

# A Systematic Approach to Making Textbook Supplements

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Many teachers have little or no say in coursebook selection, and despite publisher claims that coursebooks provide everything a teacher requires, no coursebook can actually satisfy all student and teacher needs. Therefore, many teachers make their own materials to be used as supplements for their textbook. This paper introduces a systematic approach developed by the author called ACoPE: analyze, consult, produce and evaluate. First, teacher-writers analyze their textbooks to determine the theme, linguistic features and the communicative functions of the coursebook. Next, teachers consult other teaching materials to find alternatives to their current textbook. After this, teacher-writers produce supplements based on the analysis and consultation. Finally, teacher-writers evaluate the effectiveness of the supplement after using it in class, and make any changes that are needed. Using the ACoPE system can simplify and reduce the amount of time needed to create supplemental materials.

多くの教員には教科書を選ぶ権限がほとんどあるいは一切無い。出版会社曰く、教科書は教員の需要を全て満たすものらしいが、全ての生徒ならびに教員を満足させることのできる教科書など存在しない。従って、多くの教員が教科書の補足材料として独自の教材を作成する。本論では、著者が生み出した『AcoPE (分析、検討、作成、評価)』という組織的手法を紹介する。教材を作成する教員は、第一に、教科書を分析してそのテーマ・言語的特性・情報伝達機能を見極める。第二に、他の教材を検討し、現時点での教材の代用を探す。その後、前述の分析と検討に基づいて独自の教材を作成する。最後に、実際に授業で補足教材を使用した後、その内容を評価し、必要に応じて修正を加える。AcoPEシステムを使用することにより、補足教材を作成する際の手順を単純化し、所要時間を削減することが可能となる。

**W**HY SHOULD teachers supplement commercially available textbooks? One often noted reason is that many teachers are not satisfied with their coursebooks (Harwood, 2010; McGrath, 2013). This dissatisfaction often stems from the fact that many teachers have little or no say in coursebook selection, as textbooks are chosen by administrators (Byrd, 2001; Islam & Mares, 2003). Another reason for creating supplementary materials is because, despite publisher claims of providing “everything a user needs” (McGrath, 2002, p. 80), rarely do coursebooks deliver on such claims. This is also discussed by Byrd and Schuemann (2014), who acknowledge that no textbook perfectly matches all teaching situations. Probably the most common reason that teachers supplement their textbooks is that they feel their students need greater exposure to more and varied material than what is in the book (McGrath, 2002). However, there are also more practical reasons. McDonough, Shaw, and Masuharu (2013) provide a detailed list, such as the text being too easy, too difficult, or not culturally appropriate. They also note that one of the most common reasons for

supplementing is simply that the coursebook does not have enough material to cover the allotted time.

In 2013 and 2014, the general English program at Kyoto Sangyo University was a semi-coordinated one, meaning that all teachers had to use the same textbook, and all of the students had to take the same exam at the end of the semester. The program coordinators were aware of the issues with textbooks discussed above and deliberately chose textbooks that were as generic as possible, with only enough material to cover approximately 50% of the class time. Teachers were free to use the material in the textbook however they wished and were free to fill the remaining time however they saw fit. Some of my colleagues gave the students projects, some included presentations, and others photocopied material from other texts. As for myself, I chose to create my own supplemental handouts that integrated well with the textbook, but did not simply repeat the same tasks and activities over again. However, as other materials writers have noted, creating supplementary handouts is time consuming (Saraceni, 2003) and I found that writing six A4 pages of supplementary handouts per week proved to be quite a challenge. To overcome this challenge, I developed a system to make supplementing textbooks much faster, easier, and more efficient. The name that I have for this four-step system is ACoPE: analyze, consult, produce, and evaluate. Using this system, I have been able to reduce the amount of time needed to create supplements from 8-10 hours a week to 4-6 hours per week.

## The ACoPE System

### Analyze

The first step in the process is to analyze. Many teachers are familiar with conducting a needs analysis of the students, but in my experience, many teachers do not do much analysis of the textbook they are using beyond the simple “flick test” (Bell & Gower, 1998, p. 125),

especially if they are teaching in a coordinated program in which the teachers are assigned a textbook. Again in my experience, many teachers are content to simply teach what is in the book, without looking into the purposes, reasons, or organization of the textbook.

Most textbooks are well organized and have been systematically created, and it is helpful for a teacher to spend some time learning how the book he or she is using is organized. Byrd and Schuemann (2014) noted that there are two main “strands of content” (p. 386), the linguistic content and the thematic content. McDonough, Shaw, and Masuharu (2013) felt that textbooks have several organizing principals used to create “multi-component” (p. 296) lessons. Borrowing from these two ideas, the ACoPE system operates under the assumption that each unit in a general studies EFL textbook can be separated into three main parts: the linguistic features, the communicative goals or functions, and the context or theme of the lesson. Each of these parts work together, along with the skills (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening) to create learning activities that comprise a full EFL lesson. Each of these component parts offers a teacher an opportunity to supplement the lesson.

For example, Unit 4 of *English Firsthand Success* (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010), one of the textbooks assigned for the general English program at Kyoto Sangyo University, is a unit on directions, a topic that many teachers struggle to supplement, and can be taken as an example. The text uses all four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The linguistic features of the unit (i.e., the grammar) are prepositions of place (e.g., *next to*, *to the right of*). The context of the unit is places around town (e.g., a bank, a bookstore, a theater, etc.). Finally, the communicative goal of the unit is giving and understanding directions. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of *English Firsthand Success*  
Unit Four

Unit	Linguistic features	Communicative goals	Context and/or theme	Skills
4: How do I get there	Prepositions of place	Giving and understanding directions	Places around town	Reading, writing, speaking, listening

The unit has a series of commonly used learning activities, for example, students listen to directions on the CD, look at a map in the textbook, and label the locations. In another activity students look at a map and give their partner directions to various locations and their partner fills in the blanks on their own map.

To create a supplementary handout, teacher-writers can use the ACoPE system as a starting point to align the handout with any one of the three parts of the textbook. That is to say they can write a supplement that expands on one of the parts, such as the communicative goal of giving and understanding directions. Alternatively, teachers can create a supplement that has extra practice with the linguistic features, prepositions of place. Teacher-writers could also create a supplement that has extra practice related to the theme of places around town. Please see the Consult and Produce sections below for a more detailed discussion.

At first glance this analysis appears to be difficult and time consuming, but in truth, most of the information needed for the analysis can be found on the table of contents pages of most coursebooks. It usually lists all the learning activities, including the desired outcomes, and tasks, as well as the grammar and vocabulary covered and the context of the lessons.

## Consult

The second step of the ACoPE supplement system is consult. Basically this is to consult other EFL coursebooks to see how other teachers and authors have addressed and presented the elements that the analysis has identified. What communicative functions have other authors paired with the same linguistic elements (i.e., the grammar and vocabulary)? What contexts have other teacher-writers used for similar communicative goals or outcomes?

This is not a new idea. As early as 1987, Hutchinson and Waters recommended that teachers look to already published teaching materials for ideas. More recently Kleon (2012) discussed at length the notion that creativity is not to make something entirely original, but that creativity is a reworking of other people's ideas, based on what has come before, to make something new.

With the ACoPE system, I am not suggesting that teachers consult other textbooks and then violate the copyright of the other textbooks by photocopying the material. Nor do I endorse teachers retyping the published material in an effort to mask the theft. I suggest that teachers look to other teachers and authors for inspiration for creating unique supplements that borrow an element of existing work.

To turn again to Unit 4 of *English Firsthand Success* (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010), giving and understanding directions, teacher-writers can look at other textbooks to see what other combinations of language, purpose, and context can be applied.

For example, Unit 3 of *Passport to Work* (Buckingham & Whitney, 2002) has the same communicative purpose of giving and understanding directions, but instead of setting the unit in the context of places around town, the context is places around the office. Additionally, instead of focusing on prepositions of place, it has students practicing *wh*-questions. Inspired by this, teachers could write a supplementary handout that has the students look at a map of an interior space, say a map of the school, or perhaps a shopping mall,

and have students practice giving and understanding directions inside instead of outside.

Another example comes from *Basic Tactics for Listening* (Richards, 2003), Unit 21. In this unit, the communicative goal of the lesson is understanding directions, and the context of the lesson, places around town, is the same as Unit 4 in *English Firsthand Success* (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010), although the linguistic feature of the activity is not prepositions of place, but sequencing adverbs (e.g., *first*, *next*, *then*, etc.). Inspired by this lesson, teacher-writers could come up with a supplementary handout that has the students focusing on these adverbs, instead of prepositions.

One final example comes from *Spectrum 3* (Frankfort & Dye, 1994), Lesson 32. The context of the lesson is the same as *English Firsthand Success*, places around town, but the communicative function is asking for advice and the linguistic element is superlatives. Again, teacher-writers could create a supplement that flows from the textbook by keeping the same context, but focusing on a different communicative goal instead of giving and understanding directions. For example, teachers could have the students ask each other for advice on the best place to buy shoes or school supplies.

What is needed for the successful implementation of the Consult step of the ACoPE system, is a quick analysis of different EFL coursebooks. Again, most of this information can be found on the table of contents pages.

Table 2. Summary of *English Firsthand Success* Unit Four and Other Consulted Textbooks

Text and unit	Linguistic features	Communicative goals	Context and/or theme	Skills
EFHS, Unit 4	Prepositions of place	Giving and understanding directions	Places around town	Reading, writing, speaking, listening
PTW, Unit 3	Wh-questions	Giving and understanding directions	Places around the office	Reading, speaking, listening
BTFL, Unit 21: Task 4	Sequencing adverbs	Understanding directions	Places around town	Reading, listening
Spectrum 3, Lesson 32	Superlatives of adjectives	Asking for advice	Places around town	Reading, speaking, listening

*Note.* Areas in which the textbooks do not overlap are highlighted indicating potential items for supplementation. EFHS = *English Firsthand Success* (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010); PTW = *Passport to Work* (Buckingham & Whitney, 2002); BTFL = *Basic Tactics for Listening* (Richards, 2003); *Spectrum 3* (Frankfort & Dye, 1994)

### Produce

The third step in the ACoPE system is Produce. Again, the simplest way to make supplements is for teachers to photocopy the pages from the consulted textbooks, and in fact, this is the most common form of supplementation (McGrath, 2002), but by doing so teachers miss out on a real opportunity to make something that is personal,

relevant, and specific to their classes and their students, one of the more common reasons for supplementing in the first place (McDonough, Shaw, & Masuharu, 2013).

Perhaps the easiest way to create a supplementary handout is to modify the specifics of one of the consulted learning activities. For example, the *Tactics for Listening* (Richards, 2003) lesson consulted above has students listen to the CD and number a series of sentences in the order that they hear them, again to focus on sequencing adverbs. This activity, listening and ordering sentences, has long been a staple activity for EFL learning, and teacher-writers creating a new series of original sentences would not be a copyright violation. In fact, if teacher-writers came up with a series of direction sentences to real places that the students are familiar with, it would make the supplement relevant, personal, and specific to the students. This activity could be followed by having the students write their own set of directions to a real place that they know well and then read the sentences to a partner who writes them down. (See Appendix A for an example of a supplement for *English Firsthand Success* Unit 4, inspired by Unit 21 of *Basic Tactics for Listening*, written for the general English program at Kyoto Sangyo University.)

Another easy way for teacher-writers to use the ideas they found in consulted textbooks is to make the activities easier. For example, Lesson 32 in *Spectrum 3* (Frankfort & Dye, 1994), on asking for advice, has students practicing structures like “I have a toothache. Do you know of a good dentist in this neighborhood?” (p. 51) to something like “Is there a dentist in your neighborhood?” Or even more simply, “Is there a supermarket near where you live?” This continues with the theme of places around town, but shifts away from the communication goal of giving and understanding directions. The supplement integrates with the assigned textbook, but also provides variety. (See Appendix B for an example of a supplementary handout for *English Firsthand Success*, inspired by Lesson 32 of *Spectrum 3*, written for the general English program at Kyoto Sangyo University.)

Furthermore, supplements can also be created without having to consult additional textbooks, but by reconsulting the textbook used in the class. Teacher-writers can take an existing activity and have the students do it again, but the second time include a piece of authentic language. For example, the information gap speaking activity in *English Firsthand Success* (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010) on pages 39-40 uses a generic map that could be anywhere in the world; instead, teachers could have the students use a real map of the city or neighborhood that they live in. This activity would integrate well but also provide students with a fresh take on the task. See Appendix C for an example of a supplement created for *English Firsthand Success*, using a map of Kyoto.

Finally, teachers can have the students use the material in the coursebook, but have them do something different with it. For example, each copy of *English Firsthand Success* comes with a compact disc with the listening activities from the textbook. Again, as a supplement for Unit 4, teachers could have the students listen again to the example conversations, but instead of identifying locations on the map, students could be asked to listen for other details, for example what the woman needs to buy at the supermarket, and so on. (See Appendix D for an example of a homework handout reusing the listening activity from *English Firsthand Success* Unit 4, created for the general English program at Kyoto Sangyo University.)

## Evaluate

The final step in the ACoPE system is Evaluate. Any kind of instructional design should be reiterative (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2009). That is, teacher-writers should revisit their work and make changes as needed. Making supplemental handouts should not be an exception and should be an open-ended process of ongoing development. Some teachers may be too intimidated to make supplemental handouts because they think that they will not be of the same quality as the textbook, but as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) pointed out, there is no need to think of the supplement as anything other than

a first draft. After all, the learning activities in the coursebook may have been piloted and revised (Donovan, 1998), but the supplement has not. Byrd and Schuemann (2014) suggested that for teachers creating handouts, piloting and revision, that is to say evaluating the effectiveness of the handout, does not need to be anything more complicated than making notes during the class of what seems to be working and what needs to be changed. This can be quite easily done right on a copy of the handout itself.

## Conclusion

Creating supplements for a commercially available coursebook does not need to be an overly complicated, intimidating, or excessively time-consuming process. Teachers simply need to be aware of how their coursebook is organized, and what is going on in the book; from there they can consult other published textbooks to see how other writers have handled the same language or communicative goals, or both, to stimulate their own creativity. Using a system like ACoPE (analyze, consult, produce, and evaluate) can help teacher-writers to easily and quickly create integrated and personalized supplemental handouts for their students.

## Bio Data

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## Appendix A

*Example Supplement for English Firsthand Success (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010) Unit 4, Inspired by Unit 21 of Basic Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2003), Written for the General English Program at Kyoto Sangyo University*

IN-CLASS
unit  
4A

**1** Listen to your teacher read the sentences out loud. Put them in the correct order.

- \_\_\_\_\_ You'll see it on the right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Walk down Shijo for three blocks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Go out of exit number four
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take the subway to Shijo Station
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cross Kitaaji-Dori to the south side
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's on the left next to the hair salon
- \_\_\_\_\_ Turn left and walk for about 5 minutes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take the bus to Kitaaji bus terminal and go upstairs
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Come up the escalator and go out of the north exit
- \_\_\_\_\_ The supermarket is in the basement in the Yodobashi building
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take the subway to Kyoto Station
- \_\_\_\_\_ Walk north past the pretzel shop for about 3 minutes

**2** Think of directions to your favorite shop or restaurant. Write them down.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tell your partner how to get to your favorite shop or restaurant.

**3** Write down what your partner tells you.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

*Example Supplement for English Firsthand Success (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010) Unit 4, Inspired by Lesson 32 of Spectrum 3 (Frankfort & Dye, 1994), Written for the General English Program at Kyoto Sangyo University*

IN-CLASS
unit  
4B

**1** **THINK TIME** What's in your neighborhood? Think about your answers.

Is there a \_\_\_\_\_ close to where you live?

supermarket	convenience store	department store	music store
Italian restaurant	Indian restaurant	coffee shop	sushi restaurant
elementary school	park	cemetery	shrine
English conversation school	gas station	bar	karaoke studio

Do you have a second?

Can I talk to you?

Wow! That's interesting.

Oh, really?

Thanks for talking to me.

How do you spell that?

What's your name?

**2** **ACTION!** Move around. Talk to many people. Ask and answer questions. Give extra information. If your partner's answer is 'yes' write their name.

Example Conversation:

Q: Is there a supermarket near where you live?

A: Yes, there is. There is a Max Value about a 5 minute walk from my house.

OR


A: No, not really. To get to the closest supermarket, I have to take a bus for 20 minutes.

## Appendix C

Example Supplement Created for English Firsthand Success (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010) Unit 4, Using a Map of Kyoto City

IN-CLASS
unit  
4A

**1 THINK TIME** Look at the map of Kyoto below. Write in a few places.



CD Shop	Department Store
Food Court	Post Office
Bookstore	Ice Cream Stand
Korean BBQ	Bank
Public Bath	Starbucks Coffee
Your Idea	Your Idea

**2 ACTION!** Describe your map to your partner. They will try to draw it with a different color pen. **DON'T LOOK** at your partner's map.

Example Conversation:

A: There is a Korean BBQ restaurant in Kyoto.  
 B: Where is it?  
 A: It's near Sanjo Station.  
 B: How do I get there?  
 A: From the station walk west two blocks, and then turn north. It's across from the Nijo Castle.

Useful Language  
 To the north of  
 On the left  
 Next to  
 Between

**3** Now look at your partner's map. Is it the same? Write an 'X' or an 'O'.

NAME	STUDENT NUMBER
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## Appendix D


Example Homework Handout Reusing the Listening Activity from English Firsthand Success (Helgesen, Brown, & Wiltshier, 2010) Unit 4, Created for the General English Program at Kyoto Sangyo University

HOMEWORK
unit  
4B

**1** Listen to CD1 Track 23 again. Answer the questions.

- What do they want to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do they want to buy? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did the man get his coat? \_\_\_\_\_
- What kind of store is the man looking for? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does the woman need to buy? \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Look at the map. Answer the questions.



- Where is the bank? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the fountain? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the taxi stand? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the ATM? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the department store? \_\_\_\_\_

**SELF REFLECTION**

I actively participated 0—1—2—3


I did all of the class activities 0—1—2—3

I used lots of English 0—1—2—3

I did my homework 0—1

**YOUR SCORE**

Unit 3B Answers



NAME	STUDENT NUMBER
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