

**DEVELOPING AN APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF  
INNOVATION THROUGH IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING  
BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE  
LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS IN COMMUNICATIVE  
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The language learning process is a change process of which TEFL professionals are experts. This dissertation attempts to link the management of innovation in ELT to current knowledge of the language learning process. For this purpose, an in-service teacher training course has been designed taking into account the development of the communicative approach to TEFL in recent years and has been evaluated in order to be able to describe its effects on participating teachers. A retrospective analysis of the course confirms the complexity and non-linearity of the change process involved, and experiences suggest that conditions for developing learners' ability to communicate in a foreign language might also apply to developing teachers' approach to teach it. While a number of issues regarding INSET change management claimed previously in literature are supported, notably the importance of top down and bottom up strategies adopted complementarily, the author also discusses the role and importance of integrating an overt presentation of second language acquisition research findings in INSET courses. He suggests that what has shown to foster foreign language learning should be taken into account for an approach to managing innovation, but points out that there are limitations to be accepted, similarly to TEFL.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The topic of implementing innovation in ELT is situated at the intersection of the areas of managing change and teaching English as a foreign language. While a language teacher in charge of a change project is advised to expand his or her knowledge and skills into the area of change management in order to develop an approach appropriate to the situation, the present dissertation explores possibilities of taking the language teaching professional's expertise as the point of departure to approach the handling of innovation.

In the following chapter, an overview of literature about managing change in schools and in ELT is compared to principles of a communicative approach to teaching foreign languages, discussing also implications for in-service training (INSET) course design. Chapter 3 presents the particular context and design of an INSET course for teenagers' teachers of ELT in the Canton of Glarus in Switzerland, considering the secondary school system as it is as well as the circumstances under which EFL is taught, and discussing what to take into account when addressing teachers in this system with INSET activities. I will then go on to outline the course as it actually took place, including a discussion of modifications made to the course program due to planning meeting reality. The fifth chapter of the dissertation is dedicated to the evaluation of, on the one hand, participant teachers' attitudes to communicative language teaching and change at the start of the course as well as, on the other hand, effects the course may have had on their professional views and actions. Finally, the insights gained through analysing the data gathered and implementing the INSET course will be analysed and explained in terms of validity of initial presuppositions and relevance of findings for the field of managing innovation in ELT through in-service training.

## **2 MANAGING INNOVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

### **2.1 Innovation in ELT**

Through past decades numerous new approaches and methods to teaching foreign languages have been proposed, initially to challenge the Grammar-Translation Method which had been questioned already in the nineteenth century but continued to dominate foreign language teaching through to the 1940s, and is likely to still being widely used in modified form in some parts of the world according to Richards and Rodgers (1986) who describe the range of innovations suggested since. Although the design of innovative methods can be seen as a process of acknowledging and attempting to overcome shortcomings of existing practice, the development has by no means been a linear one. Similar to the example of Grammar-Translation all innovations introduced in foreign language teaching in the past century may be in use somewhere, and Richards and Rodgers point out that it is notoriously difficult to provide comparative data to prove that one method is more effective than another (ibid. 165). But in the course of foreign language teaching gaining an increasingly solid foundation in applied linguistics a professional consensus seems to have been established in the last 20 years. The learners' ability to communicate effectively was identified as a core aim in foreign language teaching, and the terms 'Communicative Language Teaching' and 'The Communicative Approach' were coined for an approach to teaching foreign languages. Initial criticisms, raised prominently by Swan (1985), have made their contribution to further development of the approach as have new technological possibilities such as large language corpus databases. Richards and Rodgers point out that communicative language teaching differs in several characteristics from previous methods and might therefore rather be described as an 'approach' than a 'method', and what has happened in English language teaching in the past two decades has also been called a 'paradigm shift', an overview of which is given retrospectively by Jacobs and Farrell (2001).

### **2.2 Change has to be managed**

While the communicative approach seems to have been widely accepted academically, this obviously does not guarantee its application in foreign language classrooms. Therefore ways to bridge the proverbial gap between theory and practice have been focussed. The need of

change management skills to be introduced in ELT projects is emphasized by Kennedy (1988) who makes the case of applying appropriate ideas from disciplines such as education, anthropology, and sociology to monitor change in ELT. In his article, Kennedy outlines roles for participants in a project involving the management of change distinguished by Lambright and Flynn (1980) one of which is termed 'the entrepreneur, or change agent' acting as a 'catalyst for change'. Among manifold conditions for change to be successful, Kennedy emphasizes power, support, and leadership as important aspects connected with participants' roles. This means that stakeholders in a position of power must be supportive for an innovation to be promising, but it does not affect the question of where in the system innovation is initiated. The tension between top-down or bottom-up initiatives has been discussed extensively (see for example Fullan 1999, Kennedy and Edwards 1998, Pacek 1996, Stephenson 1994), the result of the discussion has been that 'institutional support for bottom-up innovation is as important as participant support for top-down approaches' (Stephenson *ibid.*, 225), while Fullan (*ibid.*, 71) points out that 'top-down *as well as* bottom-up strategies are necessary' (my emphasis).

### 2.3 The Change Agent

With the important role of change agent being established and acknowledged it must be stressed that this role is not attributed to a specific person in a change project, bearing in mind that an individual may hold one or more roles as pointed out by Kennedy (1988). He continues to say that the change agent may 'typically [...] be an outsider', and indeed this position of a change agent is found in many case studies discussing the issue (see, for example, D. Kennedy 1999, Lamb 1995, Pacek 1996, Hayes 1995, Sharp 1998, Williams and Burden 1994, Wolter 2000). This being the case, the teachers' role would typically be the one of *implementors* (in Lambright and Flynn's terminology). This does not have to be a passive role of 'innovation recipient', so to speak, but change agents may decide to strongly include teachers in several project phases in order to establish a sense of ownership with teachers, as described in all of the case studies mentioned above. Nevertheless, if the change agent is an 'outsider', he or she will usually take responsibility for a project which is limited in time and try to achieve maximum possible results within these limits. In planning and implementing the innovation project, the change agent should take into account the systemic nature of



change, as named by Kennedy (1988) who stresses the importance of considering the environment in which an innovation is to take place. He identifies five interrelating subsystems with influences on the innovation, and establishes a hierarchical order of their relative importance, pointing out that this aspect of the innovation's context should be carefully examined when planning and managing innovation. At a later point in time change agents may return to their project to evaluate the sustainability of their work, although according to Kennedy (ibid.), this happens 'unfortunately rarely', and the actual experience has been described by Lamb (1995, 72) as a 'sobering' one.

An alternative to the setting just described is the concept of the teacher as change agent, advocated by Nunan (1987, 144), Brown (1994, 442), and Fullan (1999, 32ff.). Both Fullan and Brown regard change as an imperative, whether it be in classrooms, in schools, in the school system, or in society. Similarly to Kennedy, Fullan points out the systemic nature of change, but in addition to this he describes the system as dynamic in itself, and he regards it as impossible for a single person to 'understand the totality of change in dynamic complex systems' (ibid. 75). He therefore concludes that 'everyone is a change agent', linking his concept of 'change agency' to the idea that it is the attitude towards change that should change. In Fullan's view, change is an ongoing process rather than a more or less stable system transferred into a new, thus changed, state. The integration of innovation into the system should hence be a constant aim and effort of those involved. To re-stabilise the system in an innovated state is, according to Fullan, neither likely nor even an objective. What provides stability for the individual is her or his ethically founded, internal objective or, in Fullan's words, her or his 'vision' (ibid. 33ff.). Moreover, Fullan stresses the importance of collaboration and makes the case of developing a 'shared vision'. Some examples of processes of establishing and developing individual and shared visions in school contexts can be found in Senge et al. (2000).

#### **2.4 A Parallel Between Managing Change and Managing the Language Learning Process**

In her article 'Learning to learn how to teach' (1996), Edwards compares learning to teach a foreign language to learning a foreign language - the former being aimed at turning 'novice teachers into explorers of the teaching and learning process' similarly to the latter where learners 'are encouraged to become language explorers'. She suggests an 'experience-centred approach' to teacher training where, for example, teacher training methodology is derived

from the task-based learning cycle. If Fullan's view of change and change agency as described above is considered, another parallel between teachers and learners becomes apparent: they both have to handle a complex, dynamic system. For the learner, it is his or her interlanguage evolving into the direction of a 'target language', a term which, according to Larsen-Freeman, 'is misleading because there is no endpoint to which the acquisition can be directed. The target is always moving' (Larsen-Freeman 1997, cited in Mallows 2002, 6). The imaginary endpoint of second language acquisition seems comparable to the concept of a 'vision' mentioned above, the gap between the vision and current reality being able to act, so to speak, as a motor for learning building up *creative or structural tension* (for the concept of creative/structural tension see Fritz 2000, 167; Fullan 1999, 39; Senge 1990, 184). Similarly, there does not seem to exist an endpoint of perfect Communicative Language Teaching. CLT has been described as an approach rather than a method because it is not about doing things in the classroom in a certain way, as would be a method, but approaching the issue of language teaching and learning from a certain point of view. And the paradigm shift in ELT could then be seen as a movement into the direction of an imaginary endpoint of perfection, comparable to the concept of a 'shared vision' of TEFL/TESL.

To manage change in ELT from a point of view similar to the one adopted when managing the language learning process may thus make sense not only in order to make teachers experience and reflect the learners' position, but also because learning a foreign language and learning to teach a foreign language according to principles of a communicative approach are in fact similar processes.

## **2.5 INSET Course Design**

Every in-service training course by definition involves the aim of change, and the evaluation of a course includes the question of the extent to which change may have taken place. However, according to literature efforts of INSET course designers to effect changes in participants' classroom behaviour can rarely be labelled a success story (Wolter 2000, 311). Unfortunately, reports often rather discuss why courses failed to have the effects designers had had in mind, suggesting what to take into account for future courses (see, for example, Doyle 1999, D. Kennedy 1999, Lamb 1995, Pacek 1996). Hence, the impression arises that a num-

ber of INSET projects fail to achieve objectives which may be too ambitious, and that possible effects of change in behaviour of rather short courses may sometimes be overestimated.

But if the issue discussed in the previous section is taken into consideration, one might also conclude that what could be developed is not only *what* is done in INSET courses (the *method*), but also the point of view (the *approach*) of course designers. Designers of EFL INSET courses are experts in the question of how to manage a dynamic evolving system, the system of language learners' developing interlanguage. So it might be from this expertise that an approach to INSET course design may profit.

Therefore I suggest that considerations and tools developed for the management of change in ELT be complemented by instruments and ideas which have contributed to the development of a communicative approach to language teaching. An essential step in this direction might be to set goals which are in reach of the course in question, similarly to what has been stated by Doyle about learners' interlanguage grammar : 'Students' grammatical accuracy doesn't improve because we have exaggerated beliefs about acquisition' (Doyle 1999, 60), with the adoption of a certain approach to ELT taking the place of grammatical accuracy in INSET. Another point of departure could be to adapt the conditions for language learning on which, according to Willis (1996, 11), 'most researchers would agree', to the situation of language teachers:

- *'Exposure to a rich but comprehensible input of real spoken and written language in use.'* In the case of INSET this could mean to expose teachers to a 'target methodology', so to speak, bearing in mind that such a concept represents a vision of communicative language teaching which the individual participant is invited to establish for her- or himself.
- *'Use of the language to do things.'* In an INSET course this element might be adapted in the form of opportunities for participants to apply aspects of a communicative approach during the course, either in or between course sessions. The idea that learners can *do* things in a foreign language that they might not be able to *understand linguistically* (an idea which is commonplace for native speakers) underlies concepts such as 'Task-Based Learning' as described by Willis, thus making the case of giving INSET course participants opportunities to make similar experiences with their teaching.
- *'Motivation to listen and read the language and to speak and write it.'* It is hardly controversial to say that motivation is as crucial for language teachers to work successfully as it is for learners. Activities giving participants the opportunity to explore their motivation

may therefore be included in INSET courses, also referring to the concept of a personal vision of what a participant would like his students to achieve.

- *'Instruction in language.'* According to Willis, this is a desirable, but not an essential condition for language learning. Instruction is accorded an important role in preventing a learner's interlanguage to fossilise, a term which might sometimes seem appropriate to describe a teacher's approach to TEFL as well. But if the hypothesis of paralleling the processes of learning and of learning how to teach a foreign language is valid, this may also mean that the importance of instruction in second language acquisition research findings for teachers might have to be balanced against other aspects of INSET, namely *exposure* and *use*.

### **3 DESIGNING AN INSET COURSE FOR SWISS SECONDARY TEACHERS**

#### **3.1 The Context of the Course**

I had the opportunity to provide an INSET course for secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language in the Canton of Glarus in Switzerland in the first semester of the school year 2002/2003. The course took place under the authority of the schools' inspectorate of the Canton of Glarus as part of the official program of optional in-service training courses which are free of charge for state school teachers. The only constraint made by the inspectorate was that the course was to take place outside participants' teaching time, but nothing was prescribed concerning content or objectives of the course. In the following, I will outline the context of the course in terms of the Canton of Glarus' secondary schools' structure, curriculum, and official ELT teaching materials as well as participants' professional background in order to give the reader the information I had to consider when designing the course.

##### **3.1.1 The Organisational Structure of Secondary State Schools**

Glarus' secondary schools are relatively small, decentralised schools (the smallest ones just consist of three classes, i.e. one for every school year), due to the small population (38000) and the alpine topography of the canton. They are supervised by a schools' inspectorate where one person is basically responsible for the supervision of all secondary schools. However, the fact that the multitude of schools' inspectors' duties can hardly be carried out by one single person results in an deficiency of leadership in teachers' work. Teachers have hence on the one hand a considerable degree of independence in their work; on the other hand, teaching is weakly monitored and hardly ever assessed by authorities. This structural weakness does not seem to be exclusive to the canton of Glarus' school organisation, according to Doyle (1999) a 'lack of organizational structures' is a common feature of schools. In the system just described the organisational structure would therefore have to be reorganised dramatically in order to be able to initiate and implement a 'top down' innovation project. On the other hand, the high degree of teacher autonomy makes the case of teachers being the primary contact in the system. A change process may thus be initiated through a pilot group as 'incubator of change' as advocated by Senge et al. (2000, 273) who state that 'change starts

small and grows organically'. Nevertheless, the need for institutional support for such a 'bottom up' approach should not be underestimated.

### **3.1.2 ELT in Secondary School**

English as a foreign language is taught as a compulsory subject from year 7 through to year 9 of compulsory schooling, i. e. from the beginning of and throughout secondary school. This has been newly introduced by a revised education law in August 2002, formerly the subject was not compulsory and was just taught in the final year. However, the amount of lessons taught per year has not changed: It is three lessons of 45 minutes per week.

### **3.1.3 The Curriculum**

Simultaneously with the revision of the education law, the state schools' curriculum has been revised and this revision has been promulgated in August 2002. In the curriculum, school subjects are grouped under four headings one of which is language, including the native German as well as the foreign French and English languages as compulsory subjects. A separate introduction concerning foreign languages contains statements about general aims including the following:

- The main concern is to learn a vocabulary which allows the learner to communicate in everyday situations
- Learners receive information about countries and people where the language has its origins and is spoken as the native language
- Learners should learn to understand texts used every day
- Writing texts in foreign language teaching is mainly a means for language acquisition
- Learners should be interested in the structure of the language and try to find rules.

(Bildungsdirektion des Kantons Glarus 2002, translated by Suter)

To this general part, a specific syllabus for every subject in every class is added. A detailed discussion of the canton of Glarus' syllabus for English as a foreign language is beyond the scope of this paper, it may hence suffice to say that an analysis of a provisional version of the

syllabus in question by the author of this essay for an MA course assignment has been able to identify substantial contradictions between the aims stated in the overall curriculum mentioned above and the EFL syllabus (Suter 2001). This is probably due to the fact that the EFL syllabus has been designed independently from the overall curriculum. Moreover, the essay mentioned just above points out that the form of the actual EFL syllabus will probably result in many teachers being dependent on the textbook they have to use, a fact to give the textbook the importance of a 'hidden syllabus', so to speak. It may therefore be assumed that the methodological approach adopted by teachers and their perceptions of foreign language learning might be influenced considerably by the textbook. A presentation of the textbook currently in use is not possible under the constraints of this paper, but two of its properties to stand out clearly may be mentioned here: The methodology adopted is based on a behaviourist view of language learning, as a quotation from the teacher's file may illustrate: 'The third person [of the present simple tense] is introduced first so as to fix the idea of the third person *s*, before the habit of using the verb without an *s* is formed.' (Ramsey 1996b) As a result, a strict PPP approach is visible throughout materials.

#### **3.1.4 The Background of the Teachers**

In secondary school, a teacher is basically trained to teach half the class' subjects, either specialising in modern languages and history or mathematics and science, and also teaching more subjects such as sport, music or art. A number of these teachers have been trained to teach English as a foreign language for an initial year. Because of the fact that the subject has been integrated in the learners' curriculum by reducing the amount of time dedicated to other subjects, EFL is now basically taught by the class' secondary teachers having recently updated or currently updating EFL teaching qualifications. The minimum requirements for secondary teachers of EFL defined by authorities to be met by the year 2006 are a Certificate of Advanced English (CAE) and a so-called 'crash course' of two days on ELT methodology organised by the schools' inspectorate.

Thus, the range of teachers' different backgrounds concerning EFL includes, inter alia, the following:

- Teachers trained at the University of Zurich for the first year of EFL.

- Teachers trained to teach French as a foreign language holding or working for a degree of EFL but with no professional training to teach EFL
- Teachers with untested knowledge of English wishing to achieve an EFL degree by 2006

What secondary teachers teaching EFL in the canton of Glarus have in common is their professional situation: They all work with teenagers, they all face a new situation with EFL as a compulsory subject taught over three years of secondary school, and they are all supposed to work with the same textbook prescribed by the canton's authorities. While the fact that teachers in this situation can not follow routines may open opportunities for innovative approaches to be applied, the pressures of everyday work and an increased workload due to the subject newly introduced might contribute to teachers taking recourse to 'tried and tested' methods of language teaching as well as to the textbook on which they may rely heavily.

## **3.2 Designing the Course**

### **3.2.1 Course Objectives**

Taking into account the circumstances described in the previous section, the basic aims of the course were to acquaint participants with a communicative approach to language teaching, to give them the opportunity to reflect their position regarding such an approach, and to provide various possible starting points for participants to develop their teaching practice according to principles of communicative language teaching. In the brochure of INSET courses I have described the objectives of the course for potential participants as follows: 'The aim of this training course is to facilitate teachers' methodological development on the basis of current knowledge of foreign language learning, building on participants' experience as learners and teachers of foreign languages'. It may be mentioned here that, thanks to colleagues' interest in the topic, twelve teachers of EFL applied and the course could effectively take place.

### **3.2.2 Course Structure**

Two issues had to be taken into account for a decision on the outside structure of the course: facilitation of course aims on the one hand, attractiveness for potential participants on the other. I decided to hold five sessions of two hours, once a month, on Thursday evenings from



7 to 9, hoping that this was not too much for full time teachers to take part, and that the structure would encourage participants to undertake developmental activities in their classes in the course of the semester. For the first session, I invited participants into a neutral classroom, the following sessions were planned to be held in a participant's classroom. The idea behind this decision was that this might contribute to a feeling of personal involvement and ownership of the issues discussed in the course.

### 3.2.3 Course Design

Course contents had, of course, to be balanced against the time available, a total of 10 hours divided into 5 monthly sessions. The broad range of topics which regard the paradigm shift mentioned in chapter 1 had thus to be reduced to a more digestible portion, even more so when participants should be given the opportunity not only to hear and read but also to experience, thus trying to balance *instruction* against *exposure* and *use* as pointed out in section 2.5. Moreover it seemed advisable to leave some room open when initially planning the course in order to be able to meet the actual demands uttered by participants during the course instead of pre-planning the whole course with a hypothetical participant in mind. I decided to basically confine myself to two core topics, one of them of rather theoretical character, the other closer to everyday teaching practice:

- **Language acquisition:** Here, the aim was to highlight what has been described by Kennedy and Edwards (1998, 65) as 'the change in views of language acquisition deriving from the shift from Skinnerian views to Chomskyan'. To illustrate the issue, the view of language acquisition as an 'accumulation of entities' challenged prominently by Rutherford (1987, 4) was to be contrasted with the view of a complex developmental process.
- **Task-Based Learning:** The approach outlined by Willis in her book 'A Framework for Task-Based Learning' (1996) was to serve both as an approach to communicative language teaching presented to participants and as the methodological basis for course sessions following Edwards' idea of giving teachers the opportunity to experience the methodology they are supposed to apply in their classrooms (Edwards 1996).

In addition to the experiential and the theoretical part, I planned to provide sample materials in every course session for participants to apply in their classrooms in order to encourage them to work with these between sessions and to adapt and/or produce similar materials by themselves. In order to foster such activities it seemed important not to provide ready-made materials from the publishers' market but a range of materials that I have produced or adapted and applied in my classroom as a fellow secondary teacher.

For the initial phase of the course, a suggestion by Lamb was integrated. He makes the case of 'beginning INSET with awareness-raising activities, where participants confront their own routine practice and the values it is intended to serve' (Lamb 1995, 79). For this purpose, I prepared a questionnaire for the first session. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: Part 1 was adapted from a questionnaire designed and tested by Karavas-Doukas to investigate teachers' attitudes to the communicative approach (Karavas-Doukas 1996). Part 2 was designed to provide information about participants' actual classroom practice with the aid of a questionnaire adapted from Edwards et al. (1996). The single question 'What would you like to change in your teaching practice?' formed the third part of the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were collected and analysed for participants. In session two, after an initial partner activity dedicated to the topic of participants' views on language teaching and learning, every participant was given a computer printout of his or her personal 'classroom practice profile', so to speak, according to my analysis of part 2 of the previous session's questionnaire. It was intended that at this point contradictions between participants' intentions and classroom practice should become apparent to serve the purpose of raising their awareness of classroom routines.

The last session was to be reserved for topics raised by participants as well as for an evaluation of the course's effects so far on participants and their intentions and wishes concerning future classroom practice and future INSET courses.

## **4 CONDUCTING THE COURSE**

The quality of a plan is only revealed when it meets reality through application, whether it be a lesson plan, a course plan, or indeed any plan. However, a plan may not necessarily be designed to be applied literally, as shown by a description of a plan too tightly followed in ELT resulting in 'trainees jumping through a number of hoops [...] with the aim of achieving a neatly planned PPP lesson' (Edwards 1996, 106). The evaluation of a plan's success can therefore not be reduced to verifying the degree of its fulfilment, but on the contrary a course plan must, in my view, be constantly adapted, on the one hand to best meet participants' needs, on the other also as a reaction to problems arising in the course of work. During the process of adapting the course program the problem might arise that through this very process course objectives may be affected as well. Consequently, to be able to evaluate a course's success adequately it is necessary to consider the 'real story' of the course, so to speak. In the next section, reasons for modifying the course program during the course will be outlined and discussed. This will be followed by a detailed account of the actual program of the five course sessions. While the initial stage of the course was obviously realised according to the pre-planned program, modifications gained importance subsequently, but the last session came back to initial intentions, a part of it was dedicated to course evaluation.

### **4.1 Reasons for Changing the Course Program**

#### **4.1.1 Attendance**

A problem for planning which I had not previewed at all was participants' course attendance. In the first session, one participant left one hour early, one arrived one hour late and one did not show up at all without any notice. In the course of subsequent sessions I had to cope with the fact that it continued to be unpredictable who was going to attend, two examples may illustrate the surprising extent to which this happened: one session began with five participants, but after an hour another group of five turned up; and a participant wished to integrate an issue in the subsequent session without showing up then. In the end, total attendance ranged from two participants having been present for the whole ten hours to one participant having attended one hour of the course. Once I had acknowledged this unexpected situation, the question was how to react. I had the choice between eventually being forced to repeat

myself again and again in order to explain to those who had missed part of the course or late-comers what I was talking about, or to give up the idea of progressing with course topics as previewed. However, the objective obviously remained that the profit of those being present should be the main focus. Under the circumstances described above it seemed advisable to design sessions which did not presuppose knowledge of issues discussed or presented previously. It should not be concealed, though, that I was not only surprised how some of the participants chose to attend or not, but there was also a feeling of slight disappointment preceding the thoughts of how to best meet the demands of those who showed their interest. So I suddenly found myself in a situation similar to what I had experienced several times before when teaching teenagers' classes.

What became apparent here may be attributed to the limitation of a bottom-up approach due to a lack of institutional or top-down support: not only was the course an optional one, but participants were also fully aware of the fact that it was rather unlikely for anyone at the schools inspectorate to verify course attendance.

#### **4.1.2 Participants' Wishes and Needs**

It has been outlined in section 3.2.3 that to leave room for participants' suggestions was an idea already included in the initial course plan. One difficulty with this concept has been mentioned just above, but the presentation of the effective program of course sessions below shows that some topics raised by participants could be integrated in the course. My initial conception of the first session's methodology questionnaire and the subsequent awareness-raising activity to be able to serve as an analysis of participants' needs did not prove to be a success, possible reasons for this shall be discussed in chapter 5.

#### **4.1.3 'Work in Progress'**

While conducting the course, my approach to in-service teacher development was challenged by the circumstances already mentioned as well as by participants' actual reactions, and this provided opportunities for learning more about INSET and thus for further development of my approach. While course contents were adapted as a reaction to what I have described in the two previous sections, I decided to follow a TBL approach methodologically. At a rela-

tively early stage of the project I realized that my concept of managing change might have been rather too linear and that it would probably be more useful to evaluate any effects the course may have had on participants instead of basing assessment on objectives set preliminarily in order to learn more about realistic goals for change projects.

## **4.2 The course as it took place**

### **4.2.1 The Initial Session**

- Task cycle taken from Willis (1996, 22, task 6)
- Presentation of the concept of task-based learning and the task cycle
- Questionnaire filled in by participants
- Task cycle based on a crossword puzzle (focus on the conversation while solving the puzzle)
- Provision of classroom materials for TBL on the basis of crossword puzzles

In the first part of the session, TBL was introduced by applying a task cycle but replacing the language focus/analysis stage by a methodology focus, so to speak, in the form of an analysis of the task cycle experienced previously. When having completed the questionnaire, course participants were given a crossword puzzle to fill in, and then one participant was to fill in the puzzle on the overhead projector. The following discussion shifted focus from crossword solutions to the conversation between the person at the OHP and other participants. The language used in this conversation was identified as a basis for beginners to use in pair work in task cycles with crossword puzzles. This was intended to serve as an example of the Communicative Approach where a common ELT activity (solving crossword puzzles) is used, but a shift of focus adds a new dimension to the activity. Here, it is not the solutions of the crossword which are the main focus, but the conversation between partners collaborating to solve the task.

### **4.2.2 The Second Session**

- Task cycle: 'What are your views on language learning?' (see Appendix II)
- Individual analysis of questionnaire feedback form
- Presentation / discussion: 'Skinnerian' vs. 'Chomskyan' views of language acquisition

- Provision of classroom materials for TBL adapted from the official textbook in use in the Canton of Glarus' secondary schools, 'Non-Stop English' (Ramsey 1996a)

The core objective of the second session's first part was to raise participants' awareness of their personal approach to ELT in order to provide a basis for further development, and the topic of second language acquisition was intended to highlight issues which are regarded as important for teachers. However, participants' reactions were ambiguous, and the problem of attendance discussed above in chapter 4.1 added to the decision that further work was not to be based on this session but independent from its results.

#### 4.2.3 The Third Session

- Presentation: Conditions for language learning (Willis 1996, 11)
- Repetition and presentation in more detail of the task cycle on the basis of Willis 1996 (149-155).
- Detailed presentation of a sample task based on materials from Ramsey (1996a), analysis and discussion of the task. Provision of respective materials designed for the different components of the task cycle according to Willis' concept. Participants carry out part of the task in order to obtain authentic material for classroom reflection.
- Participants design a task cycle for their classes to be discussed in the next session

As opposed to the second, the third session was to have a strong emphasis on *exposure* and *use*. The last element proved to be problematic for the five participants who showed up only in the second half of the session. I therefore abandoned the plan of systematic reporting of experiences with TBL in the subsequent session.

#### 4.2.4 The Fourth Session

- Initial question to discuss in partner work, then with the whole group: What are features of an ideal language lesson?
- Testing (P)<sup>1</sup>: Introduction of the idea of a *backwash/washback* effect of language testing. Presentation of an oral interaction test I have done with my pupils with the aid of a marking form proposed by Thornbury (1999, 147).

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<sup>1</sup> (P): Topic suggested by course participant

- Vocabulary (P): Discussion of the issue. Presentation of a computer-aided approach to work with vocabulary notebooks I am developing with my pupils inspired by Fowle (2002).
- Grammar: Consciousness-raising activity with participants, dedicated to the topic of ergative verbs, as proposed by Thornbury (2001, 108). Contrasting the activity with the article on ergative verbs in a grammar book (Sinclair 1990). Provision of a similar consciousness-raising activity for first year secondary pupils proposed by Thornbury (1999, 105ff.)

The initial activity brings us back to the idea of a teacher's vision of TEFL, contributing to raising her or his awareness of what he or she actually wants the learners to achieve. It became obvious in the discussion that teachers attribute an important role to the learners when imagining an 'ideal language lesson', mentioning the importance of motivation and concentration, but also pointing out that learning a language should be enjoyable (for another account of teachers' statements about learners see also section 5.2.5 below). The activity in the last part of the session was designed to illustrate the point that learners can do much more with language that they are able to describe in terms of grammar, showing to participants that they had no problems to use ergative verbs while none of them had ever heard of this grammatical category.

#### **4.2.5 The Final Session**

- Group work activity: 'New Year's traditions around the world', taken from Reward-English.Com (2003). Provision of photocopies of the same activity designed for elementary/pre-intermediate learners
- Retrospective overview of the course
- Course evaluation
- ELT and the internet (P): Resources for teachers - resources for learners

As participants had wished to integrate the issue of ELT and the internet into the program of the last session, it started with an activity available on the net. The major part of the session was dedicated to individual work, either with the course evaluation or browsing the net for useful resources for which a list of starting points had been provided.

## 5 EVALUATING THE COURSE

### 5.1 Evaluating Participants' Points of Departure

#### 5.1.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire to be filled in by participants in the first session of the course was intended to serve the two main purposes of awareness-raising and collecting data: raising participants' awareness of their personal approach to ELT as described in section 3.2.3, and gathering information about participants' attitude towards a communicative approach to language teaching, the approach to ELT actually applied in participants' classrooms, and participating teachers' wishes for change in their teaching, in order to be able to compare participants' statements when starting and when concluding the course.

The questionnaire as it was presented to course participants can be found in Appendix I. To understand the function and objectives of the three components of the questionnaire, some more detail may be required:

- **Part A** of the questionnaire is designed to result in a score measuring a participant's attitude to the communicative approach using an attitude scale developed and presented by Karavas-Doukas (1996); I made only very minor modifications to Karavas-Doukas' 24 questions where I felt the original statement would be difficult to understand due to terminology. The possible score for a statement ranges from 1 to 5, overall minimum score for part A is 24, overall maximum score is 120. Karavas-Doukas suggests to take 72 as the neutral or middle score (see Karavas-Doukas for a discussion of the problem of establishing the neutral point). A score higher than 72 would therefore indicate a favourable attitude to the communicative approach, a lower score would imply a critical view of communicative language teaching.
- **Part B** explores a teacher's approach to ELT by asking questions about everyday classroom practice. Participants are asked to rate the frequency of classroom actions they may perform (or not). The questionnaire from Edwards et al. (1996) has been slightly modified in order to facilitate the understanding of the statements, a number of questions were also omitted subsequently to testing and discussing the questionnaire with a fellow se-



condary teacher who did not take part in the course. It has to be stressed that the main purpose of this part of the questionnaire was to serve as a basis for raising participants' awareness of their approach as it would be problematic to take participants' statements for granted without having a closer look into the classroom, bearing in mind that, according to Nunan, 'there is frequently a disparity between what teachers think they do and what they actually do' (Nunan 1989). Edwards et al. (1996) complement their questionnaire with a 'key to methodological categories codes'. I reduced this key to brief statements under the title of 'What are your views on language learning?' which served as a basis for a task cycle and, subsequently, a consciousness-raising activity with the topic of one's personal approach to ELT in the second course session (see Appendix II).

- **Part C** asks the question 'What would you like to change in your teaching practice?'. It is meant to investigate a condition for change mentioned by Kennedy (1988) who points out that 'unless all those involved [...] accept there is a problem and agree on its nature, the innovation is unlikely to succeed.' Of course, the fact that a teacher applies for an optional INSET course seems to imply that he or she might have a wish for change of certain aspects of classroom work, but these wishes may vary considerably according to participants' individual background. It was also hoped that answers to part C of the questionnaire would be able to contribute to both the design of future sessions and the evaluation of the course's effect on participants. For colleagues with limited experience in the profession a modified question was provided in brackets asking what they would like to approach differently compared to their experience as learners of foreign languages (through the Swiss school system all participants must have had at least experiences with learning French and English).

I was able to collect data through the initial questionnaire from 11 participants.

### 5.1.2 Participants' attitude to the communicative approach

The statements participants were asked to rate in part A of the questionnaire are formulated controversially either pro or against features of the communicative approach identified by Karavas-Doukas. Figure 5.1 below shows that, in general, participants seem to have a neutral to positive attitude to the communicative approach, following the suggestion to take 72 as the neutral score. The average score (84.8) is slightly higher than in Karavas-Doukas' investigation, the standard deviation is smaller (SD=7.8 compared to 11.2).

Figure 5.1: Participants' score on the attitude scale

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Score</b>
A	97
B	96
C	92
D	91
E	82
F	81
G	81
H	80
I	80
J	80
K	73

But Karavas-Doukas points out that a score near the middle may also be the result of inconsistency in an individual's answers, a point only to be revealed through closer examination of an individual questionnaire. In fact, a score around the middle point could be the result of both all neutral ('uncertain') answers, or half of them strongly for and strongly against features of the communicative approach, to mention just the extremes. I have therefore tried to obtain more detailed information about participants' attitude to the communicative approach by counting the number of statements where someone states to be in agreement and in disagreement with the approach.

Figure 5.2: Agreement / Disagreement with CLT

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Agreeing Statements (out of 24)</b>	<b>Disagreeing State- ments (out of 24)</b>	<b>'Uncertain'</b>
A	21	1	2
B	19	1	4
C	18	3	3
D	18	2	4
E	13	4	7
F	16	6	2
G	14	7	3
H	12	8	4
I	13	6	5
J	12	6	6
K	8	9	7

A statistical analysis of this data shows a significant correlation of total scores and statements of agreement (Pearson = 0.952) as well as a significant negative correlation of total scores and statements of disagreement (Pearson = -0.949). The negative correlation of total scores and 'uncertain' statements shows a bias of lower scores to uncertainty about the questionnaire's statements (Pearson = -0.56), but it seems hardly significant, implying that statements of uncertainty might interfere unpredictably with conclusions drawn from the overall score. Moreover, it seems doubtful if participant K's overall score of 73 may signify a neutral position towards the communicative approach, considering the fact that 8 positive statements are contrasted by a total of 16 statements of disagreement or uncertainty. These considerations may suggest that there is a problem with Karavas-Doukas' assumption of 72 as 'neutral' score, but there is also an important difference between her data and the results discussed here: No information is available on course participants' previous acquaintance with the communicative approach, while the Greek teachers in Karavas-Doukas' article had made their experiences with CLT beforehand (Karavas-Doukas 1996, 189), a fact which may have affected the number of 'uncertain' answers in the questionnaire. In the case of the data gathered from participants of the course discussed in the present paper I suggest to shift the 'middle' in the attitude scale to where statements positive to CLT are level with the sum of negative and 'uncertain'

statements, and to define a middle 'region', so to speak, instead of a middle point in order to take into account the unpredictable effects of participants' uncertainty discussed above. If it is therefore assumed that 11 to 13 positive statements may be able to stand for a neutral attitude to the communicative approach, neutral scores in original attitude scale scoring may be about 10 scores higher than 72 (Obviously, the sample available here is far too small to allow reliable discussion of the fact that participant F and G's score is within the middle range but shows a higher number of positive answers).

Course participants thus seem to be divided into three groups according to their attitude to the communicative approach to ELT:

- Four participants who held favourable views of the communicative approach
- One participant who was rather critical about the approach
- Six participants who seemed to have a rather indistinct notion of the communicative approach

### **5.1.3 The Methodology questionnaire**

I have pointed out above that it can not be the aim of the second part of the questionnaire to collect data in order to discuss participants' actual work in their classrooms. Therefore, the following section will not focus on analysing and discussing questionnaire results, but explain how the data were analysed for and presented to course participants for them to raise awareness of their personal approach to ELT. This will be complemented by a short report of participants' reactions to this activity.

Edwards et al. (1996) relate the 64 classroom activities in the questionnaire to 17 methodological categories. Usually, an activity is related to several categories. For the analysis of the questionnaire, the statements about activities related to one methodological category were counted in terms of frequency (every lesson/most lessons, some lessons, few lessons/never). In order to show the extent to which a category was reflected in teaching practice, the result was converted into percentage. Every participant was then provided a spreadsheet printout with his or her personal questionnaire analysis an example of which is available in Appendix III. The letters on top of each column are related to the statements in Appendix II which had been discussed in partner work as the initial task in course session 2. Most participants seemed to be interested in discussing their views on language teaching and learning on the

basis of the photocopied statements. But they appeared to be far less motivated to compare the outcomes of these discussions to their personal spreadsheet analysis of the methodology questionnaire. While the participants were supposed to become aware of gaps between their classroom routines and their views on language learning, I had the opportunity to chat with some of them who were not working or discussing different issues. Their answers to my question about the awareness-raising activity just described included the following statements:

- I do not understand what these numbers are supposed to tell me.
- I am not so much interested in theory.
- This all sounds very interesting.

In this situation I was experiencing an interesting sense of déjà vu related to my practice of teaching English as a foreign language to secondary pupils, when I had explained a grammar point and found out that the following exercise was far out of pupils' reach. Similarly, I was left with a feeling that the activity I had chosen had not been very useful for those who had performed it.

Some statistical data might be able to illustrate the mismatch between my intentions for the questionnaire and the participants' situation: The questionnaire was designed to make transparent to participants what they do in their classrooms, the actual answers, however, show a different picture. If the sum of results is considered, a methodological category reflected in classroom practice is only revealed by 19% of all participants' answers, while 43% show ambiguity towards a category, and the remaining 38% are related to categories which do not seem to be reflected, the data thus rather tends to show what teachers do not do or are not sure whether they do it or not in their classes. My effort to raise teachers' awareness of their teaching practice through work with this questionnaire might therefore be added to the long list of INSET activities which turned out to be too ambitious in their intentions.

#### **5.1.4 Participants' Wishes for Change in Their Teaching Practice**

The purpose of the third part of the questionnaire has been outlined above in section 5.1.1, but the hypothesis that most teachers who apply for an optional INSET course may probably wish to change certain aspects of their everyday work proved to be insubstantial. In fact, four participants did not answer the question at all, interestingly they were the ones with the low-

est scores in part A of the questionnaire, all of them teachers with long professional experience. Another four participants stated to be beginners in the profession having taught ELT for just a few days when filling in the questionnaire. Nevertheless they answered the question by naming issues they regarded as important for their future practice, including statements such as:

- I would like to provide much more speaking practice than I had in school.
- I would like to find ways to keep the motivation of my students as high as it is at the moment.
- I want to achieve an atmosphere where children are allowed to have fun with English.

The remaining three questionnaires had been filled in by experienced teachers who clearly expressed wishes for change, including the following:

- I would like to create an almost "authentic" environment for my students
- I would like to use the English language as often as possible
- I'd love to use more authentic materials
- Communicative competence and skills are the things I really want to build up and strengthen
- I hoped to get some ideas from you which I can use with my students

A discussion of participants' point of view regarding change at the end of the course and a comparison to their initial (non-)statements will follow below in section 5.2.4.

## **5.2 Evaluating Effects of the Course on Participants**

### **5.2.1 Formative Evaluation**

When starting the course I had the intention to evaluate the course not only at the end but throughout, as described by Williams and Burden who point out that 'formative evaluation involves evaluating the project from the beginning' (Williams and Burden 1994, 22). They go on to describe it as 'ongoing in nature' and seeking 'to form, improve, and direct the innovation, rather than simply evaluate the outcomes' (ibid.). Moreover, the paralleling of course methodology and target ELT methodology would have made the case of a process evaluation

approach as advocated by Morrow and Schocker (1993). It can be inferred from the discussion in section 4.2.1 above how these forms of evaluation were impeded. As a result, the approach of systematic formal evaluation during the course was abandoned, nevertheless participants' reactions and statements in informal conversation helped to shape the course in the way described previously.

### **5.2.2 Designing a Questionnaire for Final Course Evaluation**

A final course evaluation in the last session was intended from the beginning of the project with the purpose of providing information about effects the course may or may not have had on participants. The initial idea was to explore changes of the views and/or actions the participants had outlined in the first session's questionnaire in order to be able to describe possible modifications to their approach to teaching English as a foreign language in the course of the five months between the first and the last course session. With the final session approaching, a reconsideration of the final evaluation's concept seemed appropriate for two main reasons. On the one hand, participants' response to the initial questionnaire and its follow-up activity had not been very enthusiastic, some of them stating that it did not mean anything to them. On the other, unstable course attendance might have affected the data's reliability, and therefore there may have been a risk of obtaining insignificant data in the end. I therefore decided to modify my approach to the concluding evaluation of the course, trying to base the survey on what we know about second language acquisition, notably that input differs from intake, and that we often know few about the sequence in which features are learnt. Instead of trying to gather data for statistical analysis I thus hoped to receive information about influences the course may have had on participants through open questions on issues from the course they had integrated into their classroom work or were intending to do so. In addition to this, a question on their attitude to change as well as a question on perceived outside influences on desired change complemented the questionnaire at the end of the course. In the following, the statements filled in by the eight course participants present in the concluding session will be presented in terms of what they reported they had applied in their classrooms and how they described their intentions for change in the future. Over and above that, I will examine and discuss some answers in relation to a broader context. The final session's questionnaire for course evaluation can be found in Appendix IV.

### **5.2.3 Elements from the Course Implemented by Participants**

When writing down answers to the questionnaire, some participants asked for a more detailed overview of what had been covered by the course, but in fact the purpose of the open question was to evaluate what they actually remembered without refreshing their memories. Participants' reports showed that a broad range of suggested activities had been applied in the classroom. The crossword activities introduced in the first session proved to be a success with teachers and learners. Several participants mentioned that they had realised that they wished to speak more English instead of the native German language in class, and that learners should also be able to speak more English, reporting that on the one hand learners had 'tried hard to speak English, but that on the other 'to make the students talk English instead of German is not as easy as it sounded in your course'. The fact that some participants had shifted their focus to fostering oral communication was also highlighted by reports of TBL applied in classes as well as task cycles designed by participants. Moreover, several participants had tested the learners' ability to communicate orally as suggested in the course.

### **5.2.4 Participants' Intentions for Future Teaching Practice**

Questions 2, 3 and 4 were designed to evaluate the course's possible effects on participants' view, or vision, of foreign language teaching. With the information provided, I hoped to be able to establish an overview of participants' approaches as well as to gain insights into individual developments by comparing reactions to statements from the initial questionnaire's part C. While one participant stated that she did not think that the course had influenced her teaching because she did not feel comfortable with the approach presented, all the others confirmed intentions for change as well as different influences on their approach to TEFL. Again, a shift of focus from grammar and written language to authentic spoken language and oral communication was mentioned prominently, other statements reported modifications in approaches to error correction, to teaching vocabulary, to using the textbook, and to change in ELT. When examining individual answers, the most significant difference to the initial survey was that, in general, ideas of and wishes for change seemed much more specific at the end of the course, and that also participants who initially had declared no or very vague



wishes for change now seemed to have gained a clear view of the direction in which they wished to develop their teaching. The most striking example for me was a participant who, through his first answers, had described the textbook as the central and most important element of his approach. In the end, however, he strongly confirmed his interest in materials from different textbooks, the internet and other sources.

### **5.2.5 What Helps or Hinders Change from the Teachers' Point of View?**

The idea to complement the questionnaire with a question on elements which might help or hinder the development of participants' approaches to teaching foreign languages in the desired direction was partly inspired by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 2003). Ajzen implies that it may not necessarily be the views of other stakeholders in the system (e.g. pupils, parents, authorities) that influence teachers' intentions of future behaviour, but rather the teachers' own perception of other stakeholders' views and possible reactions to what a teacher might consider to implement in his or her classroom. The group mentioned most frequently to play an important (and unfavourable) role in participants' view are the learners. Answers range from describing learners as difficult to convince to speak English in partner/group work activities to stating that some learners 'just don't want to speak English'. The learners were also mentioned prominently in several informal conversations throughout the course, participants said for example that learners 'have to learn the grammar step by step because they know nothing at the beginning' or that learners needed frequent testing to see their success. These statements bring us back to Ajzen, teachers declaring what they think learners want or need, apparently based on teachers' intuition. Fortunately, there were also elements favourable to further development of participants' approaches to be found in questionnaire answers. A number of participants think that access to various teaching materials would help them, moreover wishes for more courses were expressed, and several participants would like to develop their linguistic abilities in English in order to be able to develop their teaching. Strikingly, there is one element which was mentioned by different participants as a help or a hindrance respectively: 'theory'. While some of the teachers wished to know more about theory through courses or books, others stated that theoretical aspects of the course had not helped them at all, but rather the contrary. Interestingly, the teachers who opposed to being exposed to 'theory' were part of the ones with the longest professional experience

### **5.2.6 A Follow-Up Program Suggested by Participants**

In addition to intentions on how personal approaches to teaching English might be developed, several participants also expressed their wish to establish a follow-up program in the form of regular group meetings for ELT secondary school teachers. According to their statements, two main elements might be included in these meetings: opportunities to use the language, namely through discussing current issues of professional, political, cultural, or general interest, and the possibility to share ideas, materials and experiences concerning classroom work.

## **6 DISCUSSING SOME INSIGHTS GAINED**

### **6.1 The Purpose of INSET**

Above I have described the experience I have made with participants' attendance while conducting an INSET course. The first conclusion drawn from the fact that some teachers showed such a surprising attitude to attending a course they had applied for was that they apparently do not regard in-service training as an integral part of their jobs. What may have added to this is a lack of control by the employer and possibly, as has been pointed out by a course participant expressing her consternation about fellow teachers' attitude, the fact that the course was free of charge. An approach to make INSET efforts more effective under these circumstances could be to clarify the purpose of INSET from the perspective of the teacher, the employer, and the trainer, inspired by Lucas' suggestion of exploring children's, parents', and teachers' mental models of school (Lucas 2000, 293). A clearer view of the purpose of INSET from the teacher's point of view may contribute to reflecting the personal attitude towards innovation in general. The employer should by any means determine the purpose of INSET in order to be able to impose clearly defined demands on employees, the evaluation of which will provide institutional support which has showed to be crucial for introducing innovation successfully, and add the top down dimension to the bottom up approach of addressing teachers as innovators in the first place. The teacher trainer's view of INSET, however, is hoped to have become apparent through the explanations in previous sections of this paper.

### **6.2 Teachers, Innovation, and Change**

It has already been mentioned that evaluation of change projects in ELT has often revealed limited success. Moreover, project reports usually describe a number of teachers as reluctant or even resistant to innovation whose professional routines might be described as fossilised similar to a learner's interlanguage, a parallel I have already drawn in a previous section. According to the course analysed here, there may be a tendency for more experienced teachers to show a more sceptical attitude to innovation, while less experienced teachers seem to be able to be addressed more easily, probably due to the fact that they can readily identify the gap between the way they think TEFL should be and classroom practice. In addition to this,

there might be another problem for experienced teachers when innovation challenges their way of looking at their work: they might feel that their work of many years, even decades, is devalued. It seems therefore by any means advisable to carefully take into account and to address the experienced teacher's situation, a possible point of departure has been put forward by Palmer (1993).

Another issue which has come to my attention when conducting the course is that it seems to have had little effect to discuss theoretical aspects which underpin different approaches to teaching foreign languages, many teachers just don't seem to think in categories like 'on what theoretical basis does this activity stand?', they don't seem to see such a question as relevant to their work. Referring to a correspondence between managing the language learning process and managing innovation in language teaching suggested previously, the role of second language acquisition theory in INSET might be comparable to grammar in ELT which has conceded its central role to activities designed to foster communication. Ironically, I had the impression that teachers who think that teaching straightforward grammar is important react reluctantly to being being taught SLA theory. However, it seems doubtful if an emphasis on SLA research findings may be able to overcome unwillingness to innovate. Alternatively, I suggest to discuss the role of innovation and change in INSET courses. If teachers come to see change as an ongoing developmental process and a core property of the profession, similar to a learner's developing interlanguage, and communicative language teaching is acknowledged as a vision to be aimed at, continuous change and the integration of innovation into a teacher's approach become natural features of ELT.

### **6.3 Learning a Language and Learning How to Teach a Language**

The idea that INSET course designers can learn from what we know about foreign language teaching and learning has been a basis for the work presented in this paper. In addition to parallels discussed earlier there are a number of possibilities for INSET to take into account SLA research findings and to integrate features of communicative language teaching which came into focus during the course. First of all, it was obvious that language teachers, similar to language learners, are not always aware of the theoretical foundation of what they actually do. As we often accept learners' efforts to be successful if a result is achieved communicatively, the question may arise how much theory is needed for a teacher to be able to teach ef-

fectively. Under the limitations which INSET often has to face the teacher trainer might therefore ask herself or himself what to focus: would he or she like participants to become strong theorists who may be able to go for a next step on the TEFL career ladder, or should they become effective language learning process managers? Another point is linked to Rutherford's refutation of the claim that grammar rules 'can be directly imparted to the learner through teaching' (Rutherford 1987, 17). When reflecting my work in the INSET course it seemed that the idea that my talking about an activity helps teachers applying it in their classrooms may be problematic, making thus the case of being attentive to the principle of emphasising activity instead of presentation. Furthermore, it seems to me that the affective dimension of learning should not be underestimated in INSET activities, just like in language learning where it is widely acknowledged that learning is fostered by a positive atmosphere where learners enjoy themselves, experience success, and feel that their efforts are acknowledged. This obviously does not only regard trainers, but also employers who, once more, inevitably must provide institutional support for INSET.

#### **6.4 A Follow-Up Program**

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this paper to present a detailed follow-up program to the course discussed here. However, it seems clear that such a course implemented in isolation can hardly have noticeable effects on a larger scale, it is rather to be seen as an initial spark to implementing innovation in the sense of a pilot group as has been suggested in section 3.1.1. A further step to follow the path taken could be to simply provide a follow-up course, also taking into account participants' suggestions, with the objectives of on the one hand supporting teachers' efforts to apply issues from the first course in the classroom and on the other hand acquainting more colleagues with a communicative approach to ELT. Moreover, it could be useful to be able to offer teachers the possibility to work with a professional coach for ELT in order to discuss issues of importance individually and to observe lessons on demand, the intention being purely to be supportive, as proposed by Hayes (1995, 260), and not evaluative. The success of this project will then, in my view, depend on decisions to be taken by school authorities. The importance of strong institutional support has been stressed several times before, and the schools inspectorate will have to find ways to provide this. Moreover, an effort to curriculum innovation seems inevitable to provide a solid basis for further im-

plementation of communicative language teaching, a possible approach to which has been outlined by the author of these lines in an MA course assignment on the basis of the European Language Portfolio (Suter 2002), also considering curriculum implementation as well as the need for modified teaching materials.

## 7 CONCLUSION

For this dissertation, an INSET course with a group of teachers developing their approach to TEFL has been designed, monitored, and evaluated in order to examine the question of what the communicative approach to teaching English as a foreign language is able to contribute to our understanding of the management of innovation in ELT projects. By paralleling the processes of learning a foreign language and learning how to teach a foreign language, and by regarding the concept of communicative language teaching as a vision able to guide a teacher's professional development, comparable to native speaker competence in a foreign language which can be seen as an imaginary endpoint to a learner's developing interlanguage, an analogy between the tasks of the language teacher and the teacher trainer might be drawn: Managing a process of change may in effect be comparable to managing the process of learning a foreign language in terms of its unpredictability, non-linearity, the flexibility needed while the project unfolds, and the problem of not losing sight of a target which may move during the process. In addition to this, several features discussed in connection with the course presented in this dissertation may highlight this connection, including the crucial role of in-service trainees' motivation, the difficulty of predicting intake in relation to input, and the discrepancy between the trainer's intentions when presenting theory and his uncertainty about effects of the presentation. While it may be too early to say at this point in time to what extent the INSET activities described have contributed to fostering communicative language teaching in participating teachers' classrooms, some limitations have already been revealed, limitations which can also be found in the language teacher's situation who at some point must accept that course outcomes and long term effects may be beyond his or her influence. It was very challenging for me personally to realise how difficult it was to overcome a linear view of the learning process in INSET and to draw appropriate conclusions resulting from this paradigm shift. In order to facilitate a further paradigm shift in Glarus' secondary schools into the direction of a communicative approach to teaching foreign languages, efforts for implementing innovation should continue and be complemented by improved top down support, a claim which is strongly supported by previous research. However, course participants' statements at the end of the course about their views of foreign language learning and about their intentions for developing their approach to TEFL seem to encourage the project to be continued. While the opportunity to implement and evaluate an INSET course has contrib-

uted importantly to my understanding of the change process occurring when teachers innovate their professional approach, I have also come to the conclusion that INSET trainers should take into account the limitations we have learned to accept with foreign language learners developing their interlanguage with teachers developing their approach to teaching foreign languages as well. Should I have the chance to continue the INSET project outlined in this dissertation, I shall aim at further development of the approach presented. Obviously, there is more research to be done and there are more experiences to be made to learn more about the effects of an approach to INSET to which an attempt has been made in this paper. It is hoped, however, that learners and teachers of English as a foreign language may benefit from such efforts.

Since the topic of deliberately managing processes of change in ELT has been raised, a wide range of disciplines have contributed to the development of the issue. Meanwhile, the discipline of teaching foreign languages itself has seen further development. It will be interesting to see if a productive feedback process can be established in order to harness the deeper understanding of the (language) learning process gained in recent years for fostering innovation, a feedback process which might even be able to contribute to discussions in the field of change management in general.



## Appendix I: Questionnaire for the First Session

Part A: What are your views on teaching foreign languages?

A	<b>To what extent do you agree with these statements? Tick the box which best applies.</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which language performance should be judged.					
2	Group work activities are essential in promoting genuine interaction among students					
3	Grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself					
4	Since the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her					
5	Training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is futile since learners are not used to such an approach					
6	For students to become effective communicators in the foreign language, the teachers' feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses					
7	The teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' is no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom					
8	The learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential					
9	Group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning.					
10	The teacher should correct all the grammatical errors students make. If errors are ignored, this will result in imperfect learning					
11	It is impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all					
12	Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to use the language					
13	Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time					
14	Since errors are a normal part of learning, much correction is wasteful of time					
15	The communicative approach to language teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners					
16	The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson					
17	By mastering the rules of grammar students become fully capable of communicating with a native speaker					

18	For most students language is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else and not when it is studied in a direct or explicit way					
19	The role of the teacher in the language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example					
20	Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than imposed on them					
21	Students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine. but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher					
22	Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue					
23	Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively					
24	A textbook alone is not able to cater for all the needs and interests of the students. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other materials and tasks so as to satisfy the widely differing needs of the students					

**Part B:** What do you do in your classroom?

B	<b>How often do you do the following in class?</b> <b>Tick the box which best applies.</b>	Every lesson	Most lessons	Some lessons	Few lessons	Never
1	Allow pupils to use German in class					
2	Ask pupils to work out a rule from example sentences					
3	Give pupils the correct form when they make an error					
4	Ask pupils to make up sentences using new vocabulary					
5	Choral drill for pronunciation					
6	Ask pupils to talk or write about themselves					
7	Ask pupils to translate from English to German in writing					
8	Ask pupils how they feel about an activity or material					
9	Include learner training activities					
10	Focus on reading skills					
11	Give pupils materials to help them learn about British, American or Australian culture					
12	Encourage peer correction					
13	Use TV or video programmes which have been produced especially for language teaching					
14	Focus mainly on fluency					

15	Explain a grammar rule in English					
16	Ask pupils to do unscripted role plays					
17	Use problem-solving activities					
18	Use recordings of native/fluent speakers					
19	Correct oral errors as soon as they arise					
20	Do project work					
21	Let pupils choose the topics they will use					
22	Organise students into pairs or groups					
23	Ask students to translate from German to English in writing					
24	Use authentic materials					
25	Give pupils progress tests					
26	Concentrate on accuracy in writing					
27	Focus on speaking skills					
28	Provide a social context after presenting a language item					
29	Encourage the use of English-English dictionaries					
30	Ask pupils to translate from German to English orally					
31	Practise exam questions					
32	Focus on writing skills					
33	Let pupils work on a writing activity without teacher assistance for more than ten minutes					
34	Play competitive games					
35	Focus on language functions					
36	Ask pupils to read an unseen passage aloud					
37	Stick closely to the coursebook					
38	Allow pupils to use German/English dictionaries in class when they want					
39	Correct all errors in pupils' written work					
40	Use controlled practice for more than 25% of the lesson					
41	Focus mainly on grammar					
42	Focus mainly on vocabulary					
43	Let pupils work on a speaking activity without teacher assistance for more than ten minutes					
44	Ask pupils to prepare a passage then read it aloud					
45	Ask pupils to memorise a dialogue					
46	Provide a social context before presenting a language item					
47	Concentrate on accuracy in speaking					
48	Read a text aloud to pupils					

49	Ask the pupils to listen and repeat					
50	Ask pupils to make up sentences using a structure					
51	Use authentic TV or video programmes					
52	Tell students about exceptions to rules					
53	Ask students to self-correct					
54	Choral drill a structure					
55	Use freer practice/production/communicative activities for more than 25% of the lesson					
56	Expose pupils to different varieties of English					
57	Ask pupils to translate from English to German orally					
58	Display students' work on the wall					
59	Use pre-activities to focus pupils' attention before reading/listening					
60	Use codes/symbols to correct written work					
61	Focus on listening skills					
62	Ask pupils to do scripted role plays					
63	Explain a grammar rule in German					
64	Present/explain/demonstrate new language for more than 25% of the lesson					

**Part C:** What would you like to change in your teaching practice?

(What would you like to approach differently compared to your experience as a learner of a foreign language?)

## Appendix II: What are your views on language learning?

*Rate these statements A for 'agree', D for 'disagree', or ? for 'don't know'. Share your views with a colleague discussing your reasons, and any evidence to support your decisions.*

*Prepare a report on where you could not reach agreement adding any other comments you might like to make.*

- a) Language is a set of parts that can be isolated and taught/learned.
- b) Learning a language means developing a set of skills and subskills, e.g. skimming for gist.
- c) We need language to do things with it, to express concepts such as time, location, or to establish and maintain social relationships.
- d) Language learning is the acquisition of a set of habits. Repetition to aid memorisation and intolerance of errors ('bad habits') are features of this approach.
- e) Language is a set of internalised rules applied unconsciously. Language learning is facilitated by conscious learning of the rules and meaningful practice in applying them.
- f) The native language plays a role in foreign language learning, either constructive or obstructive.
- g) Authentic materials should be used in the classroom because constructed language is inadequate for language learning
- h) To teach the spoken language is as important than to teach the written language, if not more so.
- i) A rule should be explained first and then practised/applied.
- j) Learners should work out a rule from samples of language with the help of guiding activities or questions.
- k) Completing the coursebook takes high priority.
- l) Creating conditions that will facilitate effective learning processes and encouraging learner autonomy are important factors in foreign language learning.
- m) The learning process is affected by the way learners feel. This could be to do with classroom atmosphere, relationships with teachers and peers, attitude towards target language/culture.
- n) Linguistic accuracy is important in language learning. Errors are comparable to bad habits and should be corrected immediately in order to prevent 'fossilisation'.
- o) Language is learned through the process of struggling to communicate. Fluency activities take high priority.
- p) Learning requires active involvement: 'learning by doing'. Learners are not passive receptacles into which knowledge can be poured.
- q) Meaningful input or exposure to language is essential for learning to take place.

### Appendix III: Spreadsheet Printout of Personal Questionnaire Analysis

To what extent are your views on language learning reflected in your teaching?

(according to your answers in the questionnaire)

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
reflected	29%	20%	9%	53%	8%	14%	33%	33%	33%
unclear	71%	40%	45%	20%	50%	71%	33%	40%	56%
not reflected	0%	40%	45%	27%	42%	14%	33%	27%	11%
	?	-	-	+	?	?	+	?	?

	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q
reflected	0%	20%	0%	25%	37%	13%	13%	50%
unclear	50%	20%	18%	33%	37%	25%	47%	25%
not reflected	50%	60%	82%	42%	26%	63%	40%	25%
	?	-	-	+	?	?	+	?

## **Appendix IV: Concluding Evaluation of the Course**

### **Course Evaluation**

The following questions are designed to explore in what ways and to what extent the course has affected your teaching of English as a foreign language. They are supposed to serve as a tool for individual reflection as well as for evaluation of the course.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you been able to apply any contents of the course in class? If so, what did you apply? What are your experiences?
2. Are you intending to integrate anything from the course into your teaching in the future? If so, what?
3. Has the course had any other influences on your teaching of foreign languages? If so, how would you describe these influences?
4. What area(s) of TEFL are you interested in developing in your teaching practice? In which direction?
5. Are there any elements which might help or hinder the development of your approach to teaching foreign languages in the desired direction?

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