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IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND.

By

Nuchwana Luanganggoon B.Ed., M.Ed.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of Education at Deakin University

October 2001
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

CANDIDATE'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND and submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

Signed ____________________________

Date ________________

April 30, 2002
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any acknowledgments that I make here will be, by nature, incomplete. However, I would like to acknowledge the guidance and friendly support of my supervisor, Prof. Marie Emmitt. The kindly hospitality and assistance with editing provided by Dr. Pat Varley and Ajarn Roy Varley.

I was most appreciative of the expert advice and valued support I received from Prof. Bruce Jeans, who was the KKU EdD students advisor, and Associate Prof. Yachai Pongboriboon, my Thai co-supervisor.

I wish to recognise the contribution of my research participants, students, teachers, and schools administrators. It was my privilege to work with fantastic students and a quality staff, all willing to invest considerable time and effort to provide the best possible environment for learning-teaching improvement.

I am grateful for the funding support that I received from Mahasarakham University, and I also wish to thank my colleagues who encouraged me in my study and shared my work load while I took long leave.

My heartfelt thanks to my husband, Kiattisak, and my four children, Baitong, Tangmo, Katung, and Matoom, for their patience and forbearance as I continually worked on my studies.

Finally, I would like to thank my father and mother, Mr. Nukool and Mrs. Chuanpit Thongtawee, whose example and support have made it possible for me undertake the research and study that has benefited me so much.
ABSTRACT

The teaching of English in Thailand is a matter of national concern. The national government believes that the ability of Thai people to use English for effective communication is very important for the continuing economic development of Thailand. However, many students who have had primary, secondary and university exposure to English find it difficult to conduct a conversation with a native speaker of English. The reasons for this include lack of student motivation and contextual support, large classes, the dominating effects of assessment on what is taught, and the English language competency of the teachers.

The research in this thesis focuses on the teaching of English as a foreign language in secondary schools in Khon Kaen. The research reported here consists of one major and three minor studies. In the major study some of the principles of action research were used to explore strategies that would improve the teaching of English in a number of secondary schools in Khon Kaen in Thailand. In the first phase of the major study I worked with two teachers to design and implement a series of classroom activities that encouraged lower secondary students to use English. In the second phase I worked with a group of teachers to design and deliver a professional development program for twenty school teachers interested in improving their English language teaching. In the third phase I used data from the first two phases to design five new activities that were used in classrooms by two teachers. Findings from the three phases indicated that working collaboratively with school teachers can be a mutually beneficial professional experience and can improve student interest and learning.

In the first minor study I used interview-conversations to investigate the perceptions that subject co-ordinators and teachers have towards English language teaching. The conversations covered the merits of detailed curricula and curricula frameworks, professional development, assessment, resources, and integration of English language with other subjects. It was clear that the teachers were aware of the national government's policies for the improving English language teaching and accepted the need for change. It was equally clear that the preparation of teachers and the resources available were major limiting factors in schools to teacher effectiveness.
In the second minor study I examined the teaching of Mandarin in an Australian school that suffered from some of the same resource problems as Thai schools. Although there was only one teacher available for all of the Mandarin classes in the school she was extremely effective. Her teaching was an example of best practice. It included thorough preparation, the ability to manage lessons at the pace of the learners, active classes and individual attention, detailed assessment records, and the integration of language and culture. Some or all of these could be used in Thai schools.

The third minor study was an investigation of the professional development experiences of English language teachers in Thai schools. In most schools there are consultative and administrative mechanisms, acceptable to principals and teachers, in place to support professional development. Access to native speakers was seen as very important. However, the schools in Khon Kaen province have little or no access to native speakers of English. Even if they were available, the schools do not have the funds to employ them.

Findings from the four studies indicate that it is quite possible to use interactive, participatory or student-centred pedagogies to teach English as a foreign language in Thai classrooms. However, one cannot expect teachers to adopt such pedagogies unless they are convinced of their value. This can be achieved most effectively through a systematic and sustained program of professional development.
PORTFOLIO
IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND

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1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE FOLIO

1.1.1 CONTENT OF THE FOUR STUDIES

This folio includes the details of four studies—one major study and three minor studies. The four studies investigated different topics leading to a greater understanding of teaching English as a foreign language in Thailand. The major study focused on the professional development of English language teachers in Thai secondary schools. The minor studies investigated issues that were important for my understanding of effective professional development. The first of the minor studies was Perspectives on English Language Teaching in Thailand. This study was important because I learnt how to think about methodology and methods. I learnt how to design and conduct professional interviews, and I learnt how to write a research report. It was based on face-to-face interviews with teachers working in public and private schools. The second study was Foreign Language Teaching: An Australian Experience. This study explored best practice in an Australian school. I learnt that many of the problems and challenge of teaching a second/foreign language in Australia are very similar to those in Thailand. The techniques of non-participant classroom observation were used in this study. It also extended my understanding of how to write a research report. The final minor study Professional Development: The Thai Experience increased my understanding about the opinion of English language teachers and school administrators towards Professional Development Programs in secondary schools. It was an invaluable experience because I learnt how to design a questionnaire based on the literature. It was also an opportunity to fine-tune my report writing techniques.
Figure 1 below indicates the relationships between the different studies.

![Diagram showing relationships between studies](image)

**FIGURE 1: IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND**

The four studies drew on a variety of research strategies:

| The dissertation involved three phases of collaborative effort. The research drew on some of the principles of action research. These phases investigated the teaching of English and the professional development of teachers. |
| The (minor) study of Perspectives on English language teaching in Thailand was an interpretive study based on personal interviews with a range of people in education. |
| An Australian experience of foreign language teaching (minor study) involved non-participant classroom observation together with extensive documentary study. |
| Professional development in Thailand involved a purpose-designed survey together with a number of semi-structured interviews in a minor study. |

**1.2 EDUCATION REFORM IN THAILAND**

The area of research I have selected is of particular importance at this time. In the last six years there have been four major policy initiatives directing change in Thai education. These include the Educational Charter (1999), the Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001), the Quality Assurance System (1997), and the National Educational Act (1999) (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999). Learning English is a high priority. Although the National Educational Development Plan appears to have been reasonably successful in expanding access to education, there are still major concerns about the
quality of our education system (Office of the National Education Commission, 1996). In 1999, Thailand ranked thirty-four out of forty-six countries for overall performance in world competitiveness. Although one might well argue with the criteria that were used, the Thai national government regards this as unsatisfactory.

It is noticeable that, as compulsory education runs through to the sixth grade, a large number of Thailand's students miss out on the opportunity for any formal or continuous English language teaching. Although the Thai government states in the Eight National Social and Economic Development plan (1997-2001) that compulsory education is to be extended to the ninth grade, most Thai students in rural areas still only attend school for six years. Because of the inequity of Thailand's education system, the quality of education is not yet equally distributed throughout the nation. In particular students in rural areas have less opportunity to study English than those who live in urban areas (Office of the National Education Commission, 1995).

Two of the major policy strands in the reform agenda are equity and quality. The equity strand is a continuation of the national government's determination to provide better access to all levels of education. The quality issue is not new but the present initiatives are much more coherent and systematic and apply to every facet of educational provision (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999). My research was aimed at providing insight into ways of improving quality. To assist in understanding my studies an overview of the educational context in Thailand follows.

1.2.1 EQUITY OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Educational services at all levels have been inequitably distributed. In 1994, only 65% of the three to five year-old age group had access to pre-school education—the remainder of this age group (approximately 1.2 million) did not (Office of the National Education Commission, 1995). At the primary education level (compulsory) there were about 400,000 six to eleven year olds who could not enrol in a primary school. Most of these children will become part of the child-labour force and as a result will have extremely limited life opportunities (Office of the National Education Commission, 1995). The national government is concerned to make access to education more equitable.
1.2.2 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is a critical problem. It is difficult to assess quality but, in Thailand, the notion of quality is based on test performance. From the national government's point of view, achievement levels in analytical thinking, analysing and synthesising processes, creativity, initiative-taking, problem-solving and in students' academic knowledge in science, mathematics, and Thai language are all lower than acceptable. On the same basis the government believes that there have been downward trends in students' willingness to pursue knowledge, in their morality, discipline, and team spirit. The reasons (Kaewdang & Fry, 1979; Office of National Education Commission, 1995; Office of the National Primary Education Commission, 1996) for the low levels of achievement are thought to be:

- ineffective pedagogies
- inappropriate curricula (heavily over weighted with content)
- lack of teachers in some areas (English, Science, Mathematics)
- lack of qualified teachers
- inadequate professional-development opportunities for teachers.

At all levels of our education system, pedagogy focuses on transmitting academic knowledge, and on rote-memory learning rather than on enhancing the students' ability to acquire knowledge through activity based learning, to be creative, and to able to solve problems. On top of all this we have assessment systems that tend to serve bureaucratic-administrative purposes rather than the enhancement of the students' learning. Many of these problems have been long-standing (Kaewdang & Fry, 1979).

1.2.3 REFORM IN SCHOOLS

In August 1995, the Ministry of Education launched a program of educational reform that focused on excellence in schools. The Ministry plans that, by 2007, most if not all schools will be providing better quality education than they do at the present. It is not at all clear how the Ministry will assess excellence, but it is likely to draw on the perceptions of parents and employers. Thousands of schools have now been upgraded in equipment and facilities, especially in science and language laboratories. Schools are
also expected to become sites for local decision-making and as a consequence are to be held accountable for their performance.

The Ministry of Education has focused this reform on four areas:

- the school and its environment
- curriculum and pedagogy
- teachers and other school staff
- educational administration (Office of the National Primary Education Commission, 1997).

From the perspective of a school, the reforms extend from the evolutionary to revolutionary and permeate every area of school functioning.

The emerging climate for schools in Thailand is one in which the effectiveness of schools will be judged on dimensions such as:

- high expectations of student achievement, supported by clearly articulated expectations of staff and programs
- activities focused towards attainable goals
- a commitment to order and discipline based on reasonable rules fairly and consistently enforced
- collegial relationships which value each member of the school community
- collaborative planning
- a positive school climate
- a value system which supports these expectation
- consensus on values and goals
- a sense of community
- a sense of culture that encourages students to adopt the norms demonstrated by the school (AASA, 1993; Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; Depree, 1989; Glatthorn, 1994; Leithwood, 1992, 1999; Lczotter, 1988; Johnson, 1993; Senge, 1990).

1.3 English in the Schools and English as a Business

In most private schools in Thailand, particularly the religious oriented schools, English
language is taught from kindergarten to secondary school. For example, Roman Catholic missionaries run Bangkok’s leading secondary schools. There are over thirty religious orders working in the country (Watson, 1982). Moreover, the well-to-do families tend to send their children for private tuition. There is a growing number of shop-house language schools. These are small-scale businesses in which the proprietor provides some form of English language instruction on a fee-for-service basis. In some cases videotapes are used instead on an actual instructor. Even when an instructor is present, it is highly unlikely to be a native English speaker. There is little or no quality control over these businesses. There are also overseas summer language programs provided for students in the primary and secondary levels. These are also on a fee-for-service basis and are quite popular with families on middle to high incomes. Another type of school is the international school, which is designated as English only, and students are required to use English at all times in school. These schools are basically for expatriates.

Although one might expect that students who have studied English for eight or ten years would be reasonably competent in the use of the language, research does not support such optimism (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). It is still the case that many secondary school and university students cannot communicate well with native speakers (Arcekul, 1998). We know that the problems derive, in part, from large class sizes, assessment practices, and teacher competency (Sukamolsan, 1992). Taken together these factors mean that many teachers neglect the productive skills—speaking and writing. Furthermore, the tests that teachers use tend to focus on reading and writing rather than on listening and speaking. It is also the case that the schoolteachers in Thailand are less likely to be trained in an English-speaking country than are university lecturers. This has resulted in a considerable gap between what university staff want to achieve, and what schoolteachers are capable of learning in the teacher education program.

Many older school teachers who completed a one, two or three year certificate in the earlier teacher education programs were not required to study English. They have had successful teaching careers without it and don’t see the need to learn to teach English.
Now, it is still possible to complete a four-year teaching degree without studying more than the six compulsory credit points of general English. These courses are all taken in the first year and hence don't lead to competency. Less than 10% of students take additional courses in the second year (Mahasarakham University, 2000).

There does not appear to be any short-term solution to this problem. Even if the national government were to persuade more students to major in English it would still be several years before there would be significant effects in the schools. Similarly, even if it were possible to fund massive professional development programs there would be a similar time delay before their effects were felt.

1.4 CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY

Thai society is hierarchically ordered. It is normal to defer to older people and people of higher status. This is evident in all Thai relationships and can be seen in higher education institutions. It is, for example, polite to ensure that a student does not place a lecturer in an embarrassing position. For this reason students are hesitant to ask questions — in case the lecturer does not know the answers. To some extent, students are also slow to ask questions because doing so would reveal their lack of knowledge to other students. This concern might vary with age but it is evident in schools and in higher education.

The lecture is a common teaching strategy in higher education. It is accepted that school staff teach and higher education staff lecture. It fits our idea of what should happen in a university and it eases the problem of managing large classes. The material the students learn is usually presented as discovered facts and these facts are available in standard textbooks. There is little or no discussion of the epistemological basis for these facts. The students are then tested — often using multi-choice questions. The tests are usually to determine how well the students can reproduce the material in the set texts.

The knowledge and the reproductive pedagogy combine to give an impression to students that relationships and processes are non-contestable, hierarchical structures. In this way education is made to fit the socio-cultural context. When these students become teachers and go into our schools the system is perpetuated. Of course not every
teacher is exactly like this and there are probably many teachers who have tried to be innovative and have their students take greater responsibility for their own learning, but these teachers are a minority.

The national government is aware of other pedagogies and is encouraging schools and universities to introduce student centred strategies. All of this is however, to be done whilst preserving traditional Thai values. The task of pedagogical reform is therefore quite daunting. Hence the challenge for me is to develop pedagogy that will be more student centred but can be managed in the local Thai context of large class sizes, minimal resources, and minimal professional development for teachers. The pedagogy needs to:

- be consistent with the reform agenda
- encourage students to take some control over and responsibility for their own learning
- be interactive or participatory
- provide opportunities for the students to speak English.

1.5 ME AS RESEARCHER

I am a lecturer in the Department of Educational Research and Development, the Faculty of Education at Mahasarakham University. It was previously one of eight campuses of Srinakharinwirot University. In 1994, Srinakharinwirot University Mahasarakham became Mahasarakham University. It is located in Mahasarakham province, a small town, which is approximately 480 kilometres northeast of Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

1.5.1 MY ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

I attended kindergarten and grade one at the Teachers College Demonstration School, a small school used for practice by teachers college students. In grade two, I became a boarder at the Holy Redeemer School, a private school in Khon Kaen run by Roman Catholic nuns. This school provided English language from kindergarten. The nuns were native English speakers. At that time, English language was taught only from grade five level in government schools and then only as an elective. So I was fortunate in learning English from an early age. The reason my father sent me to this school was that
he taught English language and mathematics would be important tools for further study. That was my first experience of learning a second/foreign language when I was seven years old. At home we often spoke Lao. My grandmother was Lao so we often used this language in conversation.

At that time the Thai education system consisted of seven years in primary school, three years in lower secondary, and two years in upper secondary school, then on to higher education. I learned French during my lower secondary years. Later I moved to a provincial government school for years eleven and twelve, preparing for the university entrance examination. I chose the mathematics/science stream because it offered a wider choice for future study but I soon learned that it was not my strength.

I enrolled in Mahasarakham Teachers College in 1977. The college offered a two-year course for students who wanted to become teachers. In addition to the theoretical work we spent a half-semester practice teaching in primary schools. My major subject was English language pedagogy. I completed the Higher Certificate of Education in 1979 then continued studying at Chiang Mai University. In 1981, I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English (secondary school level).

1.5.2 MY RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

I enrolled in a Master's degree program (Educational measurement and evaluation) at Khon Kaen University in 1981. I chose educational measurement because I thought that the content was concrete, relatively easy to understand, and it would make me quite employable. However, it proved to be the hardest part of my life because I was the only language student in a group of mathematics students. The statistics involved in quantitative studies were, to me, so difficult. I lost five kilograms in weight in the first month. By working together with my fellow students, I was eventually able to succeed. It convinced me that my area of interest was language and that I preferred co-operative or collaborative learning strategies. The program was mainly coursework in educational statistics, research and assessment. It did however, have a thesis component of about one-eighth of the total requirements. My thesis was written on a comparison of the reliability of English language tests scored by item weighting with the classical method. That was my first experience of doing quantitative research.
While I was a master's degree student, I worked as a research assistant for my supervisor. Her project was an investigation of socio-economic and drinking water conditions of selected villages in the northeast. It gave me some experience of interviewing techniques and narrative writing. This was much more satisfying than statistical analysis. I graduated with a Master of Education in 1985.

In the last year of my study for the Masters degree, I was a part-time lecturer at Srinakharinwirot University in Mahasarakham. I taught courses in educational measurement and research to undergraduate students. After I graduated, I became a full-time lecturer in the University.

1.5.3 DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Teaching educational measurement in my Department has been relatively straightforward work. There are plenty of textbooks, although not always the most recent, a set syllabus based on a well-defined body of content, and a well-developed professional vocabulary. The objectives of my course in educational measurement EM401 or 504 401 (as in the Handbook) are for students to:

- understand the principles of educational measurement
- be able to construct educational measurement instruments that focus on the assessment of achievement
- be able to evaluate an achievement instrument
- be able to interpret test scores.

These objectives have not changed significantly in fifteen years. Notions of assessment in Thai academic culture have been dominated by measurement and a psychometric mindset. So, competency in test development has been seen as a desirable professional skill.

The (undergraduate) students taking my course major in the teaching of mathematics, science, social science, or English. The aim of my course is to provide them with the general principles of assessment, and a variety of assessment methods, including scoring and grading. Most of the texts we use in the course have examples of paper-pencil tests. In these texts there is very little about using formative assessment, or assessment to
support teaching-learning in the classroom.

The longer I taught the more concerned I became about the one-shot quality control assessment model that we used in my University and in our schools. It had many problems. For example, we relied almost totally on test scores to make decisions about what students know and whether they should pass or fail. We tested what was easily testable. If there was content that we could not easily reduce to numbers we discarded it or downplayed its importance. This process has had detrimental effects on the students and indeed, on the curriculum.

In additional to my teaching I spend a considerable amount of my time in schools. This is partly because undergraduate Bachelor of Education students do their practice teaching in local secondary schools, and also because I am very interested in improving the quality of English language teaching and the assessment of student learning. Previously it has been unusual for University staff to work in schools — unless it was for their own research. However, the national government is very keen to have closer relationships (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999) between universities and schools — particularly for mutual professional development.

Academic staff in the universities are expected to do research as well as to teach and contribute to local and professional communities. Accordingly, in 1989, I worked on a project aimed at educating Esarn people to develop positive attitudes towards the new technology in the Green Esarn Development Project. This project taught me to pay attention to what the villagers needed. This experience led me to the idea of research with people, not on people.

After teaching for ten years, I thought it was time for professional renewal. I chose the Deakin University Doctor of Education Program because it offered the chance to learn different ways of doing research. It was a structured program of doctoral study, combining research for a substantial dissertation with structured research tasks which address problems of educational theory, policy and practice arising in my own professional work and workplaces. It was not a coursework doctorate.

The present research brought together my interest in English language assessment, the need to improve current practice and my conviction that working with people is more
effective that working on people. Hence I worked with English language teachers to
determine more effective ways to teach and assess and to develop an appropriate
professional development program.

1.6 CONCLUSION
Educational reform, in particular the teaching of English, is high on the agenda in
Thailand. In this part I have discussed the socio-cultural context for my research and
my background as an English language learner and researcher. In the next part I focus on
the place of English language teaching and learning in Thailand.
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A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is the result of a collaboration between the teachers from the schools and me (as a university person) to develop some classroom activities and assessment procedures for English language classes. The impetus for doing this research was that the teaching of English language in Thailand is a matter of national concern. The national government believes that the ability of Thai people to use English for effective communication is very important for the continuing economic development of Thailand. Hence, a new English language teaching policy for Thailand was launched in 1996. The Ministry of Education expected that English language would be provided in every school commencing from grade one. In addition other policies included changes to the pedagogy and assessment such as communicative pedagogy, authentic teaching and authentic assessment, and portfolio assessment. Because I was teaching in the Faculty of Education, these changes affected the curriculum and pedagogy of pre-service teacher education. At the same time a number of research studies highlighted some difficulties in implementing these policies; such as large classes, lack of student motivation for learning English, insufficient environmental support for learning language, and insufficient professional development program for teachers.

My aim was to collaborate with English language teachers to develop relevant classroom activities that were consistent with the new policies and possible in the current environment. The research consisted of three phases. In the first phase I worked with two teachers to design and deliver a series of classroom activities that encouraged lower secondary students to use English. In the second phase I worked with a group of teachers to design and deliver a professional development program for twenty schoolteachers interested in improving their English language teaching. In the third phase I used data from the first two phases to design ten new activities that were trialled in classrooms by two teachers.

I have structured the report of the dissertation in eight chapters. In the first chapter I explain the structure of the research. In the second chapter I consider English language
teaching in Thailand and the reasons for the national government's interest in educational reform. In the third chapter I discuss the role that professional development can play in the reform process. This chapter also includes a discussion of change process more generally. The fourth chapter provides an overview of the issue of learning and teaching, in particular second/foreign language learning. The fifth chapter takes up the issue of the assessment of learning. Here I focus on the national government's emphasis on authentic learning and the use of portfolios as evidence of learning. The question of methodology is taken up in chapter six. In this chapter I indicate why I chose to use some of the principles of action research as the basis of the method that I used to research professional development of English language teachers. The outcomes of the research are considered in chapter seven. Chapter eight was an opportunity for me to make recommendations from the perspective of an action researcher.

In the tradition of action research reports I have used a semi-narrative form in writing this report of the research.
CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND

In this chapter I discuss some of the reasons why the national government considers English to be the priority foreign language for Thai people and which inform government policies. I also outline the history of English in Thailand. I finish by discussing the impact of English on Thai culture. This affects the teachers and students' motivation to learn English.

2.1 ENGLISH AS A PRIORITY

Thailand has long been aware of the need to use English for international communication. It is valued primarily for its utilitarian uses (Mitchell, 2000). In the seventeenth century when the Dutch, English and French all competed for trade and power in Thailand it was not unusual for a message in a Western language to pass through a number of Eastern languages before it was translated into Thai, or vice versa. During this period French missionaries established a seminary at Ayudhaya (the former capital of Thailand in the reign of King Narai). However, the school was closed in 1767 when the Burmese invaded Ayudhaya (Watson, 1982). King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-1868) learnt English in order to understand the politics of the British Empire and other Western powers of the time. In this sense he was Thailand's first scholar of English language and culture (Tin pang-nga, 1997).

2.1.1 HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND

In the 19th century, most teachers of English were foreign missionaries who were native speakers of the language. They worked in denominational schools that taught English language at the primary level and sometimes at the pre-school level. Some of these schools still exist, for example, St. Francis Xavier, St. Gabriel's, Bangkok's Assumption College, and the Holy Redeemer School (Watson, 1982; Woodhead & Komarakul Na Nagara, 1995). In such schools where students were required to use English all the time, the students became functionally fluent in English without ever spending time in an English speaking country.

In addition, in 1885, the Bowring Treaty (Rujikictgumjorn, 2000) signalled the first major concession of the Thai government to a Western imperial power. This treaty was
signed voluntarily as a means to avoid British colonial rule. The treaty, which was followed by other similar treaties, focused on industry and commerce. In order to remain independent, Thailand had to adopt some Western ways. Not surprisingly, there was an emphasis on developing a broader and more formal educational system. By the end of the nineteenth century, some general (western style) education was available in the monasteries—taught by monks. The ascendancy of England and France in this region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries made it inevitable that English and French would be the dominant second/foreign languages. Of these, English has become the preferred language (Tinpung-nga, 1997).

2.2 ENGLISH IN THE SCHOOLS

In 1921, compulsory education up to grade four was introduced, with a focus on the development of a national identity. English language was not officially taught in state schools in Thailand until 1937. The 1937 curriculum included English as a compulsory subject for secondary school students. At this time there were seven years of elementary schooling and five years of secondary schooling. English was considered to be as important as any other subject and it was available for all upper elementary and compulsory for all secondary students in both public and private schools.

In 1978, a new structure and a new curriculum was introduced in order to make the content and learning processes functional, self-sustaining, and relevant to local needs at each level (Ministry of Education, 1978). During the period of the Fourth National Education Development Plan (1977-1981), the extension of universal compulsory education was achieved with a reduction of primary schooling from seven to six years. The school structure of 6-3-3 was more flexible and was intended to be more sensitive to the students' age, needs, interests, aptitudes, and to local economic and social needs (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998).

In 1978, English was officially included in the curriculum as an elective subject for the last two years of elementary school. Students could choose either English or vocational courses for 200 hours a year. The underlying premise was that Thai students should be given the opportunity to first fully master their native language before being required to
cope with a foreign language. Introducing English as a foreign language in the fifth grade meant that the average age of the students was around ten. However, following a national government policy decision in 1996, English is now taught at all grade levels starting from grade one, although there are some exceptions for schools in some rural areas. English is now seen as a key element in the development of human resources in the Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001)) and hence needs to be taught earlier to ensure better competency.

It is appreciated that now it is increasingly necessary for Thai people to have at least basic communicative competency in English. For example, in most major hotels front desk staff need to be able to understand English requests and instructions. Similarly, even low-level positions in government agencies such as embassies require functional English. In the information technology industries more and more Thais work abroad for extended periods — often in English speaking countries.

So, Thais are not only encouraged to be lifelong learners, they are also expected to demonstrate English language competency. English is becoming necessary to obtain employment and for career advancement. This situation has put added pressure on schools to improve the teaching of English. To survey what teachers and educators think about the importance of teaching English language in Thai schooling, I discussed this with school principal Thongpoon (M52). He said:

The policy of teaching English from grade one was launched in 1996. The competency in English of grade five and six students has not changed. Students from the rural areas still have similar problems in learning English to those that they have had for many years. In my opinion, there are several reasons for this:

- Most teachers do not pay attention to the lower achieving students. They do not recognize that they could help the students learning by changing their teaching methods. They usually follow the students' workbook or text and try to finish it on time.
- I disagree that simply increasing the number of the years of English in the curriculum will automatically develop the students English ability. It depends very much on the teachers' awareness. They have to change their way of thinking from being content-based to being more authentic.
- It is hard to predict when the policy might be considered to be successful.
Similarly, Prcmsak, a senior officer in the district office (M50) was of the opinion that:

The policy is good but Thai teachers need to reorient their teaching methods from teacher-centred to be student-centred. The teachers have to believe that the students could learn by themselves. The Ministry of Education organised a professional development program for English language teachers and the provincial supervisors have tried to follow this up with the teachers. It might take a long time for students to be able to communicate in English. They lack environmental support. Most primary teachers claim that their major subjects were not English and so they are not able to teach English. In my opinion, this is not a serious problem. In grades one, two, three and four the goal of teaching is to develop in the students a readiness to learn English, to develop the feeling that is fun to learn English.

The teachers that I discussed the policy with were generally supportive:

Prasong (M27):

English is often needed in daily life - for example, to read the instructions on electrical equipment, medicine, or machinery, etc.

Sarit (M42):

English is used as a tool for further study. It ought to be a compulsory subject for students, not an elective. Most primary schools have no teachers who have English language as a major subject. English language teaching will be more and more effective as Thai society uses English as a second language.

Wilaiwan (F48):

English is necessary in a globalised world. Students need English to develop their knowledge of world affairs. They need to access the internet, to read books, to share their opinions with people from other countries.

From these comments, it seems that teachers realise the importance of English language and agree with the policy to start teaching English from grade one. It is of concern as to how many years will be necessary for students communicative competency to be achieved.

2.3 CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS — THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

For a very small (unknown) proportion of the Thai population, English is something like a second language. For the vast majority of Thais, English is a foreign language —
foreign in that it plays no part in everyday life. In fact English language transmissions over radio and television were not allowed until the interim government of former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun in 1994. The recent introduction of paid television services, cable and satellite stations now enables Thais to receive English language broadcasts if they wish (Woodhead & Komarakul Na Nagara, 1995). However, the majority of these programs are only available through paid subscription and services. These subscription services are available only in the greater Bangkok area and selected provincial capitals. English language news programs are broadcast over Radio Thailand and can be heard throughout the country.

With the increase of tourism English language is used as part of daily life in some large cities of Thailand. There are many Thai signs that have English words underneath. For example, the street signs are in Thai words but have English equivalents underneath. Clearly this would help tourists and the visitors find their way around. There are also English newspapers and magazines in the larger cities. English language signs are normally seen in most supermarkets in Thailand. One manager pointed out that this was a consequence of the stock control and accounting systems they were using — these were in English. There is also an increasing number of cable television programs available. Radio broadcasts in English, provided by the Thai public relations department, were started in 1999.

One of the latest businesses to commence has been the internet-cafe. In a very recent study, Permwanitchakul (2001) stated that were fifty internet-cafes in the metropolitan area of Udon Thani province, northeastern of Thailand. The main customers are students. Primary school students visit to play computer games. The secondary school students and undergraduate students spend about half an hour to one hour a day searching websites, chatting or sending e-mails. Internet cafes provide a natural purpose for students to learn some English. Perhaps universities should have such cafes on their campuses!

2.4 STUDENT MOTIVATION

In a country where English is a second or foreign language to many citizens there
needs to be engaging purposes for students to learn English if teaching is to be effective. It is possible to think of motivation in many ways but, for my purposes, it is appropriate to think of the individual, social or sociological reasons why students study English.

There are many reasons for learning English, but in general, these reasons fall into three categories: compliance, instrumental or utilitarian, or intellectual reasons. These are not in any particular order but there is no doubt that compliance is a major motivating force. At one level of compliance it is simply a matter of compulsion via education policy. As indicated earlier, the national government has declared that all students must study English in the elementary and secondary schools (and must take some English in their undergraduate university studies). English is also a prerequisite for university entrance. It is also a matter of compliance due to parental pressure or expectation. Many parents want their children to learn English because they think that it enhances the life opportunities of their children.

From a parent’s point of view, English should be taught for many reasons. These can generally be considered as instrumental or utilitarian. For example, some parents gave the following reasons. A parent, Siriporn (F32), living in a rural area emphasised the need to learn English as early as possible:

One reason is that English is necessary for further study. The earlier you start, the more the children will benefit. In the past, starting the teaching of English from grade five was too late. I agree that we should start from grade one.

Supawan (F46) also in a rural area of Khon Kaen said that:

English ought to be taught in every school. It is the student's right to have an opportunity to learn English. Some schools claim that they have no major English language teachers, so English cannot be provided. Actually, every teacher who has at least a Bachelor's degree should be able to teach fundamental English.

Kingdao (F34), a suburban parent, illustrated how some parents really do support their children in the learning of English:

We need English as a means to gain knowledge and also to find a job. I send my daughter to a religious (Catholic) school that starts teaching English in
grade one. I also encourage her to learn from a CD-ROM by herself. There are also some tuition courses provided by shop houses. It is good for parents to encourage their children.

In general, if parents make their wishes known to their children, the children will be obedient. I talked to a number of students about their English language experiences. The quotes below are representative of their views.

Satit (M15):

I learnt English language because my school provided it. Even if it had been an elective, I would still have chosen to learn English. I like learning English because it will be helpful in finding jobs. My brother went abroad to work. He earned a higher salary than he could have in Thailand. I would like to find a job with a high salary.

Ampa (F13):

I don’t know why I had to learn the English language. It was a compulsory course. Whether I liked or disliked it, I had to do my best. My teacher tells me that if you could not pass in some course, you have to re-sit. My English language teacher is not a hard person. She is kind. I enjoy singing English songs and playing games.

Pornpit (F14):

I learn the English language because it will be useful to communicate with foreigners. I like travelling. When I grow up, I would like to be a policeman and speak English with tourists.

2.4.1 COMPLIANCE — AN INADEQUATE MOTIVATION

I have distinguished between what I have called compliance and instrumental-utilitarian motives to make the point that there are students who want to study English whether their parents have specifically encouraged them or not. These students know that many of the better-paid jobs and career opportunities require a working knowledge of English. In most editions of the Bangkok Post and The Nation (English language newspapers) there are advertisements for management trainees, bank clerks and salespeople that specify that the applicants should be able to speak English.

In addition there are some students who for various reasons have an intellectual interest in learning English. It may not be the sole motive but it is strong motive as the quotes below indicate.
Tiwa (F15):

I enjoyed learning English. Actually, I learned many interesting things by searching the Internet. At first I did not know the meaning of some words, but I tried to use the dictionary and asked my parents. I thought English helped me learn a lot of things outside the classroom.

When they go to university, these students tend to take English as a major study and hence study language and literature. For example, Chatrec, a third year English major student, said that he was studying English because:

I have enjoyed English classes since I was in secondary school. My English language teacher was an active lady. She provided games, songs, role plays, and other activities. I also hope that I can find a job that uses the English language, such as tour guide.

There has been a number of Thai research and discussion papers on motivation for learning English. They have been mainly quantitative studies or issues papers about the importance of motivation and ways of motivating students. Meechaiyo (1994), Sriraungrith (1994), Gohwong (1996), Ruchakul (1996), and Littlewood (1996) have all studied motivation for learning English as a second or foreign language. Meechaiyo (1994) studied the relationship between homework and students' motivation. She compared the academic achievement of students in her school who were assigned individual homework according to their abilities and whole-group homework, and their motivation in learning English. The results showed that the assigned homework affected their academic homework and motivation, and students with individual homework showed a significant improvement over whole group homework.

Sriraungrith (1994) studied possible relationships between secondary school students listening ability and their levels of motivation. Sriraungrith (1994) used simulations, simulations with scaffolding, and the simple pedagogy suggested in the teacher's manual accompanying the textbook, to try to improve the students' listening and oral production skills. It appeared that simulations and simulations with scaffolding produced better results than the simple teacher-centred pedagogy suggested in the teacher's manual. However, this is not surprising because simulations and scaffolding require more individual or small group attention on the part of the teacher than simple
transmission pedagogies. Presumably, the more individual attention given to students the higher their achievements will be and the more motivated they will be.

Gohwong (1996) for example, studied learning independence and workplace managerial problems in King Mongkut Institute of Technology. For Gohwong (1996) lack of self-confidence in using English is a major issue. There are several reasons for this lack of self-confidence and one of them is the lack of practice opportunities in the classroom (Holmes & Tangtongtavy in Gohwong, 1996). Thai teachers also lack confidence and this together with large classes leads to an emphasis on reading and writing, with much less attention given to listening and speaking. Gohwong further argued that whereas written communication is fundamental in western cultures, Thais regard writing as a risk-taking activity and dislike it because they do not want to make mistakes.

Ruechakul (1996) concluded that motivation is strongly affected by achievement. In her study, the greater the achievement, the greater the motivation. This view is consistent with Littlewood’s (1996) study of Asian students. Littlewood came to the view that, provided the students see some practical value in their learning, they will try very hard to achieve high performance levels.

For the three years of the lower secondary level, even though French, Japanese, English, and Arabic are the possible foreign languages for Thai students, most Thai students choose English. The reason for this is that English is used for the entrance university examination. In the last three years of high school, students have to study both the core and the elective courses. Students in the language arts program have to choose more than one second/foreign language. The core courses focus entirely on basic communicative competence. The elective courses extend these core competencies and make provision for those students who have a specialist interest in English.

2.5 TEACHER COMPETENCE

By law, all schoolteachers in Thailand are members of Krusapha (the teachers council of Thailand). Krusapha is an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Education. Krusapha has developed standards of teaching so that instructional practice can be
evaluated. It is believed that a high standard of practice will improve student achievement. There are eleven standards for teachers (Krusapha, 1999). Teachers are expected to:

- be active and productive members of professional organisations for teachers
- judge all practices based on their benefit for the learner
- aim for the optimum development of all learners
- develop effective lesson plans that bring about empirical learning outcomes
- develop efficient and innovative learning materials that are responsive to learners needs
- use the best instructional practices
- prepare systematic reports on learners development based on objective and authentic data
- be a good behavioural model for learners
- be a co-operative and productive member in the school
- be a co-operative and productive member in the community
- be a competent and informed member of Krusapha (Krusapha, 1999; pp. 5-15).

These are not written in quite the same language as the performance standards envisaged in the Eight National Development Plan but the intent of the two policies is very similar.

The Krusapha standards are, of course, highly desirable but it is not known just how teachers measure up against them. Data on this are likely to become available as there is increasing emphasis on accountability at the school level. Despite the lack of data we know that many, if not most school teachers are reluctant to use English, have an inadequate knowledge of English, and do not use effective pedagogies to teach English (Sukamolsan, 1992; Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993; Sanmecema, 1993).

2.5.1 RELUCTANCE

It is difficult to tease out the relationships between confidence and competence. However, classroom observation indicates that rather than using English purposefully in
many English language lessons, the majority of the talk is in Thai and is about English. Presumably competence depends on learning and practice. For many teachers the learning of English has been inadequate particularly with regard to spoken English (Junklin, 1991; Sukamolsan, 1992).

2.5.2 INADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE

The emphasis on communicative competence has meant that little attention has been given to the structure of English. It is not surprising then that teachers cannot articulate the basic rules of conjugation or of any other structural aspect of English. It might be argued that this isn’t needed if the teacher knows how the language is used. The reality is though that both are needed and that structural knowledge facilitates communicative competence (Pornwisetsirikul, 1992; Wongsothorn, 1995).

2.5.3 ASSESSMENT-DRIVEN PEDAGOGY

To a considerable extent an effective pedagogy is one that results in effective student learning (Evans & Guymon, 1978). This in turn depends on how student learning is assessed. Because of the test orientation in Thailand, learning is generally assessed by formal testing. As it is easier to test written comprehension than oral production, teachers tend to neglect the assessment of how well each student can actually use spoken English to communicate. The teaching and assessment tends therefore to focus on written language and not on how well the student can speak English. The assessment unfortunately has determined the pedagogy to the detriment of language competency.

It is not only the test-culture that determines what happens, class size and room size are also important variables (Achilles & Finn, 1999). Small classes in large rooms are uncommon. The reverse is more common. Whether it is an excuse or not, teachers tend to argue that large classes in small rooms makes it difficult to use small group pedagogies. However, small group pedagogies are a way to encourage the students to take more control of their own learning and allow for greater peer interaction.

Suggestions have been made about how to improve the teaching and learning of English in Thai schools (Jong-utra, 1988; Pongkasempornkul, 1988). Researchers suggest that because lower secondary students only have minimal competencies in conversational English, and because this minimal competence is associated with very low confidence
levels, schools need to concentrate on listening and speaking. They recommend that
teachers provide regular and systematic practice opportunities for their students in these
two areas. No doubt this is good advice, but few if any researchers have reported
attempts to put this kind of advice into practice. It almost seems as if we think we can
change teachers’ behaviour by telling them how to do it! My contention is that we have
to do more than tell teachers but rather work with teachers to find ways that will be
more effective. This was my aim in this project.

2.5.4 STUDENT-CENTRED PEDAGOGY

that teaching ought to be student-centred. It was thought that this would develop the
students’ self-confidence, curiosity, willingness to question, and self-discipline. In
many ways, these objectives were incompatible with the customary role of the teacher
in which the teacher lectured and the students learnt by rote (Myers & Sussangkarn,

Student-centred pedagogy was one element in a more general concern to raise the
standard of the professionalism of teachers. The National Education Commission
started the teacher reform process by appointing a sub-committee to plan reform in
ethics, academic skills, and the professionalism of teachers. However worthy these
objectives were, there was little or no cultural-contextual support for their introduction.
It needs to be understood that traditional Thai social structures are based on respect for
those who are of higher status and authority. This value structure is placed in tension
with student-centred pedagogy. Schoolteachers are older and of higher status than the
students; consequently, even the students have some difficulty in changing the way that
they work with their teachers. These structures may not have quite the same force in
the major cities, but in general, society has a clear understanding of the roles of students,
teachers, and parents and it is not easy to change these understandings. There have been
numerous examples (Wasee, 2000) where we have tried to adopt western systems only
to find that all of us are quite resistant to change – particularly to change that is not of
obvious benefit to ourselves. We have also tried grafting on western systems to existing
Thai systems. Although many of these ‘grafts’ have not been successful, grafting is
more likely to produce change than radical innovation.

In addition the majority of teachers have been prepared in a hierarchical system that used teacher-centred pedagogies, and have an unquestioning faith in the use of tests to drive the school curriculum, hence do not appreciate the role of student-centred pedagogy.

For many teachers, covering the content is more important than consolidation and so it is very common to have the students do homework. In common with testing, assigning homework is perceived as evidence that the teacher is doing her job.

Because the schools generally claim to use a communicative approach (Ministry of Education, 1996) to the teaching of English, the texts that are used emphasise contextually appropriate language and de-emphasise grammar. In practice, however, there seem to be limited opportunities for the students to actually speak in English during or after school hours. There are several reasons for this:

- large classes
- teacher competence
- student reluctance
- lack of contextual support in and out of the classroom.

2.5.5 CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON CHANGE

A number of scholars have studied the problems of teaching English as a second/foreign language, but nothing seems to change very much in the classroom. Similarly, several researchers have studied the difficulties that Thai students have in speaking, and understanding spoken English. Jong-utsa (1988), Pongkasempornkul (1988), Pornwisetsirikul (1992), Ronyuth (1992), Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon (1993), Sanmeema (1993), and Sukamolsan (1992) have all studied the difficulties associated with the pedagogies that have been used. The most commonly used pedagogy is based on rote learning and reproduction. As a consequence many students do not understand the context of the particular words and sentences that they are trying to learn. In Thai culture the pedagogical relationships are such that many students would be reluctant to ask the teacher for help.
In some cases the teachers themselves may not have a deep understanding of structures and functions in the English language. If this is the case I believe that we need a systematic program of professional development for teachers of English. Such a program would need to focus on the English language and on appropriate pedagogies for teaching it which is the aim of this study.

2.5.6 TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY

As a starting point to discuss effective pedagogy one might consider Jeffcoate’s (1992) idea that language teaching-learning activities can be divided into two categories. In particular, he divided oral activities into two groups, formal or product activities and informal or process activities. Product activities include the following: telling stories, making an audio tape (e.g. of a radio program), delivering a report (e.g. on a book which has been read), dramatic performance, recitation and reading aloud, giving a talk or speech (e.g. on a hobby or controversial issue), and formal debates and discussions. Process activities are essentially dialogue between teacher and pupils; dialogue between pupil and pupil; and small group discussion. This is a useful reminder of the types of activities that one might do with students. Furthermore, Thailand has a rich tradition of music, theatre and dance, so I think that if teachers used inclusive techniques such as role play, story telling, drama, music and other methods in teaching English, it will not only be more interesting for the students but it is also likely to be more effective. (Siriluck, 1998; Tongngam, 1998).

2.6 CURRICULUM

The national lower secondary school curriculum introduced in 1978 (revised in 1990 and 1996) (Ministry of Education, 1996) is the current curriculum. This curriculum requires English language teachers to set behavioural objectives, choose appropriate texts and to devise relevant assessment procedures for the lessons. Most of the classroom assessment procedures are based on reading and writing. These are relatively easily assessed using standard tests of some kind but the tests do not seem to reflect actual student competencies very well. For example, very few teachers appear to use any systematic procedures to assess listening and speaking skills. If we think that these
skills are important we need to take some action to change present practices. An emphasis on functional English does not necessarily mean neglect of the formal study of English language structures but it does suggest that we try to use the former to improve learning of the latter.

2.7 TEXTBOOKS

The teaching of English in Thai schools has been driven by assessment and by textbooks. In a typical school lesson the teacher will follow the content of the textbook that has been chosen for that grade level. Individual schools and teachers are free to choose the textbooks from the authorised list that they think are best for their purposes. The students then have to purchase these books. The quality of these textbooks is therefore of considerable importance.

Some of the textbooks have been written by Thai authors (e.g. Chandhavimol) but most of them are written and published by British (e.g. Longman) and American (e.g. McGraw-Hill) companies. A common textbook in elementary schools is *Practice in Comprehension I* by Chandhavimol. This book is about 85% text and 15% graphics – usually black and white drawings. It shows Thai and Western characters in Thai and Western contexts. For secondary schools *Discovery* (Abbs & Freebairn, 1994) is common. It is priced at forty baht (about $A2). It is printed on cheap paper and is about 50% text and 50% graphics. The language in this text is more complex than that in the elementary school text. It shows Western characters and contexts. The accompanying activities book is also called *Discovery* written by Elsworth. The activity book is priced at fifteen baht. Most texts have tests associated with the text and teachers use these tests as quizzes. Alongside these textbooks, schools usually have a small collection of general interest reading books that students can read in class, or borrow. These are usually purchased with government funds and/or with money donated by parents.

There is some interest in the use of computers (Kulapichit, 1992) to teach English. Where this is happening it is usually in the form of interactive CD ROMs produced in Britain or America. There is, as yet, little or no research evidence in Thailand (Loipha &
Knezek, 1992) about the efficacy of this form of computer aided learning.

2.8 CURRENT CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY

The observations in Appendix A illustrate a typical English lesson in a Thai classroom. It is a typical lesson and it can be seen that the teacher's knowledge of English is basic. The content and context is not particularly stimulating and he is using a grammar based approach rather than the preferred communicative approach. The lesson was essentially teacher-centred and he rarely moved from the front of the room.

It was very evident to me that the pedagogy needed to change. In this study I wanted to work with teachers to help them develop more effective ways to teach English.

2.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explained the reasons why the English language became dominant in Thailand and discussed its status in the curriculum. It is now compulsory from grade one. The next chapter takes up matters of professional development and the reform process.
CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE REFORM PROCESS

This chapter provides the context for the role of professional development in the reform process. It has been organised in four parts; change processes, change management, workplace change and university-school collaboration.

3.1 CHANGE PROCESSES

A reform agenda, however well devised, depends on people for its implementation. There is a very limited Thai language research literature on change processes in Thai contexts. Much of what is written seems to be a summary or an interpretation of the English language research. There is a need for increased and improved research into change in Thai schools because change is contextually-based and as discussed earlier, the Thai culture is different from Western culture. Nevertheless, the general principles of interacting with, and leading people into and through change seem, in a broad sense, to be universal and implications from the literature can be made for the Thai context.

Change is endemic throughout the world. However, it was not until Toffler (1971), introduced the term future shock that the magnitude and accelerating rapidity of the change that is occurring in our own time began to be formally acknowledged. Now, some three decades later, the full impact of Toffler's message has taken hold, and organisations everywhere are grappling with mechanisms to achieve change efficiently and effectively.

More than a decade ago Connor and Hughes (1988) observed that:

We are living in the midst of what is probably the most dynamic epoch in the history of the human race. Throughout the world we are transforming the basic paradigms in science, technology, government, politics, business and human behaviour, that have provided the structure for civilisation. Educational institutions sit squarely in the midst of this change. Change will be rampant and endemic to our academic culture. Managing that change process will be one of our top priorities (Connor & Hughes, 1988, pp. 15-16).

More recently, Davis (1995) pointed out that while there has never been a time when so many organisations are engaged in change, the majority of these changes have been
relatively unsuccessful. This may be a pessimistic assessment but it is a useful reminder of the difficulty of the task faced by all sectors of society in adapting to today's changing world.

Many of the recommendations for the successful implementation of organisational change (Havelock, 1978; Bately, 1989; Scott & Jaffe, 1989; Brown, 1990; Plant, 1991; Connor & Lake, 1994) give the impression that the change process is quite systematic. If one follows certain 'rules' all will be well. Unfortunately, organisational change is more complicated and more varied for this to be the case. A much more 'contextually sensitive' approach is required. For example Kanter, Stein, & Jick (1992), suggested that:

The appropriate way of thinking about change implementation has less to do with obeying 'commandments' and more to do with responding to the 'voices' within the organisation, to the requirements of a particular situation, and to the reality that change may never be a discrete phenomenon or a closed book (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992, p. 391).

This is a view shared by Jick (1993):

There are no sure-fire instructions which, when scrupulously followed, make change succeed, much less eliminate or solve problems accompanying any change process. Changing is inherently messy, confusing and loaded with unpredictability, and no one escapes this fact (Jick, 1993, p. xiv).

Even though there may be some common features in organisational change there is little doubt that contextually insensitive change processes are not likely to produce effective change. Each situation is unique and from experience with hundreds of clients the Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team (1995) argued that there was a finite set of principles underlying successful change. Just what these principles are is a matter of debate, but in his recent study of organisational change, Dalzell (2000) derived a set of ten such principles:

- Trust: A climate of trust needs to be developed and maintained.
- Timing: The importance of appropriate timing needs to be recognised and addressed.
- Vision: A clear vision needs to be enunciated and shared.
- Valuing: All persons need to be valued and respected as individuals in their own right.
- Communication: Appropriate channels of communication need to be established and maintained.
- Consultation: Genuine and relevant consultation needs to occur.
- Culture: Organisational culture needs to be recognised and managed.
- Compromise: Recognition needs to be given to the appropriate role of compromise.
- Commitment: A high level of commitment to the change needs to be maintained.
- Chance and Serendipity: Attention needs to be given to unanticipated but relevant factors that may arise during the course of the change process (Dalzell, 2000, p. 256).

These characteristics are not peculiar to organisational change. They are similar to the qualities that one looks for in effective collaborative research (Jeans, 1996):

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

**FIGURE 1: FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION CHANGE**

3.1.1 CHANGE IS COMPLEX

Organisational change is complex and in most cases proceeds unevenly across a system (Beeby, 1986; Everard & Morris (1990). Jick (1993) said that change is inherently messy, confusing, and loaded with unpredictability. Williams (1996) also thought that change is difficult and fraught with conflict and uncertainty. Change does not usually
proceed smoothly, and linearly (Handy, 1991; Fullan, 1993; Gibson, 1997). These authors argue that discontinuous change is all around us and that we need to realise that there are opportunities as well as problems with this state of affairs: As our world becomes more complex and interdependent, change becomes increasingly non-linear, discontinuous and unpredictable (Gibson, 1997, p. 6). As Conner (1998) wrote:

Human transformation is too complex to be described by a rigid set of laws. Change is not a discrete event that occurs by linear progression; rather it unfolds on many different levels simultaneously. Instead of relying on hard and fast rules that can get you into trouble, acknowledge the complexity of change by focusing on patterns and principles for your direction (Conner, 1998, p. 10).

3.1.2 CHANGE IS RESISTED

Whenever change occurs, it almost inevitably creates some form of resistance. Elliott-Kemp (1982) highlighted this feature when speaking of the adaptability of humankind. He noted:

Yet paradoxically, despite the undoubted adaptive characteristics of the human species in a wide variety of problematic situations and environments from a long term biological or historical perspective, resistance to change appears to be an endemic feature of human life: the status quo seems to possess an obvious rationality which needs no justification — it is change which must be justified, and justified well (Kemp, 1982, p. 1).

Organisations are conservative. They try very hard to retain known ways of working even if these are not always very satisfying or productive. Resistance to change is usually takes one of two forms, systemic and behavioural (Plant, 1987). Systemic resistance arises from a lack of appropriate knowledge or information about the change, or from the lack of the appropriate skills to deal with it. Behavioural resistance, on the other hand, results from the reactions, perceptions and assumptions that individuals or groups make about the proposed change. This distinction, which Plant describes as cognitive versus emotional, is useful in that it allows for efforts to deal with resistance to change to be more appropriately targeted. Systemic resistance can be lowered by ensuring that there is effective information and communication prior to, and during, the period of change. Emotional resistance will also be lower in an atmosphere of trust (the
first of Dalzell principles). When change becomes inevitable they do respond, but it is an often nominal or token response (Everard & Morris, 1990).

For Yukl (1998) there are at least nine reasons for resisting major change. The first of them is lack of trust. A basic reason for resistance to change is distrust of the people who propose it. Distrust can magnify the effect of other sources of resistance. Even when there is no obvious threat, a change may be resisted if people imagine there are hidden, ominous implications that will only become obvious at a later time. The second and third reasons have to do with a lack of conviction that change is necessary and feasible. If people are not convinced that change is necessary or is likely to succeed, then they are likely to oppose it. Yukl’s fourth and fifth reasons are based on individual assessments of the personal cost of the change: Regardless of how change would benefit an organisation, it is likely to be resisted by people who would suffer personal loss of income, benefits, or job security (Yukl, 1998, p. 56).

The last three reasons touch on people’s belief in themselves and their place in the overall scheme of things. They resist change through fear of personal failure in the new situation, through fear of a loss of status and power, through threat to their values and their ideals and resentment that the change is an encroachment on their own autonomy.

As Yukl says:

Resistance to change is not merely the result of ignorance or inflexibility, it is a natural reaction by people who want to protect their self-interests and sense of self-determination. Rather than seeing resistance as just another obstacle to batter down or circumvent, it is more realistic and helpful to view it as energy that can be redirected to improve change (Yukl, 1998, p. 440).

3.1.3 ORDER IN THE CHAOS

Although change often appears chaotic there is usually an underlying pattern of individual and organisational reactions. This pattern has been described in various ways. One of the first descriptions of this pattern was that of Lewin (1952). Lewin proposed a force-field model that, although quite inadequate, has been very influential. Lewin’s model involved processes of unfreezing, restructuring and refreezing.

In the unfreezing stage existing patterns and structures have to be loosened and broken
down so that conditions for change become favourable. In the restructuring stage, in the more receptive environment, the change takes place. Finally, in the third stage, the changes become established. There has been, and still is, considerable support for this model (e.g. Lippitt, Watson & Westley, 1958; Gross, Giacquinta & Bernstein, 1971; Huse & Cummings, 1985; Kilmann, 1989 b; Plant, 1991; Schein, 1992; Connor & Lake, 1994; Owens, 1995; Miller, 1997; Yukl, 1998), its simplicity is also its weakness.

Kanter et al. (1992), captured the basic weakness of the model when they wrote:

This quaintly linear and static conception — the organisations as an ice cube — is so wildly inappropriate that it is difficult to see why it has not only survived but also prospered, except for one thing. It offers managers a very straightforward way of planning their actions by simplifying an extraordinary complex process into a child’s formula. Suffice it to say here, first, that organisations are never frozen, much less refrozen, but are fluid entities with many personalities. Second, to the extent that there are stages, they overlap and interpenetrate another in important ways. Instead, it is more appropriate to view organisational motion as ubiquitous and multidirectional. Deliberate change is a matter of grabbing hold of some aspect of the motion and steering it in a particular direction that will be perceived by key players as a new method of operating or as a reason to reorient one’s relationship and responsibility to the organisation itself, while creating conditions that facilitate and assist that reorientation (Kanter et al., 1992, p. 10).

Despite this criticism, Lewin’s work has been influential and it does highlight one aspect of change. It is not particularly clear in Lewin’s writing but by implication one might assume that he was thinking of change as a process and as an event (Fullan, 1997).

Twenty-five years after Lewin, Morrish (1976) described the change process with a S-curve. In this description, about ten per cent of a group involved with change are early adopters, forty per cent will be the early majority, forty per cent will be the majority and ten per cent will only slowly or never cope with the change. Whitaker (1993) argued for phases or stages of shock, withdrawal, acceptance, and adaptation. Early in the change process some individuals will react with shock; mild in some cases but traumatic in others. They find it very disturbing that their familiar world is changing. When the implications of change become apparent the individual may well attempt to withdraw. The third stage is one of acknowledgement, an acceptance of the inevitability
of the change. There is a realisation that the change is a reality and cannot be resisted any longer. Finally, for those who have stayed with the organisation there is a phase of adaptation. At one end of the adaptation continuum, there is a wholehearted acceptance of the new situation. At the other end, the individual adapts by leaving the organisation. Most reaction lies somewhere towards the mid-point of these extremes.

There is nothing systematic or predictable about this model. In some circumstances we can move through the phases in a matter of minutes, in other more traumatic situations the stages can take years to work through and may never be fully resolved (Whitaker, 1993; p. 65).

3.1.4 A MULTIPOLICY OF STRATEGIES

Just as the change process can be described more or less adequately, with a phase model, it has been proposed that there are some basic planning strategies (Chin & Benne, 1976). These authors proposed three basic strategies:

- The Rational — Empirical approach: This involves an appeal to the rational nature of the projected change.
- The Normative-Re-Educative approach: This relies on an educative process whereby the majority of those affected by the change are convinced of its merit.
- The Power-Coercive approach, as its name suggests, resorts to the application of power to coerce an acceptance of the projected change.

In practice, one or more of these strategies will be operating simultaneously.

3.2 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Although all organisations naturally evolve in some way, the kind of change required by the Thai education reform agenda is planned. The Thai reform agenda is driven by the national government but its implementation is necessarily in the hands of individual schools and principals. What is it that principals can actually do to manage the change process? The change literature highlights six major parameters that require deliberate, planned management: culture, vision, valuing, trust, communication and consultation (Dalzell, 2000).
3.3 WORKPLACE CHANGE

Schools are of course, workplaces. Because of their particular mission one would expect the people who work in them to trust and value each other and the students, have a vision for the future of each of their students, and collectively form a dynamic culture that is open to change and development. To some extent this expectation is met in many schools. However, change in schools is not a simple process (Erickson 1988; Woodward, 1993; O Neil, 2000). Teachers, like everybody else with multiple functions, have to balance the time and energy they put into the different facets of their day-to-day lives. If teachers put more physical, emotional and intellectual energy into their professional work, there is a good chance that they will do it at the expense of their non-professional lives. Teachers vary a great deal in their willingness to make such a change (Poole, 1991).

Teachers also differ in their opinions of the value of the proposed change. It cannot be assumed that teachers are neutral and compliant implementers of government policy. There are those who want to retain the status quo because it is known and manageable. These teachers will do what they can to fit the proposed change into their existing work habits. There will be others who think that the proposed changes might be effective but who would rather wait and see it happen somewhere else first. There are some teachers who will be prepared to try some of the changes but who will reject others. And, there are teachers who are wholehearted supporters of the changes. School principals similarly vary in their responses to proposed change (Leopold, Childers & Howley-Rowe, 2000).

The students and their parents are seldom if ever asked for their opinions of change. Presumably governments and their agencies will act in the best interest of the nation and, derivatively, of the parents. To a considerable extent parents have to accept changes initiated by government (Ben-Dror, 1986; Grant, 1996). However, when the changes are too far ahead of parental expectations, there is likely to be local reaction. Although there are probably differences in the expectations of urban and rural parents, many parents want the schools to teach and reinforce the values and practices of Thai culture.
(Klausner, 1993). They want their children to be literate and numerate. They want their children to have job opportunities that will enable them to enjoy a satisfying life and, in many cases, contribute to the functioning of the extended family. A question for parents is: How can they know if these expectations are being met? Part of their evidence is faith in the schools. A good part of the evidence however, consists of the frequency and quantity of homework, test scores, and qualitative judgments about their children's respect for parents and friends. Hence in many instances they are comfortable with the current pedagogy.

Change in schools is therefore not a simple process and needs to be seen more broadly as change in schools and their communities. One of the purposes of closer relationships between schools and their communities is that schools can play a part in educating the community about the reasons for and cost-benefits of, proposed or more likely, actual changes.

3.3.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE IN SCHOOLS

The Thai government believes that teachers are a renewable resource (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998) and makes provisions for their professional development (Khemmani, 1997). Even though the national government supports the concept of professional development, the cost of providing professional development for a very large number of teachers means that innovations are usually introduced into schools without much teacher preparation. This is a major obstacle and will undoubtedly make the compulsory teaching of English from grade one in primary schools a very difficult task to achieve effectively.

It is increasingly the case that the national government expects teachers and schools to take more responsibility for the provision and funding of professional development programs. Although there has been considerable discussion in the literature about models for the professional development of teachers, most, but by no means all, professional development in Thailand is based on the consultant-expert model (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). There has been, and still is, a general acceptance of the authority of experts.

In the reform process professional development has a particular role to play and
education systems have a major problem when they want to change direction. Thailand has approximately 340,000 teachers in the primary sector and 344,000 in the secondary sector. How best can these teachers be re-oriented? Even if the funds were available for some kind of mass preparation, a top-down model may not be the best way to achieve what is required. Certainly teachers need to know what is envisaged but this can be achieved, and is happening now by information sessions in the provinces and the regions.

Information is a necessary part of change but it is not a sufficient condition. Each school needs to become a change centre and each teacher a change agent. The national government looks to the principals and senior staff to create these conditions (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998). One could take a cynical view and argue that this strategy is simply a way of moving the costs to the schools. Perhaps this is so, but there is also a convincing logic in placing the responsibility with the schools. Change does not happen overnight. The only practicable way is to manage evolutionary change is in situ. To some extent, collaborative action and participative management are being imposed on the schools but in a broad sense this can be a positive imposition. Those leading the schools have a major responsibility to guide and manage the change. In one sense there will be no end to the process because the new school culture will be dynamic, always open to change.

This school-based change will be a major learning activity for the whole school community and will certainly add to the teachers understanding of their professional context and their role in national social and economic development. For this reason activities that focus on policy and curriculum changes at the school level are a major professional development activity. Enrolment in a university course is a common form of professional development for teachers (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). This is often a coursework-based masters degree taken part time over several years. The low levels of English language competency among teachers (Rujikictgumjom, 2000) means that the English language programs offered by the universities for the professional development of teachers need to be revised. The assumptions upon which
the present courses are based are simply not true.

In this study my interest is in professional development for language teachers. Very few researchers have conceptualised the problems of second/foreign language leaming as a matter of professional development of teachers (Pornwisetsirikul, 1992; Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993). It has so often been seen as a problem of motivation that rests with the student and the family or, less often, of the conservatism of teachers. It is interesting that so few studies have actually tried to change teacher behaviour (Junklin, 1991; Knight, 1992; Mohanraj, 1994).

3.4 UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

According to the Thai Educational Reform Policy and the Thai Education Charter 1999, it was expected that the collaboration between universities and schools be increased. Although schools and universities are both concerned with the development of human potential they have quite different intellectual cultures (Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1988; Carpenter et. al, 2000). The two cultures are not mutually exclusive but they are sufficiently different to create particular tensions when they interact. The universities, particularly conservative universities, tend to be structured around the disciplines and ideas of unique forms of evidence and proof (Phenix, 1964; White, 2000). In their practices, they are to varying extents concerned with explicit and formal theories, formal knowledge structures, generalised practices, criticism and the growth of knowledge, and an emphasis on what might be rather than on what is. Lecturers who work in universities are expected to be scholarly and able to present existing knowledge to students in forms that they can assimilate and accommodate. They are also meant to engage in research — traditionally, the pursuit of new knowledge. This new knowledge is often a general contribution to humanity's stock of knowledge but increasingly, it is meant to contribute to the generation of wealth for the university and for the national economy. The Thai universities for example, have a particular mission for regional development. Regional development can take many forms but in general it is intended to improve the quality of life of the people.

All Thai university teachers are required to teach and of course they do. However, the
notion of what constitutes teaching varies considerably. For some teachers it involves intensive preparation, a detailed knowledge of pedagogy, an engagement with the learners, and the creation of a learning environment in which it is safe to make mistakes. For others, it is an onerous activity that can be discharged using whole group lectures and suitable textbooks. Students are often in a university environment that encourages learner-dependency but in an external systemic environment that increasingly expects students to be independent learners (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998).

There appears to be no research on the proportion of Thai university staff that engage in research, or of the quality of the research that is done. In my own university, it appears to be a minority activity. Much of the research in Education is in the empiricist paradigm and seldom deals with the dynamic complexities of day-to-day classroom life. This is changing but it is changing very slowly.

Schools, in their practices, are more concerned with implicit and informal theories, fluid and less formal knowledge structures, very specific practices, praise and the growth of the individual, and an emphasis on what is rather than on what might be. Just as there are many kinds of universities there are many kinds of schools. However, teachers who work in schools are meant to be scholarly and able to present existing knowledge in forms that the learners can assimilate and accommodate. In the early years of schooling this requires insight into how children learn and how to embody content in forms that will engage and hold the learner’s interest. Although schoolteachers might debate the relative merits of learning a set of facts versus learning a series of processes (learning how to learn), very few teachers (at least in Thailand) formulate explicit theories of any aspect of their professional work.

Teachers rightly say that the nature of their work is such that they do not have the luxury of ample time in which to consider each of their actions. If one examines the literature on innovation and change in schools (Hargreaves, 1995; Middleton & Hill, 1996; Fullan, 1993), it is clear that changing teacher behaviours is extremely difficult. Thailand is not the only country to face this question. It has to be answered in some way whenever change is proposed.
In the context of my research I believe that I would have more chance of achieving something useful in the classroom if I:

- took the time to thoroughly understand the classroom cultures that I would work in
- worked with teachers rather than on them
- introduced change in small increments
- did all that I could to engender trust between all parties involved in the research
- could clearly show that the changes would be of benefit to everybody.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The first part of this chapter discussed the process of organisation change. The next part was about the change management in Thai context as a result of the Educational Reform policy. The third part discussed the professional development in schools as workplace change. Lastly, university-school collaboration was discussed. The insights discussed above informed my planning for the professional development activities for my collaborative teachers. The literature review broadened my view of planning the professional development program in the dissertation.

The next chapter focuses on theories of learning and teaching, in particular second/foreign language and learning.
CHAPTER FOUR: LEARNING, TEACHING, AND SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

The two processes of teaching and learning are intimately linked but as all teachers know they are not synonymous. Theories of both learning and teaching have been developed which influence the conceptualisation of language learning and pedagogy. For example, the way a teacher does her work depends very much on whether she sees her role as the source of knowledge, a source of where the knowledge can be located or a source of how knowledge can be generated. Also the way teachers do their work is influenced by the way they conceptualise the learner (Rubadeau & Garrette, 1983; Rubadeau & Rubadeau, 1983).

In this chapter, therefore, I provide an overview of theories of learning and second language learning of teaching and second/foreign language teaching and discuss the relevance for the Thai context. Finally, I discuss the possible impact of the national policy on the teaching of English in Thai schools.

4.1 THEORIES OF LEARNING

The literature on learning is vast. Much of the literature falls into one of the following categories: innate, mechanistic, cognitive mediation, social-cognitive (situated, contextualised), and technicist (information processing, parallel processing). Strauss (2000) also includes a group that he called interstitial theories. These are theories that combine elements on two or more theories to produce a new theory that is different in some significant way. My categories may well conceal significant details between theories but in general they embrace the fundamental orientations. They are certainly not mutually exclusive and elements of one theory will almost certainly occur in another theory.

4.1.1 INNATE THEORIES

At the time of birth the newborn child has already accumulated a considerable body of experience. The human organism is naturally, inclined to react to stimulation and to reflect on it. Given the ease with which young children learn their mother tongue it is not surprising that Chomsky (1957) argued for an innate language acquisition device or
that Fodor (1980) argued that infants are born with some form of universal grammar. Interesting though these speculations are, they have as yet had no fundamental effect on life in classrooms (Thomas, 1995).

4.1.2 MECHANISTIC THEORIES

In this view it is assumed that infants are born without mental content and without mental structure (tabula rasa). That is, they know very little and they have no specific organising mechanisms. However, the child can be taught and taught very effectively by various association processes. Behaviourism as developed by Skinner (1953) showed that learning could be achieved by more or less complex processes of stimulus and response, and reward. There is little doubt that some aspects of second/foreign language learning can be achieved by association. It is reasonably clear now that not all learning can be explained or achieved by this form of non-cognitive Stimulus-Response (S-R) theory.

4.1.3 COGNITIVE MEDIATION THEORIES

Many learning theories assume or propose active cognition. The simplest of these is probably associationist theory. Whilst behaviourism associates stimulus and response, formal associationist theory (Desforges, 2000) is based on various forms of cognitive mediation. In the associationist view, knowledge develops out of associations between elements of experience. The greater the store of associations the more learned the person is. Associationist theorists have developed a number of laws of association. Three common laws are those of contiguity, practice and effect. The contiguity law proposes that experiential elements close together in time are more likely to be associated than elements more distant in time. The practice law is based on the observation that repetition helps to form and maintain associations. The law of effect recognises that associations that have positive effects are more likely to be established than associations that have negative effects. These are not of course laws in any technical sense. They are best generalisations that one might well disagree with —the law of effect for example.

Connectionist theory (Medler, 1998) is based on the assumption that the mind produces and operates on representations of the world. In the connectionist perspective learning
consists of networks of interconnected elements - every thing is connected to everything else (Medler, 1998). The individual elements have little meaning outside these networks. Bereiter (1991, p.10) for example argued that all knowledge is in the connections. Connectionism can be traced back through classical philosophy and psychology: Spencer’s connexions, James’ associative memory, Thorndike’s connectionism, Hull’s learning rule, and Lashley’s search for the engram (Beach, 1960; Orbach, 1998).

Whilst associationist and connectionist theories allow for degrees of cognitive mediation, structuralist-developmental theories of learning place cognition at the centre. Structuralism takes many forms (Lye, 1996) but for this thesis I have considered structuralism only as it relates to human learning. Structuralists such as Piaget (1950) argue that the neonate has a basic repertoire of reflexes that enable it to interact with the environment. These interactions lead to the establishment of basic cognitive structures, primitive at first (sensori-motor and pre-operational) and, for some people, very sophisticated in later life (formal operations and post-formal operations). In structuralist theory, learning is essentially the application of existing cognitive structures to new content (assimilation). However, the very act of content-structure interaction produces more comprehensive cognitive structures (accommodation). The structures that develop in this way show typical peak developments that are called stages of development. For many theorists, the Piagetian form of stage theory is problematic because they find it difficult to accept the Piagetian mechanism by which the individual moves from one stage to the next. It is also difficult to decide from the empirical data whether the stages exist simultaneously or whether it is more useful to think of them as a successive sequence in which a stage is replaced by another, more complex stage.

4.1.4 CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORIES

Constructivists (White, 2000) argue that associationist theories cannot account for any worthwhile, complex learning. Humans are able to invent or construct general theories about the world and their interactions with it. They do this by reflecting on experience. Somewhat similar to structuralist theories, constructivists argue that learning consist of the restructuring of existing cognitive patterns (schema)
4.1.5 SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES
A number of theories of learning have focused on the role of significant others in the way in which individuals learn. Variants of this kind of learning (in the classroom) are variously called situated or contextualised learning (Desforges, 2000). Situated and contextualised learning are not necessarily social learning but for many practical purposes in classrooms they can be considered in this group. Social-cognitive theories emphasise the importance of social interaction in the way that an individual constructs a view of herself. This is particularly true of affective learning but it is also true of cognitive learning.

4.1.6 TECHNICIST THEORIES
The development of the computer has inevitably led to the development of theories of learning based on the ways that computers process information. In their early forms these theories were based on ideas of inputs, encoding, storage, processing, storage and outputs, on/off representations of information, and sequential and linear processing. Contemporary versions focus more of neural networks and fuzzy logic. Computational theories of learning propose that one’s cognitive processes are syntax-driven operations on symbols.

Whilst there is no direct one to one correspondence between general learning theories and second/foreign language learning theories, there is an ordinate-subordinate relationship. That is, a general learning theory will be more comprehensive than a second/foreign language learning theory. It is not surprising therefore, that elements at one level frequently appear at the other level (Lighthoon & Spada, 1999).

4.2 THEORIES OF SECOND/FREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING
Theories of first and second language learning are located on a continuum (Lombardo, 1990). The two extremes represent the classic debate of nature (nativist) vs. nurture (environmentalist), while those in the middle view language learning as a result of a more or less balanced interaction between innate capacities and linguistic experience (interactionist). Interactionists (Gass, 1997) tend to fall into two groups according to the weight they give to cognitive or social factors. Cognitive interactionists tend to give
more weight to the learner and thus reflect to a greater extent the influence of nativist theories, while social interactionists focus on language in communication and so are closer to the environmentalist part of the continuum. Language learning is therefore best viewed as the interaction of experience with cognitive, linguistic, and social systems (Stern, 1978; Pica, 1996). Language learning through interaction can be viewed from several current theoretical perspectives of second language learning: as interaction of learner needs (need to understand the target language and use it appropriately and accurately across registers); interaction of learning processes (cognitive, psycholinguistic, social); and interaction of learner with native-speaker interlocutors and with other learners.

In the 1990s the theoretical pedagogical pendulum swung away from individualisation towards ideas of collaborative learning (Nunan, 1992). At the root of this is the notion that language learning is a social process of meaning construction (Fillmore, 1985). Three types of processes occur in language learning, each intricately connected with the others. Social processes are the means by which learners and target language speakers create a social situation in which target language communication is possible. Linguistic processes are the ways in which assumptions held by target language speakers cause them to select, modify, and support the linguistic data produced for the sake of the learners. Cognitive processes involve the analytical procedures and operations taking place in learners' heads and ultimately resulting in acquisition of the language, and can be general or specialised for language learning. Both types of cognitive processes are involved in language learning, but in first language learning the specialised processes dominate, and in second language learning the general processes are more heavily involved. How these processes work, or do not work, is related to variations in three components of language learning: the learners, the target language speakers who provide access to the language, and the social setting that brings them together frequently enough for learning to occur. Much of the variability in language learning can be attributed to differences among learners in the application of cognitive mechanisms and ability, but can also be related to differences in the other two components.
Although learners may create meanings individually, these are only validated (i.e. they only become meaningful) in social interaction (Bourne, 1986). Collaboration is, therefore seen by many to be a natural way to learn languages. Collaborative learning has also been seen as the natural way for learners to become more autonomous or independent.

4.2.1 STRATEGIES

The term strategies, in the second-language-learning sense, has come to be applied to the conscious moves made by second-language speakers intended to be useful in either learning or using the second language. Strategies can be very different in nature, ranging from planning the organisation of one's learning (a metacognitive learning strategy) through using mnemonic devices to learn vocabulary (cognitive learning strategies) and rehearsing what one expects to say (a performance strategy) to bolstering one's self-confidence for a language task by means of self-talk (an affective strategy). Ever since Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco (1976) noted that good language learners appeared to use a larger number and range of strategies than poor language learners, the implications of understanding strategy use have seemed increasingly important (Bialystok, & Frohlich, 1977; Oxford, 1990; Ehrman, 1996).

However, there are still many questions to resolve. Does strategy use actually aid language learning, or is it just something that good learners do? Are some strategies better than others, or is it the number and range of strategies used that counts? Are there bad strategies that actually making learning or performance worse? Can poor language learners benefit from being taught the strategies that good learners use, or do you need to be a good learner already to use some of the strategies (Rukjikietgumjorn, 2,000)? Does strategy training affect language learning, and if so is the effect direct, or does such training serve mainly to raise motivation and awareness? If learners are encouraged to use strategies to organise their own learning, for example, what are the implications for the role of the classroom teacher? Such issues have already prompted a considerable volume of research and writing, and directly or indirectly made a significant impact on language teaching-learning. For example, the establishment of self-access centres and the encouragement of learner independence are essentially based on the-
assumption that students will be able to use viable meta-cognitive learning strategies. Ellis (1994) writes:

The study of learning strategies holds considerable promise, both for language pedagogy and for explaining individual differences in second language learning. It is probably true to say, however, that it is still in its infancy (Ellis, 1994, p. 12).

The choice of strategies depends on such factors as current and intended levels of proficiency, experience with foreign language strategy use or with learning other languages, learning style preferences and personality characteristics. As Cohen points out, little work has been done in determining the advantages and disadvantages of deliberately choosing whether to think in the native language, the target language, or even some other language during learning or use of the target language. Various taxonomies of strategies have been devised, for example, The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990), but there is as yet no comprehensive body of research literature exploring the relative effectiveness of all these strategies. Olliphant (1990) presented six theories that she called learning theories. The theories are similar to teachers’ theories of action or grounded theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1993):

- it is important to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom because cognitive learning increases when self-concept improves
- activities that employ multiple senses facilitate memory
- language learning is accelerated when the content is interesting and useful
- the major path to language competence is indirect, implicit, subconscious acquisition via comprehensible input, rather than direct and conscious learning through formal instruction
- comprehension is the first step in language acquisition; and
- movement increases interest, focus, and motivation.

These theories accord with my own experience and were incorporated into the work that we did in schools.
4.3 THEORIES OF TEACHING

A great deal has been written about learning (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Gardner, 1999; Murphy, 1999) but we are a long way from fully understanding how to optimise learning in schools. One of the reasons is that students are not a homogeneous group. They vary on almost any dimension that one thinks of. As discussed above the notion of learning is complex. For example, there have, for many years, been taxonomies of learning (Bloom, Hastings and Madaus, 1971) that place types of learning in order of their cognitive demand to assist planning for teaching. Simple recognition is seen as less complex than reproduction. Reproduction is seen as less complex than application, and all are less complex than evaluation. There have also been attempts to produce affective taxonomies (Krathwah, 2001).

Other theories of learning have been less concerned with the classification of types of learning, but rather more concerned with processes. For Von Glaserfeld (1987) individuals construct knowledge through interactions with the environment. Hiebert, Carpenter, Fennema, Fuson, Human, Murray, Olivier and Wearne (1999) view learning as problem-solving. Brezo (1999) sees learning as a process of symbol processing and situated cognition. Rogoff (1999) thought that learning was essentially a cognitive change that occurred in social interactions (Khantharos, 1998). Cobb (1999) emphasised learning as social construction. The idea of learning as a process of social construction leads one to consider the ways in which teacher, students and context might interact.

Theories of teaching arise from two sources: theories that teachers have about teaching (Noll, 1993), and theories that theorists have about teaching. The former are usually called practical theories of teaching or teachers' implicit knowledge of teaching, or implicit theories of teaching. The literature on the practical theories of teachers seems difficult to locate. A significant amount has been written about teachers' theories (Sanders & McCutcheon, 1986; Cole, 1990) but much less has been written by teachers about their own theories. The theories developed by theorists cover a wide range depending on the intellectual orientation of the author. Many (but certainly not all) of these theories are psychological, sociological, and to lesser extents anthropological and
ecological. Babb (1978) developed an ecological theory of teaching. In ecological theories the emphasis is on the characteristics of specific teachers, learners and their environment. Fox (1983) noted four major theories of teaching: knowledge transfer (sociological); shaping students to a predetermined mould (sociological), active or exploratory teaching (psychological); and developmental teaching (psychological). Probst (1987) conceptualised teaching as a series of transactions and used transaction theory to develop a theory of teaching. Transactions in this were defined as a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship between the learner and the content. Swartz (1994) on the other hand used the notion of solidarity to develop a critical theory of teaching. For Swartz, solidarity means clinging to one’s own ethnocentrism to understand differences between right and wrong, and good and bad. Social solidarity holds people together, defining them as a group, and privileges ethnocentrism as a starting place for social criticism and the establishment of pluralism. Practical theories of teaching are theories constructed from confronting the practical problems of the act of teaching and from the solidarity of practitioners. Practical theories of teaching call upon a teacher’s solidarity to solve practical problems. When teachers develop strategies and curricula that work in the classroom, they are making a connection between the solidarity of students, their own solidarity, and their personal practical theories of teaching. Similarly, Slevin & Young (1996) explore the relationships among politics, curriculum, and pedagogy to develop a critical theory of teaching.

4.4 THEORIES OF SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

There are many possible approaches to the teaching of English as a second/foreign language (Kunkle, 1972; Dubin, 1978; Kramsch, 1993, 1995). Different approaches have been popular at different times and have often been based on current theories of learning. It is often assumed or people act as if, the neonate has an innate language acquisition device (Chomsky) and or a universal grammar (Fodor).

The complexity of teaching-learning generally, and second language learning particularly, makes it extremely difficult to develop any simple or linear classification of theories of second language teaching and learning. At the simplest level, second language learning in
schools has to do with the interaction of learner, content and pedagogy:

![Figure 2: Second Language Teaching-Learning](image)

However, if we think of the learner, one can see that the researcher could focus on any or all of: motivation of the learner, personality, learning strategies, and previous second language learning experience:

![Figure 3: Determinants of Learning](image)

Similarly, if the researcher focuses on the pedagogy, one can see several levels or dimensions. For example, the teacher's general orientation will be somewhere on a teacher-centred - student centred continuum.
At another level there are the teacher's beliefs about how students know and what the students should learn. The how and what include learning the grammar of the second language, and learning how to communicate in the second language (Jungsatitkul, 2000). At yet another level the teacher may have a preference for grammar/translation, for situational learning, for drill and rote learning, or for written comprehension rather than oral production. At a fourth level the teacher may well think that situational learning is best done by creating situations in the classroom, or by using commercial audio-lingual products, or by exposure to native speakers. At a fifth level the teacher might think that lock-step whole class learning is all that is possible and all that is necessary. The teacher might however, think that group work is an essential element of second language learning.

From a research perspective there is also a question of how the research was carried out, although this has not been a major issue in the literature. The very large number of variables or elements that can be considered in any one research design is reflected in the very diverse second language teaching-learning literature.

In a summary of major trends in teaching-learning of second languages, Mitchell (2000) wrote that the most significant methods were probably the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method, communicative language teaching, naturalistic and immersion methods and humanistic methods. There are many ways that one try to summarise these major trends but it is convenient to use Mitchell's categories.

4.4.1 GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION PEDAGOGIES

There are really two forms of pedagogy here. In one form the grammar of the second language is taught because the teacher (or curriculum designer etc.) believes that knowing the grammar of the second language is essential if the student is to understand how to use the second language. To a considerable extent, grammar pedagogy depends on the student knowing a good deal about the grammar of the mother tongue. This is very uncommon in Thai schools and, I think, in Australian schools. In the case of the lessons reported in chapter two it is not clear why the teacher was using a grammar approach. Jaroungsirawat (2000) showed quite clearly that Thai students do not like learning the grammar of their mother tongue, let alone the grammar of English. However,
the lesson is helpful in distinguishing this form of pedagogy and the form that actually involves learning the grammar by direct instruction and by translating second language writing. This is more common in secondary school and university study. Typically, the student tries to translate words, phrases or sentences from the second/foreign language and reproduce their meaning in the first language (Bennett, 1969). In a school setting, the process is largely controlled by the teacher whose task is to match the complexity of the translation and interpretation with the student's knowledge of the language and culture. As the student's competence develops, the process includes moving from translating into the first language to using the second/foreign language exclusively (Finocchiaro & Bonomo, 1973). The teacher is usually central in translation strategies and so a teacher-centred approach is common in grammar/translation strategies. Engelhardt (1974), for example, discussed translation as an integral part of language learning, particularly at the third-year college level. At this level, the student can be expected to have acquired an advanced knowledge of the parts of speech, their grammatical distribution and their semantic value. Students were asked to translate into English a personal letter written in French. When the students were asked to hand in their translations, the original text was also withdrawn, and the translations were redistributed. Each student received someone else's English version to translate back into French. A comparison of individual student sentences with the original passage, enabled a number of grammatical, syntactic, and semantic problems, in addition to several translation techniques, to be explained. Exercises requiring more rapid writing tended to be effective because they encouraged novice writers to overcome their writer's block, prioritise content over form, write frequently, think in English, and increased their confidence.

Richardson (1989) has argued that a knowledge of language structure does not necessarily result in effective language comprehension. Teachers must help students bridge the gap between translation, which emphasises lexical and syntactic meaning, and interpretation, which involves global comprehension. Some of the limitations of grammar-translation pedagogies can be seen in Kresovich's (1990) paper. Early exposure to grammar/translation pedagogies usually results in a lack of communication
skills, the overuse of bilingual dictionaries, the passive acceptance of and extreme
dependence on teacher instruction, and inert classroom behaviour.
It seems therefore that one must be quite clear about one's purposes in teaching English
as a second/foreign language. Teaching for communicative competence does not
necessarily develop the skills needed for translation and interpretation, and teaching for
translation and interpreting competence does not necessarily develop communicative
competence.

4.4.2 AUDIO-LINGUAL PEDAGOGIES
The use of audio-lingual (A-L) pedagogy is based on several assumptions:

- it is essential for the student to hear native speakers of the target language,
- A-L pedagogy can be carried out in dedicated language laboratories, often in the
  presence of specialist teachers,
- it is relatively easy for the student to continue studying the target language
  outside the formal lessons
- to some extent the student can proceed at her own pace, and hence there is a
degree of individuality about the lessons
- some degree of interactivity can be achieved and, with the development of
  CDROM-based lessons, pronunciation and enunciation can be monitored.

Audio-lingual pedagogy is widely used in primary and secondary schools and many
Thai schools have language laboratories. A-L pedagogy does not solve the problem of
student motivation, and there are significant ongoing costs associated with language
laboratories. In Thai schools the language laboratories often occupy the whole room and
there is little or no opportunity for group work in the language laboratory.
Because the goal of A-L pedagogies is to have the students make automatic associations
between sounds, symbols and context, they have an element of behaviourism in them
(Lightbown & Spada, 1993). In recent years A-L pedagogies have been enhanced by the
availability of CD ROMs that have a high degree of interactivity programmed into the
content.

Behaviourist theories regard language learning as habit formation (Biehler, 1978). From
this perspective, fluency in a language is essentially a set of habits that can be developed with repeated practice (Athey, 1971; Maloney, 1973). Second/foreign language pedagogies based on these principles are now rather uncommon. Where they are used, teacher-directed strategies are the primary technique. This view of learning is now known to be inadequate as an explanation for second/foreign language learning (Mitchell, 2000). Nevertheless, significant components of a second/foreign language can and are learnt by habit formation. For example, correct pronunciation needs to be a habit if communication is to be effective. The closer the pronunciation is to that of a native speaker the easier the communication is likely to be. It is also evident in the practice that some teachers have of displaying names of objects on cards that are pinned up in the classroom. For example the word door is often pinned up above the door. The expectation is that the students will form some kind of association between the symbols and the real object. Of course these cards are often used in active teaching as well. The use of flashcards is another example of the expectation that associations will be formed between the symbols and their referents.

Games are an irreplaceable tool in language teaching (Shameem & Tickoo, 1999) and can be incorporated in most pedagogical strategies. The fun and the enjoyment inherent in games lessens the stress and fear of communicating in a second language in which people feel inadequate to express themselves. Games vary from simple well known activities such as going to the supermarket to find out prices, brand names, or special offers, to more intellectually challenging tasks using the library, and using the Internet.

4.4.3 NATURALISTIC AND IMMERSION PEDAGOGIES

Naturalistic and immersion pedagogies are a means of manipulating the learning context. It is assumed that students will learn the target language best if they are in a target language environment. This can be achieved or partially achieved in various ways. The teacher can attempt to construct as much as possible of the target language context in the classroom. This was done at Ravenshill school in Australia where I carried out the research that is reported in part four of this portfolio. To be effective the teacher must devote considerable energy to preparing the classroom and be reasonably fluent in the target language. This latter condition is seldom met in Thai schools. Some schools,
particularly the fee-paying schools have teachers who are native speakers. In some cases these teachers teach the target language, and other subjects in the target language. Language camps are another form of naturalistic pedagogy. These are quite common in Thailand — particularly among middle class families who believe that fluent English is of considerable economic and social benefit.

4.4.4 HUMANISTIC PEDAGOGIES

Mitchell (2000) argues that humanistic pedagogies are loosely based on discovery learning — that is language learning as problem solving. This is no doubt quite correct but it is more helpful to think of humanistic pedagogies as pedagogies that encourage the student to think about the learning. O'Malley & Chamot (1993) for example, took a cognitive information processing perspective of human thought and action, viewing language as a complex cognitive skill that can be described within the context of cognitive theory. The goal of these pedagogies is to help the student to look for regularities and irregularities, to actively associate words with objects and events, and to visualise and memorise. For example, the student might be asked to visualise going to a restaurant and to think of what she would like to order. In this process, the teacher encourages the association of words with objects and pictures of objects such as those one finds in posters. Initially the pedagogy encourages speaking. Then, typically, it progresses through oral composition, oral composition and reading, reading and writing and in some cases, grammar. As the student hears the different sounds again and again, she consciously and unconsciously groups the sounds, restructures them in her own way, and attempts to discover their relationships not only within the target (second) language but also between her first tongue and the target language. The new material she learns is added to and interacts with familiar material — either her native tongue or in the target language — until she perceives the entire configuration, pattern, or gestalt into which it fits. Teachers who use cognitive mediation strategies often use student-centred pedagogies and are not too concerned about controlling the learning processes.
4.5 DIRECT OR COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

4.5.1. COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

If one looks through the ESL journals from the last decade or so, it is clear that are many advocates of communicative approaches. For example, Murphy (1990), Blanton (1992), Shameem & Tickoo (1999) and Mitchell (2000) all believe that communicative competence is a natural goal of second/foreign language learning.

These are many strategies that emphasise the natural use of language (Savignon, 1983; Murphey, 1990). Usually the strategies involve interactive learning tasks that require students to interpret and negotiate meaning in order to solve a problem. To do this, it is common for the teacher to organise small groups and set tasks that require co-operative activity (Gibbons, 1993; Clements, 1995).

Communicative approaches are based on the assumption that the functions of language, rather than the structures and rules, should be emphasised (Sirluck 1998; Tongngam, 1998; Prated, 1998). Direct methods place a relatively low intellectual load on the teacher because the content is the language of everyday life —rather than the history, philosophy, literature and drama of the associated culture. The pedagogical load, however, is rather high because the teacher needs to be quite active in selecting or preparing communicative contexts that can be readily used in the classroom and that are developmental in vocabulary, sentence structure and cultural understanding. Because there is no single language register for everyday communication, the teacher (and curriculum developer) must make decisions about how and when these various contexts are to be introduced. There may also be ethical issues about the use of slang, swearing and jokes. Communicative pedagogies are often used in immersion programs in Thailand —particularly by the private schools or English language schools run as business enterprises.

4.5.2 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

There are essentially two major orientations in the notion of communicative competence. One focuses on learning to communicate and the other on communicating to learn. The emphasis in the Thai policy is on learning to communicate. In the rhetoric of communicative competence, it is often asserted that a second/foreign language can be
learnt (and is learnt effectively) in the process of solving communication problems (Scarcella, & Oxford, 1992; Williams & Burden, 1997). Since problem solving is seldom a simple linear process, the environment ought to be such that it allows for exploration, trial and error learning, iteration, and (in the teaching context) the timely intervention of an informed instructor (Brindley, 1994). Students should not be expected to get it right the first time. Most students, instead, will gradually approximate standard forms. Blanton (1992) assumes that there is a natural link between language and content. In Blanton’s model, language skills are presented as modes of communication that reinforce each other. She concludes that the whole language approach is very effective for EFL settings because the teacher normally aims to integrate all of the language skills. That is, when one teaches a language in the classroom it is normally intended that the student learn something of the structure of the language, how to speak the language and how to write in the language.

Communicative approaches to the teaching of English as a second/foreign language are common in Thailand (Ministry of Education, 1996). There are several reasons for this:

- the influence of national policy
- the influence of contemporary thinking
- student resistance to other approaches
- the expertise of teachers
- pedagogic realities.

### 4.6 THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL POLICY

The Eighth National Development Plan (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998) and the national education plan that derives from it stresses the need for Thai people to be able to communicate with the rest of the world. Knowledge of a second/foreign language contributes to international competitiveness (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998, p.4).

Although there are probably many school teachers and university instructors who do not know any of the detail of the National Development Plan, they are aware of
guidelines and recommendations that stem from the Plan and appear in curriculum documents. There is also a commonsense appeal about a communicative approach. One main purpose, for most people, of learning a second/foreign language is to communicate. Communicative approaches have become synonymous with situational learning or learning that de-emphasises the grammar of the second/foreign language.

4.7 CONCLUSION

It has been my experience that competent second/foreign language teachers use a variety of strategies — during any one lesson, over any week, and throughout a semester or year. If we accept that students vary in learning style we ought not to use any one strategy exclusively because it will neglect the learning style of some of our students. Our teaching strategies should cover a range but implemented on the basis of the teacher’s informed knowledge of theories, (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Oxford, 1993; Shameem & Tickoo, 1999).

When one considers all of these studies it is clear that any second/foreign language pedagogy for school students ought to attend to the following:

- Motivation for learning
- Clear and achievable goals/objectives
- Interesting, realistic, graded materials
- Active, participatory pedagogies
- Opportunities for peer interaction
- Opportunities to use the language in the classroom
- Low ratio of mother tongue talk to second/foreign language talk (i.e. try to keep mother tongue talk less than 50%).

Another element that impacts on learning in classrooms is assessment. This is explored in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Rather than being imposed externally at odd times during the year, assessment ought to become part of the natural learning environment (Gardner, 1999; p. 100).

This chapter takes up the issue of assessment of English language learning, particularly in the Thai context. In accord with the educational reform agenda (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999) the longstanding dominance of the psychometric approach is gradually being complemented with techniques that emphasise continuous and authentic assessment.

5.1 ASSESSMENT

For the purposes of this research report assessment is treated as the process of collecting and interpreting data about the achievement or performance of students in schools. The collection of performance data without any attempt to interpret it is a futile activity, although in many Thai schools the interpretation is minimal. Again, for the purposes of this report assessment is used to include the further step of putting some value on the performance that the data are meant to index. Hancock (1994) for example, defines assessment as an ongoing strategy through which student learning is not only monitored, but by which students are involved in making decisions about the degree to which their performance matches their ability.

Invariably in the school context assessment is related directly or indirectly to the curriculum. In Thai schools, and probably in all schools, there is always some curriculum content that is not assessed. The relation between curriculum and assessment is, in many cases, reflexive. That is, the curriculum is used to legitimise assessment and assessment is used to legitimise the curriculum. The content that is assessed is in the curriculum because the designers thought that it was worthwhile in some way. The fact that it is in the curriculum implies that there is an expectation that it will be taught and that it will be learnt. Assessment then is an activity carried in the space contained by content (Valdez, 1999), expectations, and performance or achievement (Lumley, 1996). For the purposes of my research I conceptualised the
relationship like this:

![Diagram](image)

**FIGURE 4: DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT**

Each of these dimensions involve a complex array of variables. For example, if one considers the *expectations* dimension it is clear that this encompasses. Similarly, when one considers the *content* dimension there are many questions about who selected the content, why the content was selected, what assumptions have been made about the learners and the teachers, how this content is related to other content, and what provisions have been made for learning styles and learning competencies.

For the performance or *achievement* dimension, there are similar questions. Who has decided what achievements are key performance indicators (Suphan, 1997)? Why these and not others? How are these key performance indicators related to the learner's goals, the teacher's goals and the school's goals? What levels of achievement are to be regarded as satisfactory, what happens if achievement is not satisfactory?

In trying to answer these questions one needs to consider the purposes of assessment, the ways in which assessment can be done, who controls the assessment, when the assessment is done, and, in the case of this research report how assessment is related to the teaching and learning of a second language.
5.2 PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

Teachers do a great deal more than teach (Green, 1971; Nunan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1995)! One of their many tasks is to make judgments about student learning. It has been common for Thai teachers to make these judgments on the basis of test scores. Sometimes these tests are standardised tests but more often they are district-wide, province-wide or national-wide tests, constructed by experts. Tests of this kind imply that judgments about student learning are episodic rather than continuous. Many teachers collect more data than these episodic test scores and particularly, but not only, in the primary schools develop detailed professional knowledge about each of the students in their care. They develop this knowledge because they continuously monitor what each student is learning.

Tests however, have had high status in many circles because they are deemed to have qualities (often imputed) that professional knowledge does not. Tests appear to be objective. They have common content that at first glance does not seem to favour one student over another. Tests can be based on the body of taught knowledge or skill. Tests give scores — numbers that can be compared one against the other or against a criterion. They appear to show performance at a glance. Further, numbers have an inherent appeal for education bureaucrats because they can be more easily processed that words. But, these numbers usually do not provide much guidance to teachers about how they might best do their work. Assessment is more than testing and assessment serves more purposes than putting a numerical score to a performance. The nature of assessment impacts on learning and teaching.

5.2.1 MAKING PEDAGOGICAL DECISIONS

Although Thailand has had a tradition of whole class pedagogy, there is little doubt that many Thai teachers use achievement data and affective data to make decisions about how and when to intervene in each student’s learning ((Biggs & Moore, 1993; Gardner, 1999; Murphy, 1999). Some of these decisions are made in the classroom; many are made in reflective periods when the teacher is planning the next lesson.
5.2.2 FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS
When student teachers are doing their undergraduate programs they are taught that praising students is a good thing to do. Words of praise reward the school student for work that is well done and it is said to motivate the student to continue learning. From the school student's perspective these words of praise are an indication that she is satisfying the expectations of the teacher. Teachers do more than offer words of praise. They can, and do, discuss with each student or with groups of students, the problems they might be experiencing with their learning tasks. So, one important purpose of assessment is to provide feedback to the students on their levels of achievement and on how this might be improved.

5.2.3 ACCOUNTABILITY
The reforms in Thai education are aimed at making schools more autonomous and more accountable. Schools are to be more autonomous in the sense that they have will to take control of funding and how it is used. On the other hand they will have to be more transparent to the internal and external school communities and to the various levels of government for their policies and practices and most particularly for their achievements. One implication of this change is that schools will have to be able to demonstrate that the public money they are spending really does add value to each student at each stage of schooling. The previous demand for data to satisfy central bureaucratic demands will gradually be replaced by a demand to produce data that show the marketable value of each student. Just what kind of data this will be has yet to be determined.

5.2.4 GRADING — THE SIEVE
Every school student lives with the knowledge that her performance is being assessed in some way and that the performance data will be made available to a variety of audiences. They know that if their marks are high they will be well regarded. Conversely they know that if their marks are low they will be the subject of considerable attention. Thai schools (in common with some other national systems) have traditionally used schools as a major part of a sorting process in which the choices available to students are determined by their achievements in schools. Higher achievers have more choices than low achievers. The surface logic of this is appealing, but any detailed consideration of
the problems of assessment, the differential maturational rates of individuals, and their home environment leads one to question the legitimacy of this function of schooling and assessment.

5.2.5 CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

It is paradoxical that Buddhism values harmony and co-operation whilst Thai society and schools are very competitive (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). Parents, teachers and students all expect that there will be tests and that these tests will place each student relative to every other student. Parents want evidence that their children are doing well and want reassurance that their children will be able to enrol in prestigious schools and universities. Students want test data—probably because their parents want it. Teachers want test data because it is, in part, evidence that they are doing their job.

5.3 THE PARADIGMS

There is no single authoritative theory and practice of assessment (Griffin & Nix, 1991; Thompson, 1997). Teachers gather data - or information about what students have learnt and how they go about the learning process, and they can do this in many different ways. They then use this information to make value judgments about achievement in a particular subject (or learning area), attitudes towards learning, strengths and weakness in specific skill development, and knowledge and understanding of processes (Wilson & Feiring, 1995).

5.3.1 THE PSYCHOMETRIC PARADIGM

The test is a very common means of collecting data on student performance. Purpose-designed tests are based on classical measurement theory, the writing of multiple—choice test items, test and test item analysis, and other mathematically based operations (Rivera & Lombardo, 1979; Lowe & Stansfield, 1988; Dunkel, 1999).

In this psychometric approach to assessment, it is assumed that we can obtain a number that is related in a known way to student achievement. In this paradigm, learning tasks need to be clearly specified and graded in difficulty so that both teacher and student know what is required and how one task is related to another. It was assumed that
objectivity was both possible and necessary. It was further assumed that chunks of learning could be isolated and tested without regard for the idiosyncratic context of the learner. It is also assumed that a one-shot test can give valid/reliable information. The psychometric paradigm has given rise to very sophisticated models of the distribution of student performance (Rasch, 1980) and concepts such as norm and criterion referencing (Klein, 1990; Davidson, 1992).

At various times tests based on the psychometric paradigm have been used for ranking students in order of achievement, for selecting students for particular streams in the education system or for the labour market, for diagnosing learning difficulties, and for making judgments about how best to use scarce resources. This information may not be so useful to teachers but it is important for those who have to make judgments about the system as a whole.

Although teaching about testing and test development does not seem to have been included in Western basic teacher education programs for many years, it is still common in Thailand. It is seen as desirable professional knowledge and hence teachers are sympathetic towards this approach to assessment.

5.3.1.1 Behavioural Objectives

Just as tests are endemic in Thai schools so the idea of behavioural objectives permeates the curriculum. Thailand has been strongly influenced by American practice and it has the additional problem of teachers who are under-trained with respect to the assessment of learning. From a national government's point of view behavioural objectives have a political appeal in as much as they appear to set the same standards for everybody. Politically, this might seem the fairest way to proceed but is based on an illusory objectivity and does not take into account individual differences in students and teachers.

The test paradigm has been dominant in Thailand for a long period of time and there are those who strongly believe that only tests with standardised procedures of administration and interpretation are accurate, fair and valid indicators of learning. Advocates of this position argue that objectivity is an essential requirement of any assessment procedure, and that quantitative measurement with standardised instruments
is the only way to be certain of achieving this. But, with the introduction of portfolios in 1996 a paradigm shift was heralded.

Thai schools are organised in academic school groups for the purpose of developing behavioural objectives for all areas of the English language curriculum. For example one desired skill is the ability to tell a second person the meaning of sentences that they have listened to. The behavioural objectives for this skill are to

- pronounce the sentences
- use the words to construct the simple sentences
- follow the teachers' instructions
- give the meanings of the words.

Another desired skill is the ability to answer questions about a text that they have heard. The behavioural objectives are to:

- answer questions from heard sentences
- answer questions from short conversations
- answer questions from short stories.

For the ability to speak in particular situations, the objectives are to be able to:

- greet people appropriately
- introduce self and others
- ask questions and give answers about daily life
- express thanks, feeling and wishes, ask for permission
- explain the contents of pictures, diagrams and objects.

For the ability to answer questions after reading stories the objectives are to be able to:

- pronounce words, phrases and sentences
- find the meaning of words using a dictionary.

The formal assessment of student progress towards these objectives takes place in the middle and at the end of the semester. These assessments are usually written tests or multiple-choice tests. More recently an informal, or teacher knowledge, component has been added so that the formal tests are weighted 70% and the informal component at
30%.

The psychometric paradigm is often associated with behavioural objectives because it is argued that the more clearly one can specify what is to be learnt the more accurately one can assess how well it has been learnt (Mager, 1975). From this perspective, objectivity takes priority over teacher and student interactions (Serafini, 2000).

5.3.2 THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGM

Although the psychometric paradigm is dominant in Thailand there appears to a growing acceptance that objectivity is not achievable (Serafini, 2000). The emphasis is slowly moving towards the idea of acknowledging and where possible, controlling subjectivity. However, one could not yet say that the Thai education system wholeheartedly accepts the idea of the teacher as an assessment instrument. As Serafini (2000, p. 389) said: The teacher as a knowledgeable, reflective participant is the foundation for the assessment in an enquiry (constructivist N.L.) paradigm. Nevertheless there is a move toward taking the teacher's professional judgment into account in the assessment process. As a consequence of this there is also some acceptance of narrative assessment reports.

In the constructivist paradigm assessment is seen as a social, contextually specific activity (Crafton & Burke, 1994). It is not seen as an objective measurement process intended for comparison and prescriptions. It is seen as a human interaction involving the teacher as the primary assessment instrument (Johnson, 1997). It is also seen as a process of enquiry that will inform teaching (Serafini, 2000).

5.3.2.1 Key Performance Indicators

Adopting the constructivist paradigm does not mean that assessment becomes a vague, all things to all people process. The need for clarity and specificity are just as important in this paradigm as in the traditional psychometric paradigm. However, as an indicator of the difference in approach, the behavioural objectives of the psychometric paradigm are replaced by the idea of key performance indicators. Unlike behavioural objectives that are often based on a task-analysis framework, key performance indicators try to specify authentic performance. Thai schools still work with behavioural objectives but it is likely that there will be a move over time to adopt key
performance indicators. This will be a slow process because it will need a very substantial professional development program to help teachers understand the magnitude of the difference in the two approaches.

5.3.2.2 Continuous Assessment

The constructivist approach to assessment implies the need to collect data much more regularly. It is assumed that a constant check of student performance in non-threatening conditions will give a useful, holistic understanding of strengths and weaknesses. In practice continuous assessment in the formal sense (in contrast to the teachers everyday, informal, collection of data) is associated with assignments. These assignments are designed to assess the student's ability to prepare report that brings together key elements from as series of formal teaching activities and associated private study. This approach to assessment is widely used in upper secondary schools and in higher education institutions in many countries.

Although the assignments have to be completed by specified dates, they may have a degree of authenticity if the tasks relate to relevant contexts. Devising assignment tasks requires considerable thought and depends very much on grade level and what the teacher thinks is important. For example, it is quite difficult to devise say three assignments that cover a semester's work. It can also be difficult to be sure that the assignment is actually the student's own work. Similarly, if the assignment is meant to be a group activity the teacher has to decide how to allocate marks to each member of the group.

In Thailand testing has been the most common form of assessment. However the Ministry of Education has proposed that teachers compile portfolios of students work so that teaching can be based on assessment and assessment use key performance indicators. In its guidelines for teachers, the Thai Ministry of Education suggests that student achievement can be assessed using affective data from formative and summative assessment.

A useful distinction can be made between ongoing assessment, during the course of a semester to assist a teacher in preparing lessons and helping students to learn, and final assessments, usually at the end of a unit or year to find out what has been
accomplished. The former are formative and the latter summative assessments (Heining-Boynton, 1991). Formative techniques are often informal and are closely linked to the teaching and learning practices in the classroom. They employ, for example, anecdotal records, learning logs, reflective journals, contracts and goal-based assessment (Garcia, 1992; Wilson & Fehring, 1995). Summative assessment refers to assessment practices that are undertaken at a particular time - often at the end of a unit of work, a subject, a year of study or a course. The purpose of this form of assessment is to sum up the achievement of a student (Wilson & Fehring, 1995).

The Thai Ministry of Education is attempting to combine elements that are well known to all teachers (aspects of formative and summative assessment) with elements drawn from the constructivist paradigm such as portfolios.

5.3.2.3 Portfolios

In 1996, the Ministry of Education introduced portfolios (Office of Educational Assessment and Testing Services, 1996; Janormann, 1997; Gardner, 1999) as a means of assessing student learning. The Ministry was persuaded that portfolios could provide authentic assessment in ways that tests could not. The multi-choice tests currently used in schools do not take very long to administer, but they are very crude and certainly do not assess all the skills that the Ministry says it wants teachers to develop in students. The collection of portfolios of students work was seen both as an assessment procedure and a vehicle for student reflection and feedback. The Ministry of Education (1996) suggested that portfolios could contain data from observations, interviews, anecdotal records, checklists, inventories, rating scales, and event sampling processes. The resultant portfolio of work can then be used to make judgments about levels of achievement, learning styles, and strengths and weaknesses (Green, O Sullivan & Smyser, 1996).

The nature of the portfolio varies according to the curriculum goals. The students and teachers need to use organisational strategies to ensure that the portfolios they collect are manageable and contain relevant information. The development of portfolios has a strong connection with the assessment of language skills. Portfolios can be a means of collecting authentic data on language development and as Newman (1995) notes, the
portfolio can also provide information about other language-related outcomes, such as students' attitudes toward their own culture, a second culture, and a second/foreign language.

However compiling a portfolio for each student is very time consuming and very few teachers in Thailand know how to collect and use such data. Currently there is very little evidence of widespread use. The value of portfolios for assessment and the challenges of using them in the language classroom lead me to work with language teachers to develop student portfolios as part of formative assessment.

5.3.2.4 Authenticity

When the concept of authenticity is used in education, it has at least two levels: content and context, and assessment. At one level, authenticity means that what the student is learning is directly related to the student's everyday life. This certainly happens in schools but it may happen alongside the learning of bodies of knowledge that are well removed from the life-events that most affect the student. We can think of learning as being of two types; naturally occurring learning in the environment, and organised or highly structured school learning. Naturally occurring learning is authentic simply because it is naturally occurring. All of us are constantly faced with problems in our daily lives. Sometimes the problems are trivial but sometimes they are not. All of these problems have to be dealt with in some way.

In the context of early childhood literacy, Nutbrown (1999) for example, said that:

authentic literacy includes literacy events and activities which occur in children's everyday home and community experiences: looking for their favourite sweets in the shop; identifying familiar signs and logos in the environment, handling books, having books read; retelling stories by looking at the pictures, identifying words and letters in text, writing shopping lists or birthday cards, writing their own name (Nutbrown, 1999, p. 38).

However it is viewed, authentic learning involves solving problems. Problem solving is used at school but almost always the teacher chooses the problems and they are often divorced from context. Hence they are not authentic.

In the Thai context, authentic assessment mainly refers to the sampling of students work under non-test conditions, over an extended period of time. The resulting
portfolio of work can be a good record of what the student has attempted and what has been learnt (Gardner, 1999).

5.4 ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL
As implied above, assessment is a means of control and sorting of individuals. Often the control is intended to be beneficial in the sense that it is used to the learner's advantage. In other instances however, the control can affect the life opportunities of each citizen. Assessment criteria can be set (by national bodies) that have little to do with the potential contribution that each person might be able to make to society and when used often block potential opportunities for students. The complexity of this level of assessment is well illustrated by Black (1999):

National policies on assessment must resolve many tensions, for example, between accountability and learning priorities, between formative and summative purposes, between teachers' assessments and external assessments, between frequent testing and end-of-course testing, an between the competing requirements of reliability and validity. However national debates also involve politicians, and many other interested pressure groups, which have their own assumptions and priorities, some ill-formed, some legitimate, often driven by interests quite outside the sphere of the education profession. (Black, 1999, p. 132).

The controlling effect of assessment on the life development of individuals is repeated at provincial, regional, school, teacher, parental, and peer group level. This is an observation more than a condemnation of assessment. It does mean however, that teachers really do need to understand the potential implications of their assessment judgments and in particular the dangers of high stakes testing.

5.5 ASSESSMENT AND SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THAILAND
Regardless of paradigmatic orientation, when the assessment of second language learning is considered decisions must be made about what will be assessed, why it is to be assessed, how it is to be assessed, when it will be assessed, and who will do the
assessing (Seidner, 1983). However in the psychometric paradigm there is an emphasis on simplifying the complexity of language by fragmenting it into sub-skills that are to be mastered in a predetermined sequence. Thus there are levels of language that can be arranged in defined, sequential stages or levels and which can be identified, measured and quantified for all learners. Each of these modes (reading, writing, speaking, listening) is thought of as a unique and independent set of language skills. So reading, writing, speaking and listening stand alone as subjects in their own right. Furthermore it was assumed that reading was essentially a process of comprehending the single, correct and fixed meaning in a text (Bernhardt, 1993). This perspective has something in common with the principles of Behaviourism, traditionally informed assessment, in Thailand. There is now a more holistic view of language where meaning is seen as socially constructed (Barton, 1994). Hence different assessment methods are required.

5.5.1 WHAT IS TO BE ASSESSED?

The question of what is to be assessed depends very much on the intention of the teaching and the view of language. That is to say, if the teacher intends each student to be able to communicate with a native speaker, then the global assessment will be related to the student's ability to do just this. However a single global assessment might satisfy an employer but it is of little value to the teacher. The teacher (or those advising her) has to decide what sub-global achievements are best related to the global goal, to what is taught, and to the student's ability. This is a difficult task but it is necessary to avoid the generality of global indicators and the specificity of behavioural objectives. Thai teachers are only now starting to think beyond behavioural objectives.

5.5.2 WHY SHOULD TEACHERS ASSESS?

The reasons that teachers assess second language learning are exactly the reasons that teachers assess any learning: making pedagogical decisions, feedback to students, accountability, grading, and meeting cultural expectations.

In the case of English, the bureaucratic system has required test scores for speaking, listening, reading and writing. Reading and writing are relatively easily tested by having students write answers to written comprehension questions based on some text. Speaking and listening on the other hand are very difficult to assess when you have large
classes and limited time (Ratanavichak, 1997). Teachers have devised a number of strategies to deal with this and, in most of them, the test scores had little to do with formal assessment procedures.

5.5.3 HOW SHOULD TEACHERS ASSESS?
The Thai Ministry of Education provides evaluation guidelines (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). Each school is responsible for working within these guidelines to design appropriate assessment procedures. These are intended to be used for diagnostic purposes, grade promotion and for the improvement of teaching. Whilst it is clear that assessment data are used for diagnosis and grade-promotion, it is much less clear that the data are used for the improvement of teaching. The guidelines indicate that schools should carry out periodic formative and summative assessment. This kind of assessment in schools has been well studied (Thatpaibool, 1995; Kuttiyavong, 1998) although always using empiricist designs.

Behavioural objectives and tests are consistent with the psychometric paradigm and the prevailing paradigm of assessment is more suited to the old/traditional view of language education as a series of separate sub-skills that have to be learned in pre-planned, linear sequences of individual skills. This is changing.

Almost all, if not all, Thai teachers have learnt about formative and summative assessment in their undergraduate studies and/or in in-service programs. But, regardless of what they have learnt, teachers tend to use formative evaluation to serve the same purpose as summative assessment. It is just another test score. The idea that we can assess student learning in many ways is also well known but seldom practised.

5.5.4 WHO SHOULD ASSESS?
Invariably it is assumed that the teacher is the appropriate person to make assessment decisions. This not likely to change in the near future although the requirement that schools involve their external communities in the policies and processes of the school may have an effect on who does the assessment. There has been little or no reported research in Thailand on the techniques, advantages and disadvantages, and outcomes of peer assessment. At another level, parents certainly make judgments about their children's school learning. Once again there seems to be no reported research on how
parents' assessments might be related to the teacher's assessment, or on the criteria that they use. Student self-assessment is rarely considered in Thailand.

5.5.5 WHEN SHOULD ASSESSMENT OCCUR?
A consideration of when assessment should occur in second language teaching raises all the questions that are raised in a consideration of assessment more generally. In practice the timing of formal assessment is determined by factors such as the amount of content to be assessed, the actual time it takes to make assessments (time is often proportional to class size), the experience of the teacher (experienced teachers may be able to make fewer and faster formal assessments to meet the various purposes of assessment), departmental, school, and external requirements.

5.6 A TEACHING - ASSESSMENT MODEL
Authentic learning can be, and is used, in second/foreign language learning. Those who use communicative approaches argue that learning to communicate with somebody who does not speak your mother tongue is a real life problem. This is true for some people, but not for all. Many students have no immediate need to communicate with native speakers of English and cannot see any reason to do so in the future. In a sense this is a real life problem for the teacher (an authentic problem). If one accepts this reasoning it leads to the following model:

PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Naturally occurring</th>
<th>Highly-structured</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* authentic learning
** school learning

FIGURE 5: LEARNING MODEL
This model can be applied to second language learning if one makes some assumptions or approximations. For example, if one takes the first cell one could imagine a student watching a foreign language film on television and trying to understand it -using the pictures as clues. They can often do this very successfully but note that this does not encourage them to use the language. As an approximation to television films we could have the individual student watch an English language video and learn some words or phrases.

For individual highly structured learning we could have each student do some exercises from a textbook, or answer specific questions by trying to read an English language newspaper or novel.

As an approximation, collaborative naturally occurring learning could take place when we arrange situations in which the students practise communication (i.e. using the language). For example, we might simulate shopping in a supermarket, eating with friends in a restaurant, travelling to another province, or a team discussing football tactics.

Collaborative highly structured learning can be used for various word games e.g. based on trivial pursuit. This form of learning can be used in competitions e.g. a number of groups competing in a spelling competition.

5.6.1 GROUP WORK AND SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

One of the main reasons for low achievement in second/foreign language learning is lack of time opportunities to use rather than practices the new language (Long and Porter, 1985). This is particularly true when classes are large. In this situation the predominant pedagogy is teacher-centred and lock step. Lock step in the sense that the progress of the whole is determined by the amount of time that the teacher spends on tasks such explaining grammar and leading drills. Typically, teachers in this situation will talk for half or more of the time available (Flanders, 1970). Group work does not solve this problem completely but it does allow students to have more opportunities to use the language.

Many Thai classrooms are too small for the number of students that they have to
contain. This makes group work rather more difficult than it might be in classrooms that have plenty of space and in which the furniture can easily be re-arranged. Nevertheless, there are at least five good pedagogical arguments for working in groups in second/foreign language teaching. Group work:

- increases the opportunity to use the second/foreign language
- improves the quality of student talk
- helps individualise instruction
- can promote a positive affective climate
- motivates learners (Long & Porter, 1985).

Lock step pedagogy limits the quantity and quality of student talk. Teachers in this situation tend to use highly formalised or conventionalised forms of language - forms that Long and Porter say are characteristic of weddings, courtrooms and classrooms. In these forms the answers are known to both parties and hence originality and creativity are minimised. It might well be that this kind of practice may help grammatical correctness but it does not help with the kind of communication that one would expect and experience outside the classroom. Group work however, provides a natural setting for conversation. There is a chance of engaging in communicative discourse rather than simply repeating isolated sentences. Groups that function effectively allow students to take on some of the roles normally taken by the teacher — allocating turns, limiting time, and nominating topics.

5.6.2 INDIVIDUALISING INSTRUCTION

Lock-step pedagogies are very useful for the presentation of new information needed by all students. They are not very useful when one wants to take account of individual differences in the students. School students are invariably placed in grades/classes on the basis of chronological (or in some cases, mental) age. Group work can at least allow students of similar linguistic competence to work together on tasks of about the same linguistic challenge. In this sense group work is a step towards individualisation.

Shy students in particular find it stressful when called on to respond to a whole class in a lock step environment. This is especially so if they have limited time in which to
collect their thoughts and respond. As Barnes (1973) said, we want students to talk to learn. This freedom from accuracy and participation in a more accommodating environment (than the lock step class) promotes a positive affective climate. White and Lightbown (1983) have shown that if students do not try to respond within a very brief period (seconds) teachers tend to intervene with additional comments and actions. A small group of peers can provide a low risk, and relatively intimate setting for students to try out their, often elementary, language skills.

Group work cannot magically transform reluctant learners into avid learners. But there is some empirical evidence (Fitz-Gibbon & Reay, 1982; Littlejohn 1982, 1983) to suggest that groups that function well are satisfying for the participants, who in turn develop a greater commitment to the group and its work.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The traditional reductionist view of language is gradually being complemented by a more holistic view in which language is seen as an articulated and functional system that really cannot be fragmented - because the parts are interdependent. This shift is reversing the structure to function (or application) model to a function to structure (or grammar) model. This questioning and re-examination has resulted in a shift toward a more naturalistic view of learning (Richards, 1996).

The Thai approach to English language learning in schools reflects both paradigms with the emphasis on communication being consistent with the constructivist paradigm. The psychometric paradigm has dominated assessment in Thai Education for a long period. However, most Thai teachers were trained to assess students' learning by tests based on the behavioural objectives in the curriculum guidelines. It was expected that after the Thai Educational Reform Charter was launched in 1999 Thai teachers would use variety of assessment procedures. There was to be more emphasis on process including the use of portfolios. There has been some resistance to implementation of the policy due to large class sizes, the teachers' familiarity with tests, but in particular the lack of appropriate professional development for teachers.

Hence I believed that it would be very useful to research processes for improving the
teaching of language that incorporated professional development for teachers. The content of the program focussed on pedagogy (communicative approach and group work), assessment (authentic assessment and students portfolios), and professional development (collaborative action research between school and university).

In the next chapter, research methodology is discussed and I have described the particular techniques I used in this research.
CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

In this chapter I examine how one might study functioning systems and how I came to consider the principles of action research as being the most suitable for my enquiry. Research paradigms is the first topic. Then the differences between quantitative and qualitative research are discussed. For the appropriate methodology, I focus on collaborative action research. After that I explain the research sequence consisting of three phases. The first and the third phase were done in the same two secondary schools. The second phase was to disseminate what the Research Team found to a group of teachers.

6.1 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Research is about discovering new knowledge —or so I thought when I started this doctorate. Research seemed to be a relatively straightforward process. Gradually I came to understand that I wasn’t discovering facts in the empiricist sense. This was a worrying realisation. If I wasn’t discovering facts what was I doing? The more I thought about facts the more I questioned the relevance of empiricist assumptions for my research. For most practical purposes one can assume a permanence and stability of the physical world. Physical laws such as $v = ut + at^2$ can be assumed to hold good in any macro environment. These physical laws are based on the notion of discrete variables that can be isolated and manipulated. They can be discovered with suitable experiments. These experiments are more or less systematic procedures in which particular variables are manipulated and the effects of the manipulation carefully observed. I had assumed that there was a set of standard methods for research that were available off the shelf. Some skill was needed to select the correct method for the research task but once selected it was a matter of following the steps as carefully as one could. Inevitably one would make mistakes but these could be discussed and, to a greater or lesser extent, justified in a concluding section of the research.

This way of thinking has been very effective in our investigation of the physical world. So effective that it is not surprising that we have wanted to generalise it to the world of people and their relationships. However, laboratory experiments with people were not
always as illuminating as experiments with objects nor did people behave in the same way is the real world outside the laboratory experiment. Hence the research findings were not very generalisable. Classrooms are complex systems of systems and any attempt to isolate discrete variables whilst holding other variables constant is bound to distort the very system that one wants to investigate.

When we try to study functioning systems such as schools and classrooms we soon find that there were few if any natural, discrete variables that we can isolate and manipulate. The stability that we assume in the world of objects is less reliable in the world of people. In this sense psychometric methods are not suitable for studying functioning classrooms.

The variability of the data that one gets within a group of people often makes it difficult to be sure whether the variability between groups is actually greater than the variability within a group. Progressively more powerful statistical procedures have been developed to try and smooth out the variability. These statistical techniques are useful but there was and is still a major problem of ensuring that the distribution of the data that one collects matches the mathematical distribution underlying the statistic that one uses for the analysis.

These difficulties have led to the development of a research paradigm in which it is assumed that there is no single correct interpretation of events in which people interact. Each person will have a unique perspective on the events and this may even change over time. Their interpretation of events will depend on factors such as prior experience and the effects of the event on self and significant others. This research paradigm is described as constructivist and assumes that there are multiple realities—all of equal merit. The task of the researcher is to capture as many of these realities as are needed to present a coherent an informative account of the research. Similarly, the data that are collected depend on the observer. Whereas in the psychometric paradigm it is assumed that the data are independent of the observer, the reverse is the case in the constructivist paradigm.
6.2 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The two sets of assumptions and beliefs correspond approximately to quantitative and qualitative approaches to the development of knowledge. To a considerable extent however, quantitative and qualitative are points on a paradigmatic continuum. The particular set of assumptions and belief that one holds are idiosyncratic. Whilst there may well be a core set of assumptions that empiricists and constructivists make, the way that they approach research depends very much on how the research problem is conceptualised. Church (1997) was right when he asked the question: How useful is the distinction between quantitative and qualitative? Tolich and Davidson (1999) make a useful comparison of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms under four headings: assumptions, purpose, theories and hypotheses, and the researcher's role. The realisation that research methodology was a continuum rather than a typology was enlightening for me because in all my undergraduate and postgraduate studies this had never been discussed (Tolich and Davidson, 1999). Gradually I realised that methodology was a much broader conceptual domain than method. Methodology was something about the epistemological basis for the assumptions and choices that researchers make. Method was about the set of decisions that one made in a particular case.

6.2.1 THE DIFFERENCES

In qualitative research, reality is seen as socially constructed, with variables (or in most cases, constructs) being complex, inter-related and difficult to measure. Quantitative research, on the other hand, sees social facts as having an objective reality which can be readily identified and measured; thus, providing an etic, or outsider's point of view (Anderson, 1987), rather than an emic, or insider's perspective. In an emic approach, the researcher tries to move from a personal perspective to an understanding of events as seen through the eyes of the actors.

6.2.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of qualitative research is to try to understand the perspective of those persons being studied through contextualisation and interpretation, whereas quantitative research seeks generalisability, prediction and causal explanation. It could be argued that
there is little about qualitative research that is generalisable. It is more that quantitative outcomes (of research in the physical world) are generalisable whereas in qualitative research it is often the processes that are generalisable (Jeans, 1997).

6.2.3 THEORIES AND HYPOTHESES

Qualitative researchers conclude (in some cases), rather than begin, with an hypothesis and a grounded theory. Researchers examine the data for patterns, looking for pluralism and complexity and, in arriving at a rich description, may make minor use of numbers. Quantitative researchers begins with hypotheses and theories and, using formal experimentation and deduction to control the situations, concludes with confirmation, or refutation, of the initial hypotheses. Often data is reduced to numbers and makes use of abstract language and jargon to report its findings (for example, Feather & Oberdan, 2000; Mansoor & Oei, 1999).

6.2.4 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

The researcher is personally involved in qualitative research and establishes an empathetic understanding of the situation. With quantitative research, she attempts a detached impartiality and aims to present an objective portrayal of the research findings.

Qualitative research focuses on actors and their relationships. As (Dalzell, 2000) said:

Qualitative research, as its name implies, focuses on the qualities of situations being examined and the inter-relationships that exist between the various elements. As distinct from quantitative research design, qualitative research has its emphasis on the nature, rather than the number, of situations and events that it examine (Dalzell, 2000, p. 84).

Qualitative approaches to research do not necessarily exclude quantitative techniques (Church, 1997). However, in qualitative research, quantitative techniques serve as a means of illuminating a larger picture. Qualitative researchers search for understanding. Qualitative researchers believe they are searching for truth.

6.3 RESEARCH IN THAILAND

The traditional Thai idea of research is that it is something done in universities by people who have dedicated themselves to the discovery of truth. These people may do some teaching but this is secondary to the research function. Because of the status given
to them, it is accepted that when these researchers do research on people they will act in
their best interests. The researched do not normally expect to be told about the details
of the research or about its outcomes. If anybody benefits from the research it is likely
to be the researcher. The researchers themselves usually take it for granted that people
will co-operate in the research even if they do not fully understand its purposes.
The results of such research are usually presented as higher degree theses or as papers in
learned journals.
This perception of research might, in some ways, match the reality of say medical
research but increasingly it is being challenged in fields such as education and schooling.

6.4 Determining an appropriate method
Initially, and because of my prior training, I was predisposed to quantitative
methodology. This is the dominant paradigm in Thai universities and is the approved
mode of scientific thinking. To do anything other than follow the Thai research tradition
would be a high-risk strategy. High-risk in the sense that my research could be seen as
second level research if it was not based on empiricist assumptions and if it did not use
sophisticated statistical manipulations. On the other hand, the education reform agenda
privileges participation over exclusion. Furthermore, in my mind, rational and
systematic thinking was more useful in my context than scientific thinking. I could also
see that an experiment was really not a useful way of trying to improve the teaching of
English. If I followed this line of reasoning I would choose the constructivist paradigm
rather than the empiricist paradigm. This was new territory for me. If I was not going
to do an experiment what was I going to do? I had read about field experiments, case
studies, surveys, ethnography, collaborative research, and action research, but I could
see no clear chain of reasoning that would lead me from problem to a set of choices for
my particular research. If I thought of method as a set of choices that one made about
how one did research in particular cases then I found it difficult to distinguish clearly
between a research method and a technique. For example, it seemed to me that a survey
was not a method as much as it was a technique for collecting data. On the other hand,
designing and conducting a survey involves making many choices/decisions.
Ethnography can be used, in case studies for example, as a technique for collecting data. Ethnography is also referred to as a method. Clearly then there is no simple classification of research methods/techniques but then the name is less important than what is actually done. At this point in my reading and thinking I had decided that:

- constructivist assumptions best suited my thinking about the research that I wanted to do
- I wanted to improve the teaching of English
- I would be studying a functioning system
- I wanted to work collaboratively with a small research team
- I would make progressive small changes and examine the effects of the changes.

These decisions led me to investigate action research (Kemmis & Henry, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992; Glanz, 1999) as a possible approach. This was partly because it was consistent with the Thai reform agenda.

6.5 ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is not a new way of doing research. Contemporary action research has its origins in Kurt Lewins (1946) views of the role of research in social change and development, and of his reaction against the idea of an elite group of researchers doing research on subjects. Action research can be thought of as a systematic process of collaborative review and improvement—policies, programs and practices (Kemmis, 1983; p. 131). Political ideology, feminism, linguistics, literature, and post-modernism have all contributed to the foundations of action research (Wallace, 1987; Schmuck, 1997; Dickens & Watkins, 1999).

In action research teacher and student are engaged in a shared search for knowledge. It is an interactive, reflective experience for both. Knowledge is not treated as truth but rather as provisional and open to question. The practitioner is not viewed as an expert but as an inquirer and co-learner who considers her practices as provisional and, maybe, even improbable. Action research thus becomes the basis for personal and professional development and autonomy. The wide range of action research styles and strategies is
its strength and makes it more likely than other approaches that the research will
provide insights into curriculum and pedagogic problems (McKerrow, 1996).
One of the fundamental purposes of action research techniques is the improvement of
real life, workplace problems. Action research aims to improve practice rather than to
produce generalisable knowledge (Elliott, 1992) so was most relevant to my aims.
It is possible to distinguish between emancipatory and participatory action research
(Rearick, 1998). The purpose of emancipatory action research is persistent collective
action that is overtly political and has as its purposes the removal, or reduction, of
oppression and the improvement of quality of life. The notion of oppression has been
generalised to include any situation where one person or group is in a position of power
over another person or group. A researcher unthinkingly treating people as subjects in a
research project could be seen as oppressive. Participatory action research (PAR)
retains the idea of persistent collective action, improvement and the reduction of
oppression. Where PAR leads to change, it is change by agreement. PAR or simply,
action research has evolved into a distinctive approach to the study of functioning
systems. In PAR team work and shared responsibility combine together with
negotiation and an enhanced mutual relationship of researchers to contribute to the
improvement of work in our own setting (McTaggart, 1997). In a cyclical process, all
the participants work collaboratively during the research process to plan, act, observe,
and reflect on all happenings in their own practices.

6.5.1 COLLABORATIVE-ACTION RESEARCH
Action research has an inherent appeal for many practitioner-researchers. It deals with
workplace problems, it involves collaboration and participation, it has elements of
democracy in it and it does not require detailed statistical analysis. Nevertheless, it has
its own problems. For example, it is quite difficult to form research teams that can meet
when required, and with members of equal commitment. It is difficult to avoid expert-
helper relationships – the researcher can find that the team depends on the ‘expert’ to
show them the way – and this is not unreasonable. Workplace procedures and policies
can be hard to change and it is not always easy to demonstrate to a resistant system
why they need to be changed. The iterative process of planning, observing etc. can be
lengthy and it is not unusual to lose team members and participants along the way. In addition multiple reporting is a skilful process and requires considerable energy. Finally, the very idea of participatory reform can be politically sensitive (Jeans, 1997).

Henry and McTaggart (1996) also pointed out that action research can overvalue teachers' knowledge against other sources of knowledge about what is happening, and should happen in schools. I did not think that this had any particular relevance in my case. This research was not about what was happening in all or most schools. The core of the research teams were university academic staff that one hoped would be able to see more than the obvious.

It can also be very difficult to change the discourse and thinking of teachers if they are not made aware of alternative discourses such as those from feminist and political theory (Henry & McTaggart, 1996). Even though members of the research team were all trained teachers our understanding of these alternative discourses was very limited. This could be seen as a constraint on our work.

The reality of my context was that I had identified the problem and I had to persuade my colleagues that it was in everybody's interests to do something about this problem. I also had to recognise and accept that the people that I worked with did not see the problem in the same way that I did. So, part of the general approach to the research and the workplace problem was a deliberate attempt to convince my colleagues of the rationality of my approach. For these reasons I thought of my approach as collaborative action rather than action research.

According to Sachs (1997):

Collaborative enquiry is what occurs when teacher educators and practising teachers engage in processes of collaboration which articulate academic research and practitioner research (Sachs, 1997, p. 7).

This seemed so sensible because I had little doubt that the collective decisions and actions of a research team would be more effective that my own individual decisions and actions. The model of collaboration used in this research was based on the notion of two or more people working together, critiquing and supporting each other in the classroom (Jeans et al., 1995). Action research is a group activity.
6.6 THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

In the preliminary discussion with the teachers, difficulties with formative assessment were raised. Kan, my research participant, outlined that it was difficult to use performance assessment and observation of what the students had learnt according to the behavioural objectives before and after the formal midterm assessment. Most of the behavioural objectives focused on speaking and listening skills. Her class had forty students and so she did not have enough time to assess each individual student. After three or four discussions, the research team came to the view that we should collect a portfolio of each student's work and use this for formative assessment before and after the midterm summative assessment. The portfolio would consist of the student's individual work, group work, student journal writing, and the teacher's evaluation form. For this purpose we prepared classroom activities, instructional media, assessment procedures and worksheets.

The general nature of the research problem was quite clear. For one or more reasons, teachers had trouble assessing the students' English speaking and listening competencies. It was thought that a portfolio approach might ease the problems.

The problem investigated in this research falls in the intersection of education reform and English language teaching:

![Diagram showing the intersection of education reform and English language teaching]

**FIGURE 6: EDUCATION REFORM AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

The purpose of the research was to work with lower secondary school teachers to
develop pedagogical techniques for teaching listening and speaking skills. We applied some of the principles of action research to:

- develop classroom activities and assessment procedures for English language learning, and
- deliver a professional development program for English language teachers on using students' portfolios in classroom assessment.

6.7 THE RESEARCH SEQUENCE

At this point I needed to decide just how I would organise the research. I had to take into account a number of conditions, not the least of which was time. In the first phase I worked with teachers in schools to explore the teaching and assessment of English. In the second phase I organised a professional development program for twenty teachers so that we could share our experiences in the teaching and assessment of English that we learned from the first phase. In the third phase I returned to the schools to work with teachers who had taken part in the professional development program. The research model that I derived can be shown with a simple diagram (Figure 7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would work with two teachers in two schools to make sure that I was at home in the prevailing schools culture. The teachers and I would develop and trial some instructional and assessment activities for English as a second/foreign language</td>
<td>The two teachers and I would conduct a professional development program for a group of teachers in the school cluster</td>
<td>I would return to the original schools and study the extent to which the ideas from the professional development program had been developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 7: THE RESEARCH MODEL**

6.8 SELECTING THE SCHOOLS

I chose two schools Mina and Kita on the basis of location, size of schools and staff
contacts. I had worked with teachers there for both phase one and phase three of the research.

Mina school is a medium sized secondary school with about 900 students. It has eighty staff. On the other hand, Kita school is classified as small, with 650 students. It has about forty staff altogether. Both schools are located in a suburb of Khon Kaen city. The students came from low to middle socio-economic backgrounds and would have minimal opportunities to use English. In both schools class sizes were large thirty-five to forty-five students and classroom small. The teacher centred approach dominated. In both schools there were specialist rooms for English and library.

The English Department of Mina had eight English language teachers, two men and six women. The only second/foreign language taught in the school was English. Everyone in the department had a Bachelor of Education with either an English major or minor. Two of them had graduated with master's degrees in educational administration. The teaching load was twelve to eighteen periods of fifty minutes per week. Other activities provided for the students were an English language Camp (once a year). The English Club was an elective activity for students. There were also occasional activities such as Christmas Day celebrations, and visits by native speakers to the school. A typical years program for the English Language Club might be a Question-Answer game in English once a month during lunch breaks. There is usually a Christmas play and a summer camp of several days duration.

All students are required to take two periods (fifty minutes) of English language a week and a further two periods could be taken as electives. English was taught in rooms close to the English Department. Audio and videocassettes were used and the library also provided resources. The research class in phase one consisted of thirty-seven students, twenty-six girls and eleven boys. Their teacher, Kan, was more flexible than most in her approach to teaching and was interested in co-operative learning. I started my research project by talking with Kan in March, 1996. We then planned activities, implemented them in her class. Observations and reflection continued until March, 1997.

In 1996, Kita school had only two temporary buildings. These were noisy and detrimental to teaching. The permanent buildings were built in 1997. The school has a
library, classrooms, staff room, administration office, and cafeteria, but no sound laboratory. The English Department of Kita had only four English language teachers, one man and three women. The only second/foreign language taught in the school was English. Everyone in the department had a Bachelor of Education with either an English major or minor. The teaching load was twelve to eighteen periods of fifty minutes per week. There were some occasional activities such as Christmas Day Celebration, and visits by native speakers to the school.

The group chosen for the first phase of my research consisted of thirty-eight students, twenty-three girls and fifteen boys. Sira, their teacher, was different from my first research participant because she mostly relied on students' textbooks. I started my research project by talking with Sira in October, 1996. We then planned activities, implemented them in her classroom, observations and reflection was continued until March, 1997.

**TABLE 1: MINA AND KITA SCHOOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phase one</th>
<th>Phase three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mina</td>
<td>Kita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of EL teachers</td>
<td>8 (2M6F)</td>
<td>4 (1M3F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound laboratory seats</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>14M26F</td>
<td>24M18F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating teachers</td>
<td>Kan</td>
<td>Sira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F37</td>
<td>F33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = male, F = female

**6.9 THE RESEARCH TEAMS**

I used different research teams for the different phases of the research. For phase one I worked with two classroom teachers. I also invited a lecturer from Khon Kaen university who specialised in speaking and listening activities to join us in developing the professional development program. In phase two I used eight Master of Education...
students to collect data on the professional development day. In addition I invited an English language teacher from Khon Kaen Vitej Suksa Bilingual School to demonstrate an authentic learning lesson. In phase three I worked with two other lower secondary English language teachers to implement some ideas from the professional development day to classroom.

Phase One (May 1996 to March 1997)

Kan and Sirat were grade seven English language teachers. They were teaching in the same Academic School Group in Khon Kaen Province. There are five of these groups in Khon Kaen. They were formed as part of the Ministry of Education policy to share academic resources among clusters of schools and to support each other school in their professional work. Members of the same group are required to plan learning behavioural objectives for each subject area. Kan believed in planning the learning activities and assessment according to these behavioural objectives. Sirat tended to follow the students' book — this was not set out in terms of behavioural objectives. This difference caused me to invite these two teachers to join with me in a research team.

I made several visits to the schools to meet with staff. Kan from Minas school agreed to participate. She was attracted to participatory research and the opportunity to provide input into the research process. She was keen to improve her students' competency. She had been teaching there for ten years. Sirat at Kita school was enthusiastic to learn more about pedagogy and assessment. She has been teaching there for few years. However she was very busy as she was in a small school and had to work in the office of the academic affairs. Both teachers had majored in English pedagogy.

I also asked Mr. Tim McDaniel to work with us in the professional development program. Tim was an American lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages at Khon Kaen University. He had graduated with a Master of Education in Teaching English Language from an American university. His specialist interest was speaking and listening activities for the classroom. He was invited to share his expertise about listening and speaking activities and to take a demonstration lesson.

Phase Two

Phase two of the research was a professional development program for teachers from
the academic school group (cluster). To assist in collecting the quantity of data required I invited a number of master's degree students to join the research team as research assistants. In order to prepare the students for their role in the research during the professional development program I devised a one-day workshop to assist them to understand the techniques that they would be using during the professional development program. The students acting as research assistants in this workshop were as follows:

**TABLE 2: THE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aey</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mahasarakham University</td>
<td>M.Ed (Psych.)</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Buraboo Secondary School</td>
<td>B.Ed (Math.)</td>
<td>18 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Nongsa Primary School</td>
<td>B.Ed (Music)</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Wongchawali Hotel University</td>
<td>B.Ed (Math.)</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ong</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Donbom Primary School</td>
<td>B.Ed (Elem.)</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mint</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sura Primary School</td>
<td>B.Ed (Elem.)</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nan</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Waepe Primary School</td>
<td>B.Ed (Elem.)</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ooy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(No job)</td>
<td>B.Ed (Math.)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of the workshop are reported in Appendix E. This workshop was a significant means of professional development for us all.

In addition I invited Mr. Hayden Sharp-an English language teacher from Khon Kaen Vitej Suksa Bilingual School to be a guest speaker on the professional development day.

**Phase Three**

In the third phase of the research I worked with two lower secondary school English language teachers from Mina and Kita schools. These teachers had attended the professional development program. Mr. Boon had been teaching at Mina school for fifteen years. He was particularly interested in the research because he had observed my work with Kan and thought it was interesting. Mr. Don was an experienced teacher from Kita school. His attention in joining the team was to try new (and hopefully, more effective) teaching methods with his students.
6.10 TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING DATA
The research team members decided to use the interviews/conversations for collecting data and observations throughout the phase.

6.10.1 INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS
We talk to people everyday so what is it that might distinguish a research conversation from a non-research or everyday conversation? This question is easy to ask but harder to answer. In one sense research conversations are probably more productive — from the researcher’s perspective, if they have some of the qualities of everyday conversations. That is, the conversation is seen to have a useful purpose, is non-threatening, allows all participants to have some degree of control over the shape of the conversation and takes place in a shared register — using appropriate grammar and vocabulary (Jaroungsirawat, 2000). A research conversation is, however, more than an ordinary social event. The researcher normally has a pre-determined purpose in initiating such conversations and to varying extents needs to have some control over the timing, content, direction, participation and duration of the conversation. Unlike most everyday conversations the researcher will want to keep a record of the conversation and it is this characteristic as much as any other that distinguishes the two kinds of conversation. Apart from the novelty of keeping a record of such conversations, the researcher will usually, at a later time, scrutinise the texts very carefully in order to interpret the meanings and determine patterns of responses.

What are the differences between a research conversation and an interview? A common understanding of an interview is that it is a more or less systematic process in which an interviewer asks questions and a respondent gives answers (Fowler, 1988). The researcher contacts potential participants, seeks their permission to be interviewed, and then conducts the interview at a time and a place that is mutually agreeable (Tripodi & Epstein, 1980). Besides the fact that interviews allow the researcher to collect data from participants who might be unable to complete written instruments, there are a number of other important advantages of collecting data through interviews (Babbie, 1995). While talking directly to research participants, the researcher is able to initiate discussion about their responses by making comments on or about the responses. The comments provide
participants with the opportunity to expand on responses more fully, thereby allowing the researcher to acquire more in-depth information. This is particularly important for studies that are primarily exploratory in nature. Researchers are able to observe participants while they are responding to questions. Nonverbal communications may provide important data. Close attention ought to be paid to the body language. It can indicate the participant’s ease in responding, evasiveness in answering questions, or how seriously the participant seems to be taking the interview. These conversations can be conducted in a social agency, a public place, or in the participant’s own home. If people are interviewed in their homes, observations can be made about the home environment and the interaction with significant others (Yegidis & Weinbach, 1996). During informal conversations, questions are not put in any pre-established order. The selection of questions is governed instead by the actual situation confronting the researcher, it is a probing technique. Sometimes the researchers may limit themselves to asking the questions they feel appropriate to ask on the spur of the moment, while on other occasions a particular conceptual model will govern the choice of questions. Particular attention is paid to what the informants consider to be important. One has freedom to change the form of the conversation during a sequence of conversations and exclude or add to the areas of inquiry. The intention is to try to preserve the conversation in its original form without any form of editing or comment. The researcher may make rapid notes or use shorthand. The conversation can be recorded on tape, which captures the purely verbal part of the interview or group discussion, although the symbolic language, including body language, is not captured by this method (Gummesson, 1991). The face-to-face conversation has traditionally been considered a reliable method for collecting data on attitudes, opinions, and some kinds of factual data (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983). The face-to-face conversation has some definite advantages over all other forms of survey data collection. The researcher can see people and their surroundings. Even if the observation of surroundings is not required, the conversation provides an opportunity to observe the nonverbal behaviour of the respondent and this may be highly relevant to the research (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983).

One can readily see that conversations are of infinite variety ranging to quite
spontaneous exchanges whose purpose is almost entirely social facilitation to highly structured and controlled interviews whose sole purpose is to provide data to the interviewer.

For the purposes of my research and my training as a researcher I wanted to combine some of the features of a research conversation with some of the features of a structured interview. For this reason I decided that interview-conversations would best suit my purposes. These interview-conversations were as much like everyday conversations as I could make them whilst keeping in mind the central purposes and processes of the research.

6.10.2 DIRECT OBSERVATION

Just as eliciting information by talking to people is complex so too is the process of eliciting information by direct observation. The essence of direct observation is as Malinowski (1922) said: to grasp the native's point of view, to realise his view of his world (p. 25). Malinowski made a very important contribution to the development of observation techniques when he emphasised the value of tabulating and checking the quality of one's data. For example, he thought that it was important to record clearly whether an observation was direct or indirect—whether it had been made in context or inferred from other behaviours or indeed whether it was an observation made by a third party.

Research observation is a form of ethnography (Becke, Geer, Hughes & Strauss, 1961; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968; Anderson, 1987). One of the fundamental issues in ethnography is the extent to which the behaviour of the system is changed significantly by the presence of an observer. The researcher hopes that the behaviour is essentially unchanged but it is often quite difficult to demonstrate this. For example, a school may well have beliefs and practices that they do not want to be common knowledge. If the goal of the research is to see events as the school community sees them and if research implies publication, there is clearly a difficult ethical constraint to be managed. There is also a tension between being an external observer and being a group member. If one is a group member one is quite likely to have an effect on group behaviour. So that what one is studying is not the original community but an extended and inclusive
community. Similarly, the greater the participation, the more familiar the context and content, and the less strange they will appear to be. This suggests that what might have been uncommon at the start of the observations can become commonplace and hence overlooked.

6.10.3 PARTICIPANT AND NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

There are two main ways that qualitative researchers identify themselves with the systems that they study. In some cases researchers believe that they will learn more about the system by observing the system from the outside. This non-participant observation seems to be a good idea but it has a number of problems. Although we can certainly make observations about what people do, we usually cannot make observations of why they do the things that they do—but this is exactly what researchers want to know. There is also a problem in deciding what you will observe—not everything will be relevant to one's research but how does one know that the observations that are made are the key observations?

Participant observation on the other hand requires the researcher to become part of the system. A teacher in a classroom is a participant observer of classroom life. If we are part of the system we will understand the culture of the system and so we are more likely to understand why people behave the way they do. But of course there are problems with this. If the researcher is part of the system it is difficult to see how the researcher can be objective about the system. Invariably participants in a system interpret their values, attitudes and actions in the context of the values, attitudes and actions of the system. So for participant observation there is always a question about the objectivity of the data that are collected. One can try to minimise this effect by careful training but the effect cannot be eliminated altogether. There can also be an ethical problem. If for example one is researching administrative behaviour in a school and sees behaviours that are contrary to professional norms—what should one do?

There are no detailed rules about planning ethnographic observations but there are some general principles. Clearly the observations need to be detailed enough for one to understand what is being studied. It is unlikely, for example, that observing one staff meeting for ten minutes on one day will enable us to fully understand the administration
of the school. In an ideal case one would be present and observing in the school every
day for weeks on end. Another approach would be to prepare an observation schedule
so that one observed many different aspects of administrative behaviours in many
different contexts. It is not too difficult to prepare such a schedule but, because schools
are very dynamic systems, there is no guarantee that the events that one wants to
observe will actually occur at the times we have planned for our observations. In a strict
sense we have only one chance. We cannot return to exactly the same situation. We
cannot guarantee that we will be thorough with our observations but we take as much
care as we can.

The ethnography used in this study was realist rather than critical ethnography. Realist
ethnography assumes that by very careful observation we can write a report of the ‘real’
situation. There are ethnographers (Anderson, 1987) who argue that this isn’t possible.
They argue that whenever we observe a situation, we interpret what we observe in the
light of our past experience. In this way the ‘reality’ that we see is a construct.
Furthermore, whenever we observe, there is some form of power relationship between
the observer and the observed. This critical ethnography was important in my study to
the extent that I had to analyse as best I could the power relationship between the
teachers and myself. We cannot do perfect ethnography but we can do careful
ethnography.

6.11 KEEPING RECORDS

It is a tedious but absolute requirement that the researcher keeps records of the
observations. This is often in the form of ‘field notes’, but audio and video recordings
can be helpful, as can be photographs.

6.12.1 TAPE-RECORDING

How the tape-recorder functions is dependent not only on its technical
attributes but also on the use made of them. Hence, appreciation of both the
context in which the tape-recorder is used, as well as the practice – the social
way(s) in which the technology has been shaped – helps inform our
understanding of its mediating functions (Thompson, 1996; p. 3).

In any functioning school the amount of data that one could collect about any aspect of
school life is overwhelming. Even with clear observational goals it is impossible to do anything but sample the data field. One means of capturing observational data is to use a tape-recorder. Any means of recording conversations is to a greater or lesser extent intrusive. If the researcher takes notes, it is perfectly obvious to the informant. The person may find this disconcerting for several reasons — the fluency of the conversation may be affected, note taking may be seen as an invasion of privacy, or the person might associate note taking with a scientific experiment — all of which are undesirable. These effects can be reduced by careful preliminary discussions but it is doubtful if the researcher can ever know if they have been completely eliminated. The tape recorder is an even more obvious ‘apparatus’ and has obvious drawbacks. However, it does have the great advantage of providing a verbatim record with all its linguistic and some para-linguistic richness. For this reason I decided that I would use a tape-recorder when it was appropriate to do so — together with written notes.

6.11.2 PHOTOGRAPHS
Photographs can be a useful record of events (Walker, 1981; Gee & Ullman, 1998). However, they really need extensive notes for their interpretation. Their instantaneous quality is both a strength and a weakness. I learnt that the most useful photographs were those that showed student-student and student-teacher interactions. The on-task photographs were generally less useful.

6.11.3 REFLECTING
Reflection is a complex idea (Leino, 1993; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Taggart & Wilson, 1998). In its most elementary form reflection is little more than a ‘me too’ activity in which people empathise with each other over some incident of mutual interest. A more useful and complex form of reflection involves sharing of information, mutual attempts to understand the significance of the information from several different perspectives, thinking about the implications of these interpretations for one’s practice, theorising about adaptive behaviour and planning actions that one could take. In a sense this is an ideal and our real-life reflective episodes varied from very short remarks to extended discussions about the effects of our teaching.

I planned to have regular reflective discussions with my research team and keep records
of these discussions. I hoped that these reflective discussions would focus on key observations that we had made during the professional development program. The research team met regularly to share impressions of student progress and to plan for the next session’s teaching-learning. I usually had some key issues in mind to discuss. If these emerged naturally in the discussion I was very pleased. When they did not emerge in the flow of conversation I raised them explicitly and explained why I thought that they are important.

One of the goals of the reflection process was to recall action as it was recorded in observation, and to make sense of processes, problems, issues, and constraints noted in the observation periods. During the reflection, there were several periods of discussion among participants. These had an evaluative aspect, in the sense that we judged the actions in terms of desirable or undesirable effects and suggested ways of enhancing the teaching of English language as a foreign language in Thailand.

6.11.4 WRITING

There are many ways to characterise research. For example, in this study I really learnt to think of research as decision-making. I also learnt that research is about detail, detail and detail. In yet another sense research is about writing. In this study there were several kinds of writing:

- note-taking during the discussions and during the classroom observations
- transcription of part or all of the audio-tape record
- journal writing
- writing the doctoral thesis
- writing of conference papers.

Research writing needs to be focused, detailed, accurate, and timely. It was not always easy to meet these criteria. Even though I had a vested interest in the research I often found that my writing was inadequate on at least one of these criteria. My colleagues in the research team had even more difficulty.
6.12 ITERATION AND IMPROVEMENT
The question arises in action research as to how many cycles one ‘should’ do. Action research is an iterative process aimed at improvement of one’s practice. The number of cycles is therefore determined by practical factors such as the acceptable level of improvement (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992), and the time and resources available. In the case of the present research I decided to use three phases (rather than use the pure action research terminology - cycles). In the first phase I worked with teachers in schools to explore the teaching and assessment of English. In the second phase I organised a professional development program for twenty teachers so that we could share our experiences in the teaching and assessment of English. In the third phase I returned to the schools to work with teachers who had taken part in the professional development program.

6.13 QUALITY OF THE DATA
In this research the data were snapshots of a dynamic reality and, in a sense, they were not reality itself. As one collects these snapshots the research questions take on new meanings and one attempts to create new realities by interpreting the data and acting on the interpretations. The research process is therefore:

enmeshed with the researcher’s engagement with the participants, and their texts, such that theory is grounded through negotiation rather than discovery (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998, p. 65).

The essential question to be asked is whether the data that one collects are as good as they can be. These data are not facts and in a real sense they are ephemeral. What can we do to ensure that our data are of the highest quality possible? Typically, we try to have multiple perspectives on the same event. For example, we might have three observers instead of one – uncommon but possible. More commonly we try to combine field notes with photos and recordings.

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) proposed five standards that one might use to assess the quality of one’s data:

- Standard 1 the fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and
analysis techniques

- Standard 2 the effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques
- Standard 3 alertness to and coherence of prior knowledge
- Standard 4 value constraints
- Standard 5 comprehensiveness.

When I examined my research plan against the first standard (the fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques) I thought that there were rational links between questions, data and analysis. The questions concerned the content and pedagogy designed for this purpose and we collected data on its effects. We treated the data as snapshots of a dynamic reality rather than as facts. So, I believe that the data would meet the first standard.

The second standard (effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques) is a judgment about the adequacy of specific techniques. Although our data might in some cases have something in common with realist ethnography (Wood & Knight, 1988) much of the time we were in active dialogue with each other and with the students. It was our judgment that this kind of dialogue was much more appropriate than formal interviews or questionnaires. I believe that the data would meet the second standard.

Were we alert to prior knowledge of attempts at improvement of the teaching of English as a foreign language? Because of my interest in research, my knowledge of the literature was more comprehensive than that of other members of the research team. Even so, it was comparatively limited because the specific literature on the teaching of English as a foreign language in Thailand was quite limited. Nor was the literature particularly coherent because it varied on every dimension that one could think of. Nevertheless, there were some generalities that we followed and to this extent the data approached the third standard.

Standard four may be an unduly constraining standard in that all research takes place in a values framework of some kind. The question is the extent to which this framework
distorted the data. I think that there is not much doubt that the Buddhist ethos within which we worked had an effect on the extent to which we really were frank with each other in examining our data. It is normal for Thai people to be agreeable, to avoid direct confrontation, critical analysis and criticism. It is therefore quite difficult even with people knowledgeable about western intellectual traditions to be critical with each other. This real effect was in part balanced by the thesis-driven nature of the research – we did not have a hypothesis to support or prove. As trained teachers we also knew that we would observe a wide range of behaviours and that these would be typical of teaching situations. There was never any question of discarding data because it didn’t ‘fit’. The data therefore approached standard four on some dimensions and met or exceeded it on others.

Making judgments about the comprehensiveness of one’s data is difficult. One can never capture everything that might be significant and one probably cannot ignore everything that is insignificant. We certainly focused our observations on events likely to have a bearing on the assessment of improvement but we did not restrict ourselves solely to this. The data that we collected enabled me to construct an account that needed minimal negotiation for agreement. On this basis I think the data met standard five to the extent that one could hope for in practitioner research.

In addition to these standards we followed Jeans (1997) and used his five practical things that one can do to try and ensure that the data are as good as they can be:

- know why you are collecting the data and what use you will make of it
- do everything that you can do to ensure that participants are committed to the research project
- make it as easy as you can for the participants to generate data
- use multiple sources
- check for consistency.

We used these as general principles in all of our data collection.

6.13.1 VALIDATION

Validation in participatory action research is accomplished by a variety of methods
(especially those reported in methodological literature of interpretive enquiry (Wolcott, 1992) including:

- the triangulation of observations and interpretations
- by establishing credibility among participants and informants
- by participant confirmation
- by the deliberate establishment of an ‘audit trail’ of data and interpretations, and
- by testing the coherence of arguments being presented in a ‘critical community’ or a community of ‘critical friends’ whose commitment is to testing the arguments and evidence.

This is typically an extended process of iteration between the data, the literature that informs the study (substantively and methodologically), participants in the study, and ‘critical friends’ and others with an informed interest in the study. That is, validation is an explicit process of dialogue; it is not achieved by adherence to a fixed ‘procedure’.

Validation in participatory action research can only be achieved if there are appropriate communicative structures in place throughout the research and action that allow participants to continue to associate with and identify with the work of the collective project of change. Further, validity of reporting (including authenticity and credibility) is achieved through:

- explicit recognition that this account is just one among several defensible accounts that might be presented
- presentation of, and attention to, the voices and views of participants, including their differences and agreements
- careful attention to ensure that otherwise unheard voices (for example, of disenfranchised groups) are given expression
- explicit theoretical effort to comprehend the ways in which participants have come to describe their life worlds, engage it with others, and enact their work practices, for example, through processes of deconstruction and critique
- demonstrated understanding of the relevant substantive and methodological literature and the ways in which these frame both questions and practices
• explicit iteration between the data, the literature and the practical and interpretive activities of the researchers questioning within the study the ways in which both the research question and the methodology used are framed by the relationship between the researcher and his or her institutional obligations

• deliberate attention to the planned (and incidental) reflexivity of the study, its catalytic effect on change and improvement, through intermediate reporting to its audiences, and through the relationship between. The researcher(s) and others whose work is reported (or otherwise affected).

Above all, it is important to remember that validity is a property of inferences, not of research or of research design per se (House, Mathison & McTaggart, 1989). That is, validity is a property of the interpretations and conclusions people make of information and the theoretical frameworks that guide its collection and use. In participatory action research, these are inferences that are drawn by others as well as the researcher, and the presentation of the study should typically be quite rich with voices and observations to help readers come to their own conclusions, or generate their own 'readings' (Lather, 1986, 1993). There is a need (Lather, 1993) to go beyond the views of validity expressed and implicit in the traditional empirical conceptualisations of validity (Cook & Campbell, 1979) and also their qualitative research counterparts, for example, in Guba and Lincoln (1985), Yin (1989) and Wolcott (1992).

As Walker (1980) pointed out, a commitment to the collection of definitions of a situation and the portrayal of multiple realities transfers the problem of validity to audiences and respondents. The crosschecking done by the researcher to assure the coherence of the study is probably better referred to as seeking 'recognisability' and endorsement against such criteria and 'fairness, relevance and accuracy' as is often the case in naturalistic evaluation studies (Kemmis & Robottom, 1981).

Regardless of the form of action research that one uses, there is the same obligation to do all that one can to ensure that the data that are collected in qualitative methods are at least as meaningful as the data collected in quantitative methods. The quality of data will be influenced by the methods that are used to collect it. For example, if we just ask
students. Did you like our classes today? We might well get a simple yes or no answer. This would not be very helpful unless we explored our mutual understandings of what ‘like’ means, and unless we explored what aspects of the class we were talking about, and unless we explored why they liked the class. One can see that the initial question leads to a dialogue with the participants rather than allocating them a reactive role as in say, filling out a questionnaire.

6.14 TECHNIQUES FOR ANALYSING DATA

The processes of analysis involve a dynamic relationship between the literature, theory, methods, and findings, such that the research questions and interpretations are constantly changing in the light of new experiences (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998).

Data and meaning are different things. In this research we constructed meaning by interpreting data. The process used generally followed the interpretive framework developed by Burgess (1985):

- we had a focus on the observed present
- I had a theoritical framework
- the research involved close, detailed intensive work intimately involving the researchers
- we obtained participant accounts of the workplace setting
- our observations and extended conversations formed the basis of our interpretations
- our notes and or journals were important sources of data
- our decisions about the collection of data were determined by the thesis
- the research and the teaching were on a continuum.

We also knew that the way that we interpreted the data is affected by one’s relationship to the data. This relationship is dynamic and is different for different participants and is affected by age and experience, social and professional status, and certainly by one’s intellectual culture. In writing my thesis I constructed an evidence-based account of the effects of our attempts to improve the teaching of English in Khon Kaen. The evidence
I collected came from my colleagues and the students. I used this evidence in the construction of my narrative. However, I was not a totally impartial observer simply collecting facts and reporting them. I am a Thai person and I am therefore pre-disposed to view events in a particular way. When I took these factors into account I concluded that the very best that I could do was to describe a social reality in a way that was consistent with the data that I collected.

6.15 TECHNIQUES FOR REPORTING DATA

I wanted my report to serve two purposes. I wanted it to be an interpretive narrative of what happened, and why it happened. I also wanted it to reflect McTaggart’s (1997) conceptual referents. That is, I wanted to answer some or all of the following:

- How have things changed?
- What has not changed?
- What has been confirmed?
- What has been ignored?
- What has been problematic?

An interpretive narrative depends on understanding the points of view of those are the focus of the investigation. In some cases it is possible to rely on documentation but in this research much of the data came from the participants in the research. There is no absolute way on ensuring that the narrative one constructs is the best possible narrative account. One has to stand back and examine the coherence and plausibility of the narrative. The process of learning to construct a coherent and plausible narrative has been a major task for me.

6.16 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the concept of methodology and detailed the research methods used in my dissertation research. The concepts involved are complex and there is often no absolute way of identifying one set of techniques (to the exclusion of others) that will constitute the method to be used in a particular study. For this reason I have avoided terms such as case study in preference to using the idea of method as a rational
purpose and a set of techniques. One of the major sources of data in this research was the perceptions of the various participants in the research. Using participant perceptions raise a number of problems, particularly in the matter of the quality of the data. Care was taken in collecting the data to collect the best data that was possible under the circumstances. The use of a research team contributed to the validation of the data. The next chapter will present the research findings.
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

This chapter reports on the three phases of research into improving English language teaching. Phase one involved working with classroom teachers to develop teaching strategies and assessment techniques based on behavioural objectives derived from the 1996 Curriculum. Phase two incorporated the development and implementation of a professional development program focussing on authentic learning and student portfolios. Phase three focused on the speaking and listening objectives in the English Course for grade seven (Eng 011-012) and the development of suitable activities and assessment methods.

7.1 PHASE ONE: MINA SCHOOL

Prior to our work in Mina school the research team met several times to consider what activities we would use, what observations we would make, and who would make them. We focused on portfolios as a means of accumulating student work that could be used for assessment purposes. We also selected and or developed thirty activities that could be used in the classroom. The activities were articulated with the appropriate behavioural objectives and were designed to be part of the students portfolios of English language progress. We agreed with Shaklee, Barbour, Ambrosc and Hansford (1997) that the students portfolios were to:

- serve as the source for evaluating overall student performance
- be a source of data to inform instruction
- provide data for reporting progress
- help identify special needs
- be a form of accountability.

We also considered whether the portfolio should include the student's best work, typical work, or samples of all of their work. Kan raised some assessment problems:

Most of the behavioural objectives focus on speaking and listening skills. The best assessment would be individual practice and observation and recording. I do not have enough time for this. I teach five grade seven classes - each with about forty students. For this reason, I randomly check
during the classroom activities. I have had to assume that this could represent the students' achievement.

The research team discussed this issue. I suggested we think about alternative classroom activities and classroom assessment. We decided that, in this research, the students' portfolios should be used for formative assessment (not the summative assessments made at mid-term and end-of-term). We also decided to keep two portfolios for each student. The working portfolios (WP) would contain all of the students' tasks in their English classes. The final portfolio (FP) would contain selected tasks. The tasks included in the final portfolio were chosen to represent groups of behavioural objectives. Every three weeks each student had to select their best task from a group of tasks that were based on similar behavioural objectives. We also wanted the students to keep journals that would record what they had learnt, what they felt about the activities, and what they thought could be improved.

We made the decision that our focus was to be on formative assessment, (as shown in Table 3 below) and students were to keep individual portfolios.

Teachers were expected to continue to use some formal assessment procedures (such as tests, and quizzes, rather than just informal assessment procedures (such as observations). The academic school group weighted the assessment for the behavioural objectives for the English Curriculum 011-012 (Grade 7) as shown in Table 3:

**TABLE 3: BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVES OF ENGLISH 011-012 (GRADE 7)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment based on behavioural objectives</th>
<th>Mid-term assessment</th>
<th>Affective assessment</th>
<th>Final assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formal assessment is used for mid-term and final assessment. This is usually a written question and answer test or a multiple-choice test. The total weight of these two parts is seventy percent. Thus, the other thirty percent is assessed by informal means. Affective assessment is done by observation. Hence there is considerable flexibility in assessing the behavioural objectives.
Table 4 illustrates the form of the behavioural objectives approved by the school group:

**TABLE 4: AN ILLUSTRATION OF BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral objective</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 express thanks, feelings and wishes, ask permission</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 describe pictures, diagrams and objects.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = two activities based on this objective

We planned classroom activities and assessment procedures according to the behavioural objectives. Table 5 shows the purpose/content of five of the tasks that we designed to assess student performance against the behavioural objectives. The complete set of thirty activities is shown in Appendix B.

**TABLE 5: BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVES AND ASSOCIATED PURPOSES/CONTENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Behavioural objective</th>
<th>Purposes/content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.3 .2.1</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focussing on behind, in front of, next to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1.3 2.1 4.3</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focussing on far, near</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1.4 1.2</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures left, right, snail, lady bug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focusing on short, long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4.3 1.4</td>
<td>Check understanding of the teacher's commands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were forty students in Kan's grade seven class, fourteen boys and twenty-six girls. Most of them had come to Mina from local primary schools. They had started learning English in grade five. Only one or two of the students had a useful knowledge of English. This was because they had been attending schools in another province where English was taught from grade one. There were no children with recognised disabilities in this class. The average age of the students was thirteen years. There were no children from minority ethnic groups. None of them came from homes in which English was
spoken. Few if any of them watched English language programs on television. When I went to the school to explain what we were going to do, the students seemed very excited about the activities. In my journal I made the following note:

I went to Mina secondary school today. I talked about portfolios to grade seven students. Then I asked each of them to write a journal entry at the end of every English class. The students seemed excited to get a large colourful folder and a notebook.

As some of the activities we designed were unfamiliar to Kan, Tim gave a demonstration lesson (20-6-96). He encouraged student involvement, and participation by the classroom teacher. The number of students participating increased as the lesson progressed.

For the purposes of illustration, details of four of the activities are shown, together with our evaluation of their effectiveness in Appendix C.

In summary, the evaluation of each lesson illustrated the satisfaction of my research participants on these classroom activities and assessment activities as detailed in topic 7.3.

7.2 PHASE ONE: KITA SCHOOL

The work that we did at Kita school used similar activities to those at Mina. For this reason and because of space limitations I have simply outlined the content of three lessons in Appendix D.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM PHASE ONE
7.3.1 LOCUS OF CONTROL

It was very clear in all the work that we did together at Mina and Kita schools that simply discussing innovation and change is not sufficient to make a major difference in a teacher's behaviour. It was partly that the tradition of teacher-centredness is so strong that at a time of stress (such as working in a research context) it was almost natural to fall back on to strategies that one was comfortable with. This was not the only affect however. The space available in the classrooms is often not enough to do more than
have the students stand up, or talk to the person next to them, or work in row groups etc. The provision of adequate teaching-learning space is basic but not trivial.

Over the course of the thirty lessons it was apparent that Kan and Sira gained confidence in using the activities that we had designed to meet the behavioural objectives. They also used a variety of assessment activities, including peer assessment, self-assessment, and group assessment.

Kan:

It was hard for me to correct every task of my students alone. I had five classes in this semester. Each class had about forty students. I found that letting the students assess their friends' achievement helped me a lot. It reduced my work and also a check on the accuracy of my observations.

The students quickly developed an understanding of group activities and informal assessment. They learnt that this form of continuous assessment was useful for them and that if they did their best in every task, they would meet the criteria and not fail. Their stress levels were reduced and there was little or no cheating.

We were convinced (from their observations) that group work facilitated the sharing of understanding among students. It was also clear that some of the activities needed to be improved—particularly if they were to be used by teachers who were not part of the research team. This issue was taken in phase three.

7.3.2 GROUPS

When one talks about groups it is easy to think of students working collaboratively in groups of five or six sitting together around individual tables. This just wasn't possible in my research. There wasn't the space for this. So group work in a Thai classroom often means working in rows, or working in a group of girls, or boys (without physically relocating). It could be argued that the class could be held outside the classroom. The argument would be reasonable but would almost unknown in Thai schools.

7.3.3 EVALUATION

The learning activities that we used in this study might seem very elementary but in the Thai context they were quite novel. This can be seen in the students' comments and in
the teachers' comments. The notion of portfolios was also novel and although we put a lot of time and effort into them they were still quite secondary to the formal class tests.

7.3.4 ACTIVITY LEARNING

There was no doubt at all that the students enjoyed and learnt from the various activities that we used in the research as shown in Appendix C and D. Equally, there was no doubt that we, as teacher-researchers, could have made better choices with our selection of materials. We tended to look for ready-made illustrations when in fact it would have been better to design our own. For example, the simple sheets we used for left and right worked better after we coloured one of each pair. This was a very simple change but it illustrates just how careful one needs to be when teaching a second/foreign language. The rule of thumb seems to be that the materials one uses need to be as simple as possible (consistent with one's objectives and motivational effects) and thoroughly tested before using them with classes. Despite these difficulties, English language teaching will benefit from the inclusion of such activities.

7.3.5 PORTFOLIOS

Every three weeks, we let the students have about fifteen minutes in class to select representative tasks. They pasted the selected tasks in their large drawing books and wrote a short self-evaluation. Most students understood the purposes and were happy with the activities. However, the low achieving students found it difficult to make a selection. I asked them to select whatever they liked and to try to say why they had found it difficult. Their reasons ranged from choosing the wrong colour, to worries about the quality if their drawings to not understanding the content of the lesson. Portfolios were a new experience for teacher and students. Most students were enthusiastic but it became apparent that some weaker students needed more guidance.

Here are some samples of self-evaluation.

Wirat (M12):

I chose this task because I did not understand it. If it is possible, I would like the teacher to explain it to me again. I also want to get a high score next time.

Pawadee (F131):
I am proud of this task because I got ten out of ten. Next time I will try to keep my high score like this.

Some students lost some tasks from their working portfolios. We then let them select from the remaining tasks that covered the behavioural objectives in the curriculum. There was a suggestion that the teacher design more than one task for each objective to minimise this problem.

At the end of the semester, Kan listed the selected tasks of each student in the final portfolios and assessed the quality of their work. This was done against predetermined criteria.

We also let the students take their final portfolios home to show their parents. We invited parents to comment if they wished. Some of the parents did write brief comments expressing interest in portfolios as a way of bringing home and school closer together:

*Jitra (F30):*

> It was quite interesting to see a collection of my son's tasks. He seemed proud of it. Sometimes he showed me after school. I used to hear him practice reading English at home once or twice.

*Sukanda (F34):*

> My daughter likes to learn English. She usually tells me about the classroom activities. She likes singing and playing games. This portfolio is a collection of her best tasks. I would like to have it for other courses.

### 7.4 Phase Two: The Professional Development Program

The central activity in the second phase was the development and implementation of a professional development program for a group of English language teachers. The aim was to bring some teachers together so that we could share with them what we had been doing and so that we learn from their classroom experience.

In this phase the research team was expanded to include Kan (Mina), Sira (Kita), Hayden Sharp, an English language teacher from the Khon Kaen Vitej Suksa bilingual school, the research assistants and myself.

Although the research assistants were not experienced researchers I considered them to
be part of the team because they were genuinely interested in the research, they valued the research experience, it widened the scope of those affected by my project, and because they made many insightful contributions throughout the planning and delivery of the program.

7.4.1 PREPARING THE RESEARCH TEAM

The work in this phase started with an in-house training program for the research team to ensure that all members understood the nature of the research and the strategies to be used to collect data. This was necessary because the research team had had very little research experience — particularly of this kind. This program consisted of ten activities. I assessed the level of their understanding through face-to-face interviews. I have chosen five activities as examples of the in-service program and summarised them in Appendix E.

By the end of the training session, all of my research assistants felt that their understanding of how to use the interview-conversation technique was well developed — although one or two still had some reservations about their own competence. The discussions after each of the activities were very useful for them. The difficulties they had experiencing in doing the activities assisted them in the careful planning of the data collection for the professional development program. This can be seen in their comments:

Jack (M26):

I learned that the human memory cannot remember all details. The best data collection technique is listening, remembering, taking notes, and tape recording. It needs particularly careful application of the technique if one is to get sincere responses. In some cases, the same question to the same person may get a different answer if asked by a different interviewer. I am completely confident that I can get the required data information from the participants in our professional development program.

Joy (F26):

I have learned something about action research, interview techniques, and tape transcribing techniques. The other important principle that I have learnt is the importance of building a good relationship with the interviewee. What concerned me about the PD day was how to prepare the best questions in order to find out what we need to know.
Mint (F25):
Interview-conversation contribute to a non-formal atmosphere. Sometimes the conversations (in our activities) were not about the interview issues but we soon came back on track again. I am ninety percent sure that I can handle the PD day. The other ten percent depends on the co-operation of the interviewees. If it is possible, I would like to spend more time on training activities.

Nan (F24) agreed with Mint that we should increase time for the training course:
A longer training course would help build up my confidence. I also need the complete documents and schedule for the PD day.

Ooy (F23):
I learned the advantages and the disadvantages of each technique: interview, interview-conversation and social talk.

Include something like this reflect the value and success of the in-service with some participant comments as evidence—not too many. My overwhelming impression was that everybody participated wholeheartedly in the training activities and was keen to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of every technique that we used. I felt a great sense of satisfaction when I observed their involvement. For the first two or three activities there was almost a sense of astonishment that I was not giving them a pile of handouts. If the activities were so important surely there must be handouts! It did not take them very long to understand that learning by doing was the most effective method.

7.5 PURPOSES OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
We hoped that during the program the teachers would:
- examine and reflect on some individual authentic learning (IAL)
- examine and reflect on some co-operative authentic learning (CAL)
- consider IAL and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
- consider CAL and TEFL
- consider portfolio assessment in English language classes
Before we actually delivered the program, we asked some of the participants what they
were expecting. In summary, they expected to:

- learn about new teaching methods, collaborative learning, child-centered learning
- learn more about assessment procedures particularly student portfolios
- share their own experience with colleagues
- further their career opportunities.

When we heard these expectations we made some small adjustments to the content and process of the program.

7.5.1 ORGANISING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The next step was to attend to practical matters such as locating a venue, advertising organising a venue, arranging refreshments, and identifying a cameraman. The participants in the professional development program were to be teachers from the same academic school group. With the co-operation of the teachers and administrative staff in the school, we prepared invitation letters to nine schools in the school group. We expected that about twenty teachers would attend the professional development program. We were able to use a meeting room in the Khon Kaen General Education Provincial Office (next door to the school). Staff from my university were asked to record the day's events on video.

7.6 DATA COLLECTION

As part of the training program for the research team we considered just what data we needed, when we would collect the data, and how we would collect the data. We decided that we would collect data at the start of the program, after each major session, and at the end of the program. We had three sources of data: individual interviews with the participants, observations that we made during the sessions, and a video record of the various sessions. We were particularly interested in the participants’ perceptions of the value of the activities that we were doing with them. So a good deal of the data consisted of interview protocols.

The data collected demonstrated that there was a large gap exists between what teachers do and the rather small innovations that we proposed. When I compare these data with
my conversations with many teachers over twenty years this finding seems to be a realistic representation of a more general problems.

In the discussions Hayden explained that these activities did not have to be used in every lesson. If they were used once or twice a week it would be beneficial for students and teachers. Despite this comment it was clear that at least half of the participants seemed to be opposed to the idea of child-centred learning or active learning in the way that we had demonstrated. They appeared to believe that teachers should teach, and not just act as a facilitator. Of course, the idea that the teacher only be a facilitator was never our intention and was never mentioned. This attitude (held for whatever reason) might be partly justified by the cramped conditions of the schools and the lack of English confidence and competence. On the other hand we will not be able to improve the teaching of English unless we can overcome this attitude.

It is clear that no matter how small the innovation is, teachers will be divided in their willingness to change current practice. Certainly the students vary in ability—that is a human condition but many teachers see this variation as an impediment to their work. Their mindset is, as Hayden said, focused on teaching (and on a certain kind of teaching) and not on student learning. Fortunately in every professional development program that I have been involved with, there have one or two teachers who are not overwhelmed by what is and want to explore what might be.

7.7 STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The program started with registration and a welcome ceremony conducted by the Principal of Kham Kaen Nakorn School. After an initial mini-lecture the participants were involved in various activities designed to increase their understanding of interactive pedagogic strategies. The content was based on the model introduced in chapter five:
The details of the program are included as Appendix F.
Although the structure of the program was recognisably Thai, the actual conduct of the program was quite novel. In each session the participants had an active role. Even when there was mini-lecture the participants interacted with each other and with the presenter.

7.8 CONCLUSIONS FROM PHASE TWO: PARTICIPANTS PERCEPTIONS
According to the purpose of the professional development program and the structure of the activities on that day, I could categorized the participants as follows:

7.8.1 AUTHENTIC LEARNING
Paitoon (F36) observed that the idea of authentic learning was:

what we normally use in some lessons. It is not a new idea but talking to people today has increased my confidence to use it more often than I have before.

Tippawan (F35T) thought that individual authentic learning would be best used with high achieving students:

I am not sure that we can use with this strategy with low achievement groups. Because they are often too shy to express any comment. It would take time for these students to learn to participate in the activities. Mixed ability groups might overcome some of the problems.
Suthida (F34T) also focused on student ability:

The difficulty in implementing this idea would be the students ability. Even twenty-six letters are hard to remember. How could they learn [English] grammar?

7.8.2 CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE

Patcharin (F55T) took up a deeper problem:

It is very difficult to achieve lasting outcomes in professional development programs for English language teachers in Thailand. This is because the teachers lack confidence in speaking English. There is no problem understanding the new pedagogy but its implementation is limited by the teachers confidence and competence. We need to try these activities many times and develop our own competence.

Sitti (M25T) was resigned in the face of what he saw as overwhelming difficulties:

The theory is just the opposite of the practice. You just cannot work with individual students on individual tasks. I have found that the teachers teaching and the students listening is the best way.

7.8.3 THEORY AND PRACTICE

The importance of practical work in the program can be seen in Pongsri’s (F34) remark:

The demonstrations gave me some ideas of how to implement authentic learning in my classroom. I enjoyed this part of the program very much.

Supa (F42) was also quite positive:

It is certainly possible to apply these ideas in my classroom. It will probably take times for my students to participate fully in such classroom activities.

7.8.4 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

Ratana (F37) noted the ongoing difficulty of listening to native English speakers:

The guest speaker was a foreigner. It was hard to understand his accent. Translating every word slowed the activities. The activities he designed were probably designed for primary students. I didn’t think we could use them with secondary school students.

Junchai (F40) highlighted the problem of contextual support:

It was good for me to have a chance to share ideas with my friends. I enjoyed the activities but it would be hard to use them with my students. They lack confidence. They have no opportunity to use English in their
daily lives. Their family background does not support learning English.

7.8.5 CONTENT-DRIVEN PEDAGOGY

The importance that teachers place of covering the syllabus is not confined to Mongkol (F29) when she said that:

I was quite concerned about subject content as it is written in the syllabus. To play games, to sing songs, or to produce Big Books may waste your time.

Towards the end of the program we again collected data from the participants. It was not all positive but it was positive enough for the research team to believe that it had been worthwhile:

Penchan (F28):

I learned lots of things from the activities. I will try them in my classroom.

Paitoon (F36):

The benefit of being attending this workshop was learning about pedagogy and assessment by using students portfolios. I liked the presentation of the research team.

Some of the misunderstandings that teachers have about portfolios are illustrated by Supap (F34):

I will try to plan some classroom activities by using either IAL or CAL and keeping the students work in portfolios. My former understanding was that portfolio assessment must cover all the behavioural objectives of a course. And that students would not have an examination. This program has broadened my understanding.

Suthida (F34) indicated that she would try to influence the way that assessment was done at her school:

I will try using student portfolios and disseminate the ideas to other teachers in my school. The school administrators generally write the reports of what we learn in PD programs. These reports are not read by anybody. Nothing changes. I will try to show that portfolios can work.

Mongkol (F29):

I got some new ideas about self-assessment, and parent-assessment. I would like to try these ideas with my students.
At the end of the day Hayden expressed a feeling that most of us had:

It was a good experience to share with other teachers. They seemed aware of the necessity of changing as educational reform starts to impact on their professional lives. You could see today that some of the teachers were ready to complain even before they had tried to change their practice. Many Thai teachers prefer ready-made instructional materials. At the same time, they say that it is not possible to do X and Y with the students because of such and such reasons. How can we develop in them a feeling of professional independence?

Thai teachers are middle level public servants in a very hierarchical system. For decades there has been little need to take the initiative because one’s action were largely determined by decisions made by people in authority at a higher level. They have learnt over a very long period that the appearance of change is more important than the change itself. This has worked quite well in the past but it is entirely inadequate in the political, economic and professional climate that is now developing. Thai teachers do have to face significant difficulties—large classes and crowded classrooms, noise from adjacent rooms, inadequate preparation and lack of resources. If however they are overwhelmed by these difficulties, or use them as an excuse to resist change they will rapidly become peripheral. This will be to their own detriment and the detriment of teaching as an emerging profession in Thailand.

On the other hand the national government’s expectations about rapid change in what happens in schools are far too ambitious for what is possible. Their expectation that teachers are quite prepared to adopt the latest wave of change is not based on reality. There is every reason to think that my research, small scale though it is, is indicative of the way teachers in the rural areas of Thailand think about their work. Even with massive expenditure on professional development, changing the culture of Thai schools will take many years. This is no reason not to pursue change. It is every reason to plan carefully and fund adequately.
7.9. PHASE THREE: MINA SCHOOL AND KITA SCHOOL

In the first two phases I learnt a great deal about the design of materials, pedagogical strategies and teacher resistance to change. In this third phase of the research I wanted to return to the classrooms to apply the insights gained from phases one and two to improve the teaching of English. For this reason I formed another research team — this time with two new classroom teachers - Boon and Don (teachers at Mina and Kita school). The new research team (Boon, Don and me) designed a number of classroom activities that Boon and Don trialled in their classrooms.

I had realised that one weak point in the first phase was that students' speaking and listening skills were not individually checked. Besides, there was very little pair work or group work and thus very little opportunity for students to speak English during lessons. We (Boon, Don and me) discussed this in some detail prior to the start of the classroom work in this phase. As a result of discussion with the participants in the professional development program, it was obvious that students needed more speaking and/or listening skill activities. Some teachers commented on the poor participation in classroom activities of low ability groups. We thought that group activities would help the lower competence groups because there is evidence in the literature that co-operative learning groups benefit lower competence learners (Johnson, 1994; Johnson, & Johnson, 1994).

Mr. Boon, Mina school, a grade seven English language teacher was interested in implementing new activities to improve his students' speaking and listening skills and volunteered to be a part of the project. Boon's class had thirty-one students, nine boys and twenty-two girls. They were normally seated in six rows, two rows of boys and four rows of girls.

Mr. Don, Kita school, was a volunteer to implement some new activities to his class. The English lessons were taught in a temporary building near the only permanent building of the school. There were not enough classrooms in the new building. The situation had not altered in five years. There were forty-eight students, twenty boys and twenty-eight girls in the class. Their seats were arranged into six rows. The
classroom was quite crowded with eight students in each row. It was difficult to use any activity that required much movement. Before we started work in the classroom Don, my research partner, was quite concerned about the difficulty of the activities for his students. He suggested that we reduce the difficulty of the tasks for his class. We did this by going over the written materials that we would use and the replacing any words or phrases that Don thought would be too difficult. I would have preferred to use the original materials but Don was the class teacher and was firm in his opinions.

I had little doubt that my presence in the classroom caused Don to pay more attention to individual students than he might otherwise have done. His class was rather crowded, and he told me that this was the reason that he normally sat at his table while his students were doing the activity. Very few students actually came to ask him questions while I was there. Compared to Mina, there was very much less interaction between teacher and students in Don's classes.

The students' average age for both schools was thirteen. These children came from local small villages and most walked to school. Some came by bus and one or two by motorbike. They were from medium to low economic families and while most families had television, few if any, had computers at home.

Each classroom teacher trialled five activities with his students. Each activity was designed to be completed in a fifty-minute period. I observed these activities over a period of five weeks. The observations consisted of the teacher and his pedagogies and the students and their reactions to the learning tasks. The students worked in self-selected groups, usually boys with boys and girls with girls. The details of the activities were shown in the Appendix G (Mina School) and Appendix H (Kita School).

7.10 CONCLUSIONS FROM PHASE THREE

Overall, we felt that the students really did try their best in all of the activities. It is possible that my presence in the room was an additional motivation (I might have been there to check up on them) but Boon did not think that it made any substantial difference.
7.10.1 STUDENTS CONFIDENCE

It took time to develop the students confidence in me. There were not many comments in the first week. After I had been in the classroom for several activities they were more open with me. I promised not to give any individual comments to Boon because some students were quite worried about their scores. To honour this promise I only discussed aggregate comments with Boon. This was very much a compromise because I felt that I had observed behaviours that would have been helpful to discuss with Boon.

7.10.2 OBSERVATION

It was hard for Boon to observe the individual participation in all of the groups. Sometimes he had to explain something to one group and this made it difficult to observe the other groups. I suggested that we use a group assessment form. The structure of the form was:

- How well did the students participate in the activities?
- How clear was the instruction for this activity?
- Who took most part in the activity?
- Who took least part in the activity?
- What is your best impression of today's lesson?
- What would you like to improve for the next time?

7.10.3 STUDENT INTERACTION

It was quite noticeable that as one might expect the first time we did an activity there was a dynamic interplay between motivation, anxiety, novelty, and persistence. With the early activities novelty, anxiety and motivation dominated the students interaction with the activities. Gradually however we noticed that the levels of motivation and anxiety seemed to reduce but the level of persistence seemed to increase (as shown in appendix G and appendix H).
CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter I present the conclusions and recommendations I have drawn from the research. The discussion is organised under the following headings: policy, practice, resources contextual support, professional development and research.

8.1 POLICY

The policy that all children should develop competency in English is not easy to implement in a country where there are major economic and social differences across the provinces. A policy that is quite appropriate for a major city like Bangkok is not likely to be quite so suitable for a rural province such as Khon Kaen. However no politician and no government is going to risk its mandate by advocating lesser policies for the rural provinces than for the urban provinces. Thailand needs to have English a second/foreign language but when it comes to competency in English it is unrealistic to have the same expectations of students going to school in Bangkok and for children going to school in, for example, Roi-et. In Bangkok it is reasonable to hope that English will become a second language for those who live there permanently or semi-permanently. Many parents speak some English and there is reasonable contextual support. In Khon Kaen and the areas around it, few parents speak English and there is little contextual support. Here, it is more reasonable to aim to have the students learn English as a foreign language — at least in the short term.

The broad policy does not need to change but it would be helpful if teachers had the opportunity to set realistic expectations for children in their area, and receive professional development in using appropriate strategies.

8.2 PRACTICE

If Thailand is to have English as a second/foreign language we will need to improve the teaching of English in our schools. The Ministry of Education has recommended that schools should develop communicative competence in their students. My study highlighted that there is a considerable gap between policy and practice. Many teachers have insufficient English language skills and do not use effective pedagogies to teach
English (as shown in the conclusions from phase two and my minor study one: perspectives on English language teaching in Thailand). They teach whatever they know! In some cases what they know consists of fragments of English grammar. In other cases what they know consists of fragments of grammar and a modest knowledge of English pronunciation. In yet another cases what they know consists of isolated English words learnt from sources such as television, supermarket signs, travel brochures. Hence, my first recommendation is that there is a province-by-province audit of the English language skills of teachers. The purpose in doing this is to plan professional development programs that target specific competency groups. Money for professional development is limited so it is essential to use the funds as effectively as possible.

If communicative competency is to remain the goal, teachers need to be very clear about what this involves. It may well be that in some areas early communicative competence might focus on oral production rather than on writing. In other areas the reverse may be true. It is useful to understand the policy as a general goal that can be approached from a number of directions.

Despite all the difficulties teachers will help their students learn English more effectively if they use active pedagogies. There are big classes but this does not mean that all learning has to be passive. Even very simple activities will increase the students interest in English. Schools do have tape recorders and in some cases, video recorders. Students need projects that allow them to use the technology so that they generate their own authentic interviews and news items.

If portfolios are to be used, teachers need to know much more about their compilation and their use in assessment. They also need to be persuaded that there is benefit in using them. At the present time teachers are inclined to think of portfolios as extra work for no basic purpose —the formal tests are still the most important assessment tools. Policies or recommendations that are not an integral part of the teacher’s work are more likely to breed cynicism than to encourage innovation and change.

My research in Australia and in Thailand indicates that the overwhelming proportion of teacher-talk in second/foreign language classes is in the mother tongue rather than in the
target language - English. To increase teaching effectiveness teachers need to use English more frequently in their classes.

8.3 RESOURCES
Schools have textbooks and some teachers prepare/select worksheets. It is clear that these texts and worksheets need to be as unambiguous as possible. In my research we frequently saw children have trouble with the teacher's directions simply because the materials in front of them allowed more than one possibility. This would be valuable for fluent students because it could engender discussion. For beginning students it is mainly a source of frustration and discouragement.

It may be quite unrealistic to recommend smaller class sizes or bigger classrooms nevertheless the national government needs to be reminded that if it is promoting activity learning the students must have space to be active in.

8.4 CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT
All the schools in my province lack adequate contextual support. It would be extremely helpful if each school or group of schools developed a simple policy or set of guidelines for all teachers. These guidelines would remind teachers of something they know well. That is, the more the students are exposed to English the more likely they are to learn English. Teachers could have bilingual signs right through the school, over doors, above the chalkboard, on the windows, outside on the buildings and so on. These could be made by the teachers but it might be more efficient to have them made centrally (in the provincial office). Most schools have public address systems. These could be used to play English language songs, stories, interviews and plays.

8.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH
There is a need for a large-scale systematic professional development program in which teachers experience, for themselves, activities that will encourage learning English. The program needs to be structured so that the teachers themselves contribute as much as possible. It should minimise the use of external experts.
My University cannot afford to provide professional development to all schools in the province and increasingly, professional development programs need to be self-funding. The Faculty of Education can design and deliver professional development programs specifically tailored to teachers' needs. This work needs to be cross-disciplinary because it is not a simple pedagogical matter. It involves materials design, detailed knowledge of assessment, comprehensive pedagogical knowledge and a detailed knowledge of student motivation.

All of this would really only be worthwhile for the Faculty if it is part of a broader research program. The Faculty would need to set up an English language research and professional development committee and prepare a comprehensive program for a period of, say, five years. The program would articulate higher degree teaching, research into the teaching of English and the purposeful professional development of school staff. The program would need to be funded appropriately and this might involve the presentation of a case to the University rather than just to the Faculty of Education.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This research has shown very clearly that the improvement of English language teaching in Thailand is a major task. The most significant and most immediate issue is the English language confidence and competency of schoolteachers. Even with minimal English language competence the teaching could be improved if teachers had a clear idea of what communicative pedagogies meant. It is simply not possible to have a nationwide professional development program for all teachers to improve their competency in English and their English language pedagogy. However, the kind of collaborative research program illustrated here can make a substantial difference if repeated often enough by the universities. It would help a great deal if each university was to develop a systematic research program that involved its higher degree students in collaborative research with schools, aimed at the improvement of English language teaching in Thailand. This would require a change of mindset away from doing research on schools to doing research with schools.
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APPENDIX A
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION - A TYPICAL ENGLISH LESSON

Monday 19 February, 2001, Grade 7.

There were forty-two students in the classroom. The seats were arranged in six rows, with seven students in each row. The teacher was a man of about forty-five years old. He had Bachelor's degree in Teaching English from a Rajabhat Institute. The class started when he arrived at 8.50 am.

8.50 The class leader told his friends to stand up, they said Good morning teacher.
The teacher responded Good morning, How are you?
Students Fine. Thank you.

8.55 The teacher talked in Thai for almost all of the lesson (The English words that he used are shown in italics)
He said Today we will revise how to use verb to do.
He wrote a sentence on the blackboard I swim in the sea.
Then he explained the meaning of the sea in Thai.
He explained that in the final examination the test will have simple questions and some negative sentences.
Looking at the sentence on the board he said I was a subject of a sentence.
Swim was the verb of a sentence.

8.59 How many auxiliary verbs that we have in English? No one answered.
The teacher explained: For verb to be we had is, am, are, was, were.

9.00 Some students talked with their friends. Then the teacher asked
Why don't you pay attention of what I explained?
He wrote He is a boy. on the board and explained that to make a negative sentence, we can put not after the auxiliary verb. He is not a boy.
All together pronounce is not, am not, are not, was not, were not
Besides, you can put not after do to make a negative sentence.
I swim in the sea. became negative by I do not swim in the sea.
or became question by Do I swim in the sea?
The teacher asked the class Do you understand? If you had questions, please raise your hands. There was no questions so he continued the lesson.

9.05 Now practice pronunciation Do I swim in the sea? The class followed his example.
The next example was does. He wrote a sentence He swims in the sea and explained that the students had to notice that swims had s.
If the sentence had singular subject He, She, It, we use does to change a sentence.
He does not swim in the sea. Does he swim in the sea?
Now write down the examples in your notebook. Revise this lesson at home because there will be in the final examination.

9.10 The teacher revised how to use did He wrote a sentence on the board.
He swam in the sea yesterday. Then he said that present tense is swim, past tense is swam. Now write down the sentences.
He did not swim in the sea yesterday. Did he swim in the sea?

The teacher reviewed what he had said:
We use do for present tense, does for present tense with singular subject, and did for past tense

9.15 The class practised the pronunciation of the sentences.
He swims in the sea.
He does not swim in the sea.
Does he swim in the sea?
He swam in the sea.
He did not swim in the sea.
Did he swim in the sea?

9.20 The teacher instructed the class to: Do the exercise on page 74. I will correct everyone's exercise book tomorrow.
# APPENDIX B

## BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Behavioural objective</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>1.3 2.1</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focusing on behind, in front of, next to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1.3 2.1 4.3</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focusing on far, near</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1.4 1.2</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures left, right, snail, ladybug</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Listen to and answer questions about pictures focusing on short, long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4.3 1.4</td>
<td>Check understanding of the teacher's commands</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Answer questions and describe the given picture by using between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1.2 1.3</td>
<td>Answer questions about pictures focusing on words such as heavy, light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>2.3 5.1</td>
<td>Listen to the question and answer about colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>2.3 5.7</td>
<td>Listen to a tape recording then fill complete a worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>5.3 5.6 5.7 5.8</td>
<td>Complete the elephant picture. Complete a conversation and fill the sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>5.8 5.3</td>
<td>A quiz about addition, numbers, countries and nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Revision: have got, some, any, who, whose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>1.3 2.1</td>
<td>Using a picture about full and empty to ask questions and give answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>3.2 1.1</td>
<td>Practise answers to How many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>4.3 1.3</td>
<td>Analyse groups of words</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Study a given picture and answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4</td>
<td>Listen to a story and answer questions</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>4.3 5.3</td>
<td>Games: find words, colours and nationality</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>1.1 1.2 1.3 5.8</td>
<td>Answer questions about in, on, under</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>1.1 1.2 5.1</td>
<td>Sing a song</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>1.2 5.7</td>
<td>Crossword</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>1.2 2.1 3.5</td>
<td>Look at a given picture and answer questions about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>1.2 2.1 3.5</td>
<td>(As above for 23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>2.1 3.5 5.8</td>
<td>Look at a given picture and answer questions about can, can't</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>3.3 3.5</td>
<td>Conversation about time</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>1.2 2.1</td>
<td>True — false game based on a picture</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>1.2 1.3</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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APPENDIX C

PHASE ONE: SOME ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS,
MINA SCHOOL

I Know Everything About This Picture

Description

The objectives for this game were to encourage students to:

- pronounce words accurately about pictures
- explain the meaning of these words
- explain the function of the words
- construct appropriate words and sentences.

The game was based on ten large pictures that Tim had selected prior to the lesson.

Implementation

The class began at 1.00 p.m. The students were sitting in rows. Tim greeted the students and demonstrated how to play the game I know everything about this picture. He then wrote down some sample questions on the blackboard.

- What colour is it?

- How old is he?

- How many people are there in the picture?

- The students practised reading the questions.

Tim then held ten large pictures in his hand. He asked Kan to choose a number from one to ten. She chose number eight. Picture eight was a picture of a farmer ploughing with buffalos. He then encouraged the students to ask questions. Mr. Tim pretended to know everything about that picture. Here are some examples of the questions and answers.

What is the farmer’s name?  Joey.
How old is he?  Twenty-one.
Where does Joey come from?  England
Could he speak Thai?  Yes, he could.
What is the name of the buffalo?  Tuktik
Is Tuktik male or female?  Female.
How old is she?  Three years old.

The students seemed to enjoy the activities. At first there were only a few students asking questions. The second picture was a picture of a big bear sweeping leaves in a forest with a broom. More students participated this time. Here are some examples of questions and answers.

What is the name of the bear?  Linda
Where was Linda borne?  In North America
Can she eat rice?  Yes, she can
Does she have baby?  No, she does not.

Evaluation

Kan and I observed the participation of each student and recorded it on an observation form. At the end of the lesson Tim suggested that each student should write down something that they had learnt about the picture. We used these notes as part of our assessment.

Reflections on this demonstration lesson

Kan and I agreed that the active students had few problems. They enjoyed asking questions and were pleased that they could understand Tim's answers. There were however, some shy or reluctant students. They seemed to lack self-confidence and needed a lot of encouragement from the teacher. Even with encouragement these students were unable to participate to any extent in the game. The large class size might have been a barrier to participation but the active students seemed to have few problems.

When we discussed Tim's lesson with the students, Wanwisa (F12) said that:

Today Mr. Tim came to our class. He could speak Thai and Lao. He was a very funny man. I learned how to ask questions. We enjoyed the lesson very much.

Sunisa (F13) was rather more diffident:

Mr. Tim conducted the game. He seemed to be kind but when he asked questions I felt embarrassed. I was afraid that he would ask me a question.
Ruthairat (F13) articulated a very common problem that Thai students have when they are first exposed to native English speakers:

It was hard to understand Ajarn Tim's accent.

All of the other lessons in phase one at Mina were conducted by Kan. The students' work was collected in their working portfolios.

The next illustrative lesson was taught on August 2, 1996. It was about comprehending and acting on written directions.

**Comprehension of Written Directions**

**Description**

In this activity the students had to follow written directions, and be able to answer questions about the directions.

**Implementation**

The students were seated in six rows of seven students.

The materials were cards with the following words and phrases written (non-cursive) in letters about two inches high:

- clap your hands
- close your eyes
- open your bag
- jump
- stand up
- sit down
- hit your legs (arm, hand)
- scream
- Give [ ] your pen.
- Show [ ] me your hand.
- Bring [ ] your ruler.
- Listen carefully.
- Spell the word book.
Kan first revised the pronunciation and meaning of the words on the cards. She then held up a card and read the words, and asked for a volunteer to act out the words. This was repeated row by row, and individually. When this had been done the students were asked to write down the instructions in their notebooks.

The lesson then moved on to a true-false quiz involving both Kan and me. Kan read the words or phrases from the cards and I acted as a robot carrying out instructions. Sometimes I got the instructions right, sometimes I got them wrong. The students’ task was to assess my actions against the instructions. We did this for fifteen instructions. While we were presenting the material the students had to note down right or wrong (✓ or x) on a sheet that could be put into their portfolios. The students then exchanged sheets and corrected the results.

**Evaluation**

In this lesson the students were responding directly to the teacher and hence it was possible to check each student’s understanding. Kan noted their comprehension and their pronunciation.

The students seemed to enjoy this task and most of them were quite relaxed. The students worked well together and were genuinely interested in the activity. As far as we could see there was no cheating. Kan had set the competency level at ten out of fifteen. On this basis all of the students met the criterion. The students were proud of themselves:

**Jantiwa (F121):**

We learned some instructions. Ajarn Nuchwana was very funny. She acted as a robot following Ajarn Kan words. Sometimes she did the wrong thing then I had to observe very carefully.

**Paladol (M13):**

Today’s lesson was quite easy. I am very proud of my task. I got thirteen of fifteen. Then I met the criterion.

The next lesson was taught on June 27, 1996.

**Far and Near**

**Description**
It was about the prepositions far and near. The materials involved were individual pictures of two sets of tables and chairs, a boy and some trees, and an aeroplane and two kites. The students were seated in six rows of seven students.

Implementation

Kan revised the pronunciation and meanings of words in the pictures. She asked questions about the pictures — emphasising the use of prepositions: Look at the first picture:

- The chair is near the table.
- Now look at the second picture. Is the chair near the table?
- No, it is not. It is far from the table.
- Is this boy stand near the tree?
- Yes, he is.
- Which kite is far from the aeroplane?
- The big one.

She asked as many students as possible. Kan then made a series of statements and the students had to decide which picture best fitted with each statement. The students recorded their choice.

Evaluation

During the class, Kan observed the students’ responses in the pronunciation practice. Kan corrected some of the work individually and told the students to put the work in their portfolio. The rest of the work was corrected after class. By the end of the lesson, she had interacted with most if not all students.

The pictures were shown (by the students’ responses) to be more complex than they needed to be. We had once again underestimated the importance of having very clear, unambiguous pictures in this early stage of learning English. We rectified this problem in later lessons and used simpler, coloured pictures. Kan thought that the lesson was generally useful.

The lesson was not too difficult to teach. It was useful to check their understanding by asking about the pictures. I am not sure that, after a while when the students look back on this task, they will find anything worthwhile in it or not. Also I needed to write down the questions and then
mark their choices.

The students seemed to benefit from the lesson although there were mixed reactions.

Yuwaadee (F13):

This lesson was not too hard for me. I learned the words far and near. Actually, when the teacher explained about objects around the classroom it was easy to understand than looking at the picture. However, checking my understanding after class was a good thing. I am now used to this kind of quiz.

Weerapong (M12):

I enjoyed today's lesson. I got all the answers right. I am very proud of it.

**Left and Right**

**Description**

This lesson was taught on June 27, 1996. It was about the prepositions left and right.

The purpose of the lesson was to practise the use of particular prepositions. The lesson was based on a behavioural objective that required the students to use prepositions in simple sentences and answer questions about the sentences. The materials that we used were individual pictures of three elephants, three birds and three cats.

**Implementation**

Kan handed out the pictures to every student. She explained that we would identify the position of the things in the picture. Kan started by revising the pronunciation and meaning of words related to the pictures. She emphasised the use of left and right.

She then revised the meanings of the words: gloves, hat, ice cream cone, slipper, apple, carrot, lady-bugs, snail, spoon and fork, socks, lettuce, banana, rose-apple, monkey, ball. She did this by asking and answering questions about the picture. For example:

What is this? It is a hand.

How many hands are there in the pictures? There are two.

How many birds are they in this picture? There are three.

Kan moved on to tell the students to colour the pictures that left and right pairs in them (hands, slippers, and socks).
The next eight minutes of the lesson were taken up with questions that focused on prepositions:

Look at the top picture. These are two hands. The blue hand is on the right. The red hand is on the left.

Look at the first picture, the glove is on the left and the hat is on the right.

Is the pencil on the right or left? Left.

Kan then assessed the students' understanding by randomly asking questions of the whole class, row by row, and then individually.

The students wrote down the new words in the blank spaces under the picture.

In the next phase of the lesson Kan asked a number of left-right questions about the picture and the students had to write down left or right depending on the question.

In the last four minutes the students exchanged worksheets and corrected the work —with Kan's help.

They then returned the corrected work and it was put in the student's portfolio.

Evaluation

During the class, teacher observed the students' responses in the pronunciation activities and in answering the questions. She asked nearly every student one or more questions and recorded the performance of those who she thought would need additional teaching. She also checked the work that had been corrected by each student's partner.

The relational words were difficult for the students. Kan and I found that the students' understanding was improved if we coloured one of the left-right pairs. Here are some student opinions:

Waraporn (F13):

I learned some new words lady bugs, snail, slipper, glove, monkey, lettuce. I could not write down all the words that Ajarn Kan taught me. The lesson was too fast for me, I could not catch up with every word. If it is possible, Ajarn Kan should write the words on the blackboard as we go. This way it would easier for me to copy them in my notebook.

Tongpoon (grade 7, 13, boy)

The lesson was interesting for me. The hardest one is how to remember which is left and right hand.
APPENDIX D

PHASE ONE: SOME ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS - KITA SCHOOL

Numbers

Description

In this lesson the students had to learn to recognise Arabic numbers 10, 20, 100, recognise the words ten, twenty, up to one hundred, and be able to match the numbers and the words.

Implementation

Sira had prepared cards with the individual numbers and words on them prior to the lesson. Sira used a question-answer strategy very similar to that of Kan, but towards the end of the lesson she did have a competition. She stuck the cards on the blackboard and had teams compete to match them correctly. The students competed with enthusiasm. Assessment of the students' work followed the processes observed with Kan.

Evaluation

I thought that the competition really did help the students understanding because of the enthusiasm with which the students took part in the activity and because of the relatively few errors that were made. Although it was a very simple activity it gave the students a chance to be actively involved in their learning. Sira thought that it was a clear indication of what the students had learnt:

In this task, the students showed their understanding of the meanings of the words. I was not sure how to assess individual pronunciation. I thought that working in pairs might be a way to proceed.

Nungruthai (F13):

I enjoyed the activities today. We helped each other in our group work. I was proud that our group showed their unity. When I had to take a test by myself, I felt a bit worried. However, I got them all correct!

Wirat (M12):

We had a self-test about the numbers. It was useful and I enjoyed it very
much. I got all right answers.

Family Tree
Description
The purpose of this lesson was to develop the students' skills in drawing and labelling a diagram. The particular task was to construct a simple family tree.
Prior to the lesson Sira had recorded the following conversation:

Tom: Hello! John. How are you?
John: I am fine. Thank you, and you.
Tom: What are you doing? I am writing a letter to my brother.
John: I have two brothers, Jim and Jack.
Tom: Who is the eldest?
John: Jim is the eldest, then Jack. I am the youngest.
Tom: Do you have sisters?
John: No, I have not.

She had also prepared another conversation about Ladda's family.

Implementation
Sira started by revising words such as brother, sister, mother and father. The students then listened to the first recorded conversation. This was not particularly easy because of noise from the other classrooms. When the students had heard the conversation Sira again checked their understanding of the individual and of the complete text. She then asked one student from each row to go to the blackboard to illustrate the relationships between the people in the conversation. When this was completed the students listened to the other conversation (Ladda) and attempted to draw a family tree. This work was corrected by student pairs exchanging their work.

Evaluation
A major impediment to this lesson and others was the noise from the adjoining classrooms. (The temporary building had no walls).
I thought that, despite the noise, the students enjoyed the activity and, in most cases, achieved the objectives set for the lesson. Neither the concept of a family tree nor the words used were too complicated. From my own questioning I am sure they knew the
meanings of, and relationships between, father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, daughter and son.

Sira thought that:

It was a creative task and a good starting point. Most students like drawing but do not have much opportunity to draw in other subjects except arts.

The students met the objectives of the lesson:

Sumalee (F13):

It was hard to listen from the tape recorder. The loud noise from the other classrooms annoyed me. However, I am proud of my task because there was nothing wrong.

Piyapong (M13):

I learned some words about the family, such as father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, and sister. I liked drawing a family tree.

The Zoo

Description

The purpose of this lesson was to introduce a set of words, zoo, monkey, lion, tiger, elephant, horse, zebra, and have the students use the words in clauses and sentences.

Implementation

Sira had prepared some pictures of a zoo prior to the lesson. She had also written a short conversation on individual worksheets:

Bob: Where's Ben?

Ron: At the zoo. He is looking at the monkeys.

Bob: How many monkeys are there at the zoo?

Ron: There are three big monkeys and two little monkeys

After some pronunciation practice Sira asked the students to divide into pairs to practice reading the conversation. As they did this Sira constantly checked on pronunciation. The students then had to compose their own conversation — about animals in the zoo. Finally, the students were encouraged to draw a picture of their story.

Evaluation
This lesson went very well. The students were very interested in the animals and participated, with enjoyment, fully throughout the lesson. Sira was quite surprised that her students could do this task particularly composing a conversation:

There were less mistakes than I expected in this task. I normally think that my students are poor in English. I am more confident in their learning progress now.

The students enjoyment is evident in Sayunt (M13) comment:

I enjoyed drawing the animals. It was proud of composing a short conversation by myself. I can read and follow my conversation. It was not so hard.

The importance of the pictorial content can be seen in Amara's (F12) words:

My friends and me practiced our own conversation. It was a story about the zoo. I love dogs so I drew five dogs in my picture. Next time I will colour them.
APPENDIX E

PHASE TWO: IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAM

Activity One

This activity was an overview of the research program. We considered issues such as:

- the nature of the research
- differences between social talk, interviews and interview-conversations
- how to keep research records using memory, paper and pencil, and recorders
- how to transcribe a short tape recording
- how to design a short interview-conversation
- how to conduct an interview-conversation
- understanding the structure and purpose of the professional development program
- working together to design a data collection schedule for the professional development program.

Mint (F25):

It was not quite clear what the differences between these words (interview, interview-conversations, and social talk) really were. From my own experience, I feel that an interview is a kind of assessment procedure that is more formal than interview-conversations.

Joy (F26):

All the issues addressed in the workshop will be useful for us to work on the PD day. I am not sure how much training we will need to achieve our purposes.

Activity Two

This was a mini-lecture in which I explained the purpose of the research and the reason for collecting data from the people who would take part in the professional development program.

Acy (F26):

It is quite a good example of collaborative research between university and school. I now have an idea of how to start doing research. The greatest difficulty for me is how to introduce myself to a school without seeming to be an expert. There is usually the feeling of an hierarchical relationship between university people and school teachers.
Jack (M. 26):

I have an idea of what you had done with your first two research participants. The next step is how much data I can get from those attending.

In this activity we divided into pairs. In each pair there was a designated talker and a designated listener. The talkers in each group talked for about two minutes about their early childhood — e.g. where they were born, where they went to school, what they liked to play, how well they did in their school work and so on. No questions were allowed. The listeners in each group had to listen and remember all that is being said, with no notes of any kind. At the end of two minutes the listener told the talker what had been said. The talker assessed the accuracy of the listener’s report.

This was followed with a whole group discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using only memory as a recording device.

The talkers and listeners changed roles and the activity was repeated.

Ong (F25):

Listening without any records - I could get the rough story. I sometimes forgot details or was confused about the order of the data.

Nan (F24):

I felt uncomfortable, I wanted to ask some questions or discuss the data. The process lacked participation.

Jack (M26):

I might have got bored if the story was not interesting. I am not good at remembering every detail. I needed to write down what I heard.

**Activity Three**

This was another paired activity (new pairs). The talking-listening activity was repeated but this time the listener made notes using pen and paper. After an exchange of roles we had a whole group discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using written notes.

Koon (F40):

It was better than the first activities. I got a lot more details.

Ooy (F23):
I sometimes forget to take notes. There was a feeling of being the part of the event. I then listened until the speaker finished their story.

Aey (F26):

I enjoyed asking for more information. However, when I retold the story I could not follow the order. Sometimes the speaker skipped from here to there. It would be better if I prepared the questions so that the conversation could be partly controlled.

**Activity Four**

Using new pairs the talking listening activity was repeated but this time the listener used a tape recorder. The listener then had ten minutes to make written notes from the tape recording. The listener then reported to the to talker. After exchanging roles the activity was repeated. Finally, there was whole group discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using a tape recorder.

Mint (F25):

It was hard to transcribe the tape recording. I have learnt a good deal through the real experience in these activities. Another important factor in interviews is the human relationships. How could you introduce yourself to the interviewees? How could you make them trust you?

Nan (F24):

I learned how to conduct the conversations. We sometimes talked about other topics. Then I had to pull the conversation back to what I actually wanted to ask.

Koon (F40):

We needed to check the instruments, tape recorder, batteries, and also note-taking before the interview. I sometimes forgot the questions then I had to rely on the person that I was talking to. The interviewer needs to remember every question. Preparation is everything.

**Activity Five**

In a mini-seminar we discussed the differences between social talk, discussion, interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured), and interview-conversations. We also considered the advantages and disadvantages of interview-conversations.

Ooy (F23):
I learned how to select appropriate techniques for collecting data. I learned the problems of each technique by practicing, the advantages or disadvantage of each technique. I also learned a new teaching method from this workshop that you have provided.

Jack (M26):

In my opinion, an interview is probably similar to asking questions from a questionnaire. The conversation is partly controlled by the interviewer. The interview-conversation was a completely balanced role between interviewer and interviewee. The social talk sometimes had no research value.
### APPENDIX F

**PHASE TWO: THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00 - 8.30</td>
<td>Research staff and cameraman arrived at the meeting room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.30 - 9.00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.00 - 9.15</td>
<td>Opening ceremony by the principal of Kham Kaen Nakorn School (Mr. Charoen Wiang Yot). He welcomed and thanked all the participants for coming. He outlined the education reform policy and its encouragement for teacher to attend professional development programs. He stressed the importance of English in the global village. Finally, he looked forward to useful outcomes of the day activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30 - 9.40</td>
<td>Individual authentic learning (A mini-lecture by Nuchwana)</td>
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<td>9.40 - 10.00</td>
<td>Discussion (conducted by Nuchwana). I asked everyone to think of one real life problem that affected them. I then asked them to try to solve the problem individually. Using a domestic problem raised by Supa we then worked in groups to think of solutions to the problem. That led us to the next session.</td>
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<td>10.00 - 10.15</td>
<td>Collaborative Authentic Learning. (A mini-lecture by Nuchwana) I reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative learning.</td>
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<td>10.15 - 10.30</td>
<td>Discussion. We discussed ways in which IAL and CAL might be applied to English language teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 - 11.00</td>
<td>Refreshment</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00 - 12.00</td>
<td>IAL and CAL applications in TEFL (Hayden Sharp). Hayden reviewed some applications of authentic learning in the English language classroom. He demonstrated a strategy that he often used. This involved having the students discuss things that had happened over the weekend. The teacher’s role in this task was essentially that of a facilitator and guide. Hayden’s input enabled the students to use English accurately</td>
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in the authentic situations.

He then divided the participants into groups of four. They imagined that they were in a hot air balloon: a pilot, a doctor, a cook and a tailor. They were nearly out of fuel so they needed to get rid of someone to reduce the load. Everyone tried to defend their place in the balloon. This activity encouraged the participants to use their communicative skills.

The last activity was writing for a purpose. This activity centered on the mindset that is needed to change from How can I teach well? to be How can the students learn well?.

12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00-13.50 Mini lecture on students portfolios. (Nuchwana)

I discussed the theoretical and practical value of portfolios, and emphasised their role in the assessment of student achievement.

13.50-14.10 Developing student portfolios — a teacher's experience. (Kan)

Kan explained step by step how we developed the research lessons, how we implemented the classroom activities and assessment, the purpose of collecting the students' tasks in working portfolios, how the students selected tasks for final portfolios, and how we recorded these results on the schools record forms.

14.10-14.30 Discussing students portfolios with students, teacher, and parents, (Sira). Sira's role was to present her reflections on using students portfolios to discuss achievement with parents. She also gave examples of what her students had said about portfolios. Sira showed examples of portfolios and illustrated their value by telling the participants what the parents had said about them.

14.30-15.00 Refreshment

15.00-15.20 The participants worked in groups of four to five to prepare a learning activity and an assessment procedure for one topic. (Nuchwana). We used a pre-prepared sheet on which there were
examples of collaboratively planned classroom activities. They then divided into four groups; one of primary school teachers, two of lower secondary school teacher, and one of upper secondary school teachers. We considered various ways of constructing student portfolios.

15.20-15.40 Group presentations of learning activities and assessment procedures. Discussion of how to articulate the assessment plans with student portfolios.

Their presentations were quite practical activities. Our discussions helped the groups to fine-tune their activities.

15.40-16.00 Closing ceremony (The Deputy Principal of Academic Affairs at Kham Kaen Nakorn School).
APPENDIX G

PHASE THREE: MINA SCHOOL

I have detailed three of the lessons for the purposes of illustration.

Interviews

Description

The purpose of this game was to practise authentic interview-conversations. The research team prepared seven cards (one card for each group) with interview scripts on them.

Implementation

The first lesson started with Boon explaining (in Thai) how to play the game. Then the students were divided into five friendship groups. There were two groups of all girls, two mixed groups, and one of all boys. Each group collected one card from Boon. They then had to select an interviewer and one interviewee. The latter was supposed to be a person in Fairy Plaza (supermarket) or the Lotus shopping complex. Other students in the group would assess the answers of the interviewee. The interviewer introduced his/herself and asked questions. Each group had about fifteen minutes to practise their interview and then present it in front of the class. The teacher and the other groups assessed every group presentation. All of them scored eight because their answers were all correct. On this basis Boon decided that each group had met the competency criterion.

Implementation

Some students had questions about words that they have never used before. A small number used a dictionary, but they preferred asking the teacher. The girls participated in the activity more than the boys. Once the groups had decided on leaders it was obvious that the leaders dominated the work of the groups from that point on. This is typical of Thai culture. Some groups had difficulty deciding whether the answers were appropriate or not. Boon was active in supporting the students and corrected their work where necessary. The students seemed to learn from their presentations.

Boon was confident in his students' abilities. He had no problem conducting the games but was a little hesitant on assessment.
Questioned as to how much students could learn by practising conversation. He said

At least students learnt how to answer some kind of questions. Then they would be able to apply this in their real life. Even though some students did not participate in the activities, most of them did.

From the students point of view, it seemed the high achievement groups enjoyed the activity the most.

Atitaya (F13):

I was happy to present the interview with my friend. I would like to play more of these active games. The teacher’s explanation was not quite clear.

As students had to move from room to room after each period there was a minor problem while Boon waited for everybody to join the class.

Supaporn (F13):

I want my friend to come to class on time so we could have enough time to do the activities. We wasted time waiting for these late students.

It was clear that the students in the lowest achievement group did not really understand what was required.

Komon (M13):

I would like to have more explanation in the next lesson.

Words inside words

Description

The purpose of this activity was to increase the students vocabulary by word analysis. The research team prepared ten cards with one word each on each card: birthday, nothing, everything, travelling, palace, cinema, beauty, teacher, hospital, and temple. The task was to make as many words as possible using the letters in the words on the cards. Each letter could only be used once in the new words. For example, in the word birthday the new words might be: birth, day, hay, third, bat, bid, etc.

Implementation

Boon, speaking in Thai, explained how to play the game. The students were divided into five self-selected groups. Boon chose one card and clipped the card on the blackboard. The groups all tried to use a dictionary to find new words. They tried as hard as they
could. There was some negotiation about using the letters more than once but Boon did not let them do so.

Evaluation

After ten minutes, each group wrote their new words on the blackboard. A teacher member of the research team chose a member of each student group to pronounce the word and say what it meant. The score depended on their spelling, pronunciation and knowledge of the meaning. In the first round most students did not score at all for pronunciation and meaning because they were in too much of a hurry to find as many words as they could. In the next round, they looked at meaning and pronunciation.

Words that I know

Description

The purpose of this activity was to help students learn to say more words. The research team prepared eight sets of ten cards. One card had the letter ba. On the next card ca, da, fa, ga, etc. Another set used bi, ci, di, fi, gi, etc. The purpose of the game was to make as many words as possible using the letters on the cards.

Implementation

The game started after Boon explained how to play. He spoke in Thai. The students were divided into five groups. Each group member helped find words that started with the letters on their card by using a dictionary and taking notes.

Evaluation

After ten minutes, a representative from each group presented their words by writing them on the blackboard, pronouncing the words, and explaining the meaning in Thai. The highest number of correct words won, and the game started again.

We tried playing the game without the use of dictionaries but the scores dropped dramatically. The students were very enthusiastic in playing the game. Boon was well aware of how sensitive the issue scoring was and so in most cases he decided that each group had performed well. When we talked with the students we were surprised to find that even the low scoring groups enjoyed the game. As far as we could see there was no cheating. Although we had created a competitive environment, each group worked on its
own and there was no copying. They asked Boon for help but they did not disturb the other groups.

Sataporn (F12):

My group participated quite well. I preferred choosing my own group. I enjoyed working with my closest friend. We used a dictionary when we found any difficulty.

Ampika (F13):

I enjoyed working with my group. The words were not too hard for me. Arthitaya was the best one in my group. Everyone took part in the activities.

Likit (M13):

The instruction for playing the game was quite clear. It was not too hard for me. I enjoyed working with my group. They all took part in the activities fairly. Natee and me mostly dominated in this activity.
APPENDIX H

PHASE THREE: KITA SCHOOL

Interviews

Description

The purpose of this game was to practise authentic interview-conversation. This was the same activity that we used in Mina. However it was in a bigger class, forty-eight as compared with thirty-one.

Don taught from the front of the room. He did not move around assisting the students and there was very little room for him to do so. It appeared to me that the lower achievers chose to sit at the back of the room where they were less likely to be asked to answer questions. Don used chalk and chalkboard to write on and it was difficult to see from the back row. The students had limited access to dictionaries because there was not enough for one for each student. He taught the activity as it was planned, but modified parts of it as he was teaching. In such a large class it was difficult for all to participate. The only active participants in each group were the interviewers and interviewees. The group size was seven, so five students were inactive, but they were asked to comment on the other two.

Implementation

Don started by explaining how to play the game. This explanation was in Thai. Then the students were divided into seven groups. There were mostly of a mix of boys and girls except there was one group of all boys. Each group sent their leader to select a card from Don. They then had to decide who would be an interviewer and an interviewee who were to be the people in Fairy Plaza or Lotus. Other students of each group would assess the answers from the interviewee. The interviewer introduced his/herself and asked the questions. Each group had about fifteen minutes to practise their interview and then presented in front of the class. Don and the other groups assessed each group presentation. All of them reached the criterion score (eight). Don praised them.

Evaluation

This was probably not the best activity to use as a first task. There was not enough opportunity for involvement for each member of the group, and the groups were too
large. It was not possible to involve everyone in the time available.

The students had a few questions about the words that they have never used before. A few students used a dictionary. They preferred asking Don. Just as in Mina, the group leaders tended to dominate the activity. The groups had quite some difficulty judging whether the answers were right or wrong, but with Don's help they were able to distinguish reasonably correct answers from those that were quite wrong — either structurally or in truth content.

Don had no problem in conducting the games but was a little hesitant about the assessment component. He did not think that the majority of the students would have learnt very much:

Some students learnt how to answer simple questions. They would be able to apply them in real life. The interviewer and the interviewee of each group certainly learnt from the practice. The other students probably did not learn much. The large class caused difficulty in conducting the activity.

From the students point of view, Thai (M13):

I enjoyed the asking and answering activity. But, the time was too short for us.

They also commented on the instructions for the game. Utica (M13):

I was sometimes confused about what teacher wanted us to do. He needed to explain more clearly.

**Words that I know**

**Description**

The purpose of this activity was to help students extend their vocabularies. The research team prepared eight sets of ten cards. On one card was written the letters ba. On the next card, ca, da, fa, ga, etc. Another set using bi, ci, di, fi, gi. We had used this activity at Mina.

**Implementation**

The game started after Don explained how to play (in Thai). The students were divided into seven groups. Each group member helped find words by using a dictionary and taking notes all together. After ten minutes, a student from each group wrote their words on the board, pronouncing them and explaining the meaning in Thai. The highest number of correct words won and the game started again.
Evaluation
Because this was a competition and each member of the group could contribute, it worked better than the previous activity. Each student had an individual card to work on, and they could seek the help of their group. As they worked together, they appeared to be relaxed and enjoying the work. The teacher was uneasy about any activity that did not allow him to monitor and assess the outcome. To this end he selected a student from each group to write the groups words on the chalkboard. Members of the group were then selected by the teacher to pronounce a word and define it. To get two points for their group they had to do both. The students seemed to enjoy the competition:

Canan (F14)

I liked the game because I learnt new words.

Polan (F13):

My group had good teamwork. Everyone took part in this activity.

Pachit (M13):

I would like to extend the time in playing the game. The time ran out too fast.

We tried limiting the use of the dictionaries but their scores immediately dropped. Don was aware of how sensitive the groups were about their scores so his assessment was that everybody had met the criterion. Although I was doubtful about his strategy it did make the lower achievers feel quite good about what they had achieved. Although the activity was competitive, I could not see any obvious cheating. Each group worked on its own. They certainly asked Don for advice but they did not disturb the other groups. They were generally enthusiastic about playing the game.

Radio Broadcast
Description
This activity was intended to practise listening comprehension skills. It was a group work activity. The research team prepared seven cards with one script on each. Mr. Don gave one script to each group. A student in the group read the News. Then this student asked each student in the group a question about the news. The teacher examined each group's understanding by letting them present to him after ten minutes
practice.

Implementation

The students took an active part in the lesson and were quite enthusiastic. Some of the situations were unfamiliar and hence quite difficult for the students. The self-selected groups or friendship groupings were great for the high achievers, but left the weaker students in difficulties, as the students noted.

Rare (F12):

If it is possible, I wanted the groups to be arranged by teacher. Mostly, the high achievement group enjoyed being together. The low achievement group like us could not understand the lesson and we could not help each other.

Camphene (F13):

I liked to take part in scoring my friends. I wanted to move some high achieving friends from the front row to the back. Hope that they would help us in group activities. Generally, the teacher let us choose the members as we wanted. However, I found that we had the same group for almost every activity.
PART THREE
MINOR STUDY ONE: PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND
ABSTRACT

As English language learning is very important in Thailand's education (Ministry of Education, 1996), it was of interest to me to investigate English language teachers' perceptions of the new curriculum and how they were implementing it. The purpose of this study was to document some important perspectives on English language teaching in Thailand as seen through the eyes of teachers and subject co-ordinators. The data sources were of two types: The people, and the curriculum documents. Ten English language teachers and ten English subject co-ordinators of secondary schools were studied. The documents were the 1990 curriculum and the 1996 curriculum. Interview-conversation techniques were used for collecting the data. The findings were summarised under the following: curriculum, professional development, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, detailed curricular and curriculum frameworks, and articulation with other curriculum subjects. The study found that most of the teachers and co-ordinators I spoke to were introduced to the 1996 curriculum by attending short courses run by the Professional Development Centre at Kaennakorn Wittayalai School. The two major changes in the 1996 curriculum were the introduction of English Language at Grade one level, and a new degree of flexibility.

Each teacher had his/her own preference in the professional development (PD) program. The main problem was that the government could not fund everyone's needs. Programs had to be self-supporting. Professional development was one of the requirements for teachers in the era of Thai Educational Reform (1999).

The 1996 curriculum placed considerable emphasis on student-centred teaching. Some teachers welcomed the child-centred approach. Others lacked confidence in their ability to teach this way. Still other teachers simply lacked the energy and motivation.

In the 1990 curriculum, teachers were given an opportunity to write their own objectives for the curriculum and to specify the proportion of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The mid-term and final tests were also constructed by each school group. However, in the 1996 curriculum, the assessment emphasis is on authentic assessment and student-portfolios. Some teachers had tried to use a variety of assessment methods including student-portfolios. Others concerned about the reliability
and scale in grading students' achievement.

Thai schools in major cities tended to have more material resources than schools in rural areas. The government has encouraged schools to make as much use of local resources as they can. Most English language teachers used textbooks, newspapers, and journals as resources for learning. There was little electronic media in rural areas.

For some teachers a detailed curriculum is a security blanket. For other teachers a detailed curriculum limited professional initiative and had unrealistic expectations of students who live in communities with particular local conditions.

Some teachers could integrate English with other subjects but many did not do so.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the information age a foreign language is important for global communication. English is now used internationally for this purpose. The Thai ministry of Education has realised the need to improve English teaching and learning so that the students will have well-developed skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They need these skills in order to communicate with other people and they need them to continue their studies beyond secondary school.

(Varavarn, Director of Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Ministry of Education, 1996, preface).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the research of this study by discussing the teaching of English in Thai curriculum. Aspects covered are the place of English language in Thailand, teachers as deliverers or constructors, a curriculum in transition, the 1990 and 1996 curriculum, and the reasons I wanted to study English language teaching in Thailand.

According to the discussion in the previous part (Chapter Two of the dissertation) the literature review in the previous part covering the place of English is relevant here in providing context for the study. In this section I therefore focus on the curriculum.

1.2 A CURRICULUM IN TRANSITION

English has to be considered a foreign language in Thailand. Although students have some exposure to the English language, the proportion of the students able to converse in English is relatively small (http://onec.go.th/plan/8/p1242.htm). The national government wants to change this. In 1996 (at around the same time as the Eighth National Development Plan was being developed) the Ministry of Education was revising the 1990 English language curriculum and introduced a policy that English was to be taught as a second or foreign language from the earliest years of the primary school (Ministry of Education, 1996).

The Ministry of Education was quite aware that the new policy was going to be very difficult to implement. The policy emphasis was on English for communication but there were relatively few primary (or secondary) schoolteachers who could communicate easily or effectively with a native English language speaker (Ministry of
Education, 1996; Areekul, 1998). Class sizes tended to be around the forty to fifty and most teachers had not been trained to cater for individual differences. (Sukamolson, 1992). They either taught whole groups or they taught subjects. There were, and are of course, exceptions to this generalisation, but the nature of Thai culture and the way that teachers are trained tend to favour whole-group, teacher-centred pedagogy.

1.2.1 THE 1990 CURRICULUM

The 1990 curriculum was based on communicative competency, in particular, the ability to communicate with a native speaker of English. The content of the curriculum and the suggested pedagogies were chosen to develop communicative competency. The curriculum was designed for grade five and up in the primary school. Whatever the merits of the communicative approach, many teachers were unable to communicate effectively in English (Rujikietgumjorn and Pojananon, 1993) and this encouraged the tendency to teach about English rather than to teach in English. There was little contextual support for English (communicative or otherwise) and so the teacher (or a surrogate such as audiotapes) was the dominant model of an English language speaker. Thai students in grade four are around nine or ten years of age and they are already developing ideas of what is cool and not cool. It is not cool to try to use English in front of one's peers in class — they are reluctant to use English for communication in this context. Class sizes were and still are quite large and many teachers manage by teaching to the whole class rather than to smaller groups or to individuals.

1.2.1.1 Objectives For The English Language Curriculum

The objectives for the 1990 curriculum and the 1996 curriculum are very similar and for this reason they are dealt with more fully under that heading. However, the objectives included skills such as the ability to:

- use English to communicate with others
- follow simple oral instructions
- use oral communication in simple situations
- listen to and understand spoken English, and speak, read and write clearly
- to read and write with correct pronunciation, and correct punctuation
• use a dictionary to develop a working vocabulary
• listen, speak, read and write effectively
• use English as a medium of instruction for further studies
• understand the basic principles of English
• use correct spelling and punctuation
• use English to seek new knowledge from or through a variety of media

1.2.1.2 Textbooks
The teaching of English in Thai schools is driven by textbooks and by assessment. In a typical school lesson the teacher will follow the content of the textbook that has been chosen for that grade level. For many teachers covering the content is more important than consolidation and so it is very common to have the students do homework. In common with testing, assigning homework is evidence that the teacher is doing her job. Individual schools and teachers are free to choose the textbooks that they think are best for their purposes. And the students then purchase these books. The quality of these textbooks is therefore of considerable interest and importance. Because the schools generally claim to use a communicative approach (Ministry of Education, 1996) to the teaching of English, the texts that are used emphasise contextually appropriate language and de-emphasise grammar.

Some of the textbooks have been written by Thai authors (e.g. Malee Chandhavimol) but most of them are written and published by British (e.g. Longman) and American (e.g. McGraw-Hill) companies. A common textbook in elementary schools is Practice in Comprehension 1 by Malee Chandhavimol (Chandhavimol, 1999). This book is about 85% text and 15% graphics - usually black and white drawings. It shows Thai and Western characters in Thai and Western contexts. For secondary schools, a former textbook is Discoveries by Abbs and Freebairn (1994). Recently, English for a Changing World 2 by Banks et al.(1999) has come into common use. The language in this text is more complex than that in the elementary school text. It shows Western characters and contexts. Most of them have tests associated with the text and teachers use these tests as quizzes. Alongside these textbooks, schools usually have a small collection of general
interest reading books that students can read in class or borrow. These are usually purchased with government funds and/or with money donated by parents. There is some interest in the use of computers (Kulapichitr, 1992) to teach English. Where this is happening it is usually in the form of interactive CD ROMs produced in Britain or America. There is, as yet, little or no research evidence in Thailand (Loipha & Knezek, 1992) about the efficacy of this form of computer aided learning.

In many classrooms, the students have limited opportunities to actually communicate in English during or after school hours. There are several reasons for this:

- large classes
- teacher competence
- student reluctance
- lack of contextual support in and out of the classroom.

1.2.1.3 Assessment

It seems paradoxical that while Buddhism (the dominant religion of Thailand) values harmony and co-operation Thai society and schools are very competitive (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). Formal testing is the most common form of assessment. Parents, teachers and students all expect that there will be tests and that these tests will place each student relative to every other student. Parents want evidence that their children are doing well and want reassurance that their children will be able to enrol in prestigious schools and universities. Students want test data—probably because their parents want it. Teachers want test data because it is, in part, evidence that they are doing their job.

The Ministry of Education provides assessment guidelines (Office of the Educational Assessment and Testing Services, 1996). Each school is responsible for working within these guidelines to design appropriate assessment procedures. These are meant to be used for diagnostic purposes, grade promotion and for the improvement of teaching. Whilst it is absolutely clear that assessment data are used for diagnosis and grade promotion, it is much less clear that the data are used for the improvement of teaching. The guidelines indicate that schools should carry out periodic formative and summative
assessments. This kind of assessment in schools has been well studied (Thatpaibool, 1995; Kuttiyavong, 1998) although always using empiricist designs.

1.2.2 THE 1996 CURRICULUM

The relatively low level of student achievement with the 1990 curriculum led the Ministry of Education to investigate the benefits of introducing English at grade one — rather than at grade five. The 1996 curriculum was based on a decision to do just this. The major goal (and it is clearly a long-term goal) of the 1996 curriculum is to develop a level of student competency such that they can confidently use English in a variety of contexts. The Ministry of Education (1996) believes that this goal can best be achieved by communicative or situational pedagogies rather than pedagogies based on grammar, translation or morphological studies.

1.2.2.1 Primary Level

The curriculum is divided into three levels:

- Introductory — for primary school students
- Intermediate — for the lower secondary school
- Advanced — for the upper secondary school

The introductory level is divided into three phases:

- preparatory in grades one and two (starting in the second semester of grade one) (six twenty minute periods a week)
- literacy in grades three and four (six twenty minute periods a week)
- fundamental in grades five and six (this is beginning of English 1-4) (fifteen twenty minute periods a week)

By the end of the third phase students are expected to have mastered the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The level of mastery proposed is that needed for study in the secondary school. This is a somewhat circular or ill-defined definition but it is the Ministry of Education’s view (The Ministry of Education, 1996).

1.2.2.1.1 The preparatory phase

The objectives for the preparatory phase include the ability to:

- use English to communicate with others
• follow simple oral instructions
• use oral communication in simple situations
• pronounce consonants, words and simple terms correctly.

They should also learn to appreciate the English language and develop a positive attitude towards it.

Students are expected to acquire a vocabulary of 120 to 150 words and be able to use these words for greetings, leave-taking, introducing oneself, introducing others, expressing gratitude, making an apology, interrupting, asking for permission, informing, simple forms of asking and answering, and asking for something.

The Ministry suggests that teachers should emphasise:
• listening and speaking for communication
• learner-centred approaches
• enjoyable activities
• singing, games, role playing, and story telling
• positive reinforcement.

1.2.2.1.2 The literacy phase

The objectives for the literacy phase include the ability to:
• listen to and understand spoken English, and speak, read and write clearly
• to read and write with correct pronunciation, and correct punctuation
• use a dictionary to develop a working vocabulary.

They should also learn to appreciate the English language and develop a positive attitude towards it.

Students are expected to acquire a vocabulary of 240 to 300 new words and be able to use these words for greetings, leave-taking, introducing oneself, introducing others, expressing gratitude, making an apology, interrupting, asking for permission, informing, simple forms of asking and answering, and asking for something.

Pedagogics should emphasise:
• reading and writing for communicative purposes
• learner-centred approaches
• enjoyable activities
• singing, games, role playing, and story telling
• positive reinforcement.

1.2.2.1.3 The fundamental phase

The objectives of this phase include the ability to:
• listen, speak, read and write effectively
• use English as a medium of instruction for further studies
• understand the basic principles of English.
• use correct spelling and punctuation.
• use English to seek new knowledge from or through a variety of media.

They should develop a positive attitude towards English and understand its cultural context.

Students are expected to acquire a vocabulary of 940 to 1,050 new words. These words should be drawn from the students’ environment, family, school, places, directions, dates and seasons. In this phase the student should know some basic structural concepts such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, auxiliary verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions.

Pedagogies should emphasise:
• reading and writing for communicative purposes
• learner-centred approaches
• enjoyable activities
• singing, games, role playing, and story telling
• positive reinforcement.

1.2.2.2 Secondary Level

1.2.2.2.1 Socio-cultural functions and cognitive-linguistic functions

The secondary school curriculum is based on two generalised functions: socio-cultural functions and cognitive-linguistic functions. Language goals and objectives based on the first function are designed to prepare students to function in the social and cultural world. Language goals and objectives based on the second function are designed to
prepare students to function in the technical and commercial world.

1.2.2.2 Objectives

The curriculum has a two-part structure: intermediate-fundamental (grade levels seven to nine) and advanced-fundamental (grade levels ten to twelve). The objectives of the two parts are similar and include:

- using English that is grammatically correct and culturally appropriate to communicate effectively
- to develop a level of English competency that would support post-secondary study and/or obtaining satisfying employment
- to appreciate the English language
- to develop an understanding of the cultural contexts of English.

The intermediate-fundamental curriculum is divided into three major components: Fundamental English, English Development and English for Special Purposes. Fundamental English is taken as four fifty-minute periods each week. English Development and English for Special Purposes are each taken for two fifty-minute periods each week.

1.2.2.3 Core and elective content

The advanced-fundamental curriculum has two major components: core material and elective material. The core material is taken as four fifty-minute periods each week each semester. The elective content is taken as two or three periods a week each semester.

The core and elective content covers listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabulary development, idioms and language structure; listening to conversations, stories, and passages; speaking about daily activities; describing and telling stories; reading orally and reading more complex passages, writing short and simple passages, description, stories and personal letters.

1.3 TEACHERS: DELIVERERS OR CONSTRUCTORS?

For several reasons teachers are expected to be deliverers of curriculum rather than constructors of curriculum. The central government is of the view that a national curriculum is the most effective and efficient model for Thai schools and the Thai nation
at this point in our development. This view is tempered by the understanding that some regional and local variations are useful in making the content more relevant and perhaps in assisting local social and economic development. A national curriculum also makes it easier to assess (however roughly) the performance of each school. It also seems that there is a belief that a national curriculum developed by teams of experienced curriculum developers is more likely to reflect the goals of national development plans than curricula developed in the provinces, regions or individual schools. Finally, there is the hierarchical, centralised nature of Thai bureaucracy. Thailand has a very long history of top-down administration and in many ways it has served the country well. This is changing but the bureaucracy reflects the structure of Thai culture and hence it will not change very rapidly. It may be a systemic impediment but for those teachers who want to ‘do something different’ there are many opportunities within the walls of the classroom.

1.4 TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

What are the supports for, and the barriers against, learning English as a foreign language in Thai schools? They differ from city to country and from rich to poor school, but probably the biggest difficulty is the lack of suitably trained classroom teachers. Many teachers lack confidence in their spoken English and this is especially so in the primary sector. Teachers who study elementary education are trained to teach every subject in the curriculum and have no specialist skills in English. They find it difficult to support the policy of English language teaching from grade one. In most cases they do not use English as the language of instruction in any lesson. Some provision has been made to provide professional development for teachers, but lack of funds prevents many schools becoming involved, while the courses that are held, are too short to allow for the development of language skills. Students progress through the primary school without gaining competence in spoken English and the teachers in the secondary schools blame the primary teachers.

Secondary teachers have a Bachelor Degree in English as a foreign language, but few have been abroad or had the opportunity to speak at length with a native English speaker.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methodology and strategies used to collect and analyse the perceptions of Thai foreign language teachers and English language co-ordinators.

2.2 SELECTING A METHOD

2.2.1 INTERVIEWS

Interviews are a powerful way of gaining access to an individual’s interpretations of their personal experiences (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998). I tried not to use formal interviews because they can create an impression of somebody controlling the process and of somebody being controlled (Epanchin, Townsend & Stoddard, 1994). I couldn’t avoid this altogether but I tried to create a conversational environment. The dynamics of interviews have been well studied and there is little doubt that the discourse of an interview is likely to be quite different to conversational discourse (Constable & Flynn, 1982). I was aware of possible differences in power-status relationships and my goal was to take part in these conversations as co-constructor of knowledge. The goal was seldom achieved but it served as a guide to my behaviour. Many of the discussions took place in the English department of each school. The duration varied but an average discussion was approximately forty-five minutes. I tried to make the discussions relaxed and informal.

2.3. PURPOSES

The purpose of this study was to document some important perspectives on English language teaching in Thailand as seen through the eyes of some teachers and some subject co-ordinators. In this particular study I wanted to focus on:

- strengths and weaknesses of the 1990 curriculum
- strengths and weaknesses of the 1996 curriculum
- professional development (to prepare teachers for the new curriculum)
- content (what is in the curriculum and how much is in the curriculum)
- pedagogy (what roles does the teacher have? What roles do the students have?)
• assessment and evaluation (examinations, tests, check lists, informal notes, impressions, portfolios)
• resources (books, radio, films, videos, CDROMs, newspapers etc.)
• central versus local control of curriculum content.

In the study I wanted to work with subject co-ordinators and teachers in investigating the issues around English language teaching in Thailand. To this end I chose qualitative research, seeking a range of responses from interviews.

2.4 METHODS

2.4.1 IDENTIFYING DATA SOURCES

There were three main sources of data for this study — the teachers, the co-ordinator, and the curriculum documents.

2.4.1.1 The Teachers

My first consideration was to determine how I would select schools and teachers for this study. The first issue was school size. It was quite clear from the literature review that the school budget varies with school size. In Thailand, government secondary schools are divided into four sizes: extra large (> 2500 students), large (1500-2500), medium (800-1500), and small (<800). I chose two extra large, two large, two medium and four small schools. The sample covered schools with large, medium and small budgets. The second consideration was the location. I chose three city schools, four schools from suburban areas, and three schools from rural areas. The cultural environment differs between city and country and may influence perceptions. The third consideration was the gender. When I visited the schools, I noted the number of English teachers and their qualifications. Most English language teachers are female so I was only able to include two male co-ordinators out of ten and three male teachers out of ten teachers. The fourth consideration was age. I tried to include a range of ages, to cover a range of experience.

In selecting people I relied on recommendations from other teachers as well as my own knowledge. In all I was able to speak to people from nine government schools and one private (Catholic) school.
TABLE 1 BIO-DATA: TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School size</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XL</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>BEd.</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XL</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>BEd.</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>MEd.</td>
<td>suburban</td>
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<td>BEd.</td>
<td>rural</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>BEd.</td>
<td>suburban</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 illustrates the bio-data of ten teachers. The teachers interviewed ranged from thirty three to forty eight years.

2.4.1.2 The Co-ordinators

The reason for the selection of the co-ordinators as resource people was that they were the first group to use the changed curriculum. Moreover, their viewpoints as supervisors of other teachers in the department should be useful for this study.

TABLE 2 BIO-DATA: CO-ORDINATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School size</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XL</td>
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<td>MEd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>XL</td>
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<td>MEd.</td>
<td>suburban</td>
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<td>MEd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>BEd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>BEd.</td>
<td>rural</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>BEd.</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The co-ordinators, with one exception, were in the age range thirty-seven to fifty. The exception was the co-ordinator of English in a private school who was twenty-nine.
The teachers interviewed ranged from thirty three to forty eight years.

2.4.1.3 The Curriculum Documents

The major documents used in this study were the 1990 and the 1996 English language curricula published by the Ministry of Education. These are Thai language publications. I also used a paper by the Director-General of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development in the Thai Ministry of Education. This was published as an English language preface to the 1996 English language curriculum.

2.4.2 TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING THE DATA

2.4.2.1 Interviews

The questions used for interviews composed of two parts; the bio-data, and the perceptions about the curriculum and its context. The perceptions focused on strengths and weaknesses of the 1990 and 1996 curriculum, professional development, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, resources, detailed curriculum and curriculum frameworks, and articulation with other curriculum subjects. The details are shown in Appendix A.

2.4.3 TECHNIQUES FOR ANALYSING THE DATA

The process of analysis really started with thinking about the kinds of data that I wanted to collect. Interviews can provide a tremendous amount of text and I needed to be as certain as I could be that all of this text contained information that I could use to explore the central questions of this study.

After collecting the data the next step was a detailed study and analysis of the texts. This was a very lengthy process partly because each conversation was quite different and partly because of the sheer volume of material. I looked for content related to the main issues but I also looked for content that raised new or unexpected issues.

In the third step I constructed relatively brief narrative accounts of the interviews. These accounts formed the database for the final step. The third step forced me to think very carefully about what was important to the person I was talking to and what was important to me for the purposes of this research.

In the fourth step I used the database to support a number of conclusions about the key issues.

In the fifth and final step I considered the whole process of conducting and using
interviews to see what, if any, effect the process had on my own understanding of research.

2.4.4 QUALITY OF DATA

Jeans (1997) suggested several things that a researcher can do to ensure that the data collected are the best possible data that can be collected in a specific research context. In accord with these suggestions I:

- made the issues as clear as possible
- conducted conversations at the participant’s pace
- made it as easy as possible for people to talk to me (to provide usable data)
- used multiple sources
- checked for consistency.

I told each of the participants about the purpose of the study and sought their agreement. In some cases I was able to use a mutual friend to introduce me to the participant. I found that this was a very helpful device. It helped confirm the legitimacy of my study and to engender a degree of trust.

During the interview I followed the advice of Yegidis and Weinbach (1996) and let the people know how much longer the interview I would probably take. This seemed to have the effect of maintaining interest and enthusiasm. There may have been some expectancy effects in which the person tries to guess what the researcher wants to hear, but because of the conversational nature of the discussions I think that this effect was minimal.

In the final analysis however,

When people are asked about subjective states, feeling, attitudes, and opinions, there is no objective way of validating the answers. Only the person has access to his or her feelings and opinions (Fowler, 1988, pp. 85).

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explained the methods used to collect and analyse data. In the next chapter I discuss the teachers' perceptions.
CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter I report on the information collected from the teachers and my analysis of documents. Ten teachers and ten subject co-ordinators were interviewed. The transcribed interviews were analysed for attitudes towards:

- the curriculum
- professional development
- pedagogy
- assessment and evaluation
- resources
- detailed curricula versus curriculum frameworks
- articulation or integration with other curriculum subjects.

In analysing the data I looked at teachers and co-ordinators as one group.

3.2 THE CURRICULUM
Most of the teachers and co-ordinators I spoke to were introduced to the 1996 curriculum by attending short courses run by the Professional Development Centre at Kaennakorn Wittayalai School. This centre is known as the English Resources and Instructions Centre (ERIC). It was established by the Ministry of Education in 1975.

It is one of thirteen such centres in Thailand. It has a resource collection and offers professional development programs.

The two major changes in the 1996 curriculum were the introduction of English at grade one level, and a new degree of flexibility.

Surachej (M47C)* attended the ERIC centre:

The ERIC centre invited all co-ordinators to a meeting to be told about the new curriculum. The new curriculum followed national government policy and introduced English in grade one. The core content was much the same as the 1990 curriculum, but academic groups were now allowed to make changes in behavioural objectives and content to suit their environment.

*Surachej: Male, 47 years old, co-ordinator
Prasan (M45C) said:

The 1990 curriculum focussed on rote learning and grammar. It was also teacher-centred. But the 1996 curriculum encouraged communication without too much emphasis on grammar or the exact use of vocabulary. It was a more flexible curriculum.

Surachet's comments highlight the importance in the Thai system of objectives and content. There has been a strong 'numbers' culture in Thai schooling for many years and behavioural objectives have been seen as a way of quantifying outputs. Regardless of the characteristics of the children beginning primary school or transitioning into secondary school, behavioural objectives were an attempt to achieve more equal outcomes. There seems to be little if any research into how widely behavioural objectives are actually used and whether or not they have much effect.

Thai school curricula also tend to be overloaded with content. That is, there is more content than many teachers can cover with their students. One of the major assumptions underlying Thai pedagogy is that learning is relatively linear, cumulative and permanent. Although the educational rhetoric recognises individual differences, many teachers are forced (by large classes and by the prevailing professional culture) to teach the whole group instead of individuals. Further there is little or no time for revision and consolidation. In many ways Thai students have to meet the needs of the educational system rather than the educational system meeting the needs of the students.

3.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers have very clear ideas about their preferred forms of professional development. Suthiwan (F49C):

For me, I prefer intensive courses about how to teach, not about theory.

The question of professional development for teachers is a vexed question in many countries. A large part of the problem for governments is the relatively large number of teachers needed for universal, or near universal, schooling. Even quite small sums of money spent of the professional development of teachers amount to very large budget
requests. So it is usually the case that schools are only able to allocate quite small amounts of money for professional development. As Laksana (F34T) said:

The limited budget means teachers cannot attend workshops and so on, unless they support themselves.

Governments have devised a number of strategies for managing this problem. Some government have actually been able to fund quite significant professional development programs but it is becoming more and more common to look to the schools and to the individual teachers to take responsibility for professional development (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). In the educational reforms that have flowed from the Eighth National Development Plan the idea of sustainable professional development appears. Schools are now meant to devise programs of professional development that can be funded from the schools’ resources and that are on-going rather than ‘one-shot’. Individual teachers have long enrolled in higher degree as a means of personal professional development. In Thailand the fees are relatively cheap, if the teacher enrolls in a local university. However, there is an opportunity cost involved in as much as some (if not many) teachers work as tutors or coaches outside school hours as a way of increasing their income.

The reform policy also proposes that schools develop quality assurance processes to make them more accountable to the local community and to the government, for their performance. So, along with the normal professional needs of teachers in matters of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, they now have to cope with an ‘ideological’ overlay. Ideological in the sense that quality assurance stems from the assumption that schools share much in common with industrial processing plants. Perhaps this is, in part, why Prasan (M45C) said that:

The most important thing to change is the teachers’ convictions. You have to make teachers believe or realise the importance of what we have to change - to value it. The Project Implementation Unit, Department of General Education, Ministry of Education, has developed a document ‘A new paradigm in teaching/learning’ advocating learner-centered approaches to pedagogy. It is expected that in the next few years, local schools will have to plan their own curriculum and develop this kind of pedagogy. There will be a great need for professional development programs.
Nanta (M41T) also referred to the changing environment:

We need to make teachers re-think teaching and learning. Teachers have to accept the new approach. Quality assurance is something like an audit process that follows up policy. If the Ministry of Education just launches the policy (without following it up), it might not be very effective. But when someone is coming to audit you, you have to change in order to meet the criteria.

In some ways Nanta’s comments are distorted by translation from Thai to English but in other ways they capture something of the way that Thais tend to think about teachers and change. That is, we need to make ... teachers have to... There are still major changes needed in the professional culture of teachers before the idea of individual initiative takes hold. The reform plan has started the process.

Narat (M48T).

The main aim is to change teachers’ ideas. We can do this with in-service training programs. Later, these programs need to be followed up with strategies such as supervision, peer-comment, and team-teaching. However, teachers first need to be open minded and be ready to share with each other.

Suthiwon (F49C) also raised the matter of sharing professional knowledge when she said that:

Moreover, there must be the dissemination of what people learn from external professional development programs.

Another insight into our schooling system comes from remarks made by a co-ordinator Mr. Surachej (M49C). When we were talking about his expectations of professional development in school English departments he said that:

My department focuses on lesson plans. We have Friday afternoons reserved to help each other write lesson plans.

He was not alone in this view. Suthiwon (F49C):

I believe in well-prepared lesson plans and so I have to check everyone’s lesson plans monthly.

Fortunately not everybody takes the same view. Ramida (F40T):

I disagree with the need for well-prepared lesson plans. When we teach we have to adjust, depending on the context and the learners’ abilities.
Thai schools work and they have worked well in their context. However, in many parts of Thailand this context is changing rapidly. The data from these teachers and co-ordinators illustrate the magnitude of the changes proposed for them.

3.4 PEDAGOGY

Some school administrators make fun of the idea of learner-centred pedagogy. In this context how can teachers take the policy seriously? These administrators need to clearly understand the benefits of this approach and be able to explain them to their staff. (Prasan, M45C)

The 1996 curriculum placed considerable emphasis on student-centred teaching. The Ministry was well aware that many schools had large classes but as a matter of principle it advocated student-centred learning. Some teachers welcome the child-centred approach. Others lack confidence in their ability to teach this way. Still other teachers simply lack the energy and motivation. These mixed views are evident in the following excerpts:

Ramida (F40T):

I have used this technique for a long time. I used to teach home economics and agriculture before becoming the English language teacher. I would use newspaper (Nation Junior) articles and use work groups for discussion and presentations. This was one way of increasing vocabulary and giving the students some practice with idiomatic speech. But there were problems with class size. The normal class of about fifty was too crowded. Class sizes need to be around twenty-five for student-centred teaching to be effective. I divided the class into two groups and assigned different tasks. The less competent group would get different tasks than those for the high-competent group. The important thing for the less competent group was to accept them, not to blame them.

Patra (M33T) argued that:

The child-centred approach might be possible but it needs a lot of time for explanations of things that the students might not have heard of before. For example, if I use the word Pizza in a rural school, I would need to explain what it means because this word would be unfamiliar to many if not all of the students. I focus on what students can use in real life (authentic materials and experience). I have them fill application forms or read magazines.
Nanta (M41T):

The 1996 curriculum expected that students would be active participants in the classroom. But the fact is most teachers still use the old teacher-centered pedagogy. They claim that they have heavy workloads, and do not have enough time to prepare activities.

Not everybody was in favour of student-centered teaching even as a general principle.

Krisanee (F35T) had some concerns about the child-centred approach:

If teachers speak less and let the students dominate in classroom activities, then how could teacher correct their mistakes?

Sirin (F37T) had similar ideas:

I disagreed with the comment of my supervisor that students have to be more active. Particularly in English language teaching, teachers have to correct the students’ mistakes.
I had a project ‘Friend help Friend’ which divided each class into small group of fivc (of mixed ability). The tutor of each group would help the teacher in case their friends needed more explanation. Students need feedback from teachers. After students got their corrected tasks back, they could ask for more explanation from their tutors.

Siree (F44T)

Reading Thai is difficult enough on its own, so it is especially hard to teach English. Group work does not work well in low-ability groups. Teachers have to follow up because the students might sit around and not be able to finish their work. Work in pairs might work well in some cases.

Suthiwan (F49T):

The problem is that the competency of the teachers does not meet the expectations of the curriculum. Also, the students sometimes lack basic skills so the classroom activities cannot run as we plan. We need more time to revise and consolidate.

Even for motivated students it still seems teachers are unsuccessful in teaching speaking and listening skills.

(Narat, M48T)

Some of my colleagues do not use English in class. They say the students are against using English in class. The students do not understand what the teachers say. In my opinion, students won’t benefit from English classes
unless they use English.

These comments highlight a number of basic issues facing Thai educators:

- class sizes
- impact of personal preferences
- teaching low-ability groups
- teacher-competency in particular understanding of language teaching
- managerial control and the control of learning, and
- content and consolidation.

3.5 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

In the 1990 curriculum, teachers were given an opportunity to write their own objectives for the curriculum and to specify the proportion of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The mid-term and final tests were also to be constructed by each school group. In the 1996 curriculum, the assessment issues are authentic assessment and student-portfolios. Although the Ministry of Education has promoted the use of portfolios their use does not appear to be widespread (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Prasan (M45C):

I use a variety of assessment methods but student-portfolios still have to prove their reliability. I believe that they can work well at secondary level. This year I checked the grade seven students' workbook and I found that the parents had been evaluating their children's' work. So it works well in secondary level. Parents understand it.

Peer assessment is not successful, partly because students have a bias towards helping their close friends. They co-operate rather than compete.

Narat (M48T):

I think that student portfolios ought to be part of the university entrance score. It would be more useful if they were part of student's entrance score because teachers would then teach to these requirements. Some teachers do not understand about Rubric scores or how to define each scale in grading students' portfolios.

A co-ordinator, Mrs Malec (F50C) raised another complex issue when she said:

I disagree with idea of repeating tests. The students pay less attention in
class because they know they can do the test again and again. It is also hard to make an appointment with students to re-sit their examinations. The school buses leave on time and so there is not opportunity after school. Some students do not want to be in school and are only there because their parents force them to come - study until grade nine is compulsory.

The practice of re-sitting tests is widespread in Thai schools and it is an indication of the dominance of assessment and evaluation.

3.6 RESOURCES

Students have no money to buy textbooks. The schools can provide some - but not all. We have to prepare extra worksheets or exercises for these students. Even then however, students have difficulty finding additional support materials for their assignments (Wilai, F43C).

Much as in Australia, Thai schools vary greatly in the resources they have available to them. Not surprisingly, schools in the major cities such as Bangkok tend to have more material resources that schools in isolated rural areas. For example, the English language environment in Bangkok is very much richer than in the provincial cities and towns. The national government has encouraged schools to make as much use of local resources as they can. Some schools have looked to their local communities to find any native speakers of English who could come and teach - even for a short time.

Prasob (F37C) said:

There were some foreigners married to Thai women in the village. I have invited these people to visit our schools. The students learn many things from these resource persons.

Nutjarree (F29C):

My school has an instructional media room with fifty computers in it. The students enjoy learning using CD-ROM activities that develop reading comprehension. The important thing is to encourage the teachers to take their students to this room.

Narat (M48T) was the only person that I talked to that had actually thought about preparing his own CD-ROM for use in his classes:

I am studying how to develop CD-ROMs for students by using programs called Toolbook and Authorware.
Siree (M44C):

With lower secondary classes, we sing songs and watch satellite television programs. With upper secondary, I use newspapers and in grade twelve I prepare worksheets and we watch videos between 7am and 8am (before school) or 15.30pm to 16.30pm (after school).

Even when there are considerable resources available it does not automatically mean that teachers will use them. Nutjaree's comments illustrate the hesitancy that some teachers exhibit when faced with new technology. Teacher-attitudes to resources vary according to how familiar teachers are with particular resources. In the case of computers it can be the case that some of the students know more than the teachers about how the technology works and what it can be used for. For some teachers this gap doesn't matter very much but for other teachers it is very threatening because it affects the status of teacher and student. There is no doubt that the availability of resources is an issue in Thai schooling but the issue is more than simply buying new equipment.

3.7 DETAILED CURRICULA AND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

From my discussions with these and other teachers it is reasonably clear that teachers are divided over the matter of how detailed they think centralised curricula ought to be. For some teachers a detailed curriculum is a security blanket. It sets out clearly what is to be taught and assessed. This removes the need for individual initiative and locates responsibility higher up the bureaucratic ladder. This has suited many teachers and education bureaucrats. Furthermore, it seems to mean that everybody is treated equally and that those in the villages will have the same opportunities as those in the cities.

For other teachers a detailed curriculum limits professional initiative and has unrealistic expectations of students who live in communities with particular local conditions. These teachers want more control over the judgements they have to make and they want the curriculum to be relevant to the local environment. The 1996 curriculum certainly allows local adaptations of the central curriculum but the effects of this will be limited if the system in which the curriculum is embedded remains essentially hierarchical. It is not teachers that need to be encouraged to take initiatives but it is the "top down"
policy. This can only work if our education bureaucrats can encourage a climate if
where teachers do not feel threatened if they make local decisions.

The arguments are illustrated in the following comments.

Sirin (F37T):

I like a detailed curriculum because some teachers have difficulty in planning.

Nant (M41T):

A detailed curriculum is good for teachers in rural areas because it is hard to
find resources to support the students’ learning. A curriculum framework
requires teachers to find other resources such videos, newspaper, and library
materials.

Malee (F50C):

I disagree with a detailed curriculum. The experts who design the curriculum
are smart people. If they only had to plan for smart students, it would be
OK. But for some low ability students, it does not work.

Malee’s comments touch on another problem with centralised curriculum development.
Whether it is true or not, many teachers believe that the process of curriculum
development is overly influenced by the needs of the higher education system, or in
some cases, the employers. The Thai system of curriculum development parallels that
in other countries. It is done by panels of academics, teachers or teacher-representatives
together with other special people that are appointed by the appropriate Minister or
bureaucrat. It is easy to say that these panels make assumptions about what teachers
and students will and ought to do, and that these assumptions do not reflect reality.
Maybe this is so but the task of constructing a curriculum (prescribing content) to cater
for all students would be a massive and futile undertaking. Although the 1996 is
probably overloaded with content it does try to recognise the growing sense of
professionalism of teachers, and it does acknowledge the need for local adaptations.

3.8 ARTICULATION WITH OTHER CURRICULUM SUBJECTS
The problems of teaching English in a country where many teachers are not competent
English speakers, where the external environment offers little contextual support, and
where many students and their parents do not see the point of it, can seem to be overwhelming. I was therefore, pleasantly surprised when I spoke to Prasan and Pisamai about the possibility of integrating English with other curriculum content.

Prasan (M45C):

I agree with the idea of curriculum frameworks and no texts. I always think about the news, current affairs, and how to live in society happily. I take my students for walks, talking, discussing with other students (a buddy system) then writing essays. I always integrate English with other subjects.

Pisamai (F37T):

Next semester I plan to integrate the English language with students’ interests. I have surveyed the students’ interests and found that sport is the favourite one. Now I can plan the activities according to that content. Environment and Social sciences integrate well with English.

This teacher and this co-ordinator demonstrate that even in a very complex environment it is possible to do some innovative teaching.

Surachej (M49C) had a slightly different concept of integration. This had to do with the balance of local and global content in the curriculum and in the textbooks:

English is international. It is not local. We need to learn about other cultures. To do this we can use resource for learning such as tourist places – for example, some of our festivals and our dinosaur exhibitions (eg. at Kalasin).

This was not an isolated perspective because if Narat (M41T) had a similar view:

I think it should be both local and global. Some texts have both parts – local and global, some have too much global emphasis. The teacher has to decide what will be a balanced approach.

The overall perspective that emerges from all these (and other) data is one of complexity and of hope. There are certainly many barriers to the teaching of English in our schools. Equally however, there are many teachers who take the task very seriously and who can be an example to others. One can be rather cynical about the 1996 curriculum reforms but there is no doubt in my mind that they set out some worthwhile directions for the development of schooling in Thailand.
3.9 CONCLUSION

This research has identified a whole range of factors concerning the curriculum. The research finding could be summarised as:

The curriculum, most of the teachers and co-ordinators I spoke to were introduced to the 1996 curriculum by attending short courses run by the Professional Development Centre at Kaennakorn Wittayalai School. The two major changes in the 1996 curriculum were the introduction of English Language at Grade one level, and a new degree of flexibility.

Professional development, each teacher had his/her own preference for a professional development program. The main problem was the government could not subsidise everyone's needs therefore it had to be self-supporting. Professional development is a requirements for teachers in the era of Thai Educational Reform (1999). The Quality Assurance was also part of the auditing or follow up the Educational Reform Policy.

Pedagogy, the 1996 curriculum placed considerable emphasis on student-centred teaching. The Ministry was well aware that many schools had large classes but as a matter of principle it advocated student-centred learning. Some teachers welcome the child-centred approach. Others lack motivation and/or confidence in their ability to teach this way.

Assessment and Evaluation, in the 1990 curriculum, teachers were given an opportunity to write their own objectives for the curriculum and to specify the proportion of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The mid-term and final tests were also to be constructed by each school group. In the 1996 curriculum, the assessment issues are: Authentic assessment, and student-portfolios.

Resources, Thai schools in major cities tended to have more material resources than schools in rural areas. The government has encouraged schools to make as much use of local resources as they can. Most English language teachers used textbooks, newspapers, and journals as resources for learning. Electronic media was rare in rural areas.

Detailed Curricula and Curriculum Frameworks, for some teachers a detailed curriculum is a security blanket. For other teachers a detailed curriculum limits professional
initiative and places unrealistic expectations of students who live in communities which particular local conditions.

Articulation with other curriculum subjects, it was found that some teachers could integrate English with other subjects.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter I will discuss my conclusions under two headings, research findings, and research methods. I will then discuss recommendations for the different educational stakeholders.

4.2 DISCUSSIONS
4.2.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS
The teacher perceptions were drawn from their own experiences and from different context, particularly rural and urban. Even though there were diversities, there were some similarities with the previous research (Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993; Sukamolsan, 1992). It was important for teachers to accept the need for change. Administrators and teachers needed to keep an open mind. Afterwards, Quality Assurance would follow up on the process of what the policy needed.

4.2.2 RESEARCH METHODS
Before I started this study it seemed such a straightforward matter to go and interview some people and report what they said about the issues that concerned me. If I had any concerns it was about sampling and numbers for interviews. The more I thought about the study the more I was confronted with the question of the relative merits of a broad spread of opinions or an in-depth analysis of the views of a limited number of people. The former was appealing because as I have explained above, I have had some training and experience with written questionnaires. However, I wanted to explore issues in some depth. For this reason I chose to use interview-conversations. I have used interview-conversations because my discussions were rather like a professional conversation. They weren't normal conversations because I had quite specific purposes in mind. They were not interviews either because it wasn't a simple I ask - you reply activity. I could have called them unstructured or semi-structured interviews but it was a matter of personal preference to call them interview-conversations.

The method I used to collect data was overwhelmingly successful. I had not realised how time-consuming it was going to be to go through all of these data, understand them,
and then use them to construct a coherent story.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a great deal of interesting material in this study and I intend to make it known to four main groups: those who contributed data to the study, schools in the province, the staff in my own department, and the broader academic community. For the first two groups I will print the study as a research report in a form suitable for teachers and coordinators. For the staff in my own department I will arrange a two-hour seminar in which we can discuss the methodology and outcomes of this particular study, and of this kind of study more generally. For the broader academic community I will write an article of around two thousand words to be published in the Faculty’s journal.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The research finding was shown that the teachers came from different contexts but there were some similar views. As a researcher, I have better understanding of the interview technique.
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the rural primary schools in the Northeastern part of Thailand: A case study in Khon Kaen and Kalasin, South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation.

Regional language Centre, Singapore (Thai publication)


APPENDIX A

THE BIO-DATA:
Age  20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 54+
Gender  Female  Male
Qualifications  (Name, place obtained, year obtained etc.)
Years of teaching 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30+
Years of teaching the 1996 English curriculum 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Present role Teacher  Subject co-ordinator  Other

THE PERCEPTIONS PROBES

THE CURRICULUM AND ITS CONTEXT.
- strengths and weaknesses of the 1990 curriculum
- strengths and weaknesses of the 1996 curriculum
- professional development (to prepare teachers for the new curriculum)
- pedagogy (what roles does the teacher have? What roles do the students have?)
- assessment and evaluation (examinations, tests, check lists, informal notes, impressions, portfolios)
- resources (books, radio, films, videos, CDROMS, newspapers etc.)
- detailed curricula versus curriculum frameworks
- articulation or integration with other curriculum subjects

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE 1990 CURRICULUM
For this issue I would be inclined to simply ask what their impressions of that curriculum were. I also have specific questions but the 1990 curriculum is not the focus of this study. I have included this issue for historical reasons—it is part of the context.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE 1996 CURRICULUM
- Are you convinced of the need to teach English in your school?
- Professional development (to prepare teachers for the new curriculum)
- Did you have any kind of professional development to prepare you for the new curriculum?
• If you had some PD — How effective was that PD?

• What kind of PD would have been most useful for you? (school-based with experts coming in, school based with other teachers coming in to lead, school based led by the subject coordinator, some kind of seminar, workshop at a centre outside the school etc. etc.)

• How long do you think a PD program should be to introduce a new curriculum should be?

• If you didn’t have any PD — would it have been helpful to have had some PD?

• What kind of PD would have been most useful for you?

PEDAGOGY (WHAT ROLES DOES THE TEACHER HAVE? WHAT ROLES DO THE STUDENTS HAVE?)

• What suggestions does the 1996 curriculum make about how to teach the students in each year?

• Are these suggestions any different from what you were doing in the old curriculum?

• What role is there for the teacher in the 1996 curriculum — director-controller, facilitator, resource-organiser/manager etc.

• What role is there for the students in the 1996 curriculum — receivers of the teacher’s knowledge, independent learners, individual learners, group learners, reproducers of knowledge, constructors of knowledge

• Is the 1996 curriculum realistic about the amount of work that the teacher is supposed to do?

• How competent do you think the English language teachers in your school

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION (EXAMINATIONS, TESTS, CHECKLISTS, INFORMAL NOTES, IMPRESSIONS, PORTFOLIOS)

• What does the 1996 curriculum say about assessment and evaluation?

• Is the suggested assessment and evaluation a good indicator of how well each student is performing?

• What is your preferred method of finding out (assessing) how much each student knows?
• How much time do you use on assessment and evaluation?
• Do you do some assessment and evaluation every lesson, every week, every month, every semester?
• What use do you make of assessment data?
• How much self-assessment do the students do?
• Do you base your teaching on the assessment tasks/criteria?
• How should a curriculum handle the problem of individual differences? (i.e. Should there be different content for different students at the same grade level? Should there only be one lot of content and it be left to the teacher to adapt it for each student?)
• What is the role of homework in the teaching of English?

RESOURCES (BOOKS, RADIO, FILMS, VIDEOS, CDROMS, NEWSPAPERS ETC.)
• To what extent does your teaching depend on the resources available?
• What do you think of the recommended textbooks?
• What materials do you use in addition to the textbooks?
• Are there any English language radio programs for school students during class time?
• Are there any English language radio programs for school students after school?
• Do you use any of these programs for teaching purposes?
• Are there any English language television programs for school students during class time?
• Are there any English language television programs for school students after school?
• Do you use any of these programs for teaching purposes?
• Do you use any computer aided instruction to teach English?
• Do you use any CD ROMs to teach English?
• Do you use the World Wide Web / Internet / e-mail to teach English?
• Do you use any other resources to teach English?

DETAILED CURRICULA VERSUS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS
• Would you prefer a detailed curriculum or an outline curriculum?
• If we had an outline curriculum what should be in it (objectives or outcomes,
content, assessment etc.)

- Are there any advantages in having a detailed curriculum?
- Are there any advantages in having an outline curriculum?

ARTICULATION OR INTEGRATION WITH OTHER CURRICULUM SUBJECTS.

- Is English integrated with any other subjects in your school?
- Would there be any advantages in integrating English with other subjects in your school?
- What would be the biggest problem in integrating English with other subjects in your school?
- Have you ever been involved in trying to integrate English with other subjects?
PART FOUR
MINOR STUDY TWO
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching of a foreign language in an Australian school. The school selected was a small government P-12 school in a rural area. The language taught was Mandarin. The teacher was named LOTE (Language Other Than English) teacher of the year for the State of Victoria in 1999. I investigated the nature of the curriculum, the teacher’s pedagogy including assessment, resources, and the professional development available.

Mandarin is currently taught at all grade levels from preparatory to year eleven at the school. It was to be taught at year twelve in the following year. Each year the curriculum is divided into three strands. The strands are:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading: Pin Yin (the Roman alphabet method of writing pronunciation), and characters
- Writing: Using the normal conventions of size, stroke order and stroke weight.

The aim of the curriculum is to develop the student’s ability to communicate with others in simple Chinese in each of these three strands. Emphasis is placed on learning to communicate by participating in realistic and practical experiences.

This study provided me an insight of how to provide a foreign language in a small rural school. The support of the school and its community was significant, but it was the quality of the teacher that was the greatest contribution to enthusiastic and effective learning.
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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many countries now have formal policies encouraging or requiring school students to learn a second or foreign language (Office of the National Education Commission, Thailand, 1999: National Board of Employment, Education and Training, Australia, 1996). Why do they do it? The reasons are varied and depend on the national interest. Thailand, for example, has a policy that all school children will learn English from grade one in the primary school. The national government (Office of National Education Commission, 1998) argues that Thailand must be a part of the world economy and that English is now used internationally for this purpose. In Australia English is the national language. Languages Other Than English (LOTE), including some European languages and Asian languages, are provided starting from the primary level in many schools. Global economic forces are demanding changes in the structure of Australian industry, in the ability to compete in world markets, and in the readiness to adapt to new jobs, new career structures, and new technologies. These changes will require new skills in communication, understanding and cultural awareness in the workplace as much as in the international market place (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a). Hence the learning of a LOTE is considered important.

However, there were some similar problems in the implementation of the policy. Lack of proficient language teachers, environmental support in the foreign language learning, and students’ motivation are often cited as issues. A case study of teaching LOTE in an Australian rural area would provide insights for professional development for English language teaching as a foreign language in Thai schools.

Before reporting on the case study I will review briefly the literature on foreign and second language teaching and a comparison of the language politics in Thailand and Australia.
1.2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE

In contrasting 'second' and 'foreign' language there is today consensus that a necessary distinction is to be made between a non-native language learnt and used within one country, to which the term 'second language' has been applied, and non-native language learnt and used with reference to a speech community outside national or territorial boundaries, to which the term 'foreign language' is commonly given. A 'second language' usually has official status or a recognized function within a country which a foreign language does not have (Stern, 1984).

A foreign language is often undertaken with a variety of different purposes in mind, such as travel abroad, communication with native speakers, reading of foreign literature, reading of foreign scientific and technical works, better occupational prospects, or higher learning.

A second language is taught in two situations (Brumfit and Robert, 1983); one is in a country where there is a substantial numbers of people who do not speak the official language of education and national life. This may be because they have recently immigrated or because they have been brought up in long-standing community speaking a minority language. The other situation is found in many ex-colonial territories, where the official language is not the language spoken by most people (frequently because there are large numbers of different languages within the country each spoken only by a small minority of the total population). Here, the language of education and government may be taught to almost the whole of the population as a second language, but again it fulfils a definite role in the lives of the learners, who may expect it to be used for many, perhaps all purposes for much of their adult life. In contrast to learning a foreign language, it is necessary for learners to be efficient in a second language in order to operate fully in society. Because the learning context is different, a foreign language usually requires more formal instruction and other measures compensating for the lack of environmental support.

There are significant differences between teaching a first language and teaching a foreign language (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Gardner, 1985; Krashen, 1985; Oxford, 1993). In the case of the foreign language, the teacher has to provide much of the content that in
a first language would simply be part of the day-to-day cultural and linguistic context. This adds to the complexity of the teacher's task because the contextual reinforcement that would be there in first language teaching is minimal or absent altogether in foreign language teaching. The advent of electronic communication technology (Lee, 1997) has helped reduce this problem but it is only a partial substitute for a natural linguistic environment.

1.3 NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THAILAND

Thailand has a stand-alone national language policy (Diller, 1991; http://www.mahidol.ac.th/Thailand/glance-Thai/language.html) and there is absolutely no debate about the primacy of the Thai language. There are four main regions of Thailand: the north, northeast, central and south. There are differences in geography, culture and dialect in each of the areas. However, the written language is identical in grammar and structure. The national language of Thailand is taught as compulsory subject in every school. It is the Central Plains dialect of Thai. The dialects are similar in grammar and morphology but differ in vocabulary and pronunciation. The dialects of the north and of the northeastern part of Thailand tend to lengthen phonemes and syllables. The dialect of the south is close to central Thai, but with a strong tendency toward shortened words and fast speech. Other smaller sub groups, like the Shins and Thai Lue, speak dialects even more different from central Thai. Altogether, standard Thai and Thai dialects are the mother tongues for about 83% of the population. Chinese, that is the Teochew dialect, is the language for about 10%. Mon-Khmer speakers make up 3%, the greatest portion being Kampuchean, followed by Kui, Mon, Lawa, Htin and Khamu. Malays in the south speak the Yawi dialect of the Malay language, and account for about another 3% (Goodman, 1991). From a historical and cultural point of view, Thailand has recognised only two categories of language at the national level: Thai, and foreign languages. English language in Thailand is learnt mainly for academic purposes, so it is a foreign language for most Thai students.

As Nose (1984) pointed out, in common with most ASEAN countries Thailand has no central government organisation that deals directly with language policy, planning,
development, and implementation. Rather, there are a large number of government agencies which are, to a greater or lesser extent, responsible for language matters. In the English Language Curriculum 1996, the Thai Ministry of Education instituted the policy that all school children will learn English from grade one. The national government (Office of National Education Commission, 1998) argues that Thailand must be a part of the world economy and that English is needed to achieve. The Thai government would like English to become a second language rather than the foreign language that it now is.

In this paper I will use ‘foreign language’ to refer to a language that has little or no role in everyday life for most citizens. Although many Thais have learnt English at some level, most of the nation’s internal affairs are conducted without English. In this sense English is a foreign language. This will continue to be the case but the national government recognizes that many important sources of wealth depend on English. The government also frequently refers to globalisation and Thailand’s need to participate in international trade and tourism (Eight National Development Plan, 1997-2001). Moreover, the other possible foreign languages for study in Thai schools are French, German, Japanese and Arabic. The upper secondary school students in language-art program can choose more than one foreign language.

1.3.1 NATIONAL AND OTHER LANGUAGES IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has an exceedingly mixed population and many of the ethnic groups have been able to retain an identity that reflects their origins and their life in Australia. For example, there are Saturday morning Greek and Italian language schools; there are Islamic schools that teach Arabic, and a great variety of support agencies for the maintenance of the various cultural groups.

As in Thailand, there is no contestation about the national language (English), but because of the number of languages involved Australia has found it useful to develop an explicit national language policy (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991 a; 1991 b). The national language policy distinguishes between languages that have significant economic importance and languages that are primarily of community importance. Asian languages such as Mandarin, Japanese, and Korean and European
languages such as Greek, German and Italian are considered to have economic significance. Lao, Turkish, Rumanian and Lithuanian are thought of as community languages. The degree of government support is related to economic importance.

Although there appears to some differences in practice between the Australian states, there is National and State government support for students to learn a second language in primary and secondary schools (Department Education, State of Victoria, 1998). In the last twenty years or so the traditional second languages of French and German, and to a lesser extent, Spanish and perhaps Latin, have been supplemented by many other Aboriginal, Asian, European and Eastern languages. The Aboriginal languages (Board of Teacher Registration Queensland, 1992) are taught mainly, but not only, to Aboriginal students. Asian languages are taught quite widely and are considered to be economically important languages. The European and Asian languages that are taught are either or both economically important languages and community languages (Department of Employment, Education and training, 1991 a; 1991 b). This dramatic increase in the teaching of second languages in Australian schools reflects the multi-cultural nature of Australia’s population and its decision to be aligned with the Asian group of nations.

In Victoria, one thousand, two hundred and seventy-six (1276) primary schools provided some form of LOTE program in 1997, 98 percent of the total of 1302 Victoria government schools. A total of seventeen languages were provided. Highest enrolments were in Indonesian (with 28.6 percent), followed by Italian, Japanese, German, French, Chinese (Mandarin) and Modern Greek (Department of Education, State of Victoria, 1998). Just which schools teach which languages depends on a number of factors: national government policies and priorities, size and location of the school, funding, the blend of community and economically important languages in the school’s catchment area and student preferences. Government policies and priorities have a significant effect on what is taught in schools. These policies and priorities are usually derived from geo-political and socio-cultural considerations. The final result is however that certain languages are given priority from time to time.

Larger schools are usually able to offer a greater range of foreign languages than smaller schools simply because they have the student numbers. The location of the school is
important because it has an effect of size and on the composition of the community. Rural schools tend to be smaller than urban schools. Rural populations tend to be less multi-cultural than urban populations and have less need for a community language. The number of qualified foreign language teachers available in small rural communities tends to be less than the number available in larger urban populations.

English as a second language is also part of the Australian language policy. English as a Second Language (ESL) is provided to the immigrants or their Australian-born children and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and for overseas students who arrive in Australia and have not passed the English language qualification. These students have to study what is normally described as English as a foreign language (EFL) in English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) in Australian education institutions, either as stand-alone EFL courses or as English preparation for further studies in Australia (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a; 1991b).

1.3.2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN AUSTRALIA

I knew from my work in Thai schools that the teaching of English as a foreign language suffered from many problems. For example, few if any of the teachers were native speakers, in fact the level of English language competency was too low for much of their teaching to be effective.

Studying the teaching of Mandarin as a foreign culture and language in an Australian school was an opportunity to study another 'point' on the culture-language continuum. That is, the teaching of Thai as the mother tongue in Thailand has total environmental support (culture-rich), whereas the teaching of English in Thailand and Mandarin in Australia even in large schools is generally culture-poor.

I talked to a number of Australians about foreign language learning. For example Bob (M62) said:

One reason that everyone has to learn another language is that you get an insight into how other people look at this problem or that problem. Different cultures have different ways to deal with the problem. If you
learn the language, it contributes to your understanding of how other people think. From the learning point of view, the younger the child is, it is easy to learn another language. And it is easy to keep a language and a foreign language separate. One of our problems is that when you get older, you may find it more and more difficult to keep one language distinct from the other language. I personally believe that language and culture are joined together. There are people who believe that learning language is learning a set of rules – not all the context. And I say: yes, alright. Usually when you learn language you do learn a set of rules and content but some of them are about the culture of the language.

Debby (F33):

I believe that it is very important to learn a foreign language if you wish to travel and to run your business. Culture helps you understand the people and what they believe. As a mother of a three-year old son, I teach him to sing French songs, and he has started counting in French. I believe that when the child is growing, he is open to everything. It is the best time to learn, to keep many things together.

Debby (F33):

For me, it is more important to learn the language to communicate, then comes grammar. With children, they learn to talk first. When they learn to talk then they get grammar. To learn a foreign language, I think it is better way also you’re not to think Oh! come on say like this, what’s the right way to say. You’re better just saying it and then correcting it yourself or someone. Then you will get some reinforcement on your grammar - as long as you can communicate.

Jaggie (F52)

One of the problems in learning a foreign language is that outside the classroom, there is no reinforcement, nobody speaks French.

Jaggie (F52)

I don’t think you can really separate either. If you don’t have grammar right, you don’t get the understanding. Once again, also you need pronunciation to be correct that people can understand you. Grammars are useful when you read the literature. If you converse with somebody, you have to have the accent, so you need pronunciation as well as grammar.
1.4 CONCLUSION

It would seem that the problems experienced in teaching English in Thai schools and teaching a foreign language in Australia would be similar. However, the curriculum content would be different as the status of the languages taught are different, e.g., English is designated as a national language in Thailand and in Australia, other languages taught in school are generally identified as foreign languages. Hence I was interested in exploring the language pedagogy in an Australia school.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter focuses on the purpose of the study and the methodology and methods used in studying the teaching of a foreign language in an Australia school.

2.2 SELECTING A METHOD
Case Study
Traditionally, educational research is based on empiricist assumptions about discrete variables and their interactions. These assumptions work well when the objects of research are atoms and molecules but not so well when the objects are people and their interactions. In the empiricist paradigm the processes of research are organised around a testable hypothesis, a defined sample, a more or less carefully described treatment and then some form of statistical analysis - either to test a statistical hypothesis derived from the research hypothesis or some form of post hoc exploration of the data (Jarungsiwarat, 1999).

In this research I wanted to do a detailed study of a particular aspect of school life - how a teacher was teaching a foreign culture and language. I did not want to do an 'experiment' but I wanted to be more than a 'non-participant observer'. This suggested to me that I should do a case study. I have taken case study to mean a detailed study of a particular event or situation with a view to understanding what is happening and, to some extent, why it is happening (Krathwohl, 1997). Case studies have had a long history in medicine and law but the origin of their use in education is not quite clear. According to Wilson (1977) case studies are a respected form of research, and Walker (1983) asserted that case studies have a long history of use in educational enquiry. However, Kidder, Judd and Smith (1986) only mention case study methodology once in their text on educational research, and then it is only to use as a simple form of pilot study. Similarly, Yin (1992, 1994) asserts that case studies are relatively new in educational research.

The acceptance of case studies as a valid methodology is made more difficult because the term is used so widely to describe almost any form of qualitative study in which there is
detailed investigation of events. In attempting to define, or at least contain, the limits of a case study, Lichtman and Taylor (1993) proposed that a case study:

- concentrates on a single unit or entity defined by the researcher
- is an example drawn from a larger class
- involves in-depth, and longitudinal, examination
- is particularistic, descriptive and heuristic.

Furthermore, Yin (1994) identifies three distinct types of case study differentiated in terms of their end product: 'exploratory', 'descriptive' and 'explanatory'. Drawing upon the rich heritage of past case studies, Yin (1994) argues that exploratory case studies have been used as 'pilots' before the research proper starts either to generate research questions or try out data collection methods or both. Descriptive case studies have aimed at giving narrative accounts of life as it is in a social situation. These Yin argues, have tended to be high in detail but low in theory. The explanatory case study or causal case studies, on the other hand, has tended to be used either to generate new theory or test an existing one (Yin, 1994).

These principles are useful and, at least partially, distinguish case studies from other forms of research. However, the notion of description is not simple. When Geertz (1975) used the term 'thick description' he was implicitly making a distinction between description and explanation. It is helpful to think of explanation and description as a reflexive pair. That is, a description based on thick data (or extensive and critical data) approaches explanation. Whereas an explanation based on thin (or limited) data is more like a description. The level of explanation that one can achieve seldom approaches the cause and effect of the natural sciences. Rather it is a clarification of significant influences and their interaction. Clearly, there are no absolute criteria for description and explanation.

From another perspective the case study is a way of looking at complex situations not as a very difficult research task but rather as a writing task (Walker, Lewis & Laskey, 1996). This perspective avoids any reference to causation and is based on notions of real life - complex, resisting simple interpretation, and multi-dimensional. The task for
the researcher is to construct a narrative that has a rational defence based on the data that one has collected. Whatever perspective one takes, it is clear that well conducted case studies help build up a database that researchers can draw on in their investigation of methodological and content issues. From my perspective case study methodology is simply a reasoned alternative to other methodologies. It is not in any way a panacea or a means of avoiding difficult methodological problems (Walker, 1983). The question of variables does not disappear in case study methods - it is just treated in a different way. If it is very difficult, or impossible, to identify all potentially relevant variables in a quantitative design it is equally very difficult to attend to all potentially relevant variables in a case study. In fact one possible definition is that a case study is a form of research in which the number of variables exceeds the number of possible observations (Yin, 1992, 1994). Even if one does not think that this is particularly useful, it does at least make it clear that a case study is more than a method of data collection.

The researcher is, or ought to, be concerned with construct validity and, in some cases, internal and external validity, and reliability. Construct validity can take many forms. The essential notion is that the 'instruments' that one uses to collect data ought to be an accurate reflection of the constructs that one is studying. In most studies the researcher has to be satisfied with approximations - sometimes rough. One can reduce uncertainty by using multiple estimates of the same construct - sometimes referred to as triangulation. Internal validity is a matter of internal consistency. It is of particular interest when one is trying to decide which one of two (or more) competing theories is most useful. The theory that is most consistent with the data collected is to be preferred over the theory with the lower level of consistency. Similarly, external validity is estimated by examining how well the theory of interest articulates with the web of related theories. These notions are themselves constructs and hence subject to the same uncertainties as the constructs that one is studying. For this reason the researcher needs to take particular care that the study is as carefully designed as it is possible to make it.
2.3 PURPOSES
In order to inform my understanding of the teaching of English as a foreign language in Thailand, the purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching of a foreign language in an Australian school. I hoped that the study would improve my understanding of:

- the teaching of a foreign language in Australia
- foreign language pedagogy and
- the interaction between professional development and classroom practice.

2.4 METHODS

2.4.1 IDENTIFYING DATA SOURCES

2.4.1.1 Selection Of The School
Although I was familiar with the teaching of English language and culture in Thai schools I had had no other experience of the teaching of a foreign language in another country. In particular I had little knowledge of the teaching of foreign languages in Australia.

In selecting a school to study, I took into account a number of factors:

- location
- size
- convenience
- academic program.

Location
Because most secondary school students in Khon Kaen were in rural locations, I wanted to study an Australian school in a rural location. Because of demography and geography, there were few, if any, exact equivalences between Khon Kaen schools and Australian schools. So, I gave greater weight to convenience than to location - other than selecting a rural school.

Size
Most of the secondary schools in Khon Kaen province have at least 200 students even when they are located in quite rural areas. It was possible to find schools of this size in Victoria but they were generally in cities. It also occurred to me that the smaller the school the easier it might be to research the pedagogy.
Convenience

I had friends in the western region of Victoria. Hence it was convenient to stay with them for the period of the study. It also meant that I studied a school that had not had a constant stream of researchers. In this sense I was a novelty and was made very welcome.

Academic program

Although my first thoughts were to select a school that taught a number of foreign languages, I later came to think that if the school was only teaching one foreign language it would be easier to understand and it would contain the study.

When I considered all of these factors I selected Ravenshill College as my research site. Ravenshill had an extra advantage in that it was a P-12 school. That is, it had students from the preparatory class to the final year of the secondary sector.

2.4.1.2 Data sources

In this study I used data collected from:

- the teacher -(interviews)
- texts and documents (government policy statements, curriculum documents, commercial textbooks, and teacher prepared materials and school personnel.
- the principal (interviews)
- the students (interviews, classroom observations).

2.4.2 TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING DATA

2.4.2.1 Interviews

Details of issues that were the focus of the interviews are provided in Appendix A

The Principal - Mr Racer

I was able to talk to the Principal (Mr. Racer) in his office during normal school hours and at other times during the school day. The conversations were often extended and involved up to an hour or so. We focused on:

- the purposes of teaching foreign languages
- the place of foreign languages in the curriculum
- funding and staffing
- origins of the program
- parental attitudes to the learning of an Asian language
- staff attitudes to the teaching of an Asian language
- future of the program
- curriculum matters
- assessment of learning

Mrs. Pengyou

Mrs. Pengyou appeared to be delighted to be able to discuss her work and readily gave me access to curriculum materials, texts, dictionaries and other resources that she used. Because she was the only teacher of Mandarin for eleven grade levels (year twelve Mandarin was to be introduced in the following year), data collection had to be designed around her availability.

Most, but not all, of the conversations took place during non-teaching times - at lunch and during the recesses. These took place in the classroom and in the staff room. The atmosphere was relaxed and conducive to a conversation as distinct from an interview.

The interviews focused on:
- curriculum origins, structure and content
- the use of technology
- student motivation
- learning difficulties
- curriculum matters
- assessment of learning
- Chinese culture
- native and non-native settings.

The Students

Discussion with the students took place during normal school time and in the recesses. There were individual and group conversations. A typical discussion took around fifteen minutes although this was influenced by the age of the students. The conversations focused on:
• motivations for learning Mandarin
• content
• time on task
• knowledge of, and interest, in Mandarin grammar
• pedagogy
• assessment
• interest in the culture
• in-country experience
• interest in continuing the study of Mandarin.

2.4.2.2 Observations
Classroom observations focused on:
• physical setting
• culture and language environment
• group size and characteristics
• lesson content
• pedagogy
• use of technology
• teacher-student interactions
• evaluation of student learning.

2.4.3 TECHNIQUES FOR ANALYSING DATA
My aim was to produce a narrative that reflected the teaching of Mandarin in this particular school. Writing and 'telling the story' in qualitative research in general is such an important issue. As far as case studies are concerned 'telling the story' and describing the case are crucial features in establishing authenticity and credibility (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). This realisation came when I was thinking about the relationship between the data and 'reality'. My first thoughts were that I would be writing a descriptive or realistic, rather than a critical narrative. I then realized that I could not possibly re-create even a momentary reality in writing because of the very complexity of the concept of reality. I gradually came to understand that the task was to describe
real events in a way that illustrated the operation of principles that I could identify and articulate. For example, the teacher used a variety of pedagogical techniques. These varied depending on content, student interest, grade level, availability and necessity. For one teacher dealing with eleven grade levels one might have expected the teacher to use only expository teaching in order to conserve her energy.

I wanted to be sure that any account that I wrote captured the complexity of the teaching.

2.4.3.1 Text Analysis

In the curriculum analysis I wanted to know:

- the main focus of the curriculum - was it, for example, based on a notion of communicative competence (the dominant design principle of most Thai foreign language curricula), or on developing a detailed knowledge of the grammar of the language, or on some other general principle or principles

- how the curriculum was designed - did it, for example, integrate the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) - if not how were these skills introduced and sequenced?, what was the proposed time allocation for each grade level?, what was the balance of new material and known material in each segment?

- what the goals and objectives were, how they were written (in behavioural terms? - a common Thai practice)?

- what the content was - daily life in China, contemporary social and cultural settings?, great works of literature?, poetry and songs?, historical material?

- what, if any, pedagogies were suggested - the role of individual and group work, the use of situations and simulations, the place of drill, induction and deduction of general principles, the place of chanting, singing, word games, the balance of introduction and consolidation, homework, immersion programs, in-country experiences?

- what texts were recommended, readers, dictionaries newspapers, teacher made materials, student made materials etc.?

- what technology was used - tele-conferencing, video-conferencing, the Internet, CD
ROMS, video-tapes, audio-tapes?

- what assessment was suggested or mandated, when it was to be used and how it was to be used?

I also wanted to know what illustrations were in the texts and readers and how they were used. For example, were the illustrations coloured, what was the balance of text to illustration on the individual pages, were the illustrations essential to the student's understanding of the text, did the texts show Chinese people in Chinese contexts, or foreign people in Chinese contexts?

2.4.4 QUALITY OF DATA

The processes used to collect data ensured that the data were comprehensive and accurate. All participants willingly became involved in the study. The process of data collection was interactive. That is, it was not a matter of asking questions and recording answers. In most cases issues were discussed, contested, clarified and elaborated. As data were collected from principal, teacher, students, and documents, a form of triangulation was possible. In the case of the Principal, the material collected was of two kinds: factual material about feeder schools, funding, origins of the program, number of students and matters of professional opinion; future of the program, curriculum issues, and assessment. The interviews with the Principal were taped (with permission). When the tapes were checked against notes made at the time there were only minor matters that required clarification. This was done during follow up visits to the College. When the interviews with the class teacher was checked against that of the Principal there was no significant differences on the matters of fact. The Principal's professional opinions were considered to be important because he was a significant factor in the initiation and maintenance of the program.

Photographs of the current students and their learning environment were taken at several points during the observations. These photographs were used to check handwritten notes and later reflections. The photographs recorded data such as:

- cultural context in the classroom
- whiteboard work
• group arrangements
• student engagement with the learning tasks
• teacher and student use of learning materials.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research methodology informing this study and the methods use to collect and analyse data. In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to undertake a case study on teaching a foreign language (Mandarin) in an Australian school. The techniques for collecting data were interviews and observation, and curriculum policies and programs. The data sources were texts and documents about teaching Mandarin as a LOTE, the principal, the teacher, and the students.
CHAPTER THREE: THE CASE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter discusses the nature of the school, provides details of the personnel involved, the LOTE curriculum including resources, pedagogy, assessment, and professional development.

3.2 MANDARIN AT RAVENSHILL COLLEGE
3.2.1 THE SCHOOL - RAVENSHILL COLLEGE
Ravenshill is about 300 kilometres west of Melbourne. The College is approximately half a kilometre from the village centre. In 1999 there were 22.5 equivalent full time teaching staff and approximately 2.5 equivalent full time administrative staff. During the 1990s many small schools in the area were closed, and with small numbers at the secondary school at Ravenshill there was concern that it, too, may close. To provide for the smaller number of students it was agreed that the primary and secondary schools should combine under one Principal. This took effect in 1994 when the P-12 college was established. In the following year the buildings were consolidated on a single site.

In 1999 the school has an enrolment of 240 students, 130 of whom are in the secondary section and 110 in the primary section. The secondary numbers are boosted by an intake from district primary schools that only teach to year six. Most students travel to school on school buses. The longest bus route is fifty-one kilometres and the trip takes about forty-five minutes.

The school is proud of its academic record. It ranks in the top five percent in the state and is successful in placing students in employment and tertiary study. Its dropout rate is close to zero. Mandarin was introduced to the school in 1994.

The secondary section of the school is part of the mid-western Complex, a group of five small secondary schools, each of which serves a small rural community remote from large urban centres. The schools share in some activities. Tele-conference facilities are available in each school so it is possible for a teacher at Ravenshill to teach at a distance.
3.2.2 THE PEOPLE

3.2.2.1 The Principal - Mr. Racer

The principal of Ravenshill College was male aged fifty-three years. He trained as a secondary school teacher and had taught commerce and legal studies in a number of rural secondary schools before becoming a Principal. Prior to coming to Ravenshill Mr. Racer had managed a School Support Centre in a regional city. School Support Centres were resource centres for a cluster of schools and provided specialist curriculum advice as well as housing a range of physical resources that schools could use.

Ravenshill College relies heavily on parents and people in community. The Principal strongly believes in involving the community in the life of the school. So there is a strong association between this school and its community. Parent participation is a strong feature of Australian schools and reflects an understanding that school education is not just a matter of teachers teaching in classrooms. How effectively children learn and develop, indeed what they learn and the directions of their development, are shaped by the cultural traditions into which they are socialised, by family values, child rearing goals and behaviours, by community forces, and by the children’s experiences at school.

The goal is for teachers and parents to be partners in the education of students.

In 1994 the Victorian Department of Education proposed that schools should have a foreign language program of 150 hours each year (Board of Studies, CSF II 2000).

3.2.2.2 The Teacher - Mrs. Pengyou

Mrs. Pengyou was approximately forty-three years of age and had been teaching for twenty years. At the time of the study she had been teaching Mandarin for five years. Her initial qualifications were a Bachelor of Arts (1971) and a Diploma of Education (1972) from Melbourne University. Her major study was Chinese History and she had taken an English minor. Mrs. Pengyou completed a teaching qualification in Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in 1993 and started teaching Mandarin the following year.

For much of Mrs. Pengyou’s teaching career she had taught English. At Ravenshill she is also the co-ordinator for grades preparatory to six. Mrs. Pengyou has visited China several times. The most recently of which was the two weeks immediately prior to this study. She had taken a group of sixteen students, two staff and two parents to
Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing and Beijing. Mrs Pengyou was the only teacher of Mandarin at Ravenshill. The next nearest teacher of Mandarin was in a private school some sixty kilometres to the north.

Mrs Pengyou explained some of the difficulties that she faces because she is the only teacher of Mandarin and because of the different levels of the students:

I’ve got two boys - one in year nine and one in year ten - they’ve both been to China with us but they have not learnt characters. There are three separate systems of Chinese. There’s two systems of writing. There’s the characters but there’s an Anglicised pronunciation called Pin Yin and they have only got Pin Yin. So I’m teaching them in conjunction with my other classes but my other classes have had four years of characters so their knowledge base is quite different. Their vocabulary also is different. They’ve always learnt from video-conferencing and consequently their pronunciation is slightly wrong. It’s very hard to see how you form your mouth to produce sounds in video-conferencing - because there’s a time delay in each frame. Otherwise it’s quite good and it means they get Chinese but we have to work out ways of getting over the particular problems. The trip to China was excellent for them because the teacher actually spent a lot of time telling them how to form their mouths - which was really hard for them. A lot of sounds are different and it’s really important to know how to make them. You’d find that in English and Thai I would imagine. The sounds are quite different and putting your mouth in that formation is very difficult.

3.2.2.3 The students

In this study I interviewed and observed the students in preparatory grade, year eight, and a combined year ten and eleven. Table 1 shows the school composition
TABLE 1 NUMBER OF STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>3 (+1)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>3 (+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**numbers in brackets are videoconference students

*estimated for the following year

3.2.3 CURRICULUM

In Australian schools foreign languages are included in the curriculum under the general name Languages Other Than English (LOTE). (Curriculum Standard Framework). The suggested time allocations is shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2 TIME ALLOCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Time Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory and grade one</td>
<td>50 minutes each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades two to eight</td>
<td>100 minutes each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades nine and ten</td>
<td>150 minutes each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade eleven</td>
<td>200 minutes each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade twelve</td>
<td>250 minutes each week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Ravenshill, Mandarin is currently taught at all grade levels from Preparatory to Year Eleven. It was to be taught at Year Twelve in the following year. Each year the
curriculum is divided into three strands. The strands are:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading: Pin Yin (the Roman alphabet method of writing pronunciation), and characters
- Writing: Using the normal conventions of size, stroke order and stroke weight.

The aim of the curriculum is to develop the student’s ability to communicate with others in simple Chinese in each of these three strands. Emphasis is placed on learning to communicate by participating in realistic and practical experiences.

Listening to stories, singing songs, playing games and role-plays are all used to encourage listening and speaking with accurate intonation. Reading of graded readers as well as big books and blackboard games encourages and increases reading skills.

In Preparatory and Grade one, the curriculum concentrates on speaking and listening skills so that there is no clash with the development of skills in English literacy.

For years seven to ten the study of Chinese language involves the skills of speaking and understanding spoken Chinese as well as reading and writing both characters and Pin Yin (the Romanised pronunciation form of Chinese). A large part of the study of Chinese language also involves understanding cultural similarities and differences to Australian culture. So the curriculum includes beliefs, customs, festival and lifestyles. The language is intended to be taught within the social, cultural and historical context of China, enabling students to interact with others in socially and culturally appropriate ways. For years eleven and twelve the curriculum is set externally. It consists of four units that progressively develop the students’ ability to communicate in speech and writing on everyday matters.

3.2.4 RESOURCES

There was one dedicated room in the school for the teaching of Mandarin. The room could seat around thirty students working at five to six tables. There were pin-up boards outside the classroom and these were covered with students’ work and photos of a recent trip to China. Inside the room there were lots of examples of students’ work on the walls and hanging from the ceiling. There was also a bookcase with various readers
and reference books.

There was a very small recess for Mrs. Pengyou's administrative work. This recess contained a desk, curriculum materials, a computer, some CD-ROMs and a small collection of reference materials. A small anteroom was used as a resource room. In the resource room there were musical instruments, weighing implements, items of clothing, food packaging (Coca Cola cans, McDonalds place mats), video tapes - e.g. Raise the Red Lantern with English sub-titles, paper cuts, and student-made face masks based on Beijing Opera characters.

For the youngest children Mrs. Pengyou used 'texts' that she had prepared herself. For example, the Preparatory children used teacher-made counting books. Mrs. Pengyou also used games and books that older children had prepared as part of their assessment activities.

The main text used was Hanyu. The original Hanyu had been published as Hanyu 1, 2, and 3. In 1991 these were revised and printed as Hanyu for beginning students, Hanyu for intermediate students and Hanyu for Advanced students. Writing is introduced in the first level text. For example, on page thirty-two of the text the character hao (meaning good or well) is introduced. The character is first shown in a box four centimetres square. The Pin Yin pronunciation is given as is the meaning in English. Then the individual strokes are illustrated in boxes three by two and half centimetres, then the 'assembled' character is shown again.

A typical unit (Unit 4.3) in the intermediate text was: At the doctor's. The heading was in English. The text in characters occupied the right hand two-thirds of the page. The characters were written left to right and were 0.5cm. in height. There was Pin Yin pronunciation under some of the characters. There was one illustration in the text. It showed a mother and son and a nurse in the background. These figures were of indeterminate ethnicity. The text was in the form of a question and answer dialogue. The right hand third of the page was a boxed column containing a brief account of health services in China. The box also had a diagram of an arm with various acupuncture points marked on it.

Unit 3.1 in the advanced level had a heading in characters with one Pin Yin word (y)
underneath. The top half of the page contained a line drawing of a courtyard with several figures in it. The bottom half of the page was divided into three columns. The first two columns were English text giving a brief history of the 'courtyard home'. The right hand column had nine questions (related to the text) in Pin Yin. The second page of this unit was a mixture of text, photos, line drawings and diagrams. The text consisted of characters, Pin Yin and English. There was also a vocabulary section. Mrs. Pengyou found it very difficult to get texts that were appropriately graded for her needs. From year eight on, part of the assessment requirement was to prepare a Big Book (A3) containing pictures and text about a topic of interest. These books contained a minimum of twelve pages with a minimum of two sentences on each page.

3.2.5 PEDAGOGY

Mrs. Pengyou had been trained as a secondary school teacher and in the teacher education program the emphasis was more on content than on pedagogy. On this basis one might have expected Mrs. Pengyou to have a rather limited range of pedagogical strategies:

I was trained to teach subjects. One of the great things about the amalgamation (of the primary and secondary schools NL) is that I have learnt so much from the literacy program. (Ravenshill has an extensive literacy program for its lower grades and this takes place every morning). I still have to stop myself sometimes (from only working on the whiteboard NL). Primary teachers are more student-oriented. Secondary are subject-oriented.

In fact Mrs Pengyou had developed a wide range of strategies and was able to match strategy with the needs of individual students. The three extracts (in Appendix B, C, and D) from my classroom observations illustrate her range of teaching strategies.

3.2.5.1 Pedagogy For Preparatory Grade

The first lesson was with a Preparatory grade and started at noon. There were nine boys and six girls. One of the girls (Ignacia) was a Down Syndrome child. She was seven years of age and was supported by an integration teacher. All of the other children were six years of age or soon to turn six. Josephine turned six on the day that I made these observations. The detailed of the classroom observation was shown in
Appendix B.

Mrs. Pengyou was very active in this lesson and constantly sought to engage the children's interests. She consolidated previously taught content using singing, poetry, games and whiteboard work. She made use of games and she related language to cultural context.

Almost all of the teacher-talk in this session is either organisational or facilitatory. There was very little 'control' talk. What there was, was almost entirely related to Ignacia, the integrated child. Much of the facilitatory talk was analytical. Mrs. Pengyou created stories for each character and told the story as she wrote the character. Because of the pace and variety the children showed a high level of interest and engagement throughout the lesson.

The following song is a typical, singing with actions, activity used by Mrs Pengyou.

\[
\text{pai pai shou}  \\
\text{(singing with actions - Preparatory to grade three)}  \\
\text{pai pai shou}  \\
\text{pai pai shou}  \\
\text{yi er san}  \\
\text{san er yi}  \\
\text{yi er san se wu lie gi}  \\
\text{pai pai pi pai pai pi sheu}
\]

3.2.5.2 Pedagogy For Year Eight

The next lesson that I have selected demonstrates a transitional pedagogy in which Mrs. Pengyou utilised some of the strategies used with the Preparatory grade together with longer periods of desk work. Details of this lesson are shown in Appendix C.

This lesson had three main segments: an initial phase in which prior learning was revised and consolidated (mainly teacher-centred); an active phase in which the students competed to complete characters (student-centred); and a practice extension phase in which the students worked on their assessment tasks. Mrs. Pengyou had long been aware that as the boys got older they become less willing to participate in oral Mandarin
exercises - apparently because they feared the ridicule of their peers if they made a mistake. This is also evident in Thai schools.

3.2.5.3 Pedagogy For Years Ten And Eleven
The next lesson was with years ten and eleven and was a mixed mode lesson. In the first session of fifty minutes, Mrs. Pengyou used video-conferencing to teach three students in another school some sixty kilometres away. In the next session of fifty minutes, three Ravenshill students joined in. For some of the time Mrs. Pengyou combined video-teaching with face to face teaching. For much of the time the six students worked together without Mrs. Pengyou’s intervention. The equipment was in a small room and an attempt had been made to soundproof it. This was mainly done by the extensive use of carpet on the floor and walls. The computer link was through the VICONE system (Victorian State Government Computer Network for Schools) developed by the Victorian Department of School Education. The video-conferencing equipment consisted of a computer (with sound speakers), modem link, a high resolution camera and a normal conference camera. The high resolution camera was used to transmit material that might otherwise have appeared on the whiteboard. For the purposes of this paper I have selected three ten-minute segments:

9.02 Mrs. Pengyou greeted students using a mixture of Chinese and English - Hello, nimen hao. Mrs. Pengyou also introduced me. Mrs. Pengyou told me that these students were using a textbook - Hanyu stage 1.

9.04 Mrs. Pengyou then talked to each student individually about their work on the Big Book. Mrs. Pengyou (talking to Smithy): Have you got your photos back? Smithy: Yes. Mrs. Pengyou: That’s OK. There’s couple of ways that we can talk about lorries and things. So uhm you can use them. What I want you to do today is to work on description words of them and also to work on the sort of sentence structure and so we are going to do that in a second.

9.09 Mrs. Pengyou (talking to Albert): you’re doing shapes - still? Albert: Yes. Mrs. Pengyou: and you’ve got enough photos have you? Albert: Yeah, I’ll be getting ---

9.12 Mrs. Pengyou (talking to Mary): and Mary you’re going to do a big book now - on
your school OK. Mary couldn't hear and Mrs. Pengyou repeated: Big Book - A
Big Book that we're going to use ---- At this stage Mrs. Pengyou adjusted the high
resolution camera so that the three students could see her writing. Mrs. Pengyou:
We will work on sentence structure and we will do that in a minute. Have you got
your dictionaries? Students: No. (Mrs. Pengyou says that she can drop them off
at a store near the school and one of the parents can pick them up)

In this first ten-minute segment Mrs. Pengyou used very little Mandarin. Much of the
talk was managerial and instrumental. It was also quite individual as she checked each
student's understanding of the learning tasks. I was very interested to hear Mrs
Pengyou make arrangements to drop off some dictionaries for the remote students to
pick up.

In the next ten-minute segment the balance of language becomes more facilitatory or
learning-oriented:

9.28 Mrs. Pengyou addresses Smithy: yo eis sa - quai Smithy what did I say?
Chopsticks, measure word for money. Yo mei yo (have, not have) so quai can
mean quick, money or chopsticks. It is very quick. Its very han yo eis sa.
Remember the farm utes that we saw in China that looked like a rotary hoe? I
would say it's very slow. I would say a bus is very quick wouldn't you? Smithy:
Yes. Mrs. Pengyou: OK you've got enough work there Smithy I want you for
the rest of this lesson to work out each page- what you are going to put on the
page and what you are going to write about it. Minimum two sentences - Ok?.
Smithy: Yeah. Mrs. Pengyou: and Smithy I don't want Pin Yin. I only want
characters OK?

9.32 Mrs. Pengyou (addressing Albert): Albert what sentence patterns are you going to
do? Help him Mary. Mary whispers something to Albert. Albert uhm well -
exploration in words? Mrs. Pengyou: What about zhe she? This is a roof. What
about - It is the roof - hern - what? Yo esa What am I saying about it? Albert: It's
very interesting. Mrs. Pengyou: OK hern maylei - beautiful - maylei very
beautiful - hern nun chun - very ugly hern chi guay very strange - so -. Albert:
nun chun is beautiful? Mrs. Pengyou: nun chun is definitely not beautiful. It's
ugly. Remember if you’re saying it is very beautiful you don’t use ‘she’ ha hern
what is that? So descriptions often don’t use the she, the grammar is different (the
description). It uses a square, it uses circles it uses triangles. OK. - Now I want
you to restrict yourself to those sentence patterns - keeping in mind the photos
you took - and work out a rough lot of sentences and descriptions for your first
twelve pages OK? Can you do that? Han bu han? Albert: Yes - have they got to

9.37 Mrs. Pengyou: Mary, never did I think that I would have to say this to you but I
can’t hear the soft tones of your voice. So a bit louder OK. You’re going to write
about what? Zher xiau wode, zher xia. Those boys spent heaps of time China
learning how to make that x sound. Fellows you’re there (at the other school)
show Mary how you put your mouth - han hao. Mary, copy them. Albert did it
so beautifully. The closest I can say you put your mouth where you put at.
That’s right, so xier xiau - wode xier xiau - can you say that please - Mary? Mary:
wode xier xia. Mrs. Pengyou: Oh beautiful. So tell me what it means now. Mrs.
Pengyou: Say it again nicely thanks Albert. Albert: Me? Mrs. Pengyou: What’s
that you’re whispering to her? Mrs. Pengyou: xer wode, xer xiau, han hao. Mrs.
Pengyou; Watch how I do xier please. Writes character for xier under the high
resolution camera. Students at the other school see the character full-screen size.
Mrs. Pengyou: notice that the students are only male because in China only males
were allowed to go to school. OK. So, xiau (writes character under the high
resolution camera), their schools were made of wood so it starts with the wood
radical.

In this segment Mrs Pengyou made use of some peer teaching to help Mary. The two
boys had been to China but Mary had not. Although Mrs Pengyou appeared to
be fluent in Mandarin much of this and the preceding segment were conducted in
English because of the students’ lack of confidence, vocabulary, grammar and
fluency. This is very much the same in Thailand where English language classes
are sometimes conducted mainly in Thai. In the third segment the local Ravenshill
students join with the remote students.

9.42 Mrs. Pengyou: Do you remember chin lao xie? - our teacher in China - didn’t he teach you yo enti ma - do you remember that? Smithy: Not really. Mrs. Pengyou: No, because you didn’t listen. Yo wenti ma Smithy: Yes Mrs. Pengyou: ahh bu. Bu duai you have to repeat the verb - what’s the verb there? Smithy: yo. Mrs. Pengyou: yo, so if you have a problem you would say yo. If you don’t have a problem - what are you going to say? Smithy: mei yo. Mrs. Pengyou: Albert (uses Chinese name) mei yo, han hao, very good. So, yo wen ti ma. Albert: mei yo. Mrs. Pengyou: mei yo han hao. Mary (uses Chinese name) yo wen ti ma. Mary: mei yo. Mrs. Pengyou: han hao. You are so clever. Yes. You haven’t got a problem Smithy? Smithy: Yes, how do you say - they wanted to catch the transport? Mrs. Pengyou: transport? Haaa -make it simpler than that - just use the word xie vehicle. Ahhhm hold on I’ll be honest I don’t know the word for transport I’ll look it up for you. It’s not a word I ever come across. Did Wendy leave a dictionary with you - I thought you fellows said that you had a dictionary. Ahhh transport is yun xiu I’m having big trouble seeing here (referring to her eyesight and the small print in the dictionary NL).

9.47 Mrs. Pengyou: Erin and Nicole and Adrian are coming in in a second OK. The three Ravenshill students come into the room. They exchange greetings with the other three students. (Nicole and Adrian were in the their sixth year of Mandarin. Erin was in her fifth year of Mandarin. NL).

9.52 Mrs Pengyou: We have a visitor (Introduced me). (I notice that these students are using Hanyu stage 2). Students: Hello. Mrs. Pengyou (to remote students): Can you see in focus there clearly enough? (because the additional three students could not sit directly in front of the camera NL). Albert: Yes. Mrs Pengyou: Good .... Two lines there. Sorry that took so long. (To Smithy) yu xu is transport OK. Smithy: If I want to .... Do I have to use ta zher? Mrs. Pengyou: No you’d use han - very - ta han xiguai. Smithy: ta han xiguai. Mrs Pengyou: That’s right. Mrs. Pengyou (attending to the three year eleven students) Once you’ve got - not in English I just want you to make notes OK - not good sentences. First paragraph
- China. Under that - what Chinese sentence pattern are you going to use? Mrs.
Pengyou: So what sentence patterns are you to going write - what sentence
patterns are you going to put?

In this third segment Mrs Pengyou has had to alter the direction and tempo of the lesson
because the three Ravenshill students joined the three remote students. This meant that
Mrs Pengyou had to adjust the equipment so that the students could all see each other.
This was a definite break in the lesson and it lost momentum and direction temporarily.
One can see that Mrs Pengyou had to revert to a relatively high level of instrumental
talk so that the joining students could ‘fit in’.
In all of the lessons that I observed Mrs. Pengyou did a considerable amount of revision
and consolidation and took care to involve as many students as possible.

3.2.6 ASSESSMENT

The assessment of Mandarin learning was of two general types. The grades from
preparatory to year ten are assessed within a general framework provided by the
Curriculum and Standards Frameworks (CSF) documents (Board of Studies, 2000).
This assessment is entirely internal.
The CSF documents specify three levels of competence:
Level: one non-literate beginner
Level: two any beginner who can read and write in the mother tongue
Level: three end of grade 3
Mrs Pengyou was a little ambivalent about the guidelines for internal assessment. She
had two concerns:

- the difficulty of making judgement, and hence
- inconsistencies between teachers.

She felt that these problems were always going to exist because of the different views
that teachers have about competence. The problems were minimised to some extent by
informal and formal moderation meetings in which these matters were discussed - often
using samples of students’ work.

Despite the difficulties Mrs Pengyou kept very detailed records of every student’s
pronunciation, grammar (word order, tenses, measure words, plurality), spoken and
written characters, written comprehension, oral comprehension, communicative competence and accuracy. The records were based on direct observation, written notes made during and after class, and informal tests. This was only possible because of the enormous amount of time that she was prepared to commit to her teaching.

3.2.6.1 Authentic Assessment Task

In 1999 for example Mrs Pengyou set the year eight students an assessment task of preparing a 'Big Book'. These big books had ten or more sentences written in well-formed characters and illustrated aspects of Chinese life. The text was illustrated - usually with photographs. As I have indicated earlier these Big Books were then used as resource material for the lower grade levels. The students in year nine and ten did a Powerpoint presentation. The PowerPoint presentations were typed on a bi-lingual word processor - Twin Bridges. The keyboard has Pin Yin characters and the screen shows one or more Chinese characters that correspond to the Pin Yin. The year eleven students wrote a 300 character essay on their trip to China as a major part of their assessment.

Competency levels five and six are meant to be achieved during years eleven and twelve. Competency level seven is that of a native speakers. Years eleven and twelve are assessed by a combination of internal and external tasks. The tasks included quite demanding Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) done during school time and an oral examination at the end of the year twelve. The CATs and the oral examination tested the students’ ability to communicate orally and in writing about the student’s future aspirations, family, school, part-time and leisure activities. The oral examinations were conducted in Melbourne and so the students had to travel some four hours to the examination centre.

3.2.7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ravenshill is an isolated school and forms of professional development other than school-based professional development incur a considerable travel penalty. For example, there is no public transport from Ravenshill to Melbourne (or any other major centre). To travel by car takes around four hours. Added to this there is the matter of funding.
Nevertheless, once a year Mrs. Pengyou joins with the mid-western complex schools for a grade seven LOTE day. Each of the schools teaches a different language and so much of the day has to focus on general issues of LOTE teaching rather than on any one specific language. Mrs Pengyou had also been able to travel overseas on a number of professional development activities. Mr. Racer explained some of the background to these trips:

When Jeffrey (the Victorian Premier) came to power and they mandated that a language other than English would have to be taught. That sort of coincided with the time when we couldn’t offer continue to offer French any more and Mrs Pengyou who was basically a secondary English and history teacher put up her hand to be retrained as a LOTE teacher. When she did her BA she did Mandarin Chinese as part of her BA but never ever used it. And so there were twenty four teachers to be retrained and Mrs Pengyou went off and did that. NL: When was that roughly?: Mr. Racer: 94 93 94 might have been - Jeff came in October 93 so it must have been 94 and there’s ... in department publication there was the opportunity for teachers to apply for trips to like study tours to say France, Indonesia, China and - what was the other common one? - Italy, they put a few of these things and they were offering short course programs to a very select bunch of people to go off and Mrs. Pengyou said: What do you think? So I said well if you don’t fill out an application form there’s no way that you can even be considered so she filled that application form in - trip to Nanjing for eight weeks to do that an immersion course and then two years later she - I encouraged her to have a go for another one - and she got that and she also got a trip to Hawaii for two weeks to try and help them with their language films.

During the period of this research Mrs. Pengyou was named LOTE teacher of the year in Victoria and received an all-expenses paid trip to Beijing.

3.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have described the teaching of a foreign language in an Australian school focusing on the views of the principal, the teacher and the students. My focus was on the curriculum and pedagogy. In the next chapter I will discuss the findings in relation
to English teaching in Thailand.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I make recommendations for teaching foreign language in Thailand on the basis of my Australian experiences. In addition I reflect upon the effectiveness of the research methods used and make recommendations for future research.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ravenshill was in a unique position with a talented and committed teacher with small classes and able to teach at all grade levels. Her work was an example of very best practice. Most schools (in Thailand) cannot expect to have staff with quite the same levels of talent and commitment. Nor can they expect the small classes that I saw at Ravenshill. Nevertheless, her best practice was based on principles that all language teachers can adopt. These include:

- thorough preparation
- flexibility - the capacity to manage lessons at the pace of the learners, and the capacity to embody the content in forms accessible to different learners - e.g. songs, plays and poetry
- the use of textbooks for teaching more than for learning
- active classes
- individual attention
- integrating language and culture, and integrating the four skills
- detailed assessment records
- willingness to make her own resources and use them efficiently and effectively
- relatively high levels of instructional/facilitatory talk and relatively low levels of managerial/instrumental talk.

Mrs Pengyou would have been effective in almost any school but she was particularly effective at Ravenshill because of the strong support of Mr Racer, the Principal.

4.2.2 COMMON APPROACHES

Although Khon Kaen and Ravenshill are separated by many thousands of kilometres I
was very interested to see that the fundamental approach (communicative competence) was the same and that many of the problems tended to be the same:

- lack of trained teachers
- little or no contextual support
- the teacher as the principal model
- the relatively high level of mother tongue usage
- professional development
- the role of textbooks
- judgments about student performance.

The problem of lack of teachers was extreme at Ravenshill and Mr. Racer pointed out, they would have enormous problems if Mrs. Pengyou left the school. In Thai schools there is always more than one English language teacher on staff. Our problem is that these language teachers often have low levels of English language competence. Here is no short-term solution for this problem. However, the universities have a particular role in the preparation of language teachers and on the basis of my study at Ravenshill, I think that we in the universities need to look more closely at our programs and our pedagogies.

Mrs. Pengyou’s main teaching room was a rich Chinese cultural environment that had been constructed using everyday objects such as newspapers, cooking utensils, bus tickets, advertising material, clothing, and ceremonial objects. Thai teachers of English could develop similar rooms.

Mrs. Pengyou and her students also prepared many of their own learning materials (an example is included in Appendix B). I think that we could adapt this idea for use in Thai schools.

Thai teachers tend to use textbooks as the central content of the lesson:

Take out your textbooks

Turn to page 101.

Do exercise 1 to 7.

Mrs. Pengyou used textbooks but they were used as adjuncts rather than the central
lesson content.

It would not be possible to base professional development plans for other teachers on Mrs Pengyou’s unique profile. But, while I was watching her teach the remote students it seemed to be that, despite the problems of the technology, Thailand should investigate the use of this kind of technology for the professional development of our language teachers. Technology will not solve all our problems but it may well help us do better than we are now doing.

Thailand is slowly moving away from total dependence on test scores. It will be a slow process but it would be worthwhile for us to look more closely at the common assessment tasks to see if they could be adapted in our schools.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS
4.3.1 CASE STUDIES

Undertaking a case study can be a productive research technique. However, it is a more complex technique than one might think. Like all research one is constantly making judgments about what is relevant and what is not relevant. It is no less difficult to make these judgments in a case study than in any other technique. For example, one could argue that since the students have little influence on the curriculum and pedagogy there is no particular reason to discuss these matters with them - they are teacher concerns. The counter argument is that the students’ opinions are fundamental because they are the object of the teaching activity.

Case studies are just as interventionist as other forms of research. It doesn’t matter much how one proceeds, in the end one has a finite amount of time and resources and through necessity the data collection has to fit within these constraints. To some extent the researcher is also in a hegemonic relationship with the participants because the researcher’s purpose is probably not a shared purpose.

Case studies are often ‘one-shot activities’. From my experience in this study the case study technique would be more useful if it was an iterative technique. One in which the researcher returns to the research site a number of times over a period of time as her understanding of the case develops. For future research I would recommend ongoing
visits to share and develop the case study as a partnership.

4.3.2 INTERVIEWS

I found that interview-conversations can be quite difficult, particularly if you are using a second language. It is not always easy to start a relevant conversation and to keep it moving in directions that you think are likely to be most productive. I had a research focus while the other participants had other concerns. Even if they understood my purposes they did not know what would be most useful for me. Indeed I didn’t always know myself. No matter how carefully one plans a research study it is not possible to anticipate the exact direction that it will take. In fact it is not even desirable that one tries to plan in that much detail, because if the people in the study are to be genuine participants they need to be free to participate as they think most appropriate.

I also found that it is quite difficult to obtain an accurate record of my interviews. If I tried to take notes in English or Thai during the interviews I found that it formalised the discussion and slowed it down. When I used the tape recorder there were always simple technical things that one had to attend to during the discussions and these were a distraction. Later when I listened to the tapes I found it extremely difficult to understand some of the accents and also I did not always understand the full context.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This case study provided a focussed and detailed picture of teaching a LOTE in an Australian school. When the interviewer and the interviewee are both at ease in the situation, and there is scope for wide ranging discussion and time for reflection, then the knowledge and understanding of each is enlarged and enhanced.

This study provided me with a privileged insight into the effective teaching of a foreign language in a small rural school. The support of the school and its community was significant, but it was the quality of the teacher, that was the greatest contribution to enthusiastic and effective learning.
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APPENDIX A

ISSUES FOR THE INTERVIEW-CONVERSATIONS

Because I was working with English as a foreign language and because I lacked some confidence, I adapted the 'issues' matrix developed by Jaroungsirawat (1999). This helped me organise my thinking about the kinds of data that would be most helpful in understanding the teaching of Mandarin in an Australian school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>*PP</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PP= questions about pedagogy for the Principal.

This matrix helped me to identify the issues that I wanted to talk about.

PP

What state LOTE policies are there?
Do you have a school LOTE policy?
Why was Mandarin introduced?
Where did the initiative come from?
When was it introduced?
How many teachers were involved
What resources did you have/were able to obtain?
Why Ravenshill College?
How many students in the classes?
What were the first grade levels to learn Mandarin?
What effect do you have on the pedagogy that teachers use?
What effect would you like to have?
PC
How was the Mandarin curriculum developed?
What effect do you have on the curriculum that teachers use?
What effect would you like to have?

What general mechanisms are there in the school for curriculum development -change?

If you were designing a LOTE framework what would be the main structural elements?

PE

How do you think LOTE learning should be assessed?

TP

How did you decide what teaching strategies to use?

For speaking

For listening

For reading

For writing

What do you think about immersion programs?

What is the role of grammar?

How much use do you make of situational/contextual methods?

Homework?

Peer tutoring

Taped and recorded material

Native Mandarin speakers

Role of consolidation

TC

How did you design the curriculum?

What criteria did you use?

Did you plan out a skeleton for the whole program (x years), or for parts of it (x weeks)?

Did you distinguish between language and culture?

Do you discuss current affairs?

How much emphasis do you give to the royal family?

Mandarin festivals - Moon festivals etc

How did you learn Mandarin?

What is your knowledge of Mandarin culture?
Thoughts on language and culture
Curriculum structure - spiral etc.

TE
What methods of evaluation do you use for speaking?
What methods of evaluation do you use for listening?
What methods of evaluation do you use for reading?
What methods of evaluation do you use for writing?
What techniques do you use in your day-to-day teaching?
What annual techniques are used? (HSC etc)
How much does the final assessment determine what you teach and what emphasis you give to particular content

Program evaluation
Is the final examination held in the school?
Who sets the examination papers?

Some general questions for the students
Why did you select Mandarin language and culture to learn?
What are some difficulties that you have in learning Mandarin?
Will you use your knowledge of Mandarin after you have left school?
Will you study Mandarin any further/more?

SP
What do you think would be the best method of learning Mandarin?
How much homework or practice do you do?
What use do you make of group work?

SC
If you had a choice what would you put in the curriculum?
Have you learnt any English grammar?
Do you know any Mandarin grammar - how to make plurals etc.?
What do you think is easiest to learn in Mandarin?
What is the hardest thing to learn?
What are some common difficulties?
SE

What do you think the best method of assessing Mandarin learning would be?

How much do you worry about the final examination?
APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: PREPARATORY GRADE

Because of the fast moving nature of this lesson I have used one or two minute intervals for this overview.

12:01 Children entered the room

12:02 Mrs. Pengyou sat on low chair children sat on carpet. Ignacia attempted to prostrate herself on the carpet. Mrs. Pengyou and Ignacia’s teacher helped her to sit up. The children sang four songs and talked about the words.

Mrs Pengyou used repeated praise.

12:11 Sang Happy Birthday in Mandarin to Josephine who was six today. Counted to six.

12:12 Counting up to ten. Oral number recognition activity.

12:13 Extended oral counting to twenty Mrs. Pengyou illustrated pattern children joined in.

12:15 Continued practice of oral counting to 20.

12:16 Mrs. Pengyou showed children a silk purse and talked about the material - children invited to discuss. Who knows where silk comes from? What starts with an egg, spins a house and comes out and flies away? Children guess that it is a butterfly. Ask your Mum and Dad tonight. Ignacia was prostrate again and taking no interest.

12:18 Mrs. Pengyou showed children a silkworm cocoon. Now back to our numbers

Let’s count with our fingers OK? Children count up to four

Can we write them?

I’m going to write on the board. You’re going to write in the air. Wrote yi character on the whiteboard.

Several children said yi

Mrs. Pengyou wrote er character on the board. What’s the trick? A little one and a big one (to emphasise that the two strokes are not the same length).

12:20 Mrs. Pengyou writes san character on whiteboard. What’s the trick in this one? Children tell her that it is two little ones and one big one.
Mrs. Pengyou: O.K. What’s the trick?
What number do you reckon this one is?

12:21 Wrote four characters on the whiteboard. Who can tell me what this one looks like? Children say that it looks like a window with curtains. Mrs. Pengyou said that she thinks that somebody was holding a video camera and it slipped down and only saw Sophie’s feet. Asks Josephine to stand and everybody looks at Josephine’s feet.

The lesson continued in this way until 12.46 pm. At this time Mrs. Pengyou collected books as children left the room and said goodbye in Mandarin (xai zhen).
APPENDIX C
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: YEAR EIGHT

In this grade eight lesson there were fifteen girls and seven boys. The following material consists of extracts and does not include all the detail of each lesson 'segment' or each activity.

3pm Students entered the room quietly and sat down. They were seated at tables in five competency groups.

3:03 Mrs. Pengyou greets students - nimen hao

3:04 Mrs. Pengyou revised eleven characters on whiteboard. Concentrated on characters that the students could use in preparing a big book for use with grade five children*.

3:08 Students played a game in which Mrs. Pengyou nominated a character and students compete stroke by stroke (a relay race) to complete the character on the whiteboard. Students were encouraged to call out duai or bu duai. A very active game and there was a high level of interest.

3:12 Mrs. Pengyou discussed the radical structure of the characters that they are likely to use in their big books. Told stories about the stroke order in four different characters.

3:19 Students started desk work. They are preparing their Big Books. Each group was at a different stage. One group was practicing writing characters in boxes of equal size. Another group was drafting sentences. Mrs. Pengyou moved to each desk offering advice. Students worked quietly although Mrs. Pengyou asks girls to keep the noise down.

3:50 Students packed up and left the room saying xai zhen

* One of their assignments was to prepare big books that could then be used as resources for lower grade levels.
APPENDIX D
ACTIVITY BOOK FOR PREPARATORY AND GRADE ONE STUDENTS

(One third size)
APPENDIX E

ACTIVITY BOOK FOR GRADES ONE AND TWO STUDENTS (Half size)

仔细数一数，
Zī xǐ shǔ yī shǔ,
一、二、三、四、五。
Yī ěr sān sì wǔ,
虎、鹿、猪、兔、鼠。
Hǔ, lù, zhū, tù, shǔ.

草里一只兔。
Cǎo lǐ yī zhī tù,
还有 一只鼠。
Hái yǒu yī zhī shǔ.
APPENDIX E

ACTIVITY BOOK FOR GRADES ONE AND TWO STUDENTS (Half size)

林中 一只鹿。
Lin zhōng yī zhī lù.

路边 一只猪。
Lù biān yī zhī zhū.

山上 一只虎。
Shān shàng yī zhī hǔ.
PART FIVE

MINOR STUDY THREE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE THAI EXPERIENCE
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the value that secondary foreign language teachers and school administrators in Khon Kaen province place on professional development. One hundred and sixty-eight foreign language teachers and thirty-five school administrators were contacted. One hundred and twenty-four foreign language teachers and twenty-six school administrators responded. The data were analysed under: The importance of professional development, the initiation of professional development, control, forms of professional development, planning professional development, and professional development for foreign language teachers. The study indicated that there were no major differences in the perspectives of the administrators and the teachers. Generally, the form of professional development most common was school-based which included in-house training, workshops or seminars. These arrangements were made annually by the schools administrators. The respondents explained that the decisions were made to balance the schools' needs and the individual's needs.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Until the profession builds strong theoretical bases for its (professional development), it will remain open to the fads, fancies, fixes, frustrations, factions and fictions that have tended to characterise its practice and thinking (Logan, 1994, p. 5).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the context for the study on professional development. It has been organized in three parts: Discussion of views about professional development, the need for professional development in Thai schooling, and review of literature about teaching English language in Thailand.

1.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not particularly easy to define professional development. It can take so many forms. The notion of professional development can apply to any activity a teacher undertakes to improve her or his knowledge, understanding, attitudes and performance related to current or future roles. It is a continuum of learning. At one end of the continuum one could argue that the teacher reading a Ministry of Education memo is engaged in a form of development. At the other end of the continuum there might be teachers (very few) who are constantly engaged in practitioner research as a means of development. In a broad sense, professional development means the process of growth in competence and maturity through which teachers add range, depth and quality to, the performance of their professional tasks. Accordingly, it is a career-long issue. It occurs throughout teachers’ careers as they face the challenges of the job, acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform in that job, experience a variety of teaching circumstances and grow in competence and maturity as they extend the range of tasks at which they are confident and successful (Hughes, cited in Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, 1996)

1.2.1 DEFINITIONS

In the literature from the late eighties, the terms professional development and staff development are often used interchangeably (Fullan, 1992). Fullan used professional development as a generic term describing it as:
the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement (Fullan, 1992, p. 326). Professional Development is a term that is frequently linked with the literature on school restructuring (Murphy, 1991: Murphy & Hallinger, 1993), reform and the building of shared beliefs and a shared vision (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Sellar, 1996; Sykes, 1996). The term is used in a generic sense and applies to the ongoing professional learning of both individuals and school staff.

1.2.2 FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In analysing the structure of professional development programs one needs to consider whether they are:

- formal or informal
- individual or collective
- school-based or non-school-based
- bottom up or top down
- short or long-term
- degree or non-degree
- non-degree but could count for formal credit towards a degree.

Formal activities are often provided in the form of a course offered by the employer, for example, a professional development activity on a student-free curriculum day or formal, school-based professional development activities, or conferences offered by other providers. Sometimes, in the case of long-term programs, universities and professional bodies such as subject associations run programs, which may count for formal credit towards a degree, for example the Master of Education.

Informal activities may be no more than a shared dialogue on some aspect of teaching practice over a cup of coffee in the staff room. Sometimes such activities grow in size and scope and may lead to involvement by a significant number of teachers in more than one school. Such groups may initiate a formal program in partnership with outside bodies such as universities, and this may lead to a formal course for which credit may be sought. In all cases the activity occurs after a teacher has gained an initial qualification to practice as a teacher, and may occur at any stage of the teacher's professional life,
(Victorian Standards Council of the Teacher Profession, 1996).

Whilst a good deal of professional development is self-initiated, some of it is interventionist in the sense that it is provided by the employer and teachers are more or less obliged to participate (Day, cited in Dempster, Sachs & Logan, 1996). Whether it is self-initiated or not, Day argues that professional development has a number of, interrelated, purposes. They are to benefit:

- society at large
- the organisation in which teachers work
- the individual teacher, and through the first two points,
- directly or indirectly, the students.

Looking from another perspective, Ramsey and Oliver (cited in Dempster et al., 1996) argue that professional development is closely linked to teacher appraisal and school management in most schools. They consider three levels:

- personal development and is aimed at meeting individual needs
- working in groups to plan co-operative professional development needs and to evaluate the delivery of programs
- whole-school level where attention is concentrated on analysing the implications of personal and group development, identifying trends where necessary and providing appropriate whole staff experience.

Hargreaves (1996) emphasised the value of teachers learning in the cultures of their own schools. Teachers learn from many groups, both inside and outside their own schools. But they learn most, perhaps, from other teachers, particularly from colleagues in their own workplace - their own school.

From an employer's perspective professional development ought to:

- be related to curriculum, pedagogy or evaluation
- have content designed to extend the teacher's current knowledge and/or competence
- extend over a reasonable period of time
- include a why we do it component as well as any how we do it component
- be of demonstrable benefit to the school
• be systematic
• involve a significant intellectual challenge (Dempster, Sachs, & Logan, 1996; Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, 1996).

From the teacher's point of view professional development ought to:
• be related in practical way to curriculum, pedagogy or assessment
• have content designed to extend the teacher's current knowledge and/or competence but not require undue intellectual demand
• be limited in time (and preferably done during the employer's time)
• include how we do it content
• be of demonstrable benefit to self and the school
• be reasonably systematic although this do not appear to be particularly important
• involve a modest intellectual challenge (Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, 1996).

These are of course generalisations and should not be taken to the extreme for either the employer or the teacher. The generalisations or criteria are important but they seem to stem from the western intellectual tradition —they are more analytical than might come from the Thai intellectual tradition. I discussed the criteria with two of my academic colleagues. Dr Boonchu (M56), was of the view that:

It would be easier to comment on these criteria if we had more detail about the target group and some details of an actual professional development program. Generally, the new generation tends to accept any kind of knowledge whereas some of the older generation are indifferent. I think that our economic crisis and the drive toward quality assurance has forced young people to develop themselves continuously even though they might have to change jobs.

I agree that the content has to extend the teacher's current knowledge and/or competence. Amh! Additionally, skills and creativity are important. The difference between teachers and employers about the duration of professional development activities probably arises because teachers generally prefer to use their time tutoring their students at home. It Objectively, teachers needs more income. Lastly, intellectual challenge is very important to motivate teachers to support any change.

Dr Sirinthip (F47). said:
I work with English language teachers and I think that the criteria from the employers' perspective are not too tough. They are the kind of criteria that a school could actually administer. I believe that teachers need some form of professional development whenever there is significant change in their work. For example, the Thai government has implemented a policy of teaching English language from grade one. Most English language teachers of that level want and need a program to improve their basic skills in pronunciation and teaching methods.

Three significant issues arise out of these comments:

- younger teachers may be more likely to benefit from professional development than older teachers
- the probable reluctance of teachers to do (non-award) professional development in their own time
- the effect of low to modest salaries on motivation to participate in professional development.

1.3 THE NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THAI SCHOOLING

Are teachers a renewable resource? It depends. If you regard teachers as independent contractors selling their expertise to an employer, you might argue that it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure that the expertise that have to sell is the expertise that an employer wants to buy. That is, it is the teachers' responsibility to see that their expertise is constantly renewed —by some form of professional development. This is something like the situation in parts of the western world where teachers are increasingly employed on limited term contracts. Contract employment limits the employer's responsibility to, and investment in the teacher, but it also limits the career opportunities of many teachers who are unwilling or unable to fund their own professional development. It is also the case however, that this system works best when there is an over supply of teachers so that the market is competitive. In times when there is a shortage of teachers the contracts are likely to be longer and perhaps more generous.

In some countries (including Thailand), however, teachers are still regarded as public
servants and are permanently employed on modest terms and conditions. In such cases
the employer usually takes some responsibility for the professional renewal of teachers.
Often it is a shared responsibility in which the employer and the teacher contribute to
the costs. Even where the costs are shared, governments appear to be anxious to move
as much of the cost as possible to the schools and the teachers.
The Thai government has, as a matter of policy, adopted the notion of quality assurance
(Office of the National Education Commission, 1999), and is applying it to the
performance of teachers. The government expects that schools and teachers will have
policies and practices that ensure continuous improvement in learning outcomes.
When I discussed these policies and practices with a secondary school principal
(Jaroons, M52A), said:

It is a policy of the Ministry of Education that school principals have to
organize professional programs for their teachers. There are several kinds of
programs: sending some teachers to attend seminars and workshops
provided by other institutes, budget and time support for further study,
providing some small group seminars and workshops according to small
group interests, study tours and teacher exchanges within the school
network. The purpose of these activities is to provide continuous learning
for teachers and increase their job satisfaction.
My school can arrange almost any kind of professional experience activity.
We plan our professional development activities taking into account
government policy, hot issues, and the teachers needs - year by year.

What form should this professional renewal or development take? There are many
answers to this question depending on the individual teacher, the school, and local and
national priorities. For example, in 1996 the Thai government introduced a policy
(Teacher Education Reform Office, 1998), in which primary schools were required to
teach their students English from grade one. Because English is still a second (or very
foreign) language for most teachers there is a major problem of implementation of this
policy. Putting the policy into practice is so difficult because many teachers have little
systematic knowledge of the English language. If there were unlimited resources the
Ministry of Education could mount a nation-wide professional development program of
say six months duration for all primary school teachers. This is clearly impossible and
so schools have to do the best they can. The Principal (Wattana, M58A), of a local
primary school in Khon Kacn explained to me that:

In 1996, the major problem was that grade one teachers did not have the competencies needed to teach - especially in pronunciation, listening and English language games. Then my school sent all grade one teachers, and three representatives from grades two to four to attend a training course. The school started teaching English for grade one in the second semester of 1996.

After training teachers for every grade level (during 1997-1999), my expectation was that grade one and two teachers should be able to provide Preparatory English, while grade three and four teachers would be able to provide Literacy English. However, I found that some teachers could not pronounce correctly. Some students can write but cannot pronounce. On the other hand, some speak but cannot write.

In this example the content and the pedagogy are critical. Teaching English as a second language is not the same as teaching Thai as a first language and requires specific expertise. So, teachers not only need to know how to use English, they also need to know how to teach English.

I asked a local primary school teacher (Kalaya, F28T), how she was managing with the policy and she told me that:

As I was an English language teacher in grade five, I supported the idea that learning English ought to start as early as possible in the primary school. I saw that my colleagues who were grade one teachers were enthusiastic when the policy was implemented in 1996. However, they lacked confidence in teaching English. They needed practice in pronunciation and some basic knowledge of the English language.

The provincial primary office chose some representatives to attend a professional development program to develop these skills, and also to learn some new teaching methods. These kinds of activity were taken by grade one teachers in 1996, grade two teachers in 1997, grade three teachers in 1998 and grade four teachers this year (1999).

In my opinion, these programs can provide some classroom activities and teaching methods for English lessons. However, I do not believe that short course can develop the language skills, this needs time. English language teachers should at least study English as a minor subject in a Bachelor's degree.

I find that grade five students have very limited English language ability. When I ask them what they had learnt in the previous grade they tell me that it depends on particular teachers. Some teachers do encourage activity learning but most teachers do not.
Secondary school teachers tend to be more concerned with subject (discipline) content. It is assumed (perhaps wrongly) that the students know how to learn and therefore the teacher should worry about what is being taught rather than how it is being taught. Whether this is so or not there are problems with the teaching of English at all grade levels.

1.4 TEACHING ENGLISH

English is now taught at all grade levels in the primary and secondary schools. In secondary schools it is taught in each year of the six-year curriculum as both a compulsory subject and elective subject. Prior to the introduction of this all-grade level policy in 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1996). students started English in grade five of the primary school.

The majority of research into the teaching and learning of English in Thailand has focused on secondary schooling. Almost half of these studies have been survey-based research (Jong-utsa, 1988; Pongkasempornkul, 1988; Pornwisetsirikul, 1992; Ronyuth, 1992; Sukamolsan, 1992; Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993; Sanneema, 1993). Most of the research has been on reading in English. There have been few studies of listening and speaking skills, or the problems of teaching the language (Sukamolsan, 1992; Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993).

The current curriculum used in lower secondary school is *The English Language Curriculum introduced in 1996*. This curriculum requires English language teachers to set behavioral objectives, choose appropriate texts and to devise relevant assessment procedures for the lessons. Most of the classroom assessment procedures are based on reading and writing. These are relatively easily assessed using standard tests of some kind but the tests do not seem to reflect reality very well. For example, as far as I am aware, very few teachers use any systematic procedures to assess listening and speaking skills. If we think that these skills are important we need to take some action to change present practices.

Suggestions have been made about how to improve the teaching and learning of English in Thai schools (Jong-utsa, 1988; Pongkasempornkul, 1988). These researchers suggest
that because lower secondary students only have minimal competencies in conversational English, and because this minimal competence is associated with very low confidence levels, schools need to concentrate on listening and speaking. They recommend that teachers should provide regular and systematic practice opportunities for their students in these two skills. No doubt this is good advice, but few if any studies have reported attempts to put this kind of advice into practice. It almost seems as if we think we can change teacher behavior by telling them to do it.

My reading of the literature and experience as a teacher educator have increased my interest in the professional development of language teachers. Very few researchers in Thailand have conceptualised the problems of foreign language learning as a matter of professional development of teachers (Pornwisetsirikul, 1992; Rujikietgumjorn & Pojananon, 1993; Chaibunruang, Karnphanit, and Chaibunruang, 1993). It has so often been seen as a problem of motivation that rests with the student and her family or, less often, of the conservatism of teachers. It is interesting that so few studies have actually tried to change teacher behavior (Junklin, 1991; Knight, 1992; Sukamolsan, 1992; Mohanraj, 1994). Hence I wished to focus on professional development for secondary English language teachers in Thailand.

1.5 CONCLUSION

From a research point of view there are many interesting questions associated with effective professional development. For example: What actually happens in schools? What policies do schools actually have? What do the teachers think about professional development? What are the most common forms of professional development for teachers? What do school principals think about professional development for teachers? What do teachers and principals think the main purposes of professional development are? To answer some of the questions I decided to seek the views of teachers and school administrators in Khon Kaen province. The question that I then had to ask myself was *How best to do this?* I discuss these points in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study I wanted to obtain teachers and school administrators’ views on professional development. I determined that using a written survey would be the most appropriate method. I discuss the reasons for this in the first part of the chapter. The second section focuses on the purposes of the study, identifying data sources, and techniques for collecting and analysing data.

2.2 SELECTING METHODS

At first glance it seems to be very simple to collect views from people and then use these views to make generalisations. In practice, the question of using any structured technique to have people express an opinion and then using these opinions to make generalisations is quite complex. These complexities are of several kinds: those that have to do with the relationship between the researcher and the researched; those that have to do with the reality of any views expressed, those that have to do with how the views are elicited, and those that have to do with the interpretation of the views.

2.2.1 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHED

Even everyday conversations are complex interactions (Kramsch, 1993). For example, when we talk to somebody, even those we know well, we are constantly evaluating the effects of what we say, and what is said to us. We construct (Kramsch, 1993) the conversation as we go. One of the many factors that we take into account is the power and/or socio-cultural relationship that exist between those in the conversation. If there is a significant difference, one person is likely to defer to the other. Deference is probably present in all cultures. However in some, it is more important than in others. In Thailand for example, appropriate deference is part of the normal way that language is used and a normal part of one’s physical actions/reactions in the presence of others. It is not difficult to see that this complicates the collection of data. The researcher cannot assume that these effects are constant (and hence can be partialed out or ignored), or can be regarded as trivial. Inevitably, people will have idiosyncratic beliefs
about what the researcher is really doing and why she is doing it and they will have beliefs about how what they say will affect how they are seen, or even, perhaps, how they are treated. In this context they will try to deduce what the correct answer might be.

2.2.2 THE REALITY OF VIEWS EXPRESSED

Do people hold views that remain relatively intact over long periods of time? The answer is probably yes in some areas of life and no in others. It may be that one's views about issues such as the nature of justice, the value of organised religion and the sanctity of human life do remain relatively constant. The question however, is whether views held about one's professional activities are of this kind and whether they are more transitory. We can probably never know the answer to this question, partly because the balance of stability and change is different for each person and may be different for the same person at different times. This uncertainty means that we need to be cautious in using the data. We cannot for example, use this kind of data to prove something. Rather, we need to be more concerned with the pursuit of understanding than with establishing the truth. In this kind of research there are many possible truths. If this is so, how can we be sure of anything? In an absolute sense we cannot be certain. We can however, be very careful in any conclusions that we draw and we can make sure that we describe the context well enough for others to understand how and why we came to a particular conclusion.

2.2.3 HOW THE VIEWS ARE ELICITED

There are some alternatives to the face-to-face technique. We might for example, use a telephone interview-conversation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). This avoids the costs associated with travel but has its own problems. For example, it is not always possible to contact people by telephone and the researcher is deprived of potential information from facial expression and other body language. The most common alternative is the written survey. This has the advantage of reducing the amount needed to collect data and enables more people to be contacted. It has a major disadvantage in that it must be structured in advance and must stand-alone. That is, the possibilities for clarification are limited. This latter limitation can be reduced by providing a way of
contacting the researcher before the data are returned. The advent of e-mail has opened a new avenue of contact but of course it is limited to those with access to the technology.

2.2.4 INTERPRETATION OF THE VIEWS

Do the data speak for themselves? This is a difficult question. If one believes that, whatever considerations have affected the opinions that people share with us, the data we collect are the best reflection of what people will say in the particular context of the enquiry, there can be little justification for doing anything other than simply reporting what was said. The data are the data are the data.

Whatever the merits of this position it is common for researchers to look for trends. This is usually the purpose of doing a survey. So, in a sense, we implicitly accept that our data are outcomes and that we cannot know why people express the views that they do. But, if by aggregating the data we can discern patterns or trends, we can reasonably claim that we have information about what people are prepared to say in the collection context. In my context the pattern or trend that I was interested in was the spread of opinion that teachers and school principals might show in their expressed opinions about professional development. This information would inform my understanding of the provision of professional development for teachers.

2.2.5 THE SURVEY AS A RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

In the present study I wanted to collect a significant amount of data and I had limited time in which to do it. On balance therefore, I chose not to conduct face-to-face interview-conversations. It was an on-balance decision because the alternative, a non face-to-face written survey of some kind, also had problems.

The survey as a means of collecting data has been well studied (Wiersma, 1995; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). and its problems well understood. Despite this however, experience shows that it is extremely difficult to prepare a set of items that:

- are unambiguous for all or most of the people that will read them
- will yield useful data
- do not require an inordinate amount of time to consider
- have an inbuilt reason or motivation for their completion
• directly address the issues that are of concern to the researcher (of mutual concern if possible).

Surveys are generally used in educational research. For example, many Thai doctoral dissertations use surveys to collect data. It seems to me that their purpose is not always clearly understood and that the methodological difficulties are often underrated. In fact they are a deceptively simple means of data collection. It is for example, extremely difficult to frame written questions so that they can be read by an unknown person and interpreted without loss of meaning or confusion. There is no shortage of advice as to how prepare effective survey instruments (Fowler, 1993; Litwin, 1995; Wiersma, 1995; Croll, 1996; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Croll (1996) for example, suggests eight matters that need attention:

• defining one's purpose and objectives
• identifying resources
• identifying the target population
• developing techniques for collecting data
• sampling
• accompanying documentation
• follow-up strategies
• what to do about non-respondents.

2.3 PURPOSES

There are many purposes for doing a survey. For example, in this study the survey was conducted to establish the spread of opinion that teachers and school administrators hold about certain pre-defined issues in professional development and to speculate on the causes of similarities and differences. This is a relatively strong statement of purpose. A much weaker statement might be to: See what we can find out about teachers' views of professional development.

As a matter of principle, one's purpose and objectives should be as clear as possible.

The purposes of the study were to:
• study the value that secondary English teachers and school administrators in Khon Kaen province place on professional development
• do this by using a non face-to-face survey
• develop an appropriate survey form for these purposes.

2.4 METHODS
2.4.1 IDENTIFYING DATA SOURCES
Choosing the target population is often a balance between specificity and generality. If one defines the population too generally it could result in a very large study. For example, a target population of all teachers would be a big study because the population is so big and any sample drawn from it would need to be correspondingly big. A target population of all teachers holding a master's degree would be much easier to deal with because the number of teachers holding a master's degree is relatively small. It is better to do a small study well than a large study poorly. In my case I wanted to study two populations: secondary school foreign language teachers and secondary school administrators.

Furthermore, to aid ease of management, I thought that the study should be limited to one province because these findings would support my collaborative work with secondary school teachers in Khon Kaen. The schools in Khon Kaen province are organised into five academic groups for the purposes of support and resource sharing. The schools themselves are classified as extra large, large, medium and small. I selected schools in three of the groups and covered all four sizes. I selected the teachers randomly from a list of names of all foreign language teachers in the three groups. In all, thirty-five schools were involved in my study.

Surveys often use probability sampling in order to ensure adequate representation of the population. The random sampling is stratified on status (school administrators and foreign language teachers), school sizes (extra large, large, medium, and small), and academic school groups (five groups in Khon Kaen). In the present study I wanted to learn about the probable spread of opinion on certain professional development matters. For this reason I had to consider how to draw a sample from the population of 321
foreign language teachers and 115 school administrators. Having regard for the issues raised in the previous section I came to the view that a sample size of 168 foreign language teachers and thirty-five school administrators would be defensible.

2.4.2 TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING DATA

2.4.2.1 Factors To Be Considered

Research costs money. Researchers often have to make hard decisions about the total amount of time, funding, and labour that is available. It is normally more efficient to take these factors into account during the design process than to design an ideal survey and then adjust it to take account of the available resources. It might well be the case that a purpose designed or locally developed questionnaire is quite adequate but equally there may be times when the researcher elects to use an off-the-shelf instrument. On a cost basis the off-the-shelf instrument could be cheaper than the locally developed instrument. In the case of the present study I had to design a specific purpose instrument because there was nothing else available. I also regarded the design process as an important learning experience within the EdD.

2.4.2.2 Design

As explained above, I had decided to use a non face-to-face survey. In practice this meant a posted questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data about views on professional development. There was no existing instrument available in Thailand so I was faced with the matter of design.

It is frequently argued (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) that questionnaires such as these need to be standardised. Standardisation has a number of levels or dimensions. At the lowest level standardisation means that everybody in the study gets the same questions. That was my intent in this study. At another level it means that some attempt had been made to establish whether the questions that were asked, were demonstrably related to the issue being studied (issues of validity, Fowler, 1993; Litwin, 1995; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). I wanted this level of standardisation also. At yet another, level standardisation means that data have been obtained from a sample, normally larger than the sample in the study under consideration, so that norms or patterns of known probability, can be established. I found this a difficult issue to deal
with in my study. I did not have the time or the resources to do a study of the size needed for this level of standardisation but I did want the data that I collected to be useful for the purposes of indicating what my target group thought about professional development. The difficulty was that I had to guess at a sample size that was likely to be big enough to capture all probable expressions of opinion.

I determined that the overall structure of the questionnaires for the secondary school foreign language teachers and the secondary school administrators would be the same — with some items differing. For the purposes of my research I wanted some bio-data and some expressions of opinion. The bio-data were to be used to examine possible age, gender and experience effects. Arguing from my own experience and from my knowledge of secondary school language teachers, I thought that it would have been quite possible for these parameters to have had an effect on any opinions that were expressed.

When I had designed the questionnaires I asked three university staff to read the questionnaires and tell me if:

- The items in the bio-data section were likely to affect teachers and administrators opinions about professional development
- The items in the opinions section were relevant to a study of professional development
- Whether any of the items were ambiguous
- Whether there needed to be additional items in either section

I also asked them to rate the adequacy of the questionnaire for its purpose on a scale of 0 to 10.

As a result of this activity I altered, and added, some items. For example, I added an item Does your school have any plans for co-operative professional development activities with other institutions? I then asked five teachers and five administrators to complete the questionnaire and note the time taken. I then discussed the questionnaires with them individually. The resulting questionnaires are shown in Appendices A and B.

The intention in this study was to obtain a snapshot of opinions and hence a cross-
sectional survey (Wiersma, 1995). was used.

2.4.2.3 Length of the questionnaire

The question of time was of particular interest because my experience had suggested that people respond less favourably to long sets of question than they do to short sets. When I asked three of my colleagues how long they thought would be reasonable to complete a written survey their views ranged from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes. Some opinions were quoted in Appendix C.

2.4.2.4 Letter of Explanation

In the case of mailed questionnaires the nature of the cover letter is a crucial element in determining the percentage of people who return completed forms (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). In my case the letter included the following:

- my name and affiliation
- the names of my advisors
- the purpose of the study
- the importance of the study for the person and profession
- the importance of the person's opinions for the study
- plain language statement
- a statement indicating how the identities of the people in the study would be kept confidential
- a brief description of the questionnaire and procedure
- how to obtain a copy of the results if required
- a request for cooperation and honesty, and
- a time limit (in my case fifteen days)
- my thanks to the person completing the questionnaire.

The letter was neat, professional in appearance, and had no grammatical or spelling errors.

2.4.2.5 Arrangements for the Return of the Questionnaires

The statement attached to each questionnaire indicated that the questionnaires should be returned to me in a stamped addressed envelope provided.
2.4.2.6 Follow-up

Experience suggests (Fowler, 1993; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) that an initial mailing (letter, questionnaire, and stamped return-addressed envelope) results in a response rate of from forty to sixty percent. In my case the return rate after fifteen days was 60%. Because this survey guaranteed anonymity, it was impossible to know who had not returned the questionnaire. So I sent a follow up letter to all of the original sample. The follow up resulted in an overall return rate of 73.9%.

2.4.3 TECHNIQUES FOR ANALYSING DATA

There are several ways that survey data can be analysed. Typically, in an empiricist study, the data are reported as frequency distributions that are then (often) ranked in order of occurrence. This approach is useful but in my case I wanted to explore the data rather more deeply and to construct a narrative description and interpretation of the views of the people who contributed data to the study. This required me to first analyse the questionnaires and then to site these data in a broader context derived from the literature and from my own professional knowledge and experience.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed the reason for using a written survey to obtain teachers and administrators views of professional development. I also explained what processes I went through to develop an appropriate questionnaire and the procedures I followed in using the questionnaire. Finally, I discussed how I planned to use the data collected. In the next chapter I discuss the results.
CHAPTER THREE: VIEWS

3.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter discusses the results of the questionnaire. The data are reported as frequency distributions that are then (often) ranked in order of occurrence. Furthermore, the schools’ administrators and the foreign language teachers’ views were provided separately in order to discuss the similarity and differences. 168 foreign language teachers and thirty-five school administrators were surveyed. The overall response rate was 73.9%, which consisted of 124 foreign language teachers and twenty-six school administrators.

3.2 THE PEOPLE
3.2.1 ADMINISTRATORS
Twenty-six school administrators provided information for this study. Four (or 15%). of these were female. The ratio of female to male administrators for the province is 6% so the proportion of females was underrepresented in the group that I studied.

TABLE 1: BIO-DATA OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>12</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Years of being school principal</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age of these administrators was approximately forty-seven years with twelve of them being over fifty years. The average age of all secondary school principals in Khon Kaen province is forty-five so my group approached the norm with
respect to age. The normal age of retirement is sixty (Office of the Public Service Committee, 1993). People are appointed to senior administrative positions in schools on the basis of seniority, qualifications and experience. Appointment is by competitive application. Although there are school committees these have no role in the appointment of an administrator.

Sixteen of the people had been the administrator in their present school for less than five years. Administrators can move between schools by competitive application for vacant positions or as a matter of Ministry needs. Their educational qualifications varied considerably. All twenty-six held at least a bachelor's degree with the biggest single group having a major study in educational administration. In a Thai undergraduate degree, a major study consists of thirty-eight credits in a total of 140 credits courses. Students who take a major in educational administration must also take a discipline major. Four of the school administrators also held a master's degree. Two of these were in administration areas and two were in teaching areas. The seven who were currently enrolled in a higher degree program were taking a master of Educational Administration at either Khon Kaen University or Mahasarakham University. Holding a master's degree has no effect on salary level for principals because of their relatively high salary.

Although two of the administrators had not taken any professional development program in the last three years the other twenty-four had been surprisingly active. The data show that they had been involved in at least four professional development activities and, in one case, seven such activities. These activities can be loosely classified as in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>financial management,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td>evaluation/assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data show clearly that the central functions of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment were not given the same attention as the instrumental functions of administration and financial management. This is common in Thai schools because the task of educational leadership is fulfilled by a regional office. This is now changing and principals will be expected to demonstrate educational leadership in their schools. Roughly half the principals thought that these courses had been very useful for them in their work and all thought that they had at least been useful.

Twenty of them claimed to belong to a professional association other than Krusapha (The Teachers Council of Thailand). Half of them belonged to a national body - the Secondary School Principals Association of Thailand. All but one claimed to read professional journals. The most commonly cited journal was the Journal of Curriculum Development (fourteen), followed by other journals of education (five). All twenty-six found these journals to be at least useful. These data are ambiguous in the sense that most professional development was administrative rather than educational, yet, the most commonly read journals were journals of curriculum development. It could be that reading such journals compensated for the emphasis on administration in their formal professional development. Or, it could be that these were readily available and were inherently interesting. This highlights a fundamental feature (advantage or difficulty), with surveys - they tend to lead to more questions than answers.

3.2.2 TEACHERS

One hundred and twenty-four teachers returned the questionnaire. Of these thirty-seven (30%). were male and eighty-seven (70%). were female. The ratio of male to female foreign language teachers in the province is 18%. These figures again highlight an over-representation of women in the teaching force and an under-representation in administrative positions.
TABLE 3: BIO-DATA OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<td>20-24</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>25-29</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>40-44</td>
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<td>45-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>10</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching experience (year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>21-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;25</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching experience in the present school (year)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 21-25                                           | 4 
| >25                                             | 2 |

The average age of the teachers was thirty-six with ten of the teachers aged over fifty.
The average age of all secondary school foreign language teachers in Khon Kaen province is thirty-three (The Regional Office of Education, 1997).
Although the average length of teaching experience was around fifteen years, twenty
three had been teaching less than five years and seven of the teachers had been teaching more than twenty-five years. The distribution of ages approximates normality although there were more teachers with less than five years than one might have expected if the distribution was really normal.

On average, the teachers had been teaching in their present school, for eight and a half years, although fifty-three teachers had been teaching at their present school for less than five years. Two of the teachers had been teaching at the one school for more than twenty-five years. These figures are consistent with one's experience of schools that the teaching staff is generally more stable than the administrative staff.

At the time of the study one hundred of the teachers were teaching English, three were teaching French and one was teaching German. I was rather surprised to see that twenty of the teachers were not actually teaching a foreign language. They were teaching Thai or one of the social sciences, or even working in guidance. This no doubt reflects the staffing requirements and the pattern of student enrolments in particular schools.

These teachers had been teaching English for an average of thirteen years so they were a very experienced group. The average class size was forty-five with twenty-seven of the teachers claiming to have classes of more than fifty. The average foreign language class size in the province is forty-eight. These figures raised many pedagogical issues that I could not pursue in this study but clearly have a major influence on how English is taught in our secondary schools. The problem of class size is well known and does not seem to have improved since Chaibunruang, Karnphanit, & Chaibunruang highlighted it in their 1993 survey.

Eighty-one of the eighty-two teachers that provided information on qualifications held a four-year BA. or BEd. Seventy-six of these had a major study in English language pedagogy. Only one reported having a master's degree and the major study was again English language pedagogy.

Four of the twenty-six administrators held a master's degree and seven were enrolled in a master's program in a local university. The administrators were therefore comparatively better qualified than the foreign language teachers. This is yet another question that needs further investigation. Is it the way the system works? Is it
something to do with the nature of people who become administrators?
Almost half of the teachers who provided information about qualifications had obtained their degrees from the Rajabhat Institute sector. The Rajabhat Institutes are part of the higher education sector and parallel the former advanced education sector in Australia. They are administered by a single Rajabhat Institute Council in Bangkok. All of the other teachers had a university qualification (Mahasarakham University 29, Chiangmai University 6, Khon Kaen University 5, Ramkhamhaeng University 2, Srinakharinwirot University Pitsanulok 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology in Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Measurement and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Computers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven of the 124 teachers were undertaking further study at the time of my research. In the three years prior to the survey, less than half of the teachers had participated in in-service activities related to foreign language teaching. These activities involved communicating in English, communicative approaches to teaching English, and English language pedagogy generally. Approximately half of the teachers had participated in in-service activities not directly related to foreign language teaching. These included educational technology (63), educational measurement and evaluation (21), the psychology of teaching and learning (11), writing lesson plans (10), and using computers (2). This is yet another interesting observation and would need further investigation before coming to any definite conclusions. It might be that these activities were in fact related to the generic work of teachers — work such as evaluation and utilising technology. It might also be that this form of professional development is not well matched to the teachers central task in the classroom. The content of the in-service programs appears to have been well chosen since some 99% of teachers though that
they were at least useful in their everyday teaching work. The vast majority of the teachers did not belong to any professional association other than Krusapha but round half of them did read one or more professional journals or material related to English language pedagogy and found them to be very useful. Only one teacher reported reading the Thai TESOL journal, but twelve reported reading journals about education and seven said that they read a curriculum development journal.

3.3 THE ISSUES

3.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS
When asked about the importance of professional development for teachers the administrators were quite positive. Only one felt that it was not important. I did not ask them why they thought it was important. This would have been a useful question because it would have helped me understand whether the administrators had really thought about the issue or were simply saying the right thing. At least on the basis of these data one could conclude that the administrators do not need convincing of the importance of professional development for their staff.

The data were very similar for the teachers. 86% of the teachers felt that professional development was very important in their work as a teacher. So, despite any other tensions that might exist in schools there appears to be a common understanding that teachers ought to be treated as a renewable resource.

3.3.2 INITIATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
It was clear from the data that these administrators tended to be deliberative rather than rule-driven when they were organising and administering professional development in their schools. That is they tended to take more than one factor into account as can be seen in the following table:
TABLE 5: INITIATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT — ADMINISTRATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>individual needs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top-down policy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majority needs</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subgroup needs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If these figures are further condensed to a simple top-down:bottom-up dichotomy it can be seen that the ratio is 16:50 or approximately three to one in favour of bottom up (individual needs, subgroup needs, and majority needs). This needs further investigation. Thai schools tend to be hierarchical or, at least, they are perceived that way. These data suggest that, if they are hierarchical, administrators believe that they are still responsive to the needs of staff.

The teachers’ views about how professional development is initiated in their school are shown below.

TABLE 6: INITIATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT — TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>top-down policy</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual needs</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subgroup needs</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majority needs</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the teachers tended to perceive the top-down effect as having greater significance than the administrators (37% to 24% of responses), they also saw the initiation of professional development as a multi-lateral process. If this finding is more generally applicable, it suggests that Thai schools may be rather more democratic now than they were reputed to be some ten to twenty years ago.
3.3.3 CONTROL

The principals were also asked about the control of professional development. Once again there was evidence of shared responsibility. There were thirty-five responses and so one assumes that at least some of the administrators thought that more than one person should be involved in the matter of control. In fact, twenty-three of the replies indicated that control should rest with senior administrators (Principal, Head of Department, Professional Development Co-ordinator etc.), and twelve of the replies placed responsibility with the teachers themselves. From my point of view this is a reasonably encouraging picture because I know that school administrators have to juggle higher-level accountability with teacher-needs and requests. However, I think that I might have framed this question better so that it revealed more about who should be involved, why they should be involved and when they should be involved. This aspect could be studied further to explore who the administrators believe should be involved.

When the teachers were asked the same question there were more responses than there were teachers. This suggests that the teachers too, see control as a shared affair. The data were clear. The teachers felt that responsibility should involve the principal, the teachers and the professional development co-ordinator. There is some complexity in the role professional development co-ordinator because the person sits between the principal and the teachers and has to respond to both sides — often with limited resources and perhaps, influence.

3.3.4 FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The principals had a broad view of professional development as indicated by the range of activities that they had organised for their staff. They were predominantly school-based and included in-house training courses, seminars and workshops. The non school-based activities included attending seminars hosted by other institutions such as universities, and visits to other schools. The activities did not, apparently, include enrolment in higher degree programs.

The teachers reported a very similar picture. They said that the professional development activities in their schools had been mainly school-based and had included seminars, workshops, and training courses. The non school-based activities included
attandance at seminars outside the school, study tours and enrolment in further study programs. The profile that emerges from these data is very similar to that reported by Chaibunruang, Karnphanit, & Chaibunruang (1993).

3.3.5 PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The picture that had emerged from the data at this point suggested that professional development in the province's secondary schools was reasonably well organised and, to some extent, planned in advance. This view was strengthened by the replies to a question that asked the principals what plans they had for the coming year. Twenty-three in-house activities (instructional programs, seminars and workshops covering computer aided instruction, authentic assessment and instructional media were planned. These were consistent with the Eight National Development Plan (Ministry of Education, 1996), and reflected the national government's priorities. Planned activities in other venues were confined to study tours and school visits.

From the data supplied by the teachers, professional development plans are reasonably well publicised in the schools. The activities that teachers thought were planned for their schools were almost identical to those that the principals had reported.

3.3.6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

All of the schools taught English as a foreign language. In addition, one school taught French, one school taught Japanese and one school taught German. One school (Kaenakorn Wittayalai), taught all four. Although the latter provision is quite impressive there are schools around Bangkok that teach a much wider range of foreign languages. Even here however, there are problems finding enough foreign language teachers. It is the availability of teachers that determines what foreign languages are actually taught in a school.

There was quite a diversity of professional development activities for foreign language teachers. Just under half of the programs arranged were in-house training programs. Typically, these included English language pedagogy and student-centred learning.

The other half involved participation in programs offered by the English Resources and Instruction Centre (ERIC) in Khon Kaen, and by national and international institutions
such as the Thai TESOL association and the English language centre at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, study tours in Thailand and study tours abroad. In some cases the school provided support for further study. ERIC was established in 1985 for the purpose of providing in-service programs for English language teachers (ERIC, 1998). Typically, for the following year, the school administrators planned to send their foreign language teacher to training courses or seminars on:

- language teaching
- using language laboratories effectively
- multi-media usage
- producing instructional media
- student-centred teaching.

Resource limitations meant that staff had to be rostered for these activities, but over any one year all foreign language teachers in a school had at least one opportunity to participate in this form of professional development.

The school administrators based their plans on teachers' needs and school policies. Each academic department in a school is meant to establish the best balance between individual and school needs and this information is used by the school administrator in making decisions about professional development. The Ministry of Education expects schools to develop professional development programs that are low cost and that are sustainable.

The most common professional development activities for foreign language teachers over the three years prior to my study had been:

- school-based seminars, workshops, and training courses (36)
- support for teachers to attend seminars at other places (17)
- study tours (7), and
- preparation for positions of authority (1)

Planned activities for the following year for foreign language teachers were very similar to those reported by the school administrators. Notably, one teacher reported that their school planned to organise a teacher exchange with another country, and another teacher
spoke of a plan to have an English language camp. These plans were a result of interaction and collaboration between school policies and teacher needs.

At the time of this study slightly less than half the school had co-operative arrangements in place for professional development with other institutions. These institutions included Chulalongkorn, Khon Kaen and Thammasart universities and the Rajabhat Institutes. The academic school groups were also mentioned as a source of external professional development.

When the teachers were asked about the optimal length of professional development programs they tended to prefer programs of around two (22) to three days (68), but there were individuals who preferred programs of a semester or even a year. Schools varied in when professional development programs were offered (36% during weekdays, 33% at weekends, 21% during vacations). The vacation option was well accepted by the teachers with some 45% of them indicating this time as their first preference. 38% preferred programs to be in normal school hours and about 10% preferred the weekends.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings from the questionnaire sent to thirty-five school administrators and 168 foreign language teachers from thirty-five schools in the Khon Kaen province in Thailand. Twenty-six school administrators and 124 foreign language teachers responded. The findings were discussed under perceptions of the importance of professional development, who initiation the professional development, control, forms of professional development, planning professional development, and professional development for foreign language teachers.

The findings showed that there were no major differences in the perspectives of the administrators and the teachers. The major form of professional development was school-based which included in-house training, workshops or seminars. The plans for these arrangement were done by the schools administrators on an annual basis.

The respondents explained that the decisions for professional development program aimed to balance the schools need with the individual's needs.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter the discussion and recommendation will focus on the research findings and the research and the research methods.

4.2 DISCUSSIONS
4.2.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS
4.2.1.1 Convergence And Divergence
It is clear from these data that there are no major differences in the perspectives of the principals and the teachers. Even in the matter of planning and control it seems that there are consultative mechanisms in place and that mechanisms are acceptable to both principals and teachers. In this sense there is a convergence of opinion and practice. The frequency, and may be duration, of professional development activities in these schools seems to be adequate. However, given the need to improve classroom practice and learning outcomes, one needs to consider whether the content of these activities is appropriate. Many of the schools in Khon Kaen province have little or no access to native English speakers. Even where a native English speaker is available it is usually not possible to organise a systematic and ongoing professional development program around one resource person. In this sense there is a divergence between the provision of professional development and the content of professional development.

4.2.2 RESEARCH METHODS
4.2.2.1 Survey Studies
A survey can be a productive research technique. It is repetitious about data collection. In all research one is constantly making judgments about what is relevant and what is not relevant. It is no less difficult to make these judgments in a survey than in any other technique.

Survey studies are no less interventionist (Crowl, 1996) than other forms of research. It doesn't matter much how one proceeds, in the end one has a finite amount of time and resource and necessarily seeks to fit the data collection within these constraints. To some extent the researcher is also in a hegemonic relationship with the participants
because the researcher’s purpose is probably not a shared purpose.

In the empiricist or experimental paradigm the researcher is able to follow a more or less standard set of procedures – procedures that are well accepted, understood and supported by those who decide what is to be the norm. In Thailand the norm for higher degree research is the ‘one-shot experiment’ – often a survey. When one thinks of research as a process of constructing meaning the intellectual orientation is quite different. In this paradigm research is more than skilfully following a set of standard procedures. It involves the constant exercise of judgment and hence of risk-taking.

4.2.2.2 The Questionnaire

From my experience, a typical Thai approach to designing a questionnaire is to write down everything that the researcher might possibly find useful. Then these issues are turned into items to make up the questionnaire. Little thought is given to the rights of the people that will provide information to the researcher. This doesn’t mean that the people are deliberately ignored. It is simply part of the research culture. In the present study I tried to ask only those questions that I had some reason to believe would help me understand how administrators and teachers view professional development. I tried to relate the questions to the literature – particularly any Thai studies that I could locate. As the study progressed I became more and more convinced that a survey of this kind is useful in studying the spread of opinion but is very limited in developing one’s detailed understanding of any school.

I also found that it is very difficult to think through all of the possible implications of one’s questions. The inevitable outcome is that surveys raise more questions than they answer. In a sense this is a key purpose in using a survey technique.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey studies are often ‘one-shot activities’. From my experience in this study surveys can be a part of an iterative process if you can follow up some issues with more in-depth questions or interviews.
4.4 CONCLUSION

This research report studied school-based professional development programs. They were included in-house training courses, seminars and workshops. The non-school based activities; attending seminars hosted by other institutions such as universities, visiting to other schools, or discussion with colleagues, did not apparently as much as the Educational Reform Policy expected.

My personal knowledge of research expanded as a result of this research project. I have a better understanding of the complexity and richness of survey research. I would not want to claim to be expert in survey techniques but I have a much better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this technique. It proved to be very useful in moving me from doing research on people to doing research with people.
REFERENCES


Kaeo University, Khon Kaen, Thailand (Thai document).


APPENDIX A

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
(ADMINISTRATORS VERSION)

Date

Dear

These questions have been designed to help me understand professional development in your school. In this study, professional development means anything that you do, or have done, or might do that helps your staff to do their jobs as teachers. Professional development could include attending seminars, doing further study at a college or university, membership of a professional society, going on a study tour in Thailand or overseas.

Any information that you give me will be completely confidential and nobody will be able identify you or your school from any report that I write.

The data will be kept in a secure place and nobody will have access to it without your agreement.

If you decide at any time not to participate further in this study any data that you given me will be destroyed and not used in any way.

For further information you may contact my Khon Kaen University advisor Dr. Yachai Pongboriboon on phone number 043 337345 or my Deakin University advisor Prof. Marie Emmit on phone number 61 392446469.

If you would like a copy of my research report when I have finished please contact me on phone number 043 237777.

I am working to a deadline for my research so I would appreciate it if you could return the questionnaires to me by 22nd. November, 1997.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Nuchwana Luang-anggoon

EdD Student, Deakin University
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
(ADMINISTRATORS' VERSION)

In most cases a simple tick (✓) in the box on the right of the words or figures will be enough. In a few cases it will be necessary to write a few words. I have found that completing this questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes.

____________________________________________________________________

1. Gender Male[ ] Female[ ]

2. Age < 30 years [ ] 30-34[ ] 35-39[ ] 40-44[ ] 45-49[ ] > 50[ ]

3. How long have you been the principal in this school? ___ years

4. How many years have you been working in schools?
   1 year[ ] 2-5[ ] 6-10[ ] 11-15[ ] 16-20[ ] >20[ ]

5. How many years have you been an administrator?
   1 year[ ] 2-5[ ] 6-10[ ] 11-15[ ] 16-20[ ] >20[ ]

6. What qualifications do you have? (Please tell me the qualification and any major study)
   • Certificate [ ] Major study __________________________
   • Bachelors degree [ ] Major study __________________________
   • Masters degree [ ] Major study __________________________
   • Other qualification [ ] Major study __________________________

7. Are you doing any further study now? Yes[ ] No[ ]

8. If you are doing further study please tell me:
   level __________________________
   major study __________________________
   institution __________________________

9. How many professional development programs have you attended in the past three years?
   0[ ] 1[ ] 2[ ] 3[ ] 4 or more[ ]

10. What courses have you done after becoming a principal? (you can tick more than one)
    • curriculum [ ]
    • policy [ ]
    • administration [ ]
11. How useful do you think these courses have been for you?
   not very useful[ ] useful[ ] very useful[ ]

12. Do you belong to any professional associations?
   no[ ] yes[ ] (name__________________________)

13. Do you read any professional journals?
   no[ ] yes[ ] (name__________________________)

14. How useful do you think reading the professional journals has been for you?
   not very useful[ ] useful[ ] very useful[ ]

15. How important should professional development be for teachers?
   not at all[ ] quite important[ ] very important[ ]

16. Is the professional development policy for your school based on:
   • your view of what teachers need [ ]
   • individual needs expressed by teachers [ ]
   • subject group needs expressed by teachers [ ]
   • what the teachers as a group tell you. [ ]
   • some mixture of the above [ ]

17. Who should control the school professional development program?
   • Principal [ ]
   • a professional development co-ordinator [ ]
   • individual teachers [ ]
   • groups of teachers [ ]
   • some mixture of the above [ ]

18. Have you arranged any professional development activities for your teachers in the last three years?
   no[ ] yes[ ]
   visiting speaker [ ]
   workshop [ ]
   conference [ ]
   seminar [ ]
   study tour [ ]
19. Do you have any professional development plans for your teachers next year?
   no[ ] yes[ ]
   visiting speaker [ ]
   workshop [ ]
   conference [ ]
   seminar [ ]
   study tour [ ]
   further study [ ]

19. What foreign languages are taught in your school? ____________________________

20. In the last three years, have you arranged any professional development especially
     for your foreign language teachers?
    No[ ] Yes[ ]
    visiting speaker [ ]
    workshop [ ]
    conference [ ]
    seminar [ ]
    study tour [ ]
    further study [ ]

21. For the next school year, do you plan to organise any professional development
     especially for your foreign language teachers?
    No[ ] Yes[ ]
    visiting speaker [ ]
    workshop [ ]
    conference [ ]
    seminar [ ]
    study tour [ ]
    further study [ ]

Thanks again

Nuchwana Luangangoon
APPENDIX B

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
(TEACHERS VERSION)

Date

Dear

These questions have been designed to help me understand professional development in your school. In this study, professional development means anything that you do, or have done, or might do that helps you do your job as a teacher. Professional development could include attending seminars, doing further study at a college or university, membership of a professional society, going on a study tour in Thailand or overseas.

Any information that you give me will be completely confidential and nobody will be able identify you or your school from any report that I write.

The data will be kept in a secure place and nobody will have access to it without your agreement.

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Thank you for your co-operation.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS
(TEACHERS VERSION)

In most cases a simple tick (✓) in the box on the right of the words or figures will be
enough. In a few cases it will be necessary to write a few words. I have found that
completing this questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes.

1. Gender  Male[ ] Female[ ]
2. Age 20-24 years[ ] 30-34[ ] 35-39[ ] 40-44[ ] 45-49[ ] >50[ ]
3. How long have you been teaching? _____ years
4. How long have you been teaching in this school? _____ years
5. What courses have you been teaching this year?
   • Foreign languages [ ] (names)_________________________________
   Other [ ] (names)_________________________________
6. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language? _______ years
7. Approximately how many students are there in your largest class?
   <20[ ] 20-29[ ] 30-39[ ] 40-49[ ] >50[ ]
8. Approximately how many students are there in your smallest class?
   <20[ ] 20-29[ ] 30-39[ ] 40-49[ ] >50[ ]
9. Approximately how many students are there in an average class?
   <20[ ] 20-29[ ] 30-39[ ] 40-49[ ] >50[ ]
10. What is your highest qualification?
    level ____________________________________
    major __________________________________
    institute ________________________________
11. Are you doing further study now? Yes[ ] No[ ]
12. If you are now doing further study please tell me:
    level ____________________________________
    major __________________________________
    institute ________________________________
13. Have you ever taken a course in teaching foreign language?
   - as a major [ ]
   - as a minor [ ]
   - none [ ]

14. If you have never taken university or college courses in teaching a foreign language, have you attended any in-service programs in teaching a foreign language?
   - no [ ]
   - yes [ ] (name ________________________________)

15. How useful do you think the in-service program in item 14 have been for you in teaching foreign language?
   - not very useful [ ]
   - useful [ ]
   - very useful [ ]

16. How useful do you think the in-service program in item 14 have been for you in doing the other functions of teacher s profession?
   - not very useful [ ]
   - useful [ ]
   - very useful [ ]

17. What in-service courses have you attended other than foreign language teaching during the past three years?
   - Educational technology [ ]
   - Psychology of teaching and learning [ ]
   - Educational Measurement and Evaluation [ ]
   - None [ ]
   - Others [ ]

18. Do you belong to any professional associations?
   - No[ ]
   - Yes[ ] (name). ________________________________

19. Do you read any professional journals?
   - No[ ]
   - Yes[ ] (name). ________________________________

   I subscribe to (professional journal). No[ ]
   - Yes[ ] (name). ________________________________

20. How useful do you think reading professional journals have been for you?
   - not very useful [ ]
   - useful[ ]
   - very useful[ ]

21. How important do you think PD has been for schoolteachers?
   - not very useful [ ]
   - useful[ ]
   - very useful[ ]
22. On what policy basis does your school arrange its professional development program for teachers?
   • top-down policy [ ]
   • majority needs [ ]
   • subgroups needs [ ]
   • individual needs [ ]
   • other [ ]

23. Who should control the school's professional development program?
   • Principal [ ]
   • teachers [ ]
   • PD co-ordinator [ ]
   • other [ ]

24. What professional development activities have been done for teachers in your school in the last three years?

25. What activities are planned for the next year for teachers in your school?

26. What professional development activities have been done specifically for foreign language teachers in your school in the last three years?

27. What professional development activities are planned for next year for foreign language teachers in your school?

28. Do your school have any co-operative plans for professional development activities with other institutes?
   No [ ]
   Yes [ ] (please name the institute and the activities)
29. The school's professional development policy should be based on:

- Ministry policy [ ]
- the needs of the majority of teachers [ ]
- special interest subgroups [ ]
- on individual needs [ ]

30. Who should pay for professional development?

- the school [ ]
- individual teachers [ ]
- the school and the individual teacher [ ]

31. Professional development activities should normally be about:

- 1/2 day [ ]
- 1 day [ ]
- 2 days [ ]
- 1 week [ ]
- more than one week [ ]
- other [ ]

32. Professional development activities at your school take place during:

- week days [ ]
- weekends [ ]
- vacations [ ]
- other [ ]

33. In your own opinion, professional development activities should take place during:

- week days [ ]
- weekends [ ]
- vacations [ ]
- other [ ]

Thanks again
Nuchwana Luangangoon
APPENDIX C

COMMENTS ABOUT LENGTH OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dr Manote (M50), said:

The length of the questionnaires should depend on the content of the questionnaire. It should cover each of the sections but not more than ten items for each section. As a result, people should not spend more than thirty minutes per questionnaire.

Mrs Oranit (F36), had a slightly different view:

An appropriate questionnaire should not be longer than six pages and should take about twenty minutes to complete.

Mr Somboon (M52):

A good questionnaire should take about fifteen minutes to complete. Furthermore, it must not be difficult for the respondents. For example it should not ask about details of something that happened more than five years ago.
PART SIX: REFLECTIONS
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PART SIX: REFLECTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the insights gained from working through the different research studies and to share the outcomes to date of the research. The insights are discussed under the following heading: teaching English as a second/foreign language, research directions and implications for me as a researcher. In addition the progress of dissemination of the findings is shared.

6.1 ON ENGLISH AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THAI SCHOOLS

6.1.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM 1996

It will take longer than the government expects to achieve the level of English language competency that it is aiming for. There is conflict between the objectives of the curriculum and what is possible in practice. At secondary level, the curriculum suggests teachers emphasise the use English that is grammatically correct and culturally appropriate to communicate effectively, but the goal of most secondary school students is to pass the university entrance examination. This is focused on reading and writing skills rather than oral language skills.

The curriculum suggests that teachers emphasise learner-centered approaches. This is hardly possible with class sizes of forty to fifty students and with the tradition of teacher-control. It is also in the interests of school administrators to increase the number of students in their schools because promotion in the Ministry of Education is linked to the number of students. The more students, the higher the position. Moreover, the more students, the bigger the budgets and the facilities then follow. There is no incentive to reduce class size.

The situation is similar in the quality assurance system. Most indicators relate to quantity rather than quality because quantity is easier to account and evaluate. From my point of view, the reform policy and the policy to start teaching English from grade one are progressive policies. However, my research has shown how much more there is to real change in schools than simply developing and disseminating good policies.

6.1.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Most of the planning and delivery of systemic professional development has been a top
down process. Teachers could select from what was on offer but had little effect on
decisions about what was to be offered. Then the emphasis moved to school-based
professional development programs. These were meant to meet the needs of teachers in
particular schools. Now we are moving into a system in which the provision of
professional development is becoming a competitive activity and there is some emphasis
on programs that meet the needs of individual teachers.
Some of these are user-pays programs and there is evidence that school teachers are
willing to pay for these programs if the topics are useful for them.
This change of control has tended to decrease the number attending any one professional
development program. Generally, with the top down policy, there were large groups of
up to one hundred. This changed to medium groups of about fifty to eighty
participants. In the last few years the groups have tended to be about thirty-five.
Teachers value small group work and it results in greater participation and more active
involvement. This is another of the many tensions around professional development.
From an innovation point of view no doubt the national government would want as
many teachers as possible to attend such programs. From a cost-benefit point of view
the small groups are likely to be very much more effective in initiating change in schools.
Along with the move to smaller groups there is an expectation on the part of the
teachers that they will be actively involved in the program and not be treated as passive
listeners.

6.1.3 PORTFOLIOS
The idea of authentic assessment and portfolios was introduced by the Ministry of
Education in 1996. The logic was that authentic assessment was to be used in the
classroom, examples were to be collected in student portfolios, and the student
portfolios used to construct a teacher portfolio. In addition to evidence of their
teaching, the teacher's portfolio was to contain evidence of their professional
development, their career goals and their contribution to professional and community
agencies. My research indicated that the difficulties of implementing these initiatives
are:
Most teachers had no idea of how of to start planning or developing their portfolios or
the students portfolios. They tended to follow the ready-made guidelines. These were quite complicated. As a guest speaker on portfolio assessment, I have normally suggested to teachers that they start a pilot portfolio with one class and a small number of lessons.

Teachers tend not to use alternative forms of classroom assessment. They still rely heavily on testing. This means that most of a student's portfolio is simply scores from tests given at the end of the lessons. Encouraging teachers to note down student performance on an observational basis tends to fall on deaf ears. Large classes of forty to fifty students make this difficult. There is a genuine feeling that teachers will lose control of the class or lose face feeling loss of control of the class if they are not seen to be in control of all aspects of teaching and learning. For this reason the idea of student self-assessment, peer-assessment, or group assessment is not very attractive. Even if the teachers were so inclined, crowded classrooms make it difficult to use groupwork and creative tasks. Thus testing is the easiest method of assessment.

Teachers thought that portfolios would be costly. There was discussion among teachers as who would pay for folders, paper or other materials used in developing portfolios. It was seen as impossible for small rural schools with only a minimal budget. The teachers' perceptions were that one had to have a very glossy, neat and clean folder. There was not much concern with encouraging student learning, the idea of authentic learning, collaborative learning, or the students' role in assessment.

Most Thai teachers have not been trained to keep a journal or to keep records of what they have done. When they were asked to develop their own career portfolios, it was simply an additional and unwanted task. Hence, they have been opposed to the policy and have refused to try it. After the portfolio policy had been in effect for about a year, a quality assurance policy was introduced to monitor the system. There is now a growing feeling among teachers that they will be disadvantaged if they do not keep a portfolio. However, there is still a feeling that portfolios (students' or teachers') are a threat.

6.1.4 ON GROUP WORK

The research highlighted a number of practical difficulties in group work in English
classes. In general, most of the group work that we did worked best for high ability students. The lower ability students did not benefit as much. These latter students needed much more intervention and help by the teacher. Self-selected groups tended to perpetuate the high-low ability group structure and so the groups need to be mixed ability groups organised by the teacher. Here is a feeling among teachers that the best groups are groups in which friends work together. This too perpetuates the high-low structure. Also crowded classrooms are a problem for group work. Even an enthusiastic teacher like Boon had to cope with classes in the language laboratory where it simply wasn’t possible to move the chairs away from the audio-lingual equipment.

So, it is not just a problem of resistant teachers.

6.1.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FACULTY STAFF

As a result of the reform policy, my Faculty has a renewed interest in what happens in our schools and their communities. We have organised numerous in-house training programs for our staff. These have focused on hot issues such as student-centred pedagogy, co-operative learning, alternative forms of assessment and classroom assessment. In recent years we invited two guest speakers from Australia, Peter Waterworth on Collaborative Learning, and Bruce Jeans on Self-Directed Learning and Professional Development for Teachers. My colleagues and I then organised ten or more professional development programs for teachers. These have run continuously from January till May 2001. With the co-operation of three departments, we grouped the topics into educational administration (quality assurance, staff development, etc), instructional and educational technology (CAI, computers for educators, instructional media), and educational research and assessment (classroom action research, alternative forms of assessment). There have been about fifty participants in each program. The most popular course has been classroom action research. I think that I can fairly claim, along with the effects of government policy, to have increased the interaction between schools and university.

6.2 SOME RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The research reported in this portfolio has highlighted several directions that could be
explored fruitfully.

6.2.1 POLICY

It was clear in this research that there is a considerable gap between the policy of having English taught from grade one on, and the capacity of teachers to actually do it. Research that investigated the effects of the policy across the nation, and particularly the extent to which teachers have access to specific professional development programs would be valuable. So too, would be a study of how schools and teachers are actually implementing the policy. For example, how may schools have access to native speakers of English? And, if they do have: How are they using them? How would schools modify the policy if they were given the opportunity?

6.2.2 PEDAGOGY

There is value in moving toward pedagogies that are student-centred. But, apart from the problems of large classes and lack of resources: How can one best encourage teachers to use some form of student-centred pedagogy, at least some of the time? How would team teaching work in this context? Would peer group teaching and learning be possible? Can one identify a best practice teacher of English at each grade level? If this is possible: What is that they are doing that makes it best practice? Most schools have some form of language laboratory: How are these language laboratories being used? Do they make any difference to the student's progress? What do teachers actually do when they take a class to a language laboratory? What forms of professional development (in-house or otherwise) would be most effective in convincing teachers that student-centred pedagogies can be effective?

6.2.3 CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

The curriculum at each grade level is overloaded. There is little or no time for consolidation. How could a more realistic curriculum be developed? Is communicative competence a realistic goal? If it is: What curriculum content would support this goal? If Mahasarakham University wanted to be a major research centre for English language teaching: What would be the most effective policies and practices to adopt? How can professional development be delivered to schools in the region in ways that are mutually beneficial? Experience gained in this research showed clearly that it is difficult to
prepare unambiguous written materials for teaching English. Can these problems be reduced or minimised? If so, how?

6.2.4 ASSESSMENT

Formal tests still dominate assessment in Thai schools. How can one move teachers toward more authentic assessment? How much do teachers know about authentic assessment? How much do they know about portfolios? How can teachers be persuaded to use forms of assessment other than formal tests? The problems of assessing spoken English in large classes are known. Can solutions be found to the problems?
6.3 ON ME AS A RESEARCHER

6.3.1 ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

It has been very difficult to change my mindset from empiricism to constructivism. In fact, it is not a matter of discarding one and adopting the other. It is a gradual and ongoing process in which I have learnt the strengths and weaknesses of action research processes. My initial acceptance of the principles of action research was based on a simplistic belief that action research solved all the problems of empiricism. It does not. Over the period of this research I have developed a more mature understanding the roles that empiricism and constructivism can play in research in education. I feel that I can think about research in education without automatically thinking of experiments. For a non-Asian person this may not seem to be a major advance. I can only assert that, for me, it has been a major intellectual shift.

The experience of collaborative action research with my research participants provided much more benefit than I expected:

It was a challenge to be a research participant with university people. Collaborative working was of benefit to everyone. I dislike the feeling of being treated as a research sample. Some researchers once came to school and told me to follow their plan without asking my opinion (Kan).

I learnt that this kind of research reduced the hierarchical relationship between researcher and participants. We listened and learnt from each other. It was not always comfortable but there is no doubt that it added to the richness of the research experience.

6.3.2 TIME MANAGEMENT

In my work as a full time lecturer at Mahasarakham University, I had to teach undergraduate and graduate students on weekdays, and part time students on weekends. Consistent with a policy of providing distance education for teachers in remote areas, the university has other two campuses, one in Udon Thani province and one Nakorn Panom province. Both are 200-250 kilometres from the main campus. In some semesters I have had to travel almost every weekend to give lectures to graduate students at one of these campuses.

As a Deputy Dean for quality assurance for the Faculty of Education, it has been my responsibility to deal with many people. One of my jobs was to manage a staff self-
appraisal activity. This was essentially a self-evaluation that academic staff were required to do to show how their time was being used. This was an extremely tedious, routine clerical task. The other part of my quality control work has been organising staff development programs related to needs highlighted in the self-report. It was challenging work because it created lots of conflict among the staff. They were against the system at the start, but after two years, people are generally more sympathetic to the need for this form of quality assurance. The pressure of working in conflict situations caused me to plan very carefully before asking for my colleagues' cooperation in any research project.

Time management on a day to day is very stressful. The demands on your time are pressing and problems often require an immediate response. More remote requirements often risk being neglected. This is the case with further study at a distant location. In my study with Deakin University I have made four visits to Australia for periods of up to a month. These had to be slotted into semester breaks in Thailand, and term time in Australia. My personal family, professional and academic life each needed to be planned around these visits. I estimate that I have travelled 50,000 kilometres between Khon Kaen and Deakin University during the course of my study.

With this experience one would think that managing my research would be second nature. It was not! Working in research teams brought with it new experiences and new time management problems.

6.3.3 WORKING IN A RESEARCH TEAM

My research participants took part in the planning of the research from phase one. This developed their feeling of ownership. It was different from being treated as a sample group in experimental research or being the informants in survey research. Despite their identification with the research there were small but frustrating problems of agreeing on meeting times, keeping records, being available for discussion and so on. They have however, continued to use the activities and pedagogies that we developed together. So in this way the many frustrations have been worth the effort. The research has been a rich professional development experience for them.

The Thai educational reform policy stresses the need for teachers to participate in an
ongoing program of professional development. The teachers in the research teams kept
records of their collaboration with me and of their consequent invitations to talk about
their experiences in other forums. These records are part of their career portfolios and
are taken into account when promotion is considered.
In spite of the insights into pedagogical and assessment theory that we all learnt as a
result of our reading and discussion, it was the classroom research procedures which had
the greatest effect. It is here that one is confronted with the many variables that
determine what teachers actually do in their classrooms. The interplay of culture,
teacher competence, personality, social and political environment produce effects that
are so much more complex than any theory of teaching. The detailed plans that one
makes before coming to the classroom take on a new dimension in the face of all the
contingencies of classroom life. I was extremely fortunate in that my teacher colleagues
were still able to do useful work even though we had often planned to do X when only
Y was possible. Towards the end of the research my colleagues told me that they were
considering how they might develop their own classroom research projects. I found this
very satisfying.
6.3.4 WORKING IN CLASSROOMS
Very early in the research I learnt just how well prepared one has to be to research
classroom life. When I committed myself to the study of functioning classrooms I
accepted of course that there would be no steady state that I could observe at my
leisure. But it is not until you actually come to make observations that you realize how
rapid events can be in any classroom. I think that even very experienced researchers
cannot walk into a classroom and know immediately what events to observe and what
events not to observe. It simply takes time to absorb and understand the complexity of
the system.
As a researcher I wanted to have permanent records of my observations. Because of my
particular interest in teacher-students interactions I wanted a visual record that I could
study outside the classroom. I therefore took a still camera and a video camera (and
notepads etc) with me. It is very difficult to be unobtrusive when you are encumbered
with equipment that, although not particularly bulky, is not all that convenient to carry.
Then one has to be familiar enough with the equipment to use it rapidly and appropriately. This is quite difficult with a video camera. Considerable skill is needed to use it for research purposes in classrooms. Fortunately even very amateur footage was still useful for the research.

I think my teacher colleagues had to live with split personalities for the period of the research. One the one hand I think that they were genuinely convinced of the logic and value of the research. On the other hand when they were actually teaching they constantly modified our collective plans so that they retained the traditional teacher-student relationships while delivering the new material. This was particularly obvious in the need to assess. My teacher colleagues felt the need to conclude every activity with some form of assessment. Even when the intention to compile portfolios the teachers still felt that is was right to do some formal assessment. It was quite a difficult human relations problem to ensure that the assessement did not dominate the activities.

There were times when I arrived at the classroom only to be told that the timetable had been changed to accommodate a staff meeting or some other unplanned event. Oh! I am sorry, I forgot to tell you that we will have a meeting today. I even had the experience of the very unfortunate death of one of my original teacher colleagues - Suwaporn. The rule of thumb seemed to be Whatever time allowance you have planned for, double it and you will be somewhere near the actual time needed.

6.3.5 WORKING WITH ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English language was hard work for me. Even though my English ability was adequate at the communicative level, it was hard to write in formal language (academic language). I did not know all the technical terminology and it took a long time to understand the requirements of a semi-narrative form of reporting. Now that I have completed the report I think that all of the effort was worthwhile.

Discussions in English with my supervisor and Australian colleagues were sometimes difficult. I took a long time to understand what many of the abstract ideas involved and their implications. My supervisor was very kind and patient in listening as I tried to explain. There were more communication problems for overseas students who study
English as a second/foreign language than I expected.

Data collection in Australia was one of my hardest tasks. I had to use English for the interviews and then transcribe the tape recordings. The lessons I observed moved very quickly. I took notes, but it was impossible to notice all the interactions. Time was limited and I had to interview students in the intervals between classes. These interviews were my greatest challenge.
6.4 DISSEMINATION

In the early doctoral seminars the obligation to disseminate information about one's research to everybody who might benefit from it, was stressed. In addition to the professional development problems for teachers that I have been involved with, I have made a particular effort to make the work available to a variety of audiences.

6.4.1 PUBLICATIONS


6.4.2 PRESENTATIONS


- Collaboration between a university and a school: The role of the university facilitator (in Thai). Conference hosted by The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL), Bangkok, Thailand, June 1998

6.4.3 GUEST SPEAKER

I have received numerous invitations to discuss my work on student portfolios, authentic assessment and classroom action research:


- *Portfolio assessment*, hosted by Secondary School Group One of Khon Kaen, July 1997. One hundred and fifty secondary school teachers attended in Banpai District,
Khon Kaen Province.

- *Alternative classroom assessment*, hosted by The Vocational College in Northeast Region, August 1997. One hundred vocational teachers attended from Roi-et Province.


- *Student portfolios for Nurses*, hosted by Sri Mahasarakham Nursing College, December 1999. Thirty-five staff attended.


- *Classroom action research*, hosted by a primary school group in Hui-mek District, Kalasin Province, September 2000. Fifty primary school teachers attended.

- *Alternative assessments*, hosted by the Partnership Project between the Council of Mahasarakham Province and The Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University to develop their teachers, January 2001. Forty primary school teachers attended.

- *Classroom action research*, hosted by the Collaborative Project between the National Primary Education Office and The Walai-rukawej Research Institute to develop the research skills for local primary school teachers, February 2001. Thirty-five primary school teachers attended.

This work is ongoing as is my desire to publish formal accounts of the research in appropriate learned journals.
6.5 CONCLUSION

This portfolio includes the reports of four studies. These studies explore issues around the teaching of English as a foreign language in Thailand. The research highlights the challenges in implementing the policy of teaching English from grade one. Many teachers do not have the competence to achieve this nor do the resources allow for the pedagogy that is recommended. Professional development is central but again there are limited resources to provide the appropriate professional development. In the process of this research I have explored a range of research methods and increase my skill as a researcher. The challenge is to continue to research the many questions and issues raised by this research and to disseminate the findings in this priority area.