. The following transcript segment provided evidence of this concern for the learners:

> TW1: I just think…the script this is actually what I was thinking about before I think it's important to let the students off the leash a little bit because everything else is so tightly controlled for good reasons but I think they need a an opportunity just to let rip as it were. (TW1, 2006a, lines 61-64)

In other words, TW1 was determined to allow the students some degree of freedom in making use of the textbook – even though literacy, mobility, et cetera could be challenging for the book's intended audience, and this often led to the necessary incorporation of what might be considered rather restrictive rubrics.

In his advancement of teacher and learner autonomy, which was coupled with his desire to promote the educational goals of the textbook, TW1 was again revealing an element of his expertise – the ability to keep a number of considerations in mind when progressing through the design of the book. Johnson (2003) calls this characteristic "maximum variable control" and he notes that in the case of the good task designers who took part in his study, this attribute enabled them to "produce tasks…with attention given to a wide range of variables so that their tasks [were] sensitive to as many issues and constraints as possible" (p. 137).

Conclusion

To summarise, the findings of the study revealed the following aspects of TW1's textbook-writing expertise:

- TW1's design process was cyclic in nature.
- TW1's understanding of the design process helped him to clarify issues that arose during the writing of the textbook.
- TW1 took guidance from outside sources in order to meet learners' needs when writing the textbook.
- TW1's variety of experience helped him to see how the textbook would be used in practice.
- TW1 respected teacher and student autonomy while also satisfying educational aims.

These preliminary results seem to provide some evidence to support the idea that experience in English language teaching and teacher training may have a part to play in expertise in ELT textbook writing. TW1's experience in these areas certainly appeared to influence his textbook-writing practices, and the empirical work carried out in this study was key to uncovering this point.

I intend to explore the ties between these fields in greater depth during continued study of TW1 and another ELT textbook writer, whereby the work discussed here will provide a starting point for further research-based investigation in the area of expertise in ELT textbook writing. It is hoped that insights gained from the project will be useful in helping to improve training in the area of textbook design.

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Appendix A – Coding categories

Design principles

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Clarity	Reference to a clear style of writing in the units/textbook
Continuity	Existence of a connection between the textbook units
Flexibility	Reference to the flexible use of the units/textbook
Progression	Progression in the textbook from one unit to the next
Simplicity	Reference to simple language being used to write the textbook
Naturalness	Reference to the naturalness of the language being used to write the textbook
Fun	An element of fun being incorporated into the textbook
Repetition	Incorporating repetition into the textbook
Variety	Incorporating variety into the textbook
Stimulating	Reference to the textbook/parts of the textbook being interesting
Familiarity	Designing the textbook units so that the structure is familiar across the units
Little steps	Proceeding slowly while introducing elements that are unfamiliar to the students
Substance	Incorporating depth into the design of the textbook
Originality	Reference to originality or lack thereof in the units/textbook
Useful	Incorporating an element of practicality into the textbook
Humour	Incorporating an element of humour into the textbook
Physical activity	Incorporating physical activity into the design of the textbook
Real life	Incorporating an element of reality into the textbook

Design process

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Reviewing	Looking back over the units/textbook
Feedback	Feedback given about aspects/sections of the textbook
Expansion	Expanding upon what has already been written
Planning	The planning that occurs in materials writing
Collaborate	Collaboration between those working on the textbook-writing project
Finalising	Expressing that a part of the textbook is complete
Considering alternatives	Taking into account various options
Problematise	Complexifying the writing process by considering problems that could occur with the design of the textbook
Break	Reference to taking a break while writing the textbook

Revising	Revising/adapting the textbook units
Piloting	Piloting of the textbook units
Rejects idea	Deciding not to use an idea in designing the textbook
Switches focus	Leaving one part of the textbook to work on another
Uses resources	Drawing upon a reference source or source of artwork in designing the textbook
Trying out idea	Trying out an idea when designing the textbook units
Ideas flowing	Noting points at which the thoughts concerning the design of the textbook are easy to come by
Recycling	Incorporating language used in previous units into those that follow
Return in future	Stating the intention to resume working on a part of the textbook in the future
Write it down	Reference made to putting something down on paper
Changes mind	A point at which the participant changes his mind during the design process
Routine	Following a routine when designing materials

Commercial aspects of the textbook

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Marketing	Reference to marketing considerations
Publishing	Reference to publishing considerations
Credibility	Reference to the issue of credibility in the commercial distribution of the textbook

Participant's experience

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Design experience	The participant's experience in materials/textbook design
Linguistic reference	The participant uses linguistic terminology
Teaching experience	The participant's teaching experience
Teacher training experience	The participant's experience as a teacher trainer
Education	The participant's education
Materials writing training	The materials writing training that the participant has received
Writer enters materials	The participant refers to his being a native speaker of English in regard to the design of the textbook
Preference	The participant expresses a preference

Open to revision	The participant accepts that revision is part of the textbook writing experience
Efficiency	Efficiency in materials writing
Repertoire	Drawing from repertoire when writing the units/textbook

Design considerations

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Materials framework	The framework for the units/textbook
Language	The language used in the textbook
Design freedom	Being free from constraints in designing the units/textbook
Sequence	The sequence of aspects of the textbook/textbook components
Timing	References made to time
Layout	The physical layout of the units/textbook
Literacy	Reference made to the target group of learners being able to read and write
Guidelines	Reference to the design principles guiding the writing of the textbook
Constraints	Restrictions in place in the design of the units/textbook
Syllabus	Consideration given to the syllabus in the design of the textbook
Work space	The textbook writing environment

Textbook components

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Video	Reference to the video feature of the textbook package
Audio	Reference to the audio feature of the textbook package
Teacher's manual	Reference to the teacher's manual component of the textbook package
Teacher's notes	Reference to the teacher's notes component of the textbook package
Art	Reference to the artistic elements of the textbook
Rubric	Instructions to the students
Listening work	Listening activities in the units/textbook
Speaking work	Speaking activities in units/textbook
Writing work	Writing activities in the units/textbook
Text-based work	Reading activities and related tasks in the units/textbook
Comprehension work	Comprehension activities in the units/textbook
Realia	Reference to using realia within the design of the units/textbook
Dialogue	The dialogues that are used in the units/textbook

Monologue	The monologues that are used in the units/textbook
Activation option	Options to help get the students to practice the vocabulary built into the textbook units
Optional activities	Optional activities for the learners built into the textbook, teacher's notes or teacher's manual
Recast activities	The recast activities that are built into the textbook
Headings	The headings used in the textbook
Relaxed activity	An activity designed to enable the students to have a rest

Participant's personal development

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Interest in design	Expressing interest in the process of textbook design
Self-reflection	Reflecting upon the textbook-writing process
Influence	The influences that have had an effect on the participant as a materials writer
Principles	Reference to materials design that is based on certain principles
Task typology	Reference to the participant's self-constructed typology of ELT tasks

Use of the textbook/textbook components

Code name	*Explanation of code*
Consideration for users	Taking the learners'/teachers' needs, feelings or desires into account
Learner knowledge	Things known/unknown about the students who will use the textbook
Teacher knowledge	Things known/unknown about or known by the teachers who will use the textbook
Materials in use	Considering how the textbook/textbook components will be used in practice
Teacher autonomy	Acknowledging that the teachers are professionals who are capable of using the textbook/textbook units as they see fit
Student autonomy	Enabling the students to express themselves while using the textbook
Teacher training	The textbook serves a teacher training function
Reliance on teachers	Counting on the teachers to carry out activities