BRITISH COUNCIL

TeachingEnglish

ELT-20

English Studies Information Update 4: Inspectorate Work and Accreditation

Milestones in ELT

Milestones in ELT

The British Council was established in 1934 and one of our main aims has always been to promote a wider knowledge of the English language. Over the years we have issued many important publications that have set the agenda for ELT professionals, often in partnership with other organisations and institutions.

As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we re-launched a selection of these publications online, and more have now been added in connection with our 80th anniversary. Many of the messages and ideas are just as relevant today as they were when first published. We believe they are also useful historical sources through which colleagues can see how our profession has developed over the years.

English Studies Information Update 4: Inspectorate Work and Accreditation

Published in 1990, the overall theme of this in-house British Council publication is quality assurance of language provision, a topic which was at that time gaining increasing prominence in ELT. This update was designed to raise 'current awareness' among British Council staff and it covers inspectorate work and the accreditation of English language teaching in the UK and overseas, and at different levels, from private language schools to state colleges of further education and academic contexts. One theme is the use of performance indicators as a way of providing evidence of quality. Key organisations and accrediting bodies, inspection methods, a British Council code of practice, training provision for inspectors, and information materials are also considered.

Information update

Issue 4
Summer 1990

English studies

The British Council

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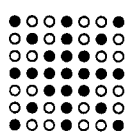

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Contents

Foreword

English studies information update, the in-house current awareness bulletin for British Council English studies personnel and ELT contract teachers (ELTOs and DTEO staff), is compiled and edited by the English Language Information Unit (ELIU) of the British Council's Libraries, Books and Information Division (LIBID). There are three issues a year: Spring, Summer and Autumn.

The bulletin concentrates on teaching issues and practice in the British Council network, but also covers major non-Council ELT topics. Each issue focuses on events and projects in a particular ELT area.

The bulletin also includes news items on headquarters projects, staff changes, ELT materials and important events.

Current issue

The overall theme in *Information update* 4 is **inspectorate work and accreditation**, covering a wide range of topics in this area of increasing prominence in ELT: the British Council's Recognition Scheme and the Code of DTE Practice; the work of the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC) and of the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP): the British Council consultative conference on teacher qualifications for EFL; projects in Morocco, Oman and Tanzania; and UK courses for overseas inspectors.

Forthcoming issues

The Autumn issue, *Information update* 5, will focus on **vocabulary studies.** Subjects under consideration for future issues include **language across the curriculum, teacher education through distance learning, ELT management and EFL examinations**, though not necessarily in that order. Articles and reports on these and other ELT subjects are invited. Articles should be two to three sides of A4 typescript, accompanied by diagrams or other illustrations where appropriate.

Contact point for articles and news items: **Ruth Curry**, Editor, English Language Information Unit, Libraries, Books and Information Division, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN

1 British Council inspection and accreditation schemes

Quality control and EFL in Britain

[The British Council manages and administers two accreditation schemes for EFL courses in British institutions, The Recognition Scheme and the Courses Validation Scheme. Here Jenny Pugsley, Head of Accreditation Unit, gives an overview of recent and possible future developments in the schemes.]

What makes a good EFL course? Is it teaching? Is it the classroom? What about the social programme? How does the prospective student planning a study trip to Britain choose a school, and a course, from the hundreds on offer? What is value for money? And how does the overseas agent or sponsor persuade their client that the **right** course, and the **right** school, have been chosen?

Background

The British Council manages and administers two accreditation schemes for courses in English as a foreign language in the state and private/independent sectors in Britain. The Courses Validation Scheme (CVS) covers courses in BASCELT colleges (members of the British Association of State Colleges in English Language Teaching) and was set up by the Council at the request of BASCELT in April 1989. EFL courses are **assessed** on a three-yearly basis and, if successful, can be described as *validated by the British Council* in promotional material.

The Recognition Scheme covers courses in private and independent language schools; the Council took over the scheme in 1982 at the request of ARELS-FELCO, the professional association of private English language schools, when the Department of Education and Science gave up its responsibility for EFL courses in the private sector. Schools are inspected on a three-yearly basis and, if successful, can be described as *recognized by the British Council* in their promotional material.

Inspections and assessments are carried out by a professional inspectorate. The schemes enable customers at accredited institutions to be assured at minimum levels of service: the Council, in collaboration with ARELS-FELCO and BASCELT, undertakes to investigate any serious complaint by a student or member of staff that could affect the accredited status of an institution.

Recent developments

What happens between inspections

Schools do not stand still. Many teachers prefer to gain a range of experience in different schools rather than stay in one place for several years. Proprietors with a business rather than a "family" interest buy and sell with a view to developing the potential of a particular school. Change can, and should be healthy, in the interests of customer and staff, but continuity is essential for long-term planning, such as staff development.

Under the terms of the Recognition Scheme, it is possible for a school to be spot-checked by an inspector without any prior warning to the school. A number of random spot-checks are now set up every year. If the spot-check shows up any major deficiencies in the school, a full re-inspection can be required. If a series of significant complaints are received about a particular school, a spot-check is one way of investigating the problem. Spot-checks do not work only to the advantage of the customer. Most schools are concerned that member schools keep to the rules, and that one or two offending parties do not bring bad press to the profession, and the industry as a whole.

So who benefits from professional development?

Many colleagues working in the framework of ARELS-FELCO, BASCELT and IATEFL (the International Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language) have given generously of their time in recent years to raise the profile of the teacher, and the director of studies, as professionals in their own right, with a major contribution to make to the success of the school, and hopefully to improve career prospects for themselves! The Recognition Scheme for private schools has acknowledged this trend by adding a seventh heading to its inspection categories - "Academic management".

In the past, the performance of the director of studies (or whatever post title was given to that responsibility) was subsumed under the heading "professional qualifications", and a single grade given to cover the two fields. Clearly, qualifications on paper are important, but the new category allows inspectors to give particular credit to the special talents of the director of studies: how, for example she or he manages teaching staff, allocates courses, organizes peer observation, monitors student progress, and ensures that teachers take advantage of whatever updating opportunities are open to them: subscribing to journals, attending a conference, giving a paper, or simply setting up regular staff sessions to deal with pedagogic issues - so easily relegated

to second or third place after "admin". And the director of studies, or senior teacher, who has **always** done this as matter of routine can see her or his role in the management structure of the school as a whole.

Does this benefit the customer? Students invariably seem to know whether their teachers are, on the whole, comfortable in their chosen profession or killing time until the next contract.

The future

The talk is all of 1992: English as a money earner, English as a political tool, English as possibly a major second language in parts of Eastern Europe. British culture, as represented through many language courses in Britain, and as the stock in trade of the British Council, is no more stagnant than the profession of English teaching itself. The cosy world of the colour brochure is in many cases a far cry from a day in the life of an overseas student in Britain. The real thing is probably more interesting, if less cosy! But there is a highly competent and professional English teaching sector in the rest of Europe. It seems reasonable to assume that monitoring of the language school sector in Britain, by official schemes, but by implication the schools themselves, will bring the kind of quality control that can only be to the advantage of the profession, and the industry.

J A Pugsley
Head
Accreditation Unit

The Recognition Scheme: the selection and training of inspectors

Who are the inspectors?

Some inspectors are ex-HMIs. Others are employed full-time within the profession, but not in recognized schools. Several inspectors are freelance. All have had training and experience relevant to the demands of the inspection and report-writing process.

Selection and appointment

The policy is to maintain an inspectorate of some fifty people, each of whom is appointed for three years in the first instance. The Accreditation Unit undertakes an annual review of the inspectorate panel, paying special attention to newly appointed inspectors' first year of work.

In making its appointments, the British Council bears in mind the need for an inspectorate whose members have varied and complementary backgrounds. Also borne in mind is the need to have inspectors who are sympathetic to the aims of the scheme. Briefly, these are to identify, maintain and improve the quality of services offered to EFL students in the UK. Inspectors must also be prepared to co-operate with their colleagues, to carry out their duties professionally and objectively; to be convincing and credible – and to work hard!

What do inspectors actually do?

Once the arrangements for an inspection have been made (each school is inspected at least once every three years), it is the inspectors' first duty to plan their visit to a school as carefully as possible. This often involves reading a lot of material quickly but carefully. Special attention has to be paid to publicity materials, timetables and staff details.

During the inspection itself, inspectors must examine the school in relation to the criteria laid down by the Scheme. To do this, inspectors need to plan their time very carefully, paying special attention to those parts of the inspection that they wish to carry out individually. Despite their carefully made plans, inspectors need to be flexible and adaptable: a too rigid plan for an inspection will not work since circumstances can change very quickly, and since it may be necessary to follow an unexpected lead or development.

In doing all this, the need for rapid powers of observation is crucial. At the same time, an inspector must be prepared to be patient, to probe, and to ask difficult questions. And since teachers, directors of studies and principals are often understandably anxious during inspections, inspectors need to be able to perform their duties with sensitivity and discretion. Also, all inspectors very soon learn that they must be prepared to make judgements. Some inspections are not for the faint-hearted!

Finally (and something which is difficult to assess before they are appointed) inspectors must be able to write reports which are fair, reasoned, detailed and professionally sound. In the past two years, the importance attached by schools to their reports has noticeably increased. Report writing has become one of the greatest challenges for inspectors. The text of each part of their reports must match the grades given, and each report's examples and conclusions must be logical and defensible.

How are inspectors trained?

A number of briefing sessions are provided for inspectors. These are extremely important in providing an opportunity for the inspectorate to express and refine its experiences of the Scheme as a group. Attendance at the sessions is considered by the British Council as part of the commitment that inspectors make to the scheme.

Recent topics at the sessions have included school management; the inspection of teaching; the credibility amongst teachers of the Scheme; report writing; and resources. The precise purpose of each briefing session varies but in general the aims of the sessions are to inform (e.g. about computer materials of self-access); to share experiences (e.g. about writing reports); and to update (e.g. about the evolution of the criteria used in the Scheme). Techniques used in the sessions are varied, and include group work, discussion sessions, and presentations by outside speakers.

In addition to attending the briefing sessions, newly-appointed inspectors are guided through their first two or three inspections by a more experienced colleague, and are not on these occasions expected to act as the "reporting inspector".

Are inspectors evaluated?

It is clearly very important for the Scheme that the work of inspectors is itself subject to scrutiny in some way. Feedback on their work comes from a variety of sources. Since it is the Recognition Advisory Committee (RAC) and not the inspectors who actually recommend or withdraw recognition, the first monitoring filter is the committee itself. Despite the very large number of reports they must read, the members of the RAC are extremely attentive to detail: they may ask for a rewrite of either a part, or exceptionally, the whole of a report.

Secondly, schools themselves are free to complete a post-inspection proforma, in which they can – and do – express their own views on the planning and conduct of the inspection. Later of course, Principals often express their views on the reports and the grades awarded.

Finally, feedback on the inspectors' work comes from the inspectors themselves. Before, during and after their visits to schools, inspectors must help each other to meet the requirements of the Scheme as fully and as fairly as possible. And each inspector must bear in mind that above all else the Scheme is run for the benefit of students. In my view, it is this capacity to learn from one's colleagues, and from one's developing awareness of the Scheme's importance to students that is the key.

Norman Whitney
Joint Chief Inspector
English Language Schools Recognition Scheme

"The desirability of dovetailing" or the skills required of the British Council Accreditation Officer

(In this article, Julie Caveney gives a humourous account of her job as Accreditation Officer in the British Council's Accreditation Unit)

There is, I believe, a certain skill called "dovetailing", normally attributed to the female sex, which consists of not only doing several things at once, but completing them all on time and keeping one's lipstick perfect throughout. I have scoured my job advertisement several times and have failed to find this requirement under either "essential" or "desirable". Still, dovetailing is required in large doses in the Accreditation Officer post and can be a very rewarding experience, in a perverse kind of way.

Dovetailing is a little like doing a dangerous party trick - you can be a star or you can embarrass yourself so much that no-one ever speaks to you again. Two people in the department are still speaking to me after a year and a half, so I suppose that counts as acceptable.

The Accreditation Unit deals with over three hundred institutions within the UK – around a quarter of the total number, but it can still feel like the entire population of Russia when things begin to go wrong. All these institutions need to be inspected every three years, so I am responsible for setting up a hundred inspections a year. That is, a hundred or so institutions need inspecting each year, which is not the same thing at all and is where I let myself be horribly misled when I took up the post. Inspections take on an amoeba-like quality, especially during the summer, when innocent-looking headquarters, housed in exquisite listed buildings, suddenly sprout thirty or forty summer satellite operations, one in four of which need inspecting.

The Unit has a panel of fifty-two inspectors, employed on a freelance basis (nobody in their right mind would do the job permanently), two of whom are needed for each inspection. The mathematically gifted sniff at this point and conclude, "Ah, two or three inspections per inspector per year, what else do you do in your spare time?" but reality, as we say in Manchester, is a different kettle of tripe. Geographical limitations are an important factor for a start. No point in getting an inspector from Edinburgh to see a school in Clacton, or persuading a school to pay the train fare from London (thus taking the additional risk of the inspector eating a British Rail sandwich on the way and never reaching the destination) if they are teetering on the edge of Cornwall.

A sense of honour also plays its part - it is a little unfair to the competition if a school's ex-principal, now inspecting for the British Council, is sent to inspect her old school, isn't it? Or, come to think of it, sending somebody whose second uncle twice removed was once turned down for the post of assistant tennis court sweeper. One can never be too careful.

Inspectors, although employed on a freelance basis, have several other jobs to keep them in pencils. Many of the panel are lecturers, departmental directors, authors, HMI inspectors, teacher trainers and whippet breeders. Availability is probably the most difficult hurdle to overcome, as schools are able to offer dates on which they would prefer to be inspected, and my job is to find inspectors who are i) free at the time, ii) close to the school geographically, iii) far away from the school personally, iv) fit enough to climb thirteen flights of stairs to reach the principal's office. Calculators at the ready ...

Principals are the proud parents of babies who make money and keep them and their staff solvent. Inspecting and criticizing the baby is a delicate and potentially explosive process and needs to be handled with tact and discretion. Council-speak is very handy in these situations, and I have metamorphosed into a shameless bureaucrat over the past eighteen months. I reserve the right not to wear steel-rimmed spectacles.

The most delightful part of the job has to be the "morning-after" telephone calls which we make to the schools to tell them that they have officially passed their inspection. Somebody once rang me back three times to check the grades because she couldn't believe that her school had done so well. Most principals pretend to be John Wayne and coolly acknowledge the fact that they have the best stamp of EFL approval available, but you can sometimes hear them screaming with joy to the director of studies when they don't replace the receiver properly.

And what a stamp it is! The British Council lists of accredited institutions are the only ones given to enquirers at its offices in the UK and overseas; agents are increasingly sending students to accredited schools because of the guarantee of high standards; national newspapers have begun to take advertisements only from accredited schools; and the BTA workshop now only admits institutions with the badge of honour.

Eat your heart out, Marks & Spencer.

Julie Caveney
Accreditation Officer
Accreditation Unit

Defining and monitoring quality in direct teaching of English (DTE): a code of DTE practice emerges

[Central Management of Direct Teaching (CMDT), in consultation with DTOMs from the network has initiated a *Code of Practice* which is to be refined over the forthcoming year. The *Code* aims to define performance indicators of quality in the direct teaching of English, which are monitored through a data return. Carl Reuter, ELT Support Officer, describes the initiative.]

"What's Jeddah like as a direct teaching operation?"
"What do you think of our Caracas operation?"
"We've got a DTO in Kyoto, haven't we? Any good?"

Assessing quality in a direct teaching operation (DTO) can be difficult for a central headquarters department, particularly when thinking about the quality of its methodology. How can CMDT realistically sift through the full range of socio-economic and cultural constraints and opportunities, understand the expectations and motivations of students and teachers, get to know the chosen methodological models for the various courses, analyse student and teacher performance, and thus assess whether the DTO in question is a "quality" operation? This is not a job for a corporate centre concerned with fifty-five or so DTOs. It is part of the operational management of each one.

Assessing financial performance does not get us much further in attempting a definition – a healthy or expanding trading surplus is not necessarily a sign of quality. A DTO may be experiencing exciting market demand without doing much to deserve it, or may be boosting surplus through under-investment which will cause long-term damage. How then can questions concerning quality in DTOs be addressed centrally?

An attempt can be made to define performance indicators of quality in DTOs. By this I mean it should be possible to examine which fields of DTO activity are measurable, establish through consensus what general measurements should constitute an acceptable degree of quality in these fields and then compare the measurements from individual DTOs against the set guidelines rising out of the consensus. Some of the questions that could be asked are, for example:

- What trends in re-enrolment exist?
- What percentage of British Council entered students pass a particular public examination?
- What proportion of the teaching staff have the RSA Dip TEFLA or equivalent?
- How often are teachers given observation/feedback support per term?
- How long does the average student wait whilst involved in the registration process?

Possibly, less precise but nevertheless informative statements can be made concerning, for example, induction procedures for new teachers, or appraisal systems.

This is what is currently being attempted by CMDT in the drawing up of a *Code of DTE Practice (CODP).* Naturally this does not mean that CMDT simply draw up a set of indicators, defined satisfactory performance levels and circulated these to DTO managers (DTOMs). DTO conferences in Singapore, Dubai, Spain and England have tackled a possible updating of the *Code of professional practice* which emerged from English Language and Literature Division (ELLD) in the early 'eighties and which has served as a starting point for the first draft of the *CODP.* (As you can imagine, pronunciation of the acronym is still a matter of debate).

The first draft has been circulated to representatives and DTOMs for comments, criticisms and suggestions. It is planned to spend a further full year obtaining feedback and then refining the final draft before "installing" the *Code.* The centrality of such a code of practice to the activity of the DTO network has not been underestimated and the time invested in getting it right appears to be fully justifiable.

What CODP contains

The *Code* offers a set of guideline statements and lists appropriate types of documentation, pertaining to the following areas:

1 Academic staff

- qualifications, training and experience
- duties
- supervision and co-ordination

2 Teaching programmes:

- examinations and examination classes
- development and updating
- methodology
- testing/assessment

3 Client relations:

- reception and registration
- customer research
- monitoring client perceptions

4 Premises and equipment:

- classroom space re student numbers
- use of display space
- classroom equipment
- computer-assisted language learning (CALL)
- cafeteria facilities
- self-access facilities

Associated documents

Accompanying the *CODP* documents is a data return, to be completed every two years by each DTO, which asks for information relating to key areas in the *Code*. It is not intended necessarily that each return from fifty-five DTOs be scrutinised minutely – CMDT does not have the staff capacity to cope with full analysis of another major return. The return has two functions:

- to inform CMDT's dialogue and decision making regarding particular DTOs as and where necessary;

- to form the basis of a programme of **peer monitoring** visits whereby host and visiting DTOM, in consultation with Representative, jointly compile a report on the host DTO and agree recommendations.

Peer monitoring of DTOs

The intention of a peer monitoring system for DTOs is to identify in the report arising from the visit:

- examples of good practice in the field of academic management which might benefit the network elsewhere

- departure from *CODP*, together with accompanying commentary on the extent to which these departures can be justified and recommendations as to how they may be remedied

- broad objectives for the future development of the host DTO

Where possible, regional exchanges will be encouraged on the assumption that a visiting DTOM from the region will offer an appropriate combination of regional knowledge and objectivity to the host DTO. It is also assumed that both DTOMs involved will benefit from the experience and cross-border regional cooperation between DTOs can be enhanced.

Summary

CMDT, in consultation with DTOMs from the network, has initiated a *Code of Practice* which is to be refined over the forthcoming year. The *Code* aims to define performance indicators of quality in the direct teaching of English, which are mentioned through a data return. Because of the difficulty in measuring methodological quality, this aspect is left to the operational managers who are more aware of local considerations. Their views are to be made explicit through a DTO peer monitoring system which results in a report for each DTO, jointly compiled by the host and visiting DTOM in consultation with the Representative. The report draws upon a combination of performance indicators as specified in the data return and local knowledge and experience, in an attempt to assess overall quality and present agreed recommendations for the future.

Carl Reuter
ELT Support Officer
Central Management of Direct Teaching

2 Other accrediting bodies

The British Council consultative conference on teacher qualifications for English as a foreign language: 1 March 1990

[This conference was set up by the British Council and involved participants from various institutions which offer teacher qualifications in EFL. The aim was to discuss the case for the formation of an Association of teacher qualifying institutions. The steering group's draft resolution was amended at the meeting.]

The idea arose from a recommendation of the British Council 1992 seminars held in February 1989, that some kind of "Institute of TEFL teacher trainers" should be set up. The British Council convened a working group representing the main interest groups concerned and both the draft resolution (see appendix 1 and appendix 2 for the amended version) and the format and organization of the conference itself emerged from the work of this group.

Roger Bowers, Controller of English Language Division, welcomed the participants and suggested that there would be three strands in the conference:

- equivalence recognition and comparability of qualifications
- management, liaison and marketing of courses
- promotion in the international area.

Professor Christopher Brumfit spoke on the issues which concerned him in considering an award-bearing higher education institute, and reflected on the various possible roles for such an institute which need to be distinguished:

- representing particular bodies to outside agencies such as the FCO, ODA, British Council, UNESCO. Existing bodies such as BASCELT and the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) overlap in function. Membership of such bodies is formally based on institutional association, and institutions normally pay membership fees
- representing individuals in their professional capacities. Existing bodies include teachers' organizations such as IATEFL and TESOL, academic organizations such as BAAL, as well as the British Educational Research Association (BERA), the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) and others
- accrediting agencies. In the UK, teacher education is accredited by the state-imposed Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) if DES recognition is to be provided. Other systems operate through professional associations, such as BASCELT and BALEAP. Professor Brumfit noted the difference in function between validation and accreditation, the former usually referring to the quality of the course in academic terms and the latter recognizing the course as a qualification for a particular external purpose e.g. recognizing that those with a particular qualification are surgeons or teachers
- restrictive membership professional bodies. These do not exist in EFL but are quite common in the pure and applied sciences. Membership is by individual subscription and qualification, and sometimes by competitive examination
- trade unions. These negotiate terms of service, salaries etc with employers but usually also take some interest in matters like professional standards. Membership is individual, though it may be, in effect, compulsory or strongly encouraged by an employer.

There can be tension between creativity and standardization and it can be said that there is an appropriate midway position for any course, but the higher the academic level, the more *who* rather than *what* becomes important. Any responsible institute needs to resolve the conflict between academic expertise and the market principle of attracting students. Professor Brumfit saw accreditation as relating to market forces and was pessimistic about the capacity of an accrediting organization to recognize scholarship. Once initial training was completed he saw a crucial need for links with other activities, as a wider perspective was needed for those moving into more responsible positions in the profession.

In summing up and closing the conference, Roger Bowers referred to the problem of representation on such an association as the one proposed, and of letting everyone know the outcome of the conference. The statement of aims would be refined before October. There will have to be a developmental function as well as monitoring of what is going on. It was important to avoid a proliferation of associations. Indicators will have to be built in from the beginning and we will be asked what is the expected return for what we are doing. These and many other points raised in the course of the day would be studied in subsequent meetings of the steering group.

This article is abridged from two documents - a written report of the conference and a paper containing a full presentation of Christopher Brumfit's ideas. Both items are available from Dr Tony Shaw, Teacher Training Unit, English Overseas Services, The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN.

Appendix 1

Draft text of the resolution

1 This meeting believes that an association should be formed with the following broad objectives:

a to provide mechanisms for describing, comparing and evaluating teacher training qualifications in English as a foreign language;

b to provide a forum for exchange of ideas among teacher-qualifying institutions and for the future development of teacher qualifications;

c to represent British English language teaching in matters concerning teacher training in dealings with official bodies nationally and internationally such as the Department of Education and Science, the European Community etc

2 The meeting further agrees that a steering group should be formed forthwith to elaborate a scheme for submission to a meeting at which the association will be inaugurated.

Appendix 2

Amended version of the draft text for resolution

1 This meeting believes that an Association should be formed with the following broad objectives:

a To establish equivalences between courses and qualifications in EFL teacher-training with a view to establishing equivalences and distinctions;

b to establish appropriate routes towards professional recognition as a teacher of EFL in a variety of circumstances;

c to represent British TEFL / TESOL in matters concerning teacher training in dealings with official bodies nationally and internationally, such as DES, EC etc.

2 This meeting further agrees that a steering group should be formed forthwith to elaborate a scheme for submission to a meeting at which the association will be inaugurated to seek to integrate TEFL / TESOL qualifications into the broader area of qualifications for foreign language teaching in this country.

British Council, 1 March 1990

It was further proposed that the steering committee should speak to the DES in order to relate decisions to foreign language teaching in general in this country.

The meeting gave sufficient approval to the spirit of the wording proposed above for agreement on the convening of a committee to carry the proposals for an association further and if possible bring such an accreditation into being.

The accreditation of independent colleges in Britain

The most significant development in independent further and higher education in 1990 was the publication in May of the first *Directory of accredited independent colleges in Britain*. The directory contains the names of almost 350 independent colleges enrolling more than 500,000 students. It is produced jointly by the three major accrediting bodies in Britain involved in independent further and higher education. They are: the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC); the British Council's Recognition Scheme for English Language Schools (BC); and the Council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges (CACC).

The independent sector of further and higher education in Britain

The size of the independent sector of further and higher education in Britain often surprises observers - and even those directly involved. The 70 institutions accredited by the BAC enrol some 30,000 full-time and part-time students; the British Council's 250 institutions enrol some 100,000 students, many on very short courses; and the CACC's 36 institutions enrol some 400,000 students both in Britain and overseas. Joint accreditation of some institutions by the BAC and the British Council gives a total of almost 350 accredited institutions. The BAC's 70 institutions probably represents only 10 per cent of the independent colleges likely to be eligible for BAC accreditation and the CACC's 36 probably represents 75 per cent. Since there is no statutory requirement for independent institutions enrolling students beyond school age even to be registered let alone inspected, it is difficult to be precise about the size of the sector.

The independent sector of further and higher education is enormously varied. As far as accredited institutions are concerned the biggest single area of provision is English as a foreign language (EFL) followed by GCSE and GCE A level provision. Courses leading to professional qualifications, either by correspondence or face-to-face tuition in accountancy, banking, catering, insurance, marketing, secretarial studies and transport management, to name but a few areas of study, are also very popular. More unusually, independent colleges offer courses in boatbuilding, clock production and restoration and petroleum studies. A small, but important group of colleges provides further education and life skills for disabled students.

Setting and monitoring standards in independent further and higher education

Setting and monitoring standards in this large and diverse area of educational provision has been a difficult task. The CACC, which was established in 1969, has responsibility for the accreditation of correspondence colleges. Until 1989 half of its Council was appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Prior to 1982 Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) were involved in the inspection of those independent colleges offering face-to-face tuition which voluntarily sought to be "recognized as efficient" by the Department of Education and Science. A vacuum was created by the decision of the DES in 1981 to cease its involvement in the inspection of independent colleges. The British Council was asked by the private sector language schools to set up a scheme for the inspection of independent language schools and organisations. At the same time, the British Council set up and chaired a working party which led, in 1984, to the establishment of the BAC as the national accrediting authority for independent further and higher education. In essence, the BAC has taken responsibility for the accreditation of colleges which are **not** involved solely in EFL provision or correspondence tuition.

Co-operation in accreditation

Commendable, indeed essential, though these separate initiatives have been, the need for a simple, clearly understood system of accreditation of independent colleges of further and higher education became increasingly apparent towards the end of the 'eighties. There was a need firstly to encourage prospective students to ask whether a college was accredited; and then to be able to provide a clear answer to the question. A major breakthrough was achieved in both these respects by the publication in 1989 of a brochure produced jointly by the BAC, the British Council and the CACC. In his introduction to the brochure, the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, The Right Hon Kenneth Baker MP, commended accreditation by these three bodies as ".... the best – indeed the only public – guarantee of standards" in independent institutions of further and higher education in Britain.

The 1990 *Directory of accredited independent colleges in Britain* represents an even more significant development. In addition to a description of the inspection schemes of the three accrediting bodies, the 1990 directory contains a list of all the independent institutions accredited by the BAC, the British Council and the CACC. For the first time, prospective students and their advisers have access to a single directory of accredited, independent colleges. The need for such a directory on the part of, for example, examination boards, professional bodies and government departments is clear. Whether the need is for assistance in

making decisions on visa applications by overseas students, community charge rebates for students, the registration of institutions as examination centres, or on the inclusion of an institution's name in the publications of a wide range of organizations, the new directory should prove to be an invaluable reference book.

The British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC): an accreditation scheme in practice

Given the voluntary nature of accreditation for independent colleges in Britain, a question may legitimately be asked. What confidence can the public have in the arrangements and criteria of the three major accrediting bodies involved in the inspection of independent colleges of further and higher education? This may be answered by outlining briefly the people and procedures involved in one of the accrediting bodies, the British Accreditation Council (BAC).

The people involved in BAC

The BAC's council includes representatives of the chief bodies responsible for the maintenance of academic standards in Britain: universities, polytechnics and colleges, national validating bodies, public and professional examining boards, and also those bodies, such as the British Council, with a particular concern for overseas students. Membership of the BAC's council is restricted to individuals and organizations with **no** direct involvement in running any of the independent colleges which seek BAC accreditation. The BAC is a registered charity.

The BAC inspectorate which carries out all inspections contains well over 100 inspectors and includes: former HM Inspectors of Education, local education authority advisers and inspectors, current and former heads and senior staff members of polytechnics, colleges and institutes of higher education and colleges of further education.

BAC criteria for accreditation

Institutions seeking BAC accreditation must satisfy the BAC under all the following headings:

- Accommodation and learning resources
- Administration and staffing
- Quality control, including the effectiveness of the monitoring of experiences of students in joining and pursuing the programmes provided
- Welfare arrangements, including career advice and counselling where appropriate
- Teaching, involving an assessment of the professional competence of academic staff

In addition, the BAC scrutinizes the legal and financial viability of institutions. The criteria used by the BAC are consistent with those required by the Home Office of bona fide institutions enrolling overseas students.

The procedures used by the BAC

The process of accreditation involves an initial general visit by the BAC's Executive Secretary following receipt of an enquiry from an institution about accreditation. This visit will normally be followed by an advisory visit from a BAC Reporting (senior) Inspector. These visits are intended to assist both the institution involved and the BAC in determining whether and when an application for accreditation would be appropriate.

The documentation accompanying each application for accreditation is scrutinized by the BAC's Accreditation and Recognition Committee (ARC) which decides formally whether an institution is eligible for an inspection. This will involve a preliminary visit by a BAC Reporting Inspector appointed by the ARC on the advice of the Chief Inspector to the BAC; a report recommending whether to proceed to a full inspection; and advice concerning the expertise required on the inspection team and the likely length of an inspection. Inspections can involve between two and eight inspectors and vary in length betwen four and over twenty "inspector days" depending on the size and complexity of an institution.

The Institutional Report of an inspection, along with the grades for each of the five inspection heads, is forwarded to the ARC, which decides whether or not to accredit an institution. Accreditation is normally conditional upon re-inspection within five years. Each accredited institution is required to submit an annual report giving current information on staffing, courses, examination results, premises and finances etc. If, in the opinion of the BAC, significant changes take place in an institution between scheduled five-yearly inspections, the BAC reserves the right to review the accreditation of that institution.

Serving the public interest

The BAC's institutional reports may be made available to bona fide enquirers at the discretion of the Principal of an accredited instituion. The BAC has procedures for considering complaints against accredited institutions where internal, college complaints procedures have been exhausted and if the allegations suggest that the BAC's criteria for accreditation have been contravened. Neither of these safeguards is available where non-accredited institutions are involved.

Conclusion

The fact that there is no law requiring even the registration let alone inspection of hundreds of independent colleges enrolling at least half a million students, many from overseas, might seem scandalous and irresponsible. Set against this is the existence of three independent accrediting bodies with rigorous standards of accreditation. A surprising fact, perhaps is that almost 350 independent colleges have voluntarily sought and achieved accreditation by one of these bodies.

The size and variety of the independent sector of further and higher education cannot be denied – even though it is frequently not fully appreciated. The need for a list of bona fide independent colleges has become increasingly apparent. The new *Directory of accredited independent colleges in Britain* provides an easily accessible list of bona fide colleges. A long-standing gap is now being filled. Students and their advisers, whether at home or overseas should be better informed and served as a result.

David W Parry
Executive Secretary
British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education (BAC)

The BALEAP Validation Scheme for EAP courses in higher education

[In 1988, the British Association of Lecturers in EAP formed a working party in order to draft a code of practice for member institutions' EAP courses. Philip Shaw gives details.]

About twelve per cent of the students in British universities are not native speakers of English, and a good proportion of the twelve per cent have their first experience of studying in English when they come to Britain. Inevitably, therefore, they face difficulties either for lack of general English proficiency or for lack of specific study skills. Since the early 'seventies universities have recognized this by appointing lecturers responsible for "English for overseas students". Initially materials for English for academic purposes were in short supply and the fairly small group of lecturers involved formed an association to exchange teaching materials and experiences. This association is now called BALEAP (British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes) and has thirty-six member institutions, mostly universities, but with some polytechnics.

BALEAP members give support to non-natives who are already studying their specialist subjects through tutorials, and part-time in-sessional classes. A major part of the support, however, is pre-sessional, in the form of courses which prepare people for studying in English. Undergraduates and many postgraduates take taught courses which require attendance at lectures and they generally start their studies in October. Consequently many institutions run fairly large full-time preparatory courses in English and study skills (between 30 and 150 participants) in July, August and September. There are, however, research students who start in other months, and there are students who need more than three months' English tuition to reach the standard necessary for successful study. There are therefore smaller courses (from 5 to 20 participants) throughout the academic year.

It is useful for people to take preparatory English courses where they are to do their specialist studies, because it enables them to get to know the institution and the city and in particular to consult their supervisors and use the library. Consequently most institutions now run their own preparatory courses in English and study skills. Though these courses mostly have similar aims and contents each one was set up independently and so exchange of experience and advice is valuable. The possibility of formalizing this exchange, among other factors, has led BALEAP members to introduce a scheme to monitor one another's EAP courses.

Since a high proportion of their students are going on to further study in the same institution, and since they provide specific training in academic rather than general or business English, BALEAP courses are not in competition with those offered by members of ARELS-FELCO, the association of private language schools, or of BASCELT, the state colleges involved in English language teaching. Nevertheless, the advent of course validation schemes for those bodies obviously made BALEAP consider validation of their own summer and year-round work. Members wanted to be seen to be accountable and wanted to ensure that all courses offered were as good as possible.

In 1988, therefore, a working party was formed which drafted a code of practice which all BALEAP institutions could subscribe to for their EAP courses, and supported it with more detailed guidelines which specified teacher qualifications, class sizes, staffing levels, facilities and much more. The process of drafting, redrafting and approving these documents took more than a year; all involved were busy teaching and BALEAP meets only twice a year.

The next step was to devise a credible and economic scheme for monitoring their application of guidelines. Because of the principle of university autonomy, members decided to base this on the external examiner peer-evaluation system. A Courses Validation Committee was formed which drew up a list of assessors with experience of running courses of this kind, many of them BALEAP members who themselves run courses.

Courses must be validated every three years. Course directors propose an assessor to the committee and, if he or she is approved, issue an invitation to visit their institution at a time of the assessor's choice, either during a summer course or during a year-round one. The assessor requests documents about all the courses offered in advance and then comes to observe classes, inspect facilities and talk to the staff and students for a day or two as necessary. Then the assessor writes a report intended both to help the course director and to allow the Validation Committee to decide whether the institution's courses should be validated.

The committee consists, for an initial two-year pilot period, of four elected BALEAP members and three outsiders with experience of EAP and other validation schemes. It meets twice a year to consider assessor's reports and publishes a list of validated EAP courses.

If the Validation Committee receives an adverse report, its main sanction is not to include an institution on its list and hence exclude it from publicity channels such as the British Council. Given that a third of the students on many BALEAP EAP courses are actually funded by the Council, and many others have received advice through its services, this is quite effective. However, noone working in a university wants to feel that the courses offered are in any way substandard, and the main importance of the Code of Practice, the Guidelines and the monitoring process is to make explicit to all concerned what the standard is in this area.

Philip Shaw
Newcastle University

3 Curriculum and materials

Pre-service training of secondary-school inspectors of English in Morocco

Background

Until 1987, English teachers in Moroccan lycées (where English is taught only in the last years) were either appointed as acting inspectors with no specific qualification or qualified as inspectors on the strength of a selection process held annually, with written exams on education and language teaching in Arabic, French and English, and a practical teacher-supervision test (observing a lesson, giving face-to-face feedback to the teacher and writing a report.) While this procedure is still used, in alternate years, to recruit a few inspectors, most now qualify only after two years' pre-service training at the Centre National de Formation des Inspecteurs de l'Enseignement (CNFIE) in Rabat, which trains both primary and secondary school inspectors.

British Council / ODA contribution

The British Council and the ODA have worked with CNFIE on the training of inspectors of English since the programme started. At first the five trainee inspectors selected each year spent their first year doing MAs in applied linguistics at different British universities, returning to CNFIE in the second year for training in teacher supervision.

At the British Council's suggestion, this pattern has now been modified so as to enable available ODA funds to cater for the larger intake of ten trainees per year that the ministry of education wants to recruit during a four-year period. First year trainees now spend only one term of their two-year training programme in Britain, where they do a course specially run for them at Moray House College, Edinburgh, in consultation with CNFIE.

At the same time, a secondary-level EFL materials writing project, already supported by the British Council and the ODA and including one ELTO post, was broadened to include contributions to both in-service and pre-service inspector training. The in-service contribution takes the form of support for an annual seminar for serving inspectors, dealing principally with testing (an inspectorate responsibility) and with teacher evaluation. The pre-service contribution has involved (in addition to the Moray House component of training) book presentations, the re-equipping of theCNFIE micro-teaching studio and the part-time involvement of the ELTO in CNFIE work. The ELTO's limited role, over a two-year period, has been to work with the two Moroccan trainers in English at CNFIE on the writing of a syllabus for English-medium components of training and on the development of new training methods, including the use of micro-counselling and training materials.

The training curriculum

The following is an outline of the present two-year training course for inspectors of English at CNFIE.

First year

Term 1:
Introduction to applied linguistics (eight hours per week)
Educational psychology (in Arabic)
Translation (Arabic-French)
Statistics (in French)

Term 2:
Twelve-week course at Moray House College

Term 3:
Methodology (eight hours per week)
Other subjects as per term one

Second year

Term 1:
Teacher supervision (six hours per week)
Educational psychology (in Arabic)
School administration (in Arabic)

Term 2:
Supervisory practice (working with serving inspectors)

Term 3:
Micro-counselling
Dissertations

Trainees are assessed at the end of each term in the first year and at the end of the second year (exam, report on supervisory practice and dissertation). Standards are high, but CNFIE entrance is very selective and motivation is strong, so failure is rare. The following four sections summarise the content of the English-medium components of training.

Introduction to applied linguistics (first year, term one)

Coursebooks:

Brown, H D *Principles of language learning and teaching.* Prentice-Hall, 1988

Coulthard, M *Introduction to discourse analysis.* Longman, 1985

McLaughlin, B *Theories of second language learning.* Arnold, 1987

Units:

- Study skills (sixteen hours)
- Overview of applied linguistics (ten hours)
- Sociolinguistics: language and communication; discourse analysis (twenty hours)
- Psycholinguistics and learner language (thirty hours)
- Sociology of language; language and cultural identity (ten hours)

Assessment:

- Takeaway exam, individual questions drawn at random

Moray House College course (first year, term two)

The course consists of six modules:

- Testing in ELT (thirty hours)
- Syllabus design and materials evaluation (thirty hours)
- Discourse and interaction analysis (thirty hours)
- Language planning and bilingualism (fifteen hours)
- Language acquisition theory and language-teaching methods (thirty hours)
- Academic counselling, plus trainees' presentations of work on their dissertation topics (fifteen hours)

Also an elective from the MA course.

Assessment:

By takeaway exam: two questions per module; each trainee draws one question at random.

Methodology (first year, term three)

Coursebook:

Doff, A *Teach English.* Trainer's manual. CUP, 1989

Units:

- Aims of ELT in Moroccan secondary education (six hours)
- Teaching the language system (twelve hours)
- Training in the language skills (twelve hours)
- Learners and materials (twelve hours)
- Testing (twelve hours)
- Teacher training (twelve hours)
- Research techniques (six hours)

Assessment:

Takeaway exam, individual questions drawn at random. Apparent overlaps with the term two syllabus are explained by the concentration in term three on the Moroccan EFL context.

Teacher supervision (second year, term one)

Units:

- Evaluation of teaching and learning behaviour (twenty hours)
- Supervisory feedback (twenty hours)
- INSET (twenty hours)

Problems

At the time of writing, the complete new system has only been in operation up to the middle of the first year. The indications are good, but we are aware of several problems that will need further attention. Three of these are as follows:

- Trainee selection
  At present selection is by written and oral entrance exams, results in English being decisive. Interpersonal skills can be guessed at during the oral interview, but teaching skill and professional commitment have yet to be included in the selection criteria. It is hoped in future to have access to candidates' inspection marks throughout their teaching careers.

- Micro-counselling.
  We are still looking for ways of transcending the ritual nature of face-to-face feedback, in which teachers make a cynical practice (in Morocco at least) of systematically witholding their own opinions and acquiescing in those of the inspector. Clearly a non-directive approach is the answer, but this in turn (given the culture) raises problems of inspector credibility.

- Transfer of training.
  Among English trainees at CNFIE the consensus invariably favours a non-directive supervisory style and rejects the authoritarian and custodial tradition of the teacher-inspector relationship in Morocco. There is, however, evidence that former trainees do not always live up to these worthy aspirations. It may be that pre-service training by itself cannot in all cases achieve a long-term commitment to a liberal approach to teacher supervision, and that only regular in-service work can hope to alter the tradition.

Conclusion

The major constraints on pre-service training for inspectors of English in Morocco have been:

- pre-existence of an inspectorate and of an entrenched stereotype of teacher-inspector relations

- pre-existence of an inspector-training curriculum (for other subjects)

This, plus the relative inexperience of all three trainers, has imposed compromise rather than confrontation.

The two Moroccan trainers are former inspectors, the ELTO a former teacher trainer. In fact, the apparent success of this mixture of skills is what suggests the first of three lessons we have drawn from our experience so far:

- For the trainers, a combination of ex-inspectors (for professional experience and credibility) and teacher trainers (for procedure) is preferable to reliance on only one or the other type of trainer.

- With an evolving syllabus, team-teaching (i.e. two teachers sharing responsibility for a course and both participating in most sessions) is a most productive working method.

- Far more than pre-service teacher training, inspector training calls for the most rigorous application of the "reflexive principle" - practising what you preach.

A Bendkia, D Britten & A Essellami
CNFIE
Rabat, Morocco

The inspection/teacher training system and the Curriculum Renewal Project, Sultanate of Oman

[The Curriculum Renewal Project, based in the English Language Teaching Department of the Ministry of Education and Youth has been in operation since January 1988 and has six component parts which all interact and complement each other. These are a) ELT materials production – 72 components are being produced, camera ready and printed locally, for the nine years of English teaching in the school system; b) in-service teacher development – the project will produce a cadre of teachers fully able to use the new material; c) pre-service teacher development; d) integrated media support - video and audio materials, closely linked with the print materials, are being produced for use by teachers in the classroom and by teacher trainers with these teachers; e) examinations - tests and examination formats are being revised to take account of the new curriculum objectives, syllabus specifications and the new materials; f) Omani training.

The inspectorate is viewed as playing a crucial role in the implementational side of the project. This article describes this role and also the steps that are being taken to set up a system of support for inspector development.]

A historical perspective / the current situation

The 1979-1984 joint Oman/ODA project personnel consisted for most of this period of a cadre of five British Council KELT inspectors, a KELT chief inspector and a KELT teacher training co-ordinator, with a counterpart of a small number of Omani inspectors. One of the major achievements of this team was to extend the traditional role of the inspector beyond that of being an administrator or "policeman" whose main job was to check and evaluate teachers. Instead, the regional inspectors became centrally involved in teacher development both in seminars and in visits to teachers. These classroom visits came to be seen as an extension of training and also advisory rather than predominantly inspectorial in nature.

From 1982 onwards the inspectorate has been recruited from a wide range of nationalities – the current composition is as follows: five Omanis; twelve Sudanese; three Indian; two Sri Lankan; four Egyptian; two Pakistani; six British.

Each of the nine educational administrative regions has a senior inspector who, in most cases, is responsible for the work of several regional inspectors. Each inspector is responsible for between thirty and sixty teachers. Liaison between these groups of inspectors and the English Language Teaching Department (ELTD) in Muscat is provided mainly by the Chief Inspector of English based in the ELTD.

At the outset of the project, the inspectorate has a number of administrative responsibilities which have not changed and with which inspectors new to the system have to become familiar. These include placement of teachers in schools, supervision of teachers, distribution of learning materials to schools, provision of statistical information to the ELTD and the making of administrative arrangements for training courses. New inspectors are first briefed by the Chief Inspector on arriving in Oman but, of necessity, because of small regional variations in procedure, the bulk of their orientation takes place under the supervision of the senior inspector of the region to which they are assigned.

The involvement of the inspectorate in teacher training courses played an important part in helping to break down the traditionally distant role of the inspector. The classroom visits could more readily be linked with what had been presented and discussed at training seminars or workshops. In addition, the inspector became a giver of advice rather than a coercive figure whose only job was to make assessments. Clearly this evaluative role could not disappear since it is necessary in any system for judgemental reports to be made on teachers, but it became possible for this role to be played down.

Additional responsibilities generated by the renewed curriculum

While it was felt desirable for the inspectors to be centrally involved in the development of the new materials, the compressed timescale – twelve months from initial planning to distribution of materials to schools – made this impossible to achieve. Since the start of the implementation phase of the project in which the new materials are tested, the inspectorate has been crucially involved in the evaluation of the materials produced. In addition to managing the teacher evaluation of the materials, they have been providing qualitative feedback based on intensive observation of a small number of teachers using the materials in the classroom.

As the new materials have been introduced into the schools, book orientation courses have been run for the teachers who will be using these materials. The initial series of courses provided the teachers with an insight into the philosophy underpinning the materials. Subsequent courses have centred around discusssions of video demonstrations of the basic techniques necessary for a successful implementation of the materials. Inspectors have been centrally involved in the running of these courses. It was felt that by involving inspectors in this

way, they would be in a better position both to explain points concerning the new materials and also to be able to advise in a much more informed way.

Additional responsibilities generated by Omanisation of the teaching force

Omanisation of the teaching force is proceedingly rapidly, particularly at the elementary level – with the output of the six teacher training colleges running at around ninety to a hundred each year. Inspectors have been instructed to assist in the induction of these raw graduates so that their transition into the school system is as smooth as possible. They are asked to increase the frequency of their visits to these teachers particularly in the first few months of the year. They also hold meetings of the new Omani teachers in their region in order to provide a forum for discussion of common problems or worries. Information on Omani teachers has to be channelled back to the ELTD in order to monitor their career development.

An increasing number of in-service training courses are now run solely for Omani teachers, since this addresses the future needs and situation of the country and also since they have needs that are more easily identifiable than those of the heterogeneous population of expatriate teachers from a variety of countries ranging from Tunisia to Sri Lanka. The courses provide both language improvement and methodology and are designed to improve the general calibre of the Omani teaching force as well as enabling some teachers to teach at a higher level. The inspectors make arrangements for teachers to attend these courses and in some cases they actually do some of the training either alongside or independently of ELTD staff.

The advisory visit

Central to the work of the inspectors is the advisory visit. As already mentioned, a determined effort has been made in recent years to shift the bias of the inspectors' visits from a judgemental role to a more advisory approach. This aspect of the inspectors' work is mainly monitored by the Chief Inspector, who periodically accompanies inspectors on their visits. This is especially important in the case of inspectors new to the system. During the course of the year, the Chief Inspector tries to spend one day with each of the inspectors.

Certain key characteristics have been suggested to inform the minimum of three visits a year which are made to each teacher:

- Inspectors have been encouraged to look for any fundamental weakness which there may be in a teacher's classroom work. This may be a lack of empathy with the teaching materials in cases where the teacher has been accustomed to using materials with a very different approach; a more general deficiency in classroom skills; or difficulties at the linguistic level. Inspectors have been urged to concentrate on these fundamental weaknesses and to postpone discussion of less important shortcomings. The emphasis has been on consistency of advice and the systematic resolution of problems.

- Much emphasis has also been put on continuity. Normally, a given teacher remains the responsibility of one particular inspector if he remains in one particular school. However, every year changes are made and the teacher may come under another inspector. In cases such as this, it is incumbent upon the new inspector to take into consideration comments made by the teacher's previous inspector. This can be easily achieved since each teacher is issued with an *Advisory visit book* which remains with him throughout his teaching career in Oman.

- The inspectors can make reference to training seminars which they know the teachers have attended. The advisory visit thus becomes an extention of the seminars or an arm of teacher training. Inspectors can also "build" upon the content of the seminar with those teachers who will be receptive to such suggestions and who can use the advice constructively.

- Inspectors have been trained to adopt a sympathetic and encouraging manner in their dealings with teachers. They must be prepared to see the advisory visit as a two-way process. Teachers should feel able to ask for clarification and to defend their opinions as well as accepting the inspector's advice.

- At the same time, it has been impressed upon the inspectors that any advice they do offer must be absolutely clear to teachers. They must structure the Advisory Visit Report in such a way as to make it clear to the teacher what deficiencies there are (if any) and what steps may be taken to improve.

- Inspectors have been asked to ensure that they offer practicable solutions to any deficiencies observed, which are within the capabilities of the teacher to achieve.

- It has been suggested to them that they should avoid commenting on insignificant errors in the teacher's performance – slips of the tongue, non-intrusive accentual peculiarities etc.
- Equally they should be aware of the constraints put upon the teachers by the system within which they work – a conservative, Islamic teaching environment.
- It has been stressed that, especially where teachers at lower levels are concerned, the spoken and written advice should be couched in language that teachers will understand.

Future plans

Arrangements are in hand for a series of Inspectors' workshops to be held later this year. Because of the very considerable demands which are being made upon all members of ELTD in connenction with the Curriculum Renewal Project, an outside consultant is being brought in from the UK to co-ordinate the running of these workshops. The workshops will have two broad aims; first to guide the inspectors in their efforts towards the successful implementation of the new curriculum, and secondly to revise the principles behind the advisory visit in the light of such factors as the introduction of the new curriculum and the increasing proportion of Omani teachers in the teaching force, and, in the near future, in the inspectorate.

For the first time, it will be possible for groups of inspectors to gather together specifically to discuss approaches to inspection of classes with special reference to the demands of the new materials. Although final details have not yet been worked out, the workshops will combine preliminary study by the inspectors of inspection models from ELT literature, presentations on inspection methodology and simulations of classroom inspection based upon video footage of actual lessons in Omani classrooms using the new materials.

As a result of the workshops, a new, formalized set of principles for the inspection of Omani English classes will emerge. Within the next five years, in keeping with the emphasis on Omanisation, there will be an increase in the number of Omani inspectors in the system. The principles which emerge from the current series of workshops will be used to develop training courses for Omani teachers who become inspectors in the near future.

Conclusion

We believe that the English inspectorate of the Sultanate of Oman has reached a high level of efficiency as a result of a continuous process of development over a decade. This would not have been possible without the low turnover which the system has experienced; many of the inspectors and ELTD staff have remained in the same post for upwards of five years. They have a uniformly professional attitude to their responsibilities and at the same time have shown themselves ready to adapt to new systems and trends in the development of ELT in the Sultanate. It is because of this that we believe the current series of initiatives will be successful and that they will contribute to a further rise in the standard of English teaching in state schools in the Sultanate of Oman.

Ian Harrison
Curriculum and Training Adviser and Technical Assistance Coordinator
Sultanate of Oman

Nicholas Parker
Chief Inspector of English, Sultanate of Oman

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The English Language Teaching Support Project (ELTSP) in Tanzania

[The aim of the ELTSP is to improve the quality and effectiveness of the English of secondary students, to enhance the learning of school subjects taught in English-medium, especially mathematics and science, and to enhance the ability of school leavers to use English. Here Ian Pearson, project co-ordinator, gives an overview of the project and discusses the co-operation between project staff and the Tanzanian inspectorate.]

The English Language Teaching Support Project (ELTSP) is now well into its fourth year, and co-operation between the ELTO team and the Tanzanian inspectorate is becoming ever closer and more important. This is felt to be necessary for the credibility of the project, for its day-to-day efficiency and effectiveness, and for medium- and longer-term sustainability. If this is an accurate assessment, it is worth exploring just how and why this is so. First however, an overview of the ELTSP is necessary.

Overview of the project

The starting point for the project is the belief that the fastest, least complicated and cheapest way to achieve the desired improvement is to introduce a graded reading programme into forms I to IV of the six-year secondary curriculum. The project is thus unusual in that its primary focus is on exposure to English rather than on teacher training, materials production or syllabus and examination design.

All 234 secondary schools that were registered by late 1986 are included in the project, though the total number of secondary schools has been growing rapidly. By February 1990, ELTSP was covering only 67 per cent of secondary schools (though perhaps 80 per cent of secondary students):

	Project schools	Non-project schools	
Government schools	105	27	132
Private schools	129	90	219
	234	117	351

However, these figures are already out of date, and by mid-1990 the total number of secondary schools will be approaching four hundred.

The ODA has at present agreed to fund the project from mid-1986 to mid-1991, at a cost of £4.439m (though we are about to put the case for an extension of the project):

a Posts, vehicles, in-service training, equipment	£2.25m
b BPP provision for graded reading programme	£0.943m
c TCTP awards for thirty+ four-month visits a year to the UK	£1.246m

There are seven zonal advisers (in Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, Iringa, Dodoma, Tabora, Mwanza and Moshi) and in Dar es Salaam the staff consists of a teacher trainer at the university, a Materials Officer in the Ministry of Education, and a Project Co-ordinator based in the British Council.

The role of the Tanzanian inspectorate

There are seven zonal inspectorates, corresponding in large measure with the seven project zones. Schools should be visited at least once a year, when the main tasks are to inspect lesson plans and schemes of work, to see that the syllabus is being followed, to handle personnel problems, to respond to specific difficulties in school management and administration, and to report findings to the Ministry of Education. The inspectors are also responsible for data collection and the dissemination of information, for running the Form II examinations, and for inspecting new schools that wish to be registered.

In recent years the role of the inspectorate as a "mechanism of control" has been influenced by a growing awareness of the need to provide support services to both teachers and administrators. Induction courses for new inspectors now stress the need to be constructive rather than judgemental, to give advice rather than making criticisms. However, although it is accepted that the inspectorate should be concerned with staff development and questions of syllabus and methodology, the inspectors are not trained for such work.

The inspectorate is too small and has too few funds for it to be able to be in constant contact with schools. Add to this the vastness of Tanzania and the difficulty of travel and it becomes clear that even in its traditional role the reach and scope of the inspectorate are limited.

Co-operation between ELTSP and the inspectorate

ELTSP must relate to the inspectorate in order to allow the development of the structural basis for medium- and longer-term sustainability – we must try to ensure that the project survives the departure of the ELTO team and the withdrawal of the ODA's financial support. This requires that ELTSP should come to be seen as a **Tanzanian** project under the control of the Ministry of Education and the inspectorate. In large measure, it also requires that the project functions within and through existing structures and according to widely-held expectations. The likelihood is that, unless ELTSP stops being a "project" and becomes simply a part of the system, it will rapidly wither away once outside support is withdrawn.

In the short term, the ELTSP faces questions of image and credibility, and if we are to avoid being regarded as yet another "here today, gone tomorrow" project, we must involve Tanzanians and we must function in the light of expectations and possibilities of the existing system. This is not to say that nothing new can be done, but it does mean that a project that is seen to involve activities, materials and expenditure that bears no relation to the resources of the system is likely to be dismissed as of no more than passing interest. We must also try to avoid the risk that ELTSP is seen as an alien growth, run by outsiders according to outside ideas and possibilities - and we can only achieve this if we work with and listen to our Tanzanian colleagues in the inspectorate.

We now know from experience that collaboration with the inspectorate means that the day-to-day work of the team is more efficient and productive. This has been especially noticeable since the link was formalized in early 1989, and since the issuing to all secondary schools of an official ministry circular on ELTSP. Both the circular and the inspectorate have made it clear to the schools that the project is of central importance. What has made this message particularly strong is that the inspectorate as a whole has taken responsibility for the project, not just the inspectors of English.

One of the zonal ELTOs, Michael Haig, gives the following list of the ways in which he values the link with the inspectorate:

a The ELTO benefits from being introduced to schools through "accepted channels" when accompanied by an inspector. Inspectors have instant access to Heads and their views are deferred to at this level; therefore they can usefully endorse (and make an impact on) the reading programme "from the top".

b The ELTO is well advised by the inspector on the way schools work, what is acceptable (e.g. from ELTOs in classrooms, with English teachers etc.), etiquette, taboos; with this advice, school visits are likely to be more effective.

c In more general terms, the inspector can be mentor on issues likely to arise; the experienced inspector can usefully be sounded out, between visits, on likely attitudes and expected practices.

d The inspectorate has a wide brief in checking on and advising upon school management, and the ELTSP is only a part of even the English inspector's work. However, one feel that ELTSP is given a high priority – the ELTO needs to avoid any idea that the concern of the inspector is exclusively with ELTSP, i.e. he or she should try to keep the inspector's concern in perspective. The inspectorate's concern is for all schools, not only ELTSP; it is sobering to be reminded that there is only a partial (albeit large) overlap in mutual concern.

e At the end of the school visit, when reviewing progress of the reading programme with Heads of Schools, Heads of departments etc., inspectors know what can reasonably be urged in terms of, for example, new lockable cupboards being installed – i.e. involving decisions in schools which might cost money.

f Inspectors can use joint school visits to discuss and develop their own ideas on teaching methodology, classroom materials etc., i.e. I have found that they regard these visits as part of their own in-service training/development.

g School visits shared by ELTOs and inspectors are more likely to be "cut and dried" because this has been part of the inspector's routine.

h In **workshops**, on the other hand, inspectors sometimes find themselves on new ground. How should they respond in group discussion? At best, the more confident participants will be quite happy to expose their ideas, with everyone else, to the cut and thrust of debate. Those less sure of themselves tend to remain silent and may appear a little aloof. It is, of course, desirable that they should attend and be encouraged to participate in discussion as freely as possible with the teachers.

i ELTOs report and discuss their work and their plans with the Zonal Chief and his team. Zonal Chiefs are at present identifying closely with the progress of the project, and encouraging it as well as they can.

j The inspectorate's role in moderating Form II exams might be an area of future co-operation, as might work in teacher training colleges.

k The lack of a strong formal link between the inspectorate and other bodies concerned with schools (such as the Institute of Curriculum Development, the University and the Examinations Council) can in some measure be bridged through the ELTO, who may be in touch with all of these bodies.

Questions arising

The co-operation between ELTSP and the inspectorate has raised several questions including:

a ELTSP is a very good example of a "support" activity, and our link with the inspectorate throws into sharp relief the question of how feasible it is to ask the inspectorate to take on such a task, which will always be in addition to their traditional tasks.

b How can we help teachers, heads of department and heads of school to change their view of the inspectors as the system's police?

c Is there a case for the development of other kinds of support service that do not involve the inspectors or perhaps for dividing inspectors into two kinds, some with the traditional role and others with the support role?

d What kind of training course should we try to organize for the inspectors? (So far, a group of ten has spent four months on a tailor-made course at the University of Lancaster, but a much more comprehensive scheme seems desirable).

Conclusion

What the ELTSP and the inspectorate are trying to do together in Tanzania looks interesting and worthwhile. However, any longer-term success will depend on our finding satisfactory answers to many questions, and on the resolution of many difficulties of organization, finance and training. Part of the possible interest of ELTSP for outsiders will then lie in how well we can find the answers and resolve the difficulties.

Ian Pearson
Co-ordinator
English Language Teaching Support Project
Dar es Salaam

A specialist course at Ealing CHE for inspectors of English from Congo and Zaire

[In the summer of 1989, the Department of ELT at Ealing College of Higher Education was asked by the British Council to provide both a short pre-sessional course and a ten-week specialist course for a group of ten inspectors of English from Central Africa: six were from Zaire, and four from the Congo. This article focuses on the design and implementation of the ten-week specialist course, which ran from January to March 1990.]

Identifying needs

We had very little information in advance about the specific needs of the two groups: fortunately, the inspectors' presence in the college for the pre-sessional course allowed us to have a number of planning meetings beforehand. At our first meeting, they described in some detail the work of the inspectorate in both Congo and Zaire. Since normally there is not a great deal of contact between these two neighbouring countries, it was interesting for them as well as for us to discover the extent of both similarities and differences between the two systems. The only difference of any significance appeared to be that in Zaire the inspector is required to make an assessment of the teacher's performance in an observed lesson; this assessment is a vital factor in the teacher's prospects for promotion. Other aspects of the inspector's role include advising and supporting individual teachers, running INSET seminars and workshops, and helping to set and mark national examinations.

The context in which the inspectors work is desperately under-resourced, with all the problems that arise from that; teachers work with enormously large classes (often up to 100 pupils in some schools; 60 or 70 would be normal) and it is often only the teacher who has a copy of the textbook. The teachers' abilities in both language and methodology may be low (though younger teachers may sometimes be more competent in English than the inspectors, which of course presents a different kind of problem). And there are constraints, too, imposed by the educational system itself, in terms of such things as choice of methodology and materials and the use to which classroom observation may be put (e.g. assessment rather than development).

The inspectors had agreed on their priorities, and presented us with a "shopping list" of what they wanted. In response to this we drew up a set of possible course components with draft syllabuses. These were presented to the inspectors for further discussion, and after two or three further meetings during which modifications and changes were made, a programme was finally agreed which the inspectors felt accurately reflected their needs.

Meeting needs (1): course components

The negotiated programme consisted of the following components:

1 *Teacher training skills*

The inspectors drew up a list of topics for INSET seminars and workshops (e.g. lesson planning, presentation and practice of new language, teaching listening skills etc.). Input with practical activities was first provided by Ealing staff, then each week two of the inspectors would plan and present input and activities on the same topic. This component was essentially a practical one, and involved a good deal of peer-teaching.

2 *Classroom observation*

Two hours a week were spent observing multilingual adult EFL classes in the ELT Department at Ealing College. Visits were also made to the local middle schools (9-12 age range) and high schools (13-18) to observe the teaching of French; there is no EFL teaching in British schools, and ESL teaching was not thought to be relevant, involving as it does for the most part the provision of language support in subject lessons. The teaching of French, on the other hand, provided a mirror image of the inspectors' own situation.

A further two hours were taken up with seminars, during which the inspectors reported back to each other on their observation of classes, and a number of related issues were discussed: the varied uses to which classroom observation can be put, both by inspectors and by teachers; the use of different types of observation tasks and schedules; the function and conduct of post-lesson discussions, etc.

3 *Evaluation and testing*

The evaluation component examined the concept of evaluation as it related to the inspectors' own contexts; they learned to analyse and evaluate teaching and learning materials, teachers and teaching, as well as courses. The testing component invited the inspectors to examine their own approaches to language testing in the light of current trends in assessment. They then critically evaluated a range of language tests and devised tests and test items suitable for their own contexts.

4 *Teaching oral skills*

This component dealt with the notion of competence (linguistic and communicative), approaches to the teaching of oral skills, and allowed the inspectors to try out a variety of oral activities both as learners and teachers. There was an emphasis on peer-teaching to give practice in demonstrating oral language teaching techniques to others.

5 *Business English*

This provided an introduction to the language of business and commerce which assumed no previous knowledge of these areas. Two hours per week were allocated to this component.

Meeting needs (2): relating context to context

We were conscious that in our relatively well-resourced institution it would be easy to forget the resourcing constraints under which the inspectors worked. Yet it was clear that unless we adapted the course content to suit their context, we should fail to meet their needs. A session on the teaching of reading skills, for example, which assumed the availability of books or facilities for copying texts would be at best of limited value; instead we focused on ways in which a text can be built up on the blackboard (essentially an oral/writing activity) and then exploited as a reading exercise, possibly by a different class. Similarly, in dealing with the teaching of listening skills, we concentrated on activities which do not require the use of a tape-recorder.

Course evaluation

Informal meetings with the course director allowed the inspectors to provide regular feedback on the extent to which the course was meeting their needs. A final de-briefing was held at the end of the course, and all participants returned anonymous questionnaires.

There were some criticisms: they would have liked more time to be allocated to the business English course; they did not find the observation of French classes particularly useful, though they were very enthusiastic about the adult EFL classes they had observed; the concepts and terminology of testing were unfamiliar, and this caused difficulties for some; the course as a whole was too short. Overall, however, the level of satisfaction seemed high, as their comments show: "the content was what we wanted"; "everything I needed was there"; "it is a good and helpful support for our job"; "really we learnt a lot". We believe that the general success of the course is due to a large extent to the involvement of the inspectors themselves throughout the whole process of planning the course.

(Note: The Congolese inspectors returned home as planned at the end of the ten-week course; we were, however, asked to extend the course for the Zaireans by a further two months. At the time of writing, they are engaged in projects which will result in a package of teacher training materials specifically designed for their context).

Anne Fraenkel
Ealing College of Higher Education

Training for inspectors: some courses available in the UK

Scottish Centre for Education Overseas, Moray House College of Education

- *Advanced certificate in teacher education and supervision*
  One term, full-time, October - December or January - March

This is an intensive, high-level course for TESOL (EFL/ESL) teacher educators and supervisors and for personnel who are likely to be performing such duties in the near future. The standard model of the course has an exclusive focus on the theory and techniques of teacher education and supervision, but substantial modification is possible to take care of special needs and interests. To give an idea of the range of provision: an individual course in the design of INSET courses has been developed for a senior inspector from Ecuador; a course has been specially designed for groups of Moroccan inspectors as part of their inspectorate training programme; similar specialized courses are currently in train. Other features of the course include: a programme of visits and attachments to suit individual needs, and a brief course in computer familiarization (word processing). The course takes advantage of the substantial expertise in this area in the Scottish Centre for Education Overseas. The Course Director is Dr Mike Wallace, author of *Training foreign language teachers: a reflective approach* (CUP).

- *MA TESOL* (CNAA validated)
  One calendar year, full-time

The MA TESOL is open to trained teachers of English. The first three terms are taught, the fourth is devoted to writing a 15,000 word dissertation. It is a modular degree offering specialist pathways. The major specialism in the training supervision and inspection of English language teachers has been followed by teachers from a wide range of countries in Francophone and Anglophone Africa, the Arab world and the Far East. The Course Leader is Leslie Dickinson, author of *Self-instruction in language learning* (CUP).

- *BEd ELT* (CNAA validated)

This degree course has been specifically developed for non-graduate but qualified and experienced teachers seeking opportunities to move into more senior positions. The first three terms are taught, the fourth term is devoted to a supervised project related to the candidate's own country and situation, in which study of the roles of supervision and inspection can be more fully developed. The Course Leader is David Carter.

Contact for further details:

Mr J W Morrison
Scottish Centre for Education Overseas
Moray House College
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

Institute for English Language Education (IELE), Lancaster University

- *Certificate of Advanced Studies: The development and management of ELT*
  (validated by Lancaster University)
  One term, full-time

This course for inspectors and teacher trainers provides both the theoretical background to their work and the opportunity to see how these ideas are manifested in their day-to-day work both in the administration and in schools. The course has four stages: backgound to the communicative approach; the roles of the inspector, adviser and teacher trainer; the administration and organization of education; evaluation. Entry requirements are: a minimum of two years' relevant experience, a degree or equivalent and evidence of a satisfactory command of English. The Course Tutor is Edward G Woods, Teaching Fellow at IELE.

Contact for further details:

Edward G Woods
IELE
Lancaster University
Lonsdale College
Lancaster LA1 4YN

4 Information materials and events

Materials and information available from the English Language Information Unit (ELIU)

English Studies Information Service (ESIS) sheets

ESIS sheet distribution, which was previously undertaken by ELIU, has now been taken over by DPX, who will arrange automatic distribution of **one** copy of each sheet on distribution scales 03 and UKR on publication. The following sheets have been distributed recently:

Short Courses 1990/91:
- *Advanced English*
- *ESP/EAP*
- *Teacher training courses for overseas teachers of EFL*
- *Index to teacher training courses*
- *International English Language Testing System (IELTS)*
- *English Studies Events: June - December 1990*

The *Local authority courses* ESIS sheet has been renamed *Polytechnic and college courses*, due to changes in the source of funding for further and higher education brought about by the Education Reform Act 1988. It is in production now and will be ready for distribution to offices in June.

A new ESIS sheet, *English language tests*, is in production and will be distributed in early June.

Specialized bibliographies

ETIC bibliography no 4 *Games, role-plays, simulations, songs, dramatization etc. in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages* has just been published. Copies are available from ELIU.

British Council ELT and Young Learners Project

Background

The teaching of English as a foreign language to young learners has recently been attracting the attention of everyone involved in the English language teaching industry. Various European countries are introducing the teaching of English or other foreign languages at primary level and British Council teaching centres overseas along with the British private sector are concerned with courses for young learners in various age groups. The need for training or retraining of teachers for this purpose is also high up on the agenda and, as a result, examination boards and institutions awarding teacher qualifications are looking at changing or modularizing existing qualifications to take this need into account.

Working party

Against this background, the Teacher Training Unit of the British Council set up a working party in autumn 1989 with a group of specialists from a variety of sectors and backgrounds working in the this field to discuss ways in which Britain can contribute to promoting the teaching of foreign languages (and in particular English) to young learners. There was general agreement that a major prerequisite is the collection of information on developments in this field with an initial focus on Europe. The information obtained will form a database and is intended to make the information available in different forms to interested parties. A series of reports and related documents is envisaged as well as the database itself.

The database project

The working party has isolated a series of projects involving foreign language teaching to young learners in Europe and contacts have been made with a variety of individuals and institutions. Specialists have been invited to visit projects and, with the help of a questionnaire, compile a profile of information which will be added to the database. The British Council is providing overall funding for the project and after the first round of visits in March to May this year and the setting up of the databases, it is hoped that funding will be extended to continue to develop the database.

For further information please contact Teacher Training Unit, ELMDO, The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN Telephone 071 389 4080

Forthcoming conferences

6-9 September	**Korea international language fair**
Place:	Seoul, Korea
Information from:	Karl J Badde, International Where and How, Verlag GmbH, Postfach 24 64, D-5000 Bonn 1, West Germany
12-14 September	**Poetics and Linguistic Association (PALA) conference**
Place:	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Information from:	Ron Carter, Department of English Studies, Nottingham University, Nottingham, UK
12-16 September	**Expolingva Budapest**
Place:	Budapest, Hungary
Information from:	Karl J Badde, International Where and How, Verlag GmbH, Postfach 24 64, D-5000 Bonn 1, West Germany
25-29 September	**Biannual national language conference of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers**
Place:	Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
Information from:	Curriculum Division, Queensland Education Department, PO Box 33, North Quay, Brisbane, Queensland 4000, Australia
27-29 September	**Twenty-first annual congress of the Gesellschaft fur Angewande Linguistik (GAL) eV (West German section of AILA)**
Place:	Bonn: West Germany
Theme:	One Europe -- many languages
Information from:	GAL-Geschaftsstelle, Professor Spillner, Universitat Duisburg, FB 3 Romanistik, Postfach 10 15 03, D-4100, Duisburg 4100, West Germany
2-4 October	**Second international congress of terminology and knowledge engineering**
Place:	Trier, West Germany
Information from:	Dr Hans Czap, Universitat Trier, PO Box 3825, Trier, West Germany
3-5 October	**Expolingua Portugal**
Place:	Lisbon, Portugal
Information from:	Karl J Badde, International Where and How, Verlag GmbH, Postfach 24 64 D-5000 Bonn 1, West Germany

11-13 October	**Traduction et signification, the Maastricht-Lodz colloquium 1990**
Place:	Lodz, Poland
Theme:	Aspects, théoretiques de la traduction et signification
Information from:	Dr Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, Department of English, University of Lodz, Kosciuszki 65, 90514 Lodz, Poland
26-27 October	**Fourteenth annual conference on the teaching of foreign languages and literature**
Place:	Youngstown, Ohio, USA
Information from:	Foreign Language Conference, Department of Foreign Languages, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio 44555, USA
21-25 November	**Expolingua Frankfurt**
Place:	Frankfurt, West Germany
Information from:	Karl J Badde, International Where and How, Verlag GmbH, Postach 24 64, D-5000 Bonn, West Germany
23-25 November	**Sixteenth annual international conference of the Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT)**
Place:	Omiya, Japan
Theme:	Directions for the '90s
Information from:	JALT, Lions Mansion Kawaramachi 111, Kawaramachi Matsubara-Agaru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan
6-9 December	**South East Asian languages and communications fair**
Place:	Singapore
Information from:	Karl J Badde, International Where and How, Verlag GmbH, Postfach 24 64, D-5000 Bonn 1, West Germany