

# FROM KNOWLEDGE ACCUMULATION TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

A PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT STUDY IN INITIAL TEACHER  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AT THE  
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BY

VĚRA BUREŠOVÁ

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## INTRODUCTION

One summer holiday afternoon in 1990, the mother of one of my former language school students came to see me. We were having coffee and chatting about all the wild changes occurring around us, when she, all of a sudden, told me she thought I should apply for a post as a teacher trainer at the newly established Faculty of Education. I was utterly and completely surprised. First, I had no idea of the foundation of such an institution in Liberec, second I would not have ever dreamed of entering the academic world. Therefore, my first reaction was: 'No way, I cannot do it, I am only a classroom teacher.' She gave me a week to think it over.

I had had more than fifteen years of teaching at one school behind me, and a great challenge ahead of me. The challenge appeared to be so tempting that, in a week, I said yes. Considering all the pros and cons, I realised the long time in front of the blackboard taught me that the teacher education I had gone through at Charles University had not given me too much for classroom practice. Consequently, I had had to learn the hard way, by trial and error, for a long time to become a teacher. So at the moment of the big decision I knew one thing for sure, I knew I must not do to my students what teacher training did to me. Otherwise, I did not have the faintest idea of *how* to educate teachers differently, except the feeling that everything should be focused on what the teacher was expected to do in class.

The five year process of looking for the answer to 'how' is the story behind this project.

To clarify the connections between the two periods of my professional life, i.e., language school teaching and teacher training, I divided the paper into two major parts. In the first one educational, personal and institutional contexts will be presented, in the second one the research project itself.

The sequence of chapters has been designed to allow the reader, who may not be familiar with the conditions for learning and teaching within a centrally controlled educational system, to get some insight into its effects and thus understand better the nature of the problems -- issues revealed by the research and the changes suggested to deal with them.

Chapter I is designed to illustrate the educational context of the project. Its goal is to clarify the background of foreign language learning, teaching and language teacher education, from pre and post 1989 perspectives. It also intends to illustrate the effects of the Velvet Revolution political changes in foreign language education at all levels, including explication of the circumstances and conditions under which the new faculty of Education in Liberec was established.

Chapter II discusses the personal experience within the system. It is meant to illustrate and specify the effects of the system, outlined in the previous chapter, by reflecting on personal learning and teaching experience. It also illustrates the professional development from the knowledge accumulation learning and teaching experience to 'intuitive' reflective classroom practice. The purpose is the clarification of professional attitudes that strongly influenced the author's decision to get involved in an action research project, instead of traditional, recognised, theoretical further education of teachers in the Czech Republic.

Chapter III demonstrates the developmental process of the subject of the research -- the 4-year initial teacher education programme at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Liberec. The public, institutional and departmental needs for the new programme are articulated. The development of the programme is presented as it progressed from the list of subjects and vague content hints, to the first version formulating reasoning, aims, content and assessment. This was actually a compilation of foreign expertise combined with Czech classroom experience. The characteristics of the programme create the basis for the articulation of the research project goals.

Chapter IV focuses on the methodology of the research project and defines the goal of the action research in the environment of a strong centrally controlled tradition. It also outlines the research process, and identifies, justifies and specifies the research methods used, and introduces participants of the research. Further on, the ethical principles and issues as they emerged in the process of data collection are discussed, followed by the data analysis procedure and the discussion of the methods for planning the change. Suggestions for change monitoring methods are presented, and the chapter concludes with the writing-up phase discussion.

Chapter V presents the programme seen, perceived and experienced by the students and teachers from a variety of perspectives, i.e., classroom learning and teaching experience, observation of student teaching performance, and team-teaching and tutoring of the newly designed course focused on the implementation of final papers. It provides two kinds of examples of *demonstrations of the issues emerging in the research process*. First, those which were expected and for which the research hoped to provide suggestions for solutions, and second, those which were revealed by the research. In the last part of the chapter considerations of the issues and possible implications for changes are discussed.

Chapter VI consists of the discussion of action planning, i.e., reporting issues and discussing change with colleagues, action taking and expected improvements. The formulation of the course description update is presented here as the first step towards implementing change. The monitoring and programme development procedures are included, too. The chapter also identifies further issues requiring change emerging in the research process.

The paper concludes by the highlighting of major themes as they were identified by the research and as they demonstrate themselves in classes after the implementation of suggested changes. Also the discussion of the personal perspective of the research is presented to illustrate the impact of the process on understanding teaching and learning, on the development of understanding the action research potential in the centrally controlled educational tradition, and learning about myself in the process of the research.



## Chapter I. EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Language teaching and learning have had a long history in the system of Czech education, as well as the education of foreign language teachers. The tradition formed in the pre and post-war periods and created, at all levels of the system, a range of beliefs, assumptions and routines. This package was confronted with new demands and needs after 1989, when the whole society went through a fast dramatic political change. What was totalitarian for more than forty years aspired to become democratic literally overnight. The enormous social turmoil initiated a number of changes in all spheres of life, including education.

What the major characteristics of the system of education in Czechoslovakia were and what changes affected it will be the subject of discussion in this chapter.

The goal is to clarify the background of the project and indicate the origin of some of the issues to be dealt with in the investigation focused on the design of the programme for educating teachers who will face the educational heritage in schools and who are expected to help introduce change.

### A. LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The long tradition of learning foreign languages had developed for various reasons: the geographical location of the country, the political and cultural history of the small nation in the heart of Europe, the political and economic necessity to communicate with all neighbours in surrounding countries. A variety of needs for languages in the society was always reflected in the national curriculum for Czechoslovak schools.

#### 1. Historical Background

A foreign language, mostly German, was a part of the national curriculum till 1948, when communists took over the power in the country. As a part of their political orientation they introduced compulsory Russian to all levels of schooling.

It was taught in all Czechoslovak basic schools [age groups from 6 to 15] as the only foreign language in the national curriculum from the end of the forties to the end of the eighties. In larger cities, however, basic schools with extended foreign



language education existed, besides schools focusing on maths or sports. Talented children from all schools in the city could apply at the age of nine, take tests and if they were accepted, they could start attending a special class there. They started with one foreign language in form three, in form five they took Russian and another foreign language.

In secondary schools [age groups from 14/15 to 18/19], two foreign languages were a part of the curriculum, Russian and German / English / French / Spanish. Entering the school, the students could choose from western languages offered by a particular school, mostly German, English and French.

University students in all areas of study had to take an exam in Russian and another, non-Slavic, foreign language before graduation.

Outside the regular educational system also state language schools also existed in larger cities offering language courses both to adults and children. For example, the language school where I taught for fifteen years offered courses in seven languages for adults and in English and German for children from 10 to 15.

## **2. Methods and Focus of Teaching Languages**

At all levels of the educational system, the methods and focus of teaching foreign languages were similar, emphasising accumulation of selected information, and its production by students for exam purposes. The source of information was mostly one, the textbook prescribed by curriculum. For instance, in English it was one textbook, written by Czech authors with texts created to support the official communist ideology, focused on grammar and vocabulary study and mostly neglecting the development of communicative skills. The outcomes required from the students were the knowledge of the contents of the book, i.e., the grammatical rules, their application in translation of the sentences focused on particular structures, memorisation of long lists of words and their use for translation of the above mentioned articles, memorisation of the textbook dialogues and historical, life and institutions or literature facts for final exam purposes. Authentic materials like newspapers or magazines, or supplementary materials were not available.

The overall focus of education on knowledge accumulation was reflected in the routine of teaching languages and was mirrored in language teacher education.

## B. TEACHER EDUCATION

### 1. Two Levels of Teacher Education

The initial teacher education in communist Czechoslovakia was offered at two levels. At one level, Faculties of Arts, Mathematics and Physics or Natural Sciences, teachers for secondary schools [non-compulsory education for the age group of 14/15 - 18/19 year olds] were educated. At the other level, Faculties of Education, teachers for basic schools [compulsory basic education for the whole population of 6 - 14/15 year olds] were prepared.

The historical development in Czechoslovakia affecting language teaching and learning in schools was reflected in initial teacher education. The imposed need for language teachers for basic schools was that of Russian teachers. Faculties of Education, either did not offer courses focused on foreign languages, or did it on an extremely limited basis. The number of secondary school teachers of other than Russian languages was dictated by the Ministry of Education and more or less reflected the needs of secondary education. This was not compulsory and thus did not embrace the whole population of children. Thus the communist educational policy created in 1989 an absolute lack of foreign, other than Russian, language teachers qualified to teach in basic schools.

### 2. Focus on Subject Study

Although basic and secondary school teachers were traditionally educated separately, i.e., at different types of schools, the applied science model of teacher education was common for them. It was the accumulation of the knowledge of the subject [English, Maths, Czech etc.] plus some teaching elements. The difference between basic and secondary teacher education, was in the depth of subject study and also in the balance of the subject and teaching components. Secondary school teachers were supposed to be primarily subject specialists, and, therefore, they studied at faculties specialising in respective areas, i.e., Faculty of Arts for humanities, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics for mathematics and physics, etc. For instance, at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, where I studied, the programme was linguistics and literature oriented. The actual teacher education was marginal as it was believed that a good subject specialist would automatically become a teacher in the process of

their teaching experience after graduation. [see Ch.II. B]. The teaching related subjects had a very limited time allocation in the programmes and were highly theoretical, as Pospíšil, Masaryk University, Brno argued in his analysis of pre 1989 teacher education:

*The result is a highly theoretical form of course which has nothing in common with the language classroom practice... Departments of foreign languages themselves support the disaster by their hypocritical attitude. In spite of the fact that most of their graduates become teachers, they pretend that teacher education is not their problem. Methodology of a foreign language is often a marginal subject, sometimes ignored completely. But as "it must be done" it is often taught only by one, often the youngest, member of the department, mostly without any teaching experience. [Pospíšil, 1992]*

The basic school teachers were educated similarly. The courses were taught as separate theoretical disciplines with no or very little connections to each other or to classroom practice, their contents were prescribed and the methods reflected the common focus on knowledge accumulation. [see Appendix p.3]

The common characteristics of teacher education programmes, the fact that professional competencies of a teacher were articulated by academics, i.e., subject specialists, and depended entirely upon factual and theoretical knowledge of the subject resulted inevitably in professional inefficiency of the graduates in classrooms. As Pospíšil argues:

*The unification of the programmes of education and arts faculties leads to abstract education of a "universal teacher"... Theoretical knowledge about pedagogy completely suppresses the development of the very basic teaching skills. Inefficiency of such education becomes obvious very soon, but the solution is sought in adding further amount of theory. [Pospíšil, 1992]*

The educational heritage in schools and most institutions of teacher education in the country became, after 1989, a great challenge and also a burden for those who believe that the purpose of learning a language in schools is communicative efficiency, and teacher education is not only a by-product of a subject study.



### C. CALL FOR CHANGE AND PRESCRIPTIVE CURRICULUM ELIMINATION

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia triggered the process of changes, sometimes wild, affecting all spheres of the society and progressing more quickly in the economy and more slowly and painfully in social structures, including education. The changes needed in education have been articulated through mass media predominantly by politicians, including Ministers of Education, some educationalists and less often by teachers, who mostly speak about the unsatisfactory financial position of teachers. The changing atmosphere opened a debate about the focus of innovations. Two themes seemed to stir the public interest most and they were the focus of teaching in our schools and differentiation of schooling.

The issue of understanding what the teaching/learning process is and what it should produce was often discussed as a clash between the accumulation of knowledge tradition and common sense. For instance, Hausenblas posed the question:

*Many representatives of our education have often claimed that the Czech educational tradition has been outstanding and that the knowledge of Czech children compared to that of children in the West has been enormous. But we can often notice that children are scared of school. They do not learn about the basics of things and to make connections between what they learn and their lives, they do not develop their ability to concentrate on work, their study skills, or ability to solve problems in important situations. But they are believed to have enormous knowledge. But what for? Where does it demonstrate? [Hausenblas, 1994]*

Another demand has been for the diversity in and among schools. It has been believed that various educational programmes should replace the uniform prescriptive national curriculum. This was believed to be the biggest barrier to the free development of education. As a symbol of the totalitarian system it was withdrawn after the revolution in 1990 and replaced by a very broad curriculum, suggesting guidelines for teaching a particular subject, both for state secondary and basic schools. For example, the material of the Ministry of Education accompanying the introduction of foreign languages to basic schools in 1990 and called Basic School curriculum for Foreign Languages - English, French,



German, Russian, Spanish comprises five areas with very general characteristics:

- Aims of the subject
- Time allocation and basic characteristics of the content.
- Final requirements for school graduates.
- Specific issues of teaching individual foreign languages.
- Methodology of teaching suggestions.

[1/par.40 zák.c.522/90sb.] [paragraph 40 of the Education Act from 1990]

Unlike in the past, the teachers can choose teaching materials and ways of instruction, they can adapt the teaching plans according to their pupils' abilities and needs, they can use various kinds of assessment for children with different abilities. The space for curriculum innovation and the introduction of a variety of approaches is enormous.

Also universities have been given an autonomy in academic matters, by the new law on higher education. [Higher Education Act, no. 172, 1990] Their programmes are a subject to regular evaluation by the Accreditation committee of the Ministry of Education that guarantees the quality of programmes. The members are appointed by the minister and are usually academics in the area of study being evaluated.

The space given for curriculum, instruction and assessment change, however, does not necessarily mean that desirable changes occur, as the examples from schools show. The power of long established routine can be recognised.

#### **D. CHANGES MADE SINCE 1989 AND THEIR IMPACT ON SCHOOLS**

All three spheres of the educational system have been affected by the change of the Education Act of 1990 providing schools with various levels of autonomy in curriculum design, material choice and encouraging the use of a variety of teaching approaches. The effects of changes varied considerably in basic schools, secondary schools and universities.

## 1. Basic Schools

The area most dramatically affected by the national curriculum changes, as far as teaching foreign languages is concerned, appeared to be basic education.

One of the wild innovations in education in 1990 was the revolutionary decision of the first non-communist minister of education to abolish Russian as a compulsory subject and offer pupils a range of foreign languages to choose from. This happened literally overnight and the schools had to face the consequences. Many classroom teachers and especially head teachers reported on enormous difficulties this decision raised.

To investigate the situation in English language teaching and learning in basic schools, the teachers of the newly established Department of English, Faculty of Education, Liberec, [see Ch.I., E], set up a minor project and conducted interviews with 9 classroom teachers and two head teachers early in 1992. Ludmila, one of the basic school head teachers, commented on the change saying:

*...it had been a serious mistake made by the Ministry of Education to introduce foreign languages without a sufficient number of teaching staff available...  
...languages thus began to be taught by teachers who either had not mastered the language, or did not know how to teach it.*

Her comment indicates the crucial question that was to be answered. Who should teach foreign languages to the whole population of 10 - 15 year olds in the country?

As most parents, rather than children, decided that the language the kids would learn would be English or German, the need for thousands of language teachers emerged. The schools had to act immediately, there was no time to prepare. To the question of who would do the job, the questions of teaching materials and curriculum were added.

The previous system had not prepared language teachers and at the moment of need there were practically none. For example, in the town of Liberec there were 27 basic schools in 1990. According to the information from the local educational authorities, at that time there were five basic school teachers who were qualified

to teach English. Three of them teaching at a language-specialised basic school, the remaining two not having taught English since their graduation some 15 years earlier. There were very few textbooks available as languages at this level had only been taught in a very limited number of specialised schools. The curriculum provided by the Ministry offered only broad guidelines which did not appear to be very helpful for the teachers who began teaching languages with very little and mostly no experience of teaching English or German in basic school classes.

The solution to the difficulties appeared first in the area of teaching materials. The licence for Hutchinson's Project English was sold to Czech publishers and within some six months all the schools in this country could purchase them at local prices. Most of them did.

The lack of language teaching staff, could not be solved quickly. The great chase for language teachers began and a number of people who had never done it before started teaching languages. Former teachers of Russian or teachers of any other subject were the most numerous group of new language teachers. They had a teaching qualification and all of them had studied English or German at secondary schools for 3 or 4 years and were therefore expected to have mastered some of the target language. Also people of non-teaching professions got involved. For instance, at a local basic school where I taught in 1991/92 a textile engineer and a secondary school graduate taught German and were the only teachers of German at a school for 700 children.

A curriculum for foreign languages had not existed before the Revolution and the new one distributed to all schools suggested only broad guidelines. As the interviews with teachers and head teachers revealed, the language curriculum was actually specified in most schools in terms of the number of lessons or units to be covered in a school year. The freedom provided did not seem to bring the expected diversification of schooling in terms of designing programmes meeting the children needs. The attitude towards curriculum dictating contents and methods did not change and as the curriculum did not exist any more in its prescriptive form, it was replaced by the textbook dictating contents and methods. The situation brings up Elliott's argument that 'no changes can occur in education unless the teachers are changed'. [Elliott, 1991]



The learning effects and ability to use the information gained in schools outside the classroom were considered very rarely, as a recent survey showed. It was initiated by the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Education in 1994. The results were an enormous surprise for the public, but above all for teachers. Over three thousand pupils of the last form of 77 schools took a test consisting of sixteen questions, from all subjects of the national curriculum, designed by the Czech School Inspection office. The aim was to provide the public with information about the level and depth of basic knowledge and skills children had when leaving basic education. The percentage of successful answers shocked everybody as the figures were mostly below 50%.

The other, even more serious issue, was the fact that all the teachers approached for consultation about the test tasks in advance, considered them easy or of average difficulty. The teachers' estimate of their pupils success compared with results was alarming. For example, math -- 53% : 13%, spelling -- 45% : 21%, etc. [Kvačková, 1994] It demonstrated that the teachers did not know how their pupils learned, did not know how effective their work was. It seems that the experienced routine of depositing the knowledge into children's heads, and requiring its withdrawal at the time of test, working for tens of years in schools and supported by teacher education has not changed when the conditions changed.

## 2. Secondary Schools

As there was a tradition of language learning and teaching at secondary schools, qualified teachers had always taught there, textbooks were available and the curriculum had existed for years, the changes did not appear to be as dramatic as in basic schools. The diversity in education has flourished in secondary schools since 1989, and a wide variety of schools, predominantly private, emerged. However, the old routine of focusing on learning grammar rules and memorising facts also seemed to continue, as our students, graduates of secondary schools reported. Approach changes appeared to progress slowly and very often depended on a particular teacher rather than the general school policy.

On the other hand, many students admitted that their teachers had used new textbooks, i.e., *The Cambridge English Course* or *The Headway*, but worked with them in old ways.



Unlike in basic and secondary spheres, in tertiary education the common curriculum was withdrawn completely.

### 3. Universities

The most dramatic change in the university sphere was the regained autonomy. Besides administrative and economic freedom, also the area of programme design offered an enormous space for the development. Botho comments on this change saying 'the system of syllabi prescribed by the ministry and mandatory year to year advancement has been eliminated.' [Botho, 1991:104] The swing of the pendulum from total control to almost total freedom seems to raise a question of what the effects of such a change might be.

*Not so easy to predict, however, is where people who have been guided and controlled in most aspects of their work seek freedom and where not.* [Botho, ibid.]

The answer is that the situation does not appear to be very much different from the lower spheres of education. The changes seem to be rather individual people's enthusiasm than a common trend.

*Five years of reform attempts have not brought expected results in higher education... Before any change can occur, a commonly shared vision must exist...Change is not possible, if there is no need within the profession itself...The present state of higher education indicates that conservative powers at universities will not go against themselves supporting innovation or reform.* [Pospíšil et al., 1995].

While contents and methods mostly remain, the structure of higher education has changed dramatically. Many new faculties and even universities were established in a couple of first years after the revolution.

### E. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

The dramatic increase of the need for language teachers, especially for basic schools, since 1990 led to the growth of existing language departments within teacher education institutions, for instance, the faculties of education in Prague, Hradec Králové, Brno, etc., or supported greatly the demand of some densely

populated areas for the establishment of their own schools educating future teachers, for instance Liberec, České Budějovice, Plzeň.

Nine months after the Velvet Revolution, in August 1990, the Faculty of Education was established in Liberec, as the third faculty of the technical School of Machinery and Textiles.

The fact that it was a part of the technical school influenced its formation from the very beginning. The departments of Physics, Maths, Computer Science and Physical Education were transferred, and to their former function of servicing machinery and textiles students, initial teacher education was added. Social sciences and language teacher training, brand new elements, began developing within the newly established Department of Languages and Social Sciences, covering English, German, psychology, pedagogy and history. In 1992, this huge department was divided into several independent departments, the English Department being one of them.

The focus on the accumulation of knowledge, dependence on the curriculum and textbook guidance, teacher-centred schooling and emphasis on theory has been the teaching and learning experience of all the actors on the educational stage in the present Czech Republic. Although the urgent need for 'autonomy of students and teachers in thinking, creativity and attitudes to values', [Hausenblas, 1994], has been articulated many times, and space has been provided in the new Education Act, 1990, the old routines seem to continue at all levels. The situation offering a considerable space for innovation within a strong heritage of centrally controlled education has created the educational environment for this project.

Every innovation rests in the hands of people doing the job, in this case, the classroom teachers. Their beliefs, attitudes, and professional qualities are crucial for any change and therefore the understanding of how they were formed by the educational environment discussed is important. An example of how the awareness of teaching and learning issues could develop under the communist regime and how the standpoints of the author of this paper were shaped in the classroom is a subject of discussion of chapter two.

## Chapter II . LEARNING TEACHING - EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Learning and teaching experiences shaped my attitudes towards teacher education over the years and, in the end, led to the design and implementation of this project. The process of schooling and its effects on the development of subject and professional knowledge, experience and learner feelings will be confronted with the following classroom teaching practice. Learning by experience will be discussed and the procedure of the development of practical professional skills and values demonstrated. Ball and Goodson argue that

*The concept of career must take into account both the objective and subjective aspects of incumbent's experience. By definition individual careers are socially constructed and individually experienced over time.* [Ball and Goodson, 1992:11]

'Objective aspects' were outlined in Chapter I. 'Subjective aspects' will be discussed in this section to clarify my perception of teaching and later on teacher education. As this is a subjective reflection of a certain period of Czech education most of the claims are based on my experience or the experience of my language school colleagues.

### A. STUDENT TEACHER EXPERIENCE

In the years 1968 - 1973 I was a student of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague and studied English and Czech languages in the 5-year full-time course for secondary school teachers. [see Ch.I. B] The course had several characteristics which will be discussed in relation to the needs of the English language teaching profession which it was supposed to lay the basis for. The goal of the discussion is to support my argument that traditional initial teacher training programmes did not provide the very basic tools and knowledge needed for the further development of an efficient teaching profession.

The course was based on unrealistic assumptions about the student level of English and did not meet the need for their general English development, in both areas, language knowledge and skills development. For example, the lectures on English grammar were focused on the development of the deep detailed knowledge. However, most of us struggled with basic grammar. Instead of a



working system, separate areas were created in students' minds without any connections among them at all.

It emphasised theoretical knowledge about English rather than proficiency. As a result, a very poor understanding of the connections between the theory of the system of English and its use in practice was developed. As it stressed accuracy in the language production of students, it supported the development of correctness and a focused attitude towards learning, and consequently teaching. I will never forget the conversation lesson at the university for which I had been supposed to prepare a speech on transport. I had worked hard on it, read books and articles on the history of transport and famous competitions and interviewed a man who was a car specialist and fan. Then I used the material, wrote the essay and read it in the lesson. As soon as I had finished, the teacher furiously listed all my pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar errors, called me a bad and irresponsible student, accused me of translating someone else's material from Czech and the lesson went on without ever mentioning the contents of my paper again. I felt terribly guilty and ashamed. I never found courage again to read and correct the paper, I simply threw it away. Not only my motivation to work was swept away, but even the focused correctness had not improved.

The course provided very little space for the development of teaching skills, i.e., methodology, rather it emphasised knowledge of the subject. [see Ch.I., B] As a result I did not consider the teaching element of my professional development important and the subject orientation was fostered. The methodology of teaching English was a marginal subject, i.e. in a five-year course there was, 1 semester and 1 lecture a week allocated to it. It was presented to students as a list of theories with no examples, just another package of theory to be memorised for the exam.

As far as teaching practice was concerned, there was almost no space for it in the programme. We had two weeks in schools for Czech in Year 4 and two weeks for English in Year 5, which in reality meant two lessons observed and two lessons taught in each subject. There was no guidance or supervision provided by faculty teachers.



The course was not coherent and consistent and the contents depended entirely on the individual teacher specialisation and interpretation and there was no connection between subjects.

When I started teaching, I found, sharing my educational experience with my language school colleagues, that the programme was either the same or very similar for those who graduated from the same school, Charles University, in the seventies, or later in the eighties. Ivana, a colleague of mine for ten years, characterised our common teacher education experience saying 'they (the teachers) were just polishing their personal specialisation and neither knew nor cared that we were supposed to end up in classrooms one day'.

To conclude, I can only say that teacher education in the late sixties and early seventies provided me with of theoretical knowledge of the language, English and American literature, some theoretical information about the methodology of teaching a foreign language, a little theory of psychology and no practice in English and teaching skills. My experience taught me that the course for secondary school teachers was designed to educate linguists and literature specialists not teachers.

The process of my learning to be a teacher began when I got my first teaching job at the Language school in Liberec, in 1975.

## **B. CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

I became a teacher while in the process of teaching. Referring to Winter's [1989] argument that 'the process of understanding must start from reflection upon one's own experience', I will discuss my first teaching job which I held for 15 years.

That period had three stages, which reflect the development of my teaching philosophy and practice as experience informed and led me to new insights at each level. Let's call them Follow the textbook, Adapt the textbook and Choose appropriate materials. They symbolise the changing attitude towards the only acknowledged and prescribed source of the language then, the textbook.

## 1. Follow the Textbook Period

This period lasted from 1975, when I got the teaching job, to 1977, when I left the school for a three year maternity leave. Shortly after I began teaching, I realised that I had not been prepared to conduct classroom work successfully and believed that the cause was my insufficient knowledge of the subject .

First, it was my knowledge of English grammar that began to worry me. I had been educated to believe that the teacher's perfect knowledge of English should guarantee successful teaching. The question that I often asked myself mainly in advanced adult classes was: Am I able to give them the information about the language they ask for?. Also most students, products of the same educational system, believed that learning and understanding all the details of English grammar would lead them to language mastery and required it. My feeling that I was not a competent teacher was growing whenever I had to admit that I had not known the system well enough to be able to provide explanation.

Also my awareness of the lack of fluency grew as a frequent question What would an Englishman say in this situation? made me realise how little I had gained in terms of everyday language.

There was only one teaching strategy used at that time. I followed the textbook as it was designed, i.e., article, translation, grammar explanations, exercises as they were ordered. As I had never experienced or learnt to work with textbooks other than follow them, I did not think about changing my techniques.

The notion of learning was absent in my education as all the focus was on subject knowledge. Therefore, I did not understand or even think about the constraints and barriers of my students who were of different ages and professions, ranging from school children and students, to doctors, technicians, geologists, artists, teachers etc. The language school professional atmosphere was underscoring my assumption that what I was doing was right. Teacher achievements were measured by the number of prescribed lessons covered within a school year. Follow-the-textbook strategy was widely recognised and used both by teachers and students.

The real blow into my perception of teaching came after I returned to school from maternity leave in 1981 and was given a chance to participate in a summer course for teachers of English.

## 2. Adapt the Textbook Period

*...there are 'critical incidents' which are key events in individual's life, and around which pivotal decisions revolve. These events provoke the individual into selecting particular kinds of actions, they in turn lead them in particular directions, and they end up having implications for identity. [Measor in Goodson, 1992:61]*

The 'critical incident' in my professional development was the year 1982. I applied for a summer course organised by the Ministry of Education, The British Council and the Cultural Section of the American Embassy in Prague for Czech English teachers. I went to four of these courses in the years 1982-1985. They were extremely important, in the process of my professional development, because they helped me overcome my language frustrations, de-construct my assumptions about teaching and start considering learning. They triggered the process of my real professional development as a teacher.

One of the characteristics of the knowledge accumulation schooling was the attitude to error. It had always been considered a matter of assessment. Together with the focus on grammar rules knowledge, this attitude created a constant mistake awareness by students and teachers. The 'terror of correctness' prevented most learners from natural language production. The first thing that struck me while at the course was the teachers' – native speakers' attitude to error. They did not correct our errors the moment we produced them. As we found later, they monitored the most common of them and before the end of the course listed them, explained and suggested remedial strategies which we immediately practised in situations. I benefited from the approach as my speaking barriers began to fall down and I started to gain confidence.

Dealing with mistakes also taught me about two other things. First, about presenting and practising grammar in a natural context, which led to meaningful, more effective and interesting learning. Second, the work with Czech textbooks in classes provided the evidence that there were language mistakes in them. For instance, the wrong use of 'must' and 'have to'. It made me start thinking about



the use of the textbooks in classrooms, about possibilities of supplementing them, adapting them and even omitting some parts.

The idea of supplementing textbooks was developed when I received some materials and also course books from the book exhibition which was always a part of the course. It was supported by the British and American publishers and the books were distributed among the participants of the course. I would study them later and began to learn the communicative approach based methodology of teaching English that we had been served in bits and pieces during the course.

Being learners we played games, worked with authentic texts like stories, newspaper advertisements, did contextualised grammar exercises, and experienced various ways of using different resources. The exposure to the learning experience made me start considering the learning effects of what I, as a teacher, did in the classroom. I had been given a chance to experience learner feelings as a teacher and the focus in the classroom began to change.

Today, considering the impact of these courses, I may say that the experience of learning in a relaxed atmosphere affected my development as a teacher most of all. It encouraged me to leave the role of someone who was supposed to be always right in the classroom. My own attitude towards teaching began to shift from the 'subject' concern towards the 'delivery' and 'efficiency' concerns. I began to ask myself questions like 'How do I make my lessons interesting and attractive for my students?', 'What shall I do to enable them to use the language and give them the feeling of progress?', etc.

After I returned to my classes, I began to change things. I started to listen to the complaints like 'I can do the exercises in the book, but I cannot express myself.' With the idea of infinite possibilities, I used various materials, I had acquired at the courses, such as texts, songs, recordings, etc. Working with the Czech textbooks I included activities focused on comprehension instead of translation, introduced pair and group work, stopped insisting on absolute correctness in spoken performance, designed my own materials and tests, etc.

Through this new experience as a language learner, the process of re-considering my teaching strategies and attitudes started. The courses influenced and affected the development of all the ideas and assumptions I had had about my profession and actually made me think about my work from a different

perspective – learning. What followed was a period in which this aspect became the focus of my teaching efforts.

### 3. Choose Appropriate Materials and Methods Period

What the courses gave me glimpses of, my work with the materials allowed me to develop and understand in the following years. Using a variety of materials in the classroom and adapting them for my students provided me with the opportunity to *discover and test some approaches and observe the effectiveness.*

#### a. Learning teaching from course-books

I used different kinds of non-Czech materials in my language school classes, from textbooks and grammar practice books to reading and listening materials. I learned from the structure of the course-books, the design of the lessons and tests included, supplementary materials used for language skills development and the teacher's books.

The English course-books I worked with for several years, were Alexander L.G., *First Things First*, and *Practice and Progress*, based on the audio-lingual approach to teaching a foreign language, and Swan, Walter, *The Cambridge English Course*, a communicative course.

Without any previous experience with an approach different from our Czech grammar translation method based books, I was attracted by Alexander's audio-lingual course first. I soon realised the monotonous structure of the lessons and an emphasis on drilling, which was tiring and often boring. However, the emphasis was on listening comprehension, oral practice first and only later on writing. Introductory texts offered interesting topics, new information and were also amusing. Text comprehension was practised. The system of language knowledge was developed in cycles. Similarly language skills were developed in a structured way.

Also the teacher's book was very useful for me as it provided ideas behind the course design, like, for instance, methodology of teaching, syllabus, etc.

I learned from both the shortcomings and the values. I became familiar with new teaching strategies and their pros and cons. Having experienced teaching language in cycles, it gave me an opportunity to perceive learning as a process.

Later on I started to use The Cambridge English Course. First, I included only parts of it, some exercises that I copied for my students to supplement what we were doing, and only later whole lessons. Having worked with it for a couple of years I appreciated its qualities. There was authentic English in it, it offered an integrated development of the language, i.e., structured and balanced development of all skills, grammar and vocabulary. The teacher's pages were a useful methodological guide introducing me to the communicative language teaching approach. It introduced a variety of materials and activities, the topics of the lessons were useful as they came out of everyday situations and the emphasis was on communication.

I became aware of the advantages of this approach to teaching English allowing the students to communicate with limited language tools, which was motivating. However, I also experienced the disadvantages in the Czech context then. First, the students had little or no chance to actually communicate and use the language outside the classroom. Second, the students were used to grammar rules providing them with a safe framework, which they frequently asked for.

Besides the textbooks I also used supplementary materials for listening and reading. Introducing them to my classes I gained experience with a variety of techniques which focused on their development, and thus broadened my repertoire of teaching skills.

When using foreign materials, however, I often found it necessary to adapt them.

#### **b. Adapting foreign materials**

The process of adapting materials began soon after I introduced them into classes. There were some areas where adaptations were needed due to the language and cultural background differences. They were grammar and vocabulary, different contexts and cultural background.

The areas most affected by the Czech language interference are word order, the system of tenses and articles. Facing the problems, I was learning to reduce the effects by focusing on the meaning of grammatical structures, by using them in situations where they had their functions, and by using Czech appropriately to compare different language tools used in both languages to express a particular meaning.



The decision to use materials of a foreign origin also brought into the classroom new background. For example, once I worked with an article on chains of fast food restaurants in the US. The notion of 'Fast food' and the fast food world, however, at the time of my language school experience were mostly unknown in Czechoslovakia. It was necessary to find more information to illuminate the notion itself first. Only then could the material be used.

As the discussion demonstrated, I had learned teaching in the classrooms and from teaching materials. However, the more I learned about teaching, the more I felt the need to investigate language teaching in a systematic way, the need to have theoretical background. Though my practice was proving what I was doing was right, I knew that there was something I had missed. I wanted to learn the basis of what was included in the textbooks, I thought I should learn about the principles the methodology was based on, and believed that this knowledge would provide me with a sort of overview that would give me professional confidence.

However, the 1989 Revolution came, and the new situation made me face a professional challenge I had never ever dreamed of. I was offered a job of a teacher trainer.

#### 4. Starting from Scratch

In September 1990, the newly established Faculty of Education was opened [see Ch.I., E], and I began teaching there. The goal for the school has been to educate teachers for basic schools, i.e., forms 5 - 9, 10 - 15 year old pupils. The new Department of languages and social sciences with two language teacher training sections, i.e., English and German, which I became a member of, had to face several huge tasks from the very beginning, i.e.,

- to develop the programme to prepare language teachers for basic schools,
- to gather resources of study materials,
- to develop English / German departments in terms of staff and technology equipment.

After 15 years of teaching English at the Language school, developing my teaching skills and gaining professional confidence, I ended up where I began. I had had no educational background focused on teacher training. There were no

resources to provide guidelines, besides the traditional ones. There were no experienced colleagues to provide advice. On top of that, there was no time to get ready for the new tasks, as the teaching began on October 1, 1990. The only difference was my experience that clarified what I had needed as a teacher, had not gained as student teacher, and later on missed in the classroom.

Although, I did not feel professionally ready for the new job, I think it was my experience that influenced significantly my decision to accept the job. Ball and Goodson [1992] state that 'the ways in which teachers achieve, develop and maintain their identity, their sense of self, in and through a career, are of vital significance of understanding the action and commitments of teachers in their work'. Drawing on that argument, I can say that it was my frustrating early teaching experience, the moments many years ago when I as a teacher enjoyed learning, and the years in the classroom that led me to believe that student teachers should not be given the kind of education that I and my younger colleagues had received. This idea not only helped me decide to take the job but also has been a driving force for any action, and my personal challenge.

The purpose of the next chapter is to illustrate how the task of the development of the pre-service, Magister degree, 4-year study programme for the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Liberec was approached. The intention is also to demonstrate the first attempt to divert from a traditional linguistics and literature oriented course towards a course meeting the learning and professional needs of students. This version of the programme later became a subject of the research and development activities discussed in this paper.

### Chapter III . PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The specification of the need for and the process of the development of a 4-year study programme for the Department of English, responsible for the initial education of teachers of English for basic schools will be presented in this part of the paper. The purpose of this chapter is to specify the conditions under which the first complete version of the programme was developed. It will complete the discussion of social and educational situation in which the research project was situated, as outlined in Chapters I and II, by providing the institutional context.

#### A. THE NEED FOR A NEW PROGRAMME

The design of the programme became an ultimate goal for the new English section of the Department of Languages and Social Sciences Department soon after the Faculty of Education was established in 1990.

However, the design of the programme was a more complex matter than departmental. It was influenced by the overall atmosphere of historical change [see Ch I.] and it was developed within a newly established teacher education institution, by people with a classroom experience background. Thus a variety of perceptions had an impact on its shaping.

Traditional teacher educating programmes were criticised by some university teachers, schools and mass media. Some people involved in teacher education as well as practising teachers of English articulated the need for change towards classroom practice. For instance, Pospíšil [1992] characterised the present state of teacher education as

*...very unsatisfactory as the only significant change had been the drastic reduction of contact classroom hours...The changes in the content of lectures and seminars have been minimal... there is no system in teacher education... The teacher education has been done carelessly by several isolated departments. No one has ever thought about the integrated teacher education... [Pospíšil, 1992:5]*

Also classroom teachers of English as well as head teachers confirmed the need for change from the customers point of view in interviews. [see Ch I] The following excerpts illustrate that.



Ludmila, head-teacher: *'The methodology of a foreign language is crucial here,... The quality of a teacher at this level of education depends, above all, on how he or she is able to convey the subject'.*

Eva, basic school teacher: *'Speaking, speaking, speaking. The focus should be on general English and classroom language.'*

Jana, basic school teacher: *'... As much teaching practice as possible - the more time they spend in schools the more they will learn.'*

The Ministry supported programmes focused on training or re-training language teachers. It invited foreign lecturers and teachers, supported the spread of textbooks based on the communicative approach to teaching and together with the British Council, and financial aid from Phare, i.e., an EC Eastern Europe assistance programme, initiated and introduced the 'Fast-Track' programme, a three-year bachelor degree one subject course intended to be a teaching practice and language development-oriented contradiction to the traditional teacher training programme.

On the other hand, academic teacher education institutions stubbornly insisted on their linguistic routine and as Pospíšil [1992] argues 'pretended' that teaching components in their programmes were not their problem and considered teacher education a by-product of subject studies. [see Ch I and II]

The traditional perception of teacher education was also reflected in shaping the programme of the new teacher education institution, the Faculty of Education, Liberec. The need for a programme description was as obvious as the need for documentation of the operation of the new school, but on the other hand it was not expected to be necessarily innovative. The goal articulated by the administration of the school was to develop programmes compatible to traditional recognised institutions.

The administrative need was to complete the 'Study Programme' of the school. It is a file of programmes supplied by individual departments. The departments were given two years to complete their contributions. [see Ch I, E]

\*Note: It is a duty of every faculty to submit documented evidence of its operation mandated by the law. The study programmes of all universities and faculties are subject to evaluation by the Accreditation Committee appointed by the Ministry of Education.

The need of the English Section corresponded to the administrative one only in that we knew we needed a complete programme. Otherwise we disagreed with the idea of developing programmes compatible to traditional teacher training institutions like, for example, Charles University. Our idea was a classroom practice oriented education. But as there was no model available, we had to start from where the Czech teacher education was.

## B. BASIS TO START FROM

From the very beginning the development of the programme was shaped by the members of the department and their background. There were several characteristics which were unique to the Department and which contributed significantly to the process.

Probably the most important fact was that the English language section had no history. At the moment of establishment there were two official sources serving as guidelines in the first two years. It was a copy of the study programme, i.e., list of subjects to be taught, for teachers of German from the Faculty of Education, Ústí nad Labem, based actually on another one. It was the Ministry of Education material from 1986 prescribing the contents of the subjects to be taught in English language teacher education courses in terms of areas to be covered. [see Appendix p.3]

Also the fact that the academic world of the technical school we entered had had no tradition of educating language teachers provided us with the freedom to design our own programme.

The educational background of the Czech staff was classroom teaching. There were two practitioners -- former language school teachers of English who started teaching in 1990. Two other language school colleagues joined us in summer semester of 1992. Our common teaching experience led to the agreement to focus the programme on classroom practice.

Since the very beginning there have been many native speakers -- teachers on the staff of the Department. In the five-year history they have always outnumbered the Czech staff. The teachers came from a variety of backgrounds, with different professional and personal agendas, they brought along different

attitudes, perceptions and working habits which inevitably had their impact on the Czech staff and students. In the department we have had experience with teachers coming through the governmental programmes of the British Council, the East European Partnership, Peace Corps, and United States Information Service, and also free-lance teachers.

Underlying all that has been said so far was the time factor. There was very little time to prepare year one. We were asked to teach at the faculty in August 1990 and the classes started in October 1990.

The time produced new demands and offered a challenge and we jumped into the water knowing that our swimming skills were limited. The challenge offered to our teaching experience resulted in the firm determination to do it differently and to demonstrate the ability of classroom teachers to prepare good teachers without an extensive theoretical subject oriented ivory tower background.

## **C. PROCESS OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

### **1. Adaptation of the Traditional Programme**

The major goal and the first step to be done was to establish the structure of the programme in terms of sequence, progression and contents of individual courses. The administrative decision was to start working within the framework of the traditional model in the English and German sections and change and adapt it on the way and at the same time develop our own programme.

For contents of individual courses we used two kinds of sources. First, our classroom experience and second, the teaching materials we had from our student times, i.e., the Charles University teaching materials.

#### **a. Diversions from the traditional programme -- experience based**

The strategy of putting a new coat on an old body that we had experienced in the language school, had to be used again. While the structure of the programme was given and became a subject of long-term development efforts and required some expertise and experience and the content in most of the subjects was derived from traditional courses, while the actual activities in classrooms offered a space and challenge for changes.



We intended to make the courses as practical as possible to enable our students to develop their language competence rather than learn lots of facts and theory about the language, and to make all necessary theory classroom practice related. The courses in a particular semester were divided among the teachers of the Department and it was the responsibility of each teacher to design a syllabus for her/his courses, identify and often provide materials, and set up assessment criteria.

As we divided the work load between the two of us and designed the courses individually, there was practically no co-operation. In terms of specialisation and separation of the courses we followed the experienced tradition. In classes, however we used our experience to teach our students differently from what we had known as teacher training.

#### **b. Changes in classes**

In the practical language development classes we focused on an integrated development of language skills, which was one of the first diversions from the traditional programme. [see Ch. II., A]

In grammar classes we tried to change lectures on the theory of the language system into the use of the language system practice and understanding of the meaning. In lessons we tried to provide both explanation and clarification of the system of English, as well as sufficient grammar practice to enable the students to understand it.

Unlike general English development and grammar teaching where we had experience, the subjects of Phonetics and Introduction to English studies in Year 1 were a teaching novelty for us. Therefore, in terms of content, and the ways of instruction we followed the model we had been familiar with, we lectured the information. The only difference was that we tried to add to our lectures bits and pieces of classroom experience to make the theory somehow related to practice.

As the brief discussion of the first courses taught demonstrates, the changes in the content and ways of instruction depended entirely on our previous teaching experience. They ranged from total diversion to slightly updating the traditional course.

A major change, however, was achieved during year two when the continuous assessment system was introduced at the English Section.

### **c. Introduction of continuous assessment**

The uniform system of assessment was common in all institutions of higher education before 1990, and was prescribed by the Higher Education Act. It was the system of credits gained for the attendance of the course and an oral or written examination at the end of a semester. The examination period lasted from four to five weeks after every 14-week semester. During semesters students attended classes and were rarely asked to do assignments. The assessment depended entirely on the results of the oral and/or written exam.

Consequently, students did not work very much during the semester time, and concentrated all their efforts towards the exam period, in which they learned, for literally days and nights, to memorise the facts from lectures or recommended books to be produced at exam time.

We knew how disastrous the system was in terms of language development. Therefore, we submitted to the Academic Senate of the Faculty a proposal for introducing a continuous assessment system in the English section. The proposal suggested the move of the assessment emphasis from the exam to the work of students during the semester.

We suggested the division of the course assessment into two parts, i.e., the course work to have 60% of weight and the exam result 40% of the final mark. The proposal was approved by the Senate at the end of 1991 and in the second year of operation in the English Section we began applying it.

In terms of the programme development, during the first two years we identified and specified the tasks. We did not manage to proceed from the traditional structure. However, we did consider gaining the experience of course syllabi specifications, a step forward towards the future programme. A new task emerged, too. It was the necessity to set up assessment criteria for each course and create the basis for continuous assessment.

Some experience was gained and also a learning opportunity abroad later on allowed us to design the first version of the programme before the beginning of year three.

## 2. Use and Adaptation of Foreign Resources -- First Complete Programme

While there were some achievements in the move from theory and knowledge oriented courses towards classroom skill and language development, the design of the programme did not progress at all within the first three semesters. There were several attempts to agree on some model, but for various reasons they failed. The important breakthrough happened after we had a chance to learn something about course design and when we gained examples of several programmes for educating teachers of English as a foreign language from several British schools. We used them as basic materials for the design of the first complex programme in summer 1992.

### a. Search for models

Looking for models actually started much earlier but had no effect. We contacted the English Department of the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague. We also believed that foreign lecturers' assistance and expertise would enable us to complete this task quickly in a non traditional form. Neither of these sources appeared to be of much help.

In Prague we saw a programme which appeared to be very similar to what we were using as a model then, i.e., a list of subjects taught in individual semesters and the contents of the subjects formulated as topics to be covered.

Departmental meetings aimed at developing the course always ended up as an argument about the focus of individual subjects. Our expectation that native speakers coming under various English language promoting programmes would suggest a structure that could be adapted to meet the Czech needs, did not come true.

In February, 1992, I participated at a course in Moray House, Edinburgh. It was a part of the British Council project focused on promoting English language teaching in Czechoslovakia. Besides three weeks of learning about methodology, teaching practice supervision and course design, I also managed to gain a copy of the four-year initial EFL teacher training course designed for Malaysian students. Its format, structure, principles and goals became a model for us to start from.



Later on in the same year I left for another learning journey to Britain. I had gained an individual TEMPUS grant and the focus of my study stay was the methodology of teaching English and teacher training programme design. I visited several British institutions providing both language and teacher training, i.e., Bell College, University of East Anglia, Aston University, University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield. In the report for the TEMPUS office, the relationship to the programme development was evaluated

*.... The task is to educate teachers who will know their subject, the appropriate ways of conveying it to children, who will be flexible and reflective and who will be able to plan, implement and improve their work.*

*To reach the target level of compatible educational model we should not use any programme used abroad. What we can and must learn are the ways and the use of tools that will help us develop the programme that would originate in our context and meet the needs of our schools and students. [Burešová, 1992]*

Equipped with another year experience, some working models and the awareness of the direction, and pressed by time we started the programme design.

#### **b. Combination of foreign expertise and Czech classroom experience**

The solution of a complete 4-year programme became a highly urgent task to be completed to meet the administrative deadline in the autumn of 1992. [see B] Action was required. Therefore, my colleague Ivana, Head of the English Department, and I decided to design the programme just between the two of us during the summer holiday. We intended to use various British examples and models as a basis and adapt them for our needs. [see Appendix p.4] What we gained from the resources was above all the format, i.e., the structuring of the description into rationale, aims, objectives and assessment sections.

We included individual courses we considered needed in our situation, both from foreign models and traditional, for instance, structured language development, introduction to English studies, history, grammar and literature courses. We also included a large methodology element. Especially for the design of this component, neglected in Czech programmes, the foreign expertise was valuable. At the beginning of school year 92/93 a new American Peace Corps lecturer

joined our Department and she suggested a brand new element to be included -- a writing course, and designed the English for Academic Purposes focused on structured writing.

With the framework for the programme ready, we divided the task of specifying the subjects in terms of aims, contents and assessment among the colleagues working with the Department. The final version was completed in October 1992, sent for external evaluation to several home and foreign institutions and submitted for approval. [ see Appendix p. 6]

### **c. Approval of the programme**

The product of the process in which foreign expertise, Czech tradition and classroom experience were combined was approved by the Academic Senate and the Scientific Board of the Faculty and the programme became an official document, in November 1993. It formed the basis from which the further development of the programme continued.

### **d. Benefits and new tasks**

The fact that we had the basic document of the operation of the Department had several benefits. First, the basis for the formulation and specification of the goals of our teaching was formed. Second, language and professional input was structured. And last, the basis for the assessment system was established. The combination of our classroom experience, co-operation with colleagues -- native speakers and learning abroad led us to the idea of educating the reflective teacher as indicated in the TEMPUS report.

The task of our programme was always double, i.e., to develop the subject knowledge and skills as well as professional knowledge and skills. Both of these areas were the focus of the innovation efforts, as well as the development of the connection between them.

Using Wallace's reflective model [1991] which draws on the Schon's idea of 'professional knowledge' we formulate the tasks as they emerged from the previous discussion of the programme development. Wallace argues that the 'professional education should include two kinds of knowledge development':

*Received knowledge - In this the trainee becomes acquainted with the vocabulary of the subject and the matching concepts, research findings, theories*

and skills which are widely accepted as being part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession.

*Experiential knowledge* - Here, the trainee will have developed knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession, and will have had, moreover, the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge-in-action. [Wallace, 1991:14]

The purpose of the project set up in April 1993, was to focus on 'received' and 'experiential' knowledge development and investigate to what extent it reflected the actual needs of the students. The project was then specified as:

**A research and programme development project in initial teacher training which seeks to assist student teachers to become reflective practitioners in the educational system with a strong tradition of central control in the Czech Republic.**

The development and progress of the research and the discussion of the methodology of the research project will be the focus of the following chapter.



## Chapter IV . METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study is an action research project implemented in the context of initial teacher education at the Department of English, School of Education, Liberec. It demonstrates probably the first attempt to use a profoundly democratic type of research to initiate change in education in the Czech Republic.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the progress of the cycle of the project, the methods used and to illustrate the development of understanding the situation. In the process the methods were adapted on the basis of earlier data collected or supplementary sources added as they appeared to be valuable in the light of the work done.

The decision to complete an action research project to develop the programme for the Department of English was influenced by my personal and educational experience. At the very beginning I was impressed, above all, by ideas present in Elliott's and McDonald's works, i.e., professional decision making on the basis of experience, and the right to have a say for all involved. They confirmed my teaching experience but contradicted the commonly recognised idea of 'professionalism' in Czechoslovakia. [see Ch I, II.]

Drawing on O'Hanlon's definition stating that

*'Action research is a process of investigation, reflection and action which deliberately aims to improve, or make an impact on, the quality of the real situation which forms the focus of the investigation. It is a form of enquiry which involves self evaluation, critical awareness and contributes to the existing knowledge of the educational community.'* [O'Hanlon, in McBride, 1996:181]

We articulate the aim and focus of the research and formulate the basic question the project seeks to answer. The intention is to investigate perceptions of the students and teachers of the English Department of the initial teacher education programme launched in 1992 and reflect the findings in the re-formulation of the programme so that it can provide a sound base for the education of teachers of English as a foreign language with the ultimate goal of reflective classroom practice. The question then raised is **what the needs of teacher students with the learning experience in a centrally controlled educational system are, and how they will be reflected in the design of the teacher education**

programme in order to enable the student teachers to develop teaching skills and acquire theoretical knowledge needed for the reflective practice in classrooms.

The action research project was designed in May 1993 to provide answers.

#### **A. TIME PLAN OF THE RESEARCH**

- interviews with English department students  
December 1993 - May 1994
- interviews with English Department teachers and Head  
April 1994 - May 1994
- team teaching  
October 1993 - May 1995
- student teaching classroom observation  
February - March 1994, 1995
- group interview with first graduates  
June 1994
- analysing interview and classroom experience data  
May, June 1994
- subject teacher meetings - reporting issues identified  
June 1994
- programme update  
June, July 1994
- monitoring programme planning  
June 1994
- writing-up  
April 1995 - June 1995, September 1995 - February 1996

The range of methods of investigation, action preparation and action taking, and monitoring, as it is listed above, are a subject of discussion in the following section.

#### **B. SOURCES OF DATA**

I decided to use the methods that I considered matched the purpose and the nature of this project. Based on Walker's division I chose interviews, observation

and documents. I was ready to add 'every and any technique as would seem appropriate to the task, as things tend to fall to places as the research goes on' [McNiff, 1992:81]. In the process of the research 'supplementary methods', i.e. team teaching, or group interview of students, appeared to be a valuable source of information and a unique chance to clarify understanding of the issues identified.

## 1. Interviews

As one of the major goals of the project was to find out about the perceptions of the actors, an interview format was chosen to provide them with a chance 'to offer account of their behaviour, practice and actions...on the assumption that people are, to some degree, reflective about their actions, or can be put in a position where they become so'. [Walker, 1985:90-91]

For the interview technique a semistructured form was chosen to keep the focus of the investigation and by the same token to 'follow up "interesting issues" raised by the interviewee in response to the questions'. [McBride, 1990:31] Interviews with the students, teachers and Head of the English Department were completed and recorded.

### a. Interviews with English Department students

Sixteen students were interviewed individually, and eight Year 4 students in a group interview after the submission of their final projects in the period of December 1993 - May 1994. The students were a major source of data.

The aims of the individual interviews were to find out about the students' learning needs in both language and professional elements, about 'their accounts of the respects in which teaching enables or constraints the development of their powers ...' [Elliott, 1991:10] and their ideas of how their needs could be met.

I sought to gather full range of students' views by considering:

- study results; i.e., the students interviewed ranged from excellent to poor according to the departmental assessment criteria,
- progression of the study, i.e., the students from all years of the course,



- various educational history, i.e., the students were secondary school graduates and also students with different previous experience, for instance, a different type of a university course or a job.

I made the choice in my classes, and I asked my colleagues to choose in the classes I did not teach.

The interviews with the students, conducted as the first step of the project, helped us specify the learning needs of the students by clarification of the learning effects of the instruction. The key issues began emerging from the students' perceptions of content and methods as well as from their articulation of the needs.

Also the first experience of interviewing was gained and I learned more about interview techniques. For instance, the questions planned to be the same, in order to keep the focus on the needs specification, appeared not to be suitable for all respondents. I had not taken into account the difference in the length of students' experience with the programme. Then some of them discussing missing components, were actually referring to the courses they had not gone through yet.

Equipped with this experience, I approached the next round of interviews with colleagues. I prepared fewer and broader questions and I tried to watch my involvement carefully.

#### **b. Interviews with Department teachers and Head**

Three teachers, two native speakers and a Czech, and Head were interviewed.

I intended to learn about the colleagues' experience of the programme, and about its functioning in a variety of courses, about their understanding of the sources of problems students had in their classes, their perceptions of students' needs and possible programme changes that could meet them.

The interviews provided detailed information and also suggestions for changes that might lead to removing the students' problems and teachers' difficulties dealing with them. The fact that two interviewees were native speakers appeared to have contributed considerably to the formulation of issues and their understanding. Both of them with a reflective practice educational background, focused on teaching -- learning relationships and actually provided analyses of

their experience in classes. Their views were the views of system outsiders, which not only helped to see the issues from a different angle, but also contributed to directing the research attention to reflective practice themes.

As the process went on, its potential and values were becoming more and more obvious. Drawing on the experience gained, I decided to include a group interview to obtain a multiple student view of the experience of the Diploma Thesis course, designed and first tested in 1993/94 school year. [see Ch V., D]

### **c. Group interview with students**

Eight students were interviewed after the submission of their final papers. The aim was to identify areas which the students considered difficult in implementing their final projects and to learn about their understanding of possible reasons for their difficulties, and also to find out what they had learned from their experience. I chose the form of group interview, because I hoped that the participants, 'far from inhibiting each other, [the individuals] would 'spark' themselves into sensitive and perceptive discussions' [Hopkins, 1993:124], and thus provide a variety of views of one particular issue.

The students' reports on the learning effects of completing their final papers offered the teachers feedback on the effectiveness of the course, as well as the whole programme. The students confirmed, and also expressed their own views of numerous issues identified previously in interviews and provided additional data.

Seeking for the student views, we had an opportunity to experience a new form of student evaluation of the course, i.e., a group discussion of particular issues. This actually indicated to us one of the possibilities of monitoring the programme.

Besides the advantage of getting a 'triangulated' view of one course, it showed that the group interview did not provide an opportunity for all participants to speak. Only those who were more articulate spoke without encouragement. One girl, actually, did not say anything apart from 'I agree with what has been said by my friends'. The experience confirmed McNiff's warning that 'care must be taken to limit the number of people to about seven...as...larger groups might inhibit the less forward members'. [McNiff, 1992:79]

Gathering data from numerous individuals, we also respected their rights in the situation in which they were providing their personal views of the programme and inevitably of the individual teachers. The rules underlying all steps of the research were established.

#### **d. Ethical issues**

The conducted research procedures followed the ethical principles of action research as they were worked out by the researchers as McDonald and Walker [1974] or Simons [1987] and which 'go beyond the usual concerns for confidentiality and respect for the persons who are the subjects of enquiry...'. [Hopkins, 1993:221].

Negotiating access to information from students and teachers, I asked each of them for consent to be interviewed. I personally discussed the conditions of the interview with all interviewees, explained the purpose of the investigation, made it explicit that the interviews would be treated as confidential and the information would be presented anonymously, if published in the report. I told them they had the right to say 'no' if they felt threatened by interviewing, or by the use of information they had provided. I paid attention to this step as I realised, especially in case of the students, that they had never been in such a situation, and I thought I might have to face unwillingness to speak openly and frankly as some information could be critical of their teachers. Also the use of the tape recorder was negotiated beforehand.

The actual organisation of the interview sessions with the students and teachers of the Department was very easy. As we worked closely together every day we just agreed on the time suitable for both parties.

I found out soon that none of my initial worries were true. All respondents approached agreed to be interviewed without any apparent hesitation or worry. They were willing to answer and their reactions were mainly inquisitive. Expressing their own opinion and influencing classroom procedures had not been encouraged at schools. They were mostly surprised to have gained the role of speakers. For example, one of them, when approached, said :

*Yes, no problem. But why me, I do not know whether I am the right person to tell you what you need, I can speak only for myself not for the others.*



The newly experienced right to have a say, and the feeling of having the power to contribute to the programme design made all the students take the request seriously and many expressed their worry that 'they would not know what to say off hand'. To ease this tension I provided a copy of questions I was about to ask. Some of them came with the list of notes 'not to forget anything'. As they admitted later, they helped them relax. During the interviews, however, most of them used the notes only as reminders of topics they had intended to talk about.

Also, access to information from teachers was similarly easy. Several sentences of the explanation of the purpose of the interview were enough to generate the same response from all of them: 'OK. When?' As a matter of fact, I had not anticipated any problems negotiating access to information from colleagues, as I knew that interviews would be just a formalised procedure of occasional informal discussions.

The problems of access might exist in other contexts, but they did not occur in this project. The interviewees were a part of our other relations, not the only reason for our being in contact. For instance, most students interviewed were the students I taught, and the teachers were colleagues I worked closely with.

Another area in which the principles of openness, empowerment, freedom and confidentiality were to be respected was the reporting. Negotiation of accounts also appeared to be affected by the fact that all participants worked together every day and that, as a matter of fact, the change of the programme was their shared interest. When we discussed confidentiality and anonymity of the data and their right to see what was to be reported, none of the respondents wanted to see their parts of the transcript, they mostly expressed a good will to help, and my oral guarantee of confidentiality was satisfactory. Nonetheless, all names of the students and teachers in this report are fictional, with the exception of Ivana, the Department Head, and Donna, my team teaching counterpart, who were very easily recognisable. [see Ch. IV., B] They only reflect the gender.

While interviews were steps planned especially for the research purposes, the teaching practice classroom observations were a part of my job. However, as demonstrations of the effectiveness of the instruction, they were considered to be a valuable source of information.

## 2. Continuous Teaching Practice Observation

In the period of February - April 1994 the observations of twelve Year 4 students were done by two members of the Department and classroom teachers in whose classes the students were practice teaching.\* In the following year, 1995, the findings from the observation of twenty three students supplemented the data.

\*Note: The teaching practice was divided into two parts during the four-year study for all students of the Faculty. In year 3, students in groups of 3-4 visited local schools regularly once a week to observe, micro-teach and teach whole lessons. In year 4, they spent a four-week block either in a local school or a school in their home town teaching five lessons a week of each subject of study.

The goal of the teaching practice observation in the students' last year in school was to monitor their performance in classrooms, to reflect together on the action and also to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the programme in real life. As the primary purpose of the observation was a part of my routine work, the technique utilised was 'observation for description', as Walker [1985] calls it. Besides the feedback expectations, I did not have any specific research project related observation task. Walker's argument that 'observation may lead to an awareness of a researchable problem, rather than strictly following the formulation of the problem' was verified by this experience. [Walker, 1985:120] The observations appeared to provide another point of view of the issues that emerged from interviews or team teaching. Not only that, they also raised a whole range of issues some of which were beyond the boundaries of this project, for example, the issue of mentoring.

The observations provided first hand classroom data as well as another source of precious information and also a unique opportunity to learn from, a team-teaching experience.

## 3. Team Teaching and Tutoring Diploma Theses

Although team teaching had not been on my list of methods in the earlier stage of planning the research, in the process it appeared to be a rich source of classroom data. It also became the centre of analysing and synthesising procedures.

The Diploma Thesis course was designed and run for the first time in 1993/94. The aim of the course was to support the development of the final degree paper by the students of the Department. It was designed by Donna, A peace Corps volunteer and a writing and student research teacher and myself in 1993 and piloted in the same year with the first group of our students. [see Ch V., D]

The purpose of our decision to work as a team was to find out what did not work, discuss it and suggest changes for the next group. Also, we intended to specify standard requirements for the final paper. We had agreed that both of us would be present at tutorials as each of us had relevant expertise, i.e., writing and research, teaching English as a foreign language methodology.

Team teaching and tutoring had a beneficial impact on the effectiveness of the process of developing the course and the supporting teaching material. We had a chance to immediately discuss issues emerging during tutorials or from reading the students' drafts, analyse them and suggest changes for the next group of students. Another advantage was the enormous learning effect brought about by our co-operation. [see Ch.V., D]

We were aware of the enormous responsibility we had as teachers. We exposed the students to a task we had not had any experience with, and the specifications of the task were done in the process of testing it. Therefore, all of the students were informed about the experimental nature of the whole procedure before they decided to write with the English Department. In the process we provided intensive individual care for each student. What we did was far beyond both, the standard and the capacity of the Department staff. This situation has never been repeated.

Gathering data from a variety of resources provided an enormous amount of information that had to be sorted out, analysed and used as a basis for action. Later on the whole process of the research was to be reported. To do that a variety of documents was needed and used.

#### 4. Documents

The purposes for the use of the documents varied according to the stage of the research. The materials on action research and educational change served as a source of information about methods and principles; newspaper and journal



clippings to provide evidence of statements about the educational situation in the country; government and institutional documents to illustrate administrative changes in education and institutional policy and regulations. Also materials focused on the wider subject of the investigation, i.e., on teacher training and teaching English as a foreign language were used to provide support for subject related matters.

Most of the materials used were of British or American origin. There was a major reason for this. Teacher education, let alone reflective teaching, was rarely discussed by professionals in Czechoslovakia. [see Ch.III., A ] This was reflected in a search for Czech resources as I found out that there was a very limited amount of materials focused on the changes needed in teacher education by the people involved in it.

The quotations from newspaper articles and official documents included in the project were translated by the author in the text. Their original versions were included in Appendix pp 1-2.

As the discussion of the interviewing phase of the research indicated, and the description of other sources of information confirmed, from the very beginning it was practically impossible to separate the steps of data collecting, analysing and even change planning. Often all of them were happening at one time and the immediate analysis of early data influenced the focus of further investigation. Also other processes, like the observation of teaching practice or team teaching and the parallel running the interviews, sandwiched with numerous informal discussions with colleagues, contributed to the very untidy character of the research in the data gathering phase.

Once the data collecting and their progressive analysing was finished at the end of the summer semester 1994, I reached the phase of the research when data gathered began to make sense related to the initial purpose. I thus reached the stage in which all data collected were analysed and synthesised.

### **C. MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA**

The preliminary analyses were often done shortly after the data collecting event as I discussed them with my colleagues. Thus the procedure of the data

processing was a long process of 'progressive focusing' in which 'as the inquiry proceeded, the key issues became relevant'. [McNiff, 1992:82] In June 1994 I began working with the data in a more rigorous way.

The first step was the transcription of the interviews. I did them all verbatim. As I was first listening, and later reading the transcripts, broad areas like learning difficulties or problems with English began to emerge and I marked the bits with the labels, for example, English, learning etc. In the next round I broke these into specific issues, for instance, English - speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. Then I put the demonstrations of one specific issue, for example, English - speaking, together from all students within a Year. Then I sorted out the sub-issues of each particular issue so that they illustrated all features of a particular problem and removed the issues that seemed to be individual student related. I used the same technique working on the data gathered from the teachers.

While doing this, I discussed the issues as they were emerging with Ivana, Head of the Department, and Donna with whom I was team teaching at the time. The disputes were endless and occurred whenever and wherever we met, including private flats when we were visiting each other, pubs into which we would go to escape professional matters, or even weekend walks. Comparing our experience and perceptions from the classrooms, adding further demonstrations of a particular issue and discussing the possible reasons, we were actually putting bits and pieces of what was actually happening in classrooms together, and they began to make sense. Relating our situation to the Elliott and Adelman's [in Hopkins 1993:152] description of the triangulation technique we were 'gathering accounts of a teaching situation from numerous 'different points of view', as we discussed the matters as seen by both our students and their teachers.

The procedure was extremely productive in that it allowed us to clarify, specify and formulate the issues, which contributed to the growth of our understanding of the learning problems of our students and to suggest improvement steps. It was also the beginning of an informed professional discussion about the programme development and thus of the team work. Unlike my language school experience in which the classroom changes were private or a matter of 'isolated rebel clique' in the research process we experienced a 'quality professional discourse' on a 'diversity of views'. [Elliott, 1991]

The discourse led to the articulation of the issues that were to be reported to the Department teachers as matters of importance for the further development of the programme.

#### **D. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING ACTION STEPS**

To communicate the data investigation findings to the Department teachers, five subject teacher meetings were called at the beginning of June 1994. I reported on the research, in the presence of Ivana, the Department Head. The meetings took from 1-1 1/2 hours each and eleven teachers were involved. They were preceded by a short explanation of the purpose at the departmental meeting. We assumed that enabling all teachers involved in teaching in the same or similar courses in all three Department programmes \* might bring together a lot of classroom experience and suggestions to base changes on. Ivana, a frequent participant of research raised issues discussions, and I were to function as 'information brokers' and participated in all meetings.

\*Note: Since 1990 the English section/Department ran two programmes, i.e., initial teacher 4-year education and a 3-year re-training programme for teachers of Russian. In 1992 a 3-year initial teacher education programme, Fast-Track, was added.

The intention was to discuss the reformulation of the courses of the programme descriptions to reflect the reported issues. We also wanted to look at the progression of the courses and connections of single subjects within each year of the study. It was also our goal to consider possible links between the compulsory subjects and electives. The idea was to update the programme in terms of rationale, teaching and learning method specifications, focus of courses, objectives and forms of assessment.

The teachers were asked to update, as a team 'their' course description and contribute to the programme formulation.

It was finished by the end of June 1994 and submitted to the Academic Senate in September 1994. In October 1994 the changes articulated in the programme began to be implemented in classes.

The changes formulated and introduced to classes, however, were only the first steps. To be able to evaluate their effects we designed the tools to provide us



with feedback, allow us to watch the progress and to identify needs for further changes.

## E. MONITORING PROGRAMME

Drawing on Elliott's characteristics of monitoring techniques which should 'provide evidence of how well the course of action is being implemented, of *unintended* as well as intended effects and which will enable one to look at what is going on from a variety of points of view' [Elliott, 1991:76] we decided to establish a monitoring scheme the moment the new programme was launched. The procedures were mostly derived from and based on the experience of the investigation and action planning phases of the research. [see Ch. VI., C]

The plans for monitoring the change introduced to classes actually finished the community work phase of the research. I perceived the whole process as exciting, challenging and extremely productive in terms of raising issues, professional communication, growth of understanding and my own learning. The stage of reporting on the whole process was ahead of me. When I began writing, I did not realise how demanding and lonely a process it would be.

## F. WRITING UP

Although the process of writing the final report was officially timed to the third year of the project development, it cannot be placed exactly between two dates. As a matter of fact it began with reflecting on my learning and teaching experience early in the research process, and was very important for the development of my understanding of those professional development stages.

On the other hand, it provided me with an opportunity to experience completing an academic paper and using the tools I had not had enough experience with, like my students. Doing what I was teaching contributed to my understanding of some sources of students' problems and made me test some strategies of overcoming them which I could use while dealing with the students' problems. [see conclusion C]

However hard, lonely, and time demanding the writing phase of the research was, it allowed me a deeper insight into the whole range of issues raised in the

research process and better a understanding of the relationships between them. As many times before in my experience, when I learned English grammar by having to teach it to my students, when I learned curriculum planning by having to design a programme, having to do the research and report on it enabled me to fully understand the whole process and its effects on the programme development and myself.

Having discussed the ways of doing this research, we will proceed to the discussion of its subject. The following chapter is the illustration of the data collecting and analysing process, providing the evidence of the information gathered as it was gradually creating the picture of the programme as its users, i.e., students and teachers, perceived it. The issues emerging will be discussed as they formed the basis for suggestions for changes.

## Chapter V . PROGRAMME THROUGH THE EYES OF ITS USERS

Four major sources of data for the research project of the programme will be presented in this chapter. They are interviews with the students of each of the four Years, interviews with the Head of the Department and three teachers, continuous teaching practice of Year 4 students observation, and team teaching, i.e., the process of the development of the Diploma Thesis course. The order in which they are presented reflects their time succession only in case of the interviews. The other two sources were being investigated parallel to the interviews.

The overall purpose of the discussion was to specify the issues related to the development of a reflective practice focused programme, identify the areas needing changes, and in the process of investigation develop understanding of those issues. The intention was then to present them to the English department staff at the end of 1993/94 school year and on the basis of that information, discuss and suggest changes to the programme.

### A. STUDENTS TALK

The interviews with sixteen students were conducted between December 1993 and May 1994. The goals of the interviews were to identify the learning needs of the students and how they were met by the programme. Besides the expected information on structure, content and methods, the interviews also revealed some issues which we had not realised before and which appeared to be of major significance for re-designing the programme.

Four groups of students were interviewed. The structure of the programme each Year had experienced at the Department was different due to the progressive changes. [see Ch.III., C]

The first group were four students, Petr, Markéta, Eva and Kateřina of Year 4. They entered the School of Education in October 1990 and were the first students studying at the newly established school.

At the time of their enrolment in the School of Education there was no complete programme. It was being made from semester to semester till 1992. At the time of the interview they had completed 7 semesters of study. As far as the teaching



experience was concerned, they had passed two-semester regular teaching practice in local schools, i.e., one morning a week spent in classrooms observing and teaching. They had a continuous 4-week teaching practice ahead of them.

The second group were six Year 3 students. Alice, Jana, Jaromír, Mirek, Karel and Lenka joined the programme in 1991. At the time of the interview they had completed 5 semesters of their study. In the first two semesters they went through the adapted version of the programme of the previous group. From October 1992, the third semester of their study, they followed the programme discussed. [see Ch.III. C]. At the time of the interview they had had 3 semesters of experience. The students had just finished their observation period in schools.

The third group were three students, Jiří, Daniela and Luboš, of Year 2. They began their studies in October 1992. They were the first group for which the complete four year programme existed at the time of their enrolment. Till the time of this interview this group had gone through 3 semesters of the programme. They experienced a one and half semester observation period in which they visited various kinds of schools and educational institutions and observed lessons.

The fourth group were three students, of Year 1, Barbora, Dana and Václav, interviewed in May 1994, several months after the students of the other Years. The intention was to give these students a chance to experience a whole year of study, i.e., semesters 1 and 2. Year 1 students were enrolled in the programme in October 1993. They had had no teaching experience.

The secondary school language learning experience of all the students interviewed was very similar. It was related to the old Czech textbooks heavily loaded with grammar and vocabulary, together with teaching methods emphasising knowledge, memorisation and translation. The development of language skills was very limited. The textbook was often the only resource material for them. [see Ch.I., A] Their exposure to the living language, either in spoken or written form had mostly been little or non existent.

The major issues as identified and perceived by the students will be discussed in the following section.

## 1. The English Language Development Problems

Almost all students articulated their need for general English development, and learning English appeared to be one of the major expectations.

For many students learning the language appeared to be the primary motive for applying to study at the School of Education. Jana, Year 3, for instance, claimed that she liked English as a subject and she expected 'her speaking and listening abilities improvement'. Jiří, Year 2, admitted that he 'had one big ambition in his head – to learn English and be satisfied with it'. This frequent primary intention was often reflected by the students' call for more speaking opportunities. Alice, Year 3 said that it was 'everyday common speaking' she missed in the programme. Also Kateřina, Year 4, mentioned the need to develop her ability 'to transfer the thoughts and ideas from one language to another'.

The demonstrations of the lack of fluency in classrooms were very similar in that the students felt they were not able to react in the way they would have liked to. It was thought to create an uneasy feeling of not having the tool needed in classes. The students provided examples of the effects. For instance, Dana, Year 1, felt that she was not fluent and it made her translate. Interference of the languages seemed to be a source of mistakes. She said:

*I transfer a Czech sentence into English looking for an English equivalent for a Czech word. For instance, mám na to chuť [I feel like having this], the word "taste" immediately appears, which actually cannot be used at all.*

Also Markéta, Year 4, thought that one of possible sources of the difficulties with grammar was the difference between Czech and English grammatical systems.

Besides translating, constant mistake awareness appeared to work. Even developing fluency by, for example, a holiday stay in a native-speaking country, did not seem to remove the anxiety. Markéta, Year 4, commented on her fluency developed in this way as not being satisfactory as she 'still made grammatical mistakes'. Eva, Year 4, spoke about 'producing messy sentences'.

This fluency/accuracy interrelated issue did not appear to be dealt with in grammar classes. Too much focus on theory was reported. The students often thought they would need an appropriate explanation of meaning and enough

practice. Dana, Year 1, for example, said 'I expected to find clarification of what I did not understand at secondary school classes'. She, too, complained about the little practice they had, which showed during tests when she 'often did not know which tense should be used'.

The students' needs for general English development appeared not to have been met by the content focus of language development courses. Eva, Year 4, said that:

*...there were more subjects here focused on the structure of the language. I missed more of every day, general English.... Talking about the fourth year, with the exception of answering questions, we had practically no chance to speak in lessons.*

Markéta, Year 4, related the grammar concern of hers to the examination anxiety when she said: 'We are afraid of the finals, grammar, because it is so different from the Czech system...'

Not only production of the language appeared to be students' worry. Some of them even mentioned perception, i.e., understanding, as a learning obstacle. For instance, Markéta, Year 4, specified her need for full understanding of new concepts and notions:

*... I still have to concentrate fully on what is said. In some subjects... like Donna's writing, where every notion is new, I have to concentrate hard.*

The above mentioned issues could be considered the students' personal and learning need to master the language so that they could feel comfortable and confident in and outside of classrooms. The other group of reasons appeared to be related to their professional needs, i.e. teaching purposes. Many of them, talked about the necessity to provide correct model language in basic school classes and appropriate explanation when needed. Jana, Year 3, said:

*...as a teacher I think I should be able to use it correctly and not think about the rules. I would need more confidence in grammar rules. When a student asks you a question and you are not able to answer, it can be excused once but not often.*

Some of the language problems seemed to have their roots in the interaction of Czech and English in the oral production of the students. They were closely



connected to the further issue raised during the interviews -- the use of Czech as a part of the instruction.

## 2. Claim for the Use of Czech in the Classroom

The need for the use of Czech was expressed by a number of the students who experienced mostly the 'English only' instruction, even by Czech staff. They called for the introduction of Czech into the programme. Their reasoning covered learning and professional purposes.

Translation was an issue discussed most often. Some language problems, e.g., in grammar, seemed to become clear if translation was used. For instance, Eva, Year 4, complained that:

*...we do not do translations here, in grammar classes. The intention is for us not to think in Czech, but it [thinking in Czech and translating] works anyway.*

The idea of Czech in grammar classes was very strongly supported by all Year 1 students who in their comments expressed the need for grammar to be taught by a Czech teacher who would be familiar with the difficulties of Czech students. For instance, Barbora, Year 1, felt very strongly about grammar calling it 'a hated subject which is good for nothing'. She thought it 'would be fantastic if they had a Czech teacher...'. She compared the few lessons at the beginning of the semester when a Czech teacher was substituting and she thought they 'learned more than they could ever find in a book'.

Czech was also believed to make it easier to comprehend new notions and ideas introduced in courses they had had no previous experience with, for example, writing.

The use of 'English only' in all classes and constant use of English study materials appeared to have led to the development of professional language in English. It thus prevented the students from developing the ability to express professional matters, e.g., methodology justifications or reflection, in Czech. Eva, Year 4, commented on that:

*And what we also need is the ability to transfer the thoughts, ideas about teaching from one language into another. For instance, I read something in*

*English, my brain understands it, but I have difficulties in conveying the idea in Czech.*

Many of the language problems and the claims for the use of Czech in classes seemed to have their roots in the previous student language learning experience, and the expectations and habits developed in schools.

### 3. The Impact of Learning Experience

The strong impact of the previous and also recent educational experience of the students was discussed in various forms by the students. It appeared to have influenced not only their attitudes towards learning but also teaching.

The impact of the knowledge accumulation history demonstrated itself frequently as the appreciation of some forms of control. For example, Markéta, year 4, said that it was a relief she did not have to make the time-plan for her final project saying:

*... we have deadlines. It is very helpful for me, as I am terribly lazy. I appreciate that you [the department staff] do not let us be.*

Eva, Year 4, speaking about her personal need for more intensive vocabulary development, asked for the tell-me-what-and-I-will-do-it approach saying:

*I am not able to do it by myself, it may be my laziness, I need to be pushed. Until I am told to, I do not do anything, it may be the system we brought from secondary schools.*

Also the continuous assessment system was understood by most of the students as a tool helping them to overcome the habit of learning for examination purposes only, and instead to work regularly. Luboš, Year 2, also considered it beneficial for the student as it made exams less stressful saying:

*... it removes the stress from big, let's say, 2 semester exams, like in history. And it is also more objective. The examination period is stressful and one can collapse and fail. And if you have to do something during the semester you are more relaxed at the exam and you also know something. In comparison with other departments I find this wonderful.*

Learning habits was one area in which the students themselves put their fingers on the impact of their past schooling, the other one was learning effects. One of them was an underdeveloped speaking skill. Jana, Year 3, recalled earlier difficulties saying:

*First we had to learn to speak here, in lessons. We were not used to speaking to each other in classes, I mean we did not do it in secondary schools, it was difficult.*

The 'terror of correctness' was reported to be often present in classes. Jana, Year 3, thought that native speakers 'heard every mistake they [the students] made'. She added that it was stressful as they 'had been used to teachers who looked for their mistakes and marked them for every production.' She added:

*... it was the time that caused the change of my feelings. Now I am not frightened by my colleagues or teachers, but I still watch my mistakes and it makes me slow.*

When asked about her opinion about the origin of her attitude towards mistakes she said:

*...from the elementary school and not only from foreign language lessons, but from all other subjects. ...the block exists in my head and works.*

She pointed out the importance of new communicative language learning experience in the process of removing the old focused accuracy one.

The new experience, i.e., new teaching approaches, appeared not to work in a positive way all the time. The interviews showed that students often insisted on the ways of teaching they were used to. For instance, almost all students complained about the literature course where the focus was on the analysis of readings rather than on information delivery. When asked what they would expect, for example Lenka, Year 3, said:

*It should give us something that I can remember. The development [of literature], maybe.*

Sometimes a different attitude could lead to misunderstanding and underachievement. For example, Václav, Year 1, claimed he had 'no serious



problems in any of the courses' at the time of interview. As it showed later on he had had serious problems in practically all classes focused on the development of language skills. However, as there were not major demands and testing focused on knowledge, he felt that everything was all right.

Also the requirement to work with a variety of resources instead of one source appeared to be puzzling for some students. For instance, Mirek, Year 3, felt insecure about it and said:

*I do not see it useful when the teachers, for example, in grammar lessons, use more materials at a time... We need one basic textbook and just occasional diversions into other sources when needed.*

Attitudes to learning seem to have been influenced strongly as well as attitudes towards teachers. The teacher appeared to be often understood as someone who, as Freire [1972] called it, 'made deposits' of knowledge but was not supposed to be asked for explanation or clarification. Speaking about sorting out her comprehension difficulties in the writing class Markéta, Year 4, said:

*...And many of us do not understand, we never ask her, and fortunately there is always someone who listened carefully and knows.*

Although the teacher was not understood to be a helper or partner in learning, she was believed to be a teaching model for many of the students interviewed. Markéta, Year 4, mentioned the teachers she had experienced and followed in her own teaching performance saying:

*...and anyway, I have found that when teaching we behave in the same way as our models do, either the classroom teacher, or some department teacher. That is not us. ... I always try to do what I like or liked about her.*

Realising the impact, she suggested for teaching techniques to be articulated, emphasised and possibly discussed in language development classes. She thought 'they could also be told from the methodological point of view what they were doing and why, for example, pre-listening activities'. She assumed that including a methodology aspect in general language development classes at the beginning of their studies would create good foundations in their learning experience for later teaching-focused classes.

Barbora, Year 1, claimed she 'expected to be taught by teachers who would demonstrate by their own example how to teach, who would give them extra materials to work with, who would practise a variety of activities.' She hoped for 'indirectly learning how to teach'.

Besides teaching techniques, also class management skills were believed to be modelled by teachers. Markéta, Year 4, for example, summed up her idea of classroom management saying:

*... and especially how to avoid disruptive behaviour and how to assess them rightly. This was my biggest worry. My experience with teachers was like that, I mean the teachers who did not teach us much, and we behaved badly in their classes, I did not want to be like them. I always admired teachers with authority, not too strict, but assertive, and I always wanted to be such a teacher.*

The students' call for practical examples of the teaching profession raised the issue of the balance of practice and theory in the theory loaded teacher education tradition.

#### **4. Impacts of Theory and Practice Balance in Training**

The interviews also showed that the professional development appeared to be strongly influenced by the level of understanding of the connections between theory and practice during the training period. The students commented on and identified some ways of bridging the gap. Subject and professional areas were both discussed.

The subject, i.e., grammar and problems with its use, were mentioned earlier.

As well as in the language area the students were articulating their ideas of increasing the level of understanding of the theory of learning and teaching. Eva, Year 4, for instance, was happy about getting recipes for ready-to-use activities in methodology classes. Markéta, Year 4, pointed out the necessity for the students to be provided with specific examples illustrating the theory, saying:

*... we were told a story of how it might be sometimes difficult to make them [teenagers] speak in front of the others ... I remembered that and prepared pair*

*and group work activities for the lesson I had with teenagers. And, all of them worked as I wanted them to.*

She understood the classroom experience of the Department teachers as helping them sort out concrete situations during their teaching practice.

However, the TEFL theory and the basic classroom practice did not match each other in the area of methodology of teaching English as a foreign language. Lenka, Year 3, understood 'all those methods as if they were focused on better students' and she suggested that in methodology classes 'some time could be focused on weaker students, too'.

In all areas previously discussed the students mentioned the impact of classroom methods used in their learning the language and teaching. Some more method considerations, the structure, or structuring the programme and the contents of courses meeting the students' professional development needs remain to be investigated.

### **5. Programme Structure and Method Considerations**

The students commented on the structure and contents of the programme and methods used in the classrooms in relation to their language, professional and personal interest needs and discussed the impact on their learning.

The major problem identified by all students was the inconsistency of the contents of some courses within the programme as for instance, in the Phonetics or Study Skills courses in Year 1, and in the literature course in Year 2 and 3. Jana, Year 3, said:

*It seems to me that there is no continuity in some subjects. For instance literature. In the first year we did fairy tales and sayings, in the second year we were analysing some American authors, and this year we do British literature from the very beginning, but we had no theory, facts about authors...we do not know what we are to learn.*

Changing teachers in the course often influenced its content severely, which showed later on as causing final exam stress and worries for the students.



Markéta, Year 4, expressed her anxiety saying that 'it [literature] had really been good for nothing. And it was a part of the finals that they were scared of'.

Discussing some of the courses, the students found major differences between the course description on paper and reality in classrooms. Barbora, Year 1, agreed that they 'needed the courses as they were designed but not as they were sometimes run'.

Some students discussed the unprofessional attitude to teaching by a particular teacher presented as careless or with no preparation for the lessons, and his personal interpretation of the goals. For instance, discussing speaking fluency development elective classes Eva, Year 4, said:

*...in conversation you just cannot go somewhere and chat. In a group bigger than four, you must control it somehow. I think that the idea of offering a freer subject was good, but on the way it changed somehow.*

She pointed out that some 'lessons had no order, no structure'. The effects of an unprofessional and free interpretation by the teacher were documented by Václav, Year 1, when speaking about Study Skills he said that 'till then [end of semester] he did not know what the content of the course should have been'.

On the other hand the clear structure and requirements of some courses communicated to students beforehand were appreciated by, for example, Markéta, Year 4, who commented on the lexicology course in which 'at every moment of the semester they knew what their situation was like, and it was everybody's own responsibility to collect the points'. Also the coherence of successive courses was found beneficial. For instance, Markéta, Year 4, 'liked the fact that the subject of writing led them to the implementation of the project. She understood it as a novelty in the operation of the school when she added that 'wherever she spoke about this way of writing the thesis her colleagues from other departments envied [them]'.

All the students interviewed welcomed the introduction of change in the school study system in 1992 in terms of the decreasing number of compulsory subjects and increasing number of electives in each year of study. For instance, Kateřina, Year 4, admitted that 'at the beginning she had missed electives, which were wonderful now'. Also the others understood electives as meeting their interests,

but they required 'wider choice of courses'. Mirek, Year 3, would introduce twenty electives including history, literature and life and institutions'.

Besides the structure and contents of the course, also the methods appeared to influence students' views of the programme.

The students often appreciated the interactive approach to teaching. Karel, Year 3, compared it to his previous experience saying:

*... We were surprised in the first year when encouraged in classes to speak when we felt like it. None of us was used to that. And also communicative activities. We had never experienced classes where students were expected to speak with each other in English. It is more natural and lively.*

All of the students interviewed appreciated the opportunity to listen and speak to people with various accents, to native speakers who provided them with the living language and were a source of valuable information about the target language countries and life in them.

More communication in classes created chances for the students to influence course contents. Dana, Year 1, claimed she liked the space the students were given to influence the choice of topics for speaking classes as 'they could speak about what they were interested in'. Jiří, Year 2, appreciated the way of instruction in which the students contributed to the input as they 'were active and had to do something by themselves'.

Apart from learning in Department classes some students also discussed methods of supporting their learning of teaching. Jiří, Year 2, appreciated the classroom focused approach practised in methodology classes, especially the chance to try classroom activities in presentations when the students 'could try to teach, or were taught as little children'. Many students expressed their need 'to have more chances' to teach.

Jana, Year 3, articulated the need for more guidance at the observation phase of the teaching practice saying:

*...during the first lessons it was very difficult to concentrate on what I was supposed to observe according to the observation sheet. I kept writing all the*

*instructions the teacher was giving as it was the observation goal, and tried to put down everything that was said. It was horrible.*

Structure of the programme, contents of the courses and methods, which were either part of the departmental policy or individual teachers' performances, thus completed the students' views of the subject of investigation. The interviewing, however, also revealed several issues, like the use of Czech in classes, impact of the learning experience and theory and practice balance, which actually appeared to be of significant importance in the process of the development of understanding the students' problems, and consequently designing the changes.

Most of the matters raised by the students were later discussed by their teachers, although they focused on an understanding of the issues rather than on their demonstrations, as the following section documents.

## **B. TEACHERS TALK**

Three teachers of the Department and its Head were interviewed in May 1994. Two of the teachers were native speakers the third one a Czech. The interviews were conducted after the students' and the discussions were influenced by the information previously gained. The goal was to find out about their experience with the programme, their understanding of possible problems, and suggestions for changes. The interviews added a teachers' perspective to the issues opened by the students and also raised the question of the impact of staffing issues on the programme implementation and development.

### **1. Characteristics of Teachers**

Pete, British Council lecturer

Pete was a teacher of English as a foreign language with previous teaching and teacher training experience. He had been working with the Department since September 1993. At the time of the interview he was teaching Methodology, besides general English development. As a methodology teacher he was also involved in the teaching practice supervision. When interviewed, he had had one-year experience working with the Department and at least one year ahead of him.

Pam, American Peace Corps volunteer



Pam came to the Department in 1993 to teach with us for two years. Before that she taught mathematics in various American schools. As a part of the training for her work in the Czech Republic she went through a six week course focused on teaching English as a foreign language. She was interviewed after one year of her operation at the Department. She taught grammar, which she took over from a Czech colleague, lexicology and also writing in all three programmes. In the second year she also designed and taught a course for textual analysis and public speaking.

Anna, Department teacher

Anna joined the Department in September 1992 and started teaching in October 1992, after her graduation from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. At the time of the interview she had been teaching with the Department for the second year. She taught History and Culture of the English Speaking Countries, Grammar and Listening in the first Year and Grammar and Writing in the second Year.

Ivana, Head of the Department

Ivana graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Charles university in 1986, and passed PhD. exams in 1988. Her previous teaching experience was in the language school where she worked as an English teacher for five years. She began to work for the Faculty of Education in 1991 as an external teacher. In spring 1992 she joined the Department full-time and was appointed the Head of the newly established Department of English.

Since the very beginning she has faced the double role of manager and teacher. As a manager she deals with all the personnel, administrative and economic matters. Besides that she teaches from four to six lessons a week. At the time of the interview it was grammar and writing.

The interviews supplemented the issues raised by the students. Some of the teachers' reflections are specifically course related, others apply to the programme focus and common learning issues, irrespective of the course.

## 2. Perception of Students' Language Worries

Commenting on the students' main concern, the English language development, Pete said it appeared to be improving with every new group coming. He claimed that he 'could see the difference. The younger, the better their spoken English'. Their speaking skill, however, appeared to be influenced by the focus on correctness in their experience. He pointed out the learning barrier effect of mistake awareness on their attitude to the complexity of the language saying:

*...we were doing relative clauses, and the difference between 'that' and 'which' and I was trying to point out that sometimes you always must use 'that' and sometimes you always must use 'which', but sometime they are interchangeable, and that worried them. They want the rules, and if there is not a rule, they are worried that they are not going to get it right.*

Discussing the accuracy-fluency issue Pam advocated for an integrated focus on correct production in other courses, too. She said, that, for instance, in the writing production of the students numerous mistakes in basic grammar showed that practice had not been sufficient. Therefore, she suggested a close co-operation of teachers focused on dealing with errors, both personal and common for the whole group. She even presented a plan:

*... the writing teacher could mark it G for grammar, which would mean that the student should take the paper to the grammar teacher... If it is done regularly we could do something about their mistakes.*

Pam thus, discussing the language problems, raised the issue of the gap between theory and practice

## 3. Theory and Practice Balance

Grammar, a major concern of the students was discussed both by Pam and Anna as each of them were involved in teaching the course. Pam had noticed too much focus on grammar rules in the classes and she emphasised the necessity to integrate theory and practice. She noticed that 'the students were able to learn all the rules, but when it came to actually using it in context then it became more difficult.' To deal with this problem she suggested 'to have them write their own story, after doing for instance, simple and continuous past tenses'. She believed

that in this way she would be able to identify mistakes they made either individually or as a group, she would let the students realise the complexity of the language and they would learn more about their language competence than in an item or two of focused exercises.

However, working with the students in grammar classes she observed that they also needed regular grammar practice exercises for 'moral support'. She advocated for the balance of various activities that provided the students with a clear picture of their progress in a particular area, and the free production that offered a more complex review of their mastering the language. She also supported the use of a text in grammar saying:

*...there is some way that they can do reading as well as speaking and writing, maybe even in the syntax, they should have a text that they read for their homework so that they begin to feel how the language works and then go to the specifics.*

Another link of grammar theory to practice, this time teaching practice, was pointed out by Pam when she spoke of student presentations in grammar classes. Drawing on her experience from the lexicology course she said:

*In order to get them to see that the topics could be useful, I would often ask them for their homework: 'Tell me how you would use them in a basic school class'. They came up with some very good ideas.*

She understood its beneficial effects for the development of the students' awareness of the connections between the university class topics and basic school classrooms. Also Anna saw the contribution in that 'the students had a chance to test their own ability to explain a little bit of grammar clearly so that the others could understand it'. Also the need for the students to use various resources could have an impact on their attitude towards the rules.

As well as Pam, Anna saw many of the students' problems in grammar classes being of a cross-subject nature. She had noticed that pronunciation and spelling were among them, saying that 'a lot of them [students] did not pronounce correctly, they could not read well, and made mistakes in the use of word and sentence stress'. The students obviously did not use the knowledge from other courses as it remained disconnected from their practice.



Discussing the ever present mistake awareness and the attitude of the students towards grammar rules, the teachers emphasised the importance of past language learning experience in the process of educating teachers.

#### 4. Impact of the Learning Experience of Students

The variety of issues related to the learning experience of the students ranged from the attitude towards new learning tools, effects on language, to understanding learning and teaching.

The introduction of teaching methods the students had not been used to was commented on as causing difficulties in classroom work. Pete, for instance understood the problems he faced in his classes as the matter which had to do 'with students' attitudes and expectations and how they sometimes did not meet his'. He thought it was a problem of teachers, not necessarily foreign, who adopted an interactive methodology in classrooms.' He found it difficult to make students contribute voluntarily, but once he chose somebody 'they actually contributed quite well. They were not used to being asked for their opinions and being asked what they think about XY.' He thought too, that 'as individual contributions to learning were never encouraged, their oral language proficiency could have been influenced'.

Still another problem he thought the students had were the activities when the students were expected to work in groups and 'solve a problem together'.

Pam saw a major problem in their understanding of learning. She argued that they did not see their learning as a process, but as a matter of results, i.e., exams or credits. This demonstrated itself in their unrealistic expectations that the work missed in the semester could be made up in a week or two. She gave an example of a student who without any excuse missed a lot of classes.

*I tried to show him how much work it would be so that he began to see he could not do it in two weeks. But it was not the message he took, he thought I was the one who did not want to help him.*

Therefore, she found the continuous assessment system beneficial for students as they could follow their progress and see the continuous process. She could monitor the progress, identify problems and help in time, too. Also, Anna

commented on the assessment system as beneficial from the language learning point of view saying: 'continuous work in language study is vital, it is not enough if students only listen to what is happening in the classroom, they have to do homework'.

Pete summarised the effects of the past schooling on their learning perception:

*...the influence of student learning experience appeared to be enormous in terms of their own language competence expectations, and dependence on teachers or other sources of 'golden rules'. They need to be encouraged to develop their sense of responsibility for what they are doing and not to depend on the teacher all the time. That comes into everything.*

He concluded that 'their critical approach to knowledge was thus limited and needed thorough development'.

Making connections between the student learning experience, university class instruction and their teaching performance appeared to be another difficulty. Pete referred to his methodology class experience:

*...a lesson on listening comprehension, you might have given a demonstration on a particular method, then you might give them a task to do and you ask them 'What problem might you have using this kind of approach with basic school students, and how would you solve these problems'. That kind of thing they find difficult. When they have to go what's beyond the piece of paper when they have to actually think about what they might do in a specific situation.*

Closely related to that is the level of development of the reflection skill. On the basis of his teaching practice observations Pete concluded that teaching experience did not work as a source of information for them. He discussed an event when:

*...I said to her that she might have done the instruction in Czech so that the students could understand. She answered that she had done that. Then I said: 'And did everybody understand?', because she asked only 'did you understand everything' and they nodded but it did not mean that they had.*

They mostly thought about their performance as 'right' or 'wrong'. They did not think about what they had done. That was why, he said, they were reluctant to do peer evaluation. He drew on his supervision experience:

*...If you ask them what you might do differently next time. All you get is silence. And if you ask the others, you can see that they think it is disloyal to draw attention to something that the other person has done because they think it's negative criticism.*

Not only the old learning experience, but also the impact of the new interactive learning experience was observed by Pete in basic school classes. It was the students' attitude towards pupils developing towards interactive instead of authoritative. Pete said that although 'we could not see them often enough, they were making an effort to get a rapport with the teacher they were with and pupils as well'.

While teachers' experience with the teaching methods in a variety of classes was the focus of the previous section, the comments on the structure of the programme and the design of particular courses, as well as factors influencing the programme implementation will be discussed in the following one.

## **5. Structure of the Programme Considerations**

All three teachers interviewed commented above all on their classroom experience, i.e., the courses they taught.

Asked for his view of programme changes needed, Pete suggested an increase in the number of methodology classes. He understood these lessons were crucial for professional development as the students should be provided both with theoretical background and also a chance to practise. He said:

*...this year I have been teaching Year 3 methodology, and in the second term, they have one 45 minute period of methodology, which isn't enough. You can't cover enough material. They should all the way through have at least two lessons a week.*

As the methodology classes are closely connected to the teaching practice of the students, he considered the contact of the English Department teachers with the



students on teaching practice very important for several reasons. First he referred to the present situation in schools. He said that

*...classroom teachers mostly did not have enough time to reflect together with the students on their teaching performance. Due to the lengths of breaks between lessons, i.e., 10 - 15 minutes, and other duties of teachers, for example, break or lunch supervision, the students sometimes might have 5 or 10 minutes to reflect on.*

Moreover, he thought we should realise that no classroom teachers were trained for student teacher supervision and they often 'were not sure about what they were supposed to do'.

Another reason for more involvement of the Department staff in supervision in schools was the development of the students' level of self-evaluation and reflection. Even using the micro-teaching sheets they received in methodology classes, they could not see what needed improvement unless they were focused to that by 'someone who was more experienced'.

Discussing his observations of Year 3 students teaching, Pete emphasised a cross curricular issue, i.e., the need to encourage and support 'student autonomy and independence of thinking and thinking in a structured way' when he said:

*...let's say lesson planning, we have to get them to see that it's not just a process where you go : I'm going to do this and then that and so on, we need to get them to see that there is a reason for step one and step two. If they do exercise 5 they have to be able to say that they need that exercise because they need revision of 'have got'.*

He pointed out that the emphasis on 'clear structured organisation' should be obvious in all English Department classes.

Clear and structured organisation was also advocated by Anna when she discussed the system of electives and its choice. She argued that 'there should be a selection of electives for particular years. Students needed the background of going through certain courses before enrolling in electives'. She called for a coherent development also within the electives, not only the compulsory courses of the programme.

The coherence within and between the courses of the programme was observed as broken sometimes, in spite of the fact it had existed in the course description. Both Czech interviewees commented on this feature. Ivana and Anna understood the majority of native speakers on staff, the frequency of their changing and the lack of Czech staff as major problems of the Department influencing the programme implementation. Due to their year or two contracts, they usually left shortly after they became adapted and had the opportunity of becoming familiar with the context and background of the school and students, which mostly took them about a year.

Anna thought that this demonstrated as the lack of consistency in some courses. She drew on her experience from the grammar course where the students appeared to have gaps from phonetics and phonology classes which she understood was a result of two teachers changing in the course in Year 1. In her opinion more Czech teachers on staff would solve not only the continuity issue but also the need for Czech in some classes, for instance, grammar. She pointed out Year 1 where 'students had only native speakers, which was bad because sometimes it was necessary to compare Czech and English'.

The constant lack of permanent staff, i.e., Czech teachers, was the issue Ivana discussed from many points of view as it appeared to influence the operation of the Department seriously, and consequently, the development of the programme. She argued that to fill in the gaps caused by frequent changes of teachers in the Department, the Czech staff usually taught what was necessary and therefore very rarely had a chance to concentrate on the development of a course or two. She used her case as an example of the problem she saw as general for the Department saying:

*...as far as my preparation for classes is concerned, I do something in a hurry, go to the classroom and it does not work. But next year I teach in a different course. There is no chance for me to prepare something, reflect on that, change it and try it again, no way.*

Ivana argued that a stable group of people could develop the system in which each of them would teach only a certain element and develop it by experiencing it. She realised that all of the Czech staff were beginners in teacher training and everything was new for them. The question of becoming familiar with a course

as a whole seemed to be the key to Ivana. She said, 'me, for instance, I teach some syntax, then for some time grammar in Year 1, I will teach grammar in year 4 and also writing, nothing thoroughly'.

Frequent and numerous staff changes made it also difficult to monitor and control what was happening in the courses. She was aware of people having their own agendas or of their different understanding of the course contents, and of the effects these 'personal' changes had on the continuity of the programme. As an example she discussed Year 1 [93/94] which

*... has been another experiment as there is not even one Czech teacher, the understanding of the courses will probably be completely different. I am sure that Craig will do some phonetics and grammar with them somehow, but I know it will not be the system they need.*

Although she did not doubt that most of the courses were prepared carefully, with responsibility and dedication, she was sure that native speakers tended to do it in their own way.

She articulated, two major preconditions for the successful and effective development of the programme, as she understood them. The first was the time to focus on and change what we did not like, for instance, the organisation of teaching practice, which she thought 'we had the rough framework for, but we should work on the details and for that we needed time'. And second she came to her favourite conclusion 'if only there were twenty Czechs here'.

The experience with the programme by students and teachers was investigated in the previous two sections. The effects of the programme will be the focus of the next two. First, the continuous teaching practice of Year 4 students will be discussed as observed by their faculty supervisors and classroom teachers.

### C. TEACHERS OBSERVE

The observation of the students on their teaching practice is the responsibility of the subject departments of the Faculty. The definition of the goals, methods of teaching and learning as well as the system and criteria of evaluation are specified by individual departments, therefore they, as well as the study programmes, vary considerably. Observation of the students during their final 4-



week block teaching practice is part of the working load of the methodology teachers. For the English Department staff it is an opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of their activities in the courses of the programme.

The two groups observed were Year 4 students in 1994 and 1995, altogether 32 students. In year 1994 I was the only Department supervisor, in 1995 I shared the task with Alice, another American colleague, who was a methodology teacher in year 4.

The primary goal of supervision of the continuous practice was to monitor lesson planning and its implementation, and participate in the reflection phase of our students' teaching performance. Our observation focus was on lesson structure and activity design, use of the textbooks and other materials, class management, and after the lesson the reflection skills of the students and their response in discussion.

Having observed two groups of students during their classroom experience we gained a lot of information providing us deeper insight into the issues raised in interviews. As the 1994 round of observations was parallel to the interviewing activities, it was actually supplementing the data collected and adding new views. We identified several areas in which the students had difficulties which later on helped indicate the focus of attention for the programme development. The issues which seemed to appear most frequently have been selected, though it cannot be said that all of them applied to all students. The range spread from lesson planning, activity design and work with the textbook, to class management and reflection. They often demonstrated themselves to be interrelated.

## 1. Lesson Planning

In the area of lesson planning it appeared that the students tended to work with the textbooks without taking into consideration the focus of the lesson. They concentrated on the techniques used in the lesson and neglected the specification of their purpose as reflection sessions often revealed. For instance, when asked a question like 'why did you do listening before vocabulary introduction?', they answered 'because it was suggested in the teacher's book'. They did not seem to be able to see the purpose of introduction of new words in the context. This attitude then appeared to have several results.

First, without thinking about the purpose of particular stages, and trying to make the lesson 'more interesting' by supplementing the textbook, the students might skip or mix up important phases of the lesson. For example, a student teacher introduced a new structure and continued with an exercise designed for free practice, i.e., the work with pictures was more exciting, as well as grouping in pairs. However, the pupils who had not practised in the more controlled way, struggled, spoke in Czech and made numerous mistakes. The outcome then was discouraging for the student teacher and pupils as well. As the observation comments of one of the Department tutors reported 'it would be helpful to clarify the goals and focus on reaching them'.

As the example above indicated, the succession of stages in the lesson and the connections between them did not always seem to be clear and the students often struggled. They did not realise in advance what language would be needed to introduce, practise or revise. This might reflect in an inappropriate design of an activity, which then had to be changed in the process of the lesson. For instance, one reading activity ended up as an unprepared explanation of new vocabulary, one planned speaking activity turned into grammar explanation.

Second, when asked for the analysis of and reflection on their performance, the students often said they 'thought it had been good'. The following discussion of their lesson plans then showed that the specifications of the aims and objectives were absent. As well as the implementation stage, the reflection showed that because there was not enough thinking focused on goal specification and learning process in the preparation stage, reflection then became a very difficult task to meet. The responses to several questions often asked in reflection sessions illustrated that. For instance, 'How did you do the reading activity?' was mostly answered in detail. Much more vague would be the reply to 'Why did you do it?'. General answers like 'I wanted them to read and understand the article' were usually as much as one could learn. The most tricky appeared to be the questions focused on learning effects. They almost never responded to 'What did the activity do to children?' or 'What did they learn?' The most common reply we got was 'I think it worked because the children liked it'.

The prevailing focus on teaching was sometimes accompanied by the use of techniques that came from the students' language learning past.

## 2. Impact of Experienced Teaching Models

Most of our students appeared to have adopted interactive approach leading to a more relaxed atmosphere in their lessons as many classroom teachers emphasised in their evaluations. However, as far as teaching techniques were concerned, they sometimes tended to slip into following the models they themselves experienced as language learners, especially when they did not follow the teacher's book instructions or introduced supplementary material.

A specific example of the impact of the previous learning experience of students on their teaching comes from the class led by one of the Year 4 group of students in 1994.

Pavla was an industrious student, always very conscious of her study results and very rarely having any difficulties in meeting the study requirements of the Department.

For the whole year 4 of her study she taught a class of 13 - 14 year old students in the language school, she met them every week. She was considered to be an efficient student teacher as the language school deputy head teacher emphasised in her evaluation. When I came to observe her teaching there were twelve students in the classroom. The English Cambridge Course, volume 1, was the textbook used. They were practising new vocabulary, doing a writing exercise and worked with the text, which was a part of the serial in the textbook.

Pavla revised the previous parts of the story asking questions and letting the students write the answers. After they had read their responses and she corrected the language, she introduced the reading of the following part of the story with the following instruction:

*Now, open your books on page 56, There is another part of the Long Story. Petr, you read the first sentence and translate it into Czech.*

The children took their turns reading aloud and translating into Czech. They struggled with the pronunciation and meaning. Then they read the article as a whole without translating, which was the last step of the activity, and the lesson went on.



After the lesson we discussed the stages of the lesson, focusing on the techniques chosen, especially in the reading section. I asked Pavla if there were any other ways of checking comprehension besides translating word for word. She said 'yes' and gave me options like comprehension questions or true - false statements. I asked her two more questions: what could have proceeded the work with the text to avoid problems students had with pronunciation and comprehension, and how she could use the text for more than just reading aloud and translation. She was not sure what to answer. When I suggested listening to the text first, discussing previous parts or predicting what would come in the following one, she agreed that these were good ideas. Explaining why she had chosen the translation strategy she said that 'they always had done it like that when she had been learning English at school and also that the kids were used to such a procedure of reading a text in a foreign language from the previous year'. As it showed in our discussion, she knew theoretically a lot about teaching reading, i.e., about phases and techniques, but she did not apply this knowledge in the classroom.

The connection between what she learned in methodology classes and practised a little during her regular teaching practice and what she did while teaching was not developed in this particular instance of the reading activity. The justification of her teaching performance was then based on her language learning experience, not on her teacher education.

Lesson structuring and activity design difficulties were often combined with class management problems.

### **3. Class Management**

In the class management area there was a whole range of problems the students struggled with in the classrooms. For most of them it was time management, which, in the supervisors' and classroom teachers' evaluations, seemed to be a universal problem for our students. The balanced use of Czech and English in classrooms, and instruction and explanation giving strategies were frequent difficulties observed.

The wrong time management demonstrated itself in most cases as 'being over-prepared' for the lessons. The students often did not manage to cover what they

had planned. Reflecting on this feature of their performance they mostly said they had underestimated the time needed for instruction and organisation of individual activities. Classroom teachers referring to this said that 'this was typical for beginners and that they would learn it by teaching longer'.

The instruction problems indicated the link to their planning when they concentrated on what they would do. In the lesson planning phase the students did not think about what would actually happen in the classroom at a certain moment, what they would do and what the children were expected to do. They did not think about the sequence of instructions to organise the activity, for instance, introducing the activity, grouping the students, distributing materials, demonstrating the activity, etc. What then often happened was that the children were given the materials first. Their curiosity made them investigate and they did not listen to instructions, then they did not know what to do, which resulted in explanations to individuals. Also questions like 'who should start first' or 'how should we let you know that we have finished' then occurred. The activity was often out of control or sometimes even had to be stopped by the student teacher and begun again, which always meant a loss of time and at the end led to lesson plan cuts.

The classroom language, i.e., the adaptation of the level of their English to the level of the class in terms of vocabulary and structures, and identification of appropriate opportunities to use English, caused difficulties for most students. They usually used the language they communicated with in the university classes. As the children looked puzzled, the students either slipped into Czech or began mixing Czech and English, which was usually even more puzzling for the kids. They also found it difficult to distinguish the situations when English could be used, for example regular classroom instructions like 'Open your books. Work in pairs.', etc., and the situations when Czech would be more appropriate, for instance, explanations of new activities or a more complicated instruction. In the lessons they usually began with English only and ended up with Czech only.

The use of English in classrooms also illustrated the gap between the fluent and accurate use of the language, as indicated in the interviews. A variety of grammar mistakes ranging from pronunciation to syntax was a common feature of their classroom speech. In reflection sessions it showed that the students themselves were aware of the errors and even identified them.

The class management problems as well as the structuring and language difficulties indicated that the attention to the learner and the process of learning in the preparation phase of the lesson were very rare, with the exception of the common effort to introduce activities 'interesting and attractive' for the children, as the students often characterised the purpose of their performance. The focus was above all on teaching techniques to deal with a certain content. The ability to reflect and thus learn from the experience appeared to be limited.

The classroom observations provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the programme and further information illuminating the origins of the problems our students had in classrooms as well as providing a range of the specifications of the issues identified in the interviews.

The following section of this chapter introduces the source of information which was, in a way, a combination of all the methods utilised in the project. The team-teaching of the course, the initial goal of which was to lead the students to the implementation of a final paper, allowed us to share classroom experience, to 'interview' students during tutorials, to monitor their performance through their writing and reporting on their classroom activities, to reflect, analyse, suggest and implement changes together with the other teacher.

#### **D. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WORK TOGETHER**

The initial goal of team teaching in the newly designed course, aimed at the implementation of the final paper by the students of the English Department [see Ch. IV., B], was to monitor the experiment, clarify the standards and assist the students who decided to undergo a procedure that we had had no experience with. The expertise, experience and educational background of both designers of the course were dramatically different, American and Czech. Each of us was to contribute to a different area. We assumed that going through the procedure together would also help us understand fully the details of the whole project, not only in our personal areas of expertise.

We expected in the process to clarify the tutoring role and activities, structure of the course, specify the criteria through developing the first complete papers and obtain examples for the teaching material.



However, it became in the process of this activity, as well as in classroom observations, a priceless source of information on the effects, problems and shortcomings of the programme itself. *The chance to share the experience and reflect together, as well as the opportunity to relate the information from interviews and observations to parallel classroom experience appeared to be extremely effective in the analysing processes as well as in further steps suggesting changes.*

### 1. Characteristics of the Course

The initial idea was to design a kind of final paper that would allow the students to implement a degree quality paper closely related to the teaching profession. A two-year long process of discussing the issue of the final paper to be completed at the English Department began in the school year of 1992/93, two years before our first students would graduate. Through endless brainstorming hours of disputing, arguing, questioning and responding on various occasions we clarified the basic ideas to draw on while designing the course.

First, it was the awareness of the need for the students to obtain guidance during the whole process of choosing the topic, *focusing on the subject of investigation*, developing the project and writing the paper. Second, we agreed that the paper should be related to teaching, unlike traditional linguistics or literature oriented diploma theses. The students would be expected to relate the teaching and learning theories to their *learning and teaching experience and thus add their own individual perspective to this work*. We gradually clarified the format, the goals and the procedure of implementing the paper by our students. To be able to do that we needed classroom time and teaching material.

As the majority of the first group of students intended to write their final paper with the Department, we decided to run the course within the English for Academic Purposes course, *led by my American colleague, Donna*. I planned to participate in the classes, to learn from her about research focused lessons and also to be able to contribute from the teaching English as a foreign language methodology point of view.

The material that we wrote for this particular reason was designed to provide guidance and help the students complete the task. [see Appendix p.7] It also

specified the parts of the paper, i.e., academic, professional project and evaluation, the procedure of developing it and writing-up, and provided the framework for the course in which we intended to team-teach.

From the very beginning both of us were very much aware of the experimental nature of this project, as were the students who voluntarily decided to go through the process. However, at the beginning of the summer semester of 1993 none of us had the faintest idea of what was ahead of us and what difficulties we would have to overcome in the research, project implementing and writing-up phases. In this sense, the process was merciless in revealing the problems and illuminating our efforts to understand them. This experience was shared by all the actors involved, i.e., teachers and students, as the feedback group interview with eight of them demonstrated.

## **2. The Research Phase Considerations**

In the first phase of doing the research the students did not seem to have major difficulties, with the exception of technical problems writing bibliography cards and sometimes focusing on the subject. The technical matters were sorted out quickly by revisions. The problem of focusing difficulties, however, was underestimated by both of us. We helped the students to narrow their topics individually during tutorials. We felt that they understood the need for specification of their task not to remain on the general level. Unfortunately, we did not go beyond the oral students' confirmation that 'yes, they understood' and believed that they would use this understanding when they began to prepare their teaching materials.

Also the design of their project models showed their difficulties in specifications in terms of defining the structure of the project. Although they were provided with step by step guidance they did not seem to be able to imagine what actually was expected from them. For example, it appeared to be difficult for many of them to provide specific answers to guiding questions like 'What do you already know about the subject from methodology classes, classroom observations... The goals and ways of implementing the steps suggested in their project plans were sometimes vague and evaluation methods were mostly ignored completely. This is where the difficult process of tutoring to help students clarify what they should

do, why, when, and how to do it began. We had to spend a lot of time leading most of them to the specifics of their projects.

### 3. Project Implementing Phase Considerations

Over the summer they prepared their teaching materials and in November 1993 went to schools to test their projects. One area neglected completely in the research phase emerged when students entered the schools. It was the familiarity with the field, i.e., school and classroom context. The students who had not taught regularly before went to test their projects and sometimes prepared materials that did not fit in the class they taught in terms of the language level or topics chosen. Some of them had problems with time management and others reported unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved within one lesson. Nevertheless, most of the students did not report to have had problems in classrooms.

### 4. Writing-up Phase Considerations

The real shock for both parties came when the process of writing-up, beginning with the academic chapter, started. Enormous amount of difficulties emerged and demonstrated themselves in the students' drafts. It reflected the way the course was run at that time, uncovered the shortcomings of the language, methodology and writing courses and demonstrated the power of the students' learning experience and their working habits.

The problem of insufficient focusing at the very beginning of the process began when the students started reading materials and collecting the bibliography. Unfortunately, it only showed later on as some of the students found the materials were not relevant or were too general and did not help them find the information they needed relating their classroom work to theory. Markéta, Year 4, for instance, admitted that 'after she had taught and started writing she had to read again as what she had read before appeared to be useless'. Petr, Year 4, also spoke about his uncertainty of what to include in his academic chapter and asked himself questions like 'Will I need it later? Shall I write about grammar generally? How to distinguish what is related to my project?' Since the topic was not always specified and narrowed at the beginning, the students often tended to cover areas too big for the scale of their projects in the academic section. As a



result of that they did not concentrate enough on one issue within the whole area of investigation.

The students' work with academic literature added another perspective to the previously identified issue of critical thinking. The students were not selective when picking up ideas as quotations which they liked but which often were only remotely related to their topic. For example, a student working on the motivational role of the games in language teaching and learning included several paragraphs of quotations of how games are divided in general. She thought it was important but at the end it appeared to have no relation to what she did in classes. Sometimes it also looked as though the students had incorporated quotations because they had been expected to, and sometimes they used them instead of their own ideas. One girl, for example, completed a whole section of citations from a variety of sources.

Another area of difficulty appearing in the Professional Project discussion was planning, i.e., logical structuring of their classroom work. Their specifications of the aims and objectives of the lessons and particular activities, were too general or vague, or were missing.

The biggest amount of effort was obviously given to the preparation of the activity in terms of the method. The students often concentrated on how they would do, for instance, a speaking activity and what materials they would need, but they did not think about its purpose. Focusing on the ways of teaching only sometimes caused little understanding of what actually happened. Then the self-evaluation of their performance was shallow. As an example from one of the drafts and the tutor's comments demonstrates. The student's sentence *'to encourage students' interest I also used several pictures which made reading easier'* was a part of her reflection on the lesson taught. In her comment the tutor had to ask for the explanation of why pictures made it easier as this thought was missing in the draft. Also in their project evaluation section students often remained vague as an excerpt from a draft illustrates:

*It is possible to apply a lot of their [experts'] ideas in the classroom and if the teacher uses the basic rules of teaching which the experts write of, speaking skills of the children in the classrooms improve. [Jarka]*

Yet the teacher's comment saying 'you need to expand here - name a few' led to a specification which provided information about what teaching techniques she meant. The statement like 'the activity worked very well and the children liked it', well known from classroom supervision experience, was rather common in their reports.

The lack of skill of logical structuring of their writing caused enormous problems for majority of the students. It was very difficult to make them think about what they actually wanted to say before they started writing, as they themselves admitted during the interview. Gabriela, for example, found it difficult to 'keep logical order while writing, instead of her way of putting the ideas on the paper as they were coming to her head'. Jana complained that 'the prescribed structure pushed her to put her experience into certain patterns, organise her work and think about what would come first and what would come second'. Also the tutor's comments like 'you need to rearrange this chapter for a logical progression of ideas' appeared in variations in almost all of the drafts.

The working habits developed during the learning experience of students in their mother tongue clashed with the new requirements causing many hard moments for almost all students. Gabriela, a local newspaper contributor, struggled with the system of writing requiring a logical structure of the paragraphs, connections and transitions between them, which 'made her write differently from what she was used to'. She understood the roots of their problems in that 'they had never done that [completing an academic paper] before'. She also assumed that part of the problem could be the language, i.e., English, as she thought that such a project 'would be difficult even in Czech'. The tutor's comments like 'This seems to contradict your next paragraph. Be clearer in the proceeding paragraph to avoid confusing your reader.' or 'Have you managed to follow the points as you prepared them in your outline?' illustrate the common feature in their drafts.

Academic writing rules appeared to be too difficult for the students, although they had gone through a two-semester writing course. The new learning experience of a writing course obviously was not long or strong enough to allow them to change their writing habits and use the new tool to meet the task of completing the major project.

The difficulties with ability to make connections between theory and practice appeared when the students reporting on their projects did not relate what they had found in theory to their work. Jarka, for example, remained very general commenting on a textbook analysis which 'led her to concentrate on activities which were adequate for knowledge of the children, which developed their interest in reading and taught them to predict what the text was about'. Only additional tutor's questions like 'what knowledge? vocabulary? background?' helped her make the connection to what the experts, cited in chapter one of her work, had said about the kind of information that could be gained from the textbook analysis.

Also the reports on their teaching and evaluations of their performance showed that some students could not connect their own theoretical discussion to what had happened in classrooms. This particular relation was often completely missing, or the student simply said:

*The theory cited in the first chapter led naturally to practice. I would like to review two important citations from chapter I which are the key points of the theory which I used. [Jana, Year 4]*

Underlying all the problems and often multiplying them was often a poor grasp of the English language. For instance, a student with language problems wrote sentences with language mistakes affecting not only the language level of the paper but also its clarity. A sentence from one of the first drafts illustrated this:

*So a teacher should involve into teaching reading such activities, for example Snakes, pexeso, flash cards, which encourage children's interest and desire to read not only at school some texts from textbooks but also in their leisure time at home.*

Both language and meaning problems then led to frequent revisions which diverted the attention from the logical development of the paper to the language corrections. The tutors' comments on the research progress then got mixed with the language focus and the student became overwhelmed, would lose confidence and at the end became more dependent on the tutor.

Going through the process together with the students provided us with an excellent opportunity to examine simultaneously the numerous problems from



several angles, supported by the findings from interviews and classroom observations. This allowed us to gain a deep insight into the issues concerning the course itself and the programme as a whole.

### 5. Sources of Problems and their Effects

Discussing the experiment after the first group of students completed their work, we identified three major sources of difficulties our students had. Both of us were very much aware of several factors which made it extremely difficult for this group to face the demands of the project.

- The course was brand new and the idea of outcome was rather vague. This then led to instructions and explanations which appeared not to be clear enough and as there were no examples available, the students had to revise their work often. In the process of teaching and tutoring the students we were clarifying the standards for ourselves.
- We did not have any experience in leading the Diploma thesis course. As a result of that we were not able to anticipate difficulties the students had. Therefore we solved them after they had occurred, which caused a lot of anxiety and a feeling of underachievement.
- The group of students we started this experiment with had little or no experience with the tools we expected them to use, for example, academic reading and writing, interview and observation, lesson planning, reflecting and evaluating their work. The situation forced them to learn to work with the tools while developing an important document.

We spent a long time with each of the students and tried to help them organise, specify and often understand what was happening. Double reading of all the drafts and frequent tutorials to help students, led to numerous revisions which caused a lot of anxiety and sometimes feelings of frustration. The students, however, got used to revisions and towards the end of the process they seemed to develop a certain kind of dependence on them. For, instance, once Jana received one of her drafts back, she returned to my office almost immediately and asked why I had not read it. I replied I had. She could not believe it as there were no comments in it.

The intensive individual care we offered to our students in this experiment had two completely opposite effects. First, it helped several students understand what we meant and they finished the task without major difficulties. Their projects then met the goals of the course and provided examples of original student research work. On the other hand, some students became absolutely dependent on tutors' advice and asked us for the approval of every detail and of each step they made. Their projects then sometimes lacked the consistency of ideas within individual parts and the connections between the parts, though bits and pieces were done quite well. Also some of them developed specific parts we discussed together but did not transfer this experience to the others. For instance, we discussed the structuring of one section of a chapter in terms of ordering ideas, building up paragraphs and making links between them. The student did that, but only in the section discussed, not in the following one or two.

Besides revealing a whole range of problems and tasks to be sorted out, besides the extremely hard work of all parties involved, the whole process, which we all literally suffered through, had profound learning effects on the students as well as on the tutors. In the interview with the students after their projects had been finished, they themselves provided a list of what they had gained. What follows are the illustrating extracts from the interview.

All of them admitted that in the process they learned or began to learn to write differently.

Gabriela: *'...and now, I try to pick up main ideas to write about and then support them with details. It is still difficult, I am learning, and I also try to write shorter sentences, not as before seven clauses in one sentence.'*

Markéta: *'For the first time in my life I wrote the other way round, first outline and then writing. It is better, I know that my thoughts tend to divert'. She also noticed the improvement of her use of English saying 'I stopped translating from Czech to English after a couple of revisions'.*

Major learning contributions, however, were recognised in their development of understanding of teaching /learning process.

Jarka: *'If I compare the activities I prepared before [the work on the project] they had no structure. And I often felt frustrated when something did not work. I*

*learned to specify aims, objectives and the structure of the lesson and also to think about the failures in the lesson. I started to set more realistic goals, smaller and specific. It brings more satisfaction to the kids and myself'.*

*Jana: 'I learned about the need to get familiar with the kids, their abilities and reactions. Their thinking is different from the teacher's. We may think it is simple, but it appears to be difficult for them.'*

*Radka: 'They are willing to speak about the things they know and are interested in. You need some supplementary materials, let them move around and let them see the goal.'*

Gabriela concluded the discussion saying 'we learned more from the kids at schools than they learned from us', which both of us felt was very much true about us, too.

Team teaching and tutoring provided us with an opportunity to share a common teaching experience. Having had a chance to be together in one class and participate in tutorials provided us with a possibility to discuss the teaching and learning issues as observers and participants of one event. We could clarify our stand points and ideas listening to each other talk to the student. It was a very special learning experience for both of us. When Donna recalled her experience she said she had learned not only about methodology of teaching English as a foreign language, but above all, about the sources of students' difficulties. Sharing the experience with the first group of the students and literally developing the course together thus provided us a chance to identify and analyse issues to be dealt with the moments they emerged. The specification of problems and immediate analysis then allowed us to suggest and discuss procedure and method changes for the second group and also for the programme as a whole, where the issues appeared to be cross curricular or requiring long-term attention.

The development of the Diploma Thesis course illustrated a piece of classroom research which had not been planned as research and which contributed immensely to the understanding of the issues which were emerging gradually from several sources of data at a time and which led to formulating programme change suggestions.



## E. WHAT SENSE DOES IT ALL MAKE?

In the process of investigation there were two fundamental questions to seek answers for. What is it that the educational past did to learners? How to deal with this heritage to achieve the education of reflective practitioners? In this section we will try to formulate answers.

To discuss the first question we will consider the *learning experience* and the *problems* students have had with the language learned in secondary schools.

### 1. Teacher Centred Heritage Works Against Learner Centred Practice

The learning experience of teacher students established the knowledge, working habits and attitudes of the students, i.e., the educational situation the programme should react to. Having their roots in the knowledge accumulation system, they often contradict the reflective practice learning and teaching strategies practised, or intended to develop. To achieve the change, enough learning experience with *new* learning and teaching tools has to be provided as the impact is recognisable in the areas of learning and teaching, too.

The importance of learning experience in initial teacher education has been well documented, as, for instance, Goodson claims:

*...many studies in the 1970s and 1980s have focused on the teacher's own experience as pupils which is seen not only as important as the training periods but in many cases more important.* [Goodson, 1992:13].

What he calls 'more important' appeared actually to be extremely important for the Czech student teachers. Their educational past in the controlled system of education worked mostly against the expectations, attitudes and working habits of reflective practice, as observations, team-teaching and interviews confirmed. The system oppressing any individual expression of views and not supporting co-operation of individual minds affected the level of language development as well as the students' attitudes towards learning and teaching. The heritage apparently has had many shapes in the classes, and also created numerous barriers that have made needed, desirable and designed changes difficult to implement.

The evidence from the research provided numerous examples of the effects of schooling that Freire [1972] calls 'the banking system of education'

*... the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and "makes deposits" which the students patiently receive, memorise and repeat. ... the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits. [Freire, 1972:43]*

We can easily trace its characteristics in the area of the language learning effects, the attitude to learning and demonstration of the working habits of our students created by the system.

First, it is the low level of the development of language skills and the underdeveloped connection between grammar theory and the use of the language which reflect the focus on 'receiving, filing and storing, deposits', i.e., grammar rules and lists of vocabulary, instead of using the language for communication. Not only that, the remaining mistake awareness prevents the students from free expression of thoughts and ideas which works against the educational goals in courses designed as interactive.

Second, it is the attitude towards learning that often demonstrates as control wanted. The students call for teaching strategies that match their memorising learning habits, appreciate the work to be structured and timed for them. Although they are often aware of the lack of their active attitude to learning, they find it difficult to take the responsibility for their progress, and appreciate ways of making them work regularly, i.e., continuous assessment system.

Third, the introduction of new learning tools is not always fully accepted. The students sometimes ask for the old ones that provide them with a feeling of security, or misunderstand learning activities that are not 'depositing'. This may lead to underachievement or anxiety. It has also been demonstrated that the students are often reluctant to contribute voluntarily, they have problems working in groups, as communication was never encouraged. It takes time before they feel ready to get involved. Also working strategies they did not experience previously as learners cause difficulties. In classes it demonstrates as reluctance to use them, unless the activity is focused on practising the use, i.e., structured writing out of writing classes. Another characteristic is the attitude of only one

book as the source of information. The students frequently find a variety of resources puzzling. The development of selective and critical attitude to information is thus affected.

The overall passive attitude towards learning is supported by the understanding of the role of teacher as 'depositor', not as a person expected to help students develop their skills, share and help overcome their difficulties. The understanding of their roles in the education process which always was a set of events, not a continuous process, demonstrated sometimes as underestimating the importance of semester work as opposed to exam results. This attitude is also illustrated by their understanding of any performance as an assessment event not as an action to learn from.

Learning and perception of learning are only one area of the influence of the past schooling experience. The other one appears to be teaching and understanding of teaching models from their history. Drawing on Goodson who argues that

*...teacher socialisation, then occurs through the observation and internalisation of particular models of teaching as experienced by the recipient pupil. Lortie argues that these models, these latent models, are activated during the training period having often been, so to speak, "carried in suspension" over a period of time, particularly the undergraduate years.'* [Goodson, 1992:14]

We will demonstrate the strong impact of the 'latent models' on the student teaching performance. Observations of continuous teaching practice and debates with the student teachers provided evidence.

The students in classrooms often tend to slip into teaching strategies and class management techniques they experienced as language learners. Although the discussion often revealed that the students were aware of the alternatives, they did not always apply them in practice. Their experience often dictated that serious language teaching occurred in traditional ways, as also their attitude to learning novelties discussed above indicated. If they accept innovation, they mostly focus on attitude to pupils and new teaching techniques. Difficulties in making the connections between the tools and the purpose of their use, as well as reflecting problems illustrated that teaching was still in the centre of the student teachers' attention.



Also problems in making connections between their own learning experience, Department instruction and teaching performance are other demonstrations of the remaining gap in understanding the relationship between teaching and learning. The divorce between education and real life supported by the learning experience for knowledge accumulation purposes also pertains.

However, the research also showed that once the learning experience of a novelty is frequent enough, a new habit, attitude or strategy could be created and replace the old ones.

During observations it became obvious that the authoritative model of a teacher-controller was replaced by a teacher believing in interaction and positive motivation. The change of atmosphere created by the teacher's behaviour appeared to be the fastest change in the performance of our students in the classrooms. The experience of the teacher being strict, unfriendly, sometimes unjust, and often creating a threatening atmosphere in the classroom, as the interviews confirmed, was probably emotionally very strong and created the need for change in the students themselves. The new learning experience in the university classes, supported by the awareness of the need, had its impact on the change achievement.

The research not only specified the areas of impact in the past, but also confirmed that new learning experience can affect learning and teaching performance of student teachers and that the change is easier to achieve in the areas where it is felt to be needed and where learning experience supports it. Therefore, the following suggestions were made:

- To create the need for change by developing the awareness of the effects of learning experience, old and new, through focused reflection on particular issues:
  - passive versus active attitude to learning
  - learning as a set of events versus learning as a process,
  - accumulative versus investigative learning,
  - variety of teacher's roles in the teaching/ learning process,
  - learning as the aim of teaching
- To provide enough opportunities to experience the innovation as learners and thus support the professional development of student teachers.

## 2. Accuracy and Fluency Problems Interrelated.

The fluency and accuracy problems student teachers have should be dealt with as an integrated issue. The focus on the development of the connection between language theory and its use in the complexity of the language will lead to the development of appropriate knowledge and the use of English for learning and teaching purposes.

Many language learning and teaching experts, for example Widdowson or Rutherford, have agreed that the basic question related to grammar is not whether to teach it or not, but how to teach it. Widdowson [1988] points out that the method should reflect 'its intrinsic communicative character'. In his understanding the function of the device, i.e., its 'formal properties', is to 'mediate between words and context as a powerful resource for the purposeful achievement of meaning'. [Widdowson in Rutherford, Smith, 1988:154] As the goal of the programme has been the development of pedagogical grammar, i.e., the grammar that, as Rutherford [1988] calls it, would be 'more consistent with the concept of language as a vehicle for communication', the emphasis should be on providing the learning experience of grammar providing also commutative experience. [Rutherford in Rutherford, Smith, 1988:182]

The research documented that the emphasis on the knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary accumulation without parallel development of language skills led neither to the understanding of the system of English, nor to the confident use of the language for communication, learning and teaching purposes. It provided evidence of how the free language production barriers developed through the early language learning experience of the students, how it influenced the communicative efficiency in classes and what effects it had on the professional development of students. The difficulties reported on were above all in production, but they appeared in perception too, in both learning and teaching areas.

The students themselves were dissatisfied with the level of their English. They identified their problems as constant translating from Czech to English and the working interference of the two languages and the always present mistake awareness. The grammar explanations, i.e., more theory and exercises focused on separate language areas had no effect on the clarification of grammar items.

and did not lead to the improvement of their correct fluent speech. The effects are then perceived by the students as awkward, messy and full of mistakes in both university and basic school classrooms. Also their teaching skills are affected as they are not always able to explain to their pupils particular language areas or answer questions appropriately.

Also the teachers pointed out the overdeveloped correctness awareness which demonstrates as dependence on the rules on one hand, and 'reluctance to contribute voluntarily' to classroom discussions on the other. The classroom observation experience and a completion process of a major academic assignment showed a variety of mistakes in oral and written language production. This then led to providing not a very good language model in classes, and a frequent change of focus from professional matters to language clarification and correction procedure in final paper revisions.

To sort out the accuracy and fluency balanced development, the students called for more speaking opportunities and introduction of translation focused on clarification of mother and target language differences. The teachers advocated for the growth of awareness of the language complexity. Thus the need for a focus on the integrated development of accuracy and fluency was supported. Drawing on the views of the actors of the research the following suggestions were made:

- In grammar it is to develop confidence in using the correct language in a variety of contexts and to break grammar related barriers created by the 'terror of correctness' in the students' past learning experience. Strategies suggested are to focus on work with the language in context through a variety of activities in grammar classes. It will allow the students to understand the complex nature of the language and provide them the sufficient amount of opportunities to practise the complexity.
- To develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the system of English for teaching purposes in basic school classrooms, i.e., explanation, clarification and remedial procedures, by sustaining the practice of student teaching presentations in grammar classes. This is believed to provide them with a chance to combine learning and teaching experiences and better



understanding of the issues related to the area of grammar teaching and learning.

- To reduce the error causing effects of the Czech-English interference and to develop an awareness of the difference between the two languages as a language development supporting tool rather than a problem causing feature. It is suggested that Czech be introduced into grammar classes for explanation purposes and translation for clarification and mistake source identification purposes.
- To support the development of aural/oral skills in English for communication, learning and teaching purposes. It is suggested to provide speaking opportunities and encourage students' contributions also in other than language development classes.
- To consider the development of self-access learning materials to provide the students with opportunities for more practice.

After discussing the effects of the knowledge accumulation focus in the learning experience of the students, we will seek the answer to the second research question of the reflective practitioner education. We will discuss the tools, the use of which is needed, the teaching support and the design of the programme. All of these can provide a way to reach the goal of educating independent student teacher.

### **3. New Language Skills Needed**

Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills developed in mother tongue for memorising and translating purposes do not serve the requirements of reflective approach. It is necessary to re-develop them to enable the students to develop professional skills needed for learning and later for teaching.

Language teaching specialists, for instance Harmer, argue that the successful development of language skills 'depends to a large extent on their [students'] expertise in a number of specialist skills...'. [Harmer, 1991:183] in the mother tongue. In the process of foreign language learning these should be transferred to support the development of the respective skills in the target language.

The research showed, however, that the skills developed in our students' mother tongue and foreign language, too, for memorising or translating purposes did not serve the requirements for understanding new ideas in English, oral and written argumentation, selective reading or structured writing. In the classrooms this was demonstrated as difficulties with comprehension of 'new notions and ideas' and consequently misinterpretation of assignments. This led to an unsuccessful meeting of the requirements, frequent revisions and a feeling of underachievement and exam anxiety.

Classroom observations and following reflection sessions, as well as the discussion of the professional project showed besides difficulties to reflect, difficulties in the formal construction of justification and argument of what had been done in classrooms by the students themselves.

Teachers' classroom and also final paper tutoring experience revealed the reluctance to work with a variety of materials, difficulties in identification of relevant information and logical structuring of the student written production.

The experience allows us to conclude that the student teachers should be provided with enough opportunities for thorough development of the skills needed for their professional growth. Therefore, it was suggested:

- To focus on the development of new kinds of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills needed for efficient study. It is suggested to increase the writing and reading [for general and academic purposes] components of the programme to provide a chance to experience the use of language skills which are developed in a foreign language for purposes not experienced in their mother tongue.
- To focus on the development of reflective skills. It is suggested to foster the reflective element in professional components as well as in subject study classes. To consider the introduction of supportive electives.

Among the new skills needed for successful teaching practice is also the appropriate use of the mother tongue.

#### 4. The Czech Teacher of English Needs to Use Czech

The Czech language should be introduced to the English Department classes to supplement 'English only' instruction. The development of a balanced use of English and Czech for basic school classrooms, and the development of professional Czech are crucial for the professional performance of student teachers.

Classroom experience of many Czech teachers and also some teacher trainers' views, for instance, Doff, 1990, and Harmer, 1991, support the idea of the use of the mother tongue in language classrooms, especially monolingual, for explanation and class management purposes. The teachers in such situations are expected to identify 'occasions when it is best to use the pupils' own language – either because the language needed is too complex, or because it is easier, quicker or more convenient'. [Doff, 1990:228]

On the other hand the development of 'the language beyond the textbook, opportunity for *real*, natural English to be used and also the language used for *communication*' [Doff, 1990:222] is desirable. For this purpose then, the appropriate classroom English reflecting the level of pupils' language grasp has to be used.

The research has revealed that both of the above mentioned factors of the efficient classroom language of student teachers have not been satisfactorily developed. It showed in the area of instructions, explanations and also social language.

The balance seems to be difficult to reach. The student teachers trying to use as much English as possible often did not simplify their classroom language in terms of vocabulary and structures used. Misunderstandings occurred and led to wasted time, pupil's concentration breaks and above all to trying to avoid English for other than activity practice purposes. The student teachers were not always able to balance the use of both languages and found it difficult to select the 'occasions' in which Czech was more appropriate or efficient.

The other area where Czech is needed is professional language. It enables the student teachers to get involved in professional discourse and to justify their decisions. The research documented unfavourable effects of the 'English only'



instruction in this area. Discussing their performance with classroom teachers or their peers, the students often insert English professional expressions into Czech utterances. The outcome, although perfectly communicative within a certain community, is unacceptable from the language point of view, puzzling for the non-English speaking colleagues, and consequently ineffective in delivering the professional message in schools..

The introduction of Czech for classroom, and professional discourse purposes thus should be considered.

Therefore, it was suggested to incorporate into the professional development component the following:

- In the methodology classes, the balanced use of English and Czech should be focused on, especially during the students' teaching presentations to enable them to become aware of the situations in which respective languages are appropriate, and also to provide a chance to work on their classroom language.
- In teaching practice tasks, observations of the classroom language should be included and also be a part of reflection discussions.
- In the methodology classes the students will be encouraged to discuss the teaching and learning matters also in Czech. Special attention should be paid to the growing tendency to use a mixture of both languages.

The development of the appropriate use of professional language does not apply only to students. Also teachers should respect what they want their students to do and speak either Czech or English.

Besides the tools needed in classes for reflective practice development, also another important factor has to be dealt with, the connection between classroom practice and theory.

## 5. Practise What You Preach

The development of a sound theoretical base and the understanding of its relation to practice in the language and language teaching and learning is crucial in initial teacher education. The students will benefit from the information flow

between these inseparable areas in learning and teaching if the appropriate strategies are sought, identified and used.

The issue being a subject of an ongoing debate by educationalists and researchers appears not to be 'unproblematic', even in educational systems dramatically different from ours. Bennett, [1996], in his discussion of initial teacher education in Britain, argues that

*Appropriate knowledge would appear to be a necessary, but not sufficient, basis for competent teaching performances. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know...but neither can they teach well what they do know without the other knowledge bases for teaching.* [Bennett, in McBride, 1996:81]

If we relate this argument to the Wallace's [1991:17] 'reflective' model, which is 'a compromise solution giving due weight both to experience and to the scientific basis of the profession', we can see that the compromise between 'received knowledge', i.e., 'facts, data and theories' and 'experiential knowledge' developed by 'practice of profession' has not always been reached and remains to be further investigated. Nonetheless, the research allowed us to identify some ways to bridge the theory-practice gap existing in the subject and professional components, as is demonstrated in university classes, basic school classrooms and during the implementation of the final paper.

Very often it was the students' attitude towards 'golden rules' which were often understood to be applied in practice, not tested and adapted according to the context. Any 'real life' irregularities either in language or in teaching, caused feelings of insecurity and hesitation about the usefulness of knowledge for performance.

The students' difficulties in connecting principles of teaching to planning real lessons, in relating classroom experience to language teaching theory, in reflection sessions, or in understanding theoretical principles behind the textbook design affected their understanding of the process of teaching and learning the foreign language and consequently the effectiveness of their performance.

Some ways leading to the development of the connection have been identified, though. They were, for instance, examples from previous teaching experience of the Department teachers or more practice and its relationship to theory discussed

in university classes. These have helped clarify some subject and methodology issues. Also student teaching presentations appeared to be effective. The students were supposed to apply the theory from methodology and language classes and other resources by 'doing the job' and had a chance to analyse the performance also from the theory of a language learning and teaching point.

Wallace's argument that 'the teaching and learning experience in a College or Department of Education ought to reflect, *in an appropriate way*, the teaching and learning experience of the schools that the trainees are going to teach in'. [Wallace, 1991:18] then only supports the need to focus on seeking theory - practice bridging strategies.

It was proposed to support the development of the link between language and teaching and learning theories and

- To foster the practical element in the language system, to enable the students to experience relating language practice to theory.
- To focus on teaching presentations in methodology classes including theoretical considerations during the analysis phase, in order to provide students with more teaching practice and also develop the awareness of the close link of language teaching principles and classroom activities, lesson planning, class management, etc.
- To use a variety of resources in classrooms to assist deconstruction of the 'golden rule' attitude to theoretical sources and to develop a selective and critical attitude towards them.
- To introduce the theory of a teaching element into language development classes.

The discussion of the issue of the relationship between theory and practice has raised the question of their separate development within a teacher education programme.

## 6. Integration Within the Programme Needed

The integration of all the components of the programme, i.e., curricular areas of English Studies, Methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language,



Teaching Practice and the Elective subjects, should be sought to support the professional development of student teachers. The coherence of the content, methods and assessment within a particular course running over semesters and between courses in each semesters has to be established.

Wallace claims that

*One of the basic decisions that has to be made about any course of professional education is how far the different elements of the course are going to cohere with one another. In other words how far are the course designers going to try and ensure that the different elements in the course will be seen as relevant to one another and forming a coherent training experience? [Wallace, 1991: 153]*

Relating the question to the research evidence we can say that it revealed the effects of the absence of coherence. Whether it was caused by the course design, or by personal interpretation of the goals by the teachers, the areas have been identified where integration is crucial. The examples illustrate the findings from particular courses running over semesters, and the need for integration as it showed between the courses in a semester.

One of the courses where coherence was broken was language skill development. The assumption that the language development of the students in years 3 and 4 of the programme could be ensured by the English only instruction in the System of Language, Methodology and Literature classes did not work. The language in these classes appeared to be subject or profession oriented and the students lost contact with current affairs, social concerns, etc., and the teacher preparation became divorced from the real world.

Also within the System of English the knowledge and skills gained in one subject did not always support the following subject. For instance, the students kept making pronunciation and spelling mistakes that should have been sorted out theoretically and practically in the previous course.

Negative effects on content coverage of some courses and their continuity caused by personal interpretations of the course description ranged from focusing on the teacher's own area of interest, over theoretical overloading, to the extreme of ignoring the course description completely. For example, the personal agenda damaging effect on the learning process was documented in the

study skills course. This is meant to reinforce or lay basis for the development of skills vital for the whole study process, which it did not. The coherence breaks often created the atmosphere of anxiety, final exam stress and awareness of minimal progress among students. To regain the continuity which brought extra work with adaptations of plans for teachers in successive courses as they tried to make up for the missing parts of the previous course.

While the lack of coherence within particular courses was revealed very quickly, the need for establishing coherence between the subjects of the programme emerged from the research gradually.

The need to understand issues to be taught, to get involved in professional discussion, to implement professional assignments or to teach in the classroom, are all areas in which the combination of subject and professional knowledge and skills are expected. The frequent problems students have had with the language, reflection, structuring or the methodological difficulties they faced while completing their final projects, or practice teaching are just some instances of coherence not properly working.

The observed illustrations of connections not working were completed by the students' call for teaching and consulting support during their school experience, for instance, specification of observation tasks, their call for space for reflection and problem solving. Altogether the demonstrations emphasise the necessity to relate university studies to classroom practice.

The connection of culture, history and literature areas and teaching components was reported as missing. The students themselves consider it another area, besides language, to be taught in basic school classrooms.

The system of electives is expected to provide further opportunity to develop areas of interest, and more space for practice. It requires a lot of careful planning. In the courses developing the areas of interest, the instruction should build on the knowledge and skills already gained. In those providing more practice, what is being covered at the moment in the respective compulsory subject should be supplemented appropriately.

The need for the coherence development of the programme was documented by the research and drawing on its evidence, the following suggestions were made:

- To add to the system of elective subjects meeting the students' needs for the further development of general English; of interests within subject and professional areas; of core subjects areas in which either more practice or deeper study is needed.
- To discuss possibilities and ways of integrating the System of English course with other courses to foster the development of the complexity of language awareness, make remedial procedures more focused and support the development of the students' grasp of English.
- To specify course description in terms of coherence of courses, objectives and assessment requirements to provide teachers with sound information allowing them to plan their syllabi and avoid misinterpretation of the aims.
- To integrate the language development and methodology courses in order to foster the language teaching awareness of the students. It is suggested to introduce discussion about the goal of the lesson into language development classes with the purpose to focus the teacher students on the stages of the lesson, choice of techniques and materials as related to the lesson goal.
- To foster the connections between methodology classes and teaching practice.
- To consider the integration of history and literature classes and the development of basic school classroom links, both in contents and methods.
- To consider ways of further integration of the subject study and professional areas.

The ultimate goal of a reflective practice focused educational programme is an autonomous teacher. The first step to educating the practitioner is the development of an independent learner.

## **7. Active and Independent Learning Development Needs Teachers' Support**

The education of an independent student teacher requires 'progressive training' and massive teacher's support. The steps and strategies are to be specified and reflected in the overall programme design.



*Most of us share a vision of the truly autonomous learner – a person who is highly motivated, thoroughly organised, and capable of making rational and responsible decisions about the use of resources and people and facilities for learning.*

*Most of us also recognise that our students are not like that.*

*So we think as giving them a progressive training towards the ultimate goal of autonomy. But we have to start where our students are now. [Waterhouse, 1990:54]*

The investigation revealed an urgent independence development need. This was articulated by the students speaking about their 'laziness', and teachers complaining about 'passive attitude', 'lack of responsibility' and 'search for golden rules'.

We will draw on Waterhouse's suggestion of four 'steps to independent learning, i.e., active learning, supervised study, supported independent work and self-managing teams'[Waterhouse, 1990:56], discussing what the research revealed about some of them.

The introduction of the inter-active teaching approach in all classes encouraged the students to express their views and contribute to solutions of problems either as individuals or teams. Although not quickly, most students gradually accepted it not only as their way of learning, but also as their own teaching approach.

Applying the continuous assessment provided the students with clear information about the contents, goals and assessment criteria. It evoked feelings of progress, showed the possibility to influence it, and fostered the feeling of responsibility and independence.

The student teaching presentations, chances to take over a particular part of the lesson by preparing a personal contribution to the topic covered, continuous development of the teaching material folios, as well as the development of a final paper led to completion of individual, genuine projects. Intensive teaching support was behind all of them.

However, the experience also taught us that support like that could have two effects. On one hand, it led the students to regular, continuous work and provided

them with a chance to take over the responsibility for their own learning. On the other hand, it often appeared to suit the working habits of students used to teacher's control and increased their dependence on teachers.

The investigation confirmed the need for focused support of the development of student autonomy, and therefore led us to the following suggestions.

- To sustain and emphasise an inter-active teaching approach in classes to support the growth of students' understanding of the connection between the teacher-controlled and student-centred classroom.
- To sustain 'supervised study' and supported independent work approaches in courses where they have already been introduced and to support their development in all courses of the programme.
- To consider the development of self-access learning materials to provide students with opportunities to work independently, control their progress and reinforce the growth of their responsibility for learning. [see also language problems]
- To consider ways of implementing the final step of individual learning, i.e., self managing teams.

The research raised many considerations about the programme changes, and also provided examples of some change experience gained in the process of investigation. These were reported to the English Department staff, and particular course changes were then negotiated and formulated in the programme description. The process is discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter VI . CHANGE COMING TRUE

Changes suggested covered the areas that initially were the focus of the research, i.e., structure and contents of the courses, and also those that emerged from the process, i.e., attitudes to learning and teaching based on the previous experience, and the autonomous learner education. Not all the changes could be dealt with immediately as they either appeared to be more complex and required more investigation and co-operation with other departments of the school, which is a task ahead of us, or have been a matter of a long-term process, or they originated from the completion of the programme changes suggested.

### A. GETTING READY FOR THE CHANGE -- SUBJECT TEACHER MEETINGS

After the teaching experience of Year 4 students finished in March 1994, the interviews were terminated in May 1994, and the first final papers were submitted in May 1994, the major issues identified in the research process were reported to and discussed with the staff of the English Department. The intention was to report them orally to the groups of teachers involved in teaching particular courses. [see Ch.IV., D]

From the end of May to the middle of June five groups of teachers met, discussing the goals and methods of achieving them in the following courses:

- General English Development and Study Skills
- System of English, i.e., Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Lexicology
- Writing for Academic Purposes and Diploma Thesis
- Literature and History and Culture
- Methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Teaching Practice

Both compulsory and elective components of these five areas were discussed. With the exception of one teacher, who left the country immediately after the end of the semester for holiday, all teachers participated at the meetings.

In the discussions the teachers shared their experiences from classes and mostly supported the findings of the research. They also discussed the ways to face the issues which they either tested or thought might work. The basic ideas about the



goals of the courses and means of reaching them were agreed and the teachers were asked to formulate the agreed ideas in a particular course description. The format of the description was suggested to comprise rationale, aims, objectives, assessment and a bibliography for each semester of the course. The teachers were asked to work the material out together with course colleagues and submit it within two weeks. The plan was to revise the programme in July to get it completed before the beginning of the new school year, i.e., autumn 1994.

## **B. FORMULATING THE CHANGE**

Three areas where innovation was needed were considered by the staff, i.e., individual courses, structure of the programme and focus of the programme.

### **1. Individual Course Changes -- Move From Theory to Practice**

In the area of General English Development and Study Skills it was agreed that the language development courses would have common contents in terms of wider topic areas to support not only fluency development but also the growth of vocabulary around personal, social and educational topics, i.e., in semester 1 every-day habits, activities, experiences and events, in semester 2, cultural and social issues, while in semester 3 educational matters. Thus also the language support for the beginning of the professional component course in semester 3 should be provided. [see Appendix p.13] The communicative approach was agreed on as an appropriate form providing enough opportunities to use the language in both oral and written forms.

In the Study Skills component the development of learning skills will be emphasised to make work in all the components of the programme more effective.

For the System of English courses it was agreed to focus Grammar I course in semester 1 and 2 entirely on the consolidation of secondary school grammar, and the most common mistakes the students made. The aim was to reach the intermediate level of English by the end of Year 1. The standard would then be considered a starting point from where further grammar components should continue. It was also decided that this course would be taught by a Czech teacher with a secondary classroom experience who was familiar with the

language difficulties of the students and the secondary school English language curriculum. The need for the contextualised, communication focused development of the awareness of the System of English was included in all the components of the course to help students clarify meaning and use, and to bridge the existing gap between theory, i.e., the rules, and practice.[see Appendix pp.14-15] The sound knowledge and confident grasp of the language for teaching purposes were the goal.

The methodology component changes agreed on were the massive reinforcement of the learner and learning elements and an emphasis on reflective teaching techniques, for example, focused observation, self and peer evaluation, group analysis of teaching performances, lesson planning and feedback. They were incorporated in all methodology courses to support the change of the balance of the emphasis from teaching to learning and growth of understanding of the relationship between them. In the area of teaching it was the intention to change the tendency to follow suggested techniques to independent decision making and justification of actions in teaching. Further student peer teaching presentations were added to provide more opportunities for planning, implementing and following analysis. The theory input would be closely connected to classroom practice. [see Appendix pp.16-17].

The cultural background course contents were reformulated thoroughly in order to provide appropriate information about the cultural and historical background, and also specifications. For instance, individual books or study of particular historical issues should enable the students to analyse the specific feature, and also develop personal reflections on the basis of a sound information background. [see Appendix p.18]

## **2. Structure of the Programme Changes -- Integration Begun**

The need for structured and integrated development of general English was also reflected in the change of the structure of these courses. They were divided into listening/speaking and reading/writing components running parallel for the first three semesters of the study. [see Appendix p.18]

The need to provide the students with enough opportunities to develop writing skills and to gain more experience with research tools led to the restructuring of

the writing programme. The general writing course was integrated into language development classes in semesters 1 - 3, to allow the students to develop structured writing. The Writing for Academic Purposes course was to follow in semesters 4 - 5, and focus on work with the academic literature in writing, on gaining experience with classroom research tools, e.g., interviewing, and classroom research reporting. All English Department students should have an opportunity to accomplish a minor research project. The course corresponded to the beginning of classroom teaching practice under the English Department supervision in Year 3.

The methodology course was given an extra one hour slot in semester 2, to correspond with the beginning of the Teaching Practice component. The reflection and observation skills introduced, as well as the concepts of learner, teacher and learning teaching relationship could thus be experienced in a real classroom environment and support the theory practice connection. [see Appendix pp.16-17]

The Diploma Thesis course became an elective in semesters 6 - 8. It should be attended only by the students writing with the English Department. It should offer enough space for a focused development of the final paper supported by research experience from the previous semesters. [see Appendix p.19]

Extensive structural changes were in the area of electives. They reflected the process of the development of the programme, but above all were designed to meet the students' interests and needs. These were specified by an investigation and clarified during the first experience of leading the students through the whole programme.

The Life and Institutions, History and Culture, Drama, Literature and the Development of the English Language courses were included with the aim to offer an opportunity for the cultural background awareness and knowledge growth, and also provide models for teaching this element in language classes.

The consolidation grammar courses were designed to run parallel to compulsory grammar to provide more practice and foster accuracy development. [see Appendix p.20].



The introduction of a Public Speaking course offered more opportunities to speak and work on fluency of the language, as well as the development of oral argumentation skill.

The methodology component in the compulsory part got its support in the Teaching Aids course providing the students with more space to utilise theory of teaching in practice and to support the development of student teachers' creativity. [see Appendix p.21]

### 3. Focus of the Programme Changes -- Autonomous Learner

Underlying all the matters discussed so far were two cross curricular issues, i.e., the impact of experience and the autonomous learner development. As it showed, most teachers brought their own experience with them and a common agreement about the necessity to face them was reached.

It was agreed that the definition of the ways of reflecting the overall focus in the classrooms would be formulated in the course descriptions as part of the competencies of the students by the end of each semester. The methods of learning and teaching suggested to reach the objectives of the courses were stated generally in the Programme Description rationale [see Appendix pp.8-13]. The choice of a specific approach or method was left to teachers to specify in course description and syllabus design. However, some approaches were discussed and agreed on.

- The structure of lessons should support independent work and encourage opinion formulation by the students. As it appeared it could be the foreign language that sometimes created the barrier for expressing views, the mother tongue, besides English, was suggested to be used in professional development focused classes. It would allow the students to think about learning and teaching matters and communicate their ideas without possible language constraints and develop their professional Czech.
- The lesson design should also support the work with a variety of materials and reinforce critical and a selective attitude to information.

- Investigation focused activities should be part of the lessons providing a chance to complete individual pieces of work utilising the learning skills, often new to the students.
- The lessons should also offer a platform to students where they could demonstrate the results of their work and discuss it with their peers and thus develop further their justification and argumentation abilities.
- The theory input element should provide the students with information necessary to let them understand the theory which would underpin the completion of professional assignments.
- The structure of lessons and the teaching performance of the Department teachers should provide a good teaching model enabling the students to connect the teaching theory with their learning experience.
- The process of the development of self-access learning materials should be started. These materials would support the focus on autonomous learning, too.

The idea of and focus on the development of independently thinking student teachers must underlie the design of all courses. The individual courses would support and supply each other and would all contribute to students' better understanding of the complexity of the teaching profession and would also help them comprehend that learning is a process with consequences and effects in a variety of professional activities.

What the outcome of the steps suggested and incorporated into the description of the revised programme will be in the classrooms of the English Department and basic schools is a matter of time. Until the first students educated under this programme have finished, we will hardly be able to say how effective it was as a whole. But we do believe that if we manage to break into the educational experience of our students and allow them to learn from it, if we give them a chance to try various learning and teaching skills and help them understand connections, we can expect a teaching performance that will not allow our graduates' pupils to experience knowledge accumulation oriented learning, as they did.

### C. MONITORING THE CHANGE

The need to monitor the programme as a part of the research process contributed to the decision to identify the tools enabling that. After a discussion with the Head of the Department we agreed on several steps that, we assumed, would allow us to keep the programme under control and also monitor its progression. The were as follows:

- Regular course/programme evaluation sessions based on continuous classroom practice reflection by individual teachers were planned to be called after each semester. Head of the Department, course leader and particular course teachers were to meet and discuss issues emerging, and changes, if these were understood to be needed.
- Classroom observations of the colleagues by the colleagues were recommended to all staff with the idea of observing the programme implementation in other classes, especially those in one course successive elements. Also the Head of the Department included class observation into her semester schedule.
- Student course evaluation was recommended to all Department teachers at the end of each semester to clarify and articulate the specific class needs to be reflected in classroom procedures as well as the issues concerning the programme as a whole.

It is expected that the combination of the above mentioned monitoring procedures will offer the kind of feedback on the programme that will allow us to identify further needs for change and also follow continuously the programme effectiveness

The monitoring procedures were announced to all staff at the departmental meeting in October 1994.

### D. FURTHER OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH

As the research was progressing and issues were emerging, instruction in classes was changing, plans for structural and content innovations were made. Also the Department operation change was becoming apparent. The area



requiring most attention was the area of communication about the programme and courses taught by individual teachers. The use of the research methods like interview or team teaching, or subject teacher meetings during the action planning phase indicated ways of facing the communication problem in the future.

Besides the issues dealt with so far, the investigation uncovered two big areas needing thorough development and profound changes, which, however, reach beyond the Department powers. These were teaching practice and restructuring of final exams.

The organisation of teaching practice, co-operation with the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, and above all the understanding of its importance by other departments and administration emerged as major issues to be faced.

The need to restructure final exams was raised after the changes of the programme were implemented. That is to say, in the present form given by the Faculty Examination Regulations the exam is oriented on the knowledge of separated subjects. As such, it does not reflect the programme where the subject and professional areas are interrelated and where the focus is on the development of teaching skills and understanding the theoretical principles underlying them.

What is common for both areas is that the innovations needed go far beyond the English Department area of direct influence and must be negotiated with other departments, the administration of the school and finally approved by the Academic Senate.

The research based changes discussed in this chapter met the initial expectations of the outcomes of the project, in terms of the development of the coherence of the programme and specification of the courses. This also started the process of the integration of originally separated specialised subjects towards the structure of a programme that would support a balanced development of 'received' and 'experiential' knowledge as Wallace's reflective model suggests.

The major issue this investigation raised however, has been the need for the enormous change ahead of us. The change of thinking of students and staff

leading to the increase of an autonomous attitude towards knowledge, theory, learning and teaching.

## TO CONCLUDE

Let's look back at the process of the investigation the task of which was to initiate change of the traditional one way applied science model of teacher education. The idea of 'received knowledge' and 'previous experiential knowledge' that together go through 'reflective cycles' and lead to 'professional competence' was the goal.

What did we learn about the programme? What is the first experience with change? What did I learn? How will it go on? These are the questions to be answered in the summary of the research experience.

### A. WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAMME?

The two year process of the research revealed the basic areas of focus, i.e., learning experience of the students and its impact on learning and teaching, connection making between theory and practice and integration of subject and professional components of the programme.

#### 1. Learning Experience as the Starting Point

Underlying most of the issues was the learning experience of students which appeared to be a source of a range of attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and working habits that often contradicted the reflective practice characteristics of the course design.

Most of the changes suggested for the courses were those facing the impacts of the past schooling. For example, focusing on learning experience at the very beginning of the methodology course, which, aimed at the analysis of the students' perception of 'good' and 'bad' teaching. It showed that even specifications of something the students had experienced were difficult for most of them. A common characteristic of good teaching was 'her lessons were interesting'. Only the teacher's question of what it meant, often supported by a couple of examples, made the students formulate what actually had made the lessons interesting for them. However, once they got the idea they were able to specify quite well.



As the example of one little step in the reflective process demonstrates the development target ability to reflect on their own teaching has to start with the learning experience of the students. That is to say, we can hardly expect the teacher students to reflect on their teaching performance unless they understand what affected their own learning and how. The analysis leading to understanding of the knowledge accumulation learning experience thus seems to be one of the basic prerequisites for the development of teaching strategies and approaches they mostly had not experienced as learners.

## 2. 'Constant concern to almost every profession'

The gap between theory and practice, as the subtitle citation from Wallace [1991] indicates, appears to be more universal than specific for this investigation. Its demonstrations revealed and specified by the research covered both subject and professional areas.

The attempt to bridge the gap by providing the students with more opportunities to experience the theory of academic writing and research project implementation led to better understanding of the theory practice relationship, which demonstrated with the second cohort of students who had had much fewer problems in planning, implementing and also reporting their projects.

Also in methodology classes the common analyses of student presentations have had their effect in the students' better understanding of principles underlying teaching and also of learning theories. The students do get involved in discussions, come up with opinions, ideas and reflections and relate the university classroom debates to their teaching experience in schools, although the procedure is not always easy, especially before they get used to it.

What does not seem to work as we would like it, is the connection between the language system knowledge and student production. The gap established in their learning past has appeared to be more difficult to deal with than in new areas of knowledge and obviously requires focused attention to achieve the balance.

The provision of enough space for the joint development of 'received and experiential knowledge' showed to be another important condition of classroom operations leading to reflective practice.

### 3. Connections Do Not Develop Incidentally

The issue of integrating courses of subject and professional studies appeared to be the third major theme raised by the research. The very nature of teaching profession embracing general, subject and professional knowledge together with a wide range of teaching, psychological and social skills indicates the complexity of the job. It raises a number of questions concerning the balance of the individual components in teacher education so they worked in unity as the profession requires, not separately as the applied science model practises. The implementation of professional tasks, like teaching practice and final paper completion only confirmed that.

In this area the research revealed the need for integration and for seeking ways of integrating the subject and professional components, rather than provided solutions. Three semesters of experience with the updated programme showed that the coherence of subject contents within a particular course can be relatively easily reached by joint planning of the course by teachers involved.

However, the attempts to introduce a teaching element into other than professional classes, i.e., develop cross subject coherence, have appeared to work only somewhere. And it seems to depend entirely on the teacher and methods s/he adopted.

The integration that seemed to be relatively easy in discussions and on paper has appeared in the meantime to be much more complicated issue requiring focused attention on each of the courses and its relation to other components of the programme, and not only the English Department one.

The focus on learning experience, theory and practice connection development and integration of subject and professional areas have become the major direction signposts on the way from applied science experience to reflective practice.

Besides some experience with the major issues, three semesters of running the changed programme provided us with some more information on the effectiveness of the changes, further specifications or alternations of the originally raised matters, and also raised new questions to be investigated and sorted out.

## B. WHAT IS THE FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH CHANGE?

The following examples come from the programme monitoring discussions with teachers and students, from informal sharing with colleagues and from my own teaching experience.

The changes focused on the development of accuracy and fluency have brought more satisfaction reported by students with the increase of the work with the language in context in some classes, e.g., syntax. However, their production, above all written, has not demonstrated any significant improvement, yet, *although the growth of fluency is apparent in classes*. Generally more students seem to be willing to contribute.

The introduction of Czech to professional component, for instance, methodology, classes has led to the significant growth of student involvement in discussions, quite frequent initiation of professional debates and to more questions asked. This cannot be generalised for all groups of students, as in some of them even the possibility to use mother tongue does not seem to generate the will to contribute.

The overall change of the focus providing space for interaction works in some classes more than in others. Nonetheless, more 'I don't understand' remarks and requests for explanations and readiness to express own opinion, initiate debates and sometimes bring along new ideas and attitudes, besides the traditional ones. Also sharing teaching ideas after student presentations became part of many classes.

Several examples from classroom show some of the changes work. However, it is very difficult to come to any conclusion about the effectiveness of the changes taken on the basis of the information from 3 semesters only. Also the demonstrations vary from group to group and from course to course.

The research process has had an obvious impact on the programme development and on the Department operation. The influence it has had on my own professional development remains to be discussed



### C. WHAT DID I LEARN?

The research offered me a unique opportunity to work closely both with the students and colleagues in a way which had not been experienced by any of us before and which is not a part of my routine operation today. The period of intensive data gathering, of conducting interviews, of team teaching, of shared programme changing and of writing up allowed me to learn about learning and teaching, about the students and colleagues and about myself.

#### 1. Community Learning

Interviewing students, reflecting together with them on their teaching performance and tutoring the final papers allowed me to gain a deep insight into their learning and the constraints that worked in classes.

Not only that, speaking to students also revealed the beneficial effects of their involvement in the programme development process. They contributed by the identification of their educational needs and this had an enormous impact on the design of courses. Having been given a chance to influence the programme design, they appeared to approach the interviews seriously. They honestly reported on their language or study difficulties and expressed their views on procedures going on in classes. When mentioning the teachers they discussed their performance as it was related to their learning and how it was affected. Some of them demonstrated a considerable level of professional maturity evaluating the issues raised and suggesting procedures to deal with them. For example, an introduction of the teaching element into language development classes at the early stage of the programme.

The process of interviewing colleagues and students also revealed a lot about myself. One of my problems was my involvement. Being an insider, I found it extremely difficult not to get involved. Although I tried hard, it appeared to be always difficult for me not to say what I thought of the matter discussed. Especially with the students, I very easily slipped into the role of the teacher who knows everything.

The interviews showed me that the teacher-controller was deeper in me than I would have ever admitted. The observations of the teaching performance of the students confirmed the finding. Especially at the beginning, during the first group

of students' teaching practice, I found myself controlling their performance during the evaluation sessions. This demonstrated in my comments like 'you should have done...you could have done'. Only later on, I realised what I was doing and asked the questions like 'what did you want to do and why...what do you think you might do if..?' It was not easy for me and I had to watch for the 'one who knows best' in myself and for the space I left for the students' talking.

Interviewing people taught me to listen to them, listening to their views taught me to hear them and be more tolerant to a variety of opinions. During observations I had to learn to provide people with the space to say what they feel and think.

The interviews with students and teachers, and the meetings following them confirmed the value of sharing teaching experience with colleagues I had known from my team-teaching experience.

The chance to work closely together with Donna had a great impact on the development of my professional thinking. Endless disputes about students and the demonstrations of their attitudes, her queries about things I had taken for granted and therefore never questioned, and also school stories we told each other led me to much closer look at what was happening in classes. In the debates, sharing of our professional experience allowed me to go beyond pure description of the issues from my point of view, and provided another one, sometimes supportive, sometimes contradictory. In the investigation process she was a mirror to me that reflected everything happening at the Department at the time. I learned to discuss, justify my standpoints and also accept another person's views.

When the community phase of the research terminated, the lonely learning period of the research, i.e., writing up, began and taught me many things, and usually in a very hard way.

## 2. Lonely Learning

The very first step was the reflection on my student and teaching experience. This had always been a private territory. The requirement to report on it actually showed me the phases of my professional development and also several important incidents that had influenced it. In the process of explaining of what happened in my past to the readers who did not share my experience, and

through the necessity to explain and illustrate every detail I became aware of my development and how the growing experience affected my teaching and my attitude towards students. The need to specify to get under the surface of events, answering constant 'what does it mean' questions and 'expand' and 'specify' comments of my supervisors allowed me to learn to read and understand my own experience.

The writing up process was for me where an old dog learns to play new tricks. All the difficulties the students had in the writing phase of their final papers seemed to be mine the moment I began to write. They only seemed to be multiplied by the number of years since I had left the school as learner. Lack of structure, ordering of thoughts, specific examples, all the writing problems of the students were mine.

I was well aware of all the good reasons for why I should think first, outline and only then write. But it did not work. I was not able to figure out beforehand what I wanted to say, I simply did not know it. The thoughts emerged always when writing and revisions were enormous. By trial and error I developed a strategy that helped me begin to change slightly my habit.

I always started in my own way, i.e., put ideas on the paper as they came into my head. Then I read the text and picked up the key ideas, wrote them in the form of notes on an extra piece of paper and started ordering them. I added what I felt was necessary and actually created the outline, structured the section and began writing again and in the process often added something. I always repeated this procedure several times before I felt it might be right. As the time progressed I learned to outline first and think before I started writing. I cannot say, however, I have mastered that skill. I still realise many things while writing.

The need to report made me structure the amount of information gathered and enabled me to see connections between issues and formulate arguments. Thus the process gradually led to the clarification of my standpoints. The illuminating effect of this phase was enhanced by my learning experience of writing up. I had an opportunity to go through all the difficulties and frustrations that my students had experienced working on their final projects. Having had that chance, I assume I can better understand what troubles them and I am better able to provide support.



The example of my experience of learning to write illustrates a crucial characteristic of the process of changes in our education. We are dealing with habits, routines in work, and thinking which cannot be uprooted by any reasoning and remain in us whether we like it or not. The research findings, my teaching and learning experience allow me to argue that the only way of dealing with them is a slow patient process of gaining new experience that must begin where we are, not where we want to be.

In the five year long process of seeking answers to the question of 'How to educate reflective practitioners in our knowledge accumulation tradition?' posed in 1990, we went through the search for 'golden rules' and also tried to define our own way. And the outcome? Some answers, more experience, a great deal of understanding and an enormous amount of issues to be investigated.

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## APPENDIX

## ORIGINAL VERSIONS OF CITATIONS FROM CZECH MATERIALS

Pospíšil M., [1992], Příprava učitelů cizích jazyků na filosofické fakultě - Návrh nového modelu, Masarykova universita, Brno [ unpublished proposal for the change of teacher education at Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno], p.3

Ch.I. p. 7

...Výsledkem je velice teoretická příprava odtržená od reality cizojazyčné třídy... Katastrofu završují svým pokryteckým postojem samy katedry cizích jazyků. Přestože drtivá většina jejich posluchačů se po absoltoriu stává učiteli, tváří se, jako by se jich učitelská příprava netýkala. Didaktika cizího jazyka je na okraji zájmu, často úplně ignorována, a protože se „to dělat musí“, je svěřována jen jednomu, často nejmladšímu nebo jinak „okrajovému“, členu katedry, většinou bez učitelských zkušeností ve škole.

Sjednocení programů a profilů absolventů filosofických a pedagogických fakult vede k abstraktní výchově „univerzálního učitele“ pro všechny stupně škol, u něhož teoretické poznatky o pedagogice úplně vytlačují výcvik v nejdůležitějších kantorských schopnostech a dovednostech. Neúčinnost takové přípravy je brzy všem zřejmá, ale řešení se opakovaně hledá v dalším zvýšení dávek teorie.

Ch I., p. 13

Pospíšil et al., 1995, Analýza situace ve vysokoškolském vzdělávání v České republice, Zpravodaj Vzdělávací nadace Jana Husa, No.95/3, Brno [Czech higher education analysis]

Pět let reformních pokusů nepřineslo ve školství obecně a zejména ve vyšším vzdělávání očekávané výsledky.... Aby však mohlo vůbec k nějaké změně dojít, musí nejdříve existovat všeobecně sdílená vize. ...Změna není možná, pokud ji nechce sama profese. ... Ve stavu, ve kterém nyní vyšší školství je, nebudou konzervativní síly na univerzitách samy proti sobě a nebudou podporovat inovační a reformní snahy.

Ch. III, p. 25

Současný stav učitelské přípravy pokládám za neuspokojivý, protože jedinou významnou změnou oproti minulým letům je drastické snížení počtu hodin. ...V naplnění přednášek a seminářů došlo ke změnám minimálním...Učitelská příprava



se dělá nedbale a izolovaně na různých pracovištích. Nikdo se nezamýšlí nad vyděláním učitele jako celkem.

Ch.I, p.8

**Hausenblas O., [1994], Vědomosti školáků a zdravý rozum, Lidové noviny, 26.3.1994**

Mnohé zástupce českého školství (od učitelů po ministra) jsme už slyšeli prohlašovat, že česká škola má skvělou tradici a že oproti západním školám mají české děti rozsáhlé vědomosti.

Avšak mnozí vidíme, že děti mají ze školy strach, a že se ve škole málo mluví o podstatách jevů, ale píše o povrchu, že školy neučí naše děti rozumět souvislostem, neposiluje jejich vůli k soustředěné práci, neučí děti tomu, jak se učit, natož pak tomu, jak řešit důležité situace. Ovšem vědomosti mají prý rozsáhlé. Ale co s nimi dělají a kde je to vidět?

# EXCERPTS FROM TEACHER EDUCATION NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Učební osnovy studijního předmětu anglický/francouzský jazyk, [1986],  
Praha-Bratislava, Ministerstvo školství ČSR, p.8,

<b>Subject:</b>	Contemporary English -- Syntax
<b>Semester:</b>	4., 5., 6.
<b>Time allocation:</b>	84 hours, [30 hours in semester 4., 24 hours in semester 5., 30 hours in semester 6.]
<b>Assessment:</b>	credits after semester 4., 5., 6. exam after semester 6.

## Content:

### Semester 4

- 1 Syntactic level as a subsystem of language study, relationship to other subsystems
  - 1.1 Basic syntactic units. [sentence, utterance, parts of speech, ...noun phrases, verbal phrases semantic sentence pattern...]
  - 1.2 Basic syntactic relations. [determination, predication...]
  - 1.3 Basic syntactic processes. [reduction of sentence pattern – complete reduction: ellipsis, i.e., grammatical and lexical, ...]

**Aim:** to make connections between the new linguistic discipline and the disciplines so far covered, to emphasise the relations, and using the Marxist-Leninist principles of linguistics to create a connection between static and dynamic aspects

etc.

LIST OF  
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B.Ed.[H

Overall

Walden

Diploma

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## LIST OF FOREIGN MATERIALS USED AS RESOURCES FOR THE FIRST PROGRAMME VERSION DESIGN

B.Ed. [Honours] TESOL, Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh

Overall course description, Mozambican teachers 2, Bell College, Saffron Walden

Diploma in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to Adults [DTEFLA]

The TARGET Programme, University of Leeds



# EXAMPLES OF THE FIRST VERSION PROGRAMME EVALUATION

MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA  
MASARYK UNIVERSITY

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky  
Department of English and American Studies

Vysoká škola strojní a textilní  
Pedagogická fakulta - English Department  
PhDr. Ivana Pekařová  
Redoucí KAJ

Jokolská 8

602 01 LIBEREC I

Arna Nováka 1  
660 88 Brno

Tel. (05) 750050  
Fax (05) 753050

Brno November 11, 1992

Dear Ms Pekařová,

Hearing about your new Curriculum for teacher training made me very happy because I think that teacher-training was always one of the weakest aspects of university preparation in Czechoslovakia. I was impressed by your challenging programme. It seems similar to what we have introduced in our department this semester, with the same stress on practice, and the same lack of lectures.

As we planned our teacher-training course as a one-semester intensive module, I would be interested in how much time per week you devote to methodology and what the proportion of lectures, seminars and teaching practice is. We would be pleased to learn more from your experience and so I would also like to know about how many students there are in a group, what the qualifications of your teacher-trainers are and if they are foreign lecturers or native people. Moreover, with detailed facts about your programme I would probably be able to say more in your favour.

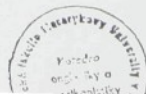
I hope you are successful in the struggle to get your curriculum accepted.

With best wishes

*Jan Sparling*

PhDr. T.D. Sparling, B.A.

Head of the Department



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## FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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## MAGISTOR HONOURS DEGREE IN TEFL AND ANOTHER

## EQUAL SUBJECT

## Evaluation of Proposal

We have read carefully the proposal which has been put up for the above degree. In general terms it conforms to what we would understand as good practice in Teacher Education for TEFL and corresponds closely to the content and approach of similar degrees that we are familiar with in UK.

The course seems to conform to the prevailing model of good practice in that it concentrates on:

- (a) ensuring a good model for the teacher of the taught language. This is absolutely essential. If the teacher cannot provide a good model of spoken and written English then obviously effective learning cannot take place;
- (b) ensuring a full theoretical and descriptive understanding of the system of English. Again, such an understanding seems essential for proficiency in teaching English;
- (c) ensuring that the trainee is fully conversant with the methodology of EFL. Again this is an obvious pre-requisite for a competence in teaching;
- (d) ensuring that, through professional action in School Experience, the trainees have an opportunity to contextualise the theoretical inputs of the course within a classroom setting;
- (e) ensuring that, through a sustained piece of action research, the trainees have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and articulate in a way that merits the reward of an Honours degree.

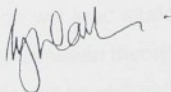
I take it from the design of the course that general educational principles are to be drawn from the contextualised inputs within the area of EFL Methodology. For example, under (p3) Learning and the learner within Basic Concepts in Methodology, I would expect this topic to include the Emotional and Cognitive aspects of children at the target level in the elementary school. Similarly I would expect the section on classroom management (group and pair work) (p16) to cover topics such as group dynamics. Similarly also, the topic of testing (top of p17) will no doubt involve the discussion of the general principles of validity and reliability etc.

There is ample evidence that these general principles can be much more effectively learnt when drawn heuristically from contextualised tasks (eg test-construction) than when presented abstractly and/or in a decontextualised way.

There could be some discussion of minor points of emphasis and presentation which would be inappropriate in the present response. In general this proposal has to be applauded as a balanced and thoroughly professional programme.

(Signed)

M J Wallace (Dr)



Scottish Centre for Education Overseas  
Moray House Institute of Education  
Heriot-Watt University  
Holyrood Road  
Edinburgh  
Scotland  
EH1 9 9 9

Burešová, Sarvay, 1993, Diploma Thesis - Professional Project, Pre=Service III-IV, unpublished teaching material of the Department of English, PF VŠST

### Aims

- 1/ to give the students the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to produce a piece of individual work of honours degree quality
- 2/ to give the student the experience of a 'teacher/researcher', using the academic and classroom data analysis and evaluation of their classroom experience in a structured way
- 3/ to give the students the opportunity to show how they can integrate inputs from subject study and theory and practice of teaching and learning

### Objectives

- 1/ collection and analysis of bibliography of professional academic literature related to the theory of the 'aspect' of language teaching and learning chosen
- 2/ development of a practical teaching model based on the theory analysis and the resulting hypothesis
- 3/ generation of teaching materials and methodology to test the hypothesis
- 4/ introduction of methodology and materials in classroom situations to ascertain the effectiveness of the model
- 5/ evaluation of the practical teaching model using data analysis as supporting evidence
- 6/ written Diploma Thesis that draws inferences between the hypothesis and the conclusions reached as a result of the Professional Project, thus demonstrating the validity of the theory.

EXCERPTS  
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**EXCERPTS FROM THE PRE-SERVICE 4-YEAR STUDY PROGRAMME,  
REVISED VERSION 1994**

## **Rationale**

### **1. Introduction**

The proposed course is a four-year full-time Magister Honours Degree course with qualification in TEFL and in another equal subject. The equal subjects are mathematics, physics, computer science, physical education, history and Czech language. The graduates from the faculty will obtain a qualification to teach two subjects in forms 5 - 9 of elementary schools in the Czech Republic.

### **2. Target Population**

English Department students are secondary school graduates who have successfully passed Final School Leaving exams and entry examinations.

### **3. Admission Requirements**

- The students must successfully pass entry examinations consisting of written and oral parts.
- In the written section of the exam the students must demonstrate a level of intermediate general English as required by the English Department in language in use, listening and reading.
- In the oral section of the exam the students must prove their ability to communicate in every-day situations at an intermediate level.

### **4. Principles of the Course**

- The course will provide students with the ability to plan, teach and evaluate effective learning of elementary school pupils in the English language.
- The course will be relevant to the educational and professional needs of the target population and to the needs of the elementary schools in which they will serve as teachers.
- The course will be educational and professional to ensure the students' personal intellectual and professional development.
- The course will lead students to increasing independence, and ability to make connections between theory, EFL methodology and practice.
- The course will be culturally broadening in that it should provide students with a wider understanding of the culture of the English speaking countries.

## 5. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the course is to ensure balance between the understanding of the theoretical background and the demands of practical application.

Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of:

- language systems: phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse and the relationship between form and function,
- the implication of learning theories for language teaching/learning: different factors affecting learning, i.e., cultural, educational, psychological, linguistic, sociolinguistics, and socio-economic factors affecting classroom interaction and relationships,
- the relevance of the history and development of language teaching and learning, including recent developments in TEFL, a range of methodologies and their appropriate applications,
- principles of syllabus and course design,
- a wide range of published materials, criteria for their evaluation, some principles of material design,
- principles of testing and assessment, methods of assessing students' learning formally and informally,
- a wide range of resources (aids to teaching and learning),
- types of errors and their implications for teaching,
- ways in which learning can be extended beyond the classroom and principles of autonomous learning,
- the variety of learning styles exhibited in classroom situations.

Candidates should demonstrate an ability to:

- apply the formal knowledge of the language systems of English to facilitate learning,
- handle individual and group learning styles sensitively and effectively,
- select and use teaching styles and techniques appropriate to learners' requirements and expectations, organise and manage classes of different age /10-15 year old pupils/ monolingual mixed ability groups in elementary schools,
- plan a lesson and a series of lessons,
- select published materials critically, devise supplementary materials where necessary, use chosen materials appropriately,

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- assess students' learning,
- select and use available teaching aids, construct new ones where appropriate, direct students to available resources,
- monitor and respond appropriately to learners' language output,
- foster independent learning outside the classroom during and after the course.

## **6. Structure of the Course**

Structure of the course consists of 4 major components, i.e. 3 compulsory and 1 elective. The compulsory components are English Studies, Methodology, School experience. The elective component consists of a Diploma thesis / Professional project seminar and elective subjects.

### **6.1 English Studies**

- Study Skills, Introduction into English Studies
- **General Language practice**
  - Speaking and Listening
  - Reading and Writing
  - English for Academic Purposes
- History and Culture of the English Speaking Countries
- **System of English**
  - Phonetics and Phonology of English
  - Grammar I
  - Grammar II - Morphology
  - Grammar III - Syntax
  - Grammar IV - Lexicology
  - Grammar V - Contextual Analysis
- **British and American Literature**
  - Literature I
  - Literature II

### **6.2 EFL Methodology**

- Methodology I
- Methodology II
- Methodology III

### **6.3 School Experience**



School experience will provide the students with the opportunity to experience and practise the link between theory and practice in the context of local elementary schools.

#### 6.4 Electives

The range of electives can vary reflecting the needs of students and specialisation of the staff of the KAJ.

- Diploma seminar
- Life and Institutions of the English Speaking Countries
- Teaching Aids
- Drama
- Public Speaking
- Development of the English language
- Consolidation Grammar
- Literature

#### 7. Progression

The progression of the course is divided into two cycles.

Cycle 1 - Year 1 - 2 /semester 1 - 4/

Cycle 2 - Year 3 - 4 /semester 5 - 8/

In cycle one the emphasis is on the English language development, especially in the first year of the programme. A methodology component is included in the form of a good model provided by departmental teachers in the first year, and methodology classes in the second year. EFL students have 10 compulsory classroom hours a week in semester 1, 2 and 8 hours in semesters 3, 4 of this cycle. In cycle two the emphasis is on in-depth treatment of the System of English, Methodology and the application of both in teaching practice. EFL students have 7, 6, 4, 4 compulsory classroom hours a week in semesters 5, 6, 7, 8 of this cycle respectively. To enable students to study some subjects offered by the department of English of PF VŠST in great depth or to study subjects that are not offered in the compulsory programme there is a wide range of electives from semester 3 of the programme. 20 classroom hours of elective subjects are compulsory for all students in 4 years. Students can focus on either of two major subjects studied.

#### 8. Assessment

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KAJ PF VŠST

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The system of assessment has been based on "Studijní řád of VŠST" [VŠST study regulations] approved by the Academic Senate of VŠST.

### **8.1 Timing of assessment**

KAJ PF VŠST students are assessed after each semester.

### **8.2 Forms of assessment.**

With the approval of the Academic Senate of PF VŠST the English Department introduced continuous assessment. The English students are assessed continuously during each semester for various forms of assignments. [e.g. essay, workbook, exercise, folio, project, presentation] carried out in class-time and in the students' own time as well.

#### **Credit**

At the end of each semester students obtain credits for all subjects required in the programme for the particular semester on the basis of continuous assessment. *The credit is not graded, it is either pass or fail.*

#### **Graded credit**

The assessment of some of the subjects in the programme is graded [1-excellent, 2-very good, 3-good, 4-fail] on the basis of continuous assessment.

#### **Exam**

The final assessment of the subjects of the programme requires examination. The students take the exam after they have obtained the credit. The final grade consists of two parts. Part one is continuous assessment and its weighting is 60%. Part two is oral and/or written exam and its weighting is 40%.

Exam is graded [1-excellent, 2-very good, 3-good, 4-fail].

#### **Combined exam**

General language practice classes require a combined exam. Course teachers prepare the exam in a team. The final grade is just one and is recorded after agreement among the team by one of the teachers responsible for classes.

## **9. Methods of learning**

- lectures
- informal lectures
- seminars

- workshops
- written and oral assignments
- presentations
- project work
- peer teaching
- micro-teaching
- team-teaching
- self-access learning

## The unit descriptions

### Excerpts

#### B.1

### 2. General Language Practice

#### 2.1 Speaking and Listening.

#### Semesters 1,2, 3.

#### Rationale.

The principle aim of this component is to improve students' personal command of English in both these skill areas. The course also aims to encourage thinking and problem solving skills, especially as they relate to the teaching and learning of English. By the end of this course students will be able to use the full range of communicative skills and to speak with clarity, conviction and sophistication on a given topic.

#### Semester 1, 0/2

#### Aims

The aim of the course in this semester is to introduce topics directly related to students' own experience and, through discussion and a variety of other methodologies, increase conversational fluency and listening skill. The topics which will be covered may include habits and daily activities, childhood experiences, travel, people and places, news and current events.

#### Objectives

By the end of semester 1 students will be expected to:

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### 4.2 Gramm

### Semester 1

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- speak about familiar topics clearly, fluently and grammatically,
- recognise and correct errors of construction,
- speak with correct intonation and speech rhythm,
- express ideas and opinions without undue prompting from teacher,
- use a variety of written materials, such as newspapers, cartoons, magazines, and song lyrics,
- understand commonly used slang phrases and idioms,
- use communicative skills such as questioning and responding to ideas,
- be able to understand a variety of accents.

### **Assessment**

A graded credit will be awarded to students on the basis of attendance, class participation and assignments decided upon by the teacher.

## **4.2 Grammar**

### **Semester 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8**

#### **Rationale**

In year 1 this component will identify personal difficulties and develop remedial strategies, consolidate secondary school knowledge of the students and thus create sound background for complex study of the system of English in years 2, 3, 4, as well as the development of receptive and productive language skills and a solid practical base for methodological classes.

In year 2 the study will concentrate in more detail on the parts of speech. Students will be provided with the necessary linguistic terminology and the focus of work will be more oriented at independent students presentations with the emphasis on practical usage of the subject matter. Students will be guided to be able to explain the rules and correct mistakes. This component will provide the students with the opportunity to extend and consolidate their knowledge of the English grammatical system at post-intermediate level, to develop an awareness of the relationships between form and function as well as between spoken and written language. It is intended to provide a detailed overview of the English morphological system.

In year 3 this component will cover various sentence structures concerning simple, compound and complex sentences. Students will be provided with linguistic terminology concerning clause elements, sentences and their patterns. Students will be helped to develop the ability to use alternative constructions and

to recognise some less usual structures and explain their usage and make a deep connection between the forms of parts of speech and their functions.

In year 4 this component will provide the students with introduction to lexicological discussions of the differences between grammatical and lexical meanings, word forms and formation, providing thus a deep link between morphology, syntax and semantics; semantic fields - lexical fields and sense relations, idiom collocations, onomatopoeia, rhyming expressions, alliterative expressions, providing thus a deep link between grammar and literature studies; ways of filing and retrieval of information in the human brain, providing thus a deep theoretical base for methodology classes; origins and etymology of English words, providing thus a deep link with classes of history. This advanced component will lead to creating links among all previous individual parts of the language system studies and will be an interdisciplinary connection among other study areas.

The focus of the last semester, when all the previous knowledge will be utilised in classes of textual analysis on an advanced level, will be revising all the previously covered areas, creating deep links among individual studies and between theory and practice, creating a good basis for students' further studies and work with the language and covering items from psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

#### 4.2.1 Grammar I

##### Semester 1, 2

##### Semester 1, 0/2

##### Aims

The aims of the course in semester one are to consolidate the students' knowledge of the English grammatical system they learned at secondary schools, to identify the students' personal problems in English grammatical structures at the intermediate level, to provide them with sufficient practice with the emphasis on the use of grammatical structures in context. Students will also become familiar with different types of references and learn to use appropriate ones with focus on areas causing difficulties for Czech learners, such as word order, articles, prepositions, complex English system of tenses.

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By the end of semester 1 the students will have identified their personal problems through placement tests and focused their attention so that they will be able to use correctly with understanding:

- the rules of the English word order, mastering two basic forms of sentences, namely statements and questions,
- basic functions of the clause elements, namely subject and verb and their agreement,
- nouns in singular and plural with determinators, including the irregular and foreign plurals,
- different morphological forms, syntactic functions and semantic meanings of verbs, namely modality and simple present and past tenses,
- basic prepositions,
- strategies to resolve their own difficulties in English grammar use, including the supplementary material in the self-access centre,

## **Methodology**

### **Rationale**

The aims of this component of the course are to develop students' understanding of the principles of language teaching based on current theories of language acquisition and methodology, to show students how to apply these principles as future teachers of English as a foreign language. It is intended that students should be afforded the opportunity to practise TEFL in a controlled way so that they become confident and competent classroom teachers and develop an ability to evaluate their classroom performance in order to improve their teaching once their initial training is over.

In Methodology I the course trains students to observe and analyse the teaching of others; to reflect on their own learning and teaching experience; to develop skills of organisation and self-evaluation; to help them make a connection between theory, personal experience and practice; and to evaluate textbooks and adapt them to meet the specific needs of the class.

The focus moves in Methodology II to evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching and its effect on learners. Students are helped to understand the range of social and psychological factors that influence language learning, both through exposure to various language teaching methods and an analysis of the specific



features relevant to the teaching situation in Czech schools: i.e. monolingual classes, young learners and mixed ability classes.

In Methodology III the emphasis is on analysing teaching practice; reflection as a source of self-development and improvement; and on the ongoing process of making connections between theory, methodology and practice.

The whole course is intended to be a process of self-development with the focus first on the student as learner, later on the student as teacher.

## 1. Methodology I.

### Semesters 3, 4, 5

#### Semester 3, 0/1

##### Aims

The aim of the course in semester 3 is to make students aware of various teacher roles in the classroom, basic techniques of classroom management and the role of motivation in language learning. It will also enable them to realise what a language learner should learn.

##### Objectives

By the end of semester 3 students will be able to:

- identify and understand the various roles the teacher plays from controller to facilitator, and the purpose of these roles at various stages of the lesson,
- identify and understand: classroom management techniques for various learner groupings, teacher behaviour, reasons for and ways of coping with disruptive student behaviour, use of the blackboard and visual aids, setting homework, creating a conducive ELT classroom atmosphere,
- understand the factors which affect the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and learn ways of increasing that motivation,
- understand the importance of teaching, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, as well as the 4 skills,
- observe and analyse videotaped lessons focusing on the role of the teacher, the impact of the teacher's behaviour on student learning, motivation and behaviour, and classroom management.

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A credit will be awarded on the basis of 3 written assignments, i.e. behaviour of the teacher, classroom management and a report on a reading task

Note: It is suggested that a link with the teaching practice run by the KPP [Department of pedagogy and psychology] be made by having students observe KPP lessons using the observation sheets of JAK [Department of English].

## **5. British and American Literature**

### **Semester 3, 4 ,5 ,6**

#### **Rationale**

The aim of the literature classes is to encourage students to approach literary texts in a variety of ways: author's intention, historical/cultural contexts, affects on the reader, the world of meaning created by the text itself. The aim is to encourage critical thinking and making lateral connections among writers with other humanistic studies and with personal experience. The course is to enable students to get familiar with trends and themes parallel in British and American literature, understand the sequence of literary periods from medieval epic and romance through modern movements. To show students how to analyse literary texts, develop their confidence in responding personally to texts, finding connections with personal experience and the world at large.

#### **B.2.**

See also General Language Practice above

### **2.2 Reading and Writing**

#### **Semesters 1, 2, 3**

##### **Semester I, 0/2**

#### **Aims**

The aim of the course in semester 1 is to introduce Writing as Process with emphasis on paragraph building and the development of basic reading skills.

#### **Objectives**

By the end of semester 1 the students will be able to:

- choose and narrow a subject, create a topic sentence,
- consider relationships of audience/purpose/subject,
- organise logical patterns, outline ideas,

- support generalisations with specific examples,
- write descriptive, narrative, illustrative, definition paragraphs,
- write formal/informal letters,
- understand and use coherence/unity/diction in writing,
- revise, edit and proof-read drafts,
- understand syntax/transitions/grammatical constructs,
- skim, scan and summarise reading material,
- identify main idea,
- recognise levels of generality,
- recognise the difference between fact/opinion/judgement,
- draw inferences,
- use background information/textual clues to understand reading,
- develop vocabulary.

### Assessment

A graded credit will be awarded on the basis of completion of writing assignments to include descriptive, narrative, illustrative, definition paragraphs and formal/informal letters with revision/editing and proof-reading. Reading assignments to include homework assignments, reading journal.

### 1. Diploma seminar

#### Semester 6, 7, 8

This seminar is compulsory for all students who have decided to write their Diploma thesis with the Department of English.

### Diploma thesis / Professional project

#### Rationale

The Diploma thesis / Professional project combines academic research with a practical laboratory to assess the relationship between theory and practice. Through conclusions reached in the implementation and assessment of the practical model, the students can be expected to produce a paper that demonstrates understanding of theory, the capacity to incorporate theory in teaching methodology and the ability to ascertain the effectiveness of theory and methodology in practice.

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The aims of the Diploma thesis / Professional project are to give the students the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to produce a piece of individual work of honours degree quality, enable them to experience the role of a "teacher - researcher" using the academic and classroom data analysis and evaluation of their classroom experience in a structured way. To give the students the opportunity to show how they can integrate inputs from subject study and theory and practice of teaching and learning.

### **Objectives**

By the end of semester 8 will have:

- collected and analysed bibliography of professional academic literature related to the theory of the "aspect" of language teaching and learning chosen,
- developed a practical teaching model based on the theory analysis and the resulting hypothesis,
- generated teaching materials and methodology to test the hypothesis,
- introduced methodology and materials in classroom situations to ascertain the effectiveness of the model,
- evaluated the practical teaching model using data analysis as supporting evidence,
- written Diploma thesis that draws inferences between the hypothesis and the conclusions reached as a result of the Professional project, thus demonstrating the validity of the theory.

## **7. Consolidation Grammar**

### **Semester 4, 6, 7, 0/2**

#### **Aims**

The aims of the course are to offer the students the opportunity to consolidate the grammar areas covered in Grammar II, III, IV courses and study them in greater depth by intensive practice in context. It will help students to resolve their individual problems in respective grammar areas. Grammar students attending Grammar II - Morphology will attend Consolidation Grammar II, students attending Grammar III - Syntax will attend Consolidation Grammar III etc.

#### **Objectives**

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

- understand the use of particular grammar items in context,

- identify and use remedial strategies to resolve their individual problems,
- perform correct use of particular grammar items both in oral and written production.

### **Assessment**

A credit will be awarded for attendance, active participation, presentations and assignments.

### **Bibliography**

See respective Grammar course bibliography.

## **3. Teaching Aids**

### **Semester 5 or 7, 0/2**

#### **Rationale**

The purpose of this course is to offer the students the opportunity to develop their Methodology classes knowledge and skills of the use of visuals in the EFL classroom and to give them practical experience in working with, designing and using visuals efficiently in an English lesson.

#### **Aims**

This component of the course is intended to enable students to better understand the significance of the use of visuals in all stages of an English lesson and the impact this has on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It is to advise them on useful techniques and approaches and test them through micro-teaching presentations. The course also provides the students with an opportunity to use their imagination and creativity in designing a range of their own teaching aids. This course is designed for the students who have successfully finished semester 3 and 4 of the Methodology I course.

#### **Objectives**

By the end of semester 5/7 the students will be able to:

- use effectively a range of teaching aids in different stages of a lesson and in various activities,
- use, design and make a range of visuals like word cards, flash cards, pictures and worksheets,
- adapt children games for teaching purposes,
- get familiar with teaching aids resources