

# **Achieving Curriculum Objectives: exploring the factors involved**

'Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements  
of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor  
in Philosophy by Christine Elizabeth Gardner'.

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## Preface

The fundamental premise of this research was the investigation of how young people learn and the development of the best teaching and learning strategies, environment, and support to enable this to happen.

Secondly the research was about implementation, within the constraints of real classrooms, not ideal conditions, and with individual children and teachers, each with strengths and weaknesses and lives outside the classroom.

Thirdly the spirit of the work is paramount in that it is about partnerships, and fidelity to people. By this I mean that all of those involved ; students, teachers, student teachers, advisors, and researcher were respected as professionals who contributed their best. They therefore worked as equal partners in a team.

All partners were considered fully capable of giving an honest assessment of the progress made and the targets reached. Within this climate of trust, new and realistic, sustainable targets could be planned. The resulting work, and the achievements at each level of operation, within the research, were therefore more accurately, and thoroughly, critically appraised by those who had invested their time, energy and commitment than they could be by any outside inspection, simply because the detail of the objectives were so clearly defined by the team that any diversions were obvious, and the outcomes were of immediate value.

There also continued to be considerable determination to develop and improve. This, however, became increasingly difficult, because of the changing political and educational climate. The focus on inspection of pre-set methodology and programmes of study. This occurred in a climate in which parents were encouraged to develop hostile and critical attitudes to professionals in education, and to question their motivation, commitment and competence. Local Education Authorities became administrators and inspectors rather than providers of advice and support. Previous forms of flexible funding disappeared and with it the body of expertise that had been developed. Schools were encouraged to compete rather than co-operate so that specialist teachers from local schools couldn't obtain funding and support to meet and pool resources and ideas. They were, moreover, already spending long hours developing systems of assessment for increasingly rigid programmes of study. This left little time or energy for real curriculum development.

So how does this relate to 1999 ? It is the argument of the author, that the findings of this research are of even more relevance in the context of the new millennium than they were when the research began. The needs of the new millennium and, in particular, the kind of educational context in which young people will need to be able to learn, work and build their working lives can best be developed within an environment of professional and parental, co-operation and trust. The management of an increasingly complex world of information will require cognitive skills and processes which are flexible and developmental. The findings of this research offer a clear framework to develop practical answers, in real classrooms, to such real curriculum questions.

The research also has wider potential for other areas of public provision where, complex questions require practical working solutions, involving multi- disciplinary teams, working within complex organisations. The author is currently using the framework, which is detailed in the conclusions, to develop a parallel model to respond to a complex education question within a combined education and health authority context.

Despite the fact that this research began 10 years ago it is therefore argued that it's findings are as relevant, if not more relevant, in 1999. The author looks forward to seeing the creation of a co-operative and supportive political and financial climate in which education professionals are supported, valued and trusted. Where teachers, student teachers, advisors and researchers are freed from petty administration and endless assessment. Where they are given the time and resources to work creatively to solve the real curriculum challenge of 1999. That of enabling young people to develop the confidence and the creativity, to become independent, autonomous learners for life.

**Abstract**  
**Achieving Curriculum Objectives :**  
**exploring the factors involved**

**Christine Elizabeth Gardner**

This thesis accepts the implementation of curriculum objectives as problematic and asks why this should be so, even when the curriculum objective is theoretically attractive. The thesis explores the factors which influence the classroom application of one particular curriculum objective: that of providing access to foreign language learning for all students. The thesis suggests that, in order for access to language learning to become a reality for all students, techniques must be found to enable teachers to explore complex questions within a practical context. Such techniques must take into account the nature and history of foreign language learning.

The premise adopted is that too often we ask curriculum questions at one level of operation only and from only one perspective. In order to understand why implementation of attractive educational objectives is so difficult we need to ask the same question at different levels of operation taking into account the different perspectives involved. Three research projects are used to do this.

Project 1 takes place in a classroom and involves the teacher, students and other observers (including student teachers). Project 2 takes place in a number of classrooms and in the context of different schools. It involves teachers, students and a project co-ordinator and it illustrates how each classroom is a part of the school in which it exists and how that influences the ability of the teacher and students to implement change. Project 3 takes place outside of the classroom and examines the factors related to in-service and initial training which effect the implementation of curriculum objectives. The perspectives of teachers, student teachers and the project co-ordinator are examined. The conclusions illustrate the complexity of factors involved if real development is to occur and if theories of learning are to be applied to teacher education as opposed to transmission models of relaying information.

In combining the conclusions of the three research projects the thesis shows why practical implementation is so difficult and how future work may be improved by taking into account the multiplicity of factors shown to influence it. The thesis also shows how the information gained from these research projects, which focus on foreign language learning, could be applied to the implementation of other educational objectives.

## Declaration

**“ This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree, qualification or course “.**

**Signed :-**

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This research would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and co-operation of the pupils I was privileged to teach, work with and learn from. It would not have gone further than the drawing board without the encouragement and support of many people including colleagues at the **University of Liverpool, Department of Education;** the **Sefton Advisory team;** and NCET. In particular :-

**Mr Rod Bretherton**            Sefton LEA

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1. Curriculum Debate

*"The crucial debate concerns the sensitive inter-relationships between educational vision and the purposes entailed, the content of the curriculum appropriate to these purposes and the forms of engagement in teaching essential to these purposes and curriculum."*

(Yaxley, Bevis G., 1991 p.9 )

Debate in these terms is curiously absent from the applied field of education and has been for some time. Yaxley may assert in 1991 that *"emerging trends in curriculum development suggest that the curriculum is guided not by sets of answers, but by sets of questions"* (p.7) but those at the sharp end in English and Welsh schools and teacher-training institutions in 1997 know that the implementation of the National Curriculum and the advent of a market economy ended all that. Certainly there are many questions to be answered by the class-based teacher on a daily basis but these are technical questions of application. Where is the educational vision which facilitates *"the posing and exploration of important questions"* (p.7)?

There is concern mirrored in a number of recent research articles, that somewhere in the application of a so-called National Curriculum, and in political attempts to manage the curriculum via teacher training, education has been redefined in such a narrow utilitarian, economic context that all real debate has ceased.

*The education system is now accustomed to frequent political intervention on matters of curriculum, assessment, quality and the professional preparation of teachers. This has become so routine that we have arguably ceased to consider it to be problematic or worth challenging . (Graham, Jim 1996, p.121).*

Perhaps, if central government are aware of this lack of debate, they regard it as politically convenient that teachers accept solutions passed down by a central bureaucracy. Indeed, there is concern that behind the reforms the interests of students and teachers are not paramount.

*The political agenda of educational policy making is being informed by needs identified by government and the corporate world rather than the needs of the students or teachers. (Davies & Ferguson, 1997, p. 54 )*

However, if teachers lose the capacity to debate the 'whys' of education, is there any real prospect of organic development in the future? As Jean

Rudduck points out :-

*Practitioners can easily lose their sense of vision or their capacity for constructive discontent. (1988, p.206 )*

She goes further in discussing the danger of creating 'a militant conservatism' in experienced teachers who are:

*being pinned against the wall by accusations that education has betrayed the nation, and ..... exhausted by the demands of multiple initiatives whose coherence and whose relationship to their own values they haven't the time and sometimes the energy, to work out . (1988, p. 207 )*

A Swedish study of in-service methods indicates the problems posed for teachers forced to comply with centralised decision-making:

*Teachers have, for decades, been trained to believe that the solutions, focusing on teaching methods, come from above (central decision). With the new curriculum there will no longer be any ready-made solutions. Teachers will have to find teaching methods that interact with the children's needs to learn and this cannot be done through general teaching methods. Instead, the focus has to be on the problem in the classroom . (Ronnerman, Karin , 1996, p.179 )*

Interestingly the same issue of imposition of teaching methods arises in a study of primary teachers' practice in Cyprus. The problems created are different but equally create barriers to change.

*...the existing relationship between inspectors and teachers is unproductive for reform at the classroom level. It encourages teachers to divorce their rhetoric from their practice. Thus, there is an implicit collusion to prevent reform. (Kyriakides, L. 1997, p. 44)*

This thesis is about questions we should be asking if we could only escape from the eternal debate about standards, selection and methods of disgracing those who cannot or do not attain and conform. Questions that would seem obvious if we could escape the

*over-preoccupation with the instrumental and economic dimensions of learning at the expense of its intrinsic and moral dimensions. (Ranson, S. Martin, J. Nixon, J. & McKeown, P., 1996, p.11).*

Questions that insist that

*fidelity to persons be taken as the proper measure and guide for the implementation of educational reform. (Noddings, N. 1986, p.496).*

This thesis focuses on a particular instance of this general problem. At its core, it asks how we can move from a theoretical acceptance that all students should have access to the learning of a foreign language, to creating this as a practical reality in the context of classrooms across the country. The issues involved are extracted from three projects spanning the years 1988 - 1991. The first examines issues from a classroom model, the second from a multi-school model and the third from the perspectives of Initial and In-service teacher education and training. The thesis also has a wider context in that it poses a more general question about how we

translate objectives which are considered theoretically attractive into attainable realities in the classroom. This is certainly not a new question but one which has not to date achieved a satisfactory response. **Robert Powell, (T.E.S, 1997),** states :-

*The changes that have characterised education in the U.K. over the past 10 years... have been largely concerned with structure or content. The biggest impact has not been on classroom practice but on the stress levels and morale of teachers.*

He also suggests that:

*The truth is that most change in education has a minimal effect on classroom practice.*

The reasons for this are many. Some of the main ones involve:-

- the gap between theory and practice
- lack of understanding of the complexity of the practical context
- a failure to appreciate that ultimately people make changes.

## **2. The gap between theory and practice**

The gap between theory and practice is often one of perception. For example, the student teacher who, in searching for practical routines which are immediately useful, labels all theory as useless and fails to appreciate that she is using theory every time she selects methods and materials. This phenomenon is described well by **Eisenhart, Behm & Romagnano (1991)** in a study of a teacher training programme. They see this result as:

*unfortunate, rather than a necessary step toward becoming a teacher, because it sets a precedent for teachers, as they begin to teach and into the*

*future , to disregard the university as a source of information about teaching . (p.66).*

Perception is one aspect of the dislocation of theory and practice, another is that of location. Theory and practice are often seen as residing in different places. Theory in the domain of universities and training institutions and practice in the classrooms. These locations are seen as being peopled by different kinds of educationalists caricatured as the vague academic professor and the realistic teacher. Popular as this image may be it falls somewhat wide of the mark as initial teacher education is full of realistic teachers and there are plenty of vague academic teachers in classrooms ! However two factors compound this image. Firstly the imposition of directives on schools emanating from academic research studies (often with dubious theoretical backgrounds and political bias). Secondly the separation of Initial Teacher Education and In-Service Training and the lack of any form of consistent professional development. The Teacher Training Agency 's competency model of teacher training far from providing seamless professional development is set to *"become elaborated into a highly debatable framework of ideological control expressed as mandatory requirements policed by OFSTED "* (Graham, J. 1996, p.127).

There are advantages in moving away from the stark opposition of theory and practice. For example **Griffiths and Tann (1992)** see theory and practice as *" the relation between theoretical and practical reason "* (p.70). They see all action *"as an expression of theory "* (p.70) and state that *" what we still tend to label as 'theory' and 'practice' are more accurately seen as 'public'*

and 'personal' theories" (p.71). This view is consistent to some extent with the "touchstone theory of theory development" (1991, p.3) advocated by Yaxley, although he is more concerned with a continuously developing theory within a practical context. Based on Kelly's theory of personal constructs the touchstone approach " focuses on the agreements and disagreements between competing theories . " (1991, p. 13). Yaxley sees progress in teacher development as "the enhanced intelligibility of the theories of effective teaching and learning advocated and supported . " (1991, p.17).

This perspective outlines a strong professional voice and one in which educational vision and practice work hand in hand. This would indeed be a basis from which to begin to ask the important questions in education. As Yaxley indicates this is dependent upon " a commitment to the recognition and accommodation of change " (1991, p.5) but much of current educational debate concerns the past and returns to 'traditional' methods.

A different understanding of the nature of the relationship between theory and practice is certainly the first step towards bringing educational vision closer to practical fulfilment but if this were the only obstacle surely many theoretically attractive principles would already be in place in schools ?

### 3. Lack of understanding of the complexity of the practical context

Walford, G. comments in 1991 on the dearth of literature about schools as organisations other than that based upon a systems paradigm. He comments:

*"Our experience of the way schools worked did not align in any meaningful way with the versions, usually very neat and tidy and unproblematically consensual, produced by the theorists ."* (p. 167)

The application of smooth constructed models of operation is rarely possible within such complex organisations. It is interesting that so many reforms of education have been attempted without due regard to the complexity of interactions within schools. Yaxley makes this point when he comments:-

*" Schools are dynamic; they are characterised by interaction, by shifting patterns of interaction and by shifting purposes. There is a dynamic and evolving interaction between the purposes a school seeks to achieve, the curriculum it wishes students to experience and the approaches to teaching used. "* (1991, p.4)

This interaction makes externally imposed change difficult to implement as S.Grundy explains:-

*"No matter how sophisticated the plans might be, it is through the transactions of the classroom that the real curriculum is developed "* (1987, p.42 )



#### **4. Failure to appreciate that ultimately people make changes**

Change within education in the recent past has been based on the premise that the performance of both teachers and students is inadequate and reforms have been designed to undermine the individual qualities of both. It seems to be inadequately understood that schools labelled 'failing' are full of children who take that label on themselves, that schools cannot be homogenous when they serve different communities and face different problems and that ultimately, (even if this were possible), there is no advantage in terms of community building in producing children who all jump equally well through the same hoops. This point is made more clearly by Jerome Bruner (1996) :-

*Surely one of the major educational tenets of a cultural psychology is that the school can never be considered as culturally "free standing". What it teaches, what modes of thought and what "speech registers" it actually cultivates in its students, cannot be isolated from how the school is situated in the lives and culture of its students. (p.28)*

**In Towards a theory of learning , Ranson, Martin, Nixon & Mckeown make the point that:-**

*Several of the reports have a notion of certain schools serving disadvantaged areas, but the experience of living and learning in such areas is taken for granted rather than explored. (p.10, 1996)*

This is an important point which also applies to the application of educational vision. It is not enough to say something is good and ought to happen, the practical realities need to be lived and explored in order to

understand how it may happen. In an environment of complex interactions it seems sensible to begin with the people who create, maintain and develop those interactions.

*Acknowledging that persons are beings rather than just the mental mechanisms of Descartes' cogito ergo sum has important implications for an education service which is still overly pre-occupied with differentiating, ranking and selecting cognitive intelligence. (Ranson et al., 1996, p.13).*

It is difficult to imagine how professionals who have been demoralised by continuous accusations of inadequacy can possibly create an education worth having. It is to teachers' great credit that they still attempt to do their best for their students. Nel Noddings discussing teacher education suggests:

*the best way to ensure that they will treat children as we want them to be treated is to demonstrate, in our own teaching, how teachers convey their caring . (1986, p. 503).*

This applies equally to the way in which teachers and intending teachers are treated by politicians, administrators and the rest of society. However, apart from this point, amidst the constant flow of criticism, direction-less reform and prescription the basic questions about education are missing.

**Noddings** put this point (10 years ago in an American context):-

*..the blame for massive perceived failure in our schools has fallen on teachers and students, mainly on teachers. They must be brighter, more knowledgeable, more willing to change in whatever direction authority prescribes. We rarely ask how things might be changed so that teachers can accomplish the work they see as teaching , nor do we ask what this work is; nor do we ask how teacher educators might best educate people who are average in academic capability but superior in social commitment . (1986, p.502).*

The reflection of this demand for higher standards is currently everywhere. With no research indicating that 18 year olds with higher

grades at A level make better teachers or that a heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the teacher training programme produces students who are more literate and numerate, these objectives are nevertheless pursued. Sentimental advertising for the teaching profession is supposed to attract more prospective teachers when it is obvious that:

*one of the reasons students are turning away from teaching is the denigration and abuse that has been going on for a long time now.*  
(Pyke,N., June 27th 1997, p.4 ).

## 5. Research Projects

Within this context this thesis asks what factors affect implementation of educational objectives and where these factors lie. As stated earlier, schools are complex organisations which operate through complex interactions. The 3 projects which form the basis of this thesis took place at different levels of operation and involve different perspectives.

The research uses qualitative methods and *"relies on people's words as the primary data "* (Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B , 1989, p.11 ). The research, based as it is around curriculum development, *"entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for study.. .values participants' perspectives ...views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants . "* (p.11 , Marshall , C. & Rossman, G.B. , 1989, p.11 ) and makes no apology for the fact that the researcher is also an active participant in the curriculum development.

In some senses the projects can be described as action research in that they are firmly located in the development of practice and in that :

*Action research promotes the development of the individual's understanding of her practice . (Roberts, R.J. 1991, p. 49 ).*

In this sense I hope that it is an example of what Shirley Grundy describes as 'emancipatory action research' in that it is "*informed by an interest in autonomous and responsible practice "* (Grundy, Shirley 1987, p.159). The combination of the projects differs from normal action research models in that it attempts to combine both multiple perspectives and multiple levels of operation in order to explore the complexity of factors involved in development. However, in exploring wider professional and institutional contexts perhaps it fits to some extent the following description:

*Emancipatory action research will always be characterised by a critical focus and a willingness to encompass the social context of action within the field of investigation. In this way, emancipatory action research is intrinsically political . (Grundy, Shirley 1987, p. 147 ).*

This description helps to locate this research in that one of the fundamental problems in describing it is that it focuses on the factors involved in development rather than the development itself. Any conclusions are therefore intended to provide tentative outlines of a wider, more complex picture rather than proofs of outcome.

The next chapter describes the context of the research. It explains why the objective of enabling all students to learn a foreign language is not as simple as it appears and how it is dependent on encouraging the use of independent learning strategies.

## Chapter 2

# Encouraging independent learning strategies in Modern Languages, within the context of languages for all.

### 1. Introduction:- A time of change

Within a climate of educational change during the 1980s, the area of Modern Languages, arguably more than any other curriculum area, developed, from within, the impetus for change which led to many exciting initiatives. Eric Hawkins describing the remarkable transformation in language teaching over the last thirty years comments:

*It has largely been a teacher-driven reform, encouraged by new technology, support from Local Authority Language Advisers, and from a succession of distinguished HMI Staff Inspectors, but perhaps most powerfully by a new readiness of universities and polytechnics to equip language graduates to meet society's needs. (1996, p. 1).*

Good practice, practical research and the pressures of context moved the teaching of Modern Languages from the days of drills, rote learning and grammatical analysis towards communicative objectives and contextualised language learning. For many language teachers the essence of these changes was embodied in the Graded Test movement and culminated in the GCSE. The changes were all the more exciting in that they stemmed from the flood tide of opinion at classroom level and that their proponents were more than willing to find practical solutions which were effective and convincing.

The advent of comprehensive schools across the country meant that teachers of Modern Foreign Languages were facing a broader range of abilities and teaching in a different kind of organisation. For example in many Grammar schools foreign languages were linked to the classics and inherited modes of teaching from the classics. This was also the case in France as explained by **Christian Puren**.

*Historiquement, la première méthodologie d'enseignement des langues modernes... s'est calquée sur la méthodologie d'enseignement des langues anciennes. (1988, p. 24).*

Somewhat ironically Latin was originally taught as a means of communication but became over time both in England and France a central part of a classical education.

*L'objectif pratique de l'enseignement du latin est ainsi progressivement supplanté par un objectif de formation esthétique... (Puren, C. 1988, p.26)*

The position of Latin and Greek in providing an education which maintained certain social divisions is at least partly responsible for the elitist perception of the learning of foreign languages in Britain. This position was, eventually, responsible for the disappearance of classical languages from much of the mainstream secondary school sector.

Interestingly, in France, this came a lot earlier than in Britain and found Modern Foreign Languages occupying a place, alongside science and technology, in a modern education.

*Les LVE se retrouveront dès le départ du côté des sciences et des techniques contre les langues anciennes, du côté d'une éducation < moderne >, à orientation utilitaire, contre l'éducation <classique > dont la formation générale se veut au contraire < désintéressé >. (Puren, C., 1988, p. 47).*

In Britain, the classics did not appear on the curriculum of many Comprehensive schools and in others the Classics department was reduced or separated from that of 'living' foreign languages. These changes meant that teachers of foreign languages needed to engage the attention of a new group of learners and in a context in which selection was less of a possibility. This was made more complicated by the fact that many teachers of foreign languages had themselves enjoyed a classical education.

Hawkins makes this point:

*Comprehensive re-organisation was especially challenging for foreign language teaching because throughout history languages had never been offered to more than a small and carefully chosen elite of learners.*  
(1996, p.5)

The gap between the ideals of providing a common curriculum and the reality of engaging all learners in such a curriculum was never more obvious than in the Modern Foreign Language classroom. Teachers were therefore impelled to find solutions in order to survive in a new context. The solutions addressed problems such as providing different rationales for learning a foreign language, recognising different levels of achievement and devising methods of teaching which fitted the new context. As Hawkins points out:

*That the policy of languages for all eventually survived was largely due to the resilience and professionalism of teachers, typified by the enthusiasm with which they supported the 'graded objectives' movement ...*  
(1996, p.5)

The classroom based drive for solutions spawned many new initiatives which moved the whole field of foreign language learning forward. Before

even the ink had dried on the first GCSE paper the effects of TVEI initiatives and Records of Achievement fore-shadowed the dissatisfaction of some teachers with many aspects of the GCSE. That dissatisfaction fuelled the production of some excellent modular courses. It seemed that there was no limit to the progress that could be made, the foreign language teaching community had largely separated itself from classical traditions and was gradually building a base of knowledge and research which acknowledged the variety of reasons for learning languages and the value of language learning for students of differing abilities.

Into this time of internally - generated innovation the external pressures of the Education Reform Act and the National Curriculum intruded like strangers in a family discussion. Suddenly it seemed that the solutions advocated by language teachers were not enough. In addition there were new problems. Whilst many language teachers were concerned to offer students of all abilities access to foreign language learning, neither the methodology nor the school structure was fully in place. The Education Reform Act forced the pace without offering any realistic solutions to the very real school-based problems. Reactions varied. Over-work, and fear of worse to come, forced some teachers to adopt extreme and entrenched positions and others to settle for less than they would previously have done.

Despite this, the proposals for the Modern Foreign Language component of the National Curriculum were highly innovative and indeed went



some way to outlining theoretical solutions to the central debates. One example of this is the definition of progression adopted in the **Proposals of the Secretary of State for National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages for ages 11 - 16**. In the document produced by the **Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office in October 1990** there were three ways in which progression was to be demonstrated which were common to all four attainment targets in foreign languages. These are paraphrased below.

1. The range and variety of texts or material to be covered and the complexity of the language used.
2. Familiarity with the vocabulary and the context of the task.
3. The degree of support provided. (p. 14/15)

These points, supported as they were by reference to individual progress and the importance of developing autonomy, provided a way of thinking about progression in language learning which was inclusive of all pupils including those with special needs. The concept of progression proposed also provided pointers to the ways in which learning could be organised

The challenge was how to translate these into practice in real classrooms. The enthusiasm which had generated so many initiatives in foreign language teaching could have provided this translation. However, in many cases, the damage had already been done. A lot of Foreign language teachers, like their colleagues in other subject areas, felt alienated and no longer in control of curriculum development. Many teachers operated on standby mode, conserving their energies and waiting for the 'National Curriculum' to be delivered, (presumably on tablets of stone).

It was in this context that the Research Projects 2 and 3 described later in this thesis came into being. They were based on the premise that the pressures of time and the understandable worries of the language teaching community obscured the main issues raised by the National Curriculum in relation to Modern Languages. These were not new issues, they were rather central issues which, to our shame, we had, in the main, tried to ignore in the vague hope that they would resolve themselves. We could no longer ignore the tremendous challenge to provide access to language learning for all students nor could we hope to achieve this if we did not address the issue of the learner's independence. There were many details in the National Curriculum Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study which occupied our minds and our time but unless we took time to consider these two complex issues 'access' and 'independence' we would, in my opinion, have missed the redeeming challenge of the National Curriculum.

In a way, the projects emanated from issues raised by the proposed National Curriculum in 1990, but they primarily focused on the practical context that had so concerned language teachers for at least ten years prior to the Education Reform Act. To understand why these issues were (and indeed still are) so problematic this chapter considers 'access' and 'independence' as theoretical concepts in the context of schools and classrooms.

## 2. Independent Learning Strategies. What are they?

The difficulties of perceived independence are many and have led to a plethora of terms to explain its divergent and often contradictory uses. Nowhere is this seen more dramatically than in the field of education where the image of the independent thinker is both the ultimate objective and practical nightmare of the most committed practitioner. **Jerome Bruner** explains this in the context of our Western pedagogical tradition of fitting teaching:

*into a mold in which a single, presumably omniscient teacher explicitly tells or shows presumably unknowing learners something they presumably know nothing about.. (1996, p. 20).*

The assumption that the teacher should and does know all and that the learner knows nothing is implicit in many of the social and political statements about education. This assumption remains unacknowledged and unexplored.

Similarly, **Shirley Grundy** suggests that :-

*While purporting to promote such goods as independent learning, the organization and constraints of the learning environment actually promote dependence and compliance. (Grundy S., 1987, p. 152 ).*

This paradox strikes at the root of the problem. Schools as organisations have characteristics which conflict with the concept of independence. The fact is that independence (whatever it may mean), has some instinctive value as a distant goal but its appearance at close range within the confines

of a classroom is received as an unwelcome intrusion, and not only by the teacher. In discussing autonomy, **Ian Gathercole** suggests that:

*Unfortunately, many students (and parents) seemed more interested in the passing of exams than in learning for life, while autonomy is perceived by some educationalists as an excuse for messing around.*  
(1990, p.1)

There are both social and educational tensions which define the limits of independence as a reality in the classroom, so it seems important to be clear about what is meant by "independent" in this context and to what extent this can be considered desirable or practically realisable.

Dictionary definitions of independent suggest a mixture of such concepts as:- freedom, autonomy, having scope, range, rights and privileges. All of these have importance in terms of an educational definition of independence and when applied to the area of learning would present value judgements about content, process, aims and applications. Many of these value judgements, such as the respect for the individual and the acceptance of a wide range of conceptual structures, are an integral part of true language learning and as such are surely indisputable facets of any language teacher's basic aims and objectives. Indeed it is one area in which the language teacher can justify the very process of learning another language and point to the immense social and cross-curricular benefits.

In the sense of aims then the value of the independence of the learner is indisputable; as far as applications are concerned this is a wider issue which calls into play not only the integrity of schools but the purposes of

governments and industries. Independent learners become self-reliant, and then question objectives, purposes and methods. This can be awkward for employers and governments. Schools are often discussed as institutions which promote social cohesion but what is more generally meant is that they maintain the status quo. There is therefore an intrinsic tension between broad social purposes and the classroom objective of the independent learner. As **Bruner** comments "*education does not stand alone , and it cannot be designed as if it did .*" (1996, p.28). The political and cultural context in which any education system exists is obviously crucial. It is, however, when this is applied to the areas of content and process in language learning that the theoretical and practical dilemmas of the foreign language classroom arise.

Many models have been proposed to explain the complicated process of learning in which we are all, (or should be), involved every day of our lives. There are many different kinds of learning from straightforward recall of factual information to complex building of physical or conceptual patterns and some types of learning are better explained by one model than others. **Ranson, Martin, Nixon and McKeown** suggest that there "*is a need to learn new ways of thinking to match the new kinds of problems that we face.*" (1996, p. 11). If there are theoretical gaps in the formation of a model to explain all forms of learning, then there are certainly practical difficulties in analysing the forms of learning taking place in any given situation.

Taking into account then the complex nature of learning itself and the fact that a single, adequate theoretical and practical working model does not for our purposes exist, I propose the word "strategies" to encompass the innumerable, simple and complex ways in which we accumulate, organise and master information, concepts and skills. The word "independent" assumes that such strategies can be internalised and used autonomously.

### **3. Independent Learning Strategies.**

#### **3.1 General justifications.**

Laying aside for a moment the practical issue of whether in fact it is possible to encourage independent learning strategies let us consider why we may want them to be encouraged. Of course in many contexts this would seem a rather silly question. After all no one would question the desire to encourage a child to feed and dress itself, although, no doubt, there may be some who would question the need to develop individual tastes and opinions. In general terms though, the consensus of values inherent in the word "education", (as opposed to instruction or training), would assume the importance of the autonomy of the individual. There are, of course many concrete examples at all levels of the education system from the nursery child to the post-graduate student of the kinds of learning strategies needed to fulfil the wide range of learning tasks and

situations that may be encountered. So the first reason for encouraging independent learning strategies would be to enable learners to cope with tasks and situations they may encounter within the education system itself. This assumes the belief that:-

*How to learn is, in itself, something that has to be learned ...*  
(Jordan D. C, 1973, p.87)

Then, of course, there are more long-term goals which concern the learner's future employment, leisure and general quality of life. These may be expressed in different ways depending on the perspective adopted, whether that be one of social utility or the personal fulfilment of the individual, and the perspective may determine the importance attributed to different kinds of strategies. Ranson, Martin, Nixon and McKeown suggest that :-

*The central challenge of our time is to transform the way people think of themselves and what they are capable of. It is only by changing the sense students have of themselves as learners that they can begin to develop their capacities and realise their potential. (1996, p.11)*

The argument so far, then, is that the concept of education itself seems to indicate intrinsic and utilitarian reasons for the encouragement of independent learning strategies. These reasons may suggest cross-curricular implementation of such encouragement and as such may involve Modern Language departments but in my opinion this is only part of the case.

### 3.2 Subject-specific justifications.

The second, and to my mind the most important, set of reasons for encouraging independent learning strategies in Modern Languages centres around the very process of language learning, with its inherent objectives. I touched briefly on this area earlier but would like to point to a number of specific ways in which learning and effectively using a language assumes the use of independent learning strategies. First of all, it must be stated that the most fluent speaker of any language continues to make discoveries about its content and usage. In this way then learning a language is an on-going process. The contexts, meanings and content change. The vocabulary widens, achieving generality and focusing on the specific. At the same time the concepts change and develop and are coloured by experience and personal preferences. For no two individuals will those concepts or the expression of those concepts be identical. Bruner discusses the:-

*..talent for "intersubjectivity" - the human ability to understand the minds of others, whether through language, gesture, or other means. It is not just words that make this possible, but our capacity to grasp the role of settings in which words, acts, and gestures occur. (1996, p.20).*

No two situations for real language use will ever be exactly the same, indeed the differences are often more important than the similarities. The successful learner then, will not be able to rely on one source of unchanging material but will need to adapt, internalise and refine content and ideas for use within a spectrum of situations, which, in detail, are impossible to predict. This idea of progression seems a lot closer to



Stephen Krashen's definition of "language acquisition" than to most current perspectives of language learning underlying British classroom practice. However recent interest in the autonomy of the language learner has produced some interesting ideas including those of David Little who asserts that:

*Classroom learning involves two kinds of interaction: the internal psychological interaction between new and existing knowledge, and the external social interaction by which new knowledge is mediated and learners can negotiate their way towards new meanings. Pedagogical measures calculated to promote learner autonomy within the social dimension will certainly support, but they may also actually promote, the development of autonomy within the psychological dimension.*  
(1990, p. 9)

In applying this to language learning Little suggests that in order to be efficient communicators learners must :

*..be autonomous to the extent of having sufficient independence, self-reliance and self-confidence to fulfil the variety of social, psychological and discourse roles in which they will be cast . (1990, p. 8 ).*

This concept of progression in language learning does not fit well with the analytical approach in which progress is largely measured in increased ability to dissect language. Perhaps, more importantly, it is strangely at odds with a functional or situational approach to language teaching, in which the emotional content and layered meanings are clinically extracted in an effort to simplify the learning process.

#### 4. Communication in the foreign language classroom

If this outline seems somewhat removed from the realities of the language-learning situation of classroom, then its precepts certainly are not. "Communication" has been the driving force behind the changes in the teaching and learning of Modern Languages. Even if we ignore basically traditional materials and approaches which have been labelled "communicative" for the purpose of complying with the latest trend in language teaching, there exists large and genuine diversity in what is understood by communicative approaches. The word itself has fostered a range of meanings which, at the two ends of the spectrum are clearly contradictory, and the differences seem to have been generated by differing perspectives of how languages are learned and how this can be most efficiently replicated in the classroom. For example the standard role-play dialogue is in principle accepted as an example of communication and yet the interpretation varies from students reading out a pre-constructed dialogue ( perhaps with little understanding of meaning ) to an information-gap dialogue in which one student is trying to obtain information which s/he does not already have. To take a purist view even the latter may not be regarded as communication unless the student genuinely wanted to obtain this information.

Whilst a standard definition of communication could be sought, when this is applied to language learning it is much more difficult. Labels such as "pre-communicative" have attempted to separate out stages in the

language learning process in order to make it fit into the classroom context. Having clearly established the desirability of communication as the main purpose and feature of language learning the difficulties arise when this is applied to a methodology. The methodology is constrained not only by the practical realities of the classroom but also by the particular aspects of communication which are perceived to be most important. As in language use it is in the comparison of differences that choices are best clarified. I would suggest that there are three main issues to which different responses have created different perspectives of class-based "communicative" language learning:-

- 1. The arbitrary nature of content in language learning**
- 2. 'Practice' versus language use.**
- 3. Learning versus teaching.**

#### **4.1 The arbitrary nature of content in language learning.**

In school based learning, content is, in the case of most subjects, a matter of balancing facts, areas of debate, skills and attitudes or values. Arguments about content in geography, for example, (as evidenced by the geography National Curriculum debate), would revolve around which of these elements should form part of the curriculum and where should the emphasis lie. The difficulty often lies in separating these elements as many geographical "facts" are embedded in values and can only be clarified using geographical skills, but in principle at least debate about content is reasonably defined. This is the case with most subjects but it is not the case in language learning. Language after all is a way of communicating

concepts, ideas, facts, opinions about an unlimited range of content and not in itself a body of content. Asking what should be taught in a language curriculum involves more than identifying a language. In fact if language is accepted to be communication then the only aspect defined by the label German, French or Russian is the medium and the content is debatable. (Ironically there is often heated debate about the medium whilst questions about content are inevitably referred to the syllabus.)

In this context it is easier to understand why such diametrically opposed teaching strategies as drills and simulations have both been accepted as "communicative" activities. In the absence of a distinct definition of content, different perspectives of learning languages have defined content and therefore different methods of transmitting content in different ways. The acceptance of the use of drills seems to develop from an association of content with structure. Progress is then defined in terms of the complexity of structure used. Even those language teachers who would most strongly resist this definition have been conditioned to accept a supposed hierarchy of difficulty which, in French, places the use of the imperfect subjunctive in the higher reaches of linguistic competence, and the use of the present tense in the first year curriculum plans. It seems we have much to learn about the role of "familiar" language in language learning and the way this is defined, not just in linguistic terms but also its social and cultural implications.

A utilitarian view of content has produced an emphasis on transactional language as epitomised by the current rationale behind the GCSE and many Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) courses. Structured role play and information gap activities represent "communicative" teaching strategies in this model, with communication interpreted as a functional "need" to exchange information. Progress is then logically measured by the number of functions mastered and the complexity of situations handled. Other perspectives emphasise the emotional and contextual weight of language and teaching strategies include developing drama techniques and certain kinds of simulations. Content within this approach may be expressed in terms of linguistic tools such as explaining/persuading/ refusing and progress as using wider ranges of tools and showing awareness of a greater complexity of nuances.

The arbitrary nature of content has in recent years created much interest in bi-lingual schools/intensive language courses and the teaching of other subjects through the target language. **The National Curriculum consultative document for Modern Foreign Languages** referred to "content free" frameworks for national assessment and explained that:-

*There are compelling reasons of principle and practice for formulating for modern foreign languages a framework for SATS which is independent of language content. (October 1990, p.43)*

The unease which this statement provoked is not entirely explained by the volume of work which this would have created at a local level for teachers. A clue to other reasons is exemplified in a sentence from an article in the **Times Educational Supplement** in which the author worried about the replacement of GCSE.

*Moreover its replacement would abandon defined syllabuses in favour of something hazily labelled a 'non-content' syllabus.*

( R.Hares, 1.2.91 )

There is no doubt that the GCSE represented a huge step forward but the GCSE syllabus for many language teachers also solved the problem of content. There was a defined list of topics to be covered and the vocabulary, structures and functions necessary were also clear. The fact that this definition of content was built upon a particular (and often narrow) view of language learning was for many irrelevant.

The GCSE was based upon a particular functional view of language learning which made very little concession to the differing purposes for which students were learning a foreign language or the variety of interests that they may have. The transactional language of the bakery, railway station and hotel is surely only one part of any language. What is more it presented a somewhat distorted perspective of the foreign language to the learner. The learner was presented with the foreign language largely as a means of becoming a tourist in a foreign country with strange and different customs. As **Vee Harris** suggests:

*Had they (pupils) had some control over their learning programme, they may well not have opted to learn to book into a hotel room or change travellers' cheques at a bank. (Hawkins,E. (Ed.), 1996, p. 256 )*

The inherent weakness in this approach as far as learners are concerned is that an English - speaking tourist can generally get by using English. For many teachers however, the GCSE syllabus set safe limits to the question of what content is and its removal would be disturbing and threatening precisely because the notion of content in terms of a foreign language curriculum is open to debate.

#### **4.2 'Practice' versus language use.**

This idea sparked some of the interesting questions of the decade such as:-

- *To what extent does language need to be practised?*
- *What sort of conditions are necessary for real language use to take place in the classroom?*

Some approaches to language learning accept the impossibility of real communication in the classroom and see "pre-communicative" practice as the real objective in class based learning. Other approaches dispute the role in the languages classroom of any activities which do not involve communication. At the root of these differences are not really questions about the ultimate use of language for communication but rather questions about how this is best achieved within the constraints of the classroom. The problem is that in answering these questions there is no guarantee that language as communication will be preserved either as a medium or an ultimate goal. For example, a teacher may believe that the ultimate goal is for his/her students to communicate effectively with

native speakers of the target language. However the teacher may because of perceived practical limitations choose to use methods of language teaching in which his students do not use language as communication. In this case the method of learning is not via communication and in fact the students may not therefore understand that communication is the ultimate goal. Even if they do understand they may not feel equipped to communicate. In this way it is possible, in confining language learning within the perceived restrictions of the classroom, to lose communication both as a medium and an ultimate goal. Hence the contradictory nature of communication as defined by methodology. The same contradiction appears when autonomous learning within the educational system is considered. This is explained well by **David Little**.

*For those inside the system it can easily appear that there are so many constraints, so many factors over which learners ( and teachers ) have no control, that learner autonomy is impossible. But to take such a view is to fall into the trap of confusing autonomy with self-instruction, to identify its freedoms exclusively with external matters of organisation, and to forget that autonomy is essentially a matter of the psychological relation between the learner and the content and process of learning. (1990, p. 11)*

This explanation is interesting in that it could also be applied to language as communication within the constraints of the classroom.

#### **4.3 Learning versus teaching.**

This area calls into question the role of the teacher, the relative independence of the learner and the whole concept of assessment.



It highlights the tension between the definition of communication as an exchange between individuals and the traditional image of the learner as the receptacle into which teachers pour knowledge. In many ways general theories about teaching and learning have in the classroom suffered the same fate as communication in the language classroom. For example,

**Bruner** states that:-

*"where human beings are concerned, learning (whatever else it may be ) is an interactive process in which people learn from each other, and not just by showing and telling. It is surely in the nature of human cultures to form such communities of mutual learners . "* (1996, p.22 ).

However he also states, (and this is partly where the conflict arises), :-

*"School curricula and classroom 'climates' always reflect inarticulate cultural values as well as explicit plans; and these values are never far removed from considerations of social class, gender and the prerogatives of social power."* (1996, p.27 ).

In addition, schools are complex institutions and can be difficult to align to clear, linear theories. The cognitive theorists may achieve loud acclaim but in the face of the practical realities of the classroom, the behaviourists win hands down.

Of course all three aspects (content, language use and learning ) are inter-related and responses have taken many different forms, but the point is this, that not only does an analysis of language learning in the abstract lead inevitably to a discussion of independent learning strategies, but the practical consideration of 'communication' in the classroom has led language teachers time and again to consider the relative independence of the learner. Communication demands the active participation of the

individual, it contains the idea of 'investment' and interaction on a personal basis. It is therefore strange to think of any form of language learning where independent learning strategies are not involved.

To summarise, the definition of education, in general, and language learning, in particular, emphasises the importance of independent learning strategies. In recent times, in language teaching, this issue has been raised by a practical consideration of communication. This being so, why is the issue still one of contention?

## **5. Do independent learning strategies need to be encouraged?**

Apart from the practical 'how' question:- "How can independent learning strategies be encouraged?", there is also the philosophical 'why' question:- "Do independent learning strategies need to be encouraged?". Traditional ways of thinking about foreign language learning in schools have been strongly affected by the belief that a person either possesses or does not possess the capacity to learn a foreign language. Those who are capable, it is assumed, already utilise their own strategies, which come in a package with intelligence, motivation and educability. These beliefs and attitudes have proved surprisingly durable. They mean that :-

- Independent learning strategies can be ignored by the teacher, they take care of themselves.

- Only certain types of learners can be expected to undertake the arduous task of learning a foreign language. This makes it safe to ignore the majority of the school population and particularly anyone with "special needs".
- Should any learner be unsuccessful, they obviously did not possess the capacity in the first place, and so failure has no implications for aims or teaching methods.

Even though progress has been made there are still discrepancies between what is considered desirable and what is considered possible. **Maurice**

**Whitehead** points out one of the hidden problems.

*The democratisation of language learning happily brought about through recent languages for all policies has not been accompanied on a widespread basis by democratisation of access to the materials needed today for effective language learning. (1996, p. 185)*

Despite **Bruner's** assertion that:-

*"There is little reason to believe that anybody, even the speech-disabled, cannot be helped to explore more deeply the nature and uses of his language." (1996, p.19)*

this is still a controversial view.

Although Bruner was referring to the use of the mother tongue there are now many examples of the use of learning a foreign language to assist students with special needs in understanding of their own language, and not just in other European countries. **Bernadette Holmes**, describing a CILT (Centre for Language Learning and Teaching ) initiative promoting language learning for students with special educational needs, makes an interesting statement.

*Both conceptual and linguistic development are helped by multi-sensory approaches engaging both body and mind. Learning a language is something that learners do for themselves , not something that is done for them. This is specially relevant for pupils with learning difficulties. (1996, p. 112)*

Language learning for students with special educational needs cannot be considered in isolation from independent learning strategies.

Despite the progress made, the idea that the mastery of a foreign language is beyond the ability of most students is, never the less, still at the root of some Modern Language teachers' perceptions of language learning. In the past this view has had some important consequences :

- Many people labelled 'incapable' of learning a foreign language are in positions of influence and power on a national and local basis, and make their judgements accordingly. (This includes the senior management in schools. After all if they, with all their expertise, could not learn a foreign language why should they juggle the timetable to give children with 'special needs' a reasonable amount of time to experience the same failure?) This provides an ironic example of

**Bruner's** statement that,

*Education , however conducted in whatever culture, always has consequences in the later lives of those who undergo it. (1996, p.25).*

- The traditional English insular attitude has been compounded by the academic elitism attached to language learning and as a result many potential learners are discouraged by the assumed social and academic characteristics of the successful foreign language learner.

Without going into too much depth it is worth noting that these considerations are not merely theoretical. They constitute a bundle of complex linked issues which pose real practical problems for language learners at many levels. In fact the simplest problem potentially is the language learner who feels that learning the foreign language is somehow beyond her ability. Much more difficult is the potential learner who believes in his own capacity to master the language but is afraid to do so because of the social distance this would create between him and his family or friends. Indeed for each family which shows an exaggerated awe for offspring who have mastered foreign tongues there is a family which communicates active discouragement for a skill which may create physical and social distance. One of the saddest examples of this, in the writer's own experience, was a parent who was devastated by the fact that his child had excelled in two foreign languages in the lower school and wished to continue to study both. For him this was the beginning of a physical separation from the area of the country in which the child had grown up (there were few opportunities to use languages in the locality). He also felt it would entail a change in social status and the child might not be happy. To say that his fears were unfounded and his vision narrow is to miss the point. This belief exists and indeed has been cultivated. Nor is the belief totally unfounded. There are many linguists who have struggled with social barriers alongside developing linguistic competence and who have paid for a wider vision of the world with perceived social distance from their roots.

It is my contention that, this belief that the capacity for foreign language learning is reserved for the select few, has not only been at the core of the perceived failures of Modern Language teaching in schools but at a national level it has fed the notion that international communication is an optional extra, which is the responsibility of the chosen few. The idea that language learning is essentially about learning to communicate across linguistic barriers, rather than learning to accede to some sort of elite, is surely incompatible with this belief.

If we accept the premise that there is nothing intrinsically elitist about the concept of language learning as communication then this brings us back to the original question:-

*Do we need to encourage independent learning strategies?*

The answer must be positive. As soon as we accept that language learning is for all, not just for those already mysteriously equipped with some sort of innate 'talent', then we are confronted with the challenge of defining effective learning strategies and working out techniques for promoting them in the classroom.

To clarify the point, the main objection to encouraging independent learning strategies seems to have its roots in the historically elitist image of language learning in this country. It is this which has, until relatively recently, denied the pleasures and advantages of learning a foreign language to a large proportion of the population. That image is

incompatible with the concept of language learning for communication and once refuted it brings language teachers face to face with two main issues highlighted by the National Curriculum:-

*Encouraging independent learning strategies  
in the context of: Foreign language learning for all*

## **6. Access to foreign language learning**

These aspects of the National Curriculum are likely to exacerbate the increasing dilemma that exists within the 'communicative' trend in Modern Language teaching. Once it is accepted that learning a language has, at its main purpose, communication with speakers of that language, then it becomes extremely difficult to justify exclusion from that activity on the grounds of academic inferiority. It has become fashionable for schools to make statements about providing access to Modern Language learning for all students. More recently this trend has been given legal status. In neither case however has sufficient thought been given to what is meant by access and what the theoretical and practical implications of such a starting point might be.

Once we say that all students can and should learn a foreign language, (in the same sense that all students can and should learn mathematics and English), then the onus shifts from the learner being required to prove that he or she possesses certain skills / qualities to the provision of an

environment and the necessary support for the learner to develop those skills / qualities which make an effective foreign language learner. Access to foreign language learning cannot be limited to providing blocks on a timetable. Moreover if we accept that independence is an issue, then those skills/qualities are only effective in as much as they are developed by the individual. At this point we have to face the idea of individual development where different stages may be reached at different times and maybe even reaching those stages in different ways.

Beginning from two different angles, the theoretical connection between a policy of foreign language learning for all and the development of independent learning strategies in foreign language learning is equally persuasive. An acceptance that independent learning strategies can be developed, (as opposed to existing as an adjunct of intelligence found in a small number of people), leads naturally to the concept of language learning for all. Starting from a commitment to foreign language learning for all, any effective definition of access must include the development of language learning strategies on an individual basis. These two major issues then can be linked, theoretically at least, by a common rationale. They are two sides of the same coin and have, as such, suffered from the same controversy rooted deep in the history of foreign language learning in this country.



## 7. Summary of Chapter 2

The argument so far in this chapter is that, a commitment to language learning for the purpose of communication is only sensible when it prepares the individual learner to act independently. There is no evidence that the learning strategies which enable this independence are innate in origin and the only justification in this belief arises from the traditional roots of foreign language learning in this country. The same tradition of elitism has prevented many potential language learners from achieving success, not just by preventing them from studying a language at school but in anticipating failure by neglecting to address the real and complex implications of access.

It is my argument that access and independent learning strategies are inextricably linked and that in confronting the one we must face the other. It is also my argument that if the confrontation takes place in the realm of ideas and concepts where communication is the ultimate purpose of language learning then its claims are irrefutable. However, as has already been demonstrated, this is not enough. Success depends rather on translating these worthy ideals into practical reality in the constrained environment of the classroom. Accepting the theoretical validity of the argument is one thing, implementing something which even vaguely resembles the original concepts quite another.

## 8. Review

To review the points made so far:

- A major current problem of curriculum change in England and Wales is that it fails to engage teachers in complex questions about teaching and learning. In order to do this teachers would need to make sense of both theory and practice ( or 'public and personal theories' ) and society would need to take more than an instrumental and economic view of education.
- The intrinsic character of foreign language learning is complex, and made more so by its inheritance of past attitudes, assumptions and definitions.

If, therefore curriculum change is to be deep-rooted and organic, a natural consequence of a commitment to improving teaching and learning rather than an externally imposed, static blueprint, then techniques must be found to enable teachers to explore complex questions within a practical context. Such techniques must take into account the nature and history of foreign language learning.

The three research projects, on which the thesis is based, are explorations of this. Their distinctive character, ( located as they are at three different points in implementation ), and the sort of questions they try to answer are explained by this overall stance. The sort of answers which may be

expected will be exploratory and messy, characteristic of qualitative action research.

*Real research is often confusing, messy, intensely frustrating and fundamentally non-linear. (Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B., 1989, p. 21 ).*

The question at the root of the projects is this:-

What are the issues and the factors involved in implementing models of language learning which attempt to address access and independence for the learner ?

## **9. Introduction to the research projects.**

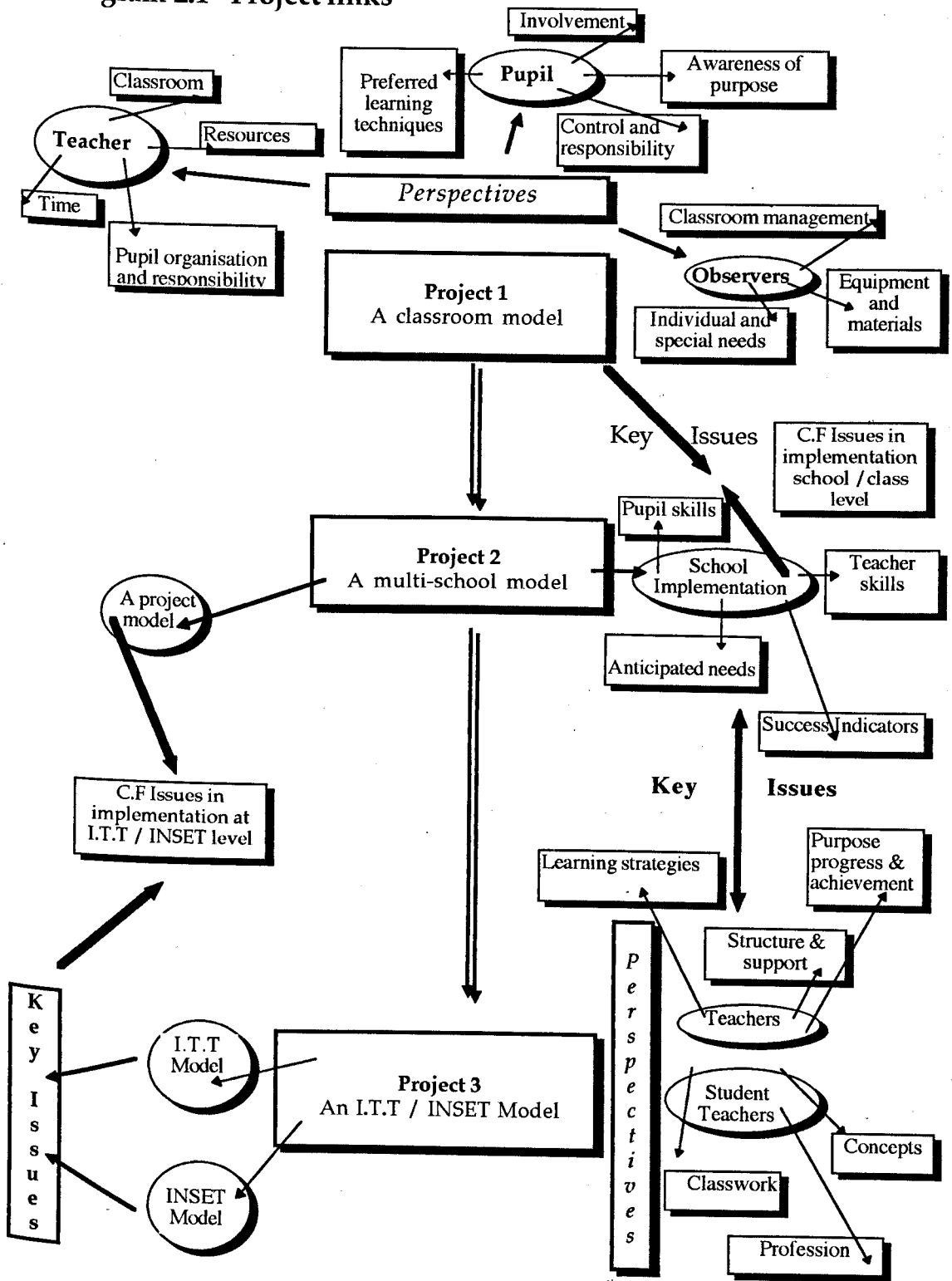
The research data collected have come from three different but linked projects. Their links are discussed in more detail in the chapters which follow but the diagram which follows gives an over-view of the projects and the ways in which they are related. In each of the research projects the same basic questions are asked. The premise adopted is that too often we ask curriculum questions at one level of operation only and from only one perspective. In order to understand why implementation of attractive educational theories is so difficult we need to ask the same questions at different levels of operation taking into account the different perspectives involved.

Project 1 takes place in a classroom and involves the teacher, students and other observers. In its conclusions it points to the ways in which an individual classroom is part of a school and of a wider educational world.

Project 2 takes place in a number of classrooms and in the context of different schools. It involves teachers, students and a project co-ordinator and it illustrates how each classroom is a part of the school in which it exists and how that influences the ability of the teacher and students to implement change.

Project 3 takes place outside of the classroom and examines the factors related to in-service and initial training which effect the implementation of curriculum objectives. The perspectives of teachers, student teachers and the project co-ordinator are examined. The conclusions illustrate the complexity of factors involved if real development and theories of learning are to be applied to teacher education as opposed to transmission models of relaying information.

Diagram 2.1 Project links



As the diagram shows the projects are linked in a variety of ways. The parallel arrows indicate that the projects followed one from the other and each project was built, to some extent, on the results of the preceding project. The medium bold arrows indicate the perspectives considered within each of the projects and the smaller arrows point out the factors highlighted by each of these perspectives. From each of the projects a number of Key Issues arose. In some cases it is useful to compare the Key Issues of two or more of the research projects. This is indicated by the large bold arrows. For example, from all three research projects, issues relating to classroom and school - based implementation are compared. Key Issues from Projects 2 and 3 contributed to a consideration of models of Initial and In-service Education. This is all discussed in detail in the following chapters but the purpose of the diagram is to give an overview of the ways in which the research projects themselves, and their conclusions, are linked.

In the following chapters the three research projects are described and their conclusions considered in turn. Chapter 3 begins with the first research project.

## Chapter 3

### Research Project 1 :- A classroom model

#### 1. Background

The first of the three projects was school-based and arose from the needs perceived by one teacher within the context of one particular school. The project began before the National Curriculum proposals for Modern Foreign Languages were drafted and arose from an analysis of learning with a specific set of classes rather than a concern with implementing national policies. However, the analysis, which was conducted before the Project began, with the objective of improving learning for students in those classes, raised two main concerns. The first was how to make language learning more accessible for all students including those with particular learning difficulties. The second was how to encourage all students to develop more independent learning strategies. These concerns arose directly from classroom practice but they were to be repeated as national imperatives within the context of the proposals for National Curriculum Modern Foreign languages.

The first research project therefore was based in one school and took its direction from problems posed by a particular set of classes. The

project was about changing practice. The research was intended to investigate the practical implementation of specific changes in the Modern Languages classroom. As such I see its value in two ways :-

- In the specific situation to evaluate change and to adapt and promote further development.
- To make general statements about the practical and theoretical issues emerging from the implementation of such change.

The project is in two parts. The first section contains a critical analysis from the teacher's perspective of change implemented over a 2 year period with a range of students. The second section is a short study (1 term) of a specific group of students in Key Stage 4. In this study 3 observer / participants were involved and a student perspective was solicited. The observer / participants were asked to make notes and at the end of the project took part in a group interview. Students were also interviewed at the end of the project and recorded their comments in a profiling document. The interviews were recorded and notes were taken from the video of student comments. Sample lessons from each of the classes involved were also videoed. These were subsequently edited and the resulting video was used in Project 2



as part of the training materials. A transcript of the interviews with students and observers is included in Appendix 1 (b).

## 2. Introduction to the project

The project began when, as a main-scale teacher of French working in a comprehensive school in a social priority area I was faced with the following issues which I have grouped in two categories, *contextual* and *previous initiatives*.

### *Contextual*

1. Classes in which there were students of wide ranging abilities.
2. Individual students with particular strengths and specific learning difficulties.
3. Many students who lacked confidence when approaching foreign language work.
4. Many students with limited organisational skills.

### *Previous initiatives.*

Implementation of an assessment system had:-

1. indicated weaknesses in the course structure;
2. highlighted the fact that all students were having some difficulty with listening skills;
3. indicated that students enjoyed working towards short-term goals and appreciated being involved in setting specific aims and objectives;
4. demonstrated the high level of teacher dependence and consequent difficulties experienced by students when approaching individual tasks.

The limitations in addressing these issues were those faced by many teachers:-

- large classes
- a small foreign languages department with consequently very little class time (e.g. 2 x 40 minute periods in Years 8 and 9)
- full staff timetables with very little flexibility
- limited space in the classroom
- limited resourcing (later helped by ESG and TVEI funding).

The time span of the first part of the project was September 1988 until February 1989. The second part of the project took place in the Autumn term 1989. The objectives were to look at the implications of a movement towards task based individual and group work in the foreign language classroom. The first part of the project concentrated on the organisational implications. The second part of the project attempted to detail the perspectives of those involved in order to extract some of the wider issues.

The data referred to in the following description of the project is in 2 parts.

1. A video of the sample lessons and the interviews.  
A transcript of the video is included in Appendix 1b.
2. A descriptive account of the organisational implications, which was written at the time (Appendix 1a).

The two parts of the project are now considered under the headings of organisational implications and other perspectives.

### 3. Organisational implications

Encouraging all students to engage in foreign language learning in a more independent way, seemed from a teacher's perspective and at classroom level, to be very much to do with organisation. Somewhat ironically in the light of the recent criticism of group work in primary schools, the more the teacher tried to encourage independent learning skills the more organised she needed to be. This finding is echoed by **Barbara McDevitt** in an article about learner autonomy at university level:-

*Placing the learner at the centre of the learning process, rather than diminishing Widdowson's teacher as enseignant(e), results in a broadening of the role. (1997, p.36).*

One major reason for this seems to be the increased number of factors involved. In this particular project there were five main aspects of organisation identified:-

1. **Classroom organisation**
2. **Organisation of tasks.**
3. **Student organisation and responsibility.**
  - a) **Instructions**
  - b) **Equipment**
4. **Organisation of time**
5. **Organisation of resources.**

These five main aspects were very much inter-related but for ease of description they are considered separately and links are indicated.

### 3.1 Classroom organisation.

In this project classroom organisation refers to the spatial limitations of a classroom. As indicated earlier, physical space was limited and students carried their coats and bags around with them from room to room. A whole school project may have been able to alter some of these limitations by adopting school approaches which facilitated learner independence but as this was a single classroom project it was more difficult to change these kinds of restrictions. Under this heading student movement around the classroom and the particular spatial implications of using various pieces of equipment are also considered.

Various forms of classroom organisation were tried which attempted to address these issues. Two forms of organisation are described in some detail in the notes (Appendix 1 (a) ). These are:-

- The commonly known 'circus' of activities where groups of students move from task to task.
- A modified version of the circus model which includes a core of activities for which students work in base groups with movement only to use tasks involving equipment.

The disadvantages and advantages of these two forms of organisation are shown below.

**Table 3.1** **Form 1 'Circus'**

<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Advantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All tasks must take the same amount of time.</li> <li>• Groups must be roughly the same size.</li> <li>• Where one computer is in use the rest of the group must be occupied on a separate task. If all students are to use the computer then the computer task should take roughly half the time of the other tasks.</li> <li>• Movement of students and belongings needs to be carefully charted.</li> <li>• It is more difficult to cater for those who finish tasks quickly.</li> <li>• Slower students can feel under pressure and feel that they never have time to complete tasks properly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A definite sense of pace is given to the lesson.</li> <li>• Students may concentrate harder to complete on time.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.2** **Form 2 'Core'**

<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Advantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient resources for the main tasks need to be available for most students.</li> <li>• Some students need more help in organising tasks.</li> <li>• With larger classes leaving one table free initially can be difficult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual students can progress at their own pace.</li> <li>• Additional tasks can be set.</li> <li>• Student belongings remain stationary</li> <li>• There is less student movement during the lesson and there are fewer groups moving at the same time.</li> <li>• Because not all students are changing task at the same time, demand for help with initial instructions is spread more evenly throughout the lesson.</li> </ul>

Variations on the two models of organisation described above were tried and it seemed that no one pattern worked with all classes all of

the time. In later parts of the project three main factors were taken into account when choosing the pattern for individual lessons:-

- the sort of tasks being attempted
- the age of the students involved
- the size and characteristics of individual classes.

Although, on balance, the second model shows more advantages and less disadvantages than the first there were still times when considering all aspects of organisation the first model seemed the more appropriate pattern to use. It therefore made sense to vary the approach but to take into account the difficulties inherent in each.

### **3.2 Organisation of tasks.**

The second aspect of organisation identified was that of the structure of tasks within the lesson. The tasks used were generally linked by a particular area of language content. This included themes such as "at the train station" and functions such as "contradicting or agreeing with something or someone". Towards the end of units of work the tasks were linked by a simulation or a puzzle. In this case students were looking for information from each of the tasks to solve a bigger problem.

One of the early difficulties was ensuring that all students were able to tackle some receptive skill tasks before being expected to complete active skill tasks. In other words students needed to have had opportunities to listen and read before being asked to use language in speech or in written form. This was to some extent resolved by including a mixture of single and multi-skill tasks and by making the core tasks interdependent and logically sequenced. For example, by including passive and active skills within a task this helped students to move from passive to active use. Also students were helped by making the first few core tasks single skill (e.g. listening or reading followed by matching or reorganising pictures to show understanding) or multi-passive skill (e.g. listening and selecting or reorganising text) and then making core tasks progressively more active. Linking the core tasks in terms of both ideas and repetitive language use supported progress. In lessons used to introduce an area of language, the tasks using specific equipment (usually computers and tape recorders or video ) therefore needed to involve largely passive skills. This was because some groups would begin with these tasks.

In creating or gathering together a set of tasks the following points appeared to be important:-

- To vary the nature of tasks in terms of the level of teacher support needed.
- To build different kinds of student support into the tasks in order to encourage students to work independently.
- To consider carefully different ways of presenting tasks and giving instructions.

The first point was particularly important with Year 7 students and with all classes at the beginning of new units of work. Obviously with new language content more support is needed but also students tend to be less confident. Therefore unless some tasks are designed so that students can complete them confidently on their own then everyone will need support from the teacher at the same time. For example, sometimes linking tasks, using largely language content from a previous unit, were devised to maintain the confidence students had gained, whilst in other tasks they were learning new language.

The second involved thinking about a range of different kinds of support and was not restricted to providing reference materials and vocabulary lists. One way in which this was done was in breaking down some active tasks into smaller steps using a variety of skills. For example, a writing task was built from matching single words with pictures, through building patterns of words into phrases, and finally



to putting sentences together. A teacher teaching a whole class together may lead students through these steps but in the project where students were working independently or in groups the tasks and materials needed to reflect this support. In the process there were two advantages. Firstly the students became much more aware of what was happening. This is reflected in one of the student comments:

*I like using the computers because it helps you to know how to spell the words and get familiar how to put the words together in like sentences.*

**(Lee, Appendix 1(b))**

Secondly the support mechanisms could be much more concrete (moving cards around etc..) and were not restricted to the pace of the middle range of students. An example of this is a student who had difficulty in completing a conversation on the telephone. By a process of elimination it became obvious that the difficulty was in putting together appropriate questions and answers. In other contexts she had found this easy because her memory worked better with visual clues.

A card game using a variety of questions and answers was used.

*I done the card game. It was different questions and you put the answers to them. Afterwards I had another go at the telephone. It was easier and I got it right.*

**( Gail, Appendix 1(b) )**

The same student subsequently used this method whenever she got stuck with conversational oral work and integrated this basic technique into her revision patterns.

The third point was highlighted in the attempt to provide access to all tasks for all students. In organising the classroom to encourage more independent learning, it became obvious that a significant number of students could do a lot more language work at a higher level once they understood what was being asked of them. Instructions were clarified in two ways. The teacher was freer to move around the room checking understanding, and peers were able to explain tasks without fear of talking across a teacher presentation. If all students were to increase their independence, however, this was not enough. Different forms of instructions were therefore tried, mixing target language with diagrams and pictures for written instructions and putting some instructions on tape. The objective of enabling all students to work confidently and to begin to develop independent learning strategies linked practically to the way in which tasks were presented. For some students the wrong presentation made the simplest of tasks impossible without teacher support.

### 3.3 Student organisation and responsibility

Very basic practical issues such as instructions and use of equipment were involved at student level. This was also a crucial area of organisation because it was the area that needed to move gradually out of the teacher's immediate control. This could not happen all at once as neither the teacher nor the students were ready ! It was clear that initially fairly tight guidelines were needed and oral instructions at the beginning of the lesson were not adequate. As explained in the previous section various ways of presenting instructions were tried and the number of tasks was gradually increased. Time was also taken to discuss with students ways in which they could organise themselves and their work.

Using appropriate equipment involved a variety of problems . The kinds of equipment which are perfectly adequate when in the control of the teacher were sometimes not so useful for students to use. Examples include the kinds of tape recorders and headphones used and the length of cassettes. Short tapes made sections easier to find for students but had other implications for the teacher. The money to create sets of taped material was one thing, cataloguing and organising these resources was another. Interestingly, most students enjoyed taking control of tape recordings and very few abused the opportunity.

One student who was unable to work co-operatively with other students using a listening bank, worked in a disciplined way with a walkman. Many students were able to explain why group and individual listening was more useful. Some examples are given on the video.

*..... it's easier with the headphones because you don't have any distractions.*

**(Eddie, Appendix 1(b))**

*It's better working in a group because everyone offers what they think....*

**(Jackie, Appendix 1(b))**

Certainly the area of care and use of resources highlighted the importance of involving students and inviting co-operation. It also emphasised the need for clear ground rules and for thinking carefully about the best ways of using equipment from the perspective of the learner.

### **3.4 Organisation of time**

Timing of any lesson is important but, as indicated in the previous section on classroom organisation, when organising lessons to develop student independence a new perspective of timing was needed. Timing was important both within and across lessons with

the pattern of timing used altering as students became more independent and more capable of setting their own targets. The precise way in which this was organised with different year groups is explained in some detail in **Appendix 1 p.5**.

Apart from teacher and student organisation of time for individual and blocks of lessons, there were also time issues in relation to setting up and clearing away when so many different resources were used. This became easier as the older students learned to set up equipment and as systems were developed so that they could extract and select resources. Towards the end of the project Year 10 students were able to organise effectively one half of their lessons in a week without the support of their normal teacher, provided that targets had been set or reviewed earlier in the week. Once this became apparent it became a policy that the younger students would be systematically trained to set up various items of equipment as well as to load and use software. They also began to select some resources from Year 7 onwards and for small sections of work target setting was encouraged.

### 3.5 Organisation of resources

The organisation of material and human resources became a key focus during the project. The first aspect was creating an integrated set of resources from both published and teacher-produced materials. One difficulty was finding a balance of skill areas which depended upon the same language content and were at an appropriate level. It rapidly became obvious that many published materials did not concentrate on progression in terms of skill development. (A number of years later teachers still struggle with the implementation of the National Curriculum for much the same reason.) Even when appropriate materials were found, they were usually presented in one way only and so additional materials had to be created by the teacher in order to differentiate in terms of the level of support offered to students. As students worked in groups and individually it also became apparent that a much greater number of tasks at a particular level needed to be completed by some students before they felt confident with the language material. This meant that more graded material was needed particularly in the early stages of a unit.

Once material had been created and collected storage became another organisational issue. A system was developed initially for teacher use, but in subsequent months this needed to be adapted so that students

could select and use selected materials easily. Human resources were also deployed in a totally different way. Apart from the changing role of the class teacher, other teaching ,advisory and support staff could fulfil different functions in the classroom. The Foreign Language Assistant became more involved in the preparation and delivery of all aspects of the work. She was equally able to work with students on the computer (a good way of developing student target language use) as in the traditional group oral exercises. Student teachers were able to be integrated more effectively into the classroom, to take responsibility for sections of work and to get to know individual students and the different ways in which they worked. Additional adult support (e.g. advisory support for Information Technology, special needs support ) could more readily and frequently be used and its availability was appreciated by students as well as the teacher.

### **3.6 Summary**

In summary, at classroom level, the development of independent learning strategies, in the context of access to language learning for all students, raised questions for the teacher of an organisational nature.

Those questions and the ways in which they were explored are described above in five sections:-

- 1. Classroom organisation**
- 2. Organisation of tasks.**
- 3. Student organisation and responsibility.**
- 4. Organisation of time**

## **5. Organisation of resources.**

Organisation was not, however, the only issue. Organisation is concrete and observable, and changes are relatively easy to define and implement. Other necessary changes are more elusive. In any context where the roles of students and teachers have changed there must be questions raised about approaches and attitudes to change. This is very difficult to explore but by involving other adults and students in discussion some aspects were highlighted.

## **4. Other Perspectives**

The comments received from all of those involved in the project were largely positive but it is not the evaluation of the project in terms of success or failure that is of most interest in this case. It is rather the issues that were raised about access and independence as a result of exploring other people's perspectives of the project. Although there is certainly overlap in the issues raised by the adults involved and by the students, for convenience the issues are grouped into those extracted from student responses and those noted by the adults.



## 5. A Student Perspective

As a general point it is worth noting that the students involved in this project, who would not in general be described as sophisticated learners, made some very interesting responses which showed a good level of understanding of the issues involved. This confirms the view of **Margaret Madden** and **Jean Rudduck** who described some of the findings of the Nuffield Foundation Project - Students' Agenda - in a recent T.E.S article. They state that:-

*Young people are observant and often capable of analytic and constructive comment. They usually respond well to the responsibility, when it is seriously entrusted to them, of helping to identify aspects of schooling that enhance or get in the way of their learning. (Madden, M. & Rudduck, J. 1997).*

The students' responses have been grouped into four main categories for the purpose of discussion:-

1. **Involvement in the learning process**
2. **Awareness of the linguistic purpose of tasks**
3. **Preferred learning techniques**
4. **Control and responsibility**

### 5. 1 Involvement in the learning process

In the video-taped discussion and in the profiling documents a number of students commented on their increased involvement in the learning process. An interesting summary of active learning was given by one student:-

*... we do like group work and it keeps your brain active because you're doing something while you're learning.*

**Gareth ( Appendix 1(b))**

The student went on to explain the difference between an inactive approach where information was delivered and subsequently learned for a test and a need to learn in order to complete the work.

## **5.2 Awareness of the linguistic purpose of tasks**

Comments in this section fell into two parts. An understanding by students of the relevance of aspects of tasks for real-life language use, and an understanding of the ways in which certain tasks were helping them to learn. In the first category there were a number of comments about tasks involving listening. One student picked out the importance of listening to native speakers.

*I like the tape because when you're listening to it, it's real French people's voices. When you go to France you're not just going to just read everything, you're going to be listening.*

**Eddie (Appendix 1(b))**

Another student emphasised the importance of listening to normal speed speech:-

*I like the listening because you get used to the words and the speed that they speak at, the normal speed, instead of just having someone say it dead slow so you can understand it.*

**Richard (Appendix 1(b))**

A number of students clearly remembered the telephone-based oral tasks. For some these were very demanding tasks but there was a sense of achievement in completing them. One student compared the tasks to making real telephone calls:-

*We had all the questions in front of us and we could prepare but when we got on the 'phone you had to listen to the questions , you had to think about the questions before you answered them and sometimes you get questions which you don't expect. ... it is useful because if you have to take a normal telephone call you're not going to get questions you expect all the time, are you ?*

**Tracey (Appendix 1(b))**

Most students at some point in the project made perceptive comments about the value of the tasks in terms of what they were learning to do. These were not always positive and arguably one of the most valuable features of the later stages of the project was in developing alternative tasks or approaches when students found particular activities less than helpful. In the taped discussion students commented on how some tasks were useful to them. Two students referred to a text manipulation program and a word-processing package used with a concept keyboard.

*I like using the computers because it helps you to know how to spell the words and get familiar how to put the words together in like sentences.*

**Lee (Appendix 1(b))**

*I like the computer because when you see the words on it and then you're doing the reading, you can recognise them. So it helps you to put them together.*

**Jackie (Appendix 1(b))**

It was interesting to note the reflection of these comments in the individual student's work. Lee had indeed made progress in structuring his written work and Jackie almost invariably chose to

follow up a computer-based task with a reading task. In both cases students were in fact commenting on positive links (in terms of learning strategies) that they were able to see between different aspects of their language work.

### **5.3 Preferred learning techniques**

For many students their preference for particular techniques came from their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. One student was keen to improve conversational oral work and highlighted the importance of preparation:-

*I found it easier to prepare. Writing the questions down and then going through it a few times.*

**Lesley (Appendix 1(b))**

Another student used a card game to help with a telephone task. A number of students commented on the use of headphones and group work in developing listening skills.

*....it's easier with the headphones because you don't have any distractions.*

**Eddie (Appendix 1(b))**

*It's better working in a group because everyone offers what they think but you've got to keep re-winding the tape all the time to listen to it again. .... Re-winding the tape is sort of bad because you can't re-wind it in the exam but you've got to re-wind it to work out what it is.*

**Jackie (Appendix 1(b))**

It is interesting to note that some students were able to distinguish between tasks with different objectives such as :- preparing for real language use, examination requirements and learning language.

#### 5.4 Control and responsibility

Behind a lot of the comments made by students are indications that they have assumed, to some extent, control over, and responsibility for, their own learning. In weaker skill areas students obviously found a level of control helpful. This is particularly obvious in the comments made earlier about the listening bank. One student went further than this and summed up the aspect of organisational control in the following way:-

*I like the way at the beginning of the lesson they tell you all the work you're going to do 'cos then you can just get on with it. But like in other classes, the teacher could tell you and the teacher could be talking and you could be asking for ages what you have to do but they just don't take any notice. .... It's easier because you can just get on, you can look in the back of your book and see what you need and go and get it without asking all the time what you need.*

**Alison (Appendix 1(b))**

For a considerable number of students this aspect of organisational control featured strongly in their casual comments during the project. A problem did however arise when, after the project, there was a change of class teacher for some of their lessons and students found it

very difficult to revert to taking less responsibility for organisation of their time and tasks. The student perspective therefore highlights other factors in developing independent learning strategies and creating access to language learning for all which will now be explored.

## 6. Implications of a student perspective.

In chapter 2, I referred to the fact that there are both social and educational tensions in the classroom which define the limits of independence as a reality. The students' perspective highlighted this because in working to develop independent learning strategies the relationship between the class and the teacher changed. The level of trust and co-operation required was high because students needed to be free to adapt approaches to learning languages to suit their own styles of learning. In doing so they offered challenges to the teachers' preconceptions and opened up the value of certain language tasks to debate. **Angela Anning** in a study of teachers' theories about children's learning comments that :-

*Teachers appear to be concerned with the observable learning behaviour of children rather than the abstract processes of cognition or what is going on 'inside the children's heads'.* (1988, p.135).

The overwhelming conclusion from the comments made during this project is that students are more than able to discuss the process of learning and thereby provide information for the teacher about how they as individuals, and as a group, think and learn. There is some evidence that being involved in such discussion not only helped the teacher to construct better opportunities for individuals to learn, but also enabled the students themselves to become more pro-active and confident learners. **Ranson, Martin, Nixon & McKeown** say that :-

*Learning depends upon motivation and the empowering of internal rewards. Learning is inescapably a conscious activity. (Ranson et al., 1996, p.16).*

If this is so, then eliciting students' views of the learning process is not an optional extra but a necessary step in making learning a "conscious activity".

A group of students who have developed independent learning strategies, or are on the way to doing so, make a difficult group to teach in a traditional manner. It also seems true that a "bright" class who challenge the teacher in terms of the content of the lesson are more acceptable than a "less able" group who challenge the teacher's perception of how to teach and how to learn. The only rational explanation for this is that teaching techniques embody control mechanisms and that changing them involves a high level of risk for

the teacher. For the students the risk lies in acquiring a new level of responsibility. **Barbara Devitt** echoes this point:-

*What we are faced with then is a re-appraisal of the teacher-student relationship. We cannot embrace the notion of independent or autonomous learning without asking ourselves far-reaching questions regarding the implications for the curriculum and for our own role as professionals. (Devitt,B. 1997, p.36 ).*

From a teacher perspective, ensuring access and developing independent learning strategies are aims which appear to raise largely organisational issues; but in taking a student's perspective it becomes obvious that there is a difficult balance to maintain in terms of roles and control. The nature of this balance is complex, but needs to be addressed within language departments and schools if the objective is for students to develop from year to year. A model in which only one teacher in a department is involved in such development would involve students unlearning strategies at a future date in order to cope in a classroom with other teachers who wished to maintain traditional roles and forms of organisation.

## **7. A support perspective**

Involving students in examining specific changes in the classroom provided a lot of different information. The perspectives of students and the teacher already provided quite a wide picture in terms of



change within specific classes but a more independent perspective was available. Two student teachers and a foreign language assistante, who were involved in supporting classes during the project, provided other perspectives. They had been involved during the Autumn Term of 1989 with a number of different classes and particularly two groups of students in Key Stage 4. In order to include their perspectives a discussion with them was videotaped. A transcript of the discussion is included in Appendix 1 (b). The taped discussion which is illustrated with sections of classroom work, centred around three main issues :-

- 1. Equipment and materials**
- 2. Management of the classroom**
- 3. Individual and special needs**

### **7.1 Equipment and materials**

A recurring theme in the discussion with the adult participants was the variety of materials, equipment and tasks used. They found this a striking difference between the classes involved in the project and classes they had observed in other schools. For the two student teachers it was also in marked contrast to their own experience of language teaching as learners. One of the adults indicated that this enabled students to develop "a variety of different skills" but that it involves the teacher in more organisation to ensure that all the necessary resources are available.

## **7.2 Management of the classroom**

Organisation of resources led to a discussion of staffing levels and the crucial aspect of teacher management of the classroom. Interestingly, although the teacher's role in managing the classroom was perceived to be more complex in the project approach than in a traditionally organised classroom, the teacher was perceived to be less in control. This was not seen as a negative comment, as one student teacher observed " Absolute teacher control can lead to de-motivation". The project approach was seen as increasing motivation and reducing discipline problems. There were several comments about the atmosphere in the classroom being "more relaxed" and "a good atmosphere for learning". The difference between the traditional roles of the teacher and the students and those apparent in the project classes was also remarked upon. One Student Teacher referred to there being " a lot more active participation " on the part of students and that students were "helping each other and using the teacher as a resource".

## **7.3 Individual and special needs**

Although all the observers commented on the appropriacy of the approach for all ability levels, there was some discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of mixed ability groups and whether

this meant that more able students completed more of the work. It was concluded that "the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages" and that the particular group of students was able to "use language more easily than other classes". The fact that this was an issue for discussion is more interesting than the conclusion as it illustrates the point that the volume of work completed and progress in terms of learning are often confused. It also introduces the mixed views of many teachers when discussing the value of students working together. This issue is also raised in Project 3. Interestingly, the Nuffield Foundation Project mentioned earlier in this chapter found that students themselves asked for "*more formal opportunities for pupils to support each other in their learning*". (Madden & Rudduck, 1997).

To summarise, the views of the adult observers / participants were interesting in that they highlighted issues of concern to both the teacher and students, but from a different perspective. Their views indicated some key aspects of a foreign language classroom where access and independence for all students were being sought:-

- The variety of skills being developed emphasised the point that objectives needed to be wider than specific language acquisition.

- There is a complex relationship between control, organisation and the roles of the teacher and students.
- Learning objectives need to disassociate the volume of material covered from the learning strategies acquired.

## **8. Conclusions from Project 1**

The first project was important in that it concerns the issues raised at **classroom level** of working towards a curriculum model which facilitates access to language learning for all students and which encourages the development of independent learning strategies. There are 3 perspectives taken:-

1. A teacher perspective which highlights organisational issues.
2. A student perspective which highlights their role and involvement and the variety of ways in which learning can take place.
3. The perspective of other adult observer/participants which highlights the importance of setting and valuing different objectives and the complexity of the relationship between control, classroom management and the roles of the teacher and students.

In analysing the implementation of a short term project in one classroom, a significant number of issues were raised but if whole departments in different schools were involved would the issues still be the same ? This is the subject of the second project which built on the results of the first project and examined how the model was implemented by 7 different High School Departments. The next chapter considers the structure, content and evaluation of Project 2.

## Chapter 4

### Research Project 2 :- A multi-school model

#### 1. Introduction

The focus of this project was the flexible implementation, in a number of different schools, of the classroom model developed during project 1. Its value in terms of this thesis is in :-

- Examining the issues raised at individual school and classroom level during implementation and comparing these with the issues raised in Project 1.
- Evaluating the structure of the project itself in order to extract the key issues which are involved when a multi-school approach is taken.

#### 2. Links between Projects 1 and 2.

Project 2 developed out of Project 1 in three ways.

- Firstly, the first project results were perceived to have wider implications than a single school base and the emerging issues were used to structure the second project. This allowed the second project to be more focused by using the main areas identified as problematic, as themes in the INSET phase of the project.
- Secondly, the video materials produced during the first project were used to construct INSET materials in the second project. This had a number of positive benefits, in that it showed a developing model rather than a finished product and it stayed close to the realities of the classroom. The teachers in the second project identified with the

classes on the video , perhaps because it was a local school. They were also able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the model by referring to the classroom footage as well as the points raised by the students and the other adults involved. This enabled them to take a more critical approach, using as near to first hand experience of the model as was possible. They were able to question and analyse the elements of the model and to develop an individual perspective in a way that would have been more difficult with second-hand descriptions.

- Thirdly, the curriculum materials used with classes in Project 1 were developed and used as exemplar materials in Project 2. Initially these were used in the INSET phase to illustrate specific points. In the school-based phases they were used in different ways with different schools. For some schools they provided a ready made pack of classroom materials. The pack allowed the schools to concentrate on the issues of how to manage the organisation of the classroom without involving them in preparation of materials. Other schools used tasks within the pack as models to construct their own teaching materials.

### **3. Introduction to Project 2.**

Project 2 took place between January and July 1990. Teachers at this time were preoccupied with the advent of the National Curriculum for Modern

Foreign Languages. They were confused by the documentation and terminology and unclear as to the purpose and rationale behind it. At the same time there was increasing pressure to provide appropriate and successful learning experiences for the full ability range. Use of the target language had also become a focus point and there was interest in using a wider range of teaching methods. TVEI resourcing had made Information Technology a growing part of school life and language teachers were being pressed for ways in which they could use computers to enhance language learning.

Seven schools were closely involved in all phases of the project. Other schools were involved in parts of the project but because of the time constraints it was not possible to accommodate all the schools wishing to be involved in all of the project. The objective was never to produce identical models in all schools but to consider the features of the model in the context of a number of different schools. The schools all began from different starting points and were able to identify aspects of the model which they wished to develop. The resulting school-based models therefore had some common features but they were all different in structure and approach.

The project was constructed as follows:-

**Phase 1 :- INSET**

**Phase 2:- School-based preparation**

**Phase 3:- Class-based sessions**

**Phase 4:- Evaluation**



The rationale behind this construction and its relative merits are discussed later but in general terms the different phases were strongly linked and, as was explained earlier, they built upon the issues arising from Research Project 1.

### 3.1 Phase 1 :- INSET

There were 3 linked sessions of INSET. Each was organised and guided by the researcher and involved teachers from 20 schools.

#### Session 1

- An overview of past and present initiatives in Modern Languages (including some of the general requirements of the National Curriculum).
- An analysis of the issues involved.
- Implications for:
  - materials / equipment
  - strategies for organising teaching / learning
  - assessment / profiling
  - accreditation
- Practical responses in each of the above areas. In order to examine these use was made of:-
  - the video produced during Project 1
  - the package of curriculum materials ('Objets perdus').
- An outline of the content of the project and the ways in which it might respond to the needs identified.

#### Session 2

This session concentrated on materials, looking at:-

- the kinds of integrated materials needed
- the rationale behind the package of curriculum materials.

Time was also given to exploring the package and discussing ways in which it could be used.

### Session 3

This session concentrated on teaching and learning strategies. The main emphasis was placed on various aspects of organisation. The session was divided into the following sections:-

- A brief comparison of the objectives of the project with a number of points raised in the Initial Advice of the National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group.
- A simulation to demonstrate one way in which Level 3 of the pack of curriculum materials could be organised in the classroom.
- Discussion of the practical issues of classroom management and planning involved. E.g. ensuring students have previous opportunities to develop the necessary linguistic and organisational skills and develop familiarity with materials and equipment, including Information Technology.
- Discussion of the format and objectives of the individual school projects.

Subsequent to this project both the INSET materials and the curriculum materials were further reviewed and developed. The INSET materials form a small part of those used in Project 3 and copies of the fully annotated file are lodged in the Department of Education at the University of Liverpool, at NCET (Coventry) and with CILT (London). The materials are entitled:- "The Environment:- an integrated package" (1991). The pack of curriculum materials "Objets perdus" were initially printed and distributed by Sefton LEA to local schools (1990) and subsequently published in their revised form (1991) by the University of Liverpool, Sefton LEA and NCET. They were used in Project 3 as a model to develop another pack of curriculum materials for National Curriculum Key Stage 4. Copies are lodged, in the Department of Education at the University of Liverpool, at NCET (Coventry) and with CILT (London).

### **3.2 Phase 2 :- School-based preparation.**

Phase 1 was centrally organised and involved more schools than the seven who completed the whole of the project. Phase 2 took place in individual schools and was intended to support teachers and departments in adapting and developing a model which fitted in the context of their own school. In advance of a planning session schools were given a planning sheet to begin thinking through the issues involved. A copy of the planning sheet is included in Appendix 2 (a). They were asked to select one group / class of students and to identify an appropriate unit of work. E.g. health, travel etc..

In the preparation session the planning sheet was used to:-

- take a brief audit of the materials / learning strategies usually used.
- set long and short term aims and objectives .
- set learning objectives within the unit of work selected.
- plan materials / equipment / classroom management etc..

The preparation of the materials was then divided between the school and the project co-ordinator . The balance depended upon the objectives set and the circumstances of individual schools.

### **3.3 Phase 3:- Class-based sessions.**

A minimum of 2 class-based sessions at each participating school were attended by the project co-ordinator whose role in the classroom varied

according to the objectives of the individual schools. In some cases, in the first class session the co-ordinator took the teacher's role and the teacher supported. This freed the teacher to consider various aspects of organisation in more detail within his/her own classroom. In other cases various supporting roles were taken, from general facilitator to provider of specific support for a task using Information Technology. At the end of each session the teacher(s) and project co-ordinator discussed the session in detail. Materials and strategies were evaluated and proposed changes for the next session noted. In this way targets were strongly linked to practice in the classroom and problems which had not been obvious at first could be dealt with as they arose.

#### **3.4 Phase 4:- Evaluation**

In addition to the evaluations made at the end of the class-based sessions, a final evaluation session took place at the end of the project with each school. During this session all schools also set future aims and objectives and discussed their particular needs and requirements in working towards those aims and objectives. In evaluating the project, the teacher(s) involved and the project co-ordinator compared the class-based sessions and final objectives with the original objectives set. In addition the schools were asked to comment on the format, strengths and weaknesses of the project. Evaluations were recorded, with the other individual school details, on a form during the project. In this way evaluation became part of the process of the project rather than an additional

administrative task. Copies of the completed records for each school are included in Appendix 2 (b) but the following outline shows the headed sections of the record.

**Modern Languages in Key Stage 4.  
Integrated resources project.  
Project Evaluation**

SCHOOL  
STAFF INVOLVED

**1. Starting position**

Equipment and materials used  
Layout of classroom  
Teaching / learning strategies in use  
Long-term aims

**2. INSET**

Number of staff involved  
Sessions  
Structure used in school-based preparation

**3. School-based sessions**

Short-term aims and objectives  
Evaluation of Stage 1  
Agreed changes  
Evaluation of stage 2

**4. Evaluation**

Overall progress compared with stated objectives  
Future aims / objectives  
Anticipated needs  
*Resources*  
*Further Inset*  
General school comment

**Table 4.1 Project 2 Evaluation Form**

## Chapter 5

### Issues emerging from Research Project 2

#### Introduction

In analysing the results of the second project the completed evaluation forms from the seven schools (see Appendix 2 (b) ) are used to extract and compare:-

1. the objectives selected
2. lesson evaluations and changes made
3. the anticipated needs of schools
4. the success indicators identified

The rationale for analysing these four particular aspects of the data is that they are likely to raise the issues which concerned each of the schools in the development of their own models. For example, *the objectives selected* show the aspects of "increasing access and developing independent learning strategies" which teachers identified as important in their own context. *The lesson evaluations* illustrate the practical issues faced at the implementation stage. *The anticipated needs* highlight the skills which teachers considered it was important to develop in order to operate the model and also the resources they felt were needed. *The success indicators* are interesting in that they begin to extract factors at a different level, one step removed from the classroom, which nevertheless affect the classroom model. These factors are then further explored later in the chapter in an evaluation of the project structure used.

## **1. The aims and objectives selected.**

This section looks at two parts of the data on the evaluation forms.

- The initial long-term aims set.
- The short-term objectives targeted during the project.

### **1.1 The initial long-term aims set.**

Reflected in this section of aims are two main influences. Firstly in the initial stage of the project the individual teachers had all identified the features of the model which they felt were important. As might be expected different teachers selected different features depending upon their previous experience and their own personal perspectives. Secondly all the teachers involved were committed to some level of experimentation and they therefore selected from these features aspects which they felt it would be useful to develop within their own practice. The long-term aims selected by each of the schools are shown below in extracted form. The complete forms can be seen in Appendix 2 (b) .



School	Aims
A	Achieve more student independence Cater for individual students Use a wider range of resources, including I.T. Manage more varied approaches to teaching and learning
B	Development of integrated group work Using a variety of equipment / resources
C	Develop staff techniques in role of teacher as facilitator. Enable students to develop social and organisational skills Give students confidence in the use of a variety of equipment (e.g. tapes/computers)
D	Try out different learning strategies Try out other resources not usually used (e.g. I.T /tape and headphones)
E	Look at techniques and materials for use with less able students Try out management of a different approach
F	Develop student independence in:- operation of a wider range of equipment learning to co-operate learning to organise work Group work Alternative ways of structuring class learning
G	Department to share information Develop different teaching / learning strategies Opportunities for students to develop different skills within different learning situations

### Key Issues

For the purpose of analysing this project the long term statements made by teachers are referred to as aims. In reality they included both aims and objectives. The short term targets are referred to as objectives. Most of the

aims stated can be organised into one of three general headings. Some of the aims could be fitted into more than one category, which seems inevitable given the close connection between different factors operating in the classroom. For example, giving students "confidence in the use of a variety of equipment" (School C) is essentially about student skills and independence but obviously involves resources and equipment and has implications in terms of teacher skills. Given these natural overlaps the following table groups the objectives under the headings to which they largely apply. The headings used are: **teacher skills, student independence and resources / equipment.**

**Table 5.1 Summary of aims**

**Teacher skills**

- Manage more varied approaches to teaching and learning
- Try out management of a different approach
- Develop different teaching / learning strategies
- Try out different learning strategies
- Alternative ways of structuring class learning
- Develop staff techniques in role of teacher as facilitator
- Development of integrated group work
- Group work
- Look at techniques and materials for use with less able students
- Cater for individual students
- Department to share information

**Student independence**

- Achieve more student independence
- Enable students to develop social and organisational skills
- Develop student independence by learning to co-operate
- Develop student independence by learning to organise work
- Opportunities for students to develop different skills within different learning situations
- Give students confidence in the use of a variety of equipment (e.g. tapes/computers)
- Develop student independence in operation of a wider range of equipment

**Resources / equipment**

- Use a wider range of resources, including I.T.
- Using a variety of equipment / resources
- Try out other resources not usually used (e.g. I.T / tape and headphones)

It is interesting to note that six out of seven of the schools were aware of the importance of developing a student perspective in some form, whilst five out of seven of the schools emphasised the use of resources and equipment. All the schools referred either explicitly or implicitly to the development of teacher skills. A slightly closer analysis shows the number of schools highlighting particular key issues.

**Table 5.2 Numerical summary**

	No. of schools
Developing new teaching and learning strategies	7
Access for all students	2
Student independence and skills	4
Increased range of resources and equipment	4

At this stage it can be seen, even in such a small sample, that there is a heavy emphasis from the teachers' perspectives on the development of new teaching and learning strategies. It is interesting to compare the issues highlighted in the initial long-term aims with the 3 areas extracted from the discussion with the adult observer / participants in Project 1.

They were:-

- Equipment and materials,
- Management of the classroom and
- Individual and special needs .

The categories are certainly similar to the three main groupings of Teacher skills, Student independence and Resources / equipment which suggests that the teachers at the end of Phase 1 of Project 2 were taking a similar perspective to that of the adult observers / participants in Project 1.

## **1.2 The short-term objectives targeted during the project.**

The short-term objectives set are predictably much more precise and refer more closely to the practicalities of the classroom. They can however still be grouped under the three broad headings used for the long-term aims.

**Table 5.3 Summary of Short-term Objectives**

**Teacher skills**

Develop teacher organisational skills and confidence for mixed task lessons.

Classroom management of task-based work.

Organisation and management of group work.

Development of classroom management of differentiated progress within a mixed ability context.

Trial of team-teaching.

Set up some simple group work including the use of tape and headphones and 1 computer. In particular to look at the management implications but also to look at student response.

**Resources /equipment**

Look at the use of I.T (How can it be integrated ? How valuable is it ?)

Integrating use of audio equipment with headphones and the computer.

Use of tape and headphones.

Use of concept keyboard with Touch Explorer.

Integrated use of computers / telephone / tapes with headphones.

Overcoming problems of classroom furniture.

**Student independence /skills**

Develop student organisational skills and use of a variety of resources.

To help students to learn to organise themselves as a group, use a tape recorder and headphones and a computer.

Develop group work skills within the area of "Health".

**Key Issues**

Although the groupings are the same, the balance between the priorities set has changed. For example, in the objectives, five out of seven of the schools specifically mention classroom organisation or management within teacher skills. In the aims only one school prioritised this area.

One possible explanation for this is that in exploring new teaching and learning techniques, at the lesson planning stage, one of the primary

teacher focus points is classroom organisation or management. Another explanation is that in working to develop access to language learning for all students and to improve students language learning strategies a key teacher focus point becomes classroom organisation or management. It is worth noting that in Project 1 classroom organisation was also highlighted as an issue which the teacher needed to address.

Student skills are noted in the objectives by four schools which is the same number as in the initial aims but these are not the same four schools. It seems that by the end of the project, the development of student skills was specifically noted by teachers in all of the schools as a key issue but for different schools this emerged at different times. At the stage of setting objectives six out of seven schools were obviously concerned about widening the use of resources including I.T. compared with five schools who cited this in the initial aims. In fact the one school (School C) not mentioning resources at this stage had decided to use the pack of curriculum materials produced in Project 1 and to concentrate on classroom management and team teaching. Resources and equipment did however become an issue for this school later in the project.

In considering such general headings some patterns can be detected but they tend to disguise the fact that at this stage each of the schools had begun to adapt the model to fit their own particular context. In the setting of the initial aims the teachers used their own experience and expertise to select the key issues, but in setting the short-term objectives they were

more constrained by their immediate context. The issues highlighted in the objectives, therefore, reflect individual school related targets as well as the issues initially perceived by the teacher to be important. In order to illustrate this the individual school objectives are listed below a brief description which illustrates the context in which those objectives were set.

### **School A**

The teacher in this school had already been trailing some independent work with students and had become conscious that most students lacked basic organisational skills. The range of student abilities within the classes she taught had convinced her that at least some lesson time needed to involve mixed tasks, in order to enable students to work at their own pace. The teacher was not confident about organising such a classroom environment and was aware that different teacher skills were required. As part of providing such a mixed task environment the teacher was aware that different resources were also needed. The use of computer software was one possibility and both the resources and the technical support were available within the school. However the teacher was not entirely convinced that I.T could be effectively integrated and usefully deployed in a foreign language classroom. In this particular context the objectives set acquire more particular significance.

- *Develop teacher organisational skills and confidence for mixed task lessons.*
- *Look at the use of I.T (How can it be integrated ? How valuable is it ?)*
- *Develop student organisational skills and use of a variety of resources.*

### **School B**

In this school the teacher was interested in organising more task-based learning. She had begun to use the computer in language lessons but was interested in integrating the computer-based work more into the language work and adding group listening to the range of resources used. The physical environment in which she taught was very restrictive. Space was limited and the desks built into the room, together with the positioning of the plugs meant that anything other than whole class teaching with the teacher at the front of the room was very difficult to envisage at first glance. The furniture further complicated matters in that the swing desks were attached to the chairs and therefore difficult to arrange in to groups.

As this was the normal teaching base, the teacher decided to work within the constraints rather than to change rooms temporarily. Classroom management therefore took on an added dimension. In this context the objectives set make sense.

- *Classroom management of task-based work.*
- *Integrating use of audio equipment with headphones and the computer.*
- *Overcoming problems of classroom furniture.*

### **School C**

School C involved the whole department in the project and wanted to give both students from different classes, and staff, the opportunity to work together. One of the particular concerns was that the setting arrangements were producing classes of students who did not believe that they could achieve in language learning. Equally, staff were unsure that it was possible to effectively manage a classroom in which learners of different abilities were working together. Management and organisation therefore became priorities and the staff decided to use the prepared pack of curriculum materials from Project 1 so that time could be spent on considering organisational details rather than on producing materials. The objectives reflect this.

- *Development of classroom management of differentiated progress within a mixed ability context.*
- *Trial of team-teaching.*

### **School D**

The whole department was involved in this project and used it amongst other things as a way of developing collective departmental planning. The resources used in language lessons prior to the project were limited, although other resources were available in the school. The class targeted had been working in a teacher-centred way but it was proving difficult to motivate the group and control and discipline were key issues. The students were also unused to operating any kind of equipment on their own. The teacher was apprehensive about the reaction of the class to a change of approach and was not confident that task-based work could be managed with a "difficult" group of students. The objectives in this context were deliberately simplified.

- *To help students to learn to organise themselves as a group, use a tape recorder with headphones and a computer.*



### *School E*

The teacher in this school was particularly concerned with making work accessible to lower ability students and in this context to try out different techniques and materials. She had some experience of working with computers and wanted to look at the use of the concept keyboard with a software package called Touch Explorer. The objectives are therefore varied.

- *Organisation and management of group work.*
- *Use of tape and headphones.*
- *Use of concept keyboard with Touch Explorer.*

### *School F*

Although the whole department was involved in this project much of the work was with one particular teacher. The emphasis was on developing alternative forms of teaching and learning and developing independent learning strategies in students. One of the interesting features of this part of the project was that the teacher learned a lot about the group she was teaching. The early work planned for a "homogenous" group was quickly adapted to take account of the different strengths and weaknesses identified in individual students. The objectives reflected the main priorities.

- *Set up some simple group work including the use of tape and headphones and one computer.*
- *In particular to look at the management implications but also to look at student response.*

### *School G*

Two teachers were involved from this school. The head of department was already using a range of techniques in the classroom and was beginning to develop task-based work. Another member of staff was drawn into the project, from which, departmental planning and team-teaching evolved. The emphasis was therefore on widening teacher and student skills and in developing a more integrated approach. In this context the objectives and the responses to them were more sophisticated.

- *Develop group work skills within the area of "Health".*
- *Integrated use of computers / telephone / tapes with headphones.*

### 1.3 Summary of issues raised in aims and objectives

To summarise the points made so far, both the initial aims and the short-term objectives highlight issues which can be generally summarised under three headings:- teacher skills, student independence and resources / equipment. These headings are consistent with the areas of discussion which emerged with the adult observers / participants in Project 1. There is however a detectable shift in focus from the initial aims to the short-term objectives and the emphasis on classroom organisation and management is consistent with one of the major pre-occupations of the teacher in Project 1.

Both of these points could be explained as the influence of Project 1 participants on Project 2 participants, but when the context of the teachers' selection of objectives is analysed in detail, a more interesting possibility is suggested. All of the schools were attempting in some way to increase student independence in terms of learning strategies and /or to improve access to effective language learning for all students. As they began to consider their selected aims in the light of their own school context, a set of factors for consideration emerged. These factors are expressed in the objectives. These factors can not only be explained at an individual school level in terms of the school context but at a general level are consistent with the issues emerging in Project 1. This suggests that in constructing a classroom model, which promotes the development of independent

learning strategies and access for all students, there exist within a wide range of situations certain common factors which need to be addressed by the teacher.

## **2. Lesson evaluations and changes made**

The idea that there is a common core of perceived issues becomes more credible if the lesson evaluations from the seven schools are analysed.

This evidence from the individual schools is contained in the evaluation forms in Appendix 2 (b). Each lesson was evaluated by the teachers concerned and proposed changes on the basis of the evaluations were noted. Across the schools similar issues emerged and they can be summarised in the following ten points.

1. Changes to tasks, structure of tasks and number of tasks.
2. Balancing language skills within and across tasks.
3. Balancing equipment and tasks.
4. Changes to instructions and modes of student response.
5. Discussion with students about organisation and management of their work.
6. Discussion with students about working as a team.
7. Changes to amount of materials to aid distribution.
8. Changes to organisation and classroom management.
9. Balancing teacher demand and complexity of tasks.
10. Changes in classroom furniture and layout.

A detailed look at these points demonstrates that these were all noted as issues during Project 1. For example, under the heading "Organisational implications" the "Organisation of tasks" is considered. In this section

there are references to the need to " vary the nature of tasks in terms of the level of teacher support needed"- a reflection of Point 9 - and to considering "carefully different ways of presenting tasks and giving instructions" - a reflection of Point 4. There are also references to the structure and number of tasks and approaches to balancing skills within and across tasks which reflect Points 1 and 2. In addition there is discussion of the importance of balancing the equipment available with the resource requirements of the total number of tasks (Point 3). The section "Student organisation and responsibilities" discusses the strategies used to encourage students to work together and to organise and manage their work. This reflects the points made in 6 and 7. The section "Classroom organisation" discusses both classroom furniture and layout and changes to classroom management, reflecting Points 8 and 10.

There is no doubt that the close linking of the two projects was bound to produce some overlap in the emerging issues but the high level of match, even when very different schools were adapting the model within their own context, suggests that these are central issues whatever the context. If this is so then a list of relevant factors at classroom level and from a teacher perspective can begin to be made. This list can be extended by examining the anticipated needs registered by the schools at the end of the project.

### **3. The anticipated needs of schools.**

This section of the evaluation form summarises the development and resource needs which the individual schools identified as being necessary to continue with the models which they had begun to develop during the project. At this point they had all had first hand experience of trying to implement, in the classroom, the aspects of the model which they had selected in the initial aims and clarified in the objectives. The anticipated needs therefore reflect very strongly the immediate context of the school and the stage of skill development which the teachers felt themselves to be at. The detail at individual school level can be seen in Appendix 2 (b) but a summary of the needs is listed below under three headings:- **resources, in-service training and other issues.**

**Table 5.4 Summary of anticipated needs**

**Resources**

- Computer hardware and software.
- Tape recorders with listening stations.
- Training telephones.
- Banks of audio cassettes and computer disks.
- Photocopying of teacher-produced materials.
- Appropriate classroom furniture.
- Management of shared resources and space.
- Time for preparation of resources (school / LEA).
- Development of student reference materials.

**In-service training**

- Long-term planning and preparation.
- Construction of bank of materials.
- Creation of different materials e.g. integrated skill / simulations etc..
- Development of learning strategies to promote student independence.
- Realistic targets for students with special needs.
- Training in use of software.
- Assessment.
- More class-based work.

**Other factors**

- Smaller class sizes.
- Change in the role of the foreign language assistant.
- Increased in-class support.

**3.1 Resources**

In terms of resources the schools were equipped in different ways. In all cases however schools either had or were requesting access to:-

- Computer hardware and software.

- Tape recorders with listening stations.
- Banks of audio cassettes and computer disks.
- Photocopying of teacher-produced materials.

The collection of material on cassette and computer disk and its organisation were seen to be crucial, as was easy and frequent access to a photocopier. School G, whose model was more sophisticated than the others, also saw the benefits of using training telephones. The value of appropriate classroom furniture was recognised by those schools whose furniture made independent and group work more difficult. (School B in fact obtained appropriate chairs and tables when the senior management team became aware of the quality of the work which the teacher had initiated and of its value to the rest of the school.)

Those schools which had involved whole departments in the project became aware of the importance of the management of resources and space across the department. Whilst there are disadvantages for a teacher working alone in developing new techniques, one of the possible advantages is that there is access to equipment and materials that other teachers do not want to use. When a whole department is enthusiastic about the use of a range of resources then access and fair distribution has to be planned and managed. Schools who had begun to think about this also realised that access for a range of classes to more independent learning would involve long-term planning using a different approach from traditional schemes of work. The need for time to develop materials was recognised by all schools. One school also recognised that more

independent learning called for different kinds of student reference and support materials.

### 3.2 In-service training

In terms of in-service training the needs identified are more varied.

However the origins of most of them are clear from the detail of the project itself. The need to develop different kinds of materials as well as just 'more' materials was recognised. The extension of teacher

competence was emphasised in terms of IT skills, other learning strategies and making the curriculum accessible for students with special needs.

Some teachers also became interested in the different forms of assessment required for this style of approach. Most teachers felt that the combination of INSET and class-based work had been effective and expressed an interest in continuing with other class-based in-service training. One teacher felt that this was important not just in actually developing teaching skills but in being encouraged and motivated to continue. This view has also been expressed by teachers in other studies. Discussing the combination of

INSET and school- based work by advisory teachers, **Greg Morris**

comments:-

*Teachers have said that they value the extra support when they are back in their own schools so that they are not left by themselves to try new ideas and approaches out in isolation. (1990, p.13 )*



### 3.3 Other factors

Another broad issue that was raised under the heading of future needs was the changed nature of the language classroom when this model was adopted. School G explained it in the following way:-

*The development of such strategies has implications for the way in which Modern Languages is regarded and a good argument can be made for smaller classes if it is to be regarded as a practical rather than an academic subject.*

#### **School G ( Appendix 2 (b) )**

The implications of this change in the nature of the languages classroom were explained in different ways by different schools. Smaller classes and additional support in the classroom were two recurring themes. For some schools this meant contemplating a change in the role of student teachers and foreign language assistants or considering team teaching, for others it meant lobbying the senior management team for foreign language assistants or smaller classes.

### 3.4 Key Issues

The issues emerging from this section of the evaluation form could again be traced in Project 1, but the anticipated needs of the individual schools in Project 2 begin to highlight not just the factors but the variety and location of factors which affect the implementation of the model. In Project 1 the location was clearly seen as the classroom and the factors involved were considered at classroom level. In Project 2 it is obvious that some of the

factors cannot be dealt with at classroom level although their effect on the individual classroom is clear.

These factors fall into different categories. There are first of all departmental issues in the management of space and resources and in the planning of the curriculum. Then there are whole school factors such as the physical properties of the classroom:- power points in accessible places, full size tables and chairs, space for student movement. The school's deployment of staff will also determine class sizes and the level of flexibility which exists for team teaching to take place. Outside factors are identified such as the availability of INSET to support changes in teaching and learning techniques and the opportunities for the shared production of resources. (It is worth noting that at the time of this project these were LEA responsibilities but the advent of Local Management of Schools changed this.) These factors which are external to the classroom but have an important impact on what can be done in the classroom are further explored in the success indicators identified.

#### **4. Success indicators**

Implicit in the emergence of issues is the parallel development of more sophisticated teacher views of how success can be monitored and measured. Implementation had produced different school models with some common purposes. In this context evaluation needed to recognise

the extent of the differences as well as the similarities. Extracting and analysing success indicators thus became as innovative as the process.

The solution adopted was simple. Success in the case of Project 2 was determined by the extent to which the schools achieved their own objectives. Again, of interest in terms of the research is not whether or not each school was successful but the factors which seemed to underpin any level of success achieved. The factors which appeared to support the level of success achieved are derived mainly from the researcher's observation and discussion with participant teachers. They are of value in considering less obvious effects on the implementation of a model at classroom level.

The success indicators attributed to individual schools are contained in Appendix 2 (b) under the heading of " School Comment" and some generalised indicators are included in the Project Evaluation 'Section 1. General Comments' (Appendix 2 (c) ). These are summarised below.

1. Enthusiasm and commitment of teacher to project
2. Flexibility of teacher approach
3. Commitment to long-term aims
4. Thinking through implications of new ideas
5. Willingness to try new approaches
6. Willingness to explore ways around potential obstacles
7. Consistent attendance at INSET
8. Involvement in material production
9. Quality of team work in department
10. Good communication systems
11. Students prepared in advance
12. Discussion with students about organisational skills etc..

The attitude, intention and approach adopted by the teachers involved were obviously crucial in that half of the success indicators (1-6) refer

directly to these. Certainly *"the process of curriculum development concerns matters of perception, values and other human characteristics as well as situational factors ."* ( Dalton, T.H. 1988, p.7 ). Whilst much emphasis is placed on the importance of 'good quality teaching' in the 'successful school' of the 1990s there seems to be little understanding that the mechanical co-operation of teachers is not enough to ensure change.

Jean Rudduck discussing the ownership of change puts this point when she says:

*"professional development may be most dynamic when personal commitment to change is strong and when its basis is understood by the teachers concerned."* (1988, p. 205 ).

It was also significant that the schools where students were prepared in advance, and where specific skills such as organisation of work and group collaboration were discussed with students, made faster progress towards their objectives. As Shirley Grundy states:-

*The production of acceptable educational products is dependent upon the development of skills in both pupil and teacher.* (1987, p.43 )

When focusing on curriculum development, the concentration upon teacher skills often means that pupil skills are forgotten.

The process of curriculum material development, although time consuming, also seemed to hold significant benefits in assisting teachers to think through both learning and organisational issues. The way in which departments worked together and the quality of the communication systems within the school were crucial where more than one member of staff was involved. However, even with good levels of communication if

INSET attendance was shared between two or more teachers there was a lack of continuity which made progress more difficult. For example, a couple of schools decided to share the INSET time between the Head of Department and another member of staff, so that one person attended some of the sessions and the other person the rest of the sessions. In principle this was intended to make more of an impact on the department as a whole. In practice it did not work. Even if both members of staff were equally well-motivated and exchanged information regularly, they were unable to exchange the developmental aspect of the session.

The clear message from this is that apart from the time to develop the skills needed, the teachers also needed time to consider ideas critically and to begin to examine the practical implications. Shared INSET attendance reduced the individual teacher's ability to do this. This point has implications any methods of training (including 'cascade' ) which rely on the passing on of developmental ideas within the busy context of a school.

### **Key Issues**

Briefly then, the success indicators emphasise the importance of teacher approach and student preparation in implementing the model. They also illustrate some of the school factors which effected the implementation such as staff team-work and communication systems. Two of the indicators (7 and 8) suggest that the pattern of teacher INSET and involvement also effect implementation. This leads us further from the

classroom and into a consideration of the project model itself in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the model in supporting implementation in the classroom.

## **5. Evaluation of the project structure.**

The truth is that even with the best of objectives the project framework which is set up to deliver them may work against achieving those objectives. Moreover, it is often difficult to separate out the different aspects of the structure of a project which promote or detract from the project's objectives. In this case there were some distinct aspects of the project structure which appeared to be supportive in terms of classroom implementation and there were just as clearly other obstacles and limitations.

## **6. Positive aspects.**

There were four particular points made in the project evaluation which appeared to support improved classroom implementation of the innovations being promoted:-

1. **The practical nature of the content and form.**
2. **The setting of general project aims.**
3. **School-based models with individual school aims and objectives.**
4. **A collaborative planning stage.**

## 6.1 The practical nature of the content and form

The use of Project 1 materials in Project 2 meant that the project could begin in a classroom, with class-based materials. The issues were then extracted from the video-tape and curriculum materials, and discussed.

This in turn produced a set of individual school aims and objectives which were located in particular classrooms. From this point of view, teachers saw the content as practical. Other researchers have emphasised the point that:

*“ a research tradition in which theories are generated from teacher and pupil realities and needs is more likely to focus on issues of central rather than peripheral concern to practitioners .” ( Anning, A. 1988, p. 144 ).*

The form of the project also meant that most of the work was school and classroom based, whilst still providing time in Phase 1 for teachers to think and to develop specific skills. At the beginning and the end of the project individual schools set long-term aims. In this way an attempt was made to locate the project as just one stage in the development of the individual school models. It also enabled schools to identify the practical measures that needed to be taken to support future developments. In these ways the project form took account of the practical realities of school development.

## **6.2 The setting of general project aims.**

The setting of general project aims provided a framework for the individual school models and enabled a clear focus to be kept, whilst offering scope for very different models to be developed.

## **6.3 School-based models with individual school aims and objectives.**

Working from the general project aims, the selection and construction of individual school models was a key feature of the project. This was important in that the teachers involved were starting from different points and working in different schools with different amounts of flexibility and resources. They also constructed in Phase 1 their own perspectives of the key issues and were able to set their own priorities. For example, a number of schools recognised that the integration of Information Technology was a key issue. However, each of the teachers saw this in the context of their own knowledge and school. The priorities they set took this context into account. The specific objectives therefore became attainable within the life of the project and the next stage of development could be identified alongside the practical and resource implications. This meant that the practical issues in terms of implementation were built into the individual school aims and objectives, reducing the frustration of setting unrealistic targets whilst still conserving a development plan against long-term aims.



#### **6.4 A collaborative planning stage.**

Collaboration at the planning stage was crucial in that it was at this point that the ideals and principles explored in Phase 1 came into contact with the practical realities of the individual teacher's own classroom. In times of change it is this stage that most teachers face on their own and it is often at this point that implementation becomes difficult or impossible. The presence of another professional who can support while the class teacher develops confidence in using a new skill or a new style of management greatly increases the chance of successful implementation. The teacher's need for another perspective to help them clarify difficulties, find solutions and generally encourage can not be overestimated. Collaboration in planning meant support in application of agreed principles in a particular context.

These four elements of the structure of the project appear to have contributed to the overall success but there were also other features of the model which provided constraints.

#### **7. Obstacles and limitations.**

There were, no doubt, numerous minor limitations within the structure of the project and there was the serious point that the number of schools

within the project was small. There were also four major limitations which are worth considering:-

1. **The timing of school-based work.**
2. **Resourcing.**
3. **The need for more flexibility in structure.**
4. **Supporting development.**

### **7.1 The timing of school-based work**

The attention given to individual school models meant that the second and third phases of the project were very time consuming for the project co-ordinator and the economies of scale achieved in general in-service training were forfeited. There were also difficulties in programming these phases against seven different school time-tables and compromises had to be made.

### **7.2 Resourcing**

The resourcing of the school-based work was dependent largely upon the ingenuity of the teacher(s) involved and the project co-ordinator, but also on the amount of resource available in particular schools and the willingness of Heads to make some of it available. Where Head Teachers were enthusiastic about the project it was much easier for teachers to obtain practical support. Also those schools tended to benefit from the influence of the project on whole school issues or other curriculum departments.

### **7.3 The need for more flexibility in structure**

Although the school models, built by the participating teachers, reflected the differences between schools, the actual project structure was fixed. The first phase of INSET was fixed for dates in the Spring Term and then there were an allocated number of planning and in-class support sessions for each school. Although these were timetabled as far as possible for the convenience of each school the total number of sessions could not be altered. Some teachers would have benefited from additional INSET sessions before they began the planning. Other teachers needed extra sessions at the planning and implementation stages to take account of their own development and the level of challenge they were setting themselves. The shortage of time made it impossible to make adjustments of this nature for individual teachers and schools. Also in most cases the first preparation session took place after school in the teachers' own time and it may have been better to build this into the structure of the INSET sessions.

### **7.4 Supporting development**

Like many projects of its kind, the teachers made long-term plans without any assurances either from the school management teams or, (in the case

of INSET), from the LEA that the practical support needed would be forthcoming.

## **8. Summary of issues emerging from Project 2**

This chapter has attempted to extract the issues of implementation arising from Project 2 by analysing the project evaluation forms and the summary record kept by the project co-ordinator. The elements considered were:-

1. the objectives selected
2. lesson evaluations
3. the anticipated needs of schools
4. the success indicators identified
5. project structure evaluation.

The factors extracted in the first three categories were consistent with those identified in Research Project 1 and the hypothesis was offered that it is possible from these to construct a list of common factors which would arise in any context when implementing similar models. The following diagram ( 5. 1, p. 117 ) summarises the factors arising from the initial aims, short term objectives and from the evaluations and changes made. These have all been discussed in some detail and each section repeats similar themes. It is interesting however when they are placed together to see the increasing level of precision moving from the initial aims through the short-term objectives to the changes proposed in the evaluations. For example, " Develop different teaching / learning strategies" becomes

"Development of classroom management of differentiated progress within a mixed ability context" and then becomes about "Changes to tasks, structure of tasks and number of tasks".

From this it seems that any list of common factors should take account of the progression from the decision by the individual teacher to implement change and the initial aims chosen, to the application and revision within the context of specific lessons. The list 1-10 under Evaluations and changes summarises the practical issues that faced teachers and students when the aims and objectives moved into the classroom.

**Diagram 5.1 : Summary of Factors 1**

1. Changes to tasks, structure of tasks and number of tasks.
2. Balancing language skills within and across tasks.
3. Balancing equipment and tasks
4. Changes to instructions and modes of pupil response.

**Evaluations and changes**

5. Discussion with pupils about organisation and management of their work
6. Discussion with pupils about working as a team.
7. Changes to amount of materials to aid distribution.
8. Changes to organisation and classroom management
9. Balancing teacher demand and complexity of tasks.
10. Changes in classroom furniture and layout

**Initial Long-term aims**

**Teacher skills**

- Manage more varied approaches to teaching and learning
- Try out management of a different approach
- Develop different teaching / learning strategies
- Try out different learning strategies
- Alternative ways of structuring class learning
- Develop staff techniques in role of teacher as facilitator
- Development of integrated group work
- Group work
- Look at techniques and materials for use with less able pupils
- Cater for individual pupils
- Department to share information

**Pupil independence**

- Achieve more pupil independence
- Enable pupils to develop social and organisational skills
- Develop pupil independence by learning to co-operate
- Develop pupil independence by learning to organise work
- Opportunities for pupils to develop different skills within different learning situations
- Give pupils confidence in the use of a variety of equipment (e.g tapes/ computers)
- Develop pupil independence in operation of a wider range of equipment

**Resources/equipment**

Use a wider range of resources, including I.T.  
Using a variety of equipment / resources  
Try out other resources not usually used (e.g IT / tape and headphones)

**Short-term objectives**

**Teacher skills**

- Develop teacher organisational skills and confidence for mixed task lessons.
- Classroom management of task-based work.
- Organisation and management of group work.
- Development of classroom management of differentiated progress within a mixed ability context.
- Trial of team-teaching.
- Set up some simple group work including the use of tape and headphones and 1 computer. In particular to look at the management implications but also to look at pupil response.

**Pupil independence /skills**

- Develop pupil organisational skills and use of a variety of resources.
- To help pupils to learn to organise themselves as a group, use a tape recorder and headphones and a computer.
- Develop group work skills within the area of "Health".

**Resources/equipment**

Look at the use of I.T (How can it be integrated ? How valuable is it ?)  
Integrating use of audio equipment with headphones and the computer.  
Use of tape and headphones.  
Use of concept keyboard with Touch Explorer.  
Integrated use of computers / telephone / tapes with headphones.  
Overcoming problems of classroom furniture

The first project treats all factors as emanating from the classroom. From the second project however it becomes increasingly obvious that the factors effecting implementation come from both within and outside the classroom. As the following diagram (5. 2 , p. 120) shows, both the anticipated needs and the success indicators include factors external to the classroom.

The role of the Senior Management and the operation of the rest of the school are obviously important not just in the provision of resources but in determining how resources such as time, space, equipment and personnel are used. As was obvious from one of the schools in the project, particular kinds of furniture limit the teaching strategies used. Many teachers noted also that whole school policies regarding photocopying determined how much scope they had in using their own materials. In a wider sense the school's view of what language learning is about and its relative value in the curriculum determined the amount of staffing given and the way in which it was timetabled. The complexity of internal school factors affecting what happens in the classroom is described by **Stephen**

**Ball** in terms of a political process:-

*Classroom processes reflect many aspects of larger scale political relationships . (1987, p. 170 ).*

Whilst this project did not see schools in a political context it is worth noting Ball's point that "*innovations disrupt existing patterns of preferment and influence ."* (1987, p. 169 ). In terms of curriculum development this can work for or against the individual teacher. **Thomas**

Dalton discussing the Schools Council GYSL Project highlights the importance of interaction in development :-

*The innovations in reality were the result of social interaction. The innovations in both schools challenged the shared meanings held by the institutions. (1988, p. 235).*

The school as a whole then contains a whole range of factors which influence, (and are in turn influenced by), single subject curriculum development.

In terms of in-service training teachers were clear about what they needed at the end of the project (this was not the case at the beginning). This is an important point as often teachers need time to step back from their practice before they can identify their own needs. The teachers expressed their needs, first of all, in terms of specific areas where they needed ideas, help, advice and thinking time. Secondly, they wanted time to create more and different materials in a wider context than their own schools and wanted time to work together. Thirdly, they wanted more class-based training. The provision of in-service training, of course, depends on the ability and willingness of the school (at the time of the project the LEA also had limited funding) to fund courses and more importantly absences from the classroom. It also depends on relevant training being available. In the case of class-based work it means forfeiting economies of scale in order to provide effective support at the stage of implementation.



## Diagram 5.2 : Summary of Factors 2

*This diagram summarises the second half of the factors raised in Project 2. Anticipated needs shows those things considered necessary for continued development. Success indicators shows the factors which contributed to the success of the school-based models.*

\* These factors are in part or in whole external to the classroom and can not easily be addressed by a teacher working in isolation from the rest of the school. Some factors involve help or support from outside of the school.

### Anticipated needs

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer hardware and software.</li> <li>• Tape recorders with listening stations.</li> <li>• Training telephones.</li> <li>• Banks of audio cassettes and computer disks.*</li> <li>• Photocopying of teacher-produced materials.*</li> <li>• Appropriate classroom furniture*.</li> <li>• Management of shared resources and space.*</li> <li>• Time for preparation of resources (school / LEA).*</li> <li>• Development of pupil reference materials.*</li> </ul> | <p><b>In-service training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term planning and preparation.*</li> <li>• Construction of bank of materials.*</li> <li>• Creation of different materials e.g integrated skill / simulations etc.*</li> <li>• Development of learning strategies to promote pupil independence.*</li> <li>• Realistic targets for pupils with special needs.*</li> <li>• Training in use of software.*</li> <li>• Assessment.*</li> <li>• More class-based work.*</li> </ul> | <p><b>Other factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller class sizes.*</li> <li>• Change in the role of the foreign language assistant.*</li> <li>• Increased in-class support.*</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|

### Success indicators

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enthusiasm and commitment of teacher to project</li> <li>2. Flexibility of teacher approach</li> <li>3. Commitment to long-term aims</li> <li>4. Ability to think through implications of new ideas</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Willingness to try new approaches</li> <li>6. Willingness to explore ways around potential obstacles</li> <li>7. Consistent attendance at INSET</li> <li>8. Involvement in material production</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Quality of team work in department</li> <li>10. Good communication systems</li> <li>11. Pupils prepared in advance</li> <li>12. Discussion with pupils about organisational skills etc.</li> </ol> |
|--|---|--|

These factors then, which directly affect implementation of change in the classroom, are partly or wholly outside of the control of the individual teacher. Interestingly, however, when the project structure was analysed, it appeared that half of the supporting factors in the classroom implementation of the project model related directly to the attitude and approach of the teacher. From the evaluation forms it can also be seen that the attitude and approach of most of the teachers changed during the project. What is less obvious but equally true is that the attitude and approach of students changed, so that most teachers at the end of the project were positive about the importance of student preparation and continuing discussion with students about the learning process. Teachers also stressed the importance of working together both in school and with colleagues from other schools in order both to continue change within the classroom and to continue to develop their own ideas and professional expertise.

From this it is important to note, (and this will be taken up later ), that whilst teachers are not in control of most of the factors which support them in making changes and continuing development, their attitude and approach is crucial to any change taking place and to the quality of any subsequent development. It must also be said that involving students directly in discussion about the development of organisational skills and learning strategies was found to be equally important and yet in the normal course of events students have very little influence on the teaching and learning strategies adopted.

How does this relate to the twin themes of access and learner independence which are at the heart of this thesis? The argument so far is that in principle these themes are two sides of the same coin and integral parts of a communicative approach to language teaching. Whilst the theory is compelling, classroom implementation is subject to a whole range of factors. In Research Project 1 these factors were explored in the implementation of one model from three different perspectives:- teacher, student and adult observer. In Research Project 2 the same factors were confirmed as existing in the implementation of seven different school models. A list of the factors arising was constructed. In addition the source of different factors was seen to be both internal and external to the classroom. In the analysis of the project structure and the success indicators the question is raised of the extent to which the nature and form of In-service training effects implementation in the classroom. This question forms the basis of Research Project 3.

## Chapter 6

### Research Project 3:- The Environment - an integrated package

#### 1. Project 3 in context

This third project was more complex than the other two and involved more people. Although it began as an attempt to create an effective INSET model following from the experiences of Project 2, a significant focus point became the relationship between initial and in-service training and the way in which teachers and student teachers can work together outside the classroom to develop ideas and create materials.

Subsequent changes to the form of both initial and in-service education have created models of initial and in-service training which would make this project almost impossible to reconstruct. In-service training is now largely focused on individual school priorities or national issues such as assessment; there is very little notice taken of teachers' own ideas about developing practice. For example, 3 out of the 5 annual primary school development days in 1998 have already been nationally prescribed for literacy training. There are already plans for the following two years to specify training days for numeracy and information technology. In the future even those aspects of development which serving teachers have

been able to follow individually will in the proposed TTA model be geared towards training, assessing and verifying competences. In any case in most areas of the country the expertise to support and encourage such development is disappearing or has been channelled into OFSTED and LEA inspection and in the future, if **Jim Graham** is right, independent courses and expertise offered by Higher Education could also disappear:

*TTA control of courses with practitioner enquiry components could compromise the integrity of masters work and unduly influence the research environment . (1996, p.130 )*

During PGCE courses student teachers spend the majority of their time in schools and the rest of their time trying to cover the nationally prescribed content of the course. In principle the time spent in school should make curriculum work with teachers easier. In practice **Davies and Ferguson** indicate another problem in combining student teachers following a competency-based initial training course with serving teachers in curriculum - led projects:

*By constructing a list of competences which NQTs should have acquired at the end of their ITE, the Department for Education implied that there was little value attached to those areas of professionalism which were not included, such as an emphasis on teachers as researchers or 'reflective practitioners', or an understanding of pedagogy. (1997, p.53 )*

In a competency-based training model there is no room for teacher-led curriculum innovation. The key issues have already been decided and defined higher up the hierarchy, and INSET is seen as training teachers to implement predetermined techniques and procedures.

The logistical implications of bringing together these two groups of people outside of the classroom in the context of such a project would now be almost insurmountable and yet the issues that this project raises are arguably even more relevant now than they were then.

Once these issues have been examined it will be interesting to consider whether they are also significant in highlighting questions about the current models of teacher education. This will be debated in a later chapter. In order to discuss the issues arising from this project it is necessary to give some background to the project itself. In this chapter I will describe the objectives of the project and its structure. I will then use notes made at the time of the project to outline the difficulties encountered in setting up the project and the issues these difficulties raised.

## **2. Introduction to Project 3**

### **2.1 Who was involved?**

This project took place across the academic year 1990/91 and involved both teachers and intending teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. It was a collaborative project between the lecturers and PGCE (MFL) students of the University of Liverpool, the MFL Adviser and teachers from Sefton LEA and a project officer from NCET (National Council for Educational Technology). Three advisory teachers from Sefton LEA also gave advice

and support in terms of Environmental Education, Special Needs and Equal Opportunities.

## 2.2 What was the context?

One of the interesting points about the project is that there were internal as well as external dynamics which made it, at least for some of those involved, an exciting and positive development. Whilst for many teachers it was a question of implementing yet another set of changes, this time in the guise of the National Curriculum, many of the teachers involved in this project felt that they had set the agenda. Needs they had identified at the end of Project 2 were being addressed in Project 3. There was a sense of moving forward with their own objectives which coincided with key points in the proposed National Curriculum. In working to develop access to language learning for all students and therefore independent learning strategies they were asking for development work in some of the key areas of the National Curriculum. Before assessment became more important than the other objectives underlying the National Curriculum, the proposed MFL National Curriculum was a positive vehicle for change.

**Diagram 6.1** shows how the identified needs compared with the selected National Curriculum implications.

### Why this project?

1. National Curriculum implications.
2. Identified needs from Project 2.

#### 1. National Curriculum implications.

##### a) Programmes of study which:-

- show *progression*, across and within Key Stages 3 and 4.
- *access* for pupils with a wide range of ability and differing needs.
- emphasis on *individual* learners and the needs / development of independent learners.
- involve *multi-skill* tasks
- *integrate I.T.*

##### b) Teaching / learning strategies and materials to make these programmes of study work in the classroom

#### 2. Identified needs from Project 2.

##### 1. Materials

Pooling departmental resources.  
Across the LEA

##### 2. Teaching and learning strategies.

Less able pupils / those with special needs.  
Multi-skill tasks.  
Organisation which caters for the individual learner.

##### 3. Working co-operatively.

With colleagues in INSET and in the classroom  
Sharing ideas.  
Strategies / materials which work in the classroom

Diagram 6. 1: Identified needs and N.C. implications

In terms of the PGCE Course, previous collaboration in a Post-16 day where student teachers had prepared materials and run the day, had been a positive experience. However a major weakness had been the lack of time,



the rushed preparation and therefore the fact that the students needed a lot of support. The decision was made therefore to plan involvement over the whole academic year and to build in more time for preparation of materials in the summer term. Of course, because the PGCE is a one - year course, the students involved in the project were the next academic year's intake into the profession and some of them did not fully understand the purpose of the involvement until they had completed the practical unit in the summer term. ( A few, it has to be said, didn't understand it then.)

## **2.3 What were the envisaged outcomes ?**

### **2.3.1 Curriculum materials**

The project was built around the production of a unit of curriculum materials which could be used across Key Stages 3 & 4 and which centred on the proposed area of experience 'C' - The Environment, which later became 'The world around us'. The unit involved integrated Information Technology and multi-skill tasks and was designed to be used with students of all abilities using the concept of support and access materials rather than segregated levels. The idea was to enable all students to complete the same core of language tasks. Sometimes, in order to achieve this, additional support in terms of materials or the presentation of the language tasks would be needed. At other times the combination of receptive and active language skills could make the language work more accessible. It was also often necessary to construct additional tasks to enable

some students to develop the necessary language and skills at a slower pace or in a more practical way. Materials linked to the central core (in content as well as language skills) were created for revision, consolidation and extension. Core materials were also backed up by access materials to provide different ways for learners with special needs to achieve the same levels of language competence. **Diagram 6.2** summarises the structure of the materials.

The concept of progression was central both within the curriculum materials and the way in which the INSET was structured. The material production was an end goal but was built into the INSET sessions so that each session had a focus point and a workshop element.

### 2.3.2 Teaching and learning strategies

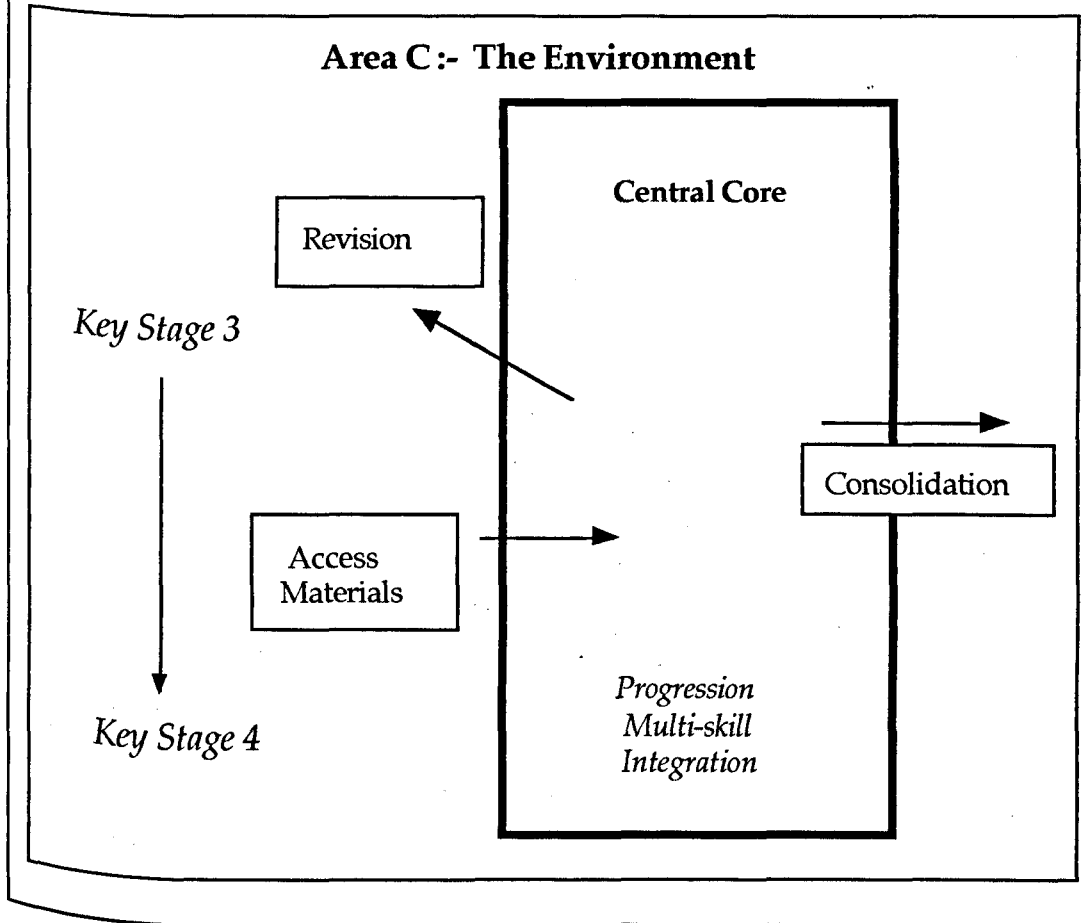
The development of teaching and learning strategies was obviously as important as, if not more important than, the production of materials; but the end product of curriculum materials meant that the concepts discussed had to be turned into practical realities for use in the classroom. This focused the mind and was also a source of considerable satisfaction to the teachers at the end of the project. It became important during the project to keep the balance between the teachers' professional development and the production of good quality materials. Some of the most interesting points came when groups of teachers rejected materials they had devised because

they didn't fulfil their requirements. There had to be time for teachers to develop new concepts, think about the implications in terms of teaching and learning and then try out possibilities. There had to be time for them to throw out their efforts and start again. Creating materials became a check point for their own development. Whereas the early materials resembled the kind of materials they were using already, the final set were radically different.

In creating the materials much thought went into how they would be used in the classroom, how they fitted together, and in particular how they would work over the length of the Key Stages. It was agreed that this was one of the most difficult things for teachers to do during a hectic timetable where the perspective naturally becomes focused on the most immediate demands. One of the major objectives of the project was to support teachers in developing a variety of teaching and learning strategies. As the teachers taught in different schools and ranged from young to very experienced their needs varied enormously. Combining a training element on a specific focus point with a directed workshop (involving carefully mixed groups of teachers) enabled all of the teachers to contribute and to learn. Teachers were encouraged to select specific aspects they personally wanted to develop during the project and allocated time and resources to do this.

Diagram2

**Project 3: - Curriculum materials**  
The following diagram shows the structure of the curriculum materials produced.



**Diagram 6. 2 : Curriculum materials**

Apart from developing teaching and learning strategies and creating appropriate curriculum materials, the project was intended to combine some aspects of initial teacher training with in-service training, in the expectation that both experienced teachers and trainees would benefit from working together.

## 2.4 Collaboration - I.T.T and INSET

The project aimed to bring together student teachers and in-service teachers to work in creating materials and developing a variety of teaching and learning techniques. The nature of the PGCE Course and the fact that student teachers were already on a fast learning curve meant that the initial training element and the in-service element had to be tied together as closely as possible. One way in which this was done was to order the focus points of the INSET to follow similar lectures and workshops in the PGCE course. For example the concept of progression was introduced in the PGCE course and the following INSET session dealt with progression within and across the key stages. The workshop element then concentrated on producing curriculum materials which supported and enabled progression. These links are illustrated in **Diagram 6.3**, (Page 134).

Apart from the content link there were various organisational links. PGCE students attended the INSET sessions on a rota basis in subgroups of 5 or 6. Student teachers in each subgroup were given a directional questionnaire designed for the focus point of that particular INSET session. Examples of the questionnaires can be seen in Appendix 3 (a). The questionnaire was intended to help the student teachers to make the links between the PGCE course and the INSET sessions. The student teachers from each subgroup were also encouraged to use these questionnaires to update their colleagues who had not been present that week. The researcher also made

a copy of the notes from each INSET session and placed it on a notice-board for students who had not attended the session to photocopy if they wished. Initially the notice-board was used very little but later more students used the system. There was an initial presentation of the project and other discussions and updates.

In the summer term some student teachers elected to work in classrooms with teachers from the project to look at how Information Technology could be used. In addition all the student teachers spent time in the summer term creating a unit of materials and a simulation which counted as part of the course assessment. The materials were created within the framework of the summer term of the PGCE Course but with a specific group of pupils from the project teachers' schools in mind. The materials were then used by the student teachers to run a full-day language simulation with the pupils and some of their teachers. The idea of this part of the project was to give student teachers an opportunity to plan a longer and more complex chunk of language work and to experience working as a team to plan and run a simulation. In contrast with the rest of the project at this stage the student teachers were in the driving seat.

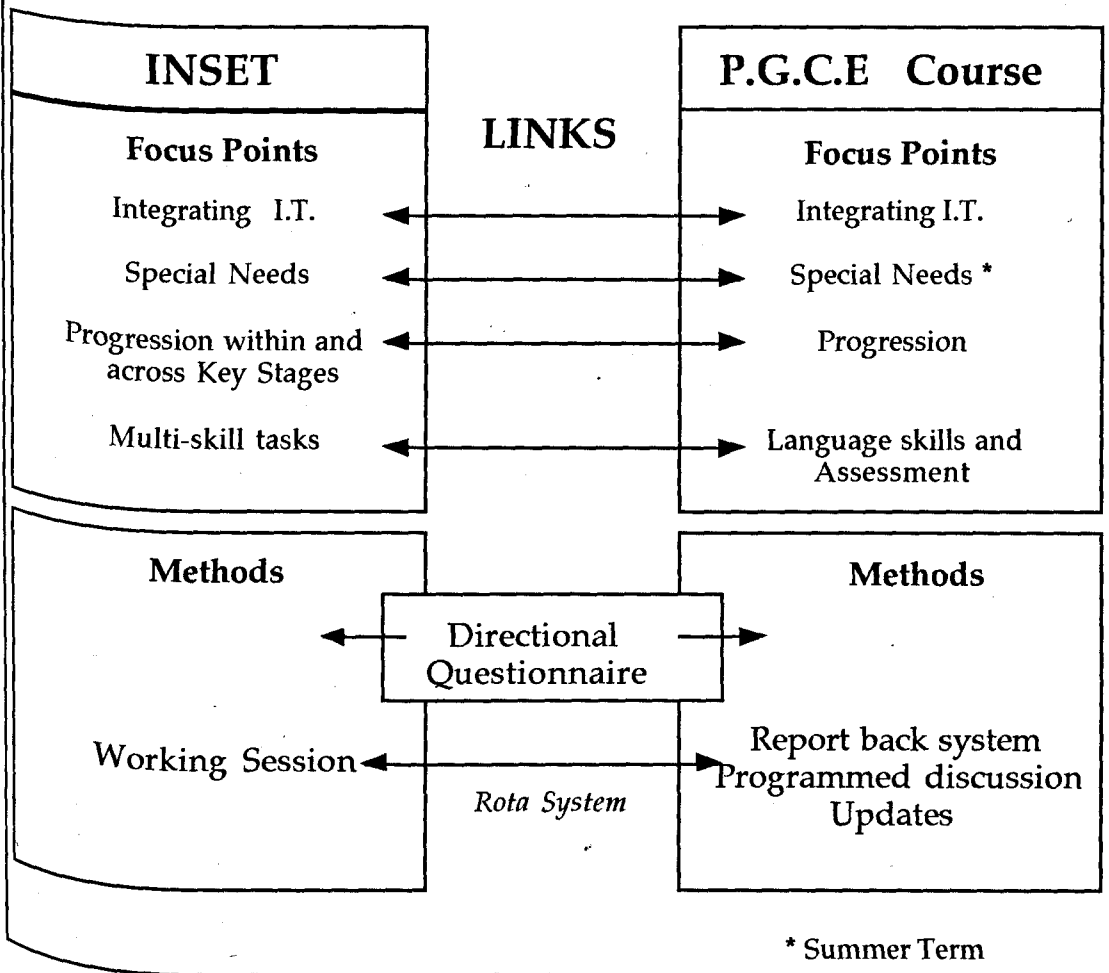
At the end of the summer term, a session was arranged for the teachers to set up and demonstrate the materials produced during the project. During this session the student teachers spent half a day with the teachers discussing and trying out the materials with them.

### Diagram 6.3 : Links between ITT & INSET

This diagram shows the links between the In-service part of the project and the PGCE Course .

The first set of links shown, are in terms of content, where the specific focus points of the INSET were linked to sessions in the PGCE Course. There was an effort to match the timing of these but in the case of 'Special Needs' this was not possible as in the PGCE Course this came in the summer term.

The second set of links show the methods used to provide a bridge between the in-service project and the PGCE Course and to encourage student teachers to transfer knowledge and skills from one to the other.



## 2.5 What was the overall structure of the project ?

The detailed structure of the project is given in the red file entitled "The environment;- an integrated package" copies of which are lodged at the University of Liverpool and with CILT (London). The file includes the detail of each of the INSET sessions with a summary transcript and copies of all OHPs, INSET tasks and working documents. As space is limited and the file is available I will give a brief outline of the structure at this point.

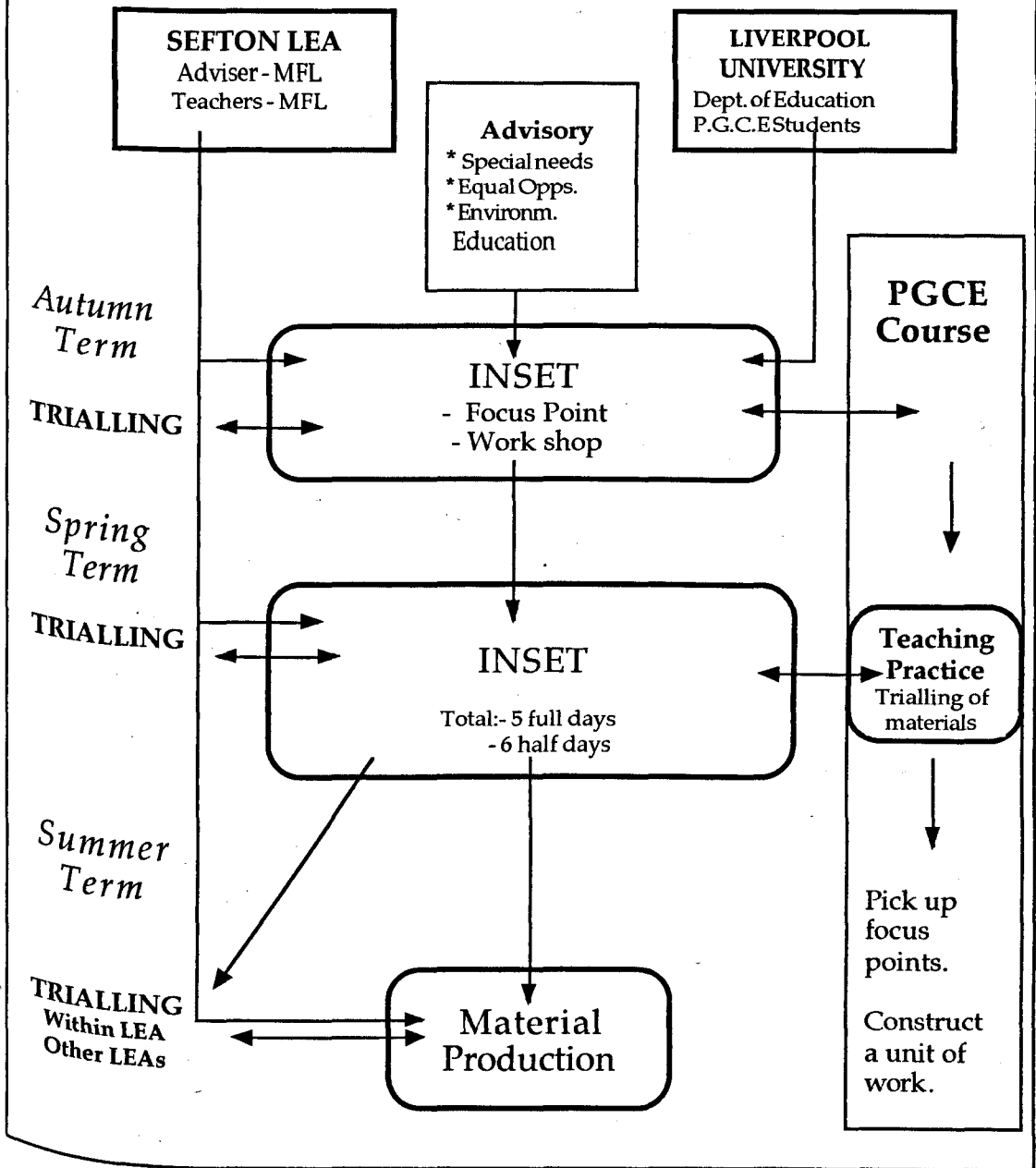
The following diagram ( **Diagram 6.4** ) helps to illustrate the overall structure.



**Diagram 6.4 : An integrated approach**

**Project 3 :- The Environment - an integrated package**

*This diagram shows the links between In-service and Initial Teacher Education across the 3 terms of the project.*



The project ran across one academic year and the INSET sessions in the autumn term were planned to introduce the key focus points. This was the first stage and the purpose was to introduce the main concepts, look at the implications for teaching and learning strategies and classroom organisation and then begin to sketch out the curriculum materials. Each of the concepts introduced was explained by the project co-ordinator in the context of the proposed National Curriculum for Modern Languages.

Although each session had a focus point each of the aspects was considered in each session. For example although Integrated I.T was the focus of session 5, examples of tasks and materials using I.T were considered throughout the sessions.

In the spring term the second stage of INSET was slightly different in format. In the first stage there was a large amount of presentation and directed activity. In the second stage a much larger amount of time was spent on the practicalities of producing the materials. The sessions were organised around the needs of the groups and time used to support groups in producing the materials they had planned in stage 1. Stage 2 was sketched out at the beginning of the project but the detail was only finalised at the end of stage 1 when groups were asked to specify the help they would need. There were short sessions on specific issues requested by the groups and themes such as Equal Opportunities. There was specific support, for example helping groups to write files for software such as 'Touch Explorer'. There was also more general help given in integrating

tasks, collecting the relevant resources and writing student instructions and help sheets for other teachers who would use the materials.

During the project the teachers worked in groups with one designated group leader. The group leaders attended all sessions throughout the project but in stage 1 other teachers attended on a rota basis. As far as possible teachers were able to choose which sessions they attended; the limitations of this are explained in the next chapter. This changed in stage 2 when all teachers attended all sessions. The groups were chosen in advance based on experience of working with the teachers before and knowledge of their individual strengths and interests. The objective was to create balanced groups in terms of interests and experience.

## 2.6 Summary

To summarise, the project was about three main things:-

- creating appropriate curriculum materials
- developing teaching and learning strategies
- integrating initial and in-service training.

The main focus points were:-

- access for all learners
- progression
- multi-skill tasks
- integrated Information Technology.

The structure of the project attempted to mirror some of the curriculum objectives in a number of ways: for example, in taking account of the structures needed to integrate initial and in-service training, and in making progression for individual teachers a high priority by allowing choice and giving support to individually stated objectives. There were numerous difficulties in trying to create such a structure but in terms of the research those difficulties provided additional issues for consideration. These issues are from a wider dimension than could be obtained from the teacher and student teacher responses because they relate to the overall structure of in-service provision and the way in which this impacts on the objectives of curriculum projects. The best way to extract and analyse these wider issues seemed to be to look at the whole structure of the project and in particular at the difficulties encountered in setting up the project. In order to do this I have used notes made at the time.

### **3. Difficulties encountered.**

The difficulties described here illustrate both the positive and negative aspects of trying to co-ordinate any major project in which the participants share some objectives but differ in certain others, and where a balance has to be achieved between the value of the process and the quality of the end product.

It is a commonly held view that starting from nothing is difficult and that building from a base is easier. It is perhaps truer to say that it is always wiser to build a base to start from and that in reality we never begin without anything. The blank page is an attractive illusion! In this case there were distinct advantages, to the co-ordinator, of prior knowledge:-

- experience of working on a similar project before
- familiar faces both in the LEA and University
- knowing the strengths of at least some of the language teachers involved
- knowing some of the classrooms and conditions in which they worked
- being aware of their professional aims and objectives
- having shared some of the frustrations and worries of recent changes
- having a rough idea of the purposes and constraints of the PGCE Course
- having seen, at a basic level, what teachers and PGCE students have to offer each other
- being aware of the priorities of the Modern Languages Adviser and of the PGCE Course Tutors.

Alongside the positive aspects of prior knowledge came the negative. One of the difficulties in the preparation stage stemmed from understanding the different perspectives perhaps too well. The problem was at and one and the same time very simple and extremely complex. How to devise a structure for the project in general, and the INSET in particular, which

responded to the needs of two essentially different bodies each with their own priorities, time limitations, external regulations and patterns of work. Both those involved in in-service training and those involved in initial training work within rigorous systems designed to ensure quality of performance and value for money. However in seeking to ensure these admirable qualities the systems devised sometimes make innovation and partnership more difficult. So the first difficulties came from reconciling two complex systems. ( If this was true in 1991 then in 1997 the systems devised, based increasingly on commercial training models and the concept of a market place with built-in 'quality assurance' mechanisms, have succeeded in making such reconciliation almost impossible, and this with the stated objective of making training more "practical". )

The second set of difficulties came from reconciling the perspectives of the individuals involved, not just between the student teachers and the in-service teachers but also between the teachers themselves. Systems and individual perspectives then were the key issues. In order to make this clearer these issues are discussed from an in-service and then an initial-training perspective.

### **3.1 An in-service perspective**

In organising LEA INSET there was first of all the question of funding. Having obtained funding from the LEA and NCET it was a question of the best way to use it. Supply cover is expensive and sharing it amongst those

teachers wishing to participate in the project, in order to involve as many as possible in the process, was difficult to reconcile with ensuring the continuity of the project. This was further complicated by the fact that each teacher had individual restrictions due to school and other commitments and also had particular professional needs and interests. This is the point at which it is tempting to ignore individual priorities ! It is easy to see why project evaluations which are successful in instigating initial change and identifying specific needs for future INSET get lost at the bottom of filing cabinets. It is equally easy to see why teachers, investing time and energy in clarifying and explaining those needs, may become rather cynical about the quality or indeed absence of response. What I am really trying to say is that being able to understand different perspectives of the same issues is an advantage in arranging INSET only if you can find a way of integrating them all !

It would have been morally indefensible to organise INSET about aspects of progression in the National Curriculum whilst ignoring the implications of progression for each of the teachers involved - so a solution was important. The solution seemed to be to devise a structure which allowed teachers, within the number of INSET sessions allocated to them, to attend the sessions which would be of the most use to them professionally. I also needed to make sure that at each INSET session there was a balance between those who were attending because they knew very little about the focus point and those who were attending because they wanted to develop an area in which they had a particular interest. This

was important for two reasons. First of all there were advantages in teachers exchanging information and secondly one of the functions of the project was to produce good quality materials. From the teacher's point of view, they were encouraged to choose a mixture of things which they had a good basic grasp of and wanted to develop as well as things in which they wanted to start from scratch. As can be imagined, this meant a fair amount of discussion and negotiation with individual teachers before the INSET began. The INSET was also planned in advance to avoid as far as possible any conflict with other school or LEA priorities.

To ensure progression, working groups were formed so that each group had at least two or three members at each session and one member of each group attended all the sessions. These core members were chosen because of their abilities to form a team and their ability to commit the necessary time to the project. They had also all been involved to various extents in a previous project and had particular responsibilities within their own Modern Language departments.

It is not difficult to see that there are many parallels between the organisation of such INSET and the organisation of a normal classroom !

In phase 2 of the project all teachers were able to attend all sessions as more funding for the project was found by the Modern Language Adviser.

This was obviously much more satisfactory but the amount of energy and time which goes into obtaining such funding cannot be ignored. In some cases funding can also bring restrictions and another set of criteria to fulfil.



Structuring the individual INSET sessions represented a different kind of problem. The project was ambitious and the time-scale short but the emphasis throughout was on enabling teachers to work from concepts and ideas to clear, practical objectives and then to turn those objectives into classroom practice and suitable curriculum materials. There is support for this emphasis elsewhere:

*...proponents of supposed educational improvements have been forced to recognise that the actual use of their ideas by teachers did not depend upon supporting research or theoretical elegance, but rather upon the attitudes teachers developed about the innovation, its perceived relevance for personal goals, the ease with which it could be integrated into teachers' present styles and routine procedures etc.. (Moreira, J.M. 1996, p.48)*

Quite often teachers are expected to take new concepts straight from a booklet or course into their classrooms. It became obvious in Project 2 that there were a number of interim stages which teachers usually face alone and in which many so called 'initiatives' wither and die. This has been confirmed by other studies;

*The failure of much curriculum innovation has been attributed to the neglect by innovators of teachers' perceptions .. (Kyriakides, L. 1997, p.39)*

*It may be, however, that the pedagogic strategies which the project wishes teachers to use in promoting conceptual change in students place conceptual demands on teachers themselves. (Johnston, Kate 1988, p. 195)*

In Project 2 the class-based sessions worked through these stages. All the teachers involved made changes and wanted more of the same. The funding for such intense work alongside the number of teachers involved in Project 3 made this impossible. The aim of the INSET therefore became to replicate the stages outside of the classroom.

As a result of the project, and the time the teachers spent together, a number of them did in fact visit each other's classrooms in order to look at specific aspects of interest. In my view this was one of the most successful by-products of the project. Apart from the information gained it gave some teachers the confidence to try new things and others a justifiable pride in their achievements. The importance of sharing professional expertise is echoed in much educational research including **Kyriakides'** examination of influences on primary practice:

*..individual teachers should be involved in the business of reform and be able to share ideas in order to develop a more collaborative culture. (1997, p. 45,)*

In the competitive environment of 1997 this kind of professional co-operation between schools is much less likely to happen. Schools in many areas are rival institutions. Local Education Authority Advisors who spent time enabling teachers to meet together and share ideas are now mostly engaged in local authority and OFSTED inspections. For teachers who have experienced the benefits of working together the sense of isolation is all the more acute. I am reminded of the students in Project 1 who, having developed some independent learning strategies, found a return to a didactic approach extremely demoralising. Perhaps the same lessons apply. Just as whole school policies were found to be essential in ensuring that students continue to acquire independent learning strategies, so a consistent developmental approach to in-service training is essential to enable teachers to continue to develop their professional expertise.

None of the focus points chosen for INSET was easily applied in the classroom. They were chosen for this reason - because teachers for different reasons found them complex - and because implementing them would make the modern language curriculum more accessible for all students and encourage students to develop more independent learning strategies. The concepts behind the focus points were in themselves contentious. Most of the philosophical background in relation to access and learning strategies is given in Chapter 2 but it may be useful to give two practical examples of the kind of statements made during the INSET.

### **Example 1**

#### **Progression.**

What does this mean ?

That's easy it's about getting through the syllabus.

No, it's about learning grammar.

Making less mistakes ?

I don't agree, it's about learning more language functions.

What, like buying tomatoes as well as baguettes ?

What about the four language skills then ?

Aren't there other skills as well as language skills ?

Yes, but how do students make progress ?

Some of mine seem to go backwards !

How can you expect students with special needs to make progress ?

How do you know when they have ?

### **Example 2**

#### **Integrating Information Technology**

What is information technology ?

It's about using computers isn't it ?

What have they got to do with learning languages ?

You can learn grammar and they tell you when you get it wrong.

Oh no, I can't even use a micro-wave.

We don't have any of those.

Ours is always broken.

What do you mean by integrating it ?

You mean leave them on their own with a computer ?

Computers don't like me.  
Technology frightens me.  
What's wrong with a piece of chalk anyway ?

I should add that these comments are intentionally humorous and are used only to illustrate a point. The point is that teachers come to INSET with different ideas and view points and where change is concerned it takes time to establish a common conceptual base from which to work . ( If this is ignored then any change which takes place can only be superficial and functional.) In order to get there, teachers have to have the chance to try out their own philosophies, decide what kind of change is necessary and why and how much change is reasonable within a certain time-frame.

As **Kate Johnston** concludes from " The Children's Learning in Science Project " :

*Such changes in practice, which may require teachers to restructure their beliefs about teaching, learning and the nature of science, can be as problematic, time consuming and personally threatening as the changes which we ask our students to make in restructuring their views of the world . (1988, p. 195 )*

What is often forgotten is that most teachers are genuinely concerned about improving teaching and learning techniques but as professionals they like to be in control of the process. In fact from Project 2 it is obvious that the more the teacher is in control of the process the more positive change takes place.

Creating a set of aims (as was seen in Project 2) is the first stage of the process and in the INSET teachers were encouraged to develop these during presentations and discussions about each of the focus points.

Directed activities were then used to draw attention to the practicalities and look at ways in which implementation could take place. After this, working sessions in groups were focused on outlining specific curriculum objectives and then practical curriculum materials. These were the objectives of the first stage of INSET. Between sessions, teachers were asked to look at particular ideas with their own classes and later to try out tasks with them. One of the advantages of the timing of the INSET was that questions and problems could be addressed throughout the sessions and as different teachers attended different sessions a core of issues ran through the whole sequence. In the end the groups were able to answer most of their own questions with some kind of consistency. At the end of the first stage most teachers suddenly realised how much had actually been achieved, but during the process frustrations arose from what was perceived as 'going over old ground'.

In stage 2 of the INSET, attendance was much more consistent and teachers worked from their own objectives towards creating curriculum materials and ways of using these materials in the classroom. Many outlines for materials were modified at this stage as groups of teachers tightened the objectives and became clearer about what was required. Specific training and support were given as required and liaison between groups was organised to ensure continuity and progression. The difficulties at this stage arose not from the overall structure but from creating a suitable support structure for individual sessions and ensuring that groups kept the basic concepts clearly in mind. The challenge of

directing the general flow whilst supporting individual endeavours is of course directly comparable with the management of a classroom where the teacher is attempting to support learners in developing independent learning strategies.

### **3.2 An initial training perspective**

For the teachers there was a clear progression from stage 1 to stage 2, but for the student teachers, who attended on a rota basis across the two stages of INSET, there was no such progression. They were allowed to choose the session they attended in stage 1 but they were then occupied in the second term with their own teaching practice and returned to the project to see the end point in the summer term. In the meantime, at the beginning of the summer term they were involved in building a simulation of their own. By the end of the summer term there was a more positive appreciation of what had been achieved in the INSET but their tenuous link with it in the first stage was overwhelmed by the more pressing demands of the course.

The major difficulty, which was not solved within the project, was how to create a meaningful link for the PGCE students with a continuing form of professional development. For most of them the focus and structure of the course was a way of 'becoming a teacher'. The course was intense and contact with the 'real world of the classroom' was high on the agenda. For many student teachers there was no sense of taking the first step along the

path but rather that the course would turn them from a graduate into a teacher. This perspective is hardly surprising given the division between initial and in-service training and, at that time, the lack of any coherent national policy about professional development. Current competency-based proposals emanating from the TTA , whilst achieving to some extent a continuum, present such an instrumental view of teaching that they can hardly be viewed as either developmental or professional. As

**David Hartley** notes:-

*In sum, the core competences for the teachers in training in the 90s are the counterpart to the core curriculum for the pupils in the 80s. Whereas, before 1987, both primary education and teacher education were regarded by government as a postmodern mix of progressivism, relativism and constructivism, now a modernist neo-behaviourism lights the way ahead with signposts to the past. The way forward is now back to basics for pupils and teacher educators alike. (1998, p.80)*

In constructing the project great care and attention were given to making the INSET follow in content the path of the PGCE Course. Content was linked by the Directional Questionnaires and student teachers were linked to groups of teachers. However not enough account was taken of the perspectives of the student teachers nor of how narrowly focused they would be. This narrow focus is repeated in much research:

*Apparently quite hidden from students were the theoretical dilemmas.....*  
(Griffiths & Tann, 1992, p.72)

Quoting Fuller & Brown (1982) , Griffiths & Tann also report that:

*...students were primarily survival or self-orientated and hence were very instrumental in their level of concerns . (1992, p.72)*

Their contact with the project was limited and most of them did not have the opportunity to challenge their own concepts of teaching and learning.

Indeed they were only just beginning to build their own concepts. They gathered facts and limited practical applications. In this sense the structure of the project failed to integrate the perspectives of the student teachers in a way which enabled them to participate fully and understand the importance of continuing professional development.

Subsequent experience with PGCE students has demonstrated how irritated they can become with what they regard as irrelevant questions about teaching and learning when they would prefer to be handed a neatly labelled package entitled "all you need to be a teacher". Best & Abbott (1988) also found :

*student teachers were frustrated by the propensity (as they saw it ) of their lecturers to 'hide the food' or knowledge rather than feed them directly. (quoted: Griffiths & Tann, 1992, p. 74).*

The more intense the course, and the more time students spend in schools within the course, the more urgent this request becomes. To the languages teacher this is not a new experience. After all, classes are full of students whose almost instinctive initial reaction to the subject is to prefer the teacher to act as a fount of all knowledge rather than, for example, requiring them to develop the necessary skills to use a dictionary.

The project therefore struggled to link the structures of initial and in-service training but found the greater difficulty lay in merging the perspectives of student teachers with in-service training outside of the classroom.



### **3.3 Summary of difficulties encountered**

The difficulties were mainly concerned with structure and perspective. They arose first of all in merging the structure of initial and in-service training, and secondly from an in-service perspective creating a structure which took into account the financial constraints, the individual teacher requirements and the progression of the project. Thirdly, within the INSET, there were problems which came from creating a structure which enabled teachers, on an individual basis and in groups, to construct new concepts and develop practical strategies and materials. In terms of perspective much effort was required to enable teachers with different perspectives to build a common basis for working ; but for the student teachers involved, their perspectives were so differently focused that the structure of the project failed to address them adequately.

### **4. Issues raised**

In outlining the difficulties which arose in setting up the project the purpose is to emphasise the issues raised which have implications for the implementation of curriculum objectives in terms of initial and in-service education. The difficulties encountered suggest that funding, structures and perspectives need to be addressed if initial and in-service education

are to be designed to support successfully the implementation of future curriculum objectives.

Funding for in-service training and its location are important. Targeted funding is now the norm but often leaves no room for the questions teachers most want to ask. In this case multiple funding brought multiple objectives. It was still possible to work from the teachers' own objectives but it took a lot of work. As funding becomes tied to ever tighter objectives, often located within individual schools or targeted to particular politically determined priorities, it becomes more difficult to see how teachers can achieve any real professional development.

Structures are also important. It is much easier to set up training courses to relay information than it is to develop structures which enable teachers to develop new concepts, challenge their own assumptions and develop additional teaching strategies and materials which they can use confidently in their own classrooms. In creating such structures the curriculum objectives need to be kept clearly in mind. If, for example, it is impossible to create a form of in-service education which responds to the individual needs of teachers and encourages them to develop their own learning strategies, it is somewhat naive to expect teachers to set up such structures in their own classrooms. It is also to be expected that teachers easily recognise such contradictions.

The difficulties of integrating the student teachers into the project demonstrates that constructing a form of initial teacher education which is clearly seen as the first stage of professional development is crucial.

Creating initial teacher education which not only responds to the immediate priorities of survival in the classroom but also begins to develop concepts, theories and questions which will promote future development seems to be a difficult but essential task. Some of the difficulty in this task lies in the perspectives of student teachers which are naturally narrowly focused; but the lack of direct links between initial and in-service training and the absence of structured long term professional development only serve to confirm such perspectives. The subsequent addition of a competency-based model of initial training only compounds the problem. It is entirely understandable that the course pressures on student-teachers should produce a narrow focus. However, there are clearly long-term dangers in this initial pre-occupation. If the initial training suggests that such a narrow focus is all that is required, why, at a later stage, should new entrants to the profession ask themselves complex questions ?

In the next chapter the responses of teachers and student teachers will be considered in some detail in order to extract other issues relating to initial and in-service education.

## Chapter 7

### Issues emerging from Research Project 3

#### 1. Extracting Issues

The third Project which was outlined in the last chapter raised many issues about translating curriculum objectives into appropriate forms of in-service training. To recap, the common threads between the three Projects are those of creating access to a foreign language curriculum for all students and in the process increasing independent learning strategies. From the inside of one classroom in project 1 these objectives were translated into a list of practical factors that needed to be considered at the point of implementation. Across seven schools in Project 2 these factors again arose but were extended to include factors outside of the classroom which supported or hindered implementation. In Project 3 an in-service programme was constructed with the intention of supporting continuing implementation of the same curriculum objectives. An initial training dimension was created by linking the in-service training to a group of student teachers completing a one year PGCE course. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the issues which arose from the Project in order to create a picture of factors at the level of teacher education and training which influence implementation of curriculum objectives.

## 2. Tools used

In order to extract issues a number of tools were used. As in project 2, evaluation was, as far as possible built into the process rather than tacked on the end. In the end, this enabled changes in perspective during the Project to be sifted from the documentation. The purpose in using the evaluation tools is not to determine the success or failure of the Project but to extract the issues that were important to the process and to create a list of factors which affect curriculum implementation and which occur at the level of training.

Although informal and more formal discussions were used to gather data with both PGCE students and teachers during the Project, most of the main issues were also duplicated on comment sheets. I have therefore chosen to use the comment sheets as the main source of information. These came in a number of forms:-

- Directional questionnaires for PGCE students
- Comment sheets for overall Project -PGCE students
- Teacher comment sheets for individual INSET sessions
- Teacher comment sheets - overall review

Copies of the format of each of these can be found in Appendices 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d.

These questionnaires and comment sheets outlined the issues raised from the perspective of in-service teachers and student teachers. Some of the issues raised, particularly by some student teachers, focused very much on

individual requirements. Others commented on more general course related or LEA matters. The issues extracted from the comment sheets and the notes are discussed under two headings:-

- an in-service perspective
- an initial training perspective

The in-service perspective will be discussed in this chapter and the initial training perspective in the next.

### **3. An in-service perspective**

Inevitably there was a certain amount of repetition in comments made throughout the Project. In fact the statements which most effectively raised the deeper issues came from the teacher comment sheets from INSET sessions 2 -5 and the summary evaluation from INSET 6. These comment sheets have been collated in separate sections so that differences between the beginning of the Project and the end of the first phase can be seen. The comments have also been grouped under broad headings to give a quick impression of the number of times particular issues were mentioned.

The reason that these comment sheets have been chosen are as follows. INSET 1 was used as an introductory session and no evaluation was done. Subsequent INSET sessions ( 7 - 10) were structured entirely around the

needs of the groups and the summary evaluation at INSET 10 revealed only the success of the Project in terms of the production of quality curriculum materials and the progress made by individuals and groups. Whilst this was useful for the parties involved in terms of evaluating the success of the Project it is less useful in trying to examine the issues which arose during the Project and which are relevant in constructing a model of in-service training. One of the interesting points which did emerge during the final session (in which the teachers demonstrated the materials and discussed strategies for their use with each other and the student teachers) was the number of teachers who had made professional progress either within their own schools or by moving to others. The role of INSET in provoking or supporting such progress for individual teachers is worth noting as is the effect on morale.

#### 4. Teacher Comment Sheets

##### **INSET SESSION 2:-**

*Progression across and within Key Stages 3 and 4.*

##### **The most useful part of the INSET.**

###### **Information about the National Curriculum.**

- Clarification (again) of N.C. jargon !
- The most useful part was being able to understand the different levels.
- The most useful part was a greater awareness of problems and the jargon of the N.C.
- Looking at levels in greater detail than usual.
- The most useful part was being able to examine the levels in greater detail.
- The introduction to National Curriculum terminology and awareness of levels.
- The most useful part was the introductory explanation and reading the National Curriculum document.

###### **General information.**

- I liked the introduction which put what we do in perspective and in its context.
- The most useful part was the introductory talk which - gave an overview of Project - helped us to relate it to our needs in the classroom.

#### **Group discussion/collaboration.**

- The most useful part of the INSET was group discussion.
- The most useful part of INSET was working in a group and sharing ideas.
- The most useful part of the INSET was the exchange of ideas within the group.
- I liked pooling ideas.
- Contribution of all members to change or refine the task.
- I liked exchanging ideas with other people.
- The most useful part was working with other teachers, exchanging ideas - modifying various suggestions.

#### **Practical tasks.**

- I liked deciding on the practical tasks in the group.
- I liked getting down to practical tasks from National Curriculum theory.
- Reading the initial advice with a purpose. The document is very dry, to read it with making up of materials in mind makes it more "digeste" as we say in the trade.

#### **Guidelines.**

- I liked the initial presentation of the task.
- I appreciated the written guidelines.

#### **Structure of INSET.**

- The most useful part was the structure to start with.
- I liked the general structure of the programme.

#### **General Comments.**

- All of it was useful.
- Very enjoyable
- I found it all interesting and useful.

#### **Aspects not liked.**

##### **National Curriculum related.**

- realisation of the magnitude of the task
- the thought of having to work with such a large amount of material
- lack of time
- worrying about the National curriculum
- The insecurity engendered.
- Assessment procedures do bother me.
- I do feel 'fogged' by the whole thing!
- Insecurity about the magnitude of the task.
- I didn't like reading all the jargon in the National curriculum initial advice document!  
- why use such obscure references to necessitate a glossary at the back ?!

##### **INSET structure.**

- I didn't like having to go through the green document with so little time. Will read at home now so next session will be more clued up!



### INSET SESSION 3

#### *Attainment targets and a multi-skill approach.*

#### **The most useful part of the INSET.**

##### **Information about the National Curriculum.**

- The most useful part was the examination of attainment targets.

##### **General information.**

- The most useful part was the simulation.

##### **Group discussion/collaboration.**

- writing together - very creative
- exchange of ideas for activities
- The most useful part was the exchange of ideas.
- I liked discussing with other teachers and creating tasks.

##### **Practical tasks.**

- Looking at how to integrate all the skills - add to activities
- Realising how activities need to relate closely and fit into a limited amount of time.
- The most useful part was the workshop.
- The most useful part was the workshop - exchanging ideas on multi-skill approaches.
- The most useful part was looking at ways of bringing other skills into various exercises.
- I liked the group activity which gave us ideas which we could use for working on the 4 - 6 tasks.

##### **Guidelines.**

- I liked the planning sheets which helped to focus ideas and keep aims of tasks in mind.
- I appreciated help from the co-ordinator when building the main task.

##### **Structure of INSET.**

- I liked it when the "penny dropped" and we could see better the link between all the activities.
- I liked to see the progress of the work and discovering little by little what we are aiming at.
- Restructuring the original plan was a good idea.
- The most useful part was seeing the structure grow on a planning sheet.
- I liked the sense of purpose. We made real progress this morning.

##### **General Comments.**

- I liked the straight forward style of presentation.

##### **Aspects not liked.**

No negative comment made on any of the teachers' reply sheets from this session.

## INSET SESSION 4

### *Special needs and access materials.*

#### The most useful part of the INSET.

- Practical tasks.
- The most useful part was the 10-15 minute activity.
- Working in the small group to see how we could adapt the task.
- I liked the direct relevance of special needs and the how to apply checklist.
- The most useful part was group work.
- I liked the group work.
- how to change the task to suit these children

#### Information about special needs.

- I liked the clear presentation by Special Needs Project Adviser.
- Excellent talk about Special Needs.
- The most useful part was the talk about special educational needs.
- Special needs talk, very useful.
- The most useful part was the input from Special needs Project Adviser
- The most useful part was hearing Special needs Project Adviser talk about special needs and how to change the task to suit these children.
- I liked the detailed ideas she gave us.

#### IT

- The most useful part was touch explorer and the concept keyboard and finding out about the possibilities.
- The most useful part was looking at the computer and the mention of computer programmes.
- The most useful part was looking at available computer software.

#### General Comments.

- The whole morning was very useful.
- I enjoyed the morning. It was extremely useful in giving specific ideas for the Project.
- I found the activities clear and well organised and very relevant.

#### Suggested changes.

- Some discussion, questions with Special Needs Project Adviser about special education might have been useful.
- The whole morning was very useful. It is a pity we did not have more time and we left the possibility to look at the IT till the last minute.

#### Least useful.

- The final section - difficult to imagine tasks until one actually devises them.
- I did not find that the introductory talk presented any new information or ideas.

#### Aspects not liked.

- I didn't like having to explain the progress so far to absolute newcomers.
- I didn't like having a morning session and knowing I had to go back to school for 12.50. I would prefer full day or p.m. sessions. If out for a full day the school takes more care to find a modern linguist to cover, which is preferable if available.

**INSET SESSION 5:-**  
*Integrated Information Technology*

**The most useful part of the INSET :-**

**Practical Tasks**

- Learning how to write overlays.
- Preparing overlays for concept keyboard and hands - on experience with concept keyboard.
- Opportunity / time to practise / make mistakes on computer !
- Developing my skills on the computer.
- Learning how to use programmes and write an overlay.

**Information / demonstration**

- Looking at software packages and getting new ideas about their uses - in particular the various uses for the concept keyboard.
- The demonstrations of Touch Explorer / Prompt Writer.
- Seeing how to adapt the uses of programmes like Caption with Special Needs Adviser.
- Seeing the range of software available and being shown how to programme Prompt Writer and Touch Explorer.
- Especially how to write overlays
- I liked looking at the software available.
- The most useful part was actually seeing the software in use.
- Being able to assess the relevant uses.
- Having time to see the writing of an overlay.
- I liked having the time to think about the uses / purposes of the software and how to integrate.
- The most useful part was the review of software.
- Demonstration of Touch Explorer programming. I'll need it explaining again when I come to do it.
- The most useful part was learning how to programme Prompt Writer and Touch Explorer Plus and Front Page Europe.

**General**

- I liked the fact that 'jargon' was explained - all was clear.
- It was all useful.
- I found the day most useful.
- Liked the clarity of organisation and good planning of activities.
- I liked working in groups. Helping each other.

**Didn't like**

- Didn't like having to repeat where we're up to twice over today for PGCE students / others' benefit.

## INSET SESSION 6:-

### Review

The teacher comment sheet for this session took a different form and asked teachers to indicate any ways in which the programme of INSET sessions had been helpful. The first section gave a list of areas. The second section contained more specific focus points. The third section asked if overall the INSET had been perceived as useful and for any other comments.

#### Section 1

**Understanding of the National Curriculum.**

All teachers gave a positive response.

**General Techniques for teaching / learning Modern Languages.**

All teachers gave a positive response

**Ideas about materials.**

All teachers gave a positive response

**Own professional development.**

All teachers gave a positive response

#### Section 2

**Planning**

All but one teacher gave a positive response

**Special educational needs**

All but one teacher gave a positive response. The one teacher indicated absence as a reason.

**Integrated Information Technology**

All but one teacher gave a positive response. The one teacher indicated absence as a reason

**Progression**

All teachers gave a positive response

**Multi-skill approaches**

All teachers gave a positive response

#### Section 3

**Overall has it been a worthwhile experience ?**

All teachers gave a positive response

#### General Comments

- All good.
- Most useful. Especially in relation to understanding of the National Curriculum.
- The whole exercise has been extremely useful. I particularly enjoyed working with other teachers and exchanging ideas with them. I felt that the INSET as a whole is extremely well-organised and well-structured. I found the sessions on special needs and multi-skill tasks especially helpful. The overview session has put the whole Project into perspective and has shown how much progress has been made.
- Development of ideas within groups very interesting :- useful to learn about materials available (& helpful) and ideas already tested successfully in school.
- Most useful - learning how to plan work on a theme for students of different abilities and needs.
- Most useful - writing together and designing tasks (with progression, multi-skill etc..)
- I found the information on special needs most useful. I have already used the tips in planning my remedial classes and it works very well.
- The whole Project has been useful. I found the I.T. session particularly useful.
- Liked the opportunity to use National Curriculum guidelines in context. Liked clear guidance.
- Having time to think and examine statements. I most appreciated the efficient, structured preparation by the co-ordinator.
- Help with multi-skill approach and I.T. has been especially useful.

**Didn't like ...**

- I personally didn't like the fact that I missed one session.
- I am sorry about lack of continuity , (partly my fault).

## 5. General analysis of in-service teacher perspective

The comments made by the teachers throughout the Project were largely positive and enthusiastic and comments made by a number of them in subsequent years suggest that the experience was professionally very useful. Perhaps because of this, they took the trouble to fill in the evaluation forms with care and in some detail and therefore a lot of useful points have been made. Throughout the Project their comments were taken seriously and where possible, changes to the structure and content were made. Examples of such comments and changes are:-

- *I would prefer full day or p.m. sessions. If out for a full day the school takes more care to find a modern linguist to cover, which is preferable if available.*

The issue of cover for teachers and timetabling of INSET is often contentious as different teachers have different requirements. For example, some teachers prefer sessions out of school hours, others with other commitments prefer day-time sessions. In the first phase of INSET, given the financial restrictions, half-day sessions were organised. In order to minimise disruption to individual classes the sessions were organised on different days of the week. With more money and having achieved a consensus, in phase two, full day sessions were arranged.

- *I personally didn't like the fact that I missed one session.*
- *I am sorry about the lack of continuity, (partly my fault).*

Continuity and rota attendance, for the teachers involved, were able to be addressed in phase 2 as was discussed in the previous chapter but the rota attendance of student teachers continued to cause problems for the teachers as well the student teachers.

- *Didn't like having to repeat where we're up to twice over today for PGCE students / others benefit*

Perhaps one of the first points to make is that the practical issues which enable teachers to attend INSET have to be considered when constructing any form of professional development. Cover for teaching commitments, preparation to made by the teachers before absences, responsibilities to individual classes, making a case to senior management to be released and/or funded are all issues for teachers to resolve and any professional development needs to take these into account. The current climate can make these issues more complex, especially when a teacher's professional needs are not priorities in the school development plan or when it is difficult to find suitable supply teachers for their particular curriculum subject.

The second point to make is that teachers appreciated their suggestions being taken seriously and efforts made to make changes during the course of the Project. Apart from changes to the structure this meant making requested equipment and resources available in subsequent sessions and

adapting the content of sessions where extra input was needed. For example, some of the teachers became interested in a particular piece of software and could see applications for it. Time for a small group to be shown in detail how to write texts for the programme was then made in a subsequent session.

## **6. Specific Analysis**

Apart from these more general points about attending INSET, teachers' comments about the Project fell largely into three areas:-

- 1. Learning strategies**
- 2. Structure and support**
- 3. Purpose, progress and achievement**

### **6.1 Learning strategies**

The teachers made a number of comments about the way they enjoyed and /or had found it useful to learn during the Project. As the Project was focused on encouraging independent learning strategies in the classroom these comments are obviously of interest. Their comments are divided into the following sections:-

- **Collaboration**
- **Theory to practice**
- **Applications**
- **Time**
- **Variety**

### 6.1.1 Collaboration

Most teachers at some point commented on the value of collaboration.

They learnt through discussion and by sharing ideas and they enjoyed the process of contributing to a joint Project, writing and creating together.

The following quotes are just a few of the comments made:-

- *The most useful part of the INSET was working in a group and sharing ideas.*
- *writing together - very creative*
- *I liked discussing with other teachers and creating tasks..*

They also enjoyed modifying and refining ideas, tasks and materials.

- *Contribution of all members to change or refine the task*

One point that is worth making is that group or collaborative work is often discussed warily in relation to the classroom. It is certainly not in fashion politically and primary schools are currently actively discouraged from its use. Teachers and other adults tend to want to know which students contributed what to the final product and are concerned about "stronger students" helping "weaker students". No such discussion emerged in relation to the groups of teachers working on the Project and yet there were definitely some who had more to contribute than others. The point which emerged strongly from the Project was that everybody learned something of value, every one was able to contribute and there was considerable group pride in the finished product. It seems teachers learn effectively in groups, so why not students? David McNamara in a recent article in the **Times Educational Supplement** discusses the irony of students in Higher Education benefiting from the work of Plowden:



*Politicians and their educational advisers may convince parents that they will improve educational standards by imposing formal teaching methods in primary schools. But primary teachers may take some comfort from the thought that eventually the winners in the educational race will finish up in higher education institutions increasingly committed to student-centred active learning and offering an increasingly flexible curriculum.*  
(21st March 1997).

### 6. 1. 2 Theory to practice

A lot of teachers derived benefit from the opportunity to consider various aspects of teaching and learning in terms of theories, and principles. They commented on different perspectives and a wider context for their own teaching. They liked the opportunity to look at National Curriculum guidelines in context and in detail.

- *I liked the introduction which put what we do in perspective and in its context*
- *The most useful part was being able to examine the levels in greater detail*
- *The introduction to National Curriculum terminology and awareness of levels.*

Some teachers pointed out that they enjoyed the process of moving from theory to practical tasks.

- *I liked getting down to practical tasks from National Curriculum theory.*

The teachers, in contrast to the student teachers, were very aware that the National Curriculum was built on a set of theories about learning and they were interested in exploring these. It was apparent in the first session that they were less aware that their own methods of teaching were also built on theories and a number of teachers were interested in looking at the history of language teaching and placing their own work in context. This enabled

them to take a much more critical and flexible approach to both their own work and the work of the Project groups.

Discussion in session 1 opened a lot of questions which came to the foreground in session 2 when National Curriculum guidelines were discussed in more detail in the context of progression. A section of teachers' comments at the end of session 2, grouped under "National Curriculum related", show that these questions raised fears and insecurity as well as the sense of challenge which is reflected in other sections of the comments. The change in perspective and attitude over the course of phase 1 is discussed later but these comments are important in that they demonstrate that raising questions about teaching and learning, although ultimately a rewarding experience, can raise insecurity initially which needs to be worked through. It is important not just that teachers are able to discuss this with colleagues who feel initially equally insecure but that the process of INSET or professional development leaves them feeling more secure.

### **6.1.3 Applications**

Teachers' comments reflect the value of having the opportunity to follow a process of application of ideas to practical classroom tasks. This process appears to have three main stages although it is not a linear process and therefore the stages were repeated throughout the Project and teachers as

individuals and in groups approached the stages in different ways at different times:-

- **Viewing**
- **Applications and ideas**
- **How to... sessions / developing practical skills**

**Viewing** resources and equipment ( particularly new items or equipment not available in their own schools ) was very important to the teachers involved and the comments reflect this.

- *The most useful part was looking at the computer and the mention of computer programmes.*
- *The most useful part was actually seeing the software in use.*

Sometimes knowledge about the resources available enabled teachers to make decisions about how to spend departmental budgets, at other times it enabled them to speak with confidence to other people within their own schools (especially Senior Management, Information Technology co-ordinators and support staff) in order to gain access to equipment . In some cases teachers were surprised to find equipment lurking in cupboards in other parts of the school having been declared obsolete by another department. Some teachers also found school technicians were very willing to give time and support once they expressed an interest.

Working from available resources to **applications and ideas** was an important stage. During the Project there were a number of simulations and demonstrations using a variety of resources. There were also specific tasks intended to generate ideas and sessions where all the groups pooled

ideas. There was organised input but then there were the numerous ideas which come from having a room full of creative people.

- *Looking at software packages and getting new ideas about their uses*
- *seeing how to adapt uses of programmes*
- *Being able to assess the relevant uses*
- *I liked the detailed ideas she gave us.*
- *...exchanging ideas on multi-skill approaches*

Of course resources, applications and ideas are important but often within busy timetables teachers do not have time to learn practical **how to** skills nor do they have time to **develop practical skills** . During the Project this was particularly obvious in terms of information technology. Many teachers were already convinced, or became so in the course of the Project, of the importance of information technology (I.T) in developing language skills. The sessions presented a rationale for the use of I.T in the context of developing multi-skill tasks, access to language tasks , progression etc..

Being convinced of the usefulness of I.T is obviously an important first stage but it made some teachers feel even more frustrated. They now knew the names of some software packages and were beginning to see potential applications but they needed to be able to use them confidently in their own classrooms.

There are a lot of reasons why teachers do not use I.T in their classrooms.

A **Learning Methods Project Report** by Fox et al suggested that language teachers were even more suspicious than their colleagues of I.T.

*It is possible that Multi-media will have an impact on the teacher's role, but this seems likely to be a slow process . This is partly because of financial constraints, the dearth of suitable courseware, and because of the*

*suspensions of language teachers about IT. The following chart shows Modern Language teachers were the group with the least confidence in IT. ( Fox, Labbett, Matthews, Romano-Hvid, Schostak, 1992, p.61 )*

However some reasons for not using computers stem from INSET which fails to address the practical issues involved in their use. Detailed knowledge of one piece of software and some background information about how computers work is often preferable to a confusing overview of software for different systems. Time to chat about particular equipment in individual schools and having the same resources available at each session so that teachers could come back and look again, seemed to help. A few teachers were frightened of the computers, and one of the teachers seemed able to corrupt software just by standing in front of a computer! (The same teacher was justifiably proud of the database she created during the Project). Tackling these practical blocks to implementation was crucial. The Project therefore took a limited number of authoring packages, made them available at each session, discussed applications and gave practical demonstrations in each context and then moved on to supporting teachers in using the programs. The teachers' comments reflect their appreciation of the **how to** elements of the sessions.

- *Learning how to write overlays.*
- *Preparing overlays for concept keyboard and hands - on experience with concept keyboard*
- *Learning how to use programmes*

Some teachers learned new skills and others developed skills they already had.

*developing my skills on the computer*

#### 6.1.4 Time

Behind many of the comments made is the appreciation of time to think and learn but teachers also made specific comments which show that they valued being given time outside of the classroom.

- *Opportunity / time to practise / make mistakes on the computer !*
- *I liked having the time to think about the uses / purposes of the software and how to integrate.*
- *Having time to think and examine statements*

Time to think is obviously important when attempting to make changes and for teachers thinking at different levels is needed before change is implemented. This involves thinking at the level of principles, theories and general ideas and thinking at a practical level about using and integrating materials and tasks. **Griffiths & Tann** discussing reflective practice also make this point:

*If all the levels are brought into play, the personal theory stands more chance of being brought into question, since the accepted theory of one level may well clash with the accepted theory of another. (1992, p.80)*

Giving both teachers and students *time to practise and make mistakes* is not generally considered a high priority but was obviously an important part of the learning process for teachers during the Project.

#### 6.1.5 Variety

The teachers' comments for individual sessions and for the review of Phase 1 demonstrate quite clearly that individual teachers considered different parts of the session to be most useful. For example in Session 2 the following comments occur:-

*The most useful part of the INSET was*

- *group discussion*
- *being able to understand the different levels*
- *a greater awareness of problems and the jargon of the National Curriculum*
- *the introductory explanation*
- *working in a group and sharing ideas*

This variety of response is repeated throughout the sessions. Of course teachers have different priorities but they also favour learning in different ways. Whilst most teachers enjoyed working with other teachers they noted different activities as being of most value to them as individuals.

This differentiation was obviously more related to attitudes and preferences than to experience, as teachers with the same amount of experience noted different activities as being most helpful. A study of primary teachers in Cyprus suggests that:

*The notion of a coherent set of teachers' attitudes to change has to be questioned. It might be inferred, therefore, that some approaches to curriculum change will be more effective than others for different groups of teachers. (Kyriakides, L. 1997, p. 44)*

Some teachers need more time at different stages than others. One example of them is a comment from session 2:-

- *I didn't like having to go through the green document with so little time. Will read at home now so next session will be more clued up.*

The parallel with classrooms and students is obvious - but not so obvious that all teachers are convinced that students learn in different ways. The important point in terms of teacher education and training is that different learning strategies need to be used if all teachers are to learn effectively.

To summarise, teachers made numerous comments which can be grouped under the heading 'learning strategies'. Their comments show that they learn in different ways but that there are approaches that many appreciate. They enjoy working with other teachers and sharing ideas, and appreciate also the opportunity to move from theory to practice and from practical ideas to developing the skills to implement them. As Dalton states:

*The process of learning and re-socialization is central to the implementation of innovation ..... A failure to learn new skills can lead to rejection or inadequate implementation. (1988, p.8).*

Teachers need time to think but also to practise and to make mistakes.

## 6.2 Structure and support

Teachers made some useful comments about aspects of the structure of the sessions which raise issues about training and teacher education. Some of these link with learning strategies but have been grouped under structure and support because they are aspects which are most often controlled by the teacher educator or INSET co-ordinator. The first point to make is that the teachers (like the students in Project 1) appreciated **structure and organisation within and across sessions.**

- *The most useful part was the structure to start with.*
- *I liked the general structure of the programme.*
- *The most useful part was seeing the structure grow on a planning sheet.*
- *I felt that the INSET as a whole is extremely well-organised and well-structured*
- *Liked the clarity of organisation and good planning of activities.*



This may seem an obvious point to make but the fact that most teachers mentioned this at some time during the Project suggests that it was not something they were able to take for granted in INSET and professional development. The teachers appreciated knowing where they were aiming for from the beginning, working within a structure to get there and making the most of their time within organised sessions. If these points were applied to professional development as a whole it would be reasonable to assume that teachers would feel better about their profession and more positive about the progress being made. It would mean however that professional development would need to be based on an understanding of the nature of learning and on long term, rather than short-term politically convenient, objectives, for education in general and schools in particular.

*If teaching is truly a profession rather than a craft, then we cannot have brief apprenticeships; we need regular study and in-service training.*  
(Eisenhart, Behm & Romagnano, 1991, p.77 )

In terms of INSET this would mean looking closely at objectives in order to match the learning environment and organisation of sessions to facilitate particular aspects of learning. For example, during this Project, initial sessions were tightly structured with talks, question and answer sessions and short group tasks predominating. This allowed the maximum time for information giving and the introduction of new concepts and principles. As so many of the concepts were new and challenging, the structure was designed to create a safe environment for thinking and starting to apply thinking to practice.

Later sessions were more flexible in structure, as teachers had had time to build from those concepts and principles their own targets. The INSET sessions therefore evolved into supported practical sessions with smaller amounts of formal input from the project co-ordinator to plug gaps which became apparent as time passed. Group work was then geared towards enabling particular teachers to learn new skills in order to achieve their own objectives. In addition, when groups or individuals hit problems the Project co-ordinator acted as a kind of reference guide to the basic principles agreed.

Structure in this sense then means organisation appropriate to the intended learning outcomes. In classrooms this makes eminent sense. This research Project suggests it would make sense to apply the same principles to in-service provision.

The second point that teachers made was that they saw the content of the Project as **relevant** to their own situations.

- *The most useful part was the introductory talk which helped us to relate it to our needs in the classroom.*
- *I found the activities ... very relevant*

Partly this relevance relates to the fact that the Project built upon the experiences of teachers and incorporated their own objectives but also teachers were clear about the relevance of particular activities during the Project. 'Relevant' didn't always mean 'of immediate practical use' but teachers did need to be able to see the link between general theory or

principles and their own classrooms. For example, once teachers understood that discussing general theories led on to discussions of practical difficulties in implementation and then to construction of ways of working and specific class-based tasks, they were happy to discuss general principles. In other words, most teachers were not happy to discuss principles for the sake of the discussion nor were they prepared to have theoretical discussions which they were left to work out the relevance and practical consequences of for themselves. In contrast, they found the discussion of principles stimulating when it was presented as a coherent part of tackling the consequent practical problems.

Teachers also commented on the **techniques** used during the Project. For example, positive comments were made about information giving in the form of presentations and explanations.

- *The most useful part was the introductory explanation*
- *I liked the clear presentation.....*
- *I liked the fact that jargon was explained - all was clear.*

Like students, teachers are often afraid of asking 'silly' questions or showing ignorance. This was especially the case in relation to National Curriculum guidelines and computer based technology. Setting ground rules - e.g. no question is too basic and unexplained jargon is the fault of the presenter and should be challenged - left teachers free to ask and learn.

Perhaps more interestingly, teachers commented positively on three techniques used during the Project (which, were also used to support learning in the classroom in Project 1) :-

**1. Guidelines**

- *I appreciated the written guidelines*

**2. Planning sheets**

- *I liked the planning sheets which helped to focus ideas and keep aims of tasks in mind*

**3. Limited practice tasks.**

- *The most useful part was the 10-15 minute activity*
- *I liked the group activity which gave us ideas which we could use...*

**Guidelines** were written down instructions and suggestions for each session to remind teachers of what needed to be done. Although these were given verbally before each task or activity most teachers appreciated having written guidelines to refer to. This is worth noting as students are not always treated sympathetically, by these same teachers, when they find complex verbal instructions difficult to remember !

**Planning sheets** were designed for use across the Project so that teachers could see the relationship between the different sessions and gradually build up a block of materials. During the Project the planning sheets gave teachers both a sense of progress and control and provided a visual map of the focus points as applied to curriculum materials. Again, students appreciate seeing how aspects of what they learn relate to each other and visual pictures of how progress is being made can give them confidence and a sense of control.

**Limited practical tasks** were short (10-15 minute) activities which enabled teachers to focus on particular aspects of applying theory to practice. For example, one task used during the session about multi-skill activities gave examples of multi-skill tasks and asked teachers to analyse the language (and other) skills involved. The next part of the session then asked teachers to recognise and develop multi-skill tasks from tasks they already used in the classroom. Later, they took part in a simulation which enabled them to see from the inside how students might react to more complex multi-skill activities. Another example ( a summary of which is shown below) is a task used during the Integrating Information Technology session. This was intended to help teachers to think about ways in which specific software could be used within the language classroom.

**Activity :- Integrated I.T.**

There are 2 lists on the page. One list gives some of the ways in which I.T could be used as an integral part of the language classroom. The other lists the programs we have looked at briefly today. Draw lines to show how many ways in which you think each of the programs could be used. Then for each way of using I.T. choose one program and try to give a specific example.

**E.g. To support . - Prompt Writer.**  
 Could be used to give a bank of words / phrases to support students writing a description.

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1. To support                                   | Matchmaster    |
| 2. To provide differentiated tasks.             | Fun with Texts |
| 3. To build tasks with differentiated outcomes. | Prompt Writer  |
| 4. To extend.                                   | Touch Explorer |
| 5. To consolidate                               | Concept Match  |
| 6. To facilitate different learning patterns    | European Folio |

These tasks provided a bridge between discussion of practical applications of the specific focus points in each session and the guided group work in

which teachers sketched out ideas for curriculum materials. This is a technique often used in language teaching usually focusing on limited vocabulary and ideas and using a previously discussed template but demanding thought and providing a bridge before students attempt their own more creative work. The fact that it worked well with teachers in INSET again parallels the process of learning and suggests that thought should be given to the practical applications of learning theory in constructing teacher training and professional development.

Apart from these three techniques teachers commented about more general **help and support** given during the Project:-

- *I appreciated help from the co-ordinator when building the main task.*
- *I liked working in groups. Helping each other.*
- *Demonstration of Touch Explorer programming. I'll need it explaining again when I come to do it.*

Teachers supported and helped each other during the Project but, where appropriate, teachers appreciated individual as well as group support from the Project co-ordinator and other advisors to the Project. Supporting the practical applications within the sessions was as important to the teachers as providing initial information and advice. Just as individual and group work in the classroom needs to be highly organised and supported at a group and individual level so teachers need a similar kind of support if they are to move from receiving and understanding principles to applications of change in a practical context.

### 6.3 Purpose, progress and achievement

A theme which can be followed through the comments and which certainly came through in the discussions during the Project was the sense of purpose which developed in the early stages of the Project and which grew with the progress made until at the end of the Project every teacher had expressed a real sense of achievement. In the comments made at the end of session 2 there is enthusiasm expressed but there are also a lot of concerns about the task ahead.

- *the thought of having to work with such a large amount of material*
- *lack of time*
- *worrying about the National Curriculum*
- *I do feel 'fogged' by the whole thing !*
- *Insecurity about the magnitude of the task.*

In subsequent sessions there are indications that individual teachers are beginning to understand what they are doing and see both purpose and progress.

- *I liked it when the "penny dropped" and we could see better the link between all the activities.*
- *I liked to see the progress of the work and discovering little by little what we are aiming at.*
- *Restructuring the original plan was a good idea.*
- *I liked the sense of purpose. We made real progress this morning.*

In the review session at the end of phase one of the Project all teachers felt that the first part of the Project had been a worthwhile experience and that progress had been made. Some teachers highlighted particular areas which had been useful to them.

- *I found the information on special needs most useful*
- *I found the I.T session particularly useful*
- *Help with multi-skill approach and I.T has been especially useful*
- *Having time to think and examine statements.*

One teacher summed up the general feeling of the groups:-

- *The overview session has put the whole Project into perspective and has shown how much progress has been made.*

At the end of the Project there were physical materials which the teachers could be justifiably proud of creating but at the end of Phase 1 they were largely celebrating a development of ideas. One teacher who had been overwhelmed by the task ahead, and somewhat in awe of a teacher in another authority whose classroom she had visited, explained that she and the group had developed really new and practical ideas that she now felt fully capable of implementing. In a climate where teachers are so often criticised for falling short of externally imposed objectives there is a clear need for professional development which has a limited and definable purpose and in which teachers can feel confident of their own progress and achievements.

## **7. Summary of Issues - In-service perspective**

To summarise, teachers' comments during Project 3 raise a number of important issues about translating curriculum objectives into in-service training and professional development. The comments suggest that:-



Professional development is essential to give teachers time:-

- to think, to challenge their own preconceptions
- to view applications and materials
- to collaborate with other teachers and exchange ideas
- to translate theory and principles into practice
- to develop ideas
- to learn how to....
- to develop and improve practical skills
- to learn in their own way and at their own pace.

Professional development needs to be

- well-structured and clear
- well-organised and relevant
- based on sound learning theory and applying good teaching practice
- formed in the context of long-term objectives
- creating purpose, progress and achievement.

There is a clear overlap between the needs of teachers in in-service training and the needs of their students learning foreign languages in classrooms. The summary points indicate that teachers as well as students need support to develop confidence and control over their learning environment.

In the next chapter the responses of student teachers involved in the Project will be analysed to extract issues relevant to initial training and the involvement of student teachers in the first stage of their own professional development.

## Chapter 8

### Other issues emerging from Project 3

This chapter considers the involvement of the PGCE student teachers in the Project and the issues raised by their comments.

#### 1. An initial training perspective

In order to make the maximum use of space the student teachers' comments have also been extracted from the forms and organised under relevant headings. It is very much more difficult to resume their comments for a number of reasons:-

1. Not all students returned the comment sheets.
2. The students attended sessions on a rota basis throughout the Project (for reasons given in the initial description of the Project) and so the accumulated comments apply to a number of sessions.
3. Students worked with different groups of teachers and some of the comments obviously reflect this.
4. Perhaps, in part, for the above reasons the comments indicate a much wider range of reactions.

## 2. PGCE Comment Sheets.

13 students returned the comment sheets. The following questions were asked and the numbers and comments below indicate the replies received.

### 1. Overall did you consider the session a worthwhile use of your time ?

YES	11 students
NO	1 student
YES & NO	1 student

### 2. Please tick any aspects of the session you thought were useful.

Contact with serving teachers.	9 students
Information about the National Curriculum.	3 students
Working to produce materials.	10 students
General information about teaching / learning Modern Languages	7 students

### 3. a) What did you personally find most useful ?

- Programming and implementation of computers in classroom.
- Chatting to other teachers and seeing how much material there was available for teaching Modern Languages.
- Interacting with service teachers and gaining a broader idea of methods of language teaching available for use in schools.
- Seeing how real classwork can be planned and developed.
- Seeing some real work directly related to lessons.
- Being shown the range of software available by co-ordinator, just knowing what can be used and how.
- Concepts expounded about National Curriculum.
- Being aware of differences in shifts from teacher to student centred approach - extent of work involved in devising tasks for different levels, looking at skills and progression.
- The opportunity to listen to other teachers applying the N.C. to their school. General ideas being tossed about very useful.
- Pooling ideas on how to practise certain skills, materials to use.
- A few new ideas that I would try for lesson preparation.
- Most useful part was dealing with 'chalk face' problems and actively seeing the difficulties a teacher must cope with and solve in a multi-skill approach.
- Most useful - looking at computer packages which can be used in teaching languages.
- Seeing in action the wide range of available software packages, particularly the authoring packages.

### 3. b) What did you personally find least useful ?

- The tasks set were beyond me, beyond my understanding. Until the start of this course I have just never been anywhere near a computer.
- Contact with group - as session had started in the morning, felt an outsider to some extent. Not knowing exactly what was going on.
- The preparation stage, reading through Nat. Curric. Advice Document.

- The least useful part was that as I arrived in the afternoon the group had already decided in what direction they were going and had their ideas already fixed.

#### 4. What did you feel you learned, if anything ?

- How it is possible to use computers to accomplish a variety of tasks as part of an integrated approach to a topic.
- I learned about listening stations, "touched" on touch control and realised that I.T is the important thing to know when going into teaching in the 90's.
- I learned several ways of making the tasks easier for children with special needs and children in general.
- Use of different materials - video / database ideas.
- I can begin to appreciate that as a teacher, I would need to be extremely imaginative in pooling ideas, resources etc.. Improvising what course books are available and introducing authentic resources.
- Insights into how children learn.
- Complexity of concept of progression and differentiation - difficulties in devising materials.
- Availability and range of software.
- How IT could be integrated to teach SEN children but also use of materials for 'high fliers'.
- Something about how to develop ideas and sorting them out into something that will be used in the classroom.
- More about how much goes into teaching plans.
- The interesting materials there is / will be available, the difficulties for individual schools of actually getting hold of the stuff.
- The versatility of computers re. F.L teaching.
- Wide range of I.T used in schools.
- Organisational difficulties created by differing ability ranges in classes.
- There's a lot of material available for teaching Modern Languages.
- Increased value of I.T in Modern Language learning.

#### Comments.

These have been organised into rough categories.

#### General.

- At least now I have an insight into INSET.
- I also saw two different types of teachers - one young, enthusiastic, interested. The other during the discussion came over as though she was too set in her ways and was not in the slightest bit interested.
- I enjoyed meeting serving teachers and during the coffee break I chatted at length to one teacher in particular but that was about how she found teaching, about computers, about teaching French etc..
- The course was useful in that we were shown what was available, how various programmes worked, how they would be used.
- There was some confusion in working through the N.C document - it would have been helpful to have prepared our reading in advance and then compared notes.
- I felt I have a lot to learn about the different ways of teaching and I realised again that teaching is difficult, it demands a lot of energy and ideas non-stop.
- The INSET group has a difficult task made all the more difficult because there is only one 'constant' in the group. It highlights the difficulties that teachers will face in having to implement the National Curriculum and the real need for materials to help them do this.

- Overall I found this session useful in so far as it consolidated my knowledge about Special needs and the national curriculum. The introductory talks were very informative as were the handouts provided.
- A very stimulating session which has whetted the appetite for more "hands-on" experience. I should be particularly interested to see a written up teaching plan of the type outlined to me in the last five minutes of the course, once it has been tested out. A concrete example of each detailed activity showing how it fits into the overall picture would be an excellent template for future Projects of my own devising.

#### Problems of rota attendance.

- It was a pity that I was only there half a day and it would be more beneficial if students could attend more than one session - though I know that this is not possible. Also it's a shame it was on a Tuesday too as I did not like missing T.P. Wednesdays would be better days for students, then no other parts of the course are missed.
- I felt that one morning was not enough. As INSET is an on-going thing, I felt that I was missing out and could not contribute effectively. There was so much to learn, yet only two and a half hours - not enough, I felt frustrated.
- I did not enjoy the 'group work' as I felt very much an outsider despite the other members taking the trouble to explain what they were doing. I felt disadvantaged by not seeing the morning session.
- I felt I could not contribute a great deal - learned more from the experienced teachers.
- Obviously our 'role' in INSET was quite 'false' - by that I mean that as we only attended for one afternoon of one session our input could not be very complete.
- It would have been more interesting and relevant if we had observed the INSET scheme right from the outset. Felt a bit of a spare part - the teachers had their own ideas which they had been working on in previous weeks.
- Apart from the friendly social contact with serving teachers I found I was unable to contribute greatly in the group activities, as understandably they were more concerned with the tasks in hand than explaining to somebody the ideas discussed previously. Therefore although I had spoken to students attending prior sessions, I felt ill-equipped to contribute in the latter stages of the course, although the materials available such as the I.T equipment was useful viewing. The session was of particular interest to me, with Special Needs being my second teaching subject and I was able to adjust my timetable to fit it in. However since it consolidated my ideas and supplied very little new information I would be hesitant in recommending it in preference to other course activities, viewing the limited time allowed in a PGCE.

### 3. General analysis of student teacher perspective

For the reasons detailed above, even if evaluation were an objective, it would be difficult to evaluate the success of the Project from the perspective of the student teachers. Most of those who returned their

comment sheets thought that the session they attended had been worthwhile but one student did not and another was unsure. On the other hand the student who thought the session was not worth attending in comparison to other course activities also felt that students should have been able to attend more sessions. There were many other such contradictions within the comments. For example 10 of the 13 student teachers thought that working to produce materials had been a useful part of the session they attended but there were a lot of comments about the difficulties students had in contributing to such work.

At the root of these contradictions are a number of facts which made the Project complex from the perspective of the student teachers. First of all, despite attempts in the Project structure to make links between the PGCE course and the Project, the students naturally saw this as a very small and not particularly significant part of the course. The Project also came at the wrong time for them. Rather than being spread across the course - it would have been better for them if any involvement had come during the summer term when other responsibilities and pre-occupations were behind them, (major teaching practices came in the autumn and spring terms). This kind of point is made in other research and is summarised well by Eisenhart, Behm & Romagnano :

*... new teachers can be expected to notice, or pay attention to, only those experiences that fit with their location along the skills trajectory . (1991, p.53).*

However, this does not mean that meaningful communication between teachers and student teachers should be abandoned. In the same study the program director underlines the importance of such communication:

*Regular interactions are needed between practicing and training professionals toward the end of creating this shared view or vision of the culture of teaching . (Eisenhart, Behm & Romagnano, 1991, p.77 ).*

The comment sheets show that student teachers did not think of themselves as members of the teaching profession until the course was over and before the summer term most of them were not ready to think about their future professional development. In fact many student teachers regard completion of the PGCE course as the point when they become a teacher and are not aware that any more development of their skills is required. This pass/fail mentality has been further encouraged by the abolition since 1992 of the probationary year, ( to be re-instated in a revised form in September 1999 ), and the fact that in-service training is now almost entirely geared towards the needs of schools and the implementation of national policies rather than the development of individual teachers.

Secondly, student teachers chose the sessions they would attend at the beginning of the PGCE course and really didn't know what they were selecting. This led to various problems. There was the problem of pitching information at the right level for individual student teachers. Some students attending earlier in the INSET felt that the subject matter was beyond them, another student attending later in the year, and already

having studied the focus point in some depth during the course, felt that the session was too basic. Interestingly some of the student teachers expected the teachers to know more factual information about every aspect of teaching (including the National Curriculum ) than them. Some of the students seemed unsure about their own role and this was reflected in contradictory statements such as:-

*the session provided very little new information*  
and  
*I found I was unable to contribute greatly in the group activities*

Certainly there was the problem of involving student teachers in practical work when the groups of teachers had been working together for other sessions beforehand but many of the student teachers didn't realise that the teachers were attending in rota as well and attributed their own difficulty in contributing to the group work to the fact that they were only able to attend one session. Whilst this was probably true for student teachers attending sessions later in the year, there was also a real problem of perspective. Apart from raising questions about the level of information necessary to give student teachers a clear picture of their role this point outlines a more profound dilemma. The problem is how to structure a joint enterprise which gives student teachers enough support to contribute confidently. Perhaps more importantly how much support is necessary for student teachers to learn from the experience without being threatened by it. How challenging is too challenging ? This would mean taking much greater account of the stage which student teachers had reached on a group and on an individual basis. It may even mean



deciding that such an experience is inappropriate for some student teachers during the PGCE course. It may also be worth finding a means of communicating to student teachers the insecurities which teachers experience and the ways in which they deal with these.

The teachers had much more experience of working from objectives towards practical materials. They also had a background of many different theories of language teaching. Their difficulty was in examining the National Curriculum in the context of their own beliefs and theories of language learning. For them the National Curriculum represented uncertainty and change. For the student teachers the National Curriculum was the only real context for language teaching. It was the context they were being prepared to teach in. Most of them felt that the PGCE course had provided them with all the information they needed about the National Curriculum and they were much less able to discuss the methodological implications of change. Although some of the student teachers were aware of an increasing workload for teachers they were surprisingly uncritical of the theories underpinning the National Curriculum. (Interestingly some of the student teachers became aware of this as a result of the Project and showed interest in looking at different principles and concepts.)

The teachers were also making use of their time to examine new concepts and apply them carefully to the construction of materials. The student teachers were understandably much keener to produce materials they

could use quickly. Also whilst some student teachers were able to listen and learn as well as contribute to the group work, others felt that if they weren't contributing they weren't doing anything. This indicates a weakness in the Project and suggests that the role of the student teachers should have been discussed more thoroughly with them and the value of listening and learning highlighted.

#### 4. Specific analysis

These points are important and should be considered when involving student teachers in in-service work. The main purpose of using the student teacher comment sheets was to analyse the issues raised by student teachers during the Project. From this perspective the comments are interesting. The comments fall roughly into the following areas:-

- "Real classwork"
- Concepts
- Profession
- Project structure

##### 4.1 "Real classwork"

The student teachers comments reflect their focus on what they regarded as the "real classroom" and how open they were to any ideas that were seen as practical.

*Seeing some real work directly related to lessons*

There were a lot of comments about classroom materials and applications, including information technology, such as:-

- *Programming and application of computers in classroom*
- *..... seeing how much material there was available for teaching Modern Languages*
- *Being shown the range of software available...*
- *Use of different materials - video / database ideas*

Ideas of how to use materials and various kinds of tasks were scribbled down enthusiastically during the Project sessions and this was reflected in some of the students' comments:-

- *General ideas being tossed about very useful*
- *A few new ideas I would try for lesson preparation*
- *I learned several ways of making the tasks easier for children with special needs and children in general*

Having a class to relate these ideas to was important for the student teachers and during the Project it was interesting to note the effects of different times of the year. Whilst an imminent teaching practice was not conducive to students' ability to concentrate on general concepts or skills, knowledge of a particular class coupled with the prospect of teaching those students in the near future did seem to help student teachers to focus on particular applications. Serial teaching practice ( 1 day a week for a series of weeks) is certainly not in vogue and is often absent from the new structure of PGCE courses as student teachers spend the majority of their time in schools but it certainly has advantages in allowing students time to develop ideas whilst maintaining a specific focus point. This point is reflected in an Australian research Project which highlights concerns that

student teachers towards the end of training see effective teaching in terms of instructional outcomes rather than humanistic perspectives.

*In our view this reinforces the notion that field experience should be less about practice teaching and more about the investigation of teaching practice as a problematic enterprise. Based on our data it is apparent that student teachers obviously need the chance to talk about many of the issues that confront them during (rather than simply before or after ) field experiences . (Wilson & Cameron, 1996, p. 194 )*

Some students commented about planning and were particularly interested in longer term planning than they had been able to experience on teaching practice. Planning is something which both experienced and student teachers largely do on their own and the chance to observe experienced teachers planning materials was of interest to the students.

- *Seeing how real class work can be planned and developed*
- *The opportunity to listen to other teachers applying the National Curriculum to their school.*
- *More about how much goes into teaching plans*
- *Something about how to develop ideas and sorting them out into something that will be used in the classroom*

This is an interesting parallel with the teachers in Project 2 who very much appreciated the joint planning process and as a result were more easily able to make changes to their classroom practice. It also reflects the experience of teachers in Project 3 who found collaborative planning to be one of the best aspects of the Project.

#### **4.2 Concepts**

The comments made by student teachers illustrate first of all their pre-occupation with "real class work" with comments made about materials,

applications, ideas and planning. Nevertheless some student teachers were able to comment about developing broader concepts and strategies.

Sometimes these were linked to practical aspects of the classroom as indicated in the following comment:-

*Most useful part was dealing with 'chalk face' problems and actively seeing the difficulties a teacher must cope with and solve in a multi-skill approach.*

The irony in this particular comment is that for most of the teachers present at this session, the main problem was in defining the concept of a "multi-skill" approach and deciding whether or not this would be a useful approach to adopt. The translation of the approach into strategies and materials came second. At first many teachers saw this as an imposition of national policy in terms of the National Curriculum and they were only prepared to discuss practicalities when they could see the benefit in terms of language learning. Yet, at least one of the student teachers perceived this as a 'chalk face' problem. It is possible that this is another example of the difference in focus between the teachers and student teachers but it may also be that theories of language teaching when presented in a practical context are less likely to be perceived as theories or approached critically by student teachers.

This reminds me of numerous comments made by student teachers which place theory firmly in the lecture halls of initial training institutions and practice in the classroom. This is by no means an uncommon view judging by the statements made in recent years by politicians and by others

within education who ought to know better. Ironically, one of the best current examples of instigating action on the basis of faulty theory without recognition of the existence of the theory is the application of the OFSTED inspection model. As **Peter Gilroy & Brian Wilcox** point out:

*OFSTED's observation statements are, we would argue, undermined by the imprecision of the theoretical framework which purports to support them. (1997, p.36).*

*Even the hard sciences no longer accept OFSTED's nineteenth century conception of its methodology as merely a matter of testing the validity of hypotheses against some sort of objective standard provided by 'facts' . (1997, p.33).*

The relationship between theory and practice and student teachers' understanding of this relationship raises important questions particularly in the context of future development and change. The increasingly classroom and competence -based PGCE course where teachers are over-worked and student teachers are often over-timetabled leaves student teachers with very little time to recognise never mind understand the place of theories of language learning in classroom practice. Findings from research conducted by **Rick Davies and Joyce Ferguson** comparing teachers' views of Initial Teacher Education suggest that there is cause for concern.

*Neither the theory of educational development, nor research and development, are mentioned in the government's list of competences; there is little emphasis on teachers pursuing their own research, reading and professional development. One difference between the three experience groups in our sample was that the youngest of the newer teachers spoke less of professional development and not at all of research while some of the most experienced saw these as important omissions. (1997, p.54)*

Some student teachers showed in their comments that they were aware that concepts and different methods of teaching were being discussed. One student stated that:-

*Concepts expounded about the National Curriculum*

was personally the most useful aspect of the session. This is an interesting statement particularly as only 3 out of the 13 student teachers thought that information about the National Curriculum was a useful aspect of the session. Another student felt they had learned about the:-

*Complexity of concept of progression and differentiation  
- difficulties in devising materials*

It is useful to note that whilst some student teachers were very focused on collecting information and concrete materials, others were beginning to show interest in wider issues and paradoxically were less secure about what they 'knew'. One student teacher felt they had gained:-

*Insights into how children learn*

and another student teacher linked:-

*Being aware of differences in shifts from teacher to student-centred approach*

with the

*extent of work involved in devising tasks for different levels, looking at skills and progression.*

The student teachers who commented on specific concepts and more general aspects of teaching and learning in addition to curriculum materials and practical tasks attended different sessions so there was no particular session which was responsible for provoking more abstract thought. The conclusion must therefore be that some student teachers

were more able than others to extract specific concepts and generalised principles from the sessions. This has implications for the selection of student teachers. For example, if teaching is to be a creative and healthy profession does it not need a range of different sorts of people ? If this is so, then a range of qualities must be regarded as valuable for selection purposes and equally individuals must have opportunities in initial teacher education to develop other skills and qualities. This also raises interesting questions in the context of the lack of planned professional development opportunities for individual in-service teachers and the increasingly classroom-based initial training courses. Might not such an approach encourage a much narrower spectrum of entrants to the profession? Then, in a more mechanistic training model where there is less intellectual stimulation, where are intending teachers given the time and support to understand and develop the concepts and theories underpinning their own practice ? How does a teacher with no understanding of such concepts and theories change and develop that practice ?

The particular objectives of this Project as they relate to increasing the development of learning strategies in the classroom provoke a third question:-

When will the questions surrounding initial teacher education be discussed with reference to research about teaching and learning ?



### 4.3 Profession

It is obvious from the comments that most student teachers ( 9 of the 13) appreciated the contact with serving teachers in a less formal atmosphere where teachers had the opportunity to chat to them. Some student teachers seemed to gain a more general picture from this contact. One comments :-

*I can begin to appreciate that as a teacher I would need to be extremely imaginative in pooling ideas, resources etc..*

Another student teacher obviously felt the contact highlighted the demanding nature of teaching and their own lack of experience:-

*I felt I have a lot to learn about the different ways of teaching and I realised again that teaching is difficult, it demands a lot of energy and ideas non-stop.*

Some of the comments indicated that as student teachers they saw themselves as outside of the profession looking in and one student teacher was obviously surprised to find that some teachers are less enthusiastic than others:-

*I also saw two different types of teachers - one young, enthusiastic, interested. The other during the discussion came over as though she was too set in her ways and was not in the slightest bit interested.*

On the face of it this seems a strange comment to make as most people realise that that in any profession some individuals are more motivated than others, but there is also a particular aspect of some school staff rooms which is often misunderstood by student teachers and newly qualified teachers. In staffrooms some teachers moan and groan about students, the examining board and the school management in a very negative fashion

and then return to their classes to deal sympathetically with their students and teach superb lessons. The same teachers go home and spend long hours preparing new materials and planning work. In another sphere of work this staff room activity would be recognised for what it is - stress management! When it comes to curriculum change some teachers react in the same way, but experience shows that this is part of a process which often (but not always) results in quite radical change in the same teachers' classrooms.

This student teacher's comment raises another interesting point. In the days of the National Curriculum when student teachers appear to have less decisions to make about what and how they teach, student teachers have less experience of making critical evaluations of different methodological approaches. Yet it is in the best interests of their students, the schools they teach in and their own future development, that they are able to look critically at their own practice and at future proposed developments. An initially negative response to change is not necessarily a bad thing - at least it shows the teacher is thinking.

One of the student teachers commented:-

*At least now I have an insight into INSET*

It seems important that student teachers do have some idea of the kind of training and development opportunities they can expect as a teacher. In fact this Project was probably not a fair reflection of what the student

teachers were likely to be offered in the first few years of their teaching careers as such opportunities are now very scarce. The comment does underline that the student teacher wanted to know what in-service training might be like and again points to the need for some form of known and recognised continuum for professional development. Recent TTA initiatives certainly go some way to recognising there needs to be a continuum. The DfEE Consultation paper on Induction for New Teachers makes a number of positive statements about proposed Key Elements of the Induction Year :-

- i) opportunities to work with the best schools in the area*
  - ii) access to mentoring by and observation of and by experienced teachers in the school and neighbouring schools*
  - iv) opportunities to attend training courses... seen as relevant to any specific development needs*
  - viii) opportunities to join and contribute to working groups ...*
- (DfEE, May 1998, pp. 9 - 10)

There is no doubt that, should some aspects of the proposals be implemented, they would begin to close the gap between initial and in-service provision. How feasible they are, in the context of competition between schools and reduced personnel at LEA level to ensure access for individual probationary teachers who find themselves in schools which are less than scrupulous about ensuring adequate support, is less certain. The proposals are about creating a continuum but whether the continuum being proposed is really about professional development is debatable.

One comment that was repeated by teachers was the opportunity and time to think. The students seemed much less aware of this benefit as they were so focused on immersing themselves in the real classroom. This is

understandable but it is interesting that they did not seem to be aware of the teachers' need for time to think. One student teacher did note the difficulties faced by the INSET group:-

*The INSET group has a difficult task made all the more difficult because there is only one 'constant' in the group. It highlights the difficulties that teachers will face in having to implement the National Curriculum and the real need for materials to help them to do this.*

This comment shows some awareness of the difficulty of implementing a curriculum change but was not typical of the student teachers' responses.

#### 4.4 Project structure

There were a number of points raised by the student teachers about the Project structure. They are grouped under the heading, *Problems of rota attendance* in the summary of the comments. (Some of these points were dealt with in more detail in the previous chapter.) The points centred around the fact that student teachers only attended one of the main sessions and they made the point that this was not enough. They however simultaneously objected to missing other parts of the PGCE course to attend the one session. They were also very concerned that they were unable to contribute effectively to the group work and didn't feel it was enough to simply learn by listening.

- *I felt I could not contribute a great deal - learned more from the experienced teachers*
- *Obviously our 'role' in INSET was quite 'false' - by that I mean that as we only attended for one afternoon of one session our input could not be very complete.*

This question of the role of the student teachers in the Project, as suggested before, was not made sufficiently clear and the student teachers' expectations were obviously not met. The comments about the Project structure when grouped together raise the question whether in fact it is possible to give student teachers any meaningful contact with in-service training in view of the condensed nature of the PGCE course. It would be interesting to find out if current student teachers who spend much more of the PGCE course in schools would react differently to time spent listening and thinking.

## **5. Summary of Issues - ITT perspective**

In some ways the reactions of the student teachers make finding a meaningful link between initial and in-service training all the more important. However in order to do this the Project findings from the 'student teachers' comments suggest a number of points would need to be considered.

- The role of the student teachers would need to be clear.
- Emphasis would need to be placed on the value of observing and learning as well as contributing.
- Opportunities to contribute would need to be constructed to take account of student teachers' ability to contribute.

- The very different perceptions of student teachers would need to be taken into account.

The link would need to be timetabled in a way which took account of:-

- student teachers' fear of missing other parts of the course
- student teachers' pre-occupations
- the best point in the course to introduce such a link.

Ideally the link should take place in the context of a continuing programme of professional development.

The student teachers' comments do indicate that there are ways in which contact with in-service professional development is valuable. Student teachers obviously gained practical information in terms of materials, applications, ideas and planning. They also benefited from seeing teachers working together outside of the narrower context of a single school. The experience of a few student teachers in confronting more general aspects of teaching and learning, and the concepts and philosophies which lie behind them, indicates that such links could help student teachers to become aware of wider issues and in turn understand that there is no practice without theory.

Perhaps the most important issue to emerge from the ITT perspective is that initial training, in its PGCE variant, is too short to give all student teachers both the practical skills they require to survive in the classroom

and the understanding of underpinning concepts and theories which enable them to develop as professionals. This is not a localised problem. Research from the United States presents clearly the dilemmas of student teachers:

*When was there time to develop an elegant conceptual explanation of a mathematics problem if it must be taught tomorrow and one's own understanding was, at that moment in time, only procedural? When was there time to reflect on today's lesson, if there were only a few hours left to prepare tomorrow's? How could student teachers choose among alternatives when they could only barely conceptualise and prepare one?* (Eisenhart, Behm & Romagnano 1991, p.66).

However, this problem is likely to be exacerbated in the context of England and Wales by an increasing dependence on competence - based training for pre-service and in-service teachers.

The following chapter sets the findings from the three research Projects in the current educational context, outlines the implications and proposes areas of future research.

# Chapter 9

## Conclusions

### 1. Review

It is easy to state what a curriculum ought to do. The real difficulty lies in **implementing** general aims and objectives. These three projects cast some light upon this dilemma.

The three research projects described in this thesis explored the issues involved in translating one curriculum objective to the classroom; that of providing access to language learning for all students by encouraging the development of independent learning strategies. This curriculum objective is seen as problematic in that it is easy to agree with in principle but difficult to put into practice. Each of the project conclusions indicates issues which need to be taken into account if the curriculum objective is to be successfully implemented. Within each project these issues are identified and discussed from different perspectives. In combining the three research projects the intention is to show why practical implementation is so difficult and how future work may be improved by taking into account the multiplicity of factors shown to influence implementation.



The projects in total suggest that it is not enough to look at classroom factors in isolation or one after the other in sequence. The real obstacles to progress lie in the **minds** of people, and consist in essence of various types and levels of problem jumbled up together and interacting upon each other. In this, the different perspectives of teachers, student teachers and students are at once important and revealing.

In addition to classroom factors and the complexity of factors associated with the differing perspectives of teachers, student teachers and students, the research indicates the importance of the school context. In particular, the projects demonstrate the necessity to consider, **in detail**, the factors within schools which may influence the individual teacher's ability to provide access to languages for all students. The level of detail is shown to be important in that some of the factors described (such as arrangements for photocopying), appeared at first glance to be trivial and yet prevented progress being made.

Apart from the different perspectives involved and the numerous classroom and school-based factors considered, the projects also highlighted the area of support. The kinds of support within and outside of the classroom which helped individual schools to make

changes are discussed. In particular the research examines the characteristics of in-service work which were seen to affect implementation in the classroom.

Finally the projects consider the role of student teachers in curriculum change and the particular issues which need to be considered if their involvement is to be productive.

## **2. What is the relevance of this research work in 1998 ?**

The conclusions of the research projects are interesting as examples of development in a specific context. In addition the research is of use in highlighting issues, which others, attempting to make languages accessible to all students, may wish to consider. However, I would also suggest that the way in which these research projects were constructed makes the conclusions valuable in a wider context. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the information gained from these research projects could be applied to the implementation of other educational objectives both within foreign language learning and other curriculum areas.

In isolation, the research projects each have points to make about change and development in different contexts: in the classroom,

within different schools and as the focus of initial and in-service education. Collecting together the issues raised from the different perspectives and from all the projects it is also possible to draw an overall picture of factors which need to be considered in order for educational objectives to be successfully achieved in classrooms.

### **3. Innovation and curriculum development**

I have extracted the conclusions from the three research projects and combined the results to provide a summary of factors at different points of operation which need to be considered if curriculum implementation is to be successful. I suggest that this summary could be used to inform the construction of projects which attempt to address complex curriculum objectives.

The summary, which follows, is collated in sections and is separated under the following headings:-

#### **1. Structuring a project to promote curriculum change**

- Essential elements
- General factors for consideration

#### **2. The importance of responding to different perspectives**

- Factors which contributed to successful implementation
- Perspectives of curriculum change in the classroom
- Students in classrooms

- Teachers, Student Teachers and Professional Development

### **3. Implementing curriculum change in the classroom**

- Factors which become the focus of change during lessons
- Developing teacher skills
- Developing student skills
- Resourcing for change and development

### **4. Professional development as part of curriculum change**

- Why in-service education is essential
- What kind of professional development ?

### **5. Involving Student Teachers in curriculum change**

Factors which need to be considered

Implications for Initial Teacher Training

The particular value of this summary is that it combines factors at a general structural level (i.e. in terms of curriculum project design ) and a specific practical level (i.e. achieving objectives with Year 10 on Friday afternoon ). This is relevant to the problems explored in Chapter 1. Projects and initiatives which promote curriculum change need to “ knit the gap” between theory and practice, in terms of the aims and objectives they espouse and the way in which they are constructed at each level of operation. Knowledge and understanding of how learning can be enhanced cannot be separated from informed understanding of the factors which influence the realities of learning in a classroom context. Nor is there any excuse for failing to apply sound learning theory to the professional development offered to teachers.

In order to clarify the relevance of each of the sections of the summary, to this thesis, there is some textual explanation within each section. The summary is also presented as a document without explanation in Appendix 4. Section 4 of this chapter is therefore a document with explanation and numbering within this section related to the document and not to the rest of the chapter.

#### **4. Summary of conclusions**

##### **1. Structuring a project to promote curriculum change**

Each of the projects suggests the importance of regarding innovation and development as problematic and subjecting planning for change to critical evaluation from all perspectives. This enables a developing model to be created. It is important that this model is regarded as dynamic and not as a finished product to be handed on. It should also be accepted that in the end there will be many distinct school-based models as the model is adapted to different circumstances in a range of schools and a range of social environments. To be successful, any change needs to be built upon the complex and shifting realities of classrooms and schools. That means also taking into account the level of detail and revision necessary for change to take place over time.

When constructing a project to promote curriculum change the research suggests that there are certain key elements which should be considered.

### 1.1 Essential elements

- Structures appropriate to the curriculum objectives.
- Accepting the challenge of constructing professional development as opposed to training sessions.
- Practical and relevant content and form.
  
- Setting of general project aims.
- School-based models with individual school aims and objectives which reflect general aims.
- Objectives set need to be wider than specific language (or other curriculum ) acquisition.
- Learning objectives set need to disassociate the volume of material covered from the learning strategies acquired.
  
- A collaborative planning stage.
- Class-based support during initial implementation.
- Collaborative review and problem solving.
  
- Funding
  1. The location of funding
  2. The criteria and targets which constrain funding

These key elements focus on the building of curriculum projects:-

the way in which they are thought out and structured;  
the way in which aims and objectives are related;  
the stages of implementation and  
the way in which the locus and constraints of funding may impinge on the results.

The research conclusions described in this thesis suggest that the structure and the nature of curriculum projects should be designed to

reflect their objectives. There is little point in constructing projects or initiatives whose aims are innovative curriculum practice, in the form of quick-fire training sessions with teachers left to implement vaguely conceived objectives. Exposure is not the same as ownership : the latter implies teacher input and activity.

The conclusions of this thesis also indicate that achieving successful implementation means working carefully from general aims to the development of tightly defined and achievable school-based objectives. In addition, when structuring curriculum projects, implementation cannot be regarded as happening in one single stage; different phases need to be planned for.

The conclusions of this research suggest that collaboration during the planning stage is crucial to the development of a viable school model which is true to the initial aims. There is little doubt that class-based support during initial implementation enabled teachers to make more changes than they had at first envisaged. In addition, a planned element of collaborative review and problem solving is essential to maintain the momentum of curriculum change when it comes face to face with the gritty and complex problems of everyday life in the classroom.

Finally in planning curriculum initiatives the source of funding is important; for two reasons. First of all, the source of funding may impose restrictions on the form, and therefore results, of the initiative. Secondly, it may restrict the questions that can be asked. There are important curriculum problems which, in the current climate, may never become whole school priorities. There are also curriculum problems whose solution demands collaboration across schools. There are curriculum questions which teachers and students want to find answers to, but that governments are unlikely to be interested in. This indicates the need for variety in sources of funding. If funding is only targeted at individual whole-school needs or politically-instigated national initiatives then there are whole areas of curriculum questions that are unlikely to be effectively answered.

To summarise. The conclusions of this research outline the above essential elements required in planning a curriculum project or initiative. In addition, the research suggests that there are other general factors which need to be thought out when constructing the practical elements of the project or initiative. These are listed below.

## **1.2 General factors for consideration**

- The timing of school-based work.
- Resourcing.
- Flexible structures which take account of school realities.



- Support for development from within and outside the school
- Complex relationship between control, organisation and the roles of the teacher and students.
- The progression, in terms of precision, from the decision by the individual teacher to implement change to the initial aims chosen and then to the application and revision within the context of specific lessons.

These general factors for consideration fall into two sections. The first set indicate the need for practical attention to be given to the needs of teachers and schools in structuring curriculum initiatives. One example is that of time. The constraints of time within schools are very particular. The day is divided. Lessons follow one upon another. Days are heavily timetabled. Diversions to wider issues within lesson times are not possible as the teacher's attention is fully engaged with the class. The terms are programmed. There is too much content to fit into them. There is little scope for anything which disrupts the syllabus. It is still possible to make curriculum changes within such limitations but, in order to achieve this, curriculum initiatives need to be designed within the 'real' time of schools and classrooms. The same applies to resourcing, and the structures and support needed to implement change.

The second set of general factors which need to be considered relate to more nebulous issues. The first issue concerns the nature of interaction within the classroom. The fact that the relationship

between control, organisation and the roles of the teacher and students is so complex demands attention, especially when change and development are priorities. If attention is not given to the way in which different forms of classroom organisation influence the balance of control and alter the roles of teacher and students then the curriculum initiative may well be abandoned in the confusion which results.

The second issue, concerns the nature of curriculum change. It is particularly obvious from the conclusions of Project 2 that the closer the implementation of objectives came to particular lessons with particular students the more detailed and precise those objectives needed to be. It was also obvious at the time, that, when the details were not sufficiently worked out, there was a temptation either to fudge the initial objectives in order to adapt to current practice or to say that the initial aims were unworkable. Two things, in particular, helped to avoid this situation. One useful approach was to regard the first stage of implementation as a time for resolving problems, with support on hand in the classroom. The second was the immediacy of review in highlighting issues that individual teachers may not otherwise have had the time to notice. The process of review also kept the initial aims clearly in view. What is important is that, in building curriculum initiatives, the process of evolving sufficient

level of detail for effective classroom practice to be developed from general aims, should be planned.

## **2. The importance of responding to different perspectives**

The conclusions of Research Project 2 suggest a number of factors which contributed to the success of individual school models.

### **2.1 Factors which contributed to successful implementation**

- Enthusiasm and commitment of teacher to project
- Flexibility of teacher approach
- Commitment to long-term aims
- Ability to think through implications of new ideas
- Willingness to try new approaches
- Willingness to explore ways around potential obstacles
- Consistent attendance at INSET
- Involvement in material production
- Quality of team work in department
- Good communication systems
- Students prepared in advance
- Discussion with pupils about organisational skills etc.

These factors underline the extent to which people themselves make changes. Project 2 suggests that the actions and approach of individual teachers is the single and most important factor in change in the classroom. Enthusiasm and commitment, flexibility, the ability to think through new ideas, willingness to try new approaches and find ways around obstacles are all cited. Teachers in projects 2 and 3 valued

professional co-operation, taking control of the development process and having their individual priorities taken into account. They respected the fact that their comments were taken seriously and altered both the process and the outcomes. The conclusions of Project 1 underlined the importance of students' involvement and the value of their perspective. More specifically, all of the projects suggest that it is vital to take the differences in perspectives into account when constructing curriculum initiatives.

## **2.2 Perspectives of curriculum change in the classroom**

The projects suggest that the following perspectives are important in the context of change and development in the classroom.

- A teacher perspective which highlights organisational issues.
- A student perspective which highlights their role and involvement and the variety of ways in which learning can take place.
- The perspective of other adult observer/participants which highlights the importance of setting and valuing different objectives and the complexity of the relationship between control, classroom management and the roles of the teacher and students.
- A student teacher perspective which may differ at different points in their development.

Curriculum change within classrooms depends upon recognising the differences in perspectives and addressing these within the process of curriculum development.

## **2.3 Students in classrooms**

It is perhaps worth stressing that this research suggests that students:-

- Need to be involved in the learning process
- Benefit from an awareness of the linguistic ( or other curriculum ) purpose of tasks
- Already have and can develop preferred learning techniques
- Profit from developing control and responsibility over their own learning.

Projects 1 and 2 indicated the large contribution that students can make to curriculum development and the positive effects that such involvement can have on their understanding of the process of learning. It makes sense to involve students in change because their perspectives are uniquely important, their insights are often surprising and ultimately without their involvement learning does not take place.

#### **2.4 Teachers, Student Teachers and Professional Development**

In addition to the more general points made about Professional Development later in this summary, this research also suggests that there are specific points to make in relation to differences in perspectives.

When Professional Development is being constructed as an element of curriculum change then it needs to :

1. Take into account the individual experiences and perspectives of teachers.

2. Build a common base for teachers with different perspectives to work together.
3. Take into account the different stages which student teachers reach within their training and the particular focus which they have.
4. Create a form of initial teacher training which is clearly seen as the first stage of professional development. This would help student teachers to develop a progressively wider focus and also enable more complex concepts, theories and questions to be introduced at the appropriate time.

Research Project 3, in particular, demonstrated that teachers need time to establish a common conceptual base; try out their individual philosophies and then, decide what kind of change is necessary and how much change is reasonable within a certain time frame. They appreciate thinking together, working together and creating materials together. Professional co-operation across schools may seem irrelevant in a culture of competition and selection and is certainly an expensive commodity to buy in terms of supply cover; but the results justified the outlay if they were measured in terms of curriculum change and the enthusiasm and problem-solving capacity generated.

From Project 1 it was clear that student teachers enjoyed and benefited from being involved in class - based development. Project 3, whilst suggesting that student teachers derived some benefit from working with teachers outside of the classroom, also highlighted some serious problems. Changes in the content of Initial Teacher Education between Project 1 and Project 3 may have changed the perspectives of student teachers but it is more likely, given the findings of Project 3, that

student teachers are more open to development work within the classroom than outside of it. This is probably due to the narrow focus encouraged by an intense period of pre-service training.

More specific factors, which need to be addressed if student teachers are to be involved in curriculum change, are given in the final section of this summary. The main point to be made here is that the particular focus of student teachers and the way in which this changes during the training period means that their individual perspectives are both more variable over time and more likely to be more focused and less flexible at any given time than is the case with serving teachers. It is therefore important that these differences are taken into account.

### **3. Implementing curriculum change in the classroom**

The first two sections of this summary refer to the planning and construction of curriculum projects and initiatives. This section refers specifically to implementation in schools and classrooms. The conclusions of the three research projects suggest that successful implementation of change in individual schools and classrooms is unlikely unless classroom materials, teaching and learning strategies,

organisation and planning have been clearly thought out. Inevitably this also has implications for time and resources.

As was stated earlier, the role of students is crucial and alongside the teacher developing new skills, the development of students' skills and the ways in which students are involved in change need to be planned.

Schools are complex organisations, and like classrooms, they are all different. Many different factors will affect the success of any development model. Unless these factors are taken into account real curriculum change will not take place.

Despite the differences between classrooms and schools, the research conclusions identify a common list of factors which need to be taken into account when schools and individual teachers begin the process of class-based implementation. These are listed below in four sections and involve,

- those aspects of the classroom which become the focus of change;
- the skills which teachers may need to develop;
- the skills which pupils may need to develop; and
- resourcing for change.

### **3.1 Factors which become the focus of change during lessons**

- Changes to tasks, structure of tasks and number of tasks.



- Balancing language (or other curriculum ) skills within and across tasks.
- Balancing equipment and tasks
- Changes to instructions and modes of pupil response.
- Discussion with pupils about organisation and management of their work.
- Discussion with pupils about working as a team.
- Changes to amount of materials to aid distribution.
- Changes to organisation and classroom management
- Balancing teacher demand and complexity of tasks.
- Changes in classroom furniture and layout

### **3.2 Developing teacher skills**

- Different teaching / learning strategies
- Managing more varied approaches
- Appropriate approaches and materials for full ability range
- Approaches which address individual student differences
- Confidence in classroom management
- Use and management of equipment
- Integration of Information Technology
- Overcoming problems of classroom space and furniture
- Integrated use of in-class support (e.g. foreign language assistant / special needs support )
- How to develop appropriate skills in students
- Long-term planning and preparation
- Communication and team work in department

### **3.3 Developing student skills**

- More independence in organisation and management of work
- Social skills, e.g. co-operation and team work
- Confident independent use of appropriate equipment and resources
- Opportunities to develop different linguistic skills and strategies within different contexts
- Opportunities to discuss objectives, ways of working and progress made

### **3.4 Resourcing for change and development**

- Appropriate hardware and software
- Flexible technical support
- Develop resource bank (e.g. audio cassettes, computer disks )
- Appropriate space and classroom furniture
- Adequate arrangements for photocopying and printing
- Development of supportive student reference materials
- Time to develop new / different materials appropriate to techniques being developed (within and outside school )
- Time to work collaboratively to develop innovative materials / approaches
- Appropriate class sizes
- Availability of team-teaching and in-class support

The level of detail given in this section may seem petty, but it is precisely at this level of detail that the mechanics of schools and classrooms work. Any attempt to change what happens in classrooms needs to address this reality.

### **4. Professional development as part of curriculum change.**

It is generally agreed that implementing major curriculum objectives is impossible without in-service education. The project conclusions suggest that translating complex curriculum objectives into practice is impossible without the right kind of in-service education and that, this needs to be built upon sound professional development for individual teachers.

#### **4.1 Why in-service education is essential**

The conclusions of Project 3, in particular, demonstrate the importance of in-service education. In order to implement change this research indicates that it is essential to give teachers time:-

- to think, to challenge their own preconceptions;
- to view applications and materials;
- to collaborate with other teachers and exchange ideas;
- to translate theory and principles into practice;
- to develop ideas;
- to learn how to....;
- to develop and improve practical skills;
- to learn in their own way and at their own pace.

Some of the points made in Projects 2 and 3 emphasise the value of collaborative thinking and planning in moving from a flexible general model to the models adopted by individual teachers and schools. This means time outside the classroom to think, preferably without having to spend hours before hand preparing work for classes and without worrying about cover for classes missed. In addition, where more complex or new concepts are involved teachers need time and space to think them through. Without this phase it is very difficult for individual teachers to make radical changes in their classrooms.

The value of collaboration also extends to the production of materials. The collaborative production of appropriate classroom materials seemed to achieve more than just the creation of useful tools in that it enabled the teachers involved to think more clearly about applying concepts to a practical context and about how the materials could be used to different effects. It is well documented that it is possible for individual teachers to take the most imaginative and original course book and use it to teach in the same way they have been teaching for years. Different materials do not necessarily lead to different practices. Taking part in the creation of different materials seems more likely to result in a change in practice. It was also obvious from the projects that developing a wider range of teaching and learning strategies necessitated the creation of different kinds of materials. For example, if Information Technology is to form an integrated part of classroom strategies it needs to form an integrated part in the materials used and not just be tagged on the end of existing course materials.

The project conclusions emphasise the value of in-service education in affording teachers time and support to think, to develop practical skills and to make professional progress on an individual basis. Project 3 also suggests that in-service education which performs these functions is much more difficult to create than in-service training

which simply presents information. The project also suggests that the form of in-service education used in addressing specific curriculum objectives should reflect good educational practice in the classroom. For example, if diverse teaching and learning strategies are the objective in the classroom then they should be evident in the in-service education.

#### **4.2 What kind of professional development ?**

Having indicated the value of in-service education, the research conclusions go on to indicate the character of in-service education needed to support curriculum change. Specifically it is suggested that in-service education needs to be:-

- well-structured and clear
- well-organised and relevant
- based on sound learning theory and applying good teaching practice
- formed in the context of long-term objectives
- creating purpose, progress and achievement.

Teachers in the projects were clear about what they valued in in-service education. It seems unlikely that we can achieve quality in schools if in-service education is not based on sound learning theory and the application of good teaching practice. Well-structured and organised in-service sessions which are clear and relevant, which

create purpose and which include teachers as participants and creators rather than merely recipients, are more likely to enable teachers to make progress and be proud of their own achievements.

In more general terms, the projects indicate the importance of a long-term perspective so that in-service education becomes a coherent part of planned professional development. There is currently an expectation that teachers ensure the individual progress of every student. It therefore makes sense to create a climate in which teachers' individual professional progress is valued and supported.

The research projects suggest that such development needs to begin in the Initial Teacher Education process so that individual prospective teachers are fully aware of what professional development entails and so that impossible demands are not made of intending teachers and of Initial Teacher Education.

As early as 1972 the James Report indicated that weaknesses in teacher education arose "*from an over dependence upon initial training, as distinct from continued education and training...*" (D.E.S., 1972, p.1).

The report suggested that what was needed was:-

*a framework for growth and development over perhaps the next 20 or 25 years sufficiently flexible to accommodate the changes which will inevitably take place in that time . (D.E.S., 1972, p. 1).*

These words are still surprisingly, and depressingly, relevant in 1998 and the actions which should have followed are long overdue. In days of political expediency it will be a brave government which dares to look further ahead than their term of office: nevertheless, this research indicates that a long term framework which provides stability and flexibility is essential if complex curriculum questions are to be effectively addressed. Of course, as the James report concludes, such a framework would require trust and co-operation :

*To be effective, a pattern of opportunities would have to bring into a working relationship individuals, schools, L.E.A.s, the D.E.S. and the institutions providing higher education and professional training.*  
( D.E.S., 1972, p.12 )

## **5. Involving Student Teachers in curriculum change**

The research conclusions from Project 3 suggest that if student teachers are to be involved in development work outside of the classroom a lot of attention needs to be paid to the role of student teachers and the timing of such work. Most importantly any such work needs to be built carefully to ensure that their limited experience and particular perceptions are taken into account if they are to derive any real benefit from their involvement and be enabled to contribute.

## **5.1 Factors which need to be considered**

The research conclusions suggest the following factors which need to be considered:-

- Careful timetabling
- The role of the student teachers would need to be clear.
- Emphasis would need to be placed on the value of observing and learning as well as contributing.
- Opportunities to contribute would need to be constructed to take account of student teachers ability to contribute.
- The very different perceptions of student teachers would need to be taken into account.
- The link would be most productive in the context of a continuing programme of professional development.

As with planning curriculum change in the classroom, involving student teachers as effective participants in curriculum change demands attention to the practical details. This means taking into account the nature of initial training courses in terms of both structure, (as in timetabling ), and objectives (e.g. the balance between action and observation ). It also means, as is discussed earlier, being aware of differences in perceptions as well as individual student teachers' progress in terms of pedagogical skills.

## **5.2 Implications for Initial Teacher Training**

Apart from the specific factors listed above, involving student teachers in the research work raised a number of questions about the preparation of intending teachers and the ways in which Initial



Teacher Education is likely to impact on the curriculum development of the future. The first concern is that of time and how much it is sensible to expect student teachers to learn in their preparation stage. Properly planned and funded Professional Development would, at least in part, address this problem and highlight the need for continuing development rather than a one off training programme.

The second concern is how and where intending teachers are given the time and support to recognise, understand and develop the concepts and theories underpinning their own practice. In 1998, this concern is magnified by four other points :

- the highly prescriptive nature of the current PGCE courses and the large amount of time student teachers spend teaching as opposed to observing, preparing, thinking, discussing and evaluating.
- the emphasis on competence-based initial training
- the uncritical presentation of particular methodologies as the only way to teach.
- the consideration of competence-based INSET as the professional development of the future.

These four points put together are likely to create problems in terms of applying curriculum objectives in the future for the following reasons. Project 3 suggests that in a very busy initial training period

intending teachers become narrowly focused on immediate practicalities. If the course itself emphasises only the competencies they must achieve and presents teaching as an unproblematic activity which is about successfully wielding a narrow set of skills within a defined curriculum then newly qualified teachers are unlikely to ask complex questions about the classroom and the learning process. Neither will they have any experience of critically evaluating the methods they use in the classroom. Perhaps this is acceptable if, in the early part of their career, they have access to a form of professional development which enables them to recognise the theories underpinning their own developing practice and use this knowledge to develop that practice. However, if such initial training courses are followed by competence-based in-service training then it is unlikely that teachers of the future will be encouraged to pose and explore the fundamental and complex questions about teaching and learning which lead to change and development in classrooms.

This is the end of the summary document which outlines the potential use of the conclusions of the three Research Projects. It is also the end of section 4 of this chapter.

## 5. Future research

In reality, each of the research projects posed questions which could usefully have been followed up by additional research in the same context. For example Project 1 raises many questions about the diversity of classroom based issues that are involved in making language teaching accessible to all pupils. Any number of these would be interesting to develop with further research. The students' perspective was particularly fascinating and it would be interesting to see longitudinal studies which examine the extent to which developing independent learning strategies at an early stage helps students in future study of the same or other languages and indeed to determine the extent to which developing such strategies motivates students to continue learning a foreign language.

It was a privilege to work with so many committed teachers in Projects 2 and 3, and amongst the array of questions the projects raised it would be particularly interesting to see research which looks in detail at how development is best supported on a long-term basis within individual classrooms and schools. Currently research is focused on how best to implement government policy, but there seems to be little funded research into maximising teachers' professional expertise in the context of their own classrooms over time.

The value in looking at these three research projects together is to emphasise the importance of looking at classroom development in conjunction with initial and in-service teacher education in order to explore how factors which effect implementation are linked together. The thesis indicates how particular changes in initial and in-service education are likely to effect these factors. In the current context, what is needed is research based upon the perspectives of teachers, student teachers and students which examines the effect of these changes on curriculum development. This means asking basic questions such as:

- How well do competence-based courses of initial teacher training prepare intending teachers to recognise the complex relationship of theory and practice in their own classrooms ? Are such teachers able to examine and develop their own practice ?
- What are the best ways of constructing a continuous form of professional development which prepares, supports and encourages teachers to improve their own practice and make real changes in the classroom ?

## 6. Summary

The conclusions of the three research projects suggest that asking curriculum questions at different levels of operation is essential if we are to be clear about all the factors involved in implementing desirable curriculum objectives. Different perspectives highlight different factors all of which must be considered if real change is to take place.

When considering the application of curriculum objectives we need to be aware that:

- Teachers and their students know more about the complexities of the classroom than anyone else and ultimately they are the only people who can really change the curriculum. They also often know how the curriculum needs to be changed in order to facilitate learning.
- If students are to learn they need to be involved in the process of learning and if teachers are to teach effectively they need support so that they can continue to learn.
- The structure and interactions of schools influence the individual teacher's ability to effect change in often unexpected ways.
- The potential for change in the classrooms of tomorrow begins in the Initial Teacher Education of today. Inflexible IIT courses may very well produce inflexible teachers.
- The research described and discussed suggests strongly that the structure and kind of professional development available to teachers may significantly influence their ability to implement change.

The particular relevance of the conclusions of the research projects is that they provide in total a summary of factors which could be used when considering the implementation of other curriculum objectives. This summary is detailed and discussed above. If the intention is really to address the complexity of issues such as improving Literacy, Numeracy and Information Communication Technology, the summary given without discussion in Appendix 4 could be used to construct a development model for achieving objectives in other important fields of educational endeavour beyond the one tackled in this thesis.

As stated earlier, these 3 research projects took place between September 1988 and July 1991. It would be hoped that in over six years education has changed - and indeed it has. However, it is somewhat alarming to find that not only does the educational climate in 1998 make it more difficult to address the points raised in this thesis but that any forum to debate such issues is fast disappearing. One of the key questions to be answered is posed by Malcolm Lee in an interesting review of the development of in-service training :

*Are teachers professionals with a measure of autonomy over the work they do or are they vocational workers implementing learning programmes designed by others .*

(Lee, M. 1997, p. 18 )

This thesis suggests that neglecting the crucial role of teachers in debating the complex educational questions of the present will inevitably lead to a future education system which is incapable of real organic change. In addition if simplistic political directives continue to be applied to complex curriculum questions change will continue to be superficial and make no positive impact on the learning process.

Roger Hancock's article which examines class teachers' reluctance to become researchers is clear about the effect of relentless government reforms on the ability of teachers to make confident professional decisions and to involve themselves in classroom-based research:

*To a very considerable extent, teachers have been usurped as creative and thinking professionals .*

( Hancock, R. 1997, p.90 )

The overall conclusion of this thesis is nevertheless a positive one. It is possible to move closer to achieving valuable curriculum objectives if the complexity of the task is acknowledged and all the perspectives and factors are taken into account. The value of this research is in outlining those perspectives and factors in the form of a summary which could inform the construction of other curriculum initiatives.

This could happen if research and development are valued and change is entrusted to teachers who as respected professionals are expected to think for themselves.

*The object of teacher education from a caring perspective is not to produce people who will do their duty as it is prescribed or faithfully use the means deemed likely to achieve discrete learning goals but, rather, to produce people who will make autonomous decisions for the sake of their own students . ( Noddings, N. , 1986, p.504 )*



# **Appendix 1 (a)**

## **Reference to Project 1**

## Organisations

A number of different ways of integrating computers into class work have been tried, within a general commitment to individual/group work. In most cases this approach has been used to practise and develop vocabulary within a topic area but introducing a topic in this way has also been tried on several occasions. In organising work of this kind several main areas have had to be considered:-

### 1) Classroom organisation

The room has been organised in different ways according to the actual work being done. This has been limited by the position of plugs, the actual size of the classroom and the need to create space for pupils and staff to move between tables. In general tables are organised in groups of different sizes with a maximum of eight pupils in a group. One set of tables is usually reserved for the listening station with eight headphones (bought with TVEI funding). Not all pupils feel comfortable working in a large group so it seems preferable to use different sizes of groups. As far as possible pupils are also seated in pairs.

Movement around the room is also a traditional problem, especially when the room is small and pupils are accompanied by coats and bags. When the class are all working on one main task and three pupils at a time are moving to work on the computer, disruption is obviously minimal. Other patterns of movement have been tried:-

a) A circus of 4/5 tasks with a time limit after which all pupils move to the next task. This pattern has some obvious difficulties:-

i) All tasks must take the same amount of time.

ii) Groups must be of roughly the same size and, if three pupils are working on the computer then the rest of that particular group must be occupied with a separate task. Also if all pupils are to use the computer, then the computer task should take about half the time of the other tasks.

iii) Pupils need to take all their belongings with them each time they change tasks.

iv) Some individuals will always finish ahead of others and it is more difficult to cater for them, in this arrangement. Also slower pupils may feel under pressure.

The advantages of this arrangement are that:-

i) Pupils concentrate harder to complete the task in the time limit.

ii) A definite sense of pace and organisation is given to the lesson.

b) To overcome some of the difficulties listed above another pattern was tried. Each pupil is given a list of the tasks to be completed, with instructions. The table with the listening equipment is left out of the initial seating arrangements. Pupils can work on the tasks in any order except for the computer task where sets of three pupils change over throughout the lesson as and when the previous group finishes, and the listening task where groups of eight pupils swop over throughout the lesson. In this arrangement pupils work mainly on their own table and move only twice during the lesson, to use the computer and the listening station.

The difficulties of this arrangement are:-

- i) Sufficient resources for the main tasks must be available for most of the pupils, most of the time or the teacher must restrict group or individual choices in the ordering of the tasks.
- ii) Some pupils will need more supervision in organising the order and timing of the tasks.
- iii) Trying to leave one table free initially is more difficult with classes of thirty plus.

The advantages of this option are:-

- i) Individual pupils can progress at their own pace on the central tasks and an additional task can be available for those who finish.
- ii) Bags, coats etc remain stationary throughout the lesson, and less pupils are moving at the same time.
- iii) Because not all pupils are changing task at the same time, demand for help from the teacher with initial instructions is spread more evenly throughout the lesson.

Variations of the above patterns have been tried depending on -  
 ... the sort of tasks being attempted  
 ... the age of the pupils (1st to 5th Years)  
 ... the size and characteristics of individual classes.

No one pattern seems to work all the time with all classes. The ideal seems to be: to vary the approach but to take into account the difficulties inherent in each.

## 2) Organisation of tasks

Apart from the physical organisation of the classroom the structure of the tasks within the lesson seems to be important. Both single skill and multi-skill tasks are used and within any one lesson these are linked by a particular topic area. Where possible passive skill tasks precede active skill tasks. In

creating or gathering together a set of tasks the following points seem to be important:-

- 1) To have a mixture of different types of tasks, some of which pupils should be able to tackle without any teacher assistance. This is particularly important in the first year where pupils tend to need more help with active skill tasks. If, for example, one of the tasks is an oral one which pupils are likely to need or expect help with, then some of the tasks should be readily accessible to the majority of the pupils, otherwise the teacher will not be able to deal with the different demands for attention.
- 2) Different types of pupil support should be built in to tasks, to relieve the pressure on the teacher and to encourage the pupils to work more independently. This is difficult to do but can be done first of all through the type of instructions used and also the resources provided. For example, if the pupil is preparing a written or an oral task providing notes of vocabulary may not be enough. Cards could be produced for pupils to match single words with pictures, then patterns of words to build into phrases etc.
- 3) The simplest of tasks can become impossible with the wrong instructions. The way in which the task is presented seems, in some cases, to be more important than the task itself. This leads to the next area of organisation:-

### 3) Pupil organisation and responsibility

This is the area in which most problems seem to occur but if pupils are to develop independence then the issues must be faced. Two main topics seem to be central:-

- 1) Instructions
- 2) Equipment

#### 1) Instructions

Pupils need guidelines in tackling work but in a classroom where a variety of tasks are taking place, oral instructions are neither adequate nor in the longterm desirable. As pupils progress they seem to need less and less in the way of guidelines but in the initial stages these need to be fairly explicit. Written instructions for tasks seemed to be the obvious answer and if these are presented at the beginning of the lessons pupils are then aware of what they are expected to complete in the lesson and can organise themselves accordingly. However the pupils in general were not used to reading and following instructions for themselves, so this needs to be built up slowly, with some time being taken to discuss with pupils the way in which they should organise themselves.

## 2) Equipment

Pupils use equipment themselves and some problems have arisen from this, but not in fact with the computer. Pupils have, in general, treated the computer with respect and are developing competence in the use of the software. Most of the problems have originated with listening tasks. In the beginning a reel to reel cassette was used. This was:-

- a) Difficult to use for the pupils
- b) Noisy

To solve the first problem staff used their own tape recorders but the problem was still that the listening task interfered with other tasks. With TVEI funds a listening station was purchased and this has solved the problem of noise (except that pupils tend to shout, when they have the earphones on) but has introduced other problems:-

- 1) It is quite easy to swop the French cassette for Kylie Minogue.
- 2) Unless the tabs on the cassettes are extracted pupils can accidentally or deliberately erase the recording.
- 3) The headphone sockets/plugs are quite delicate and need care and attention.

Problem 2) can be resolved by only using copies of tapes, but this means that a large bank of tapes are needed. (C45's are presently used so that recordings are easier to find for pupils.)

Problem 1) means that teachers must develop acute hearing and recognise slight changes in tone. All three problems (but especially number 3) mean that the pupils' co-operation must be sought in operating and taking care of equipment. Specific instructions, setting equipment up in the way that invites least problems seems to help. So far no one has been banned from using equipment and I am most reluctant to do this. A third year pupil with severe behavioural problems has been unable to work in a group on listening equipment but uses a personal stereo to good effect and has used the computer with other pupils.

## Organisation of time

(Lessons in the school are forty minutes long.)

Timing of work has again been approached in a number of ways. Apart from the timing of tasks within a lesson, the balance of work over a week has been considered. This varies from week to

week but after some trial and error the general pattern, at the moment, is as follows:-

#### 1st Years (four lessons per week)

With the younger pupils sets of tasks which can be completed in one or two lessons seem to be most successful. Also it seems important at this stage to set expectations in different areas of work, so two lessons per week as used for group/individual (including the departments reading scheme) and the other two lessons are used for class oral work/games etc.

#### 2nd/3rd Years (two lessons per week)

At this stage pupils can cope with longer tasks so sometimes both lessons are used for group/individual work. At other times one lesson is used for oral presentation and practice.

#### 4th/5th Years (two double lessons per week)

These are mixed ability classes and most of the work is based on individual/pair/group tasks, sometimes with a short presentation at the beginning of the lesson. Expectations are clarified at the beginning of the lesson/week and a time limit is given. At this stage pupils are also encouraged to set personal targets and to ask for extra practice or extension tasks.

The question of preparation time is also an issue. Work of this kind takes more time to prepare especially where resources have to be produced along with instruction sheets, but it is hoped to build a stock which can be adapted and revised.

#### Organisation of resources

Sometimes tasks are built around published materials and at other times the teacher produces materials. This obviously depends on whether suitable resources are available and how much time the teacher has. Sheets, games, tapes etc are then put into a cardboard file and stored, under the topic title, along with the name of the computer software and program.

Work of this kind is certainly more effective when more than one member of staff is in the room. The 1st Years benefit from the lessons where Mr Howlett is present and the 4th Years also have the help of a Belgian assistante.

#### COMMENT

##### Areas of difficulty

- 1) Time to produce sufficient resources.
- 2) Developing pupil responsibility.

### Positive advantages

- 1) Pupil motivation/enjoyment.
- 2) Change in pupils' attitude to learning.
- 3) Improvement in quality of language work.
- 4) The working patterns established in the lower school benefit pupils preparing for TVEI/GCSE courses in 4th/5th Years.

### Future plans

1. To identify the most successful patterns of work and to collate the materials.
  - a) To create a database referencing all materials with topic/skill areas.
  - b) Some resources have been produced on word processing packages but it is hoped to eventually put all worksheets on to discs so that they can be adapted.
2. To establish a structure of targets (alongside the language targets which already exist) of organisational/learning strategies pupils should be able to use at certain stages. To develop better ways of developing these independent study skills.
3. To consider integrating the present assessment system into a multi-task situation, giving credit for the pupils' ability to identify and correct mistakes.

## **Appendix 1 (b)**

### **Reference to Project 1**



## Appendix 1 (b) Transcript of video (Project 1)

### Alternative Learning Strategies in Modern Languages

The following transcript is of a video recording constructed for In-service training to show some of the work conducted in Project 1. In it, both the pupils and the group of adult observers involved discuss their own perspectives of the project. The video itself was constructed from hours of classroom filming and shows examples of different classes working.

**CQ** - Teacher

**ST1** - Student Teacher (1)

**ST2** - Student Teacher (2)

**FLA** - Foreign language Assistant ( A part-time assistant shared with another school ).

#### *Discussion with adults*

**CQ** Initial impressions ?

**ST 1** I've been really impressed with the teaching that has gone on at St ..... (Name of school ) especially in a group work situation. When I compare that to my own experience of doing languages, the teacher was up at the front and the pupils were two by two. I've been very impressed with the group work situation where they're doing different activities and they are actually moving around, learning to use a tape and learning to use a computer. I've been really impressed with it.

**ST2** Having been in other schools the thing which impresses me most about group work in Bootle is that the class is arranged in a way which increases the motivation of pupils to learn. They have more responsibility to work by themselves and although an outsider looking in may not feel that there is much teacher control in this set up, I have seen other classrooms where there is absolute teacher control in other schools but where the pupils are put off by that and are consequently de-motivated. I think the fact that the pupils are working by and large with their friends and are allowed to work at their own pace increases their interest in the topic. I think that is the outstanding feature of it for me.

*Discussion with Year 11*

**CQ** Which aspect of the work do you find most interesting ?

**Jackie** The listening bank.

**CQ** Why ?

**Jackie** Because when you get the tape and you've got to have the headphones on you get to listen to what is said. Sometimes it is difficult and it's fuzzy. If you're with the whole class you can hear everybody making noises and everything so you can't hear properly.

**CQ** So, you like having the individual headphones ? Do you find you work on your own on the tape ?

**Jackie** No, it's better working in a group because everyone offers what they think. But you've got to keep re-winding the tape all the time to listen to it again.

**CQ** How about when you listen to it as a class what's different then ?

**Jackie** You always find people dropping pens and moving so you can't hear .

**CQ** Right, so small noises disrupt the tape ? How about re-winding is that a good thing ?

**Jackie** It's sort of bad because in the exam you can't rewind it but you've got to re-wind to work out what it is , the answer.

**CQ** Which aspects of the work have you found most interesting or most useful ?

**Tracey** In the orals, the telephone call is the most useful out of all the orals we've done because you can just take it as a normal casual telephone call. Whereas with the other orals you sit in the office face to face with the mike and she sits there asking you questions. With the telephone call you can take it easy because you're by yourself and no-one can see you.

**CQ** How about preparing ?

**Tracey** We had all the questions in front of us and we could prepare it but when you get on the 'phone you had to listen to the questions and you had to think about the questions before you answered them but sometimes you get questions you don't expect to be asked.

**QQ** Was that useful ?

**Tracey** Yes, because if you do have to take a telephone call you won't get questions you're expecting all the time will you ?

*Discussion with adults*

**QQ** How do you find the children respond to using a real telephone ?

**FLA** I think it's difficult for them because of the telephone itself and you're not supposed to see the other person so that's more difficult but it's a real situation, and that's going to be very useful if they have to speak to someone on the telephone.

**ST1** I think it's advantageous, the fact that there's a variety of materials. So inside a 1hr 10 min lesson the children are actually using computers, using a tape recorder, using written material, reading material, so they are actually using a variety of skills. And they are getting used to using a computer, getting using a tape-recorder so I think this is quite beneficial to them. There are slight disadvantages that I've found in that you've got to be very organised in getting the tape set up. Sometimes you do have problems with the ear phones. If you're doing a lot of tape work they tend to be quite cumbersome. The computers the children seem to pick up very quickly and the reading and writing materials they don't generally seem to have any problems with them. I think it's just the tape work that you need to be really well organised.

**QQ** Do you think that the methods cater for the whole ability range or do they favour one end of the ability range ?

**ST1** They do actually cater for all ability levels but I think there are problems in catering for the different ability levels. In a group of 5 or 6 one or two are very good and they'll tend to do a lot of the work and the others will tend to go along and not get as much done. But there again, sometimes, the one or two who do most of the work will actually help the others. So, to me that's the real benefit of it.

*Discussion with Year 10*

**QQ** What sort of things have you found most useful or most interesting ?

**Gareth** In some lessons you've got a teacher in front of the class who's saying here's how you say such and such and writing it all down on the board and after a while it just goes in one ear and out the other because you're just not listening then, because it's so boring. But we do group work here and it keeps your brain active because you're doing something while you're learning.

**QQ** How does that make it easier to learn for you ?

**Gareth** Because you've got to know it to do the work. Whereas if you are just sitting there if you don't know it you just swot up for the test and you're all right.

**QQ** Eddie, which aspects of the work have you found interesting or useful ?

**Eddie** I like the tape because when you're listening to it it's French peoples' voices. When you go to France you're not just going to read everything you're going to be listening.

**QQ** If I put a cassette in the middle of the classroom you'd listen then wouldn't you ?

**Eddie** Yes, but it's easier with the headphones because there's nothing distracting you.

**QQ** Richard, when you were in the first year there was something you found particularly difficult in learning French ?

**Richard** It was because I couldn't get the pronunciation of French words and the accent, but I taped it and listened before tests and it got easier.

**QQ** You've been listening to tapes at home for 3 years now. What about this particular year what have you enjoyed doing ?

**Richard** I like the listening because you get used to the words and the speed that they speak at, normal speed, instead of having someone say it dead slow so you can understand it.

**CQ** Lee, is there any particular aspect of the work you find interesting ?

**Lee** I like using the computers because it helps you to know how to spell the words and get familiar with how to put the words together in sentences.

**Alison** I like the way at the beginning of the lesson they tell you all the work you are going to do because then you can get on with it. But in other classes you could be asking and the teacher could be talking, you could be asking for ages what you've got to do next but they don't take any notice.

**CQ** So you like to have your list of things in front of you before you start ?

**Alison** Yes.

**CQ** So how do you find it in terms of organisation ?

**Alison** It's easier, because you can just look in the back of your book and see what you need and you can just go and get it without asking all the time what you need.

**Jackie** I like the computer because when you see the words and then when you're reading you can recognise them so it helps you to put them together.

### *Discussion with adults*

**CQ** To come to a conclusion, you've mentioned a lot of difficulties : equipment and resources, staffing levels, organisation of materials and general management of the classroom. Given all the difficulties do you think that it's worth pursuing this course of action ?

**ST2** Yes.

**ST1** Definitely. For me the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. When you compare the way the children are taught French at ..... (Name of school ) - the work we've actually done. If you compare that with more traditional methods of language teaching there's definitely a lot more learning going on, at lot more active participation. It's a more relaxed atmosphere but I think you get fewer discipline problems. I know it's hard to say that we've only been in a few weeks but the feeling that we get is that there are fewer discipline

problems. It's more relaxed and there's a good atmosphere for learning. There's a lot of active participation. The children are actually helping each other and using the teacher as a resource. It's very much child- centred / pupil-centred learning in a relaxed atmosphere.

ST2 Yes.

FLA I think they have a higher level as well because they can use language more easily than other classes.

**Appendix 2 (a)**  
**Reference to Project 2**

**SCHOOL:-** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INVOLVED:-** \_\_\_\_\_

*Current position.*

*Layout of classroom*

*Equipment*

*Types of materials*



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Teaching / learning strategies in use.

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Long Term Objectives.  
Teaching / learning strategies.

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Layout of classroom

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Equipment needed.

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Materials needed.

# Short term aims / objectives.

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

## **Appendix 2 (b)**

### **Reference to Project 2**

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

SCHOOL: A  
STAFF INVOLVED:- 1

### 1. STARTING POSITION

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Cassette recorder, Action texts books and tapes.

LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

Tables moved recently into groups.

Good size room.

Plenty of plugs.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.

Whole class teaching.

Pairwork.

Some individual work.

LONG- TERM AIMS.

Achieve more pupil independence.

Cater for individual pupils (motivation / special needs).

Use a wider range of resources, including I.T.

Manage more varied approaches to teaching and learning.

### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED.

1 (teacher liaising with H.O.D )

SESSIONS ATTENDED.

Same teacher attended all 3 sessions.

SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.

Session with teacher and attended by Head of Department.

Emphasis on management and structure of class sessions and the

integration of computer and listening bank.

Materials prepared by teacher.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.

SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES

1. Develop teacher organisational skills and confidence for mixed task lessons
2. Look at the use of I.T. (How can it be integrated ?  
How valuable is it ? )
3. Develop pupil organisational skills and use of variety of resources.

### STAGE 1

EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

Level and use of materials good. Tasks well-balanced.

Teacher felt that the hard work in preparing the materials was worthwhile

that it produced good results in the classroom.

The class worked well including one pair of pupils who usually produced very

little but who were proud of their achievement and who surprised their

teacher with the volume and quality of the work produced. The teacher felt

that the structure and organisation allowed pupils to work at varying

speeds on different tasks according to their strengths and weaknesses.

The teacher had prepared the class well beforehand by:-

- a) Talking to them about the session and the organisation.
- b) Trying simplified sessions with some independent work to allow the pupils to learn skills gradually.

### AGREED CHANGES

Small alterations would help.

- E.G. 1. Numbering of tape sections on tape to help pupils to find the right section of tape.
2. In first stages it is easier if pupils write all the answers on a sheet labelled for them.
  3. Information gap needs to more tightly structured.

### STAGE 2

EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

Alterations implemented and improved the points noted.

It was noted that the pupils were more organised with time and materials completed a greater variety of tasks. They also needed less help with the tape and computer.

### OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

The main objective from the teacher's point of view was to develop confidence and competence in the classroom management of a variety of different tasks. The materials were produced by the teacher, who was keen to develop control of this area so that she could work towards longer term objectives. In this area the project was obviously a success. The teacher was also able to answer her own questions about the value of integrated I.T.



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CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF  
THE PAGE**

From the reaction of pupils it was also obvious that they were beginning to develop the kind of organisational skills envisaged by the teacher in the initial objectives.

## FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES

In the short term the teacher intends to continue to develop materials and organise similar classwork for the targeted 3rd Year group and to try out similar techniques with 2nd Year pupils, in preparation for the next academic year.

Her targets for next year are to concentrate on the development of materials for the 3rd Year but to also incorporate the use of the computer in the 5th year and to investigate the possibility of using such techniques with a 1st year group of slow learners.

## ANTICIPATED NEEDS

### RESOURCES

The teacher has access to computer hardware and software is on order and gradually becoming available. Early in the project tape and headphones were identified as being lacking and particularly important. These were borrowed for the teacher's use during the project but are now on order by the department. The teacher is also aware of the implications in terms of disks, cassettes etc.. Photocopying of teacher-produced materials is not, at the moment, a problem.

The teacher, whilst determined to extend the aims of the project is also aware of the difficulties of organising this kind of work with large classes working with 1 teacher. This has implications for the size of classes (as compared with those subjects perceived as being "practical" subjects) and also for a change in the traditional role of the foreign language assistant. The teacher found the class support within the project very useful.

### FURTHER INSET

The teacher found the 3 sessions of INSET to be appropriate, relevant and practical and in conjunction with the rest of the project one of the most useful she had personally been involved in. She felt that all 3 sessions were useful and needed therefore to be attended consecutively, so that maximum benefit could be gained. She felt that if all participants did this questions addressed in the early sessions could then be taken for granted and as much as possible could then be packed into the INSET.

As a result of the project she felt that the following areas were of importance for future INSET:-

1. Long-term planning and preparation.
2. Construction and management of simulations.
3. Assessment.
4. Materials and realistic targets for ESN / statemented pupils.

## SCHOOL

### COMMENT

This school-based project has been successful in a number of ways:-

1. The objectives set by the teacher for herself and the pupils were realistic and took account of the situation in which she teaches (organisation of available space and resources.) These objectives were achieved.
2. The teacher worked out in, terms of resources, what was needed in addition and then was prepared to do something about it.
3. The pupils were well-prepared and were involved in the process.

The project's success seems to have been due to:-

1. The enthusiasm and commitment of the teacher involved, and the flexible approach she adopted.
2. Consecutive attendance of INSET during which the teacher thought through the issues involved.
3. The teacher's commitment to long-term aims at the beginning of the project. The project was always regarded as a beginning and not as an end in itself.

Apart from the INSET and resource needs already identified the main difficulty the teacher sees is keeping up with the volume of preparation, particularly as the pupils are enthusiastic about the change. The teacher has made vast changes in a short amount of time and now that the organisational aspects are underway may want to look at:-

- a) Developing more multi-skill tasks.
- b) Looking at alternative sources of materials.
- c) Planning for progression across a unit.
- d) Integrating tasks with a common purpose i.e. simulation.



# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

SCHOOL: B  
STAFF INVOLVED:- 1

### 1. STARTING POSITION

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Books (Action 4), Tapes.  
has begun this year to use the computer with the help of I.T / ModLangs  
Advisory Teacher.

LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

Rows of desks, with desks attached to chairs. Platform at front of class near  
plug. Plugs at the back of the room. Class space restricted.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.

Whole class oral work and listening.  
Pairwork.  
Reading / written work sheets.

LONG- TERM AIMS.

Development of integrated group work using a variety of equipment /  
resources.

### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED:- 1 (as above).  
SESSIONS ATTENDED:- Same teacher attended all 3 sessions.

SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.

Having thought through the issues involved during the INSET, the preparation  
session was used to look at the organisation and preparation of materials  
for the class sessions. Materials for the first session were prepared jointly  
and then the teacher used the same model to prepare new materials for the  
second session.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.

SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES

1. Classroom management of task-based work.
  2. Integrating use of audio equipment with headphones and the computer
- One of the major obstacles to using this approach was the layout of the  
classroom and in particular the type of desks attached to chairs. It was  
decided by the teacher to look in particular at how this obstacle could be  
overcome rather than to change rooms just for the period of the project.

#### STAGE 1

EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

In stage 1 all of the objectives outlined were met. The pupils became  
familiar with the structure of groupwork and coped well with the  
information gap oral work. They were able to benefit from the tape work  
and the computer task. Despite the problems of the layout of the  
classroom the teacher felt that it had been a useful exercise.

AGREED CHANGES

To counter some of the difficulties faced it was agreed that:-

1. More discussion with pupils about organisation and the planning of their  
work would take place before or at the beginning of the next session.
2. Some pupils needed simpler tasks.

#### STAGE 2

EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

Improved oral instructions about organisation plus pupils knowledge of what  
was expected enabled pupils to cope more effectively with the work. The  
teacher felt that more tasks were completed and pupils used the instruction  
sheets more. The physical layout was still a problem but the teacher felt that  
it was possible, if not ideal, to organise this kind of classwork within the  
limitations of her own classroom.

- 2 minor points were noted :- 1. The computer task was too long and it  
involved too much spelling. 2. An extra task was needed for brighter pupils.

### OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

All the objectives were achieved. The initial stages of organising and  
managing group work in the classroom were covered and the main difficulties  
were faced and responded to. In stage 2 the teacher took control of the  
organisation of materials.

Pupils became familiar with organising their work, needed less help with  
change of tasks and were more organised in clearing away. The teacher felt  
that the project had achieved quite a lot, that the pupils were more

motivated and looked forward to the group work and that the lessons were more lively and attractive to pupils than passive listening. It was also helpful in working towards more independent work. The teacher also felt much more confident in approaching the preparation and classroom management.

### SCHOOL COMMENT

The project was successful in a number of ways:-

1. The agreed objectives were all met and the major hurdle of the classroom furniture was faced rather than avoided.
2. Pupils made significant steps in learning to organise themselves.
3. The teacher was able to use the model to produce her own materials.
4. The materials used were to a large extent original and not based on the course used.
5. In terms of resources a number of new things were used, including group based operation of a tape and headphones and information gap oral work.
6. The teacher has definite plans to extend the knowledge acquired during the project.

### FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES

1. Development of task-based work moving towards multi-skill, integrated tasks.
2. The teacher intends to target 2 sets of pupils. The first set are 1st years moving into the 2nd Year and the second set are 3rd Years moving into the 4th Year. It is anticipated that the 4th Year pupils will study a modular G.C.S.E course.

### ANTICIPATED NEEDS

#### RESOURCES

Ideally the department would like more than 1 computer. Also a bank of blank audio cassettes will be needed. However the priority for the teacher concerned is the problem of the furniture in the classroom which prevents her from making maximum use of the space. It is not clear at the moment how this problem is to be resolved.

#### FURTHER INSET

The teacher found the INSET and the in-class support useful. In the future she would like to see more examples of integrated skill materials and INSET linked to this.

The success of the project seems to be due to:-

1. The commitment of the teacher.
2. The teacher's consistent attendance of INSET during which the main issues and implications were faced and thought through.
3. The fact that the teacher was prepared to find ways around obstacles and regarded the project as a beginning stage within long term aims.

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

SCHOOL: C  
STAFF INVOLVED:- Whole Department

### 1. STARTING POSITION

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Varied according to members of department.

LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

Some rooms rows, some groups of tables.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.  
Varied according to teacher's preferences.

LONG- TERM AIMS.

Develop staff techniques in role of teacher as facilitator.

Enable pupils to develop social and organisational skills.

Give pupils confidence in the use of a variety of equipment (E.g. tapes / computers).

### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED:- The Head of Department

SESSIONS ATTENDED:- 2 sessions attended. Information systematically relayed to department.

SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION – STRUCTURE USED.

Whole department involved.

Aims / objectives of project explained.

Department discussed ways in which maximum benefit in terms of teacher involvement could be obtained.

The department decided to use the package of materials prepared 'Objects Perdus' with 4th Year pupils. In the first session 2 teachers put their classes together to team teach making one mixed ability group. In the 2nd session the same materials were used with a high ability class and one teacher.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.

SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES

1. Development of classroom management of differentiated progress within a mixed ability context.

2. Trial of team-teaching.

As the package of materials was already there it was possible to concentrate on the issues of organisation and management.

#### STAGE 1

EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

The 2 classes worked well together and pupils were able to progress at their own pace. Initially the pupils had some difficulty deciding how to organise their work but they settled to their tasks quite quickly. Teacher reaction to the materials was positive but the amount of preparation to organise and set up equipment was daunting. Also if some of the less able pupils were to continue effectively using the materials the gap between level 1 and level 2 would need to be balanced with more materials not dependent upon the use of the tape or the computer.

#### AGREED CHANGES

As pupils in the first stage had worked mostly on Level 1 and a few tasks from Level 2 it was decided to keep the format the same for the class of able students anticipating that they would progress at a faster pace but would not exceed the materials in those 2 levels. This time one teacher would be involved. Some extra copies of tapes were made to facilitate the practical-distribution of resources and extra copies of the appropriate materials were made.

#### STAGE 2

EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

After the initial minutes when pupils were settling to organising their work the teacher was impressed with the range and volume of work produced. The pupils were extremely well motivated and were visibly keen to progress through the tasks. The teacher also liked the materials. She commented on the importance of the pupil-teacher ratio in organising work of this kind and the implications in terms of equipment and class space and time spent preparing and organising materials.

### OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

The department achieved the objective to include all teachers in the project and to look specifically at the management and organisational implications of this style of classwork.

It was also possible to compare the way in which 2 different groups of pupils worked on the same materials. One of the groups being from 2 different classes and of mixed ability and the other group of able pupils.

the department felt that the project was a useful opportunity to try out an alternative method of teaching and felt that the form of organisation reduced the stress for the teacher of maintaining classroom control and allowed pupils to benefit from more individual contact with the teacher. It was also felt that that students were able to help each other. They commented on the difficulties of ensuring pupils are working on the tasks when the teacher is not present with the group.

## **FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES ANTICIPATED NEEDS**

The teacher involved in Stage 2 subsequently used the same materials with a difficult / lower ability class, on her own.

Some of the teachers would use the materials in a similar way next year. The department felt that it would be useful to develop similar materials for several GCSE topic areas but felt that to produce the materials in sufficient quantities it would be beneficial for schools to pool materials or for other teachers to be seconded to develop materials.

Although there are obviously resource implications in terms of the individual teachers involved, (in particular the location of equipment and the problems of sharing resources and space), the department seemed prepared with the equipment available (headphones / computer hard and software and photo-copying facilities) to make resources available to individual members of staff as and when required.

## **SCHOOL COMMENT**

The success of this school-based project is focused mainly on the integrated way in which the department operated in order to involve all members of staff. Information was consistently relayed both from the INSET and the various parts of the school-based project. The department also made collective decisions about the way in which the project was to be operated and resources were to be shared.

The advantage of using the prepared materials was that it allowed the focus to be centred around management issues as well as looking at the reactions of various groups of children to the same materials.

The project was also successful in that two teachers were prepared to try team teaching both for the benefit of the pupils involved and to pool resources. This was a mark of the flexible approach the department used.

The next stage is obviously for the department to consider the way in which they wish to proceed, perhaps by identifying one unit area and combining forces to produce the materials for this area. They have already identified the need for materials and made suggestions on a wider basis on the way they think those materials could be produced. Support in continuing to develop classroom management techniques would also be useful to enable the department to continue the positive beginning made.

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

**SCHOOL:** D  
**STAFF INVOLVED:-** 2 teachers plus head of department

### 1. **STARTING POSITION**

**EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.**  
Tricolore 3  
Cassette player

**LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.**  
Rows of desks  
2 plugs in room

**TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.**  
Whole class oral work / listening  
Some pair work

**LONG- TERM AIMS.**  
Use the project to try out different learning strategies and other resources not usually used (Eg IT / tape and headphones ) and look at possibilities.

### 2. **INSET**

**NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED:-** 1 teacher  
**SESSIONS ATTENDED.** 2 sessions

### **SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.**

Whole department met to plan class session to be conducted with teacher who had not attended INSET and to prepare materials jointly. Department worked as a team in preparation and evaluation stages. The project was to be used as an opportunity to try out different approach. The teacher and class selected usually worked in a formal way and the class was not normally either the fastest or the most co-operative. The idea was to try an alternative approach to see if it had any effect.

### 3. **SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.**

**SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES**  
To help pupils to learn to organise themselves as a group, use a tape recorder and headphones and a computer. As these skills were all new to 1 particular group of pupils it was decided to keep the basic organisation simple and to concentrate on these areas.

#### **STAGE 1**

##### **EVALUATION OF STAGE 1**

The teacher who was initially apprehensive about the way in which the class might react was impressed with the quantity and quality of work achieved and the way in which the pupils settled to work. Pupils were busy all of the time and appeared interested. Normally disruptive pupils had less opportunity to disrupt others and achieved a good amount of work. Organisation within the classroom was much easier than anticipated but the amount of teacher time in preparation was, in the teachers opinion , the crucial factor.

##### **AGREED CHANGES**

Small changes made to verbal instructions and it was agreed to change the organisation of the clearing up at the end of the lesson.

#### **STAGE 2**

##### **EVALUATION OF STAGE 2**

The second session was much the same as the first but raised the issue of spreading the demand for teacher attention (particularly with oral tasks) over the time period by making sure different groups of pupils did more difficult tasks at different times.

### **OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.**

The project was successful in that it gave the department an opportunity to explore less formal arrangements of the classroom and to see the effect with a class which was normally difficult. 3 members of staff were involved different stages but it would have been useful, if there had been time, to spend more time looking at the preparation and execution of class session with all 3 teachers. The department concluded that as a one off it was an excellent way of motivating badly behaved classes.

### **FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES**

The department would like to use this kind of arrangement as an additional technique and proposes its use at the end of a topic in the 4th / 5th Year. The department intends to work together to prepare a unit for a particular class so that materials can be shared and the work of preparation for the individual teacher will be reduced.

## ANTICIPATED NEEDS

### SOURCES

The department has ordered listening banks and is investigating the question of telephones. They would find it useful to have access to more computers if it this was not seen as a priority. They felt that in terms of preparation of materials it would be very useful for the department to have photocopying facilities.

### IRTFHER INSET

The teacher who attended the INSET felt that it had been excellent and the preparation and class sessions were an essential part of the INSET. The department would like to see more of the same kind of work, in action, and could also like the opportunity to look at other materials. In preparing units of work they thought it was crucial to have time as a department and felt at school INSET time could usefully be allocated for this.

## SCHOOL COMMENT

The project was successful in that both a new approach and new resources were used to good effect and that the department intends to build on this next year to produce another unit of work. The department used the project to consider with some care whether or not the techniques and resources were useful and in what ways they intended to make use of them. The project was also useful in looking on a very small scale at the effectiveness of the approach with more difficult pupils.

The success of the project can be attributed to:-

1. The way in which the department worked together / sharing information and ideas.
2. The professional approach of the individual teachers, the co-operation of the Head of Department and the enthusiasm of the teacher who had attended the INSET.

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

SCHOOL: E  
STAFF INVOLVED:- 1

### 1. STARTING POSITION

#### EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Action 3 + tape  
Worksheets  
Some computer - used with Advisory teacher IT / Mod Langs last year.

#### LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

Rows of desks.  
Number of plugs.  
Quite large classroom.

#### TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.

Worksheets  
Some pairwork  
Whole class oral work / listening.

#### LONG- TERM AIMS.

Look at techniques and materials for use with less able pupils.  
Try out management of a different approach.

### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED. 1

SESSIONS ATTENDED. 3

#### SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.

Worked with teacher to plan session on the basis of work done in INSET.  
Materials jointly prepared. The teacher was particularly interested in looking at the use of the concept keyboard with Touch Explorer so this was built into both class sessions.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.

#### SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES

Organisation and management of group work.  
Use of tape and headphones.  
Use of concept keyboard with Touch Explorer.

#### STAGE 1

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

The teacher felt that it worked very well but wondered if this was just because it was a novelty. The pupils worked harder as individuals than normal and were enthusiastic about the work. Pupils organised themselves well but were initially reluctant to share information with others in their group.

#### AGREED CHANGES

Extra task added as all pupils completed task on concept keyboard.  
Emphasised oral work as pupils tended to leave oral / written work until last.  
Some discussion with pupils about the way they worked.

#### STAGE 2

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

Evidence that pupils were working more co-operatively. Most of work completed.

### OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

The objectives stated were achieved in that the teacher was able to look at the advantages and disadvantages of the classroom organisation and the use of the equipment / materials described.

#### FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES

Although the teacher was aware of the positive benefits she was concerned about the integration and quality of oral work if this method was used regularly. She also questioned the amount of time necessary to prepare resources and equipment and to build up a bank of materials. She intends to use the materials produced with less able pupils next year.

#### ANTICIPATED NEEDS

RESOURCES  
Materials.

#### FURTHER INSET

The teacher felt that the practical in-school sessions had been the most useful and answered questions she had not had answered during the INSET. She would like future INSET which looked at ways of producing materials.

## SCHOOL COMMENT

The project was a success in that some simply structured group work was used positively with a group of less able pupils. The pupils enjoyed the work and proved themselves very capable of organising and completing work in this context. The teacher experienced the positive aspects of an alternative way of organising the classroom and will at least use this material again even if the implications in terms of time in preparing and organising the resources and equipment mean that the strategy is not used on a regular basis.

The success of the project lay mostly in the teachers willingness to try out something new with pupils who were less able. The teacher missed the first session in which the reasons for adopting this kind of approach were outlined and in retrospect this was a weakness in the structure of this particular project, as it was an issue that was never totally resolved. Future work would need to address this issue first.

### Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

#### Project Evaluation

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SCHOOL: F  
STAFF INVOLVED:- 1

#### 1. STARTING POSITION

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Tape recorder  
Text books and tapes

LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

Rows of single desks. Type of desk (sloped) made it difficult to put them neatly into groups.

2 plugs, one at front and 1 at back of room.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.

Whole class teaching.  
Drama techniques.

LONG- TERM AIMS.

Develop pupil independence in:- operation of a wider range of equipment.  
learning to co-operate  
learning to organise work

Group work for some of time.

For teacher looking at alternative ways of structuring class learning.

#### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED:- 1 for all sessions 2 for 1 session  
SESSIONS ATTENDED. 3 / 1

SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.

Short session with whole department explaining briefly aims / objectives of project. This was rather difficult as members of the department approached the project from different perspectives. The impact of the project rested with one member of staff rather than forming a cohesive part of the departmental programme. The preparation session with the 1 teacher was very useful and materials were produced jointly.



### 3. **SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.**

### SCHOOL

#### SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES

Set up some simple group work including use of tape and headphones and 1 computer. In particular to look at the management implications for the teacher but also to look at pupil response.

#### STAGE 1

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

The teacher noted the importance of giving clear instructions to minimize pupil confusion and the need to have multiple copies of materials to give maximum flexibility in pupil organisation and in overall balance of tasks. The beginning of the lesson was important for pupils sorting out instructions. In 1 lesson the teacher was able to note differing levels of skills possessed by individual pupils in a group she had previously thought of as homogenous. The teacher is going to try same structure but without computer with a less able group in the same year group.

The project was successful in that ideas were discussed and tried out in the classroom and the beginning stages of the objectives were reached. The class-based work integrated new equipment and materials and the teacher had the opportunity to look at some aspects of the preparation and classroom management of alternative learning strategies. It was unfortunate that unforeseen circumstances halted the project part way through.

#### AGREED CHANGES

1. Pupil organisation. 3 minutes at beginning of lesson in which pupils are asked to study instruction sheets.
2. Some teacher direction to ensure that pupils tackle tasks in varied way to reduce pressure for teacher attention at the same time.

The success of the project was due to:-

Consistent attendance of INSET by the teacher concerned.  
The teacher's willingness to try new ideas in the classroom and overcome obstacles such as the arrangement of class furniture etc..

#### STAGE 2

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

Unfortunately events beyond the control of the project meant that session 2 had to be cancelled and the project suspended.

### OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

A constructive basis for further work was established and the work prepared operated well in the classroom.

#### FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES

The teacher intends to continue work within this area when possible.

#### ANTICIPATED NEEDS

##### RESOURCES

Only 1 computer available in department at present and this has only a small amount of software for language teachers.

#### FURTHER INSET

The teacher would like to continue to look at the development of materials and learning strategies to promote pupil independence.

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation

SCHOOL: G  
STAFF INVOLVED:- 1 teacher plus head of department

### 1. STARTING POSITION

#### EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS USED.

Computers being used with Advisory teacher for I.T / ModLangs  
Action Course and combination of other tapes etc..

#### LAYOUT OF CLASSROOM.

1 teacher has moved tables into groups.  
Other teacher has rows.

#### TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES IN USE.

Whole class teaching / pairwork etc..  
H.P beginning group work with several classes.

#### LONG-TERM AIMS.

From the teachers perspective department to share information and develop different teaching / learning strategies.  
From the pupils perspective opportunities to develop different skills within different learning situations.

### 2. INSET

NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED. Head of department

SESSIONS ATTENDED. 3 sessions

#### SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION - STRUCTURE USED.

Worked with the 2 members of staff looking at objectives / preparing materials on initial visit to school. Details were then followed up in telephone calls with the Head of department before the class sessions. This was an effective way of dealing with the problems caused by the shortage of time. Both teachers were involved in the class sessions.

### 3. SCHOOL BASED SESSIONS.

SHORT TERM AIMS / OBJECTIVES  
Develop group work skills within the area of "Health".  
Integrated use of computers / telephone / tapes with headphones.

#### STAGE 1

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 1

Overall impression of teachers involved positive. Pupils took time to adjust to reading instructions and needed to learn to use instruction sheet and information booklet more effectively. Some latecomers had problems with instructions. Headphones and computer worked very well. Telephone (making an appointment) - pupils were reluctant to use at first but by the end of the session were fighting for their turn !! The number of tasks was possibly over-ambitious for a first session but could be simplified by reducing the amount of reading. Matchmaster exercises needed simplifying to balance tasks.

##### AGREED CHANGES

Matchmaster given picture reference and simplified.  
Layout of classroom changed to give every pupil a permanent seat and leave the listening stations free.  
Attention drawn at the beginning of the lesson to the use of instruction sheets and notes.  
2 extra listening stations made to compensate for the listening tasks which were taking longer than other tasks.

#### STAGE 2

##### EVALUATION OF STAGE 2

The pupils were much more organised the classroom becoming very quickly hum of activity. Equipment used more effectively and more use of notes and instruction sheets. Far less organisational questions asked. From the teachers perspective noticeably easier to cope in the second session, despite the fact that the class size of 32 is far from ideal. The telephone appointment was completed confidently and with enthusiasm and was a successful part of the session.

## OVERALL PROGRESS COMPARED WITH STATED OBJECTIVES.

Objectives achieved. Both teachers had the opportunity to be involved in preparation and management of an alternative way of teaching and the pupils quickly developed the basic organisational skills necessary to cope.

#### FUTURE AIMS / OBJECTIVES

To continue to develop alternative teaching / learning methods alongside existing methods. Build in extra cross-curricular days and work on developing materials for selected units (E.g. travel). Continue to use as appropriate with all classes.

## ANTICIPATED NEEDS

1. Further INSET on specific software packages and new packages as they arrive on the market.
2. Have found the in-school support of the Advisory Teacher for ModLangs / IT + the project very useful not only in terms of help and support but also in providing incentive to continue with initiatives. This seems to be something that would be useful in the future.

The school has made many changes and is keen to develop more initiatives in the short and long term. The Head of Department has clear ideas about how this will be achieved. 3 areas were identified as being of importance:-

1. The production of materials. This was felt to be crucial in that it takes so much time to put packages of materials together.
2. Within the packages it was felt that support in terms of reference materials for the pupils which drew together the main vocabulary and structures was important and difficult to achieve when material from different sources was used.
3. Development of such strategies has implications for the way in which Modern Languages is regarded and a good argument can be made for smaller classes if it is to be regarded as a practical rather than an academic subject.

## SCHOOL COMMENT

The success of this school-based progress can be attributed to the enthusiasm and practical approach adopted by the Head of Department and the other member of staff. INSET was consistently attended by the Head of Department and information relayed. The 2 teachers worked as a team and made decisions together. The practical implications were seriously considered from the beginning and there was an intention to do something positive. The work produced was well integrated with several multi-skill tasks. The work in the school achieved by the Advisory Teacher for I.T / Mod. Langs meant that the department was already positive about the use of IT and the co-operative way in which he had worked with the department provided an excellent basis for developing new initiatives.

The department have solved the problems of equipment necessary but will need support in the development of materials and the opportunities to develop ideas. The department already has plans for the next stage and deserve to have the support and exchange of ideas necessary to develop in the way in which they have chosen.

## **Appendix 2 (c)**

### **Reference to Project 2**

# **PROJECT EVALUATION**

**Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4.  
Integrated resources project.**

**C.Quantrell  
L.E.A.F Mod Langs  
SEFTON 1989 /90**

# Modern Languages for all in Key Stage 4. Integrated resources project.

## Project Evaluation:- Introduction.

The project has formed the major part of a part-time secondment to look at the development of learning strategies and materials in Modern languages in Key stage 4 ( but with major implications for Key stage 3 ), with particular emphasis on catering for the whole ability range. It has placed an emphasis on the role of I.T and the classroom management of integrated, multi-skill tasks. The project has developed in 5 main parts:-

1. Planning and preparation of resources for INSET.
2. INSET
3. School - based preparation of classroom management and materials.
4. 2 class sessions.
5. Evaluation.

### Section 1.

1. School based study by project co-ordinator in own school involving P.G.C.E. students, the assistante and pupils in evaluation process. this also produced a video of class work and discussion for use in INSET.
2. Preparation by the co-ordinator of a pack of materials, in 3 stages, with teacher notes based on one topic area 'Objets Perdus' and incorporating the main aspects of the project. The materials were designed for practical use in the classroom and formed the basis of practical demonstrations within the INSET sessions.

3. INSET session :- Use of Touch Explorer and the concept keyboard in setting up classroom based simulations.

## Section 2.

3 linked sessions of INSET.

### SESSION 1

1. An overview of past and present initiatives in Modern Languages (including some of the general requirements of the National Curriculum.)
2. An analysis of the issues involved.
3. Implications for:
  - materials / equipment
  - strategies for organising teaching / learning
  - assessment / profiling
  - accreditation
4. Practical responses in each of the above areas. To examine these:-
  - a) the video of the autumn term study
  - b) the package of materials 'Objets Perdus'
5. An outline of the content of the project for the Spring and Summer Terms and the ways in which it could respond to the needs identified.

### SESSION 2

This session concentrated on materials, looking at :-

- a) the kinds of integrated materials needed
- b) the rationale behind the package of materials 'Objets perdus'.

Time was also given to exploring the package of materials and discussing ways in which it could be used.

### SESSION 3

This session concentrated on teaching and learning strategies. The main emphasis was placed on various aspects of organisation. The session was divided into the following sections:-

- a) A brief comparison of the objectives of the project with a number of points raised in the Initial Advice of the National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group.
- b) A simulation to demonstrate one way in which Level 3 of the package of materials could be organised.
- c) Discussion of the practical issues of classroom management and planning involved. (E.g. Ensuring pupils have previous opportunities to develop the necessary linguistic and organisational skills and develop familiarity with materials and equipment (including I.T.).
- d) Discussion of the format and objectives of the individual school projects.

## **School - based preparation of classroom management materials.**

In advance of this session schools were given a planning sheet to be thinking through the issues involved. (A copy is attached.) They were asked to choose one group / class of pupils and to identify an appropriate unit of work E.g. health / travel etc..

In the preparation session the planning sheet was used to :-

- take a brief audit of the materials / learning strategies usually used
- set long and short term aims / objectives
- set learning objectives within the unit
- plan materials / equipment / classroom management etc..

The preparation of materials was then divided between the school and the project co-ordinator. The balance depended upon the objectives set and circumstances of the individual schools.

### **4. 2 class sessions.**

The 2 class sessions were attended by the project co-ordinator whose role varied according to the needs of the individual schools but the idea was to try alternative forms of classroom management and materials with the support of another teacher. At the end of each session materials and strategies were evaluated and proposed changes noted.

### **5. Evaluation**

Apart from the session evaluations, the school based projects were also evaluated in discussion with the teachers by comparing the sessions and final aims with the original aims and objectives. In addition the schools were asked to comment on the format and strengths and weaknesses of the project. In order to record evaluation during the project, making it part of the project and cutting down on the time spent by the teacher in this process, a form was prepared in advance and filled in by the project co-ordinator after each discussion session.





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# Evaluation of structure of project.

## 1. General Comments

*School projects seemed to produce better results when:-*

1. The 3 sessions of INSET were attended by the same teacher.
2. There was either a) a whole departmental approach where information was shared and discussed and joint decisions made. ( In some cases this also included team- teaching so that more teachers took advantage of the sessions.)  
or b) one teacher took responsibility and worked through the whole project from the initial INSET to the final evaluation.
3. The teacher took an equal share with the project co-ordinator in the preparation of materials.
4. Pupils were prepared in advance and time was made to discuss with the pupils ways in which they could improve their organisational skills etc..

Following a consistent course of INSET appears to be crucial in allowing teachers time to reflect on current practice, absorb ideas and begin to think about the practical implications.

It also seems that the school - based preparation stage needs to be flexible to allow departments and teachers to approach the project in different ways. In some cases more time was needed at this stage - 2 or 3 separate sessions could usefully have been employed. This was particularly the case where

- i) not all INSET sessions had been attended by the same person.

- ii) departments wished to involve all staff
- iii) the teacher(s) involved were not used to collecting or constructing materials and needed both more time and more help to do this.

There was a distinct advantage in working with schools who were currently or had been previously involved in work with the Advisory teacher for Mod Langs / IT for 2 reasons:-

1. There was much less resistance and often enthusiasm towards the use of computers in the classroom, and they had experience of working co-operatively with another teacher.
2. They generally saw several reasons for a multi-tasked based classroom.

# Recommendations

Each school has, obviously, set its own priorities and the next stage will differ according to the stage the school began at and the amount of progress made. The emphasis will also vary because of the different needs of schools and teachers, the resources available and the working conditions. Nevertheless there are some common needs which have been identified during the project and which may be of use in future planning.

## 1. DEPARTMENTAL AND INTER-SCHOOL CO-OPERATION

Most teachers talked about the lack of suitable materials for integrated use in the classroom. This is not just a question of resourcing but a mark of the lack of foresight shown by publishers in a time of change within the teaching of Modern Languages. Content free software means that it is much easier, in fact, to integrate the I.T elements than it is, for example, to integrate printed or taped material. Within this project many teachers saw the immediate answer as the creation of banks of materials. The sheer size of work would indicate at least the need for departmental co-operation if not for co-operation across the LEA. One of the positive features of the year's work was the effective way in which teachers can work together on both the creation of materials and changing of teaching strategies. From the project there are a number of teachers who would like to further this co-operation.

**RESPONSE:-** LEA project in planning stage for production of materials by working party. Funding has been applied for.

## 2. SCHOOL PLANNING

The change in teaching / learning strategies used in Modern Languages suggest that changes are needed in the physical conditions in some classrooms:-

- a) Plugs in accessible places.
- b) Full size tables and chairs rather than chairs attached to individual desks.
- c) Space for pupils to move.

A practical approach to the teaching of a language also suggests practical class sizes and a more flexible approach to staffing allowing for team-teaching.

## POSSIBLE RESPONSES

This is obviously an area where individual schools have different priorities but it is at least important for senior management to understand the implications of changes taking place so that within the limitations of the school budget etc., positive action can be taken. Some departments have more difficulties than others and these are not problems that can be solved over-night but rather require long-term planning combined with a determination on the part of the individual school to respond to these difficulties.

Terms of staffing possibilities could include:-

- LEVEL funding being used to pay for assistantes.
- Team teaching or integration of student teachers to work with the teacher rather than in classrooms on their own. Setting up situations where older and younger students are mixed. (E.G. 6th formers and 2nd /3rd years).



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## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of model.

The principles and structure of the project obviously produced some positive results, due in no small measure to the effort of individual teachers. Overall the teachers appreciated the practical nature of the INSET provided, the materials (which worked in the classroom) and the school-based element of the project in the preparation and classroom stages. The distinctive elements of the structure which appear to have contributed to the success of the project are:-

1. The practical nature of the content and form.
2. Keeping an overall aim in view.
3. Having established general aims in INSET, then working from the individual perspective of the teacher / department. This seems particularly important as all teachers as individuals will find themselves at a different point in the implementation of new initiatives and will therefore need to start from where they are. By setting specific objectives at this point it was possible to achieve success in terms of progress towards the general aims and then to identify the next stage. As progress is never linear and limitations in terms of resources etc. varied it was important that teachers were able to set their own priorities.
4. The collaborative element in the planning stage enabled the principles examined during the INSET to be applied more effectively and the benefits of this stage carried over into the class-based work.

The main obstacles to success in the structure of the project were:-

1. The difficulty of fitting in the school based work when school timetables varied and only half the week was available to fit the visits into.
2. Resourcing of the school projects was dependent upon the ingenuity of the teacher and the project co-ordinator.
3. In most cases schools would have benefitted from a second preparation session. Also in most cases teachers were obliged to use their own time for the first preparation session and it may have been useful to build this element into a 4th INSET session. With more time it may also have been useful to adapt the model as follows:-

### INSET

- > teacher reports back to department
- > meeting with department to structure programme and condensed presentation of aims
- > preparation session 1
- > class session (+ evaluation)
- > preparation session 2
- > class session (+ evaluation)
- > final evaluation + set new objectives

### 3. INSET

A number of areas of INSET were generally thought to be needed in the future. IT INSET was high on the list and this fell into 2 main categories. The first concerned continued sessions on the use of specific software, expertise having been developed in other areas of software (this was generally from teachers who were happy about the use of IT in the classroom, having worked with the Advisory teacher for IT / Mod Langs, and wished to extend their knowledge). Other teachers felt after the project that they could see a possibilities in the integrated use of IT and wished to look in more detail about ways of doing this.

A number of teachers wished to continue to look at different teaching / learning strategies in the classroom and wanted practical Inset on this area.

In conclusion the project which had limited objectives and was somewhat constrained in terms of the time allocated was nevertheless successful in achieving some change but, I would suggest, was more successful in establishing a starting point for the changes ahead. The process has included stock-taking and the setting of long-term aims and objectives. It has also identified some of the positive moves towards change being made in individual schools and the general and specific difficulties to be faced. It is, of course very difficult to assess the long-term benefits of the project as these will depend very much on the next steps taken.

## **Appendix 3 (a)**

### **Reference to Project 3**



PGCE Students  
Directional Questionnaire (1)

**INSET:- Progression across and within Key Stages 3 and 4.**

Name:-

Date:-

*Can you please take a few minutes before the INSET to read through the questionnaire and to answer the questions in Section 1. After the INSET could you please hand the questionnaires in , so that a copy can be made.*

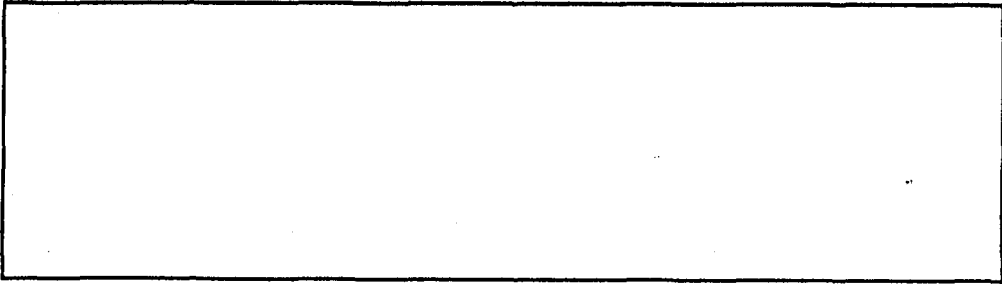
Section 1

1. What do you understand by the term 'progression' ?

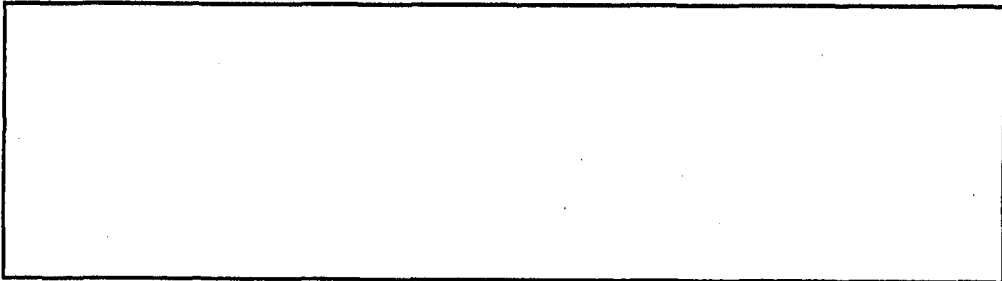
2. How do you think it relates to teaching / learning Modern Languages ?

Section 2

3. What importance does the National Curriculum place on progression in Modern Language learning ?

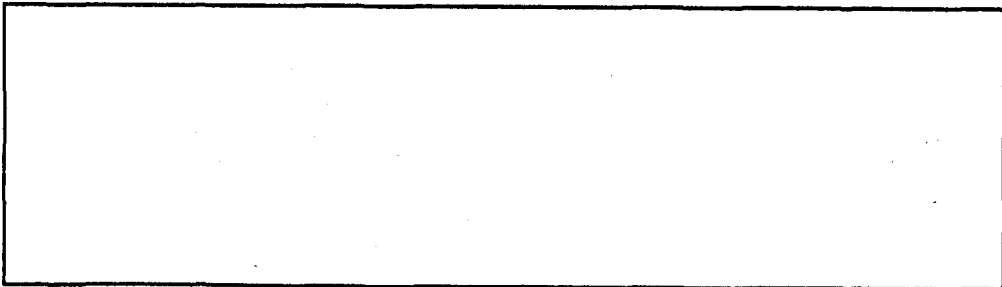


4. Which aspects of progression are highlighted ?

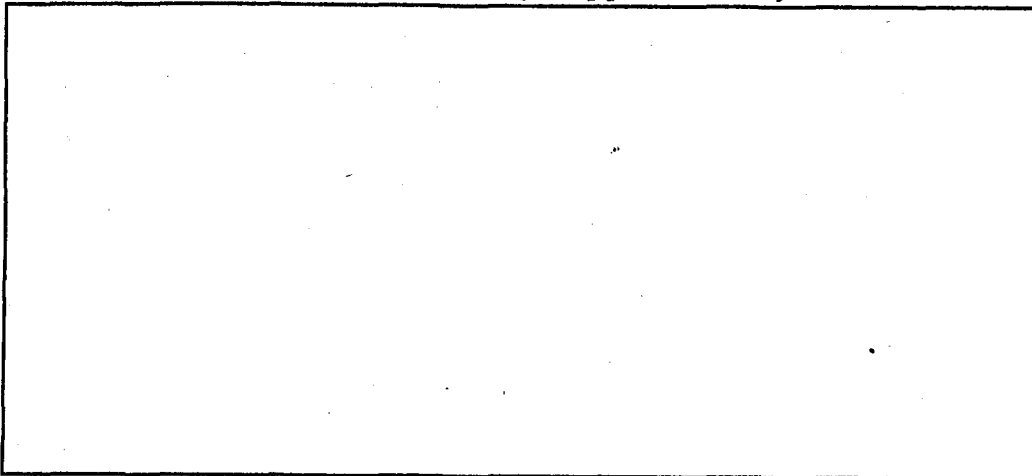


5. Do you personally think it is possible to deliver this idea of progression in the classroom ?

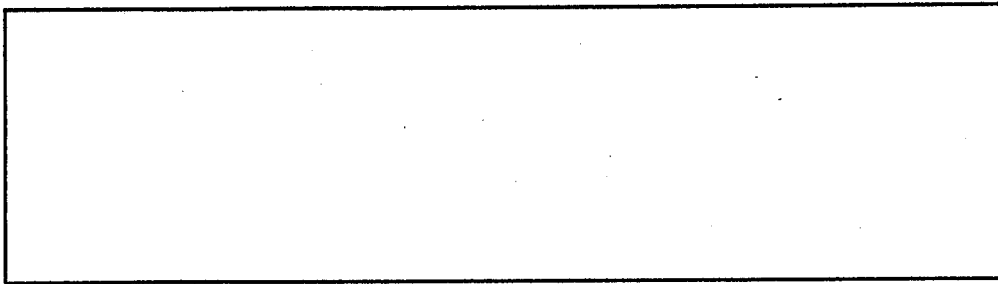
( Think about the school placements you have attended ? )



6. Can you think of any ways you might approach this yourself ?



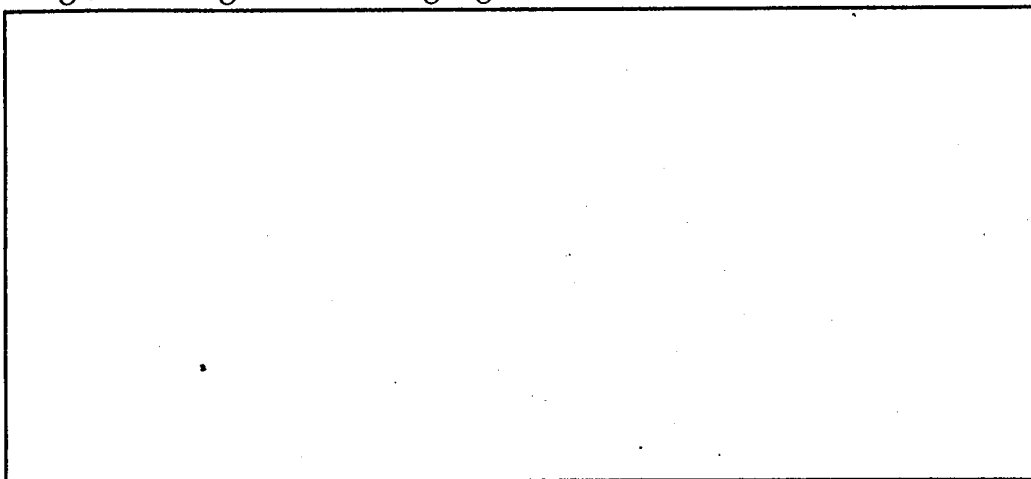
7. What do you see as the main difficulties ?



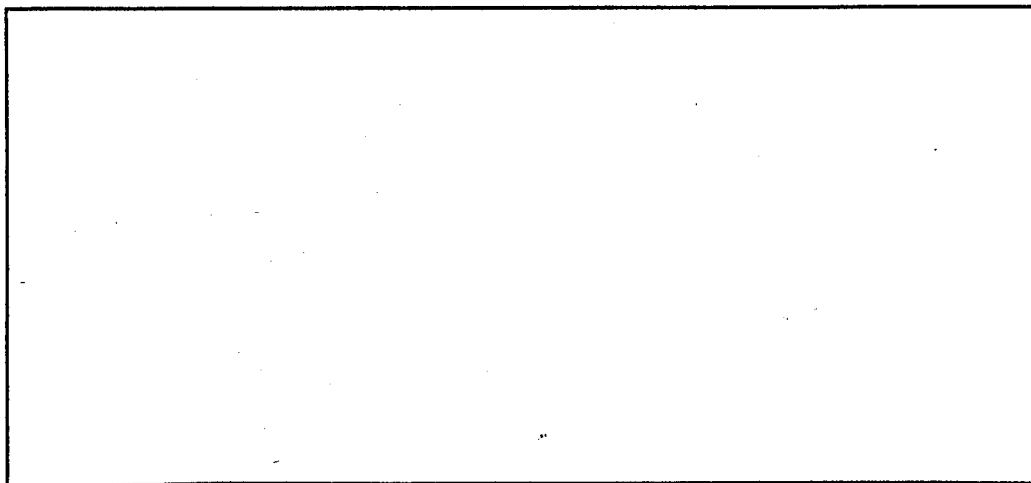
Section 3

In working with the teachers, what did you learn, if anything, about :-

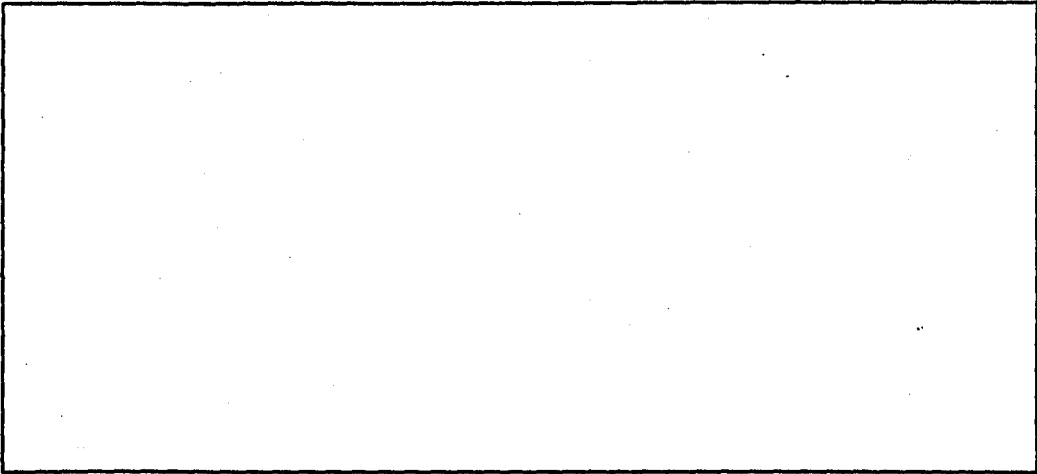
a) teaching / learning Modern Languages



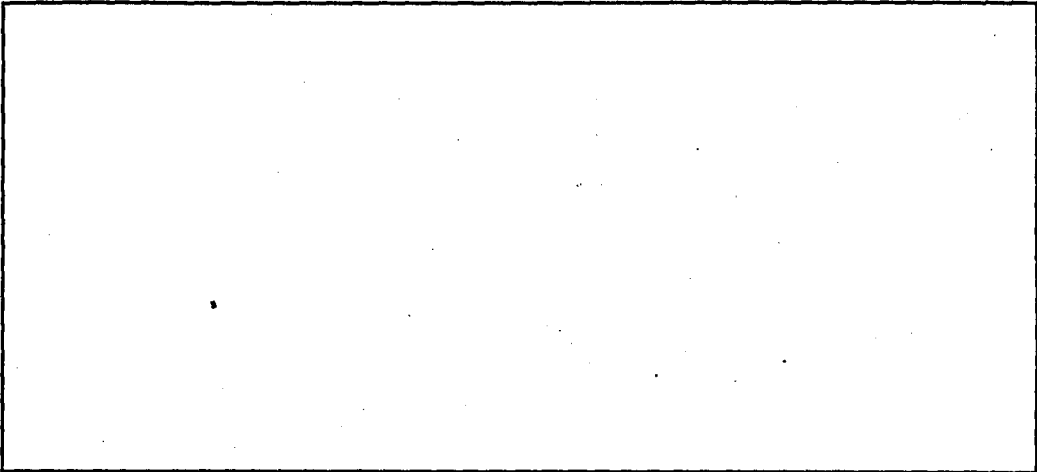
b) materials



c) the National Curriculum



d) progression



PGCE Students  
Directional Questionnaire (4)

**INSET:- Integrating I.T in classroom practice  
and materials.**

Name:-

Date:-

*Can you please take a few minutes before the INSET to read through the questionnaire and to answer the questions in Section 1. After the INSET could you please hand the questionnaires in , so that a copy can be made.*

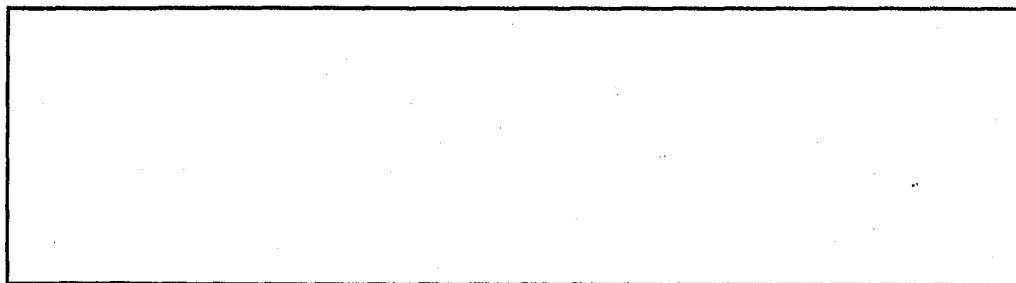
Section 1

1. What do you understand by the term "Information Technology" ?

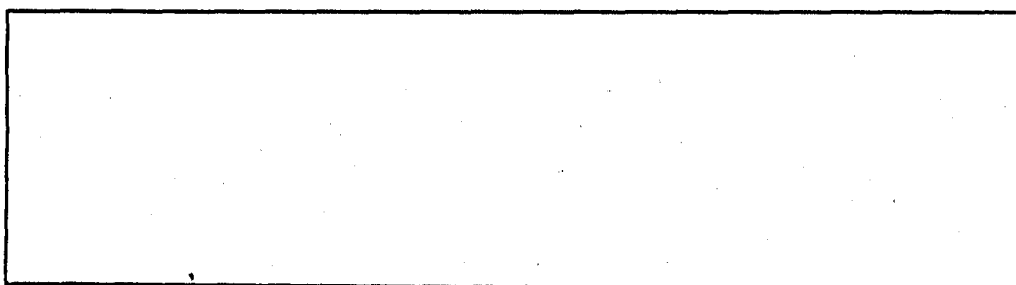
2. How do you think it relates to teaching / learning Modern Languages ?

Section 2

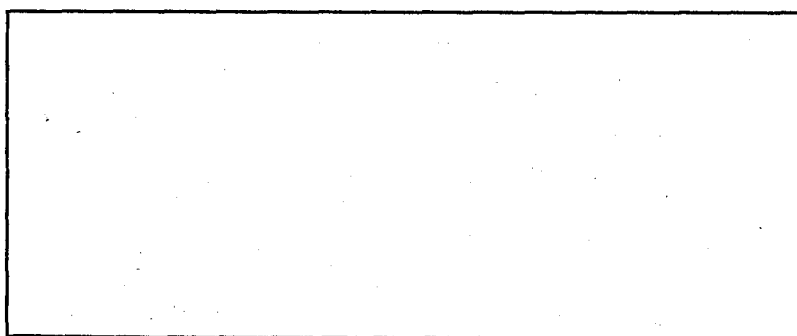
3. What differences, if any, does the National Curriculum make to the way Modern Language teachers approach Information Technology ?



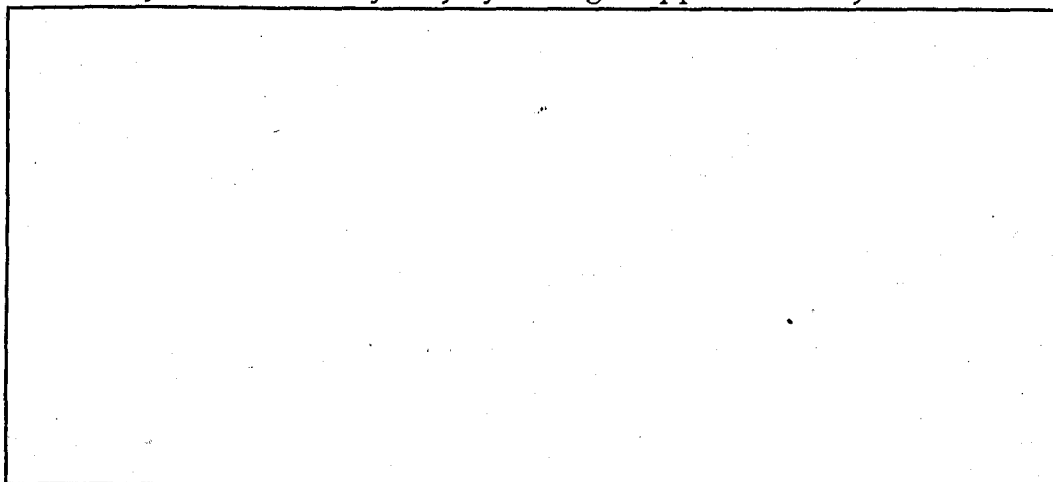
4. What kind of implications does this have for materials / teaching and learning strategies ?



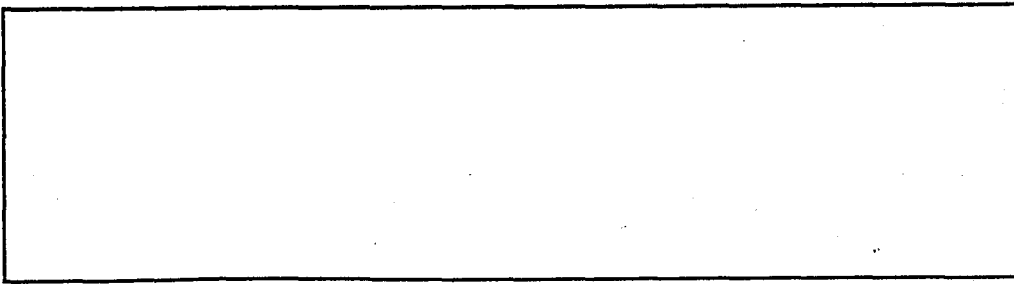
5. Do you personally think it is possible to integrate Information technology into language teaching ? ( Think about the school placements you have attended.)



6. Can you think of any ways you might approach this yourself ?



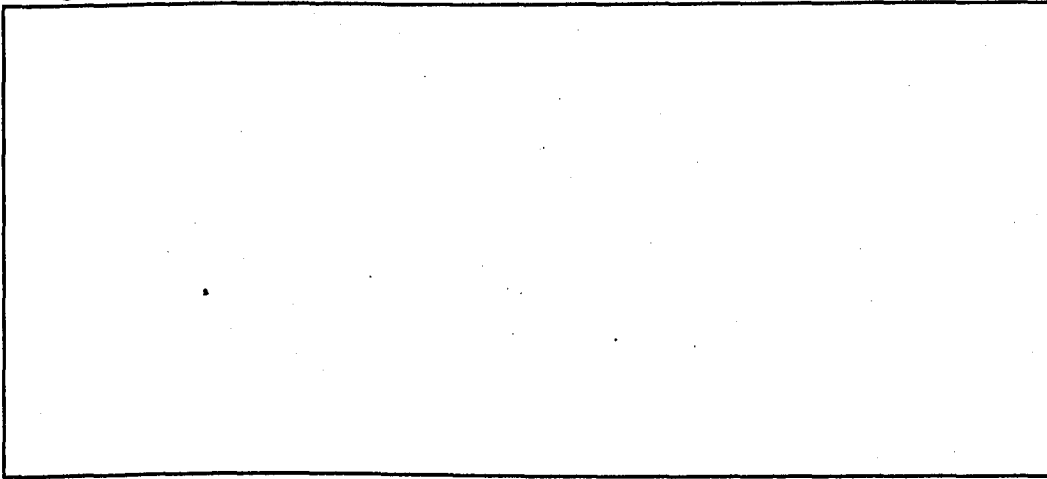
7. What do you see as the main difficulties ?



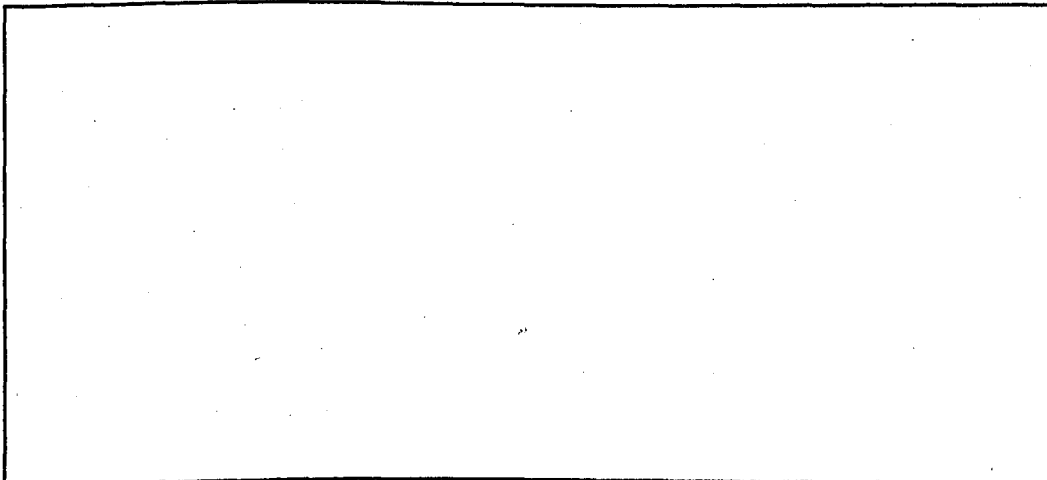
Section 3

In working with the teachers, what did you learn, if anything, about :-

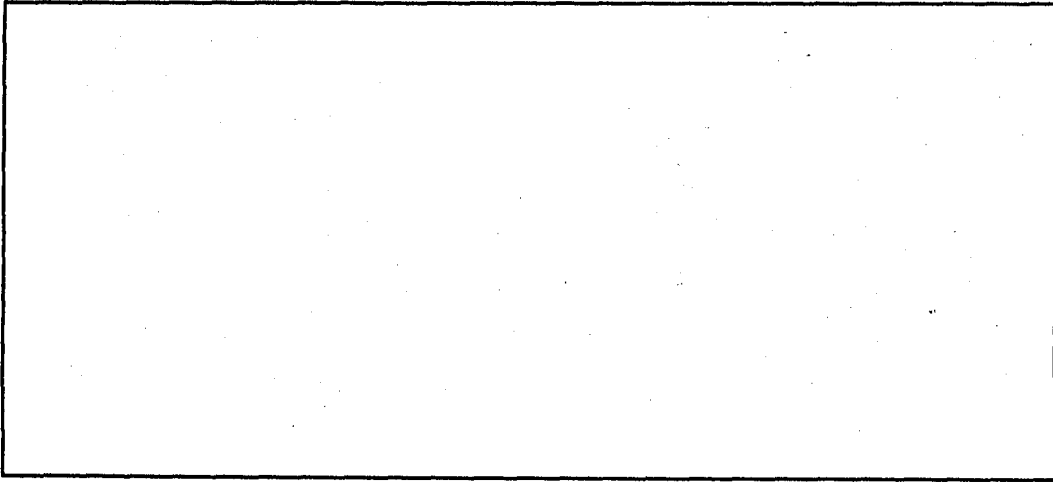
a) teaching / learning Modern Languages



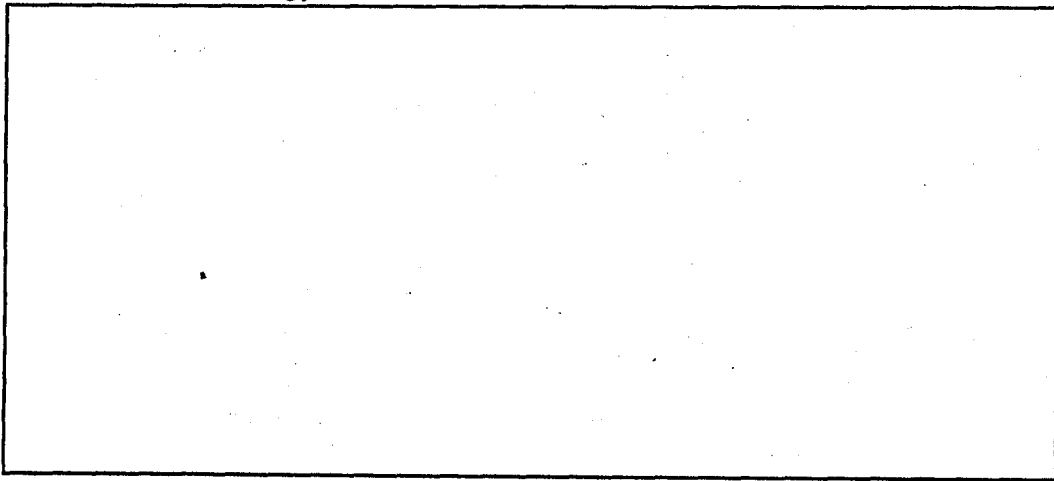
b) materials



c) the National Curriculum



d) information technology





**Appendix 3 (b)**  
**Reference to Project 3**

## PGCE Comment

Name:-

Date:-

Title of INSET Session attended:-

1. Overall did you consider the session a worthwhile use of your time?

2. Please tick any aspects of the session you thought were useful.

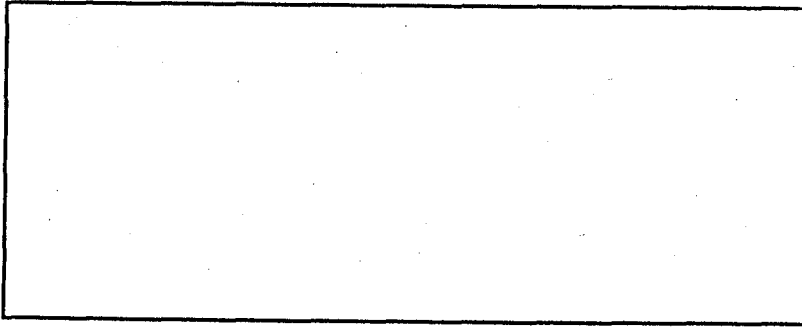
Contact with  
serving teachers

Information about  
the National Curriculum

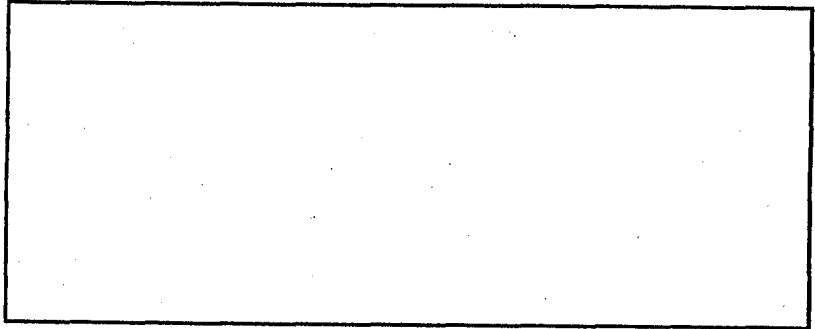
Working to produce  
materials

General information  
about teaching/  
learning Modern  
Languages

3. What did you, personally, find most useful/least useful?



4. What do you feel you learned, if anything?



**Comment**

## **Appendix 3 (c)**

### **Reference to Project 3**

## Teacher Comment Sheet

Name:-

School:-

Contact telephone number:-

Contact address:-

### About the INSET:-

The most useful part was:-

The least useful part was:-

I liked..... / I didn't like.....

### Future INSET:-

I would like more information about:-

I would like a session on :-

Our group needs:-

Any other comments.

**Appendix 3 (d)**  
**Reference to Project 3**

# Teacher Comment Sheet (End of Autumn Term)

Name:-

School:-

*Having finished a term of INSET could you please complete the following sheet giving your impressions of the project so far.*

## About the INSET

1. Overall do you consider the project has been helpful to you in any of the following ways? Please tick.

Understanding of the National Curriculum

General techniques for teaching/learning of Modern Languages

Ideas about materials

Own Professional Development

2. Do you feel you have learned anything about any of the following:-

Planning

Special Educational Needs

Integrated I.T.

Progression

Multi-skill approaches

**3. Overall has it been a worthwhile experience?**

Yes/No

**4. General Comments**

(Most useful/least useful/liked/didn't like etc ...)

**5. Future INSET**

Apart from the needs your group has identified for next term, are there any short sessions you would personally like to form part of next term's INSET? (These could involve particular items of software, general issues raised by the National Curriculum, etc ...)



**Teacher Comment Sheet (End of Spring term)**

**Name:-**

**School:-**

*Having completed the majority of the project could you please fill in the following sheet, giving your impressions of the whole programme from September until now.*

**About the Inset / Project.**

**Which aspects of the project have been most useful to you ?**

**Do you feel any differently about the project now than you did at the beginning ?**

**If you had the opportunity to be involved in a similar project again...**

**a) would you want to get involved ?**

**b) are there any aspects of the project you would like to see repeated ?**

**c) is there any anything you would want to change ?**

Are there any ways in which the project has effected what you do in the classroom ?

Of the materials which your group has produced which are you personally most pleased with ?

**About the National Curriculum.**

Are there any aspects of the National Curriculum you feel that the project has helped you with ?

What would you now most like to concentrate on ?

Are there any ways in which you feel differently about the National Curriculum than you did before the project ?

**About the future.....**

**What do you think needs doing now to complete the project ?**

**What would your priorities be for follow-up INSET / etc.. ?**

## **Appendix 4**

### **Reference to Chapter 9**

## Summary of Research Conclusions

for use in future

### Innovation and curriculum development

I have extracted the conclusions from the three research projects and combined the results to provide a summary of factors at different points of operation which need to be considered if curriculum implementation is to be successful. I suggest that this summary could be used to inform the construction of curriculum projects and initiatives which attempt to address complex curriculum objectives.

The summary, which follows, is collated in sections and is separated under the following headings:-

- 1. Structuring a project to promote curriculum change**
  - Essential elements
  - General factors for consideration
- 2. The importance of responding to different perspectives**
  - Factors which contributed to successful implementation
  - Perspectives of curriculum change in the classroom
  - Students in classrooms
  - Teachers, Student Teachers and Professional Development
- 3. Implementing curriculum change in the classroom**
  - Factors which become the focus of change during lessons
  - Developing teacher skills
  - Developing student skills
  - Resourcing for change and development
- 4. Professional development as part of curriculum change**
  - Why in-service education is essential
  - What kind of professional development ?

## 5. Involving Student Teachers in curriculum change

- Factors which need to be considered
- Implications for Initial Teacher Training

## Summary of Research Conclusions

### 1. Structuring a project to promote curriculum change

Each of the projects suggests the importance of regarding innovation and development as problematic and subjecting it to critical evaluation from all perspectives. This enables a developing model to be created. It is important that this model is regarded as dynamic and not as a finished product to be handed on. It should also be accepted that in the end there will be many distinct school-based models as the model is adapted to different circumstances in a range of schools and a range of social environments. To be successful, any change needs to be built upon the complex and shifting realities of classrooms and schools. That means also taking into account the level of detail and revision necessary for change to take place over time.

When constructing a project to promote curriculum change the research suggests that there are certain key elements which should be considered.

#### 1.1 Essential elements

- Structures appropriate to the curriculum objectives
- Accepting the challenge of constructing professional development as opposed to training sessions.
- Practical and relevant content and form.
- Setting of general project aims.
- School-based models with individual school aims and objectives which reflect general aims.
- Objectives set need to be wider than specific language (or other curriculum ) acquisition.
- Learning objectives set need to disassociate the volume of material covered from the learning strategies acquired.
- A collaborative planning stage.

- Class-based support during initial implementation.
- Collaborative review and problem solving.
  
- Funding
  1. The location of funding
  2. The criteria and targets which constrain funding

These key elements focus on the building of curriculum projects:

1. the way in which they are thought out and structured;
2. the way in which aims and objectives are related;
3. the stages of implementation and
4. the way in which the locus and constraints of funding may impinge on the results.

When planning a curriculum project or initiative the conclusions of this research outline the above essential elements. In addition, the research suggests that there are other general factors which need to be thought out when constructing the practical elements of the project or initiative. These are listed below.

### **1.2 General Factors for consideration**

- The timing of school-based work.
- Resourcing.
- Flexible structures which take account of school realities.
- Support for development from within and outside the school
  
- Complex relationship between control, organisation and the roles of the teacher and students.
- The progression, in terms of precision, from the decision by the individual teacher to implement change to the initial aims chosen and then to the application and revision within the context of specific lessons.

## **2. The importance of responding to different perspectives**

The conclusions of Research Project 2 suggest a number of factors which contributed to the success of individual school models.

### **2.1 Factors which contributed to successful implementation**

- Enthusiasm and commitment of teacher to project
- Flexibility of teacher approach
- Commitment to long-term aims
- Ability to think through implications of new ideas
- Willingness to try new approaches
- Willingness to explore ways around potential obstacles
- Consistent attendance at INSET
- Involvement in material production
- Quality of team work in department
- Good communication systems
- Students prepared in advance
- Discussion with pupils about organisational skills etc.

These factors underline the extent to which people themselves make changes.

### **2.2 Perspectives of curriculum change in the classroom**

The projects suggest that the following perspectives are important in the context of change and development in the classroom.

- A teacher perspective which highlights organisational issues.
- A student perspective which highlights their role and involvement and the variety of ways in which learning can take place.
- The perspective of other adult observer/participants which highlights the importance of setting and valuing different



objectives and the complexity of the relationship between control, classroom management and the roles of the teacher and students.

- A student teacher perspective which may differ at different points in their development.

Curriculum change within classrooms depends upon recognising the differences in perspectives and addressing these within the process of curriculum development.

### **2.3 Students in classrooms**

It is perhaps worth stressing that this research suggests that students:-

- Need to be involved in the learning process
- Benefit from an awareness of the linguistic ( or other curriculum ) purpose of tasks
- Already have and can develop preferred learning techniques
- Profit from developing control and responsibility over their own learning.

### **2.4 Teachers, Student Teachers and Professional Development**

In addition to the more general points made about Professional Development later in this summary, this research also suggests that there are specific points to make in relation to differences in perspectives.

When Professional Development is being constructed as an element of curriculum change then it needs to :

- Take into account the individual experiences and perspectives of teachers.
- Build a common base for teachers with different perspectives to work together.

- Take into account the different stages which student teachers reach within their training and the particular focus which they have.
- Create a form of initial teacher training which is clearly seen as the first stage of professional development. This would help student teachers to develop a progressively wider focus and also enable more complex concepts, theories and questions to be introduced at the appropriate time.

### **3. Implementing curriculum change in the classroom**

The first two sections of this summary refer to the planning and construction of curriculum projects and initiatives. This section refers specifically to implementation in schools and classrooms. Schools are complex organisations and, like classrooms, they are all different. Many different factors will affect the success of any development model. Unless these factors are taken into account real curriculum change will not take place.

Despite the differences between classrooms and schools the research conclusions identify a common list of factors which need to be taken into account when schools and individual teachers begin the process of class- based implementation. These are listed below in four sections and involve,

- those aspects of the classroom which become the focus of change;
- the skills which teachers may need to develop;
- the skills which pupils may need to develop;
- and resourcing for change.

### 3.1 Factors which become the focus of change during lessons

- Changes to tasks, structure of tasks and number of tasks.
- Balancing language (or other curriculum ) skills within and across tasks.
- Balancing equipment and tasks
- Changes to instructions and modes of pupil response.
- Discussion with pupils about organisation and management of their work.
- Discussion with pupils about working as a team.
- Changes to amount of materials to aid distribution.
- Changes to organisation and classroom management
- Balancing teacher demand and complexity of tasks.
- Changes in classroom furniture and layout

### 3.2 Developing teacher skills

- Different teaching / learning strategies
- Managing more varied approaches
- Appropriate approaches and materials for full ability range
- Approaches which address individual student differences
- Confidence in classroom management
- Use and management of equipment
- Integration of Information Technology
- Overcoming problems of classroom space and furniture
- Integrated use of in-class support (e.g. foreign language assistant / special needs support )
- How to develop appropriate skills in students
- Long-term planning and preparation
- Communication and team work in department

### 3.3 Developing student skills

- More independence in organisation and management of work
- Social skills, e.g. co-operation and team work
- Confident independent use of appropriate equipment and resources
- Opportunities to develop different linguistic skills and strategies within different contexts

- Opportunities to discuss objectives, ways of working and progress made

### **3.4 Resourcing for change and development**

- Appropriate hardware and software
- Flexible technical support
- Develop resource bank (e.g. audio cassettes, computer disks )
- Appropriate space and classroom furniture
- Adequate arrangements for photocopying and printing
- Development of supportive student reference materials
- Time to develop new / different materials appropriate to techniques being developed (within and outside school )
- Time to work collaboratively to develop innovative materials / approaches
- Appropriate class sizes
- Availability of team-teaching and in-class support

The level of detail given in this section may seem petty, but it is precisely at this level of detail that the mechanics of schools and classrooms work. Any attempt to change what happens in classrooms needs to address this reality.

## **4. Professional development as part of curriculum change.**

It is generally agreed that implementing major curriculum objectives is impossible without in-service education. The project conclusions suggest that translating complex curriculum objectives into practice is impossible without the right kind of in-service education and that, this needs to be built upon sound professional development for individual teachers.

#### 4.1 Why in-service education is essential

In order to implement change this research indicates that it is essential to give teachers time:-

- to think, to challenge their own preconceptions
- to view applications and materials
- to collaborate with other teachers and exchange ideas
- to translate theory and principles into practice
- to develop ideas
- to learn how to....
- to develop and improve practical skills
- to learn in their own way and at their own pace.

#### 4.2 What kind of professional development ?

Having indicated the value of in-service education, the research conclusions go on to indicate the character of in-service education needed to support curriculum change. Specifically it is suggested that in-service education needs to be:-

- well-structured and clear
- well-organised and relevant
- based on sound learning theory and applying good teaching practice
- formed in the context of long-term objectives
- creating purpose, progress and achievement.

It seems unlikely that we can achieve quality in schools if in-service education is not based on sound learning theory and the application of good teaching practice.

## **5. Involving Student Teachers in curriculum change**

The research conclusions suggest that if student teachers are to be involved in development work outside of the classroom a lot of attention needs to be paid to the role of student teachers and the timing of such work. Most importantly any such work needs to be built carefully to ensure that their limited experience and particular perceptions are taken into account if they are to derive any real benefit from their involvement and be enabled to contribute.

### **5.1 Factors which need to be considered**

The research conclusions suggest the following factors which need to be considered:-

- Careful timetabling
- The role of the student teachers would need to be clear.
- Emphasis would need to be placed on the value of observing and learning as well as contributing.
- Opportunities to contribute would need to be constructed to take account of student teachers ability to contribute.
- The very different perceptions of student teachers would need to be taken into account.
- The link would be most productive in the context of a continuing programme of professional development.

### **5.2 Implications for Initial Teacher Training**

Apart from the specific factors listed above, involving student teachers in the research work raised a number of questions about the

preparation of intending teachers and the ways in which Initial Teacher Education is likely to impact on the curriculum development of the future. The first concern is that of time and how much it is sensible to expect student teachers to learn in their preparation stage. Properly planned and funded Professional Development would, at least in part, address this problem and highlight the need for continuing development rather than a one off training programme.

The second concern is how and where intending teachers are given the time and support to recognise, understand and develop the concepts and theories underpinning their own practice. In 1998, this concern is magnified by four other points :

- the highly prescriptive nature of the current PGCE courses and the large amount of time student teachers spend teaching as opposed to observing, preparing, thinking, discussing and evaluating.
- the emphasis on competence- based initial training
- the uncritical presentation of particular methodologies as the only way to teach.
- the consideration of competence-based INSET as the professional development of the future.

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