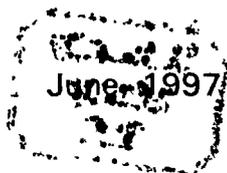


**IMPLEMENTING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS
(SECONDARY LEVEL):
THE SINGAPORE EXPERIENCE**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Hull

by

Susan Nair
B.Ed.(Hons.), Nottingham; M.Ed., Exeter



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(Kay Siang Road, Singapore 248922)

Languages & Library Branch
Curriculum Planning & Development Division
51 Grange Road
Singapore 249564



Telefax : 7379320

Your Ref :

DID No:

Our Ref :

Date : 5 Aug 97

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY THESIS BY SUE NAIR

Mrs Sue Nair conducted research on her Ph D thesis at a time when she held the post of Specialist Inspector, English Language, in the Ministry of Education. Her letter to schools to request the submission of the school assessment papers was signed by her in that capacity.

As head of branch, I can state that Mrs Nair's comparative analysis of the schools' assessment papers was not part of a research project carried out by the Ministry of Education but it was an exercise independently undertaken by Mrs Nair for the purpose of research in fulfilment of her Ph D thesis.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Rebecca Mok'.

REBECCA MOK (Mrs)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
LANGUAGES & LIBRARY BRANCH
CURRICULUM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all those who have assisted me throughout this study.

In particular, I would like to thank Ms Nadine K. Cammish, my supervisor, for her guidance, kindness and support.

Thanks are also due to officers in Singapore Ministry of Education's Languages and Library and Examinations and Assessment Branches; and staff in the National Institute of Education's English Language and Applied Linguistics Department. Their time and consideration greatly facilitated the production of this study.

However, my special thanks are due to my family in Singapore and England. Your confidence in me has been invaluable.

Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
Figures and Tables	vii
Abbreviations	viii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	
1.0 Rationale for the Study	1
1.1 Choice of Terminology	3
1.2 Approach to Research	6
1.3 Research Problems	9
1.4 Singapore's Education System and Approach to Change	11
1.5 Features which would Contribute to the Successful Implementation of an English Language Syllabus in Singapore	18
Chapter Two: Language and Education in Singapore	
2.0 Language Use and Language Planning	25
2.1 Bilingualism	26
2.2 The Status of English and Singapore Colloquial English	29
2.3 The Government's Attitude to the Teaching of English in Singapore	39
2.4 Teachers' Attitude to the Teaching of English in Singapore	41
2.5 Methodological Consequences	43
2.6 Perceptions of Teachers' Competence	45
2.7 Students' Motivation	47
2.8 Students' Learning Styles	50
2.9 Students' Competence	53
2.10 English and the Workplace	56
2.11 Teachers' Morale	58
2.12 School Culture and Curriculum Development	64
2.13 Conclusion	70
Chapter Three: 1982 Syllabus: Perceived Problems	
3.0 The 1982 Syllabus: Areas of Concern	72
3.1 Immediate Catalyst for Change	85
3.2 The 1982 Syllabus: A Structural Syllabus	87
3.3 Conclusion	90
Chapter Four: 1982 Syllabus: Teaching Materials Generated	
4.0 The Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore	92
4.1 <u>Course in Learning and Using English</u>	93
4.2 The 1982 Syllabus and <u>CLUE</u> : Aims and Principles	93
4.3 <u>CLUE</u> : Implied View of English Language Teaching	98
4.4 Other Interpretations of the 1982 Syllabus: Commercially Produced Course Books	100
4.5 Conclusion	104

Chapter Five: 1982 Syllabus: Assessment Modes		
5.0	Examination Backwash	106
5.1	GCE 'O' Level Examination	106
5.2	GCE 'O' Level Examination: Implied View of English Teaching	117
5.3	GCE 'N' Level Examination	
5.4	1982 Syllabus: Lower Secondary <u>Assessment Guidelines</u>	119
5.5	<u>Assessment Guidelines: Implied View of English Teaching</u>	133
5.6	Conclusion	135
Chapter Six: 1982 Syllabus: Dissemination, Implementation, Evaluation and Revision		
6.0	Responsibility	136
6.1	Dissemination and Implementation	139
6.2	Evaluation of the <u>Course in Learning and Using English</u>	145
6.3	Revision of the 1982 Syllabus and the <u>Course in Learning and Using English</u>	147
6.4	Syllabus Dissemination, Implementation, Evaluation and Revision: Teacher Involvement	149
6.5	Conclusion	150
Chapter Seven: 1982 and 1991 Syllabuses: Comparison and Contrast		
7.0	A Framework for Comparison and Contrast	152
7.1	Approach	153
7.2	Design	156
7.3	Procedure	172
7.4	Comparison and Contrast: Critical Differences	174
7.5	The 1991 Syllabus: A Response to the Criticisms of the 1982 Syllabus?	176
7.6	The 1991 Syllabus: Perceived Problems	181
7.7	Conclusion	188
Chapter Eight: 1991 Syllabus: Teaching Materials Generated		
8.0	Teaching Materials Produced by the Ministry of Education: <u>New CLUE</u>	189
8.1	The 1991 Syllabus and <u>New CLUE</u> : In Alignment?	191
8.2	<u>New CLUE</u> : Teacher Involvement	204
8.3	Commercial Course Books and Syllabus Implementation	206
8.4	Teacher Dependency on Course Books	216
8.5	Conclusion	219
Chapter Nine: 1991 Syllabus: Assessment Modes		
9.0	1991 Syllabus: Recommendations Regarding Assessment	220
9.1	Formal and Informal Approaches to Assessment: "Complementing Each Other"?	221
9.2	1991 Syllabus: Influence on 'O' and 'N' Level Examinations	223
9.3	Revisions to the 'O' Level Oral Examination	229
9.4	Examinations as Agents of Change	232

9.5	<u>Assessment Guidelines</u> for Lower Secondary Classes: A Reflection of the 1991 Syllabus's Recommendations?	235
9.6	The 1991 Syllabus, the 1994 <u>Assessment Guidelines</u> , School-based and National Examinations: In Alignment?	251
9.7	Conclusion	252

Chapter Ten: 1991 Syllabus - Dissemination of Information: 1990-1995

10.0	Responsibility for the Dissemination	254
10.1	The Initial Dissemination: 1990-1991	255
10.2	Dissemination to Heads of Department and Key Teachers	256
10.3	Other Means of Dissemination	259
10.4	Strengths and Weaknesses of the Initial Dissemination	261
10.5	The English Unit's Evaluation of the Initial Dissemination	265
10.6	Other Sources of Information Regarding Teachers' Responses to the Initial Dissemination	272
10.7	Reporting the Evaluation of the Initial Dissemination	275
10.8	Responding to the Formative Evaluation Reports	277
10.9	The English Unit's Evaluation of School-based Dissemination: 1992-1995	280
10.10	Strengths and Weaknesses of School-based Dissemination: 1992-1995	288
10.11	Reporting the Evaluation	290
10.12	School-based Dissemination - 1992-1995: Responding to the Evaluation	290
10.13	Strengths and Weaknesses of the Evaluation	294
10.14	Conclusion	298

Chapter Eleven: 1991 Syllabus - Implementation: Evaluation and Meta-evaluation - 1992-1995

11.0	Background to the Evaluation	302
11.1	Evaluation: Planning Documents	303
11.2	Representativeness, Reliability and Validity of the Information Obtained	305
11.3	Findings Based on the Planning Documents	307
11.4	Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation	309
11.5	Reporting the Evaluation	310
11.6	The English Unit's Response to the Findings	311
11.7	Responses by Other Departments and Institutions	317
11.8	Evaluation: Classroom Practice	318
11.9	Representativeness, Reliability and Validity of the Information Obtained	319
11.10	Findings Based on the Classroom Observations	324
11.11	Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation	326
11.12	Reporting the Evaluation	329
11.13	The English Unit's Response to the Findings	330
11.14	Evaluation: Pupils' Responses	331

11.15 Representativeness, Reliability and Validity of the Information Obtained	331
11.16 Findings Based on Pupils' Responses to the Questionnaire	332
11.17 Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation	335
11.18 Reporting the Evaluation	336
11.19 The English Unit's Response to the Findings	336
11.20 Evaluating the Evaluation: Meta-evaluation	337
11.21 Conclusion	341

Chapter Twelve: Looking Ahead: Implementing the Syllabus in 2001

12.0 Learning from the Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus	344
12.1 Impact of the Implementation and its Evaluation	344
12.2 The Implementation and its Evaluation: Some Missed Opportunities	349
12.3 Features Desirable to the Successful Implementation of an English Language Syllabus in Singapore	352
12.4 Future Directions	377

Bibliographies

Bibliography 1: Published Materials	379
Bibliography 2: Unpublished Works	408
Bibliography 3: Unpublished Ministry of Education Papers, Documents, Reports and Communications	410
Bibliography 4: Minutes of Meetings	417
Bibliography 5: School Appraisal Reports	423
Bibliography 6: Course Books	425
Bibliography 7: Public Examinations and Related Reports	428
Bibliography 8: School-based Examinations	433
Bibliography 9: Units of Work	441
Bibliography 10: Lectures	446

Appendices

Appendix A: Content of 1982 and 1991 English Language Syllabuses	447
Appendix B: Sample of Letter Requesting Copies of School-based Examination Papers	448
Appendix Ci: Aims of the 1991 English Language Syllabus	450
Appendix Cii: Terminal Objectives of the 1991 English Language Syllabus	450
Appendix D: Sample Unit of Work	453
Appendix E: Syllabus Dissemination Teacher Questionnaire (Form A)	455
Appendix F: Syllabus Dissemination Teacher Questionnaire (Form B)	457
Appendix Gi: Letter Requesting Information about Syllabus Dissemination	459
Appendix Gii: Questionnaire: Syllabus Dissemination	460
Appendix Hi: Unit of Work Checklist	462

Appendix Hii:	Year Plan Checklist	463
Appendix I:	Monitoring of Syllabus Implementation in All Schools: 1995	464
Appendix J:	Monitoring Syllabus Implementation: Classroom Observation	466
Appendix K:	Monitoring Syllabus Implementation: Classroom Observation (1995)	470
Appendix L:	Pupils' Responses to the EL Programme	477
Appendix M:	Semi-structured Interview Questions	478
Appendix Ni:	Interview with a member of the 1982 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1979-1981	480
Appendix Nii:	Interview with a member of the <u>CLUE</u> team, 1982-1988	483
Appendix Niii:	Interview with Dr. Makhan L. Tickoo	485
Appendix Niv:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1986-1991	486
Appendix Nv:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1986-1991	491
Appendix Nvi:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1988-1991	496
Appendix Nvii:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1987-1990	501
Appendix Nviii:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1986-1991	503
Appendix Nix:	Interview with Assistant Director, Languages and Library Development Branch, 1990-1995	506
Appendix Nx:	Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee: 1986-1991	509

FIGURES AND TABLES

a. Figures

Figure 1:	Singapore's Education System	14
Figure 2:	Flow Chart for Syllabus Construction/Revision	16
Figure 3:	Rationale for <u>CLUE</u>	94
Figure 4:	English Language Unit Work Plan: 1992	278

b. Tables

Table 1:	Checklist to Assist in the Evaluation of the Implementation of <u>CLUE</u>	138
Table 2:	Dates <u>New CLUE</u> was ready for use in schools	190
Table 3:	Commercially Approved Materials: 1985 and 1995	207
Table 4:	Use of Course Books in Planning Units of Work	216
Table 5:	Frequency of Use of Recommended Course Books	217
Table 6:	Number of Units of Work Based on Approved Course Books, According to Academic Level	218
Table 7:	Units of Work: Dependence on Course Books	218
Table 8:	Comparison of Numbers of Composition Papers Including Expository/Argumentative Topics Before and After Schools Received the 1993 <u>Assessment Guidelines</u>	239
Table 9:	Band Descriptors for Functional Writing, Paper 1, Section B	240
Table 10:	GCE 'O' Level English Language Results: 1990-1995	253
Table 11:	Secondary Teachers' Responses to Syllabus Dissemination: Teacher Questionnaire Form A	266
Table 12:	Secondary Teachers' Responses to Syllabus Dissemination: Teacher Questionnaire Form B	269
Table 13:	School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 1E, 1N and 2N: 1991	272
Table 14:	School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 2E and 3N: 1992	281
Table 15:	School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 3E and 4N: 1993	281
Table 16:	Summary of Syllabus Dissemination Problems (Secondary): 1993	283
Table 17:	School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 4E and 5N: 1994-1995	284
Table 18:	Areas of Concern in Year of Implementation: 1992-1995	308
Table 19:	Workshops Given by the English Unit to Support Syllabus Implementation: 1993-1995	312
Table 20:	In-service Courses Offered by Staff Training Branch to Support Syllabus Implementation: 1992-1994	317
Table 21:	In-service Courses and Workshops Offered by Language Proficiency Centre to Support Syllabus Implementation: 1993-1994	318
Table 22:	Findings From Classroom Observations: 1994 and 1994	325
Table 23:	Pupils' Responses to the EL Programme: 1995	333

ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	- Active Communicative Teaching
AD	- Assistant Director
ADEX	- Assistant Director, Examinations
ADLL	- Assistant Director, Languages and Library
AL(s)	- Attainment Level(s)
CA	- Continuous Assessment
CDC	- Curriculum Development Committee
CDIS	- Curriculum Development Institute, Singapore
CLUE	- Course in Learning and Using English
CPD	- Curriculum Planning Division
CSE	- Certificate of Secondary Education (U.K.)
DD	- Deputy Director
DDEX	- Deputy Director, Examinations
DDLL	- Deputy Director, Languages and Library
DOE	- Director of Education
EAB	- Examinations and Assessment Branch
ESC	- Education Services Commission
GCE	- General Certificate of Education
HoDs	- Heads of Department
IE	- Institute of Education (<i>became National Institute of Education</i>)
LPC	- Language Proficiency Centre
MOE	- Ministry of Education
'N' Level	- General Certificate of Education, Normal Level
NIE	- National Institute of Education
NUS	- National University of Singapore
'O' Level	- General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level
PASSES	- Project to Assist Selected Schools in English Skills
PO	- Project Officer
PSC	- Public Services Commission
PSLE	- Primary School Leaving Certificate
REAP	- Reading and English Acquisition Programme
SI	- Specialist Inspector
SIEL(s)	- Specialist Inspector(s) of English Language
TELL	- <u>Teaching English Language and Literature</u>
UCLES	- University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Rationale for the Study

This study attempts to illuminate the processes of planned change. More specifically, it examines the difficulties of implementing a revised English language syllabus in the context of Singapore's educational, cultural, socio-economic and political frameworks. It considers, too, those who plan change, the assumptions and models which inform their work, and the impact of their actions. A broad view, then, is taken of syllabus implementation as part of a larger pattern of systems, individuals and events which needs to be understood before a formal implementation programme begins (Kennedy, 1988).

It is recognised that a knowledge of the successes and pitfalls of previous change efforts should inform the work of syllabus writers and implementors. So, this is a historical study, a diachronic comparison of two implementation exercises, separated by a decade.

A comparison of the two syllabus documents (see Appendix A:447) and the processes by which they were implemented reveals considerable differences between them. For example, syllabus writers' and implementors' views of both teachers and pupils radically changed. By 1992, teachers had been transformed from people needing professional help to individuals capable of selecting and adapting resource materials to suit the needs of their pupils. In the classroom, their roles multiplied, reflecting recommendations to adopt a humanist approach to teaching. Pupils became first instead of second language learners of English, taking responsibility for their learning. By 1992,

specific rather than general recommendations were made regarding classroom procedures, which were to reflect principles of integration, interaction and contextualisation, and to encourage more oral work. Syllabus writers and heads of department became change agents, a role played by course book writers in 1982. Course books, in 1982 seen as the means of implementing a syllabus, became a resource in the implementation process. Assessment became more wide ranging in 1992, including measures for formative evaluation alongside the traditional, externally set public examinations.

Clearly, implementing the 1991 revised English Language Syllabus in Singapore represented a radical change effort. This study tries to understand this process, its successes and failures, its impact on teaching and learning, and the divergence of policy and practice.

The researcher's experience as a change agent was the initial motivation for the study. It led to an acceptance of the theory that change is a long term process brought about by interactions between human beings (Rogers, 1983; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Widdowson 1993; Breen 1995). Factors affecting change, therefore, are very difficult to identify or measure. They could be apparently extraneous, like a sick child, or more obviously relevant but of indefinable impact, for example the personality of a change agent.

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that "the process of change and the factors which promote or inhibit innovation" have been neglected in the literature of applied linguistics and language teaching (White, 1993:245). The situation has improved since 1993 (see, for example, De Lano *et al*, 1994; Brown, J.D., 1995; Bailey and Nunan, 1996; Green and Beavis, 1996;

Hamilton, 1996) but it is still fair to say that not enough is known about the process of change in English language teaching. Without such knowledge, it is very difficult to establish a time frame for or predict the outcomes of a planned change process (Kelly, 1980; Bailey, 1992; Lamb, 1995).

Nevertheless, change agents are charged with trying to influence the process within a limited, specified time frame. To do this, change agents also have to conduct formative evaluations of the process of the planned change, another area to which insufficient attention has been given (Beretta, 1992).

This study, then, attempts to contribute to an increasing, publicly available, international body of studies (see for example, Brock, P., 1996; Harrison, 1996) which may eventually enable innovators in English language teaching "to understand which approach to creating change . . . works best, most often and under what sets of circumstances" (Henrichsen, 1989:201).

1.1 Choice of Terminology

To avoid confusion, it will be useful to define and distinguish between some of the terms used in this study.

Curriculum and Syllabus

These terms are contrasted by a number of writers, for example, Dubin and Olshtain (1986:3), Krahnke (1987:2) and Stern (1992:19-20). White's distinction is the most succinct:

" . . . 'syllabus' refers to the content or subject matter of an individual subject, whereas 'curriculum' refers to the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system." (White, 1988:4)

These definitions are observed in this study.

Curriculum Renewal and Syllabus Implementation

Clark uses the term curriculum renewal because it:

" indicates clearly that the exercise does not often start from scratch, but from an existing state of affairs, and does not stop at the production of some new examination or some new curriculum package to be used in schools, but implies an ongoing process of refinement and recreation" (Clark, 1987:xii)

He develops this point:

"Curriculum renewal can perhaps best be likened to the creation of a never-ending jigsaw puzzle, in which the various pieces are cut and recut to fit together into a whole that is itself evolving to respond to changing insights and values. A change made to one part of the jigsaw will inevitably affect other parts" (*ibid*:xiii).

In this study, then, curriculum renewal is perceived as a continuous process made up of many inter-dependent, constantly shifting parts. Syllabus implementation is defined as the process of putting into practice the principles contained in the syllabus. It is one part of the "never-ending jigsaw puzzle", and contributes to curriculum renewal. Ideally, it should reflect a similar evolutionary approach.

Dissemination and Diffusion

These terms are defined by Kelly:

"A portrayal of dissemination depicts systematic administration, meetings, plans drawn up on paper, timetables, the distribution of newsletters, organised in-service courses, and even a computer or two. Invariably it will have four inter-related aspects. The movement of people and materials to implement an innovation (translocation); the passage of information about an innovation through printed or oral media and personal contact (communication); the provision of stimuli for change, either externally produced or self-generated (motivation); and the development of the considerable understanding and commitment required for the effective implementation of an innovation (re-education)." (Kelly, 1980:68)

Thus, dissemination is a deliberate, planned process intended to change people's thinking. In contrast, diffusion:

" refers to what actually happens, to the interaction

between dissemination and the complex influences in the social context in which it occurs. At the same time it is a continuing process and, for example, can relate as much to the movement of ideas in the development phase of a project as it does to the effects of the dissemination initiated after development (It) involves a mix of both ordered and disordered personal and social activity." (*ibid*)

Diffusion, then, is an unplanned process with no defined intention.

Despite their differences, these are complex processes characterised by human interaction. The impact of both will be unpredictable and difficult to capture. Both contribute to the process of syllabus implementation.

Innovation and Change

A syllabus can also be seen as an innovation:

"Innovation will be defined as proposals for (*planned*) qualitative change in pedagogical materials, approaches, and values that are perceived as new by individuals who comprise a formal (language) education system." (Markee, 1993:231. Italicised word added)

Here, innovation is defined at three levels of complexity: the use of new materials, the use of new approaches and the adoption of new pedagogical values. Derived from the work of Fullan, Markee's definition is useful, but does not emphasise that an innovation is planned. Inserting the word "planned" provides the definition of innovation used in this study.

Innovation and its distinction from change have been discussed by a variety of authors, for example, Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992:8), Bailey (1992:257), White (1993:244), and De Lano, Riley and Crookes (1994:488-489). However, as Markee points out, in practice, other writers use the terms innovation and change synonymously (Markee, 1993:239). Markee observes the same practice, as do Kennedy (1988) and Fullan (1993). This study shares their approach.

Evaluation

Rea-Dickins and Germaine's definition of evaluation is observed here:

"Evaluation is the principled and systematic collection of information for purposes of decision making." (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992, in Rea-Dickins, 1994:72)

1.2 Approach to Research

This research intends to illuminate the process of planned change. It focuses on the description and interpretation of this process rather than on the measurement and judgement of the effects of planned change. Change is the result of human interactions. To portray their subtlety, diversity, richness and elusiveness (Adelman and Alexander, 1988:298) requires the researcher to "address a much wider range of questions than can possibly be accommodated within an experimental, hypothesis-testing framework" (Mitchell, 1990:11).

A useful approach to this research focus is described by Stenhouse in his discussion of the potential for case studies in educational research and evaluation (Stenhouse, 1988). He recommends the use of narrative, vignette and analysis to produce an interpretive, descriptive case study which:

" . . . appeals to the experience of participation in education rather than to technical theory and holds to the vernacular because it recognizes 'the task of entering into the consciousness and the convictions of citizens prepared to act' (Habermas, 1974:75). It aims to strengthen judgement and develop prudence." (*ibid*:222)

Following Parlett's advice regarding the practice of illuminative evaluation, very relevant to this evaluative case study, the research is "characterised by a flexible methodology that capitalises on available resources and opportunities, and draws upon different techniques to fit the total circumstances of each study" (Parlett and Deardon, 1977, in Parlett, 1981:219). The techniques used are: ten semi-structured interviews with

people associated with the development and implementation of the 1991 English Language Syllabus; documentation analysis of primary source materials including Ministry of Education (MOE) official documents, internally circulated materials and official publications; a meta-evaluation of MOE's formative evaluation of the implementation; analysis of secondary source material, in particular professional and academic publications circulated in Singapore; analysis of public and school-based examinations; analysis of curriculum materials; and analysis of units of work produced by teachers. To contextualize the study the time frame is fourteen years, though the interviews, meta-evaluation, analyses of primary sources materials, school-based examinations and units of work took place between 1990-1995.

This multiple-methods approach enabled the researcher to collect data from a wide range of sources on different aspects of the study, and made it possible to use triangulation to cross-check data to ensure higher research validity and reliability.

For example, the interviews, eight of which were with Ministry of Education officials, sought information about and perceptions of events, the identification of problems and the verification of data. The primary source materials provided more information, a different, official perception of events and identification of problems, and cross-checked data. The meta-evaluation of the Ministry of Education's formative evaluation of the dissemination and implementation is the most coherent means of incorporating the information gathered into a comprehensive and accessible account. It also provides insights into specialist inspectors', teachers' and pupils' perspectives of and responses to the implementation, raises further problems, and verifies data

from other sources. Secondary source materials and two of the interviews provided viewpoints of other informed commentators on English language teaching in Singapore, and also identified further problems with the process of implementation. Externally set public examinations and official examination reports from 1981-1995 were analyzed to reveal the examinations' major characteristics, changes to these characteristics over time, and to compare them with assessment guidelines originating in Singapore. School-based examinations from 1991 to 1995 were analyzed to identify the backwash effects of both the public examinations and the 1991 English Language Syllabus. Data generated from these analyses were included to verify users' and commentators' comments on this backwash effect. Curriculum materials from 1985 to 1995 were analyzed to assess their alignment with the two language syllabuses; and units of work from 1992-1995 were analyzed to assess the impact of the curriculum materials on programme planning.

For the duration of the research, 1990-1995, the researcher was working with the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning Division as a specialist inspector in the English Unit. Throughout the period, the researcher's duties included the role of change agent, and for two years, 1994 and 1995, the researcher also chaired the Syllabus Monitoring Committee, responsible for evaluating the dissemination and implementation of the 1991 English Language Syllabus. In fulfilling these duties, the researcher contributed to or was responsible for some of the primary documentation used in this study. For example, she initiated and contributed to the development of the classroom observation forms and the pupil questionnaires used to evaluate implementation (see Chapter Eleven). All the

analysis associated with these two instruments was completed by the researcher. She also conducted 4 of the 32 school appraisal exercises in which these evaluation instruments were used, and 39 of the interviews with teachers in their first year of implementing the syllabus (see Chapter Eleven).

1.3 Research Problems

The story of the origins, dissemination and implementation of the 1991 syllabus is told very much from one actor's point of view.

"There is a sense in which this type of analysis of past events allows the author to make sense retrospectively of what was, at the time that it was experienced, a very messy reality. This retrospective making sense - or, to put it more cynically, the tidying up of history - may be carried out with the *intention* of providing an objective account. Nevertheless, a document of this type presents only one point of view and cannot achieve genuine objectivity. A fuller picture would require parallel descriptions from other individuals and groups who had interest in the project." (Coleman, 1992:239-240)

A head of department telling the same story would tell it entirely differently, presenting another entirely valid perspective. To try to overcome researcher bias, the researcher has referred data and interpretations back to their sources for verification and correction where necessary and talked through the findings and decisions with uninvolved professional peers.

Another factor which could affect the credibility of the research is that the researcher is not Singaporean. A foreign researcher "stand(s) at a distance from contextual nuances" (Lewin, 1991a:3), casting doubt on the authenticity of the study. To some extent this problem is overcome because of the researcher's fifteen year involvement with Singapore's education system, and the "prolonged engagement and persistent observation" (Davis, 1995:445) which characterise the research. This must contribute to research credibility, further enhanced by the use of multiple sources and research procedures.

Although the researcher's position as a specialist inspector in the Ministry of Education was a tremendous asset in gaining access to primary documentation, it proved a constraint when trying to use other research procedures. Teachers' perceptions of Ministry of Education officials tended to distort information received by the researcher. (See Nwakoby with Lewin, 1991:252 for an example of a researcher in Malaysia with a similar difficulty.)

The responses to a questionnaire sent to lower secondary teachers of English to obtain their views on the implementation of the 1991 English Language Syllabus illustrate the difficulty of gaining insights into any marked differences between policy and practice when the questions originate from the policy makers (Nair, 1994). The questionnaire was originally intended for use in this study. Permission was sought to send it out, and was granted in the researcher's capacity as a specialist inspector. This ensured a good return. However, questionnaires were often filled in by the head of department rather than a class teacher; generally, they were returned only after the principal had seen them; and many lacked internal validity. It has been argued that questionnaires have a tendency to "reproduce the rhetoric of policies" (Vulliamy, 1990:17). The researcher's position as a specialist inspector increased this tendency.

Besides the researcher's position in the Ministry of Education, the lack of a qualitative tradition in educational research in Singapore (Kam and Soh, 1991:150; Cheah and Chiu, 1997:64) may have contributed to the reluctance of some people involved in the implementation of the 1991 English Language Syllabus to be interviewed. So, the number of interviews is limited to ten.

The advantage of being a specialist inspector, the relatively easy

access to primary documentation and to people who wrote and implemented the syllabuses, created ethical problems. To some extent these have been overcome by protecting the identity of schools involved in classroom observations and school appraisals, and of those who provided examination papers. People who were interviewed were guaranteed anonymity. Interviews were not taped as it was felt this would inhibit interviewees. They were able to read the notes produced in the interview and invited to read the final drafts. Not everyone took advantage of this opportunity, though the report on one interview went through three drafts.

Schools providing units of work are not named either. The majority of these units were not obtained through the researcher's position in the Ministry of Education, but were collected by the researcher with the support of staff in the National Institute of Education.

A final reservation needs to be made regarding the research. Though the time frame is long, it is not long enough to enable this study to tell the complete story of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus:

"It is also important, though it unfortunately rarely happens, to return to projects some time after they have finished to see whether the change has been incorporated into the system, whether it has itself led to further innovation, and to what extent it has undergone diffusion." (Kennedy, 1988:330)

A further study is required to complete the story.

1.4 Singapore's Education System and Approach to Change

"(Singapore) . . . has continually experimented with its educational system to such an extent that neither teachers nor students can keep track of educational policies from one year to the next . . ." (Altbach, 1985:25 in Wong, 1991:129)

Yip, Eng and Yap, 1991, provide an overview of the many reforms

from 1965, when Singapore became an independent nation, to 1990. Some were necessitated by the increasing number of students. In 1965, there were 114,436 secondary school students (Yip, Eng and Yap, 1991:6). By 1994, this number had more than doubled to 251,005 (Ministry of Education, 1994:26, *Bibliography 3*). They were taught by 7,990 teachers, over 60% of whom were graduates (*ibid*:16). The average class size at Secondary One is 38, and in Secondary Four, 33 (*ibid*:12). School attendance is not compulsory in Singapore. Nevertheless, 97% of the population aged 6-16 years were students in 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1991:13).

To accommodate these increasing numbers, schools have been built rapidly. They vary from the very functional designs and rather rundown buildings of the 1960s and 70s to the impressive air-conditioned opulence of more recent creations. The latter reflect the loyalty and fund raising ability of some schools' current and ex-students and Singapore's increasing prosperity.

The education system has been the beneficiary of Singapore's affluence. Only defence receives more in the national budget (Government of Singapore, 1991:33), and the allocation is increased regularly. For example, the total provision for education in the 1994/5 budget was 11.29% more than in the previous year (Ho, 1996:85).

The government's approach to education is essentially pragmatic. People are "our most precious resource" (Government of Singapore, 1991:30). Changes are introduced to improve the value of this resource. For example, in 1994, to help overcome a severe labour shortage, 10,000 pupils previously ineligible for secondary education were placed in the newly introduced Normal Technical stream. This curriculum will prepare students for

vocational training and/or prepare them to join the work force.

In addition, changes have been introduced to reflect technological development. For example, it is intended that all secondary schools will have access to the Internet, and \$100 million is to be allocated to providing each primary school with one or two computer laboratories (Ho, 1996:83).

Despite the constant tinkering with the system, those responsible for introducing policy changes in English language teaching make little reference to educational research:

"In Singapore . . . official and educational language policy is formulated at the very highest levels of government, and until recently, often without any consultation with linguists, sociologists or professional educators." (Noss, 1984:67).

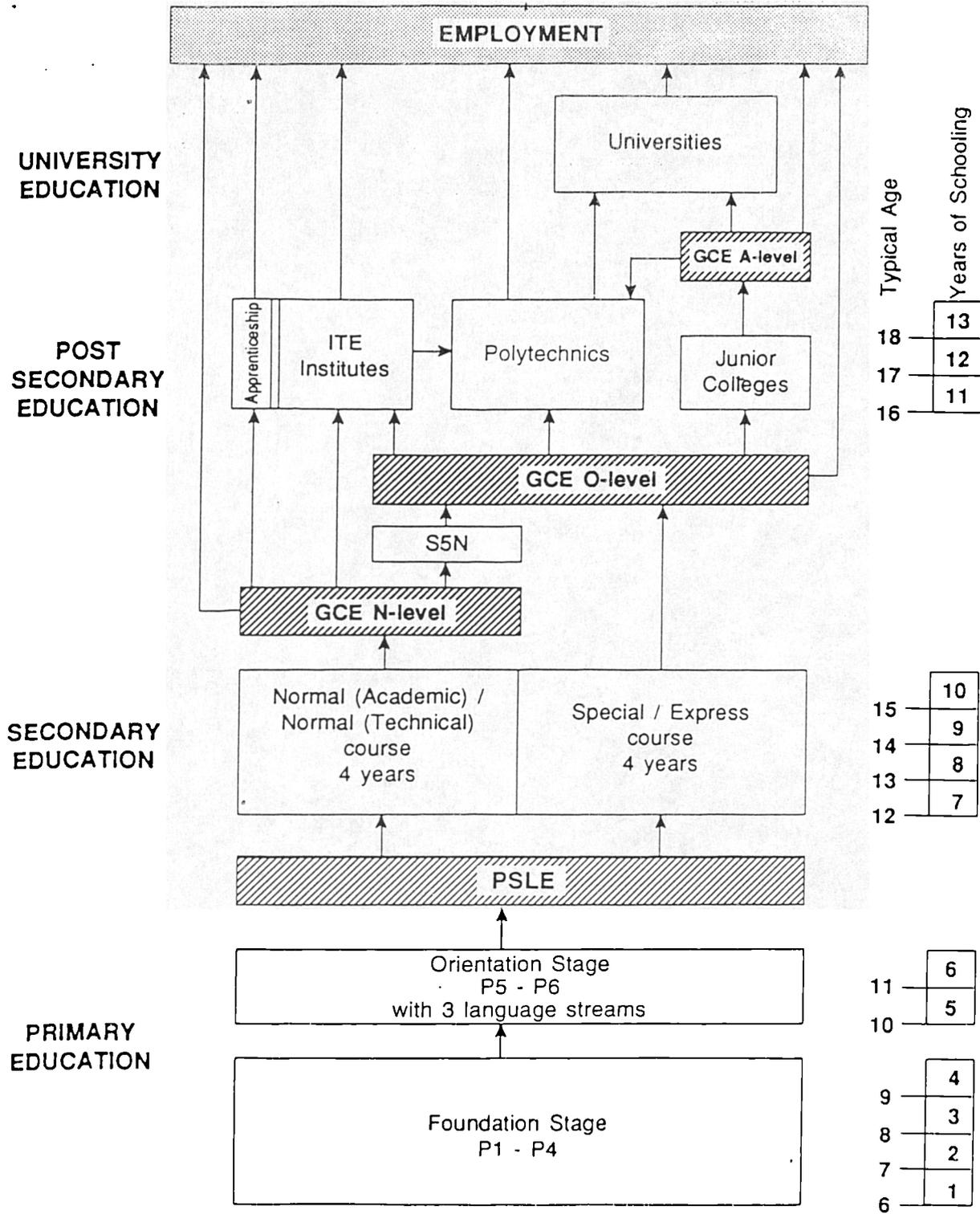
More recent commentators have also referred to the reluctance to consult experts in the field and to the fact that a strong tradition of educational research remains to be established in Singapore (Sim, 1990; Wong 1991; Appendix Niii:485).

Figure 1, on the next page, represents the current organisation of the education system. It shows that streaming is a fundamental principle of the system. Pupils are streamed on the basis of examination performance. Examinations play a very important role in Singapore's meritocratic society, and can be described as high stakes (Shohamy *et al*, 1996:300).

Examinations have always been important in Singapore, though recent measures have increased their importance. Since 1994, secondary schools which helped students obtain better results in the public examinations than might have been expected from their primary school performance have been given monetary rewards ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 (Ho, 1996:83).

FIGURE 1

EDUCATION SYSTEM



 National Examination

Source: Ministry of Education, 1994:2

Since 1992 secondary schools have been ranked and the lists published. Initially, the schools were ranked on the basis of examination results, though since 1995 schools have also been ranked on their students' performance in the national physical fitness test and the percentage of overweight students (*ibid*:82). Already, the ranking of schools may have limited the subject choices available to students (Chapter Two:69).

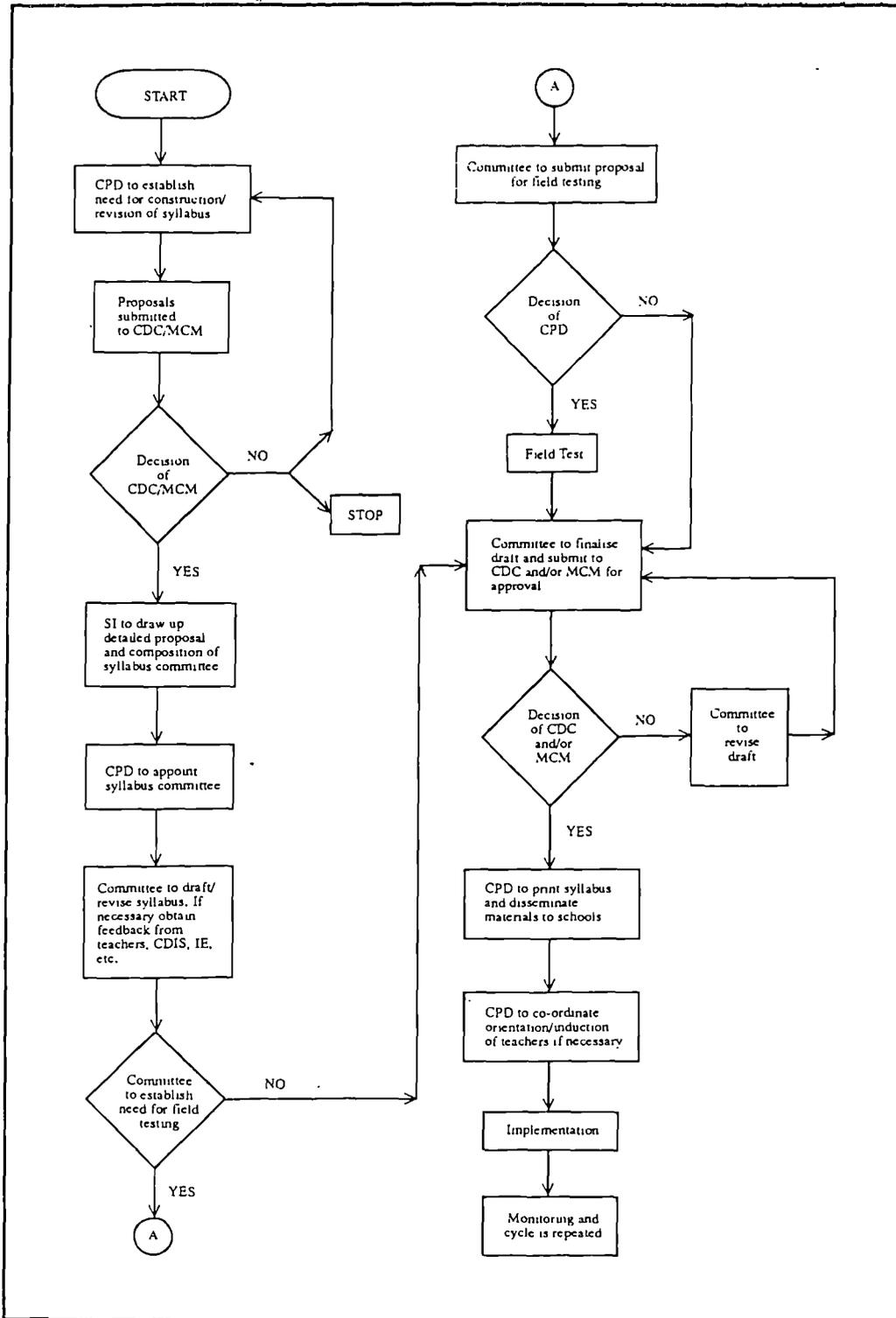
In addition to the importance of examinations, the bilingual policy, made compulsory in 1966, has been a constant in Singapore's changing education system. Students are required to learn English and one other language. Since 1982, English has been the medium of instruction for all subjects except when learning a language other than English.

To some extent, the bilingual policy reflects the impact of British colonisation and the need for a multi-racial and multi-cultural society to adopt a *lingua franca* which favours no race. The emphasis on English also demonstrates Singapore's recognition of her need to be part of the international economic community. This need to participate globally is one reason why Singapore has retained its links with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). Validation by an internationally recognised academic board gives candidates internationally recognised qualifications and access to universities outside Singapore.

Curriculum change is introduced in a top-down manner. New subject syllabuses are implemented approximately every decade (Appendices Nv:491 and Nvi:496). They may originate in a political decision, for example the 1982 English Language Syllabus, or in a decision made by the Curriculum Planning Division in the Ministry of Education, for example the 1991 English Language

FIGURE 2

FLOW CHART FOR SYLLABUS CONSTRUCTION/REVISION



Source: Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994c:3

Syllabus (see Chapter Three). Once a decision to introduce or revise a syllabus is made, a standard procedure is followed. This is represented in Figure 2:16.

There are two points in the process in which teachers may be involved: providing feedback on the draft syllabus, and field testing. There are two other points at which, belatedly, teachers will be involved: orientation/induction and implementation (Figure 2:16). A stage in which no-one can be involved is evaluation. It is not mentioned, though it could form part of the first stage in the process: "CPD (*Curriculum Planning Division*) to establish need for construction/revision of syllabus" (*ibid*). Teachers, then, need not be consulted about the need for syllabus change.

This approach to syllabus implementation approximates most closely to the Research Development and Diffusion/Dissemination model (White 1988:121-123). The model assumes that the production and implementation of an innovation is a rational, linear sequence of activities and consumers will adopt the innovation faithfully. However, much of the literature (for example, Rogers, 1983; White, 1988; Kennedy, 1988; Bailey, 1992; Nias, 1993; Fullan, 1993) suggests the process is neither rational nor linear, and that fidelity of interpretation cannot be assumed. This study supports this view.

The Research Development and Diffusion/Dissemination model is often associated with the ideology of constructionism. Singapore's education system shares many of the features of that ideology: for example, in the broad aims of promoting social unity and tolerance through enabling students to communicate with speech communities other than their own; and in the opportunities provided to study languages of significance to the political and

economic concerns of the country. However, there are also many elements found in a more classical humanist approach, particularly in the streaming policy and the norm-referenced, summative assessment modes intended to select an elite for the next stage of education (Clark, 1987:94-99).

These, then, are the important features of Singapore's education system: continual, centrally authorised change, made with little reference to educational research; taking place within the framework of a post colonial, multi-cultural, expanding and increasingly affluent state education system; which has continued to emphasise the importance of English and internationally acceptable qualifications, obtained through externally set high stakes examinations, as a means of ensuring economic success.

Such a description emphasises the uniqueness of Singapore's education system. Its size, relatively short history as a national system, reliance on a foreign examining body, and tradition of central control separate it from English medium education systems in developed countries like Australia, England and America. Its affluence, emphasis on English and long standing international outlook separate it from systems in developing countries like Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, though the whole is a unique synthesis, elements of that whole are shared by countries throughout the world.

For this reason, it is hoped readers will find in this study insights of relevance to their own situations.

1.5 Features which would Contribute to the Successful Implementation of an English Language Syllabus in Singapore

This study attempts to make sense of a particular planned change

process through the generation of a list of features, the absence or presence of which affected that process. The list is grounded in the experiences of the researcher as a teacher and a change agent and the research completed for this study. Literature which has helped to shape and focus this list includes: Alderson, 1992; Bailey, 1992; Breen, 1987a, 1987b and 1995; Breen *et al*, 1989; Brindley and Hood, 1990; Bucko, 1994; Clark, 1987; De Lano *et al*, 1994; Elliott, 1985; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Ghani, 1992; Hamilton, 1996; Henrichsen, 1989; Jennings, 1993; Kelly, 1980; Kennedy, 1987 and 1988; Maley, 1984; Markee, 1994a; Marsh, 1992; Rea-Dickins, 1994; Rogers, 1983; Stephenson, 1994; Stoller, 1994; Vulliamy, 1990; White, 1988 and 1993; Whitehead, 1980; and Widdowson, 1993.

The list is given below:

- 1 **A national framework for curriculum renewal which ensures:**
 - * an integrated curriculum
 - * the gradual coordinated implementation of new syllabuses in the various subjects
 - * that the introduction of far reaching changes in the structure of the education system does not clash with major syllabus implementation programmes
 - * necessary support is provided for syllabus implementation programmes through effective networking between different state education departments and organisations
 - * the existence of a respected organisation responsible for introducing, overseeing and coordinating large scale curriculum renewal programmes
 - * syllabus evaluation
 - * clear mechanisms through which educational research can influence policy and practice

2 An educational environment which has:

- * a history of gradual, productive curriculum renewal
- * emphasised continuity
- * a willingness to learn from past experience
- * curriculum development personnel and teachers who share a strong commitment to the process of curriculum renewal
- * promoted teacher development, viewing curriculum renewal as an element in the context of this development
- * avenues through which regular and meaningful professional exchange takes place between teachers
- * recognised channels of communication between teachers, their professional organisations and the external organisation responsible for introducing large scale curriculum renewal programmes
- * at both local and national levels, a stable, confident, informed administration which accords respect and professional dignity to teachers
- * encouraged experimentation and risk taking

3 A teaching force which:

- * is regarded by the community as professional
- * is stable, robust, informed, empowered and involved in curriculum renewal through its professional organisations
- * is involved in classroom research
- * feels ownership of the proposed syllabus
- * recognises the desirability of curriculum renewal and is willing to implement the changes this will necessitate
- * reflects a culture of collegial support and collaboration
- * accepts the need to experiment and take risks

4 Personnel responsible for curriculum renewal who are:

- * located inside and outside the school
- * trained/able to deal with the practical, administrative and bureaucratic implications of curriculum renewal
- * clear about, and accountable for, their roles
- * aware of the different cultures found in schools, and the teachers' situations within these cultures
- * aware of teachers' readiness for change, ie: the fit between the level of teacher's professional development, as reflected in teachers' currently held views/theories regarding appropriate language teaching practice, and what the syllabus requires of them
- * employing a managerial style and procedures which encourage and support curriculum renewal
- * in agreement on the critical features of the syllabus and how these will be reflected in the classroom
- * trained/able to conduct formative and summative evaluations of the curriculum renewal process
- * able to provide inspiring leadership
- * sufficiently committed to curriculum renewal to make sustained efforts to achieve it

5 An English language syllabus which:

- * originates in school-based curriculum development programmes
- * is based on a valid analysis of pupils' motivation, learning strategies and competencies - such an analysis being informed by large scale teacher involvement
- * takes into account the heterogeneous language backgrounds of the students
- * contributes to curriculum continuity and coordination across teaching levels and subjects as it is informed by research into demands made upon students' English language competence in other subject areas
- * has the active support of the community as it takes account of its characteristics by recognising the needs and expectations of, for example, institutes of further education, employees and parents

- * in the varieties of English taught, reflects both the needs identified above and the students' developmental and learning needs
- * is informed by regular consultation between a large, representative sample of teachers and the personnel responsible for curriculum renewal
- * builds upon teachers' professional knowledge and is informed by their moral concerns, values and ideals
- * is seen as a development of the previous syllabus, and is part of the continuous process of curriculum renewal, ie it is not excessively divergent from nor too similar to current practice
- * has high "trialability": ie, it "can be tried on an instalment plan", in stages (Rogers, 1983:15)
- * is finely balanced between simplicity and complexity, ie, it is not so simple that it is ignored, nor so complex that it is difficult to understand and use
- * is clear, explicit and user friendly
- * provides direction concerning the order in which the linguistic content and, where appropriate, related subject matter is to be covered
- * provides a retrospective record as a basis for the evaluation of learners' progress and, subsequently, the syllabus itself
- * is underpinned by a coherent theoretical framework which informs methodology and thus provides clear guidance on, for example, the place of grammar teaching and oral work in the language classroom
- * permits flexibility of interpretation yet maintains integrity in its key aspects
- * addresses perceived dissatisfactions and is seen as contributing to an improvement on existing practice
- * offers clear benefits to teachers and learners
- * is perceived by adopters to be practical and feasible
- * reflects an awareness of the cultural, political, economic, administrative, educational, institutional, human and technological factors which will act as resources and constraints in its implementation

- * generates teaching materials and assessment modes which are in alignment with its principles
- * through its description of existing theory and practice, provides the basis for ongoing, professional discussion between teachers and syllabus writers of the connection between evolving and existing theory and professional practices
- * is validated and evaluated by a respected, external organisation

6 Procedures for syllabus implementation which include:

- * placing the teacher at the centre of this process
- * the use of normative-re-educative innovation strategies
- * a recognition of the role of teachers as mediators rather than delivery systems
- * in-service courses built on principles of adult learning and informed by an awareness of the change process
- * school-based dissemination concentrating on what the changes involved in the implementation will look like, and how the school can work towards achieving these changes from its present situation
- * the involvement of the whole school so the effect of the implementation of the new syllabus on all levels and in all subject areas can be coordinated and a coherent overview produced
- * an analysis of the political, economic, administrative, human and technological resources and constraints relevant to the implementation of the syllabus in schools
- * a long term plan for dissemination and implementation, breaking the process into manageable steps which provide implementors with the opportunity to receive positive feedback
- * a realistic time frame for dissemination, implementation, subsequent reflection and teacher development
- * the establishment of appropriate and acceptable documentation associated with the new syllabus: eg, how the planning, monitoring and assessment will be recorded
- * ongoing, formative evaluation which enables the rapid identification of problems which arise during dissemination and implementation

- * support systems which provide prompt, appropriate and effective responses to identified problems
- * the timely availability of appropriate resources
- * on-site administrative support for teachers, for example: through the provision of extra planning time; equal division of extra work associated with implementation; rewards for positive contributions to the implementation process; opportunities for relevant, reinforced, school-based, in-service courses
- * criteria for a summative evaluation of the success of the implementation procedure, and objective means of conducting such an evaluation, employing an external evaluator
- * an appropriate place in which to publish the findings so they are accessible to policy makers, teachers and other members of the academic community

This list of features which would contribute to the successful implementation of an English language syllabus has been developed with a particular situation in mind. It is not specifically intended that these features be generalizable beyond Singapore. Nevertheless, it is likely they will be relevant to other situations. The researcher's own cross-cultural experience and the experience of other researchers (see Henrichsen, 1989:199) suggest that though resistance to change may be expressed in a variety of ways, the reasons for such resistance are not confined within cultural boundaries.

CHAPTER TWO

Language and Education in Singapore

2.0 Language Use and Language Planning

In 1990, over three million people (3,002,800) lived in Singapore. They comprised 2,239,700 (77.7%) Chinese; 406,200 (14.1%) Malays; 230,000 (7.1%) Indians; and 126,900 (1.1%) people of other ethnic origins (Department of Statistics, 1991:i). These ethnic groups are reflected in the four official languages: Mandarin, Tamil, English and Malay, which is also the national language as the Malays are the indigenous inhabitants of Singapore. Malay has remained the predominant language in Malay households in the decade from 1980 to 1990: 96.7% in 1980 and 94.3% in 1990 (*ibid*:18).

However, the use of Mandarin has greatly increased at the expense of other Chinese dialects. In 1980, 76.2% of Chinese households used other dialects, compared with 46.2% in 1990. In contrast, in 1980, 13.1% used Mandarin: by 1990, 32.8% did so (*ibid*).

The use of English, too, is increasing. In 1980, 52.2% of all Indian households used Tamil as the main language of communication: by 1990, 43.7% did so (*ibid*:18). Tamil is being replaced by Malay and English. (See Saravanan, 1994, for a discussion of the declining use of Tamil.) The greater use of English is reflected in the proportion of English speaking households identified in the 1990 census: 11.6% in 1980 and 20.3% in 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1991:i). There has, then, been a shift in language use towards Mandarin and English.

Census counts classify households according to the language which is most frequently used. More thorough research into language use emphasises that, "The practice of multilingualism has permeated through

even the family domain" (Kuo, 1985:39). An individual is likely to use different languages to speak to grandparents, parents and brothers and sisters. A Malayalee Indian teenager may speak Malayalam to his grandparents, who originated from Kerala; Malay to parents, who may not have attended school but who learned Malay as a *lingua franca*; English to his siblings, as they have all learned this in school; and Tamil to his Indian neighbours, for whom Tamil may be the language of the home. (For a description of a similar linguistic situation in a Cantonese family in Singapore, emphasising the likelihood of the loss of the language of the grandparents, see Gupta and Siew, 1995. For an account of code mixing and code switching in a Chinese household, see Tan, 1988.) Singapore, then, is a very diverse language community, and one in which patterns of language use are rapidly changing.

Despite this, there is no official body responsible for language policy making in Singapore.

"In Singapore, general goals and guidelines of language-related policies are expressed in policy speeches by political leaders. There does not exist in Singapore a separate and permanent language planning agency to deal with language planning problems at the state level." (Kuo and Jernudd, 1994:31)

Even the National University of Singapore's linguistics programme, introduced in 1991 is to be phased out by 1998 (The Straits Times, 1994b:Section 2:2). Such an apparently diffuse approach to macro-level policy planning makes it difficult to monitor rigorously the effect of different language policies at the micro-level.

2.1 Bilingualism

However, a policy which has had a far reaching effect on many aspects of the lives of the majority of Singaporeans is the bilingual policy. The government would like all Singaporeans to speak two languages,

English and one of the other official languages - Malay, Mandarin or Tamil:

"The rationale behind this (bilingual) policy was explained by the Prime Minister when he explained that English was studied for its utilitarian value while the mother tongue was important for individual identity as it explains 'what we are, where we come from, what life is and should be and what we want to do . . .'" (Quoted from The Straits Times, 11 Nov., 1972, in Dhillon, 1984:30, *unpublished*)

Clearly, it is hoped that an individual will be able to use both languages accurately and fluently in a variety of situations. To implement the bilingual policy, the government ensures that Singaporean pupils study two languages in school, English and another official language, though the medium of education in government schools is English. As Tony Tan, then Minister of Education, pointed out, no other country "tries to educate an entire population so that everyone is literate in English, and at the same time, has a reasonable knowledge of his mother tongue" (The Straits Times, 17 March 1990, quoted in Pakir, 1995:2).

The official languages of Asian origin are called 'mother tongues'. In Singapore the term 'mother tongue' usually refers to the official language identified with a person's ethnic origins. So, even if a Tamil boy grew up in a household in which only English was spoken, and was not exposed to any other language until he attended school, Tamil would be regarded as his 'mother tongue'. Mandarin is the most widely spoken 'mother tongue', partly because of the number of Chinese Singaporeans, and perhaps partly because of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, energetically promoted since 1979 and intended to unify the various Chinese language communities (Gupta and Siew, 1995:313).

There is some evidence to suggest that this local interpretation of 'mother tongue' is being questioned:

"The need for Singaporeans to continue with English as a

working language while promoting the ethnic mother tongues is well accepted. What may need a relook is the common phrase 'English and the mother tongues', which implicitly suggests that English is not a mother tongue for Singaporeans . . . perhaps it is not too difficult to take into account the sensitivities of Eurasians and other Singaporeans whose mother tongue is English, by adding one word to say: 'English and the OTHER mother tongues.'" (The Straits Times: 14 June, 1994a)

Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that, "Each 'mother tongue' is used to re-ethnicize and consolidate separate ethnic communities" (Kuo and Jernudd, 1994:31).

This unusual bilingual policy, then, is helping to create a situation in which many Singaporeans can be described as "English-using bilinguals" (Kachru, 1992:68). The economic consequences have been all the government could have wished for: it has been easy for Singaporeans to assimilate relevant technological developments in the English speaking countries and Singapore is attractive to Western investors and tourists.

However, the unplanned consequences need to be taken into account when considering the cost effectiveness of the government's policy. Lim foresaw that individuals would have to make sacrifices in terms of time to pursue other means of self development:

"Keeping children occupied in school from morn till eve or with a succession of tutors through the week is not the best way of educating them. We may succeed in turning them into effective learning machines but I dare say we would like to have happy genuine human beings rather than merely efficient machines in the future Singapore." (Lim, 1979:7-8)

Sixteen years on, the policy is still in effect. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate whether happy, genuine human beings or effective learning machines have been the result. The effects of macro-level language policies on individual development and family life are both immeasurable and potentially traumatic. Nevertheless, in 1995 there is no public demand for the policy to be changed. Individuals and families

appear to be coping with the linguistic demands made upon them.

In her discussions of "English-knowing bilinguals", Pakir (1991, 1992b and 1993a) acknowledges her debt to Kachru, and considers the unplanned consequences of Singapore's bilingual policy. Two of these are:

"(1) the creation of an English-speaking elite whose absorption of other than Asian values through the English language has become a matter of concern; (2) the noticeable increasing divide between the so-called Chinese-educated vis-a-vis the English-educated;" (Pakir, 1993a:81-2)

Pakir concludes that a reason for these social divisions is that the official mother tongue languages have not been successful in communicating "what we are, where we come from, what life is and should be and what we want to do . ." (The Straits Times, 11 Nov., 1972, quoted in Dhillon, 1984:30), the stated intention of their maintenance when the bilingual policy was introduced. However, she believes that the potential language-based tension between the English-educated and Chinese-educated is unlikely to materialise as both groups share important core values. Her view is that Singapore's bilingual policy is not only cost effective but essential to the future of a small, developing country.

Pakir's conclusion reflects sound common sense. The bilingual policy has been implemented at a cost, sometimes unforeseen, to individuals and the fabric of society. However, without a bilingual policy there may have been greater internal social tensions exacerbated by a less than successful economy. Perhaps individual Singaporeans recognised this. Certainly, they have developed coping strategies.

One may be reflected in a further unplanned consequence of "English-knowing bilingualism", the increasing use of colloquial English.

2.2 The Status of English and Singapore Colloquial English

English has been promoted successfully by the government both as

a *lingua franca* and a working language.

"As the language of the colonial government, English has been retained as the administrative language in independent Singapore. Moreover, its perceived importance for, and actual use in, higher education, international trade, and modern industry and technology have strengthened over the years. Much of this spread here can be explained by the pragmatic implementation of the language policy. The government deems an expansion of the proficient use of English necessary for the continued growth of the economy." (Kuo and Jernudd, 1994:29)

Clearly, the government's motives in promoting the use of English are mostly instrumental. Individual Singaporeans may have similar motives:

". . . using education, income and housing type as indicators of socio-economic status, we find that there is an association between home language use and socio-economic status. Invariably, the use of English is found to be associated with higher socio-economic status" (Kuo, 1985:39)

Policy, then, affected practice in part because individuals who use English are perceived to have benefitted financially. This may have contributed to the increased status and use of English. However, even the best laid plans go astray. Gradually, another kind of motivation has become apparent. As the use of English spread, "invisible planners" (Pakir, 1994:164) took over, and a colloquial variety of English emerged, Singlish.

This local variety has become institutionalised in Singapore (Moag, 1992; Kachru, 1988). Conferences have been held to consider it, for example Words in a Cultural Context, 9-11 Sep 1991, (see Pakir, 1992a) and The English Language in Singapore: Standards and Norms, 20-21 Nov 1992 (see Pakir, 1993b). Some of its features have been documented (for example: Tongue, 1974; Crewe, 1977; Tay, 1979; Platt, Weber and Ho, 1983; Newbrook, 1987; Brown, 1992; Gupta, 1994) and will be included in a dictionary of South East Asian varieties of English (Butler, 1992).

In the constantly shifting linguistic landscape of Singapore, research is very much ongoing. More data is needed to answer questions like:

"What is meant by 'Singlish'?. Currently, Singlish refers to colloquial English that exhibits a high number of features which differentiate it from standard English. Exactly how many and of what kind depends on the perceptions of the speaker/reader.

However, some statements can be made on the basis of existing research. The English heard in Singapore has been described as:

" . . . a speech continuum, comparable to the post-creole continuum in Jamaica described by DeCamp (1971) or in Guyana described by Bickerton (1975). There is a whole range from the 'lowest' variety, the *basilect*, through the medium range, the *mesolects*, to the 'highest' variety, the *acrolect*." (Platt, 1977:84)

Platt distinguishes Singapore colloquial English from a creole language, preferring to call Singapore colloquial English a 'creoloid'. One reason he gives for this distinction is that Singapore colloquial English did not develop from a pidgin language.

More recent discussion has not focussed on this comparison between creole languages and Singapore colloquial English, but rather on the acquisition of the latter (Gopinathan, Pakir, Ho and Saravanan, 1994; Gupta, 1994). However, the concept of a speech continuum is rightly retained. The English used by many Singaporean speakers is described as ranging along clines of formality and proficiency (Pakir,1995:3), from native-like to spoken and/or written discourse which may be incomprehensible to the first-time listener and/or reader. Many Singaporean speakers of English have a command of a range of English along those clines, and a few will be able to exploit the whole range.

In 1977, Platt made a similar observation:

"The higher (a Singaporean's) position on the (educational and socio-economic) scale, the greater will be the range of the continuum which is available to him. Many Singaporeans who use the acrolectal sub-variety in lectures, debates and formal discussions use a mesolectal sub-variety in more formal shopping

and other transaction situations or in informal talk to strangers but they can also drop comfortably and without artificiality into the basilectal sub-variety when, for example, talking with friends or colleagues or a waitress at a restaurant." (Platt, 1977:90)

More recently, Pakir (1995) reporting on the English used by female 'O' level students and their teachers in a high achieving school in Singapore, found that all the subjects were able to use the structures and pronunciation patterns of British English. However, ". . . once rapport, solidarity and familiarity were established, the formality level drops and the proficiency (measured in terms of Standard English) exhibited by the same students goes along a wider range" (Pakir, 1995:6). More features of colloquial English were demonstrated when "the need to signal casualness, or intimacy arises" (*ibid*:10).

A wide ranging speech continuum and the ability of many Singaporeans to make use of that range have remained constant features of any description of English used in Singapore. All descriptions, naturally, accept that Singapore colloquial English is rule-governed, the rules being derived from a variety of sources:

"The sources for such a structure came from dialectal grammars of the substratal languages, primarily colloquial Malay, Southern Chinese (Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese) with the superstratal language, English." (Alsagoff, 1995:78)

Alsagoff's article discusses the lack of use of the relative clause in Singapore colloquial English. Other structural differences between this variety and the standard form include not changing the verb form to agree with its subject, and not marking the verb to indicate time, but using words like *already* (Zhiming, 1995), and *last time*. The use of *last time* also merits a research paper to itself. It may refer to a number of past events, often habitually performed. Another difference which may confuse the standard English speaker is in the use of pronouns, which may not match

either the number or gender of the nouns they replace. The source of many of these variations is Chinese, which has different ways of marking time and organising discourse from those used in English.

An even greater variety of sources is evident at the lexical level. For example, Indian words like *mama* (an adjective describing a small, sundry shop, run by an Indian man) and *dhoby* (laundry) are in common use alongside Malay words like *kampong* (village), *makan* (food) and *ulu* (jungle, but also used as an adjective to describe an unsophisticated person), and Chinese words like *kiasu* (an adjective describing a person who is determined to take personal advantage of every opportunity) and *kaypoh* (an adjective describing a person who is very interested in other people's affairs). Words which derive from features particular to life in Singapore have extended the lexical range further. For example, *void deck* refers to the ground floor of blocks of public housing development board flats, usually an open space which the residents use for leisure activities, like playing chess, or more public activities like wedding receptions or funerals. Words found in standard English do not always denote the same meaning in Singapore colloquial English. *Follow*, for example, means to accompany. (See Brown, 1992, for further discussion of lexis).

Greetings, too, may be unexpected to the speaker of standard English. "*Hello, have you taken your dinner?*" has the same function as "Hello, how are you?". The satisfaction of a person's hunger is equated to the general state of a person's health.

Shades of meaning are indicated in the use of particles like *lah* and *lor*, which affect the emphasis of a statement and/or reaffirm group identity. Tags like *is it?* and questions like *Are you sure?* do not usually signal direct questions; rather, they are indirect requests for affirmation.

However, it is in its phonological system that Singapore colloquial English deviates most significantly from standard English. Deterding (1995) compares and contrasts the characteristics of Singapore English pronunciation with standard southern British pronunciation. In Singapore colloquial English the distinction between long and short vowels is sometimes neutralised; consonant clusters in the final position of a word are often omitted and a single consonant in the same position may be replaced by a glottal stop. Lexical and sentence stress vary considerably from those heard in standard southern English. Singapore colloquial English may be syllable rather than stress timed. It is hard to identify one stressed syllable that is more prominent than others and the rise-fall tone is rarely heard in Singapore colloquial English. Its intonation patterns, then, make it difficult for speakers of other varieties of English to understand.

Clearly, if a speaker of Singapore colloquial English demonstrates all these variants he/she is likely to be misunderstood by a non-Singaporean, thus completely undermining the government's purpose in promoting English as an international *lingua franca*.

Nevertheless, it once seemed that variation from a standard form of English might be acceptable. A high profile diplomat had this to say:

" . . . when one is abroad, in a bus or train or aeroplane and when one overhears someone speaking, one can immediately say this is someone from Malaysia or Singapore. And I should hope that when I'm speaking abroad my countrymen will have no problem in recognising that I am a Singaporean." (Tommy Koh, Singaporean diplomat, quoted in Tongue, 1974:7-8)

Perhaps encouraged by nationalistic fervour, the media enthusiastically lauded the creative resources of colloquial English:

"Singlish is the spontaneous and delightful way that Singaporeans express themselves in English. In short, street talk. It is a language that is exclusively ours, lah. Singlish is the common dialect of the people of Singapore." (The New Paper, 15 August

1988, quoted in Pakir, 1994:177)

However, the use of English for "street talk" seems to have been regarded as straying too far from the original plan - that English should be used for utilitarian purposes. In 1993 the government banned the use of non-standard English by journalists and broadcasters. The following extract from a letter to The Straits Times demonstrates one reaction to this:

" . . . I have ceased viewing some of your programmes on Channel 5, which use presenters who look Asian but speak an English which none of my Singaporean friends speak. I can understand perfectly if you need to hire an Asian-American to cover world finance because he happens to be the best in the field. But the fact that American accents surface now with astonishing frequency on the air-waves can only indicate an aesthetic determination on the part of some of your producers that only such accents are proper, and that the rest of us have accents that are improper. I refuse to countenance this belief. . . . I am resigned to the ban on Singlish . . . but if our English-language stations are to be identifiably Singaporean, they must reflect the varieties of English spoken here." (Janadas Devan, The Straits Times, 21 Oct 1994, quoted in a lecture by Gupta, 1994b)

Government bans notwithstanding, the influence of the "invisible planners" continues to be felt, and the range and depth (Pakir, 1995:2) evident in the varieties of English used in Singapore continue to be seen, heard and researched. (See, for example, Winder's 1994 research into the use of English in the gay community in Singapore.)

Apart from the instrumental, regulative and interpersonal uses of English in Singapore, the language also fulfils an imaginative/innovative function (Kachru, 1992:58). More people are literate in English than in any other language spoken in Singapore. 65% of the population are literate in English, 61% in Chinese, 16% in Malay, and 3.4% in Tamil (Department of Statistics, 1991:17). Singapore's bookshops, then, display large numbers of novels and short stories in English by Singaporean writers. The five most popular locally written and published paperbacks sold in Times

bookshops in the period 25 July-1 Aug 95 were:

- . True Singaporean Ghost Stories Vol 6 by Russell Lee (Native)
- . No Money, No Honey! by David Brazil (Angsana)
- . True Singapore Ghost Stories Book 5 by Russell Lee (Angsana)
- . True Singapore Ghost Stories Book 4 by Russell Lee (Angsana)
- . True Singaporean Ghost Stories Vol 5 by Russell Lee (Native) (The Straits Times 1995d:12)

These books do not make any deliberate use of Singapore colloquial English to tell their locally researched stories. A book published in New Zealand, however, claims to be written entirely in Singapore colloquial English (Ming Cher, 1995). A Singaporean reviewer, though questioning the authenticity of the language, felt that in attempting to use Singapore colloquial English Ming Cher had "put Singapore on the world literary map" (The Straits Times, 1995b:32). He added:

"His idiosyncratic English will no doubt worry anti-Singlish purists, who warned about this recently. The gates have opened, and more such writing will come through - sooner rather than later."
(*ibid*)

The "visible planners" may have stemmed the tide temporarily, but the "invisible planners", in this case the writers, will ensure that eventually Singapore colloquial English becomes the dominant language.

Already, local drama productions positively exploit the linguistic resources offered by the varieties of English in Singapore. Rajah and Tay compare the English of plays written by Singaporeans in the sixties with more recent productions:

"The greater confidence, range and comfort displayed in the English of these . . . plays, the instinctive use of Singapore accents in performance, is, in many ways, typical of Singaporean English drama of the 80s, especially of the later 80s. This confidence and greater Singaporeanness is no accident. It is the welcome consequence of the very much wider use of English in Singapore today. And because English is being spoken by so many people, in so many ways, and for so many more years now (*sic*), English, Singapore English has come into its own in Singapore English

drama." (Rajah and Tay, 1991:410)

Texts using Singapore colloquial English have appeared on the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate's 'O' Level Literature in English syllabus. For example Singapore Short Stories (Yeo, 1989) was offered for examination from 1991-1993. This collection includes The Taximan's Story which is written in the form of a monologue:

" . . . been taximan for twenty years now, Madam. Long time ago, Singapore not like this - so crowded so busy. Last time more peaceful, not so much taximen, or so much cars and buses. . . . Yes, Madam, quite big family - eight children, six sons, two daughters. Big family! Ha! ha! No good Madam. In those days, where got family planning in Singapore? People born many, many children, every year one child. Is no good at all. Today is much better. Two children, three children, enough, stop. Our government say stop." (Lim, 1989:54)

This is the only one of the collection's sixteen stories which demonstrates features of Singapore colloquial English in an extended piece of writing. It will be intelligible to an international audience, and at the same time its style and register will enable a Singaporean reader to make informed assumptions about the taxi driver's background.

Emily of Emerald Hill, a play using Singapore colloquial English, was included in the 'N' Level English Literature syllabus from 1992-1994, and performed at the 1986 Edinburgh Festival:

"Hello, Bee Choo? Emily here. Just to remind you, don't forget dinner tomorrow night, Richard's birthday. Ya-lah, the boy so big now, grown-up already, going to England next month. I asked him whether he's happy to go, you know what he said? 'Mummy, to go to England happy also - but to leave my home very sad lah!' Yah, rascal-lah dia. All right, give my regards to your mother eh, hope she'll be better soon . . . I see you eh Bee Choo? Bye-bye.

She hangs up the phone. She calls:

Richard! Richard, come let Mother talk to you something.

Emily's son Richard enters: but all characters except Emily are unseen and known to us only through her mime.

Hullo boy-boy, did you sleep well? Ah, big strong sonny, tomorrow going to be twenty years old, eh?" (Kon, 1989:2)

This extract suggests the Edinburgh audience would have had little

difficulty in making sense of this play, though the Macmillan edition includes a glossary of fifty three words and phrases it was felt necessary to define, for example "dia" in the above extract means "he/she/it" (*ibid*:56). However, the use of Singapore colloquial English is not sustained as Emily, unlike Lim's taximan, has the ability to use a more standard form of English in company in which she feels it is appropriate. It is Emily's command of the varieties of English heard in Singapore which has endeared her to Singaporean audiences:

"Emily's ability to switch her accents to match her language has been among the most successful comic moments of the play perhaps because Singapore audiences identify immediately with the use of different registers for different people. Almost all Singaporeans possess a range of Englishes to meet the range of people and situations, formal and informal, in their lives. The totality of Emily's English, by its very combination of varieties and levels, by juxtaposition of accents and use of non-English words, is entirely Singaporean." (Rajah and Tay, 1991:408)

That the nuances of those varieties of English are a source of humour to a commercially viable audience suggests a sophisticated development and wide awareness of those varieties.

This international recognition of Singaporean literature in English and its popularity in Singapore may have contributed to the suggestion that:

". . . the increasing number of Singaporean literary texts in English and their popularity are an indication of the growing importance of English, not only as a *lingua franca*, but as a cultural medium as well." (Talib, 1994:427)

The national obsession with ghost stories, reflected in the list of best sellers, suggests that currently Singaporean literary texts in English reflect a rather narrow range of Singaporean culture. Nevertheless, Talib is right to state that in Singapore, English is far more than a *lingua franca*.

It can be seen, then, that in Singapore's dynamic language community the use of English is rapidly increasing and its status is

changing. A perception is growing that the varieties of English used in Singapore are a means of reflecting national identity.

Inevitably, the written and spoken English of many Singaporeans is moving further and further away from the variety it originally imitated. Some would regard this as desirable, indeed essential. Prabhu suggests forcefully that once a community of speakers shares a language system, that system should not be dependent on an external norm.

"To think that (because this shared system was) once . . . an incomplete replication of some other shared system deprives it perpetually of the full status of a shared system, thus dependent for ever on an external norm, is not very different from thinking that a country which was once ruled by a foreign nation remains perpetually less than a nation, less than fully entitled to self government." (Prabhu, 1993:5)

2.3 The Government's Attitude to the Teaching of English in Singapore

As has already been suggested, the government would be unlikely to agree with Prabhu. Rather, as will be seen, the evidence suggests the government is more likely to measure the success of its policies by the extent to which the speech and writing of Singaporeans approximates to an external norm, that is standard British English. Perhaps the most influential person in Singapore, Lee Kwan Yew, said when Prime Minister:

"It is foolish to teach our children a Singaporean variety of English, when with some effort and extra cost, we can teach them standard grammatical English." (The Straits Times, 27 March, 1980, quoted in Phun, 1986:30, *unpublished*)

In 1979, Prime Minister Lee called a meeting of ministers, ministers of state and senior civil servants to discuss the falling standards of English in the civil service. At the meeting, the view was expressed that the difficulties encountered in the civil service reflected:

". . . the larger, and more intractable, problem of deteriorating standards of spoken and written English nationwide - among those who were supposed to be models of language use, such as teachers, newspaper writers and newsreaders." (Lim,

1986:6, *unpublished*)

One measure taken to address this problem was the publication of the 1979 Goh Report on the Ministry of Education. In 1979, Goh Keng Swee was both Minister of Education and First Deputy Prime Minister. His appointment as leader of the team which produced this report indicates the importance the government attached to it. The Goh Report resulted in the New Education System, " . . . in which great prominence is attached to English" (Goh and the Education Study Team, 1979:1-7, *Bibliography 3*). This prominence led to the 1982 English Language Syllabus which " . . . will stress the correct use of language" (Mok, 1984:233).

As might be expected, the students' command of English is measured in an international arena. That arena is provided by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). UCLES sets the 'O' level English language examination, comprising one oral and two written papers, entered by around 35,000 Singaporean candidates a year. It seems to have been assumed that a pass in the 'O' level examination means candidates have displayed a command of English similar to that of native British speakers:

" . . . the Minister of Education commenting on the need to raise the standard of English in Singapore, compared the results of students in Singapore and Britain in the English GCE 'O' Level Examinations. He noted that . . . for English, only about four in ten pupils here make the grade, whereas at least six in ten British pupils pass. The Minister concluded: 'This means Singapore has a long way to go in improving the standard of English.'" (The Sunday Times, 19 May, 1985, quoted in Lim, 1986:249, *unpublished*)

Within the framework of the bilingual policy, this is a lot to ask of students. Nevertheless, the quotation emphasises the government's view that it is desirable for students' use of language to approximate to an external norm, provided by Britain.

More recently, it has been suggested this norm need not be Received Pronunciation. Speaking as Senior Minister, Lee Kwan Yew said:

"I don't have to speak with an English upper class accent. But I speak in a way which makes it easy for them (my interlocutors) to understand me and, therefore, they are not distracted by my background." (From The Sunday Times, 31 July, 1994, quoted in a lecture by Gupta, 1994)

However, The Straits Times' editorial probably reflects the government's view accurately when it says:

"If Singaporeans want to retain a competitive edge in international business, it is crucial that they speak a variety of English which can be understood by a global audience." (The Straits Times, 1993:34)

Essentially, then, the government has a very pragmatic view of the teaching of English. This view and the macro-level policies derived from it will have an impact at the micro-level, in particular on English language teaching and learning. According to this view, a teacher's objective must be to enable students to reproduce accurately in speech and writing a standard British form of the language. This will ensure the international intelligibility of Singaporean users of English, and enable English to be an effective *lingua franca* for the nation. A teacher's success will be measured by the performance of the candidates he or she enters for the UCLES' 'O' level examination.

2.4 Teachers' Attitude to the Teaching of English in Singapore

Although the government's attitude to the teaching of English has not been explicitly stated in public, the available research suggests that many teachers share the government's view. As will be seen, the overriding objective of many English teachers is the students' acquisition of an accurate standard form: the successful achievement of that objective is measured in the results of the 'O' level English language examinations.

In Singapore, there are approximately 2,200 teachers of English at the secondary level (Monitoring Committee, 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]). Research conducted (for example: Chia, 1986; Lim, 1986; Chan, 1987; Suvanaris, 1991; Chan, 1992; Yim, 1993, *all unpublished*) reflects the opinions of only a small percentage of this number, but the results are consistent and thus worth reviewing.

Lim's survey of the attitudes of 85 secondary school teachers of English demonstrates the value they placed upon accuracy:

"The mean score for concern with grammatical correctness is 2.8, the highest mean score for any attitudinal tendency tested in the study. 72% of the subjects agreed with the statement that it is impossible to call speech 'good' unless it is grammatically correct, and 84% feel that the first concern of English language teachers should be to teach grammatically correct speech." (Lim, 1986:299)

Yim, using data collected from a questionnaire answered by 70 teachers of English to lower secondary classes, suggests that teachers perceive accuracy to be an essential ingredient of examination success:

"In an examination-oriented school system such as Singapore's, most teachers have been pushed to be accountable to a point that their chief concern is with preparing students who can pass and preferably pass with distinctions. Almost invariably these teachers find it safer to 'teach to the test' and provide students with plenty of grammar practice under examination conditions." (Yim, 1993:94)

An investigation by Chia into the attitudes of 210 secondary school teachers of English towards the use of communicative activities as techniques for language teaching and learning found a major stumbling block preventing the use of such activities in the classroom to be:

". . . the teachers' fears of not conforming to the language syllabus and to the examination requirements, which they tend to be overly concerned about." (Chia, 1986:194)

This anxiety about accuracy and examination success has caused a degree of insecurity amongst Singapore's teachers of English and

resulted in a dependence on external sources. Lim identifies these external sources as expatriate native speakers teaching English in the secondary schools and/or teacher trainers in the Institute of Education, and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate:

"In each of these areas, more than 60% of the respondents express approval of the current policy: 67% say that the recruitment of native-speaker teachers will help raise standards in schools; 62% say that native-speaker teacher trainers are more suitable than local teacher trainers; and 72% fear that taking over the English language examinations from the Cambridge Syndicate is likely to lead to a fall in standards." (Lim, 1986:282)

Available research, then, suggests that many Singaporean teachers of English believe one of their most important functions is to ensure their pupils have an accurate command of English, and that accuracy will contribute significantly to the pupils' chances of passing the external examination. A degree of insecurity about their ability to fulfil this function is reflected in the dependence of some teachers upon external sources.

2.5 Methodological Consequences

The research suggests the government and many teachers will feel more comfortable with a classical humanist approach to language teaching in which:

"The curriculum is determined mainly by the valued subject content, which exists outside the learners and should be transmitted to them." (Littlewood, 1994:14)

A grammar-based syllabus will be regarded as most appropriate, and, given the teacher insecurity noted above, teaching may rely heavily on external sources. These assumptions are borne out by classroom observations in the decade 1981 to 1991. In 1981, Henry Widdowson was invited to give his opinions on the teaching of English in Singapore. In 1982 Raphael Gefen accepted a similar invitation. Gefen reported:

"The secondary schools simply reteach English grammar as deductive analytical rules, as if pupils had never learned this

grammar in Primary School, and again 'spoonfeeding' them with slow sequencing . . . teacher-centred lecturing is followed by copious written exercises all done in full, including copying large sections from the textbook . . . the idea of skipping exercises or sections of exercises when it is quite clear that the pupils know the materials does not occur to many teachers." (Gefen, 1982:6, *bibliography 3*)

Widdowson observed a similar state of affairs:

"Over and over again in the lessons I observed in schools, there was the same fixation on formal items and mechanical response." (Widdowson, 1981:20, *bibliography 3*)

Gefen, however, does point out:

"At the same time, I must repeat that I also found modern communicative techniques and good teaching, so that the criticism I make does not apply to every school and every teacher . . ." (Gefen, 1982:8)

This variation in methodology is also reflected in more recent Ministry of Education appraisal reports:

"The Language programme, in particular, needs to be re-considered. More integrated teaching should be encouraged. Grammar items, for example, are better taught in context rather than isolation. The *ad hoc* use of supplementary grammar exercises in either the instructional or remedial programme is not helpful to the pupils. Regular meetings of teachers teaching the same level would encourage the sharing of ideas and, perhaps, discourage the dependence on model answer books and other ill-conceived commercial publications. It would be advisable to develop a coherent approach to marking. The excessive concern with accuracy and the lack of positive response to pupils' writing is probably discouraging to the pupils." (Ministry of Education, 1991a:9)

Whilst in another school:

"The EL Department . . . are (*sic*) working very hard to provide the best possible programmes for their students, are anxious to keep up-to-date with the latest developments and are constantly looking for new, lively materials to enhance their classroom presentation . . . Classroom displays are colourful, interesting and informative, thanks to the English Corner competition, and plenty of interesting activities have been planned for the English Language Month, to be held later this year. . . there is clearly a lot of potential in this department." (Ministry of Education, 1990a:7)

It is apparent that not all teachers in Singapore allow the need for

accuracy and good examination passes to limit classroom innovation.

Thus, the available evidence suggests that from 1981 to 1991 English teaching in Singapore was characterised by grammar-based, examination-oriented approaches. However, adventurous, communicative methodology was also in evidence.

2.6 Perceptions of Teachers' Competence

This varied picture of teaching in Singapore may reflect the shortage of trained English language teachers capable of being good models of a standard form of English. The first generation of locally trained teachers began work in the 1950s. However, by the 1980s, there were still not enough teachers who could demonstrate both accuracy and fluency when speaking and writing English:

"I was . . . perturbed by the fact that many teachers of English were not sufficiently fluent in speech or proficient in knowledge. Even the worksheets carefully prepared at home by the teacher and distributed in the class contained serious mistakes in English." (Gefen, 1982:8)

And:

"The English proficiency both spoken and written of many of the teachers of English whom I saw teaching was rather disappointing; even in one prestigious girls' secondary school the teacher made serious pronunciation errors in English . . . I must regretfully assume, therefore, that the Oral Proficiency of many teachers of other subjects will be even more disappointing." (Gefen, 1982:28)

The situation was no better by the 1990s. Early in 1991, the English Unit of the Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, requested heads of English departments in every secondary school to submit a profile of the English teachers in their schools. Of the 2143 teachers teaching English at the time, 467 (21.79%) were not trained to do so (Monitoring Committee, 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]).

In 1995, it was clear that the situation would not be improved by newly qualified teachers entering the profession. Discussing the 1995

student intake for the English Language pre-service methodology course at the National Institute of Education, lecturers stated:

" . . . out of a total of 133 student teachers, 48 are qualified (ie have 3-4 years of English language), 29 are borderline (ie only did a few courses in their first one or two years of their degree work), and 56 have no English language background at all beyond 'O' level English . . . We run an extra course for the 56 unqualified students to improve their grammar knowledge, but the effect is limited since the course is only 26 hours." (Lim, Skuja-Steele, Sullivan and Seow, 1995:64-65)

It is assumed in these comments that a teacher needs a very good command of the English language to teach effectively. However, it is also true, as Widdowson has pointed out, that non-native speakers have a natural advantage as instructors as they have had invaluable experience as learners of English (1992:338). Local teachers are also in a better position than imported native speakers to identify appropriate contexts of language learning in which to achieve the target language (Widdowson, 1994:387). Kirkpatrick's idealistic suggestion is relevant here too:

"Ideal teachers of any language should . . . have an in-depth knowledge of the language and culture specific rules both of the language they are teaching and of the learner's first language so that they can make the learners aware of these differences." (Kirkpatrick, 1995:66)

Clearly, few imported native speakers would have this knowledge. However, Lim's research (this chapter:43) suggests that a number of Singaporean teachers lack confidence in their own language proficiency. As Medgyes has pointed out, this could interfere with performance:

" . . . it seems to me that non-NESTs' (Non-Native-Speaking EFL Teachers') progress is hampered most of all by a state of constant stress and insecurity caused by inadequate knowledge of the language they are paid to teach. . . . The inferiority complexes of non-NESTs may be unfounded in some cases, but it hurts none the less, and manifests itself in various forms of contorted teaching practice (Medgyes 1983, 1986)." (Medgyes, 1992:348)

Reves and Medgyes' interpretation of responses to 216

questionnaires sent to ESL/EFL teachers in ten countries indicated that an over emphasis on grammar teaching may be one of the realisations of "contorted teaching practice":

" . . . grammar is the non-NESTs' favourite field of teaching. The reason is that it is more concrete and more learnable than vocabulary. This relative feeling of security may be conducive to attaching more importance to grammar than to other, perhaps more relevant aspects." (Reves and Medgyes, 1994:362)

In the Singaporean situation, too, the "contorted teaching practice" is likely to be manifested in grammar-based teaching, and in examination-oriented procedures.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this "contorted" teaching has produced good examination candidates. The percentage of candidates obtaining an 'O' level English language averaged 40-45% in the early 1980s, but was about 65% by the early 1990s (Ministry of Education, 1993:Point 4, *bibliography* 3). Measured by this yardstick, teachers' competence improved throughout the decade.

2.7 Students' Motivation

Research suggests that for many Singaporean students the motivation for learning English is instrumental. For example, Shaw found that, in common with other Asian students, Singaporean students placed "a continual emphasis on the instrumental uses of English over the integrative ones" (1983:29). The findings of the Ministry of Community Development's Research Section support this view. Basing their statements on focussed group interviews with 115 youths, the Section reports:

"Students are generally examination-oriented. They study in order to pass examinations, to get good grades, and to obtain necessary paper qualifications. There is generally a lack of curiosity for intellectual pursuit. They do not dislike studying, but certainly do not enjoy it either. They hate cramming for examinations. But for most, it is inconceivable that one studies not for examination. They

would question: what's the purpose of studying, then?" (Research Section, Management Information and Planning Division, Ministry of Community Development, 1988:3, *bibliography 3*)

The objective of studying English, then, is likely to be passing the examination. Such instrumentally motivated students may be less receptive to classroom innovations. Brock's investigation into the responses of approximately 300 Hong Kong secondary school students to the introduction of a process-oriented approach to teaching writing found:

" . . . some evidence that the reluctance among students . . . to adapt to process writing related at least in part to their worries about demands posed by the public examinations they would face in the following academic year. Some students questioned whether the innovation addressed those challenges." (Brock, M., 1996:52)

Such pragmatism may not result in classroom demonstrations of learner enthusiasm. Gardner (1982:137) summarises three studies relating motivation to classroom behaviour. (Two were conducted by Gilksman in 1976, and one by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco in 1978.) These suggest that students who are integratively motivated will volunteer to answer more frequently and appear to be more interested in class than students judged to be instrumentally motivated.

However, it has been argued in this chapter that English in Singapore is seen increasingly as a vehicle of national identity. This would imply that motivation to learn may not be entirely instrumental. If a student wants to acquire English as an "act of identity" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985), his classroom behaviour and choice of learning strategies might be quite different from that of a purely instrumentally motivated student (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989, reported in Oxford, 1989:239). Perhaps unfortunately for the Singaporean teacher, the variety of English taught in the classroom leaves something to be desired as a symbol of group identity for Singaporean students. As Tan and Gupta have pointed

out (1992:148), many Singaporeans would rather sound American.

As has already been mentioned (this chapter:35) they have a lot of opportunity to listen to models of it. Approximately 65% of television airtime in Singapore is taken up by foreign programmes. American programmes occupied 3,698 hours in the year 1991-2. In the same year, programmes from Britain, the second most popular source of foreign programmes, occupied 825 hours (Tan and Soh, 1994:90-91).

Certainly, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) has seen evidence of this mix of influences and motivation:

"The 1992 Report mentioned 'an unfortunate increase in the use of inappropriate slang, obscenities and even profanities'. This year a large number of Examiners have reported an increasing incidence of unacceptably crude terms even in formal contexts where milder, equally well-known words were more applicable. Perhaps, influenced by television, some writers assume that words such as 'f---', 's---', 'pissed-off', 'jerk' (as a noun), 'cute', 'chick' and 'guy' are universally accepted as U.K. and U.S.A. standard English. They should be made aware that this is not the case, and that tasteless, offensive words - especially related to the deity - are rarely acceptable, even in quoted speech or highly colloquial passages." (UCLES International Examinations, 1995a:4)

Nevertheless, UCLES may be heartened by the consideration that if the motivation resulting in this inappropriacy is integrative, the pupil may develop this aspect of fluency even after the examination has been taken (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1995:222). Instrumental motivation, too, may continue to exert an influence after an examination if it is perceived, for example, that an improved command of the language is necessary for promotion at work. Das and Crabbe's 1984 research supports this view.

The discussion so far has been based on what Crookes and Schmidt would regard as a limited perception of motivation. They would prefer discussion to include "choice, engagement, and persistence, as determined by interest, relevance, expectancy and outcomes" (Crookes and Schmidt,

1991:502). Certainly, a consideration of these factors in relation to planning an English language syllabus in Singapore would open up discussion considerably. However, in the light of current language planning in Singapore, they have only limited relevance in a description of pupils' motivation. Pupils have no choice about studying English. Engagement and persistence are greatly determined by the pupils' expectation that the outcome, in terms of examination grades, will justify this effort.

Of more relevance is Tremblay and Gardner's research, conducted partly in response to the suggestions of Crookes and Schmidt. This examined whether "expectancy and self-efficacy, valence, causal attributions and goal setting" (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995:507) are important to an understanding of motivation in language learning. It was concluded that they are. Indeed, it is very likely that Singaporean pupils will be more motivated if they believe an examination pass is attainable, are aware of the value of passing the examination, can understand the causes of their success and failure, and set themselves specific and challenging goals. Teaching and learning which is informed by an awareness of these motivational factors is likely to be more effective.

2.8 Students' Learning Styles

Learning motivated by a desire to pass examinations may be reflected in "surface" approaches to learning, in which learning is characterised by memorization through rote learning (Chang, 1990:36). Research suggests that Asian students prefer teaching strategies which involve rote memorization, sequenced repetitions and structured reviews (Oxford, 1989:242-3; Oxford and Anderson, 1995:207). However, stereotyping should be avoided (Holliday, 1994a:126-129; McKnight, 1992:98-9). Other research contradicts this view. Purdie (1995),

compared the learning strategies used by 248 Australian and 215 Japanese students aged sixteen to eighteen. She found that 59.92% of the Australians saw learning as primarily a process of memorising and reproducing, as compared with 39.69% of the Japanese students.

Chang and Ho in a review of research into the learning styles of Singaporean students, suggest that:

"Singapore students are achievement and examination-oriented but they are not necessarily rote learners. Rote learning does not reward them with the high grades they would hope to get for the effort spent." (Chang and Ho, 1992:50)

Chang's research supports this statement. In a study of 234 Secondary 4 students, she found that low achieving pupils were more likely to use rote learning and to "concentrate heavily on notes given by the teachers and on solving questions/problems set in past-year examination papers" (Chang, 1990:39). Such a statement could be made about low achieving students the world over, and may reflect socio-economic grouping rather than ethnic origin (Long and Robinson, 1995).

Nevertheless, it does appear that culture exerts an effect on an individual's approach to teaching and learning. This is reflected, for example, in Kennedy's work with British and Malaysian teachers concerning locus of control (Kennedy, 1991), and in McCargar's research into the expectations that students and teachers from different cultures have of each other (McCargar, 1993). (For further discussion, see Oxford and Anderson, 1995.)

It may be, too, that some learning strategies, for example peer editing, which assumes that one student will accept another's authority to make suggestions regarding his/her work, may be less appropriate in some cultures (Tickle *et al*, 1995). Strategies to promote independent learning,

too, must take into account the culture in which such learner autonomy is being promoted. In Cambodia, and many eastern societies, dependence and collaboration are valued in an authority oriented culture. Thus, even the physical design of a self-access centre requires careful consideration or the centre is likely to become a white elephant (Jones:1995). This dependence and collaboration, however, may ensure the success of group activities (Jacobs and Ratmanida, 1996; Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996).

Leong, discussing distinctive features of Chinese and Western thought, states Chinese students have been brought up to "Hide your brilliance and never outshine others" (Leong, 1993:42), and to accept that "Exaggerated facial expressions are considered improper behaviour in society" (*ibid*:43). Thus, many Chinese students need sympathetic support if they are to become involved in discussions or drama-based activities.

Chan's unpublished 1992 study of the perceptions of 40 Secondary Two Singaporean students reveals they wanted and expected explicit grammar teaching from their teachers. A more detailed study of the learning styles of 1733 Secondary Four students concluded:

"The Singapore students tend to prefer traditional ways of teaching, where they can observe, listen and reflect. They study hard to do well for the examinations." (Lim Tock Teng, 1995:50)

Lim drew attention to the need for research into whether teaching styles matched learning styles. Research elsewhere (for example, Nunan, 1991a and 1992; Felder, 1995; Wallace and Oxford, 1992, reported in Oxford and Anderson, 1995:210) has indicated that this is an important area of consideration. However, given the comments above on teachers' attitudes and the methodological consequences, it may be hypothesised that in a number of Singaporean classrooms, any mismatch may be minimal. If, as Wallace and Oxford suggest, cultural influences are a major

contributor to differences in teaching and learning styles, this match may be a reflection of teachers' and learners' shared culture.

2.9 Students' Competence

The competence achieved as a result of Singaporean learners' motivation and approaches to learning is difficult to quantify:

"We do not know much about normal development in children learning most of the languages in Singapore. The languages about which we know very little include Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese and Malay and the local variety of English. Standard screening tests are not available for most of the languages spoken here. Even for English, standardised assessments are based on the development of children learning Standard English in the United Kingdom or the United States. Here, however, most children learn Singapore Colloquial English, which is not the same grammatically as Standard English (Gupta, 1989, 1991)." (Yeo *et al*, 1994:2)

What is known suggests teachers will need to provide a rich language environment to compensate for the limited pre-school language experience of some of their pupils. Changing economic circumstances have encouraged Singaporean parents to hand their children over to professional caregivers for long hours every day, sometimes for five days a week (Foley, 1994:272). Foley also refers to:

". . . a study of 2418 children aged between 3 and 6, on a number of tasks related to their language (English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil); the interaction between parents, particularly between mothers and their children was confined to language regulating or monitoring behaviour instead of encouraging talk (Ko and Ho 1992)." (*ibid*:271)

Thus, teachers may need to help pupils achieve a level of oracy and literacy which will empower them to develop personally and socially, and to adequately exploit the resources of the education system. Research to date suggests English language teachers have had mixed success.

For example, Phoon and Cheah studied 3000 Secondary One pupils to ascertain whether they could read local newspapers with understanding. The majority had little difficulty in comprehending news about daily events,

but "did not seem to have acquired the ability to read government announcements and news about commercial and industrial materials" (Phoon and Cheah, 1981:218). It was speculated that the unfamiliarity of the subject matter could have contributed to this lack of understanding.

Balasingam (1990, *unpublished*) analyzed the essays of 50 Secondary Four pupils, commenting on the syntactic, morphological and lexical deviations. She found that verbs, especially tenses, were the greatest source of error, followed by the wrong choice of preposition or particle. Students avoided using connectives, especially relative pronouns.

Chandrasegeran (1991) investigated the decisions made by 24 third year university students as they wrote expository essays. The students had been identified to attend extra classes to improve their written English. Limitations in the students' composing processes included a lack of relevance and audience awareness because of a pre-occupation with surface structures; and an inability to integrate and restructure information.

Gupta (1989), drawing on her twelve years' experience of teaching Singaporean university students in the department of English Language and Literature, identified four strengths in their English proficiency: an excellent control of educated vocabulary; considerable comprehension of reading and oral materials; a very good control of standard English; and an increasing willingness to engage in discussion. Weaknesses include: an inability, reflected both in reading and writing activities, to pick out the main points and present them clearly, perhaps because of a focus on language rather than content; poor organisation of written material, in particular the presentation of contradictory facts or opinions; and an inability to choose an appropriate register and style for writing tasks.

A number of these problems may be attributed to the very different

rhetorical styles of English and Chinese expository prose. Fagan and Cheong report on a study in which four Singaporean teachers analyzed the rhetorical patterns demonstrated in 60 essays written by Secondary Three Singaporean Chinese students:

"The findings of the study suggested that the sixty students were influenced by Chinese rhetorical styles. The raters' analyses indicated that 39.2% of the sixty compositions exhibited the English three-part pattern of Introduction-Body-Conclusion, and 50.6% exhibited the Chinese four-part pattern of Introduction-Body-Related or Contrasting Subtheme-Conclusion. The raters also indicated that 71.4% of the compositions had examples of digression, repetition, and indirection and 53.8% had flowery, metaphorical styles." (Fagan and Cheong, 1987:19)

However, not all errors can be definitely ascribed to one particular source (Balasingam, 1990:70-1). In Singapore's linguistic situation, there is likely to be interference from a number of other languages with which the learner may be familiar. In addition, some difficulties may be the result of the learner's own strategies within the target language, as the learner makes his/her own approximations of the target language.

Another valuable contribution to a discussion of the English language competence of Singapore's students is the annual UCLES's Examiners' Reports. These comment only on the candidates' written performance. Some candidates try to hide their incompetence:

" . . . it was disturbing to find many candidates producing (with varying degrees of accuracy) whole essays which had been committed to memory and regurgitated with little or no attempt to adapt them to the chosen topic." (UCLES in collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1985a:5)

And:

"Some weak, misguided candidates attempted to incorporate memorised passages but gained nothing, as these were clearly detectable." (UCLES International Examinations, 1991a:8)

The examiners' comments on original scripts coincide with the points already made. Poor scripts display inadequate planning, irrelevance and repetition, inappropriate style and register and use of local idioms.

Examples of common language errors are provided within the following categories: verbs, time concepts and sequences; vocabulary, idiom, spelling; number, agreement; prepositions; pronouns; articles; sentence construction, linking, punctuation.

This should not be taken to mean that the examiners regard the work produced by Singaporean candidates as weak. Far from it:

"The general standard had improved, with the best schools demonstrating the results of excellent teaching and examination technique. Many outstanding answers showed a variety of imaginative approach, keen sensitivity and perception, high interest value and sound planning. In all centres there was evidence of determined effort and seriousness of mind. The apt use of semi-colons, colons, quotation marks, apostrophes, parenthetical commas and dashes was more frequent but should be further encouraged. The range of vocabulary, sentence construction, knowledge and ideas was impressive. Expositions had clarity; arguments contained significant detail. Narratives were well-handled, with convincing characterisation, emotional tension, dramatic space and vivid description." (UCLES International Examinations, 1993a:8)

2.10 English and the Workplace

Employers in Singapore do not hold Singapore's graduating students in the same high regard as the UCLES's examiners. In 1994, the Ministry of Education asked employers whether Singapore's education system was equipping young people with essential skills and qualities. The majority's response was summarised:

"Generally, education systems which focus on results and good grades only develop intelligent but ineffectual workers. New job entrants are technically proficient but are poor at communication, teamwork, lack initiative and versatility." (Pastoral Care and Career Guidance Section, 1995:32, *bibliography 3*)

Most of the employers surveyed believed that employees straight from school "still want to be spoonfed" (*ibid*:17). In general, employers thought that employees were unable to apply their knowledge to practical situations, lacked creativity and initiative, and could not express themselves openly at meetings. Whether this was a cultural or linguistic

problem was not clarified.

Employers did feel that the school leavers' standard of written and spoken English was deteriorating. Comments like: "Weak in writing . . . Singlish predominates", and "Speaking English mixed with Mandarin or Malay" were reported (*ibid*:15). To counteract this lowering of standards, many employers would like a business communication course to be included in the curriculum for the last two years of the secondary school.

The views reported represent those of employers from a cross section of the entire economic community. Das and Crabbe's 1984 survey of 738 working adults from a variety of occupations who had registered for a primary school level English language course found:

" . . . a great deal of the communication among and across working adults, at different levels of employment, did not take place in English. When communication did occur in English it was generally in the Singapore patois and was fairly stereotypical and did not make great demands on the English language skills of workers. A survey of the reading skills which workers required to deal with job-related English language texts revealed that they were able to develop a range of effective reading strategies without too much difficulty as the texts were fairly predictable." (Das, 1994:382)

Nevertheless, the employees did want to improve their English:

"The workers perceived English as a long-term investment for self-advancement rather than as an instrument for the satisfaction of immediate needs The perception of needs, in terms of both motivations for learning English and awareness of its uses, did not vary greatly across occupational categories (by type of industry/occupation) and employment levels." (Das and Crabbe, 1984:73)

The limited research available, then, indicates that instrumental motivation dominates, and does continue to operate beyond the requirements of a final school examination. It also suggests that both employers and employees perceive a need for employees to acquire greater proficiency in English. However, whilst employers see this need to be job

related, perhaps better responded to through an ESP course, employees would be happier with a more general English course. In other words, employers wish to "equip" their employees, who would prefer to be "enabled" (Prabhu, 1987:190).

2.11 Teachers' Morale

The discussion in the previous section suggested employers believe teachers should do more to improve the standard of their pupils' English. Over the years, demands that they do more have sapped teachers' morale.

In 1979, morale could only improve. 140 teachers from 16 primary and 12 secondary schools were interviewed by the authors of the Goh Report. The interviews suggested the major factors affecting morale were:

" . . . low social status, frequent changes in the education system, ineffective system of supervision and guidance and poor promotion prospects." (Goh and the Education Study Team, 1979:3-8)

Since the report was written, one of the issues has been tackled:

"In February 1995, for the first time in the history of the Education Service, a record number of 2,456 officers were promoted in the Education Service without having to go through promotion interviews." (Singapore Teachers' Union, 1995:8)

However, the criteria for promotion do not seem to have been widely understood or accepted as:

" . . . the forthcoming promotion exercises due in October 1995 and next year may cause heartaches and unhappiness for some . . . " (*ibid*).

There appears to have been no improvement in teachers' social status:

" . . . NIE (National Institute of Education) director, Professor Leo Tan, feels that teaching has yet to become a lodestone for Singapore's ambitious new entrants into the workforce. Society, he says, is partly to blame for this. For instance, parents want the best facilities and best schools for their children but they discourage their own children from joining the profession. 'Inadvertently, we're sending the message that only failures need to go into teaching'." (The Straits Times, 1995e:4)

Society's perception of teachers, though, was not the only reason teachers cited for their belief that their social status was low.

"Unfair criticisms by the press and public, lack of authority and shabby treatment by MOE (eg being the last to be told of MOE's policies and being made the scapegoat for MOE's mistakes) were some reasons cited by the teachers . . . (Goh and the Education Study Team, 1979:3-7)

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has attempted to address these concerns through regular dialogue sessions with teachers and publications like Contact (Public Relations Branch, 1994 *bibliography 3*) which is delivered to their homes (Foo, 1995, *bibliography 3*). Contact aims to keep teachers informed and to answer their questions. Unfortunately, there is still a perception that MOE is out of touch with teachers and schools. For example, commenting on the problems of school administrators the President of the Singapore Teachers' Union said they:

" . . . have to carry out directives from the Ministry of Education which sometimes do not take into account the special problems or constraints of their schools." (Singapore Teachers' Union, 1995:45).

A third factor identified by Goh and the Education Study Team (1979) as affecting teachers' morale was the frequency of changes introduced by MOE. The pace of change has accelerated since 1979. The Director of Curriculum Planning Division, in her opening address at the division's biennial seminar, said that in the period 1991-1995, 42 new or revised syllabuses had been introduced in schools (Mok, 1994).

It is not surprising, then, that the perception of teachers as victims of change is widespread. In 1992, Singapore's Director of Education said:

"The Singapore public has the perception, rightly or wrongly, that the Ministry of Education is always chopping and changing its educational policies." (Yip, 1992:1)

This perception may be affecting the recruitment of teachers. Soh

et al (1985) administered a questionnaire to 1177 pre-university (*sixth form*) students to gather information about their perceptions of teaching as a career choice. Those students who would not choose teaching as a career, but who might reconsider their decision if certain job conditions were changed, cited "not having to cope with frequent policy change" (Soh *et al*, 1985:28) as the second most important job condition it would be necessary to alter. It was perceived as a more effective means of influencing their career decision than improving teachers' pay.

Supervision and guidance, another factor affecting teachers' morale in 1979, may not have greatly improved either. Chia *et al*, discussing the responses of 338 secondary school teachers to a questionnaire designed to examine their professionalism, state:

" . . . all teachers, whether they are new teachers or experienced teachers, are treated equally. In most schools, experienced teachers and new teachers are usually allocated a workload that does not take into consideration their teaching experience. Teachers with experience are not given opportunities to act as 'mentors' (Harrington, 1987) which would challenge them to develop professionally on the job, so that they become more professional teachers in terms of professional competence and commitment to the profession." (Chia *et al*, 1994:62)

Wong's 1988 research supports this view. She analyzed the responses of 305 secondary school teachers to a questionnaire designed to explore which aspects of the school climate most affected teachers' morale. She found that older teachers "expressed disturbingly low morale" (Wong, 1988:44). Wong suggested that a lack of planned career development and the rapid promotion of younger colleagues who are graduates are likely reasons for the older teachers' responses.

In addition, new problems have arisen since 1979. One has been the effects of the introduction of a ranking system for schools, based to a large extent on pupils' examination results:

"Although the ranking of secondary schools was intended to provide parents with information on the schools' academic performance and other areas of interest, this had (*sic*) resulted in some schools applying undue pressure on teachers and pupils to achieve better results in order to ensure improvement in ranking." (Singapore Teachers' Union, 1995:35).

This pressure may have contributed to an increase in the working hours of many teachers. A teachers' union survey of 150 schools revealed that 25% of them had extended teachers' working hours beyond a reasonable limit (*ibid*). Duties included "non-professional chores" and a variety of duties which ensured "that many teachers are deprived of their holidays" (*ibid*:44). Not surprisingly, "the state of the mental health of teachers" (*ibid*:45) was identified as an area of concern.

In 1995, the results of the Union's survey into teacher stress were released. Teachers in 26 primary and secondary schools had been interviewed, and their responses suggest they felt high levels of stress. Around 80% experienced long working hours and 86% were often tired, which may be why approximately 60% thought they neglected their families and had a heavy workload. Around 64% felt they performed too many non-teaching related jobs. External sources were cited as contributing to this stress. About 75% of the teachers interviewed thought pupils were difficult to teach, and around 80% believed parents left it to teachers to discipline their children. Approximately 68% blamed the Ministry of Education for implementing change too fast. Around 53% believed they were held accountable for low ranking and poor results. 61% thought schools' expectations were too high and were upset by classroom observation and checking of books (The Straits Times, 1995g:25).

Also in 1995, the Union published the results of its survey of the views of 261 discipline masters, principals, vice-principals and teachers in

146 primary and secondary schools on discipline in schools. 60% felt that discipline was a growing problem. More than 77% "cited the lack of parental control as the main cause of misbehaviour" (The Straits Times, 1995c:12). Dealing with a greater number of discipline problems which they feel are not of their own making will further damage teachers' morale.

Perhaps because the situation has remained the same since at least 1902 (Kynnerseley, 1980:40), recent literature does not mention class size as a feature affecting teacher morale. In the majority of government schools the average class size is 38 (Ministry of Education, 1994:12, *bibliography 3*). The marking load, then, is daunting.

Thus, routine and often overwhelming duties prevent teachers from spending time on more rewarding professional work which might contribute to a greater sense of control over their situation. The President of the Teachers' Union's claim that "a fair number" of teachers have resigned, and "many" have retired on medical grounds may not be unfounded (Singapore Teachers' Union 1995:45). In 1994, 1,654 secondary school teachers had up to four years experience, but only 887 had between five to nine years (Ministry of Education, 1994:17), suggesting a considerable number had left when they had served their bond and while they were still young enough to find another profession.

The perception that the Ministry of Education is responsible for this state of affairs is emphasised by the President of the Teachers' Union:

"If the School's Branch (The Ministry of Education) takes a more enlightened approach and adopt (*sic*) the slogan 'Work Smart' instead of 'Work Long Hours', we can all do much more to reduce the stress and strain on teachers and achieve quality instead of quantity in education." (*ibid*, 1995:44).

In the Ministry's defence, however, some school appraisal reports do highlight the need to reduce the workload of English teachers. Many

teachers have at least two and often three classes of English, and are required to teach a second subject. A number of schools demand that pupils complete a quota of 12 essays and 12 comprehensions and summaries in each academic year. Multiplying the number of assignments by the number of pupils in three classes, one teacher may have to mark 2736 English assignments a year. In addition, she will mark examination scripts and fulfil the marking commitments of the second teaching subject.

One specialist inspector commented:

"The recommended number of written assignments per year, twenty four in total, is high." (Ministry of Education, 1995g:9)

There are, of course, other demanding professional duties:

"There are many EL programmes and activities going on in the school throughout the academic year and teachers and pupils have put in much effort in (*sic*) these activities. However, counter-productivity sets in when too much is attempted. The EL department has to review its existing policies and programmes and make modifications or remove some completely, if necessary. Besides allowing more time for teachers to gather interesting reading and resource materials for their classes and plan their lessons more effectively, streamlining of EL subsidiary programmes will enable the aims and objectives of the remaining programmes to be fully achieved." (Ministry of Education, 1992c:14)

Heads of department do not escape lightly either:

"The school administration should reduce the administrative load of the Head of Department, English, to enable him to take on his professional load more fully." (Ministry of Education, 1990b:7)

This brief review of teacher morale suggests that many teachers are experiencing increasingly long working hours, often filled with mundane, routine duties, and facing greater indiscipline in schools. The morale of older teachers may be particularly affected, though it is the younger teachers who are leaving the profession. In a very centralised system a number of teachers feel rather remote from the centre. Many seem to lack control over their working situation, and have little opportunity to acquire

such control. Often, the Ministry of Education is perceived to be the originator of teachers' problems, through the introduction of measures like the ranking of schools and the imposition of frequent changes.

2.12 School Culture and Curriculum Development

One way of dealing with a constantly changing situation is to ignore those changes. Wong describes a 1983 project undertaken by the Curriculum Branch and the Testing Branch of the Ministry of Education. It required all secondary school teachers to write specific instructional objectives based on Bloom's taxonomy. They were intended to provide a focus for lesson plans and a basis for setting examinations. Singapore Teachers' Union asked 450 experienced secondary school teachers how they used these objectives:

"Of those who wrote SIOs (*Specific Instructional Objectives*) 54.7% did not use them to prepare lesson plans . . . Only 38.7% used SIOs in constructing their test items." (Wong, 1991:152)

The majority of teachers surveyed simply ignored the requirement.

Another way of dealing with change is to accept without questioning; to wait to be told what to do, and to do it. The available research into teachers' curriculum beliefs suggests this may have been a course of action adopted by a number of teachers. Yeoh *et al* distributed questionnaires to 749 teachers from 143 primary schools in Singapore to elicit information about their curriculum beliefs:

"Their philosophical preference is distinctly eclectic in nature and scope. On the assumption that teachers in Singapore do not have to argue for or against any one belief system about the curricula that are prescribed in schools, it is therefore understandable that their own educational beliefs about the school curriculum do not reveal as yet the emergence of strong curriculum biases." (Yeoh *et al*, 1994:16, *unpublished*)

Teachers' concerns when implementing curriculum change were mostly with what to do and how to do it. The consequences for learners

and the need to devise more appropriate curriculum innovations were rarely considered. These findings suggest that the rapid pace of change in Singapore's education system and the top-down means by which curriculum changes have been implemented may have contributed to a situation in which a number of teachers have not developed coherent curriculum beliefs.

A small study by Soh (1987) reinforces the implication in the above research that there will be little motivation for school-based curriculum initiatives. Twenty seven trainee primary school heads of department in Singapore were asked to complete three questionnaires designed to measure stress, willingness to accept responsibility and attitude towards change. Soh found a significant negative relationship between stress and attitudes towards responsibility and change (Soh, 1987:90). Clearly, it will be very difficult to introduce innovations in a stressful environment.

People experiencing stress are more likely to cling to the aspects of their situation from which they derive most satisfaction. Lee (1989) analyzed interview data gathered from 211 secondary school teachers in Singapore. The teachers gained most satisfaction as classroom instructors, and were reluctant to extend their professional role beyond this.

Collaborating with colleagues was not an important source of professional satisfaction (Lee, 1989:86). Chia *et al* also recorded "the near absence of cooperative learning as a professional development activity among secondary school teachers" (1994:64). Both research papers portray a similar situation to that described by Fullan and Hargreaves:

"The most common state for the teacher is not a collegial one. It is a state of professional isolation; of working alone, aside from one's colleagues. This isolation gives teachers a certain degree of protection to exercise their discretionary judgement in the interests of the children they know best. But it also cuts teachers

off from clear and meaningful feedback about the worth and effectiveness of what they do." (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991:38)

Without this "clear and meaningful feedback" teachers will find it difficult to identify any need for change in their classrooms. If such a need were identified, the teacher is likely to be alone in trying to address it for it is not common practice to consult others. Indeed, Lee found that potential avenues of professional development within the school, like working with the administration and working under supervision, were sources of professional discouragement to teachers (Lee, 1989).

As Sim has pointed out, there is a great need to "improve the professionalism of teachers" (Sim, 1990:6). He highlights some unprofessional practices which are widely accepted, but which he believes should be of serious concern: the acceptance of unqualified supply teachers to perform the same duties as qualified teachers; the lack of a professional association to represent and protect teachers' professional interests; the apparent lack of interest displayed by the majority of teachers in professional development activities; and a general acceptance that pupils will attend classes given by private tutors to reinforce what has been learnt in class, a practice which suggests teachers are inadequate.

To demonstrate the last point, 55 advertisements appeared on one day in The Straits Times' classified section (The Straits Times, 1996a:46). 31 offered tuition in English. Tuition is provided by students studying for 'A' level examinations, undergraduates, practising teachers, and teachers who have resigned or retired. All promise examination success:

"Exam-Oriented English/GP Course by Lady Lecturer. Score an A1 with exam-oriented notes on Essay, Comprehension, Grammar, Vocab, Summary, Letter & Report." (*ibid*)

In practice, many simply supervise their charges as they complete

assessment books which are likely to encourage a command of stilted, inaccurate English. If parents believed that teachers adequately prepared their children for examinations, there would not be a thriving tuition trade.

The presence of unqualified relief teachers in schools and unqualified tutors outside schools should have aroused some public criticism. As Sim points out, there has been none. He believes this implies that teachers are working in a culture which does not engage in professional debate.

In part, Sim attributes this lack of debate to the fact that:

" . . . teachers have, by and large, tended to be reasonably successful, at least in terms of examination performance, (so) there seems to be a lack of research ethos, as well as confidence in what research has to offer." (Sim, 1990:5)

The question is, to what extent do the tutors deserve credit for candidates' successful examination performance? It is beyond the scope of this study to answer such a question. Nevertheless, Sim has usefully described current, unprofessional educational practices which have contributed to a climate likely to discourage teachers from being involved in school-based curriculum development, or being responsive to suggestions for change.

On the basis of interviews with 66 primary school teachers from 65 schools, all of whom had attended an in-service course intended to prepare them to be heads of department, Chew (1985) identified other obstacles in the way of change in Singapore's schools. These were: a heavy teacher workload; examination-oriented schools; the difficulty of measuring the benefits of an innovation; an absence of incentives and rewards for risk taking behaviour; too many changes in schools at both the systemic and organisational levels; and teachers' beliefs (Chew, 1985:18-19). The great

majority of teachers interviewed believed:

"Authority is vested largely in the principal, the vice-principal and the senior assistants . . . Consequently, most teachers are willing to receive directives and orders only from the top and not from other teachers. Subject co-ordinators do not have the same authority as the administrators and their professional authority has been hampered as a result." (Chew, 1985:19)

Naturally, Chew concluded teachers did not believe themselves to be empowered as change agents. The prevailing culture in many schools meant that change could take place only through the principal.

In this context, it is interesting to consider Zhang's research into the characteristics and attributes of school principals in Singapore. He found that principals who attended the 1993 Singapore Principals' Conference and 200 heads of department agreed on the importance of the following attributes: willingness to assume and accept responsibility for both success and failure; adaptable to situations; assertive; and competitive. (Zhang, 1994:17) Zhang feels that these characteristics would be considered as important in different cultures, too.

He then goes on to discuss other essential characteristics of school principals in Singapore, identified by the principals and the heads of department, but which may be regarded as important because of the Singaporean context. Pointing out that good schools are responsive to the priorities of the community, and emphasising the example of centrally controlled leadership set by the Ministry of Education, Zhang states:

"In the Singaporean setting, where parents and community are very demanding, principals are very much concerned about productivity, namely, high percentage of students' passes; of distinctions; of promotion/college going rates, especially when confronted with the ranking system of the schools. A strong will . . . is the most important core attribute with quality of resolution in carrying out the school's mission and in realising the school's vision . . . To be domineering will make teachers and administrators get things done following the principal's instruction. Principals demand subordinates' unquestionable obedience to authority.

Because the effect of autocracy demands compliance instead of commitment, the quality of jobs done by subordinates is often measured by quantity rather than quality, hence it is not enough to give orders only, but to provide instruction and explanation. Also, to be unconventional needs courage in front of danger and chance. They have a relatively low level of courage when taking personal risks. Embedded in the Eastern culture, being less bold in taking personal risks and in taking advantages of chances is characteristic of Singaporeans." (Zhang:1994:17)

Given such a description, it is hardly surprising that the teachers' union's survey into teacher stress identified principals as being in the best position to reduce teachers' levels of stress (The Straits Times, 1995f:3).

Other researchers would agree that the cultural environment of Singapore is likely to reduce the possibility of successfully introducing change. Gilroy, in a 1993 lecture, suggested that, in contrast with Western societies, Singaporeans' greater respect for authority, reluctance to criticise because of the need to save the face of those being criticised, and 'kiasu' desire to win whatever the cost, exacerbate the problems inherent in change in all societies. These cultural characteristics mean there is a reduced willingness to take risks; a reluctance to participate in critical debate, to accept that change may affect status, or to listen to 'outsiders' since the authorities know best; and fewer opportunities to share goals and failings. The dominantly Singaporean audience to whom these points were addressed agreed with them. Curriculum change, it was felt, was unlikely to be teacher generated.

The Straits Times' editorial also expressed the view that the 'kiasu' aspect of Singapore's culture has a negative effect on school-based curriculum decisions. Discussing the then current concern that secondary schools were denying their pupils the opportunity to study Literature in English as an examination subject, the editorial became quite strident:

"What is unacceptable is the rationale: this is being done to

improve or protect the schools' standing in the annual Straits Times ranking exercise. The reason is that it is harder to score high marks in literature. As one humanities subject must be offered for the 'O' levels, schools are steering their students towards alternatives considered easier to score distinctions in, such as history or geography. . . . What is not pleasant to contemplate is that this action . . . is indicative of a harmful variant of kiasuism taking root. School principals should do all they can to arrest its growth." (The Straits Times, 1995a:32)

The concluding plea, seen in the context of Zhang's views above, may fall on stony ground. Lee's summary of Singapore's education system also suggests such a plea would receive a negative response. Comparing and contrasting Singapore's education system with the systems found in Hong Kong and Japan, he describes all three systems as "credential":

" . . . where educational credentials determine a person's occupational status which may in turn influence his social and economic status and access to political power." (Lee, 1991:210)

This entrenched view that education is a means to individual economic, political and social ends is likely to result only in changes which facilitate the achievement of those ends: for example, in the development of methodology which leads to improved examination passes.

2.13 Conclusion

With such conflicting views regarding the status and functions of English, held in a complex and dynamic linguistic situation, the English language syllabus writer and, in particular, implementor, are likely to find themselves in an unenviable position. For a syllabus to receive the Ministry of Education's backing, it must recommend that standard English be taught and modelled in the classroom. In addition, an official syllabus needs to be in alignment with the assessment mode, which should have national and international credibility. However, the discussion has also suggested that Singapore colloquial English must be recognised as having an important and legitimate function in society; and that the multilingual

and multicultural backgrounds of both teachers and pupils should inform all aspects of syllabus planning and implementation.

However, no matter how practical and relevant the proposed syllabus, the outlook for future innovation is not encouraging. There appears to be neither the motivation nor the channels of communication necessary to encourage school-based curriculum development, thus implementation will be top-down. A history of this approach to syllabus implementation has contributed to a situation in which only the forms of a proposed change are likely to be observed, or it may be ignored entirely. With no feeling of ownership for the innovation, there may be little motivation for real teacher engagement with the curriculum materials. Any such engagement may be discouraged by instrumentally motivated students and/or those principals who are reluctant to take risks and whose first requirement of teachers is compliance. There is, then, very little incentive for real change to occur.

It will be clear by now that none of the features enumerated in the categories of educational environment or teaching force in the list of features desirable to ensuring the successful implementation of an English language syllabus in Singapore were present in 1992 (Chapter One:20). So why was a new English Language Syllabus introduced?

CHAPTER THREE

1982 Syllabus: Perceived Problems

3.0 The 1982 Syllabus: Areas of Concern

The 1982 syllabus was politically driven. It was a response to the Goh Report (1979), produced as a result of the Prime Minister's concern about the standard of English. (See Chapter Two:39-40.) However, neither the interviews with the writers of the 1991 Syllabus nor the Curriculum Planning Division's file NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2, (English Unit, 1981-1992) suggest that the 1991 syllabus was similarly motivated. So what were the reasons behind the impetus for change?

People interested in manpower development identified one reason:

"In response to fast changing technology and structural changes, Singapore is increasingly more plugged into the international network of trade, communications and services. The education system must move in tandem with these trends and development by upgrading teaching methods and other facilities, curricula and relevancy amongst others." (Low *et al*, 1991:214)

Two linguists, Henry Widdowson and Raphael Gefen invited to comment on the 1982 English Language Syllabus, also discussed its lack of relevance to Singapore's situation. Both remarked that the greatest influences on Singapore's English language syllabuses appear to be located outside Singapore. Commenting that there seemed to be no explicit rationale for the syllabuses's design, Widdowson said:

". . . the impression I get is that the syllabuses have been drawn up with reference to models designed for other contexts and not as a result of the particular conditions and circumstances of Singapore." (Widdowson, 1981:8)

Gefen suggests why Widdowson may have received this impression:

"The O-Level Examinations should be set and marked in

Singapore itself and not in Cambridge; control of the examinations means control of the syllabus and the methodology in schools." (Gefen, 1982:48)

Gefen accurately perceived the enormous influence of the examinations. There is no evidence in the documentation or the interviews that reference was made to research, or research initiated into, for example, Singaporean students' preferred learning styles or underlying learner competencies. Neither is there any evidence of consultation with employees or community leaders regarding the proposed syllabus. However, there is much evidence in the 1982 Syllabus document to suggest that it was greatly influenced by the existing GCE 'O' Level Examination set by Cambridge, and for which candidates were first entered in 1981. Indeed, "passing the examination is of overriding importance . . ." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:2).

The syllabus sometimes reads like a handbook for prospective candidates:

"The pupil is expected to answer about 5 questions on the passage read. The questions are normally short and simple, and are usually easily answered. However, the pupil should listen very carefully to the questions to provide the precise information required. He should answer in complete sentences. He is allowed to use the words in the passage. The teacher should provide practice in oral comprehension until she is sure pupils are able to answer the questions correctly." (*ibid*, 1982:44.)

These statements cast the pupil and teacher in the respective roles of candidate and coach, and encouraged critics like Varghese to write:

"The aim of the 1982 Syllabus seems to have been to achieve a better match between teaching and eventual testing in the GCE 'O' Level examination." (Varghese, 1994:298)

This is demonstrated in the recommendations regarding reading and

writing. The range of writing tasks is almost entirely confined to those set in the 'O' level English language examination: narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative. In the lower secondary classes pupils are required only to narrate and describe. They have to wait until Secondary Three before encountering argumentative and expository texts, when "more proficient pupils can write expository compositions such as 'The Benefits of Reading' and 'The Motor-car - a Curse or a Blessing'" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:34), titles typical of those set at the time in the 'O' level English language examination.

Teachers are encouraged to give pupils the opportunity to practise other kinds of writing:

"In addition, pupils should be taught forms of writing which are important for their practical, functional value." (*ibid*:24.)

However, "In addition" clearly indicates which kind of writing the syllabus views as the most important.

Extensive reading, too, is sacrificed as the examinations approach:

"Since pupils at Sec 4 (*sic*) are preparing for the examination, they may have less time than they had at Sec 3 (*sic*) to read for pleasure and do project work . . . However, if time permits, extensive reading should be continued but with reduced frequency. For instance instead of reading one book a month, pupils could read a book every two months or once a term." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:45.)

Such prescriptiveness, motivated by high stakes examinations, has engendered limited teaching and learning opportunities.

Thus, one area of concern is that the 1982 Syllabus does not reflect an assessment of the needs of Singaporean pupils and the society in which they live: rather, to a large extent, it reflects the assessment

requirements established in Cambridge before the syllabus was written.

Widdowson felt the examinations were able to exert a negative influence on language teaching and learning in part because the syllabus itself provided insufficient direction to teachers:

"(The New English Language Syllabuses) specify sets of Language items to be covered in each year but leave the sequencing of items within each set to the discretion of the teachers . . . this *laissez faire* line is in sharp contrast to the tight control imposed by the assessment scheme . . . This will naturally tend to focus the teachers' mind on techniques for getting his pupils through the examination and the examinations being what they are at present, this is unlikely to promote effective language learning." (Widdowson, 1981:4)

"*Laissez faire*", may seem an inappropriate description of a government authorised document produced for the express purpose of intervention. However, little guidance is offered to teachers or material writers regarding when to teach the syllabus's linguistic content. As Widdowson suggests, the 1982 Syllabus could be described as four syllabuses, one for each of the four year levels in the secondary school. For each year, the "Objectives of Teaching English" are stated, followed by advice on how to achieve these objectives through teaching various "items and skills". No recommendations are made regarding the sequencing of items and skills to be covered within that academic year.

Neither is there a clear reflection of the progression of learning across the academic year levels. Where possible, the 1982 Syllabus states the objectives for each year in terms of length. For example, for Secondary 1, "The recommended maximum length of the reading comprehension passage is about 400 words. This is intended as a general guide only, and not as a requirement"; and "The recommended length of the free

composition is between 200 to 250 words. This is intended as a general guide only and not as a requirement" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:5). By Secondary 2, these recommendations have been extended to 600 and 250 words respectively.

However, progression of learning cannot be measured by length: a short passage by Lawrence cannot be compared to a longer extract from Enid Blyton. The 1982 Syllabus recognises this, and tries to reflect progression in its sequence of objectives through statements like: "By the end of Sec 2 (*sic*), the pupil should be able to do all the language tasks set out for Sec 1 (*sic*) pupils (see [page 5](#)) at a higher level of language use and with longer texts" (*ibid*:20). However, a great deal depends upon having realised an appropriate standard in Secondary 1. In the discussion of the objectives for each year level little attention is paid to language beyond the sentence level, so it is not easy to gauge an appropriate standard.

Listening and speaking outcomes are identified, too, though again, progression is not clearly described. In Secondary 1, a pupil is expected to ". . . understand announcements, short talks or passages read out to him" (*ibid*:5). By Secondary 3, it is suggested the pupil should ". . . understand talks that he listens to and passages read out to him" (*ibid*:32).

A language syllabus reflecting a coherent development of skills which can "function as a retrospective record, a basis for the evaluation of learning amenable to evaluation and adaptation" (Breen, 1987a:82), is extremely difficult to achieve. However, the 1982 Syllabus's task is compounded because its dominant objective is to prepare pupils for examinations. Other learning objectives are sometimes in conflict with this

overriding aim. Thus, the Secondary 4 objectives do not always build upon the objectives for Secondary 1-3. For example, the procedures for the 'O' level Oral examination are suddenly introduced into the discussion of the objectives for Aural-Oral English (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:43-4). In an assessment driven system, there is little motivation to attempt the difficult task of articulating a coherent development of language learning relevant to learners' needs when assessment modes are already prescribed and clearly articulated.

It was also felt there was insufficient direction concerning how to teach. Gefen felt there should be a more prescriptive approach to methodology:

" . . . the secondary school syllabus should be less tolerant than it is regarding the freedom it gives to teachers to use whichever method they wish. In this way they are officially allowed to use noncommunicative teaching techniques!" (Gefen, 1982:14)

Goh, a specialist inspector with the Ministry of Education, evidently agreed with this criticism, too:

" . . . although certain principles underlying teaching methods are given, no particular approach for English teaching is recommended to the teacher." (Goh, 1991a:136)

Certainly, the 1982 Syllabus is concerned with content rather than pedagogy. Nevertheless, it does make some statements about approaches to teaching. In a brief section on "Teaching Approaches" it recommends:

- ". an integrative treatment of the different language components and skills
- . a cumulative and spiral use of the individual language items and skills taught
- . the need for continual consolidation and reinforcement
- . continual relation of language teaching to the needs of other subjects and to everyday situations." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1-2)

In addition, although the 1982 Syllabus states clearly, ". . . this syllabus does not dictate any particular teaching strategy . . ." (*ibid*:1), some suggestions are made regarding methodology. For example, after instructing the teacher to, "Teach interpreting a speaker's attitude or mood through an understanding of speech idioms", the syllabus suggests:

"Pupils can be given short dialogues to listen to and can be questioned on the speaker's attitude or mood as indicated by speech idioms such as 'not on your life', 'I've told you a million times'." (*ibid*:21.)

However, classroom activities are not always suggested, and often very general statements are made instead: "Revise the writing skills taught in Sec 1 (*sic*) (see pages 10 & 11) but at a slightly higher level of language use, and with longer paragraphs or texts" (*ibid*:23).

The absence of guidelines may have resulted in some fairly mundane methodology. Considering manpower development requirements in Singapore in 1991, Low *et al* were emphatic:

". . . education in terms of learning by rote in an unstimulating environment must be replaced by something more challenging, innovative and inspiring." (Low *et al*, 1991:214)

A third area of concern, then, was that the syllabus was not sufficiently specific about how to teach.

It was much more specific about what to teach, but this did not endear it to its critics either:

"In essence, this approach follows a conventional structuralist-behaviourist line which defines the learner's task as the gradual accumulation of a knowledge of language system by means of structural practice." (Widdowson, 1981:5)

And:

". . . the Syllabus concentrates on grammar almost to the exclusion of other language components (beyond some broad remarks in the introduction);" (Gefen, 1982:13)

Representatives of the Ministry of Education eventually agreed:

"The existing English syllabuses reflect the Singapore school setting and expectations in the late 1970's. They are structural grammar-based syllabuses taking the view that grammar can be taught systematically as a set of rules to be mastered and transferred by the learner into proficient language use. While the syllabuses took cognizance of the significant place of reading comprehension and writing skills in the English programme, the grammar sections of the syllabus tend to dominate and therefore be given undue emphasis in English programmes in schools." (Mok, 1987:148)

A reading of the syllabus document supports this criticism. In the 1982 Syllabus, the overview of what was to be taught in the English language lessons at all levels in the secondary school is called "Outline of Course Content". This title implies there is a finite body of knowledge appropriate to all pupils. Teachers merely have to convey that body of knowledge. It consists of five aural/oral skills; six reading skills; and four writing skills. Concluding the outline of course content is a long list of items, knowledge about which will help the pupil when "improving expression" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:3-4). There is a total of 63 items on the list. 15 are concerned with vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, the remaining 48 are related to grammar. Thus, the content description is narrow in its definition, concentrating substantially on a knowledge of the language, in particular its grammar.

Naturally, other aspects of language learning are neglected:

"Language syllabuses in Singapore have so far been based on discrete points of grammar and not on the interaction between and among sentences in a connected discourse or utterance. . . Rules of grammar have been emphasised at the expense of rules of use." (Lee, 1983:9)

To do justice to the 1982 Syllabus, some, albeit superficial,

attention is paid to the cohesion and coherence of discourse. For example, considering reading skills for Secondary 1 pupils, the syllabus states "Pupils should be able to understand the use of words that help link ideas in prose writing". This is followed by a short passage and sample questions intended to draw pupils' attention to the relevant words and phrases which demonstrate the passage's cohesion (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:8).

Nevertheless, Lee's perception that language learning beyond the sentence level is neglected is justified. Gefen felt that vocabulary enrichment, extensive reading, speaking skills and listening comprehension (Gefen, 1982:13 and 14) were neglected, too. His views were echoed by a representative of the Ministry of Education:

"Another reason for revision is that some sections of the syllabus are inadequate in reflecting the true importance of the skills concerned. For example, the syllabuses tend to give insufficient attention to listening and speaking skills and to the importance of extensive reading in an English programme." (Mok, 1987:148-9)

Again, the 1982 Syllabus reflects the truth of this statement. It has seven specific aims: only two are related to listening and speaking.

Thus, a fourth criticism is that the 1982 Syllabus concentrated on grammar to the detriment of other aspects of language learning.

A further area of concern is articulated by Gefen who complained that pupils had far too much exposure to British literary English, and suggested that other varieties be presented to them, including ". . . formal and informal speech and informal writing . . ." (Gefen, 1982:14). However, a syllabus dominated by assessment procedures which require only a command of formal British English is unlikely to encourage a

consideration of other varieties of English. In consequence, the whole concept of appropriacy is neglected.

This concentration on grammar and formal writing, using British English as the standard, may have contributed to Foley's criticism:

"If the English Language Syllabus in Singapore stressed fluency rather than accuracy only, alternative approaches could be taken to the teaching of English for those children who are clearly fluent in English." (Foley, 1988:63)

The implication here is that the 1982 Syllabus does not take account of the wide variety of pupils' linguistic backgrounds. The heterogeneous situation in Singapore requires a broader interpretation of English language teaching than the 1982 Syllabus was prepared to encourage. Thus, a sixth area of concern is that the 1982 Syllabus does not promote an approach to teaching which will exploit the linguistic abilities of all pupils. Its concentration on accuracy within a limited range of language experience means that teaching could adversely affect the language development of pupils with a more fluent command of English.

Another area of concern was expressed by Widdowson, who felt an English language syllabus should be written with greater reference to how English was used in other areas of the school curriculum:

". . . there is a case for considering syllabus design in English not as a self-contained exercise but one which needs to be keyed in with the syllabus design of other subjects as an element in an integrated curriculum for primary and secondary education." (Widdowson, 1981:9)

Foley's admittedly limited research in the late 1980s into the teaching of writing in two upper primary and two lower secondary classes led him to a similar conclusion. He found that all classes observed had

opportunities to write for only a very restricted variety of purposes and audiences; and that "to assist pupils to eliminate errors of usage, teachers and textbooks stress controlled writing which moves from direct copying to a more or less detailed outline for the pupil to follow" (Foley, 1991:276). Reflecting on the consequences of this, Foley points out that though secondary school teachers of all content subjects may assume that pupils entering the school will be able to use textbooks and other written materials as a source of information, in practice this is unlikely. He calls for more emphasis on the teaching of genre rather than "grammar, lexis and discourse patterns (grammaticalised connectors)" (*ibid*:278) as encouraged by the 1982 Syllabus, so that pupils will be "ready to learn the language of the disciplines, the functional varieties or genres which frame the discourse of subject areas in secondary, tertiary levels of education and the world outside" (*ibid*:278).

The creation of a curriculum in which all syllabuses taught in English are informed by the subject teachers' awareness of their pupils' development in that language, and in which the English language teachers are aware of and enabled to respond to the language demands made by other subject syllabuses may seem daunting. However, the circumstances in which syllabuses are written and implemented in Singapore make it more feasible than in other countries. For example, a number of the syllabus writers interviewed believed the 1982 syllabus was revised because:

"It was understood that after ten years, it was time to review a syllabus anyway. There were other syllabuses being produced in other subject areas, too, like maths." (Appendix Nv:491)

Since the New Education System was introduced in the early 1980s as a result of the Goh Report, all syllabuses are expected to be reviewed at about the same time. Thus, there could be a greater inter-dependence between syllabuses than there is currently.

Another reason for change mentioned in the interviews and in the request to the Curriculum Development Committee for permission to revise the syllabus (Specialist Inspectors of English [SIELs] 7 and 9, 1987:2, *bibliography 3*) was the need to incorporate all the developments since the writing of the 1982 syllabus. For example, in 1984 the Normal level examination, the equivalent of the old CSE in UK, was introduced. Pupils preparing for this examination were placed in the Normal stream:

"There was a special syllabus for the Normal Stream, a listening comprehension syllabus . . . a lot of *ad hoc* materials existed as separate documents to be used in conjunction with the syllabus. They all needed to be brought together." (Appendix Nvi:496)

Not surprisingly, by 1987 the Ministry of Education, the originator of these "*ad hoc* materials", was distancing itself from the 1982 Syllabus:

"The fact that the present syllabuses are out of step with the firmly held views of Singapore language specialists on language teaching gives a valid reason for considering revision." (Mok, 1987:148)

Mok, in 1987 a Deputy Director in the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning Division, is referring to the views reflected in English language teaching projects then in operation in Singapore's primary and secondary schools. There were three projects, all begun since the implementation of the 1982 Syllabus: Reading and English Acquisition Programme (REAP) aimed at the pupils in the first three years of primary

education; Active Communicative Teaching (ACT) aimed at pupils in the final three years of the six year primary education programme; and the Project to Assist Selected Schools in English Skills (PASSES) in which forty secondary schools with low pass rates in the public examinations were identified and then helped to develop a teaching programme which would improve their candidates' performance (Specialist Inspector of English Language [SIEL] 5:1984). All three programmes emphasised pupil-centred, activity-based, interactive and communicative approaches to the teaching of English. These approaches were not emphasised in the 1982 Syllabus.

Ten areas of concern have been identified. Inevitably, overlap prevents a clear division into concerns which may be of separate interest to language planners, curriculum developers, teachers and Ministry of Education officials, but the list below attempts to present them beginning with the general and moving to the particular. The 1982 Syllabus:

- i does not reflect the needs of Singaporean pupils or the society in which they live; rather, it is assessment-driven
- ii pays insufficient attention to the heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds of the pupils; in particular, the more fluent pupils may be penalised by an overriding concern for accuracy
- iii places too much emphasis on grammar so other important areas of language teaching are neglected
- iv encourages concentration on British literary English, thus other varieties of English are not recognised and the concept of appropriacy is not properly considered

- v does not adequately relate the pupils' acquisition of English to their use of English across the whole curriculum
- vi does not articulate a coherent progression of language learning, within or across academic levels: thus, there is inadequate guidance on when to teach syllabus content; and no rigorous basis for the evaluation of pupils' learning, or of the syllabus itself
- vii provides insufficient direction concerning how to teach
- viii does not reflect the views expressed in English language teaching projects in operation in schools since 1984
- ix does not incorporate the various developments in the education system since its introduction
- x has achieved its life expectancy

These areas of concern, then, provided considerable motivation for syllabus revision, at least in the view of linguists who had occasion to look at the syllabus, and language specialists in Singapore who had implemented projects reflecting a broader interpretation of English Language teaching.

3.1 Immediate Catalyst for Change

The immediate impetus for the revision of the 1982 Syllabus came from the specialist inspectors in the Curriculum Planning Division of the Ministry of Education. Two submitted a paper to the Curriculum Development Committee to officially begin the process of syllabus revision (SIELs 7 and 9, 1987). They were motivated to do so in part by the perceived discrepancy between teaching projects in operation in schools

since 1984 and the 1982 Syllabus. In May 1987 they consulted a meeting of senior secondary school teachers:

"Every teacher of English (*at the meeting*) was given a questionnaire to complete and the contents have been received and collated by the Syllabus Committee. The findings generally indicate that a revision of the syllabuses is necessary to reflect more closely the more interactive teaching/learning approaches presently introduced in schools" (*ibid*:2)

The paper from which this quotation is taken, Revision of the English Language Syllabuses (Primary and Secondary), is located in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2, (English Unit, 1981-1992). Unfortunately, the file does not include the questionnaire, the number of respondents, or the findings.

"(T)he more interactive teaching/learning approaches presently introduced in schools" (SIELs 7 and 9, 1987:2) had been introduced in only forty secondary schools through the PASSES programme. The programme was evaluated only in terms of the participating schools' 'O' level examination results (SIEL 5:1988). Teachers involved in the PASSES programme were never asked whether they had adopted its methodology. Even if they had, teachers in nearly one hundred other secondary schools had no experience of the programme.

This is flimsy evidence on which to instigate wholesale syllabus revision. The English Unit was running the risk of introducing a revised syllabus which would "build on bedrock which is the sand of previously unimplemented change" (Lewin, 1991b:19). They may simply have been moving with the tide running in favour of communicative syllabuses.

3.2 The 1982 Syllabus: A Structural Syllabus

The whole concept of a structural syllabus, and the methodology which became associated with it, was under attack in the 1980s. To inform this criticism of the 1982 Syllabus, a structural syllabus, some of the strengths and weaknesses of such syllabuses will be reviewed.

The 1982 Syllabus could also be described as a Type A Syllabus (White, 1988:44-45; White and Robinson, 1995:93-94), one which focusses on content. It could be seen, too, as a synthetic syllabus, in which "different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of the language is built up . . ." (Wilkins, 1976:2, quoted in Long and Crookes, 1992:28).

One of the major difficulties with such syllabuses is that linguists disagree about what constitutes the most appropriate description of the content, the target language. Nevertheless, there is long tradition of linguistic analysis and description, descriptions with which many teachers are familiar, perhaps first meeting them as pupils themselves. Thus, many teachers are likely to judge the practicality and feasibility of other approaches to syllabus design on the basis of their knowledge of the structural syllabus.

Such comparisons may well place the structural syllabus in a favourable light. It has been suggested that an analysis and description of the target language provides a systematic framework upon which to design a syllabus (Breen, 1987a:86). However, Gonzalez complains, and the writers of the 1982 Syllabus can be heard applauding:

"Sequence was a problem which was never really solved, since after treating the basic functors of the language, there was no really principled basis on which to sequence. Other than vague guidelines such as frequency, degree of difficulty, functional load, and prior knowledge specification of certain structures . . . there was no real guide for sequencing." (Gonzalez, 1987:92)

Second language research suggests that learners do not naturally acquire language through learning items in a linear sequence, "but as parts of complex mappings of groups of form function relationships" (Long and Crookes, 1992:31). However, a more rigorous basis for syllabus design, taking into account how learners acquire language, awaits articulation. Widdowson, for one, does not see such a development as feasible, not least because such a syllabus would have to include learners' interlanguage forms, clearly inappropriate in a syllabus designed to specify what to include in a teaching programme (Widdowson, 1987:76).

In a structural syllabus, the focus is on the teaching of isolated linguistic items, often practised *ad nauseam* though discrete, uncontextualised exercises. This kind of practice, concerned as it is with accuracy in artificial situations, is unlikely to lead to authentic language use. Perhaps it is hoped that through learning and constantly practising the rules of language, learners will be able to make the generalisations necessary to apply those rules in other situations.

Clearly some learners have, as many Singaporeans with a native-like proficiency in the language were taught this way. Equally clearly, many learners have not found this a successful procedure. However, a classroom which reflects the need for accuracy through learners' completion of exercises in which answers are either right or wrong is very comforting for

a teacher. This is particularly true in a paternalistic society like Singapore's, in which exploration of alternatives is not always encouraged.

In a stereotypical lesson in the structural/behaviourist tradition, teachers knew where they stood: at the front of the classroom in command of the business of learning. Sadly, from this position, a number of teachers did not take cognizance of the learners' existing knowledge and often denied learners the opportunity to direct their own learning (White, 1988:44-45).

It must be emphasised that this brief description of a structural syllabus makes no allowance for the very varied interpretations it may have received in the hands of Singaporean teachers and materials writers. However, its theoretical base does not take account of available research. Its content is limited to descriptions of the code of the target language, though no one description is universally accepted and content is not easily sequenced. Language items are often taught in isolation in linear progression. Teaching is frequently characterised by teacher domination of the classroom, which may limit the learners' opportunities to contribute to the lesson.

However, if the structural syllabus is to be abandoned, it will not be easy to replace. The obvious alternative is a syllabus whose objective is the achievement of communicative competence:

"At this stage, our theories of communicative competence are abstract, speculative and fragmentary, but progress in this area has nevertheless been real. We now know enough about the schemata and processes which guide certain aspects of communication to suspect that lists of target behaviours are inadequate and possibly counter-productive either as ends specifications or as the basis for programme and classroom

implementation. What we do not have, unfortunately, is an adequate descriptive account of the constructs of communicative competence that could be used in place of such lists." (Johnson, 1989:5)

This would have been cold comfort to the 1991 Syllabus writers, who completed their task in 1990.

3.3 Conclusion

Relating this discussion to the features desirable in a national English language syllabus in Singapore (Chapter One:21-23), it is clear that the majority of the features were not reflected in the 1982 Syllabus.

However, the syllabus did have some commendable features. Teachers may have perceived one to have been its low profile. Each school received only two copies of the syllabus, which were often kept in a cupboard (Appendix Niv:486). Had they consulted it, many teachers may have found it balanced between simplicity and complexity and to be reasonably user friendly since it considered a description of language with which they were likely to be familiar.

Teachers and pupils who were aware of the syllabus's existence may have felt it was informed by their moral concerns, values and ideals. Its emphasis on grammar, accuracy and examinations reflects the views of teachers and pupils expressed in the research (Chapter Two:41-43; 50-53). This same emphasis would have endeared it to representatives of institutes of further education, employees and parents, too. Employees may have felt it met their needs and expectations since it was concerned with accuracy (Chapter Two:56-58), and parents and institutes of further education would have appreciated the emphasis on examinations. Thus,

a number of stakeholders would have seen the 1982 syllabus as practical and feasible.

Unfortunately, the perceptions of all these stakeholders can only be the subject of speculation since their views have not been recorded. Revision of the 1982 Syllabus was based very largely on the views of linguists and Ministry of Education officials.

A further commendable feature was the coherent theoretical framework - a classical humanist philosophy underpinning a structural, grammar-based approach. The next chapter will consider whether this theoretical framework informed the teaching materials generated by the 1982 Syllabus to reflect its view of English teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR

1982 Syllabus: Teaching Materials Generated

4.0 The Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore

The Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS) was established by the Ministry of Education in 1980 to support the introduction of the new syllabuses written as a result of the 1979 Goh Report. In 1979, Dr. Goh himself invited Robert Morris and Gerald Thompson to Singapore to meet Ministry of Education officials, visit schools and observe teachers. One of the recommendations made in their subsequent report was to provide teaching resources which would address a perceived lack of teacher expertise:

"By all accounts, and by our very limited observations, the teaching is extremely didactic, permitting little by way of dialogue between the teacher and the taught, whether at the low level of questioning, which tests only factual recall, or at the higher level, which provokes thought and inference. The teachers, we understand, rely heavily on the textbooks, to which they gear what they say and which they ask the children to memorise. The parents, likewise, we are told, need the reassurance of seeing textbooks in the home. Methods which evade the use of textbooks can be, and have in the past been deeply disturbing to parents. . . ." (Morris and Thompson, 1979:6, *bibliography 3*)

And:

"Teachers keep closely to the text book, and these books do not help them probe deeply into the minds of the children and help them to reason for themselves . . . Better books are required, and other resources should be brought to bear. The Ministry itself should take a hand in textbook and media production." (*ibid*:12)

Thus, CDIS was established to support the introduction of new syllabuses and to produce materials which would inspire confidence in anxious parents and enable teachers to be less didactic.

CDIS intended to achieve this by using its own experts to:

" . . . plan, design, write and develop systematically the curriculum instructional materials to match faithfully and creatively the intended objectives, content and standards of each prescribed syllabus." (Yeoh, 1984:5, *unpublished*)

4.1 Course in Learning and Using English

Within the Curriculum Development Institute, the Department of English Language and Social Studies is responsible for writing English language teaching materials. In 1982, this department identified a team of specialist writers and a project director to produce course materials for secondary schools based on the 1982 English Language Syllabus.

The course materials are entitled Course in Learning and Using English (CLUE). They consist of two series: one for Normal pupils, working towards the 'N' level examination, roughly equivalent to the CSE examination; and one for Express and Special pupils, working towards the 'O' level examination. Each series includes a teachers' guide, pupils' course book and workbook, and listening comprehension tapes for every year level. In addition, there are video tapes, overhead transparencies, picture-cue cards and role play cards. CLUE represented "a multi-media approach towards material design" (Sandosham and Schoonbeck¹, 1988:4, *bibliography 3*).

4.2 The 1982 Syllabus and CLUE: Aims and Principles

A clear rationale for the development of CLUE is provided by the project director in personal communication. (See Figure 3, next page.)

The four aims here are similar to the four aims of the 1982 Syllabus. It is likely that "to provide for training and practice in a wide range of communicative language skills" is related to two of the 1982 Syllabus's aims: "to enable pupils to communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms"; and "to provide the necessary skills for functional literacy" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1). Understandably, the

¹ Sandosham and Schoonbeck were, respectively, project director and specialist writer of CLUE

FIGURE 3
Rationale for CLUE

<u>FRAMEWORK FOR COURSE IN LEARNING AND USING ENGLISH</u>		
LANGUAGE VIEW		
The learner needs language for 'real and purposeful communication'		
AIMS		
.	To provide for training and practice in a wide range of communicative language skills	
.	To reinforce and consolidate the skills and knowledge acquired previously	
.	To develop abilities to use English in other subjects in the school curriculum	
.	To develop and practice the necessary skills in preparation for the GCE 'N' and 'O' level exams	
DESIGN PRINCIPLES		
.	Language skills should be fused	
.	Language should be taught 'above sentence level'	
.	Language learning involves learners in interaction	
.	Language learning requires practice, consolidation and application	
.	Language learning must be stimulating and interesting	
METHODOLOGY		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Presentation</u>	<u>Stimulus</u>
Pair/Groupwork		Print Materials
Discussion	<u>Practice</u>	AVA Materials
Project Work		
Dramatisation	<u>Consolidation</u>	
Role Play		
Debates	<u>Application</u>	
Games		
Written Work		

Source: Chan, 1987:12, unpublished

course book writers' emphasis is on the means rather than the outcome, but it is likely that both syllabus and course book writers would share the hope that the "training and practice" would "enable pupils to communicate clearly and effectively". It can also be assumed that the "communicative language skills" would include the "necessary skills for functional literacy" and take "oral and written forms".

The second aim identified by the project director is "to reinforce and consolidate the skills and knowledge acquired previously". This is similar to the syllabus's aim "to consolidate and extend the knowledge and skills of English that the pupils have learnt in their Primary school" (Ministry of

Education, Singapore, 1982:1). The director's omission of "Primary school" emphasises that a number of pupils acquire English informally, as well as through the formal instruction delivered in the primary school. Neither in this rationale nor in the introduction to any of the CLUE publications, does the concept of "extend(ing) the knowledge and skills of English" appear. It could be implied in the director's fourth aim: "to develop and practice the necessary skills in preparation for the GCE 'N' and 'O' level exams". If the writers interpreted the idea of "extend(ing) the knowledge and skills of English" to mean preparing pupils for their public examinations, they were perhaps adhering more closely to the spirit of the syllabus than if they had simply observed its aims.

The third aim is "to develop abilities to use English in other subjects in the school curriculum". The 1982 syllabus makes a similar statement: "to provide pupils with the language proficiency that will enable them to learn their content subjects" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1). This is a very specific aim, suggesting that the features of written and spoken discourse appropriate to, say, geography or general science, be taught. Developing "abilities to use English in other subjects in the school curriculum", however, has wider implications:

" . . . the . . . aim in the syllabus which states 'provide pupils with the language proficiency that will enable them to learn their content subjects' was taken to include the teaching of study skills such as note-taking, summarizing, creating suitable titles, using tables of content and indexes, all of which were treated in the CLUE materials. It also called for the inclusion of more higher-order reading and thinking skills in the course, the treatment of which is evident throughout the four levels, particularly the upper secondary levels." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:23)

A comparison between the stated aims of the 1982 Syllabus and the CLUE course books it generated, then, suggests that the latter place a greater emphasis on generative, communicative skills. The aims of the

CLUE materials, then, reflect a tension between a desire to provide pupils with the English language skills necessary for everyday communication and the need to train successful candidates for a traditional examination.

The writing team favoured the view that pupils should be provided with the English language skills necessary for everyday communication:

"The main concept underlying the overall framework of the materials is based on the view that the learner needs language for 'real' and 'purposeful communication'. Hence, an overriding principle in the design of the materials is that Language must be taught in a meaningful context to be meaningful to the learner, and to be able to generate further learning." (*ibid*: Appendix 4.1:3)

This view of English language teaching is reflected in the design principles identified in Figure 3:94. Support for all these design principles can be found in the 1982 Syllabus.

The first design principle states: "Language skills should be fused". The 1982 Syllabus suggests pupils ". . . work on projects of general interest such as 'The use and abuse of advertisements'. Such inquiry work will allow a pupil to use and practise certain English skills. He will be reading for information or comprehending and when he is writing down the information, he will be note-making or summarising" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:34).

"Language should be taught 'above sentence level'" is the second design principle. Though receiving only superficial consideration, this is also recommended in the 1982 Syllabus: "Pupils should be able to understand the use of words that help link ideas in prose writing" (*ibid*:8).

A third design principle is "Language learning involves learners in interaction". The 1982 Syllabus suggests that to facilitate "carrying out a conversation . . . pupils can team up in pairs or small groups to talk about their hobbies, their likes and dislikes . . ." (*ibid*:7).

"Language learning requires practice, consolidation and application", is another principle upon which the course book's methodological approach is based. A cumulative and spiral use of the individual language items and skills taught together with continual consolidation and reinforcement are recommended in the 1982 Syllabus (*ibid*:1).

The final principle is: "Language learning must be stimulating and interesting". It is more difficult to find this view stated in the syllabus, but it is suggested that authentic materials be used because they may provide interesting examples of grammar in use (*ibid*:2).

The rationale for the course books, then, can be found in a careful reading of the syllabus. The fundamental difference is in the relative emphasis placed upon learners' needs. The syllabus suggests the learners' overriding need is to pass the examination. However, the overriding principle in the course books' design is to provide learners with language for "real and purposeful communication" (Figure 3:94). Thus, the course books reflect and give greater emphasis to aspects of the syllabus which highlight the need for "real and purposeful communication".

The course books, then, have not interpreted the "intended objectives, contents and standards" (Yeoh, 1984:5) of the 1982 Syllabus with absolute fidelity.

Sandosham and Schoonbeck justify the writing team's creativity rather than fidelity of interpretation in their final report on the materials:

"While the task of the team was to develop materials to fulfil the requirements of the then 'new' syllabus, the latter in no way restricted the team from manipulating the syllabus for example, by expanding its goals and objectives or by placing greater emphasis on neglected skills or new skills. . . while a syllabus may prescribe what pupils must learn, or even advocate a set of principles for teaching and learning, it permits scope for interpretation. This gives the materials writer room for creativity and thus makes for innovation." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:22-23)

Clearly, the writers regarded themselves as mediators rather than delivery systems (Widdowson, 1993).

4.3 CLUE: Implied View of English Language Teaching

The writers produced a course which was regarded as quite radical:

"CLUE represents a new approach in so far as it reflects modern linguistic and educational thinking ('the communicative approach') as to the aims of Language Teaching while at the same time continuing the Singapore tradition of stressing accuracy, correct usage . . ." (Gefen quoted in Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:Appendix 5.7:3)

The materials are presented in the form of a series of units of work.

The organisational focus of each unit is a topic, for example A Day in the Life Of . . . (CDIS, 1983b, CLUE 1 Normal:Unit 3), and Presenting Yourself (CDIS, 1986a, CLUE 4 Normal:Unit 2). The topics have been chosen and interpreted so that they provide a context for the pupils to practise communicative skills they need, or will need, to use. Thus, many of the activities integrate reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The majority of units follow the same format: Listening Comprehension; Language Use; Reading Comprehension; Vocabulary Expansion; Punctuation/Spelling; Writing; Word List.

Within this organisational framework, teachers are encouraged to help pupils achieve objectives expressed as communicative functions, for example: ". . . give instructions on how something is done", and "explain why an action is necessary" (CDIS, 1984a, CLUE 2 Express:Unit 13). These objectives are achieved through activities emphasising accuracy, for example reviewing the present simple tense through studying a dialogue and completing a fill-in-the-blank exercise (CDIS, 1983b, CLUE 1 Normal, Unit 1:1-2); and through activities which place a greater emphasis on fluency, for example a group discussion on Teacher's Day, based on the

views of parents, a pupil, a teacher and a principal (CDIS, 1986a, CLUE Normal 4, Unit 4:47-48).

It was anticipated that this bringing together of communicative and structuralist based approaches to language teaching would be likely to cause problems to a number of teachers. Certainly, the teacher implementing the CLUE materials would have a far wider role than that of an examination coach, the role most emphasised in the 1982 Syllabus. Faithful implementation would require the teacher to be a guide, facilitator and consultant. The teacher's traditional, central and leading role would need to be modified. Thus, a teacher's guide was regarded as essential:

"It would be essential to have a Teacher's Guide to accompany the materials largely because of the 'newness' of the approaches and the methodology adopted and also because of the possibility of untrained English Language teachers having to handle the materials." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:6)

The teacher's guides provide an insight into the role of the pupil:

"Be prepared for a lot of discussion in this exercise as different cultures have different methods of cooking. Accept pupils' answers as long as they can justify them. For example, some pupils may argue that beef can be fried if it is minced, made into little balls and coated in batter." (CDIS, 1986b, CLUE 'O' Level [4E/5N] Teacher's Guide:63)

This advice suggests the CLUE writers see pupils as active contributors to the lessons. Through oral interaction with peers and the teacher, pupils will develop all aspects of their English language skills.

The view of English language teaching implied in the CLUE materials, then, is more dynamic and interactive than is suggested in the 1982 Syllabus. Attention is paid to accuracy, and test papers are included in all course books; but the need for pupils to achieve fluency in authentic communicative situations is addressed, too. Thus, there is an attempt to balance the requirements of the examination with the pupils' need for

communicative skills, though their control of these may not be examined.

The CLUE materials and the 1982 Syllabus, then, do differ in some important ways. The philosophy on which the 1982 Syllabus is based is classical humanist. A structuralist approach to English teaching is envisaged, and there is an overriding concern with preparing candidates for the examination. In contrast, the CLUE writers leaned more towards progressivism. The CLUE materials place more importance on the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and on interactive and contextualised teaching than is suggested by the syllabus. The implications for the role of the teacher and the pupil, and the implied view of English language teaching conveyed to the teachers, are different from those reflected in the syllabus. Many teachers using CLUE would have had to reconsider their whole approach to teaching English, which was now expected to be more learner-centred.

4.4 Other Interpretations of the 1982 Syllabus: Commercially Produced Course Books

If teachers did not like the view of English teaching presented in the CLUE materials, commercially produced course books provided an alternative. Publishers are required to apply to the Ministry of Education to have their materials approved for sale to schools. Course books are reviewed to determine whether they reflect the current syllabus. If they are found to be appropriate, the books are published with a stamp stating they have been approved by the Ministry of Education, and the titles appear in an annual publication sent out to schools, the List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials for Secondary Schools.

In some quarters, this system was seen as prescriptive:

"In Singapore, the textbook is manufactured according to certain specifications proposed by the Ministry of Education.

Although there is an amount of flexibility in the size, shape, model, colour and general appearance of the bodywork and interior, the basic mechanical arrangement must conform to certain guidelines before it is approved and granted the seal of roadworthiness. After all, it is the Ministry of Education who knows the route and who maps out the itinerary for students." (Fry and Mercer, 1979:20-21)

Despite this tongue-in-cheek criticism of the Ministry of Education's top down approach to curriculum development, six course books were approved for the period 1982-1991, in addition to the CLUE materials (Education Services Division, 1984, 1985 and 1986; Curriculum Planning Division 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991a, *bibliography 3*).

At first sight, these books appear to reflect a variety of interpretations of the 1982 Syllabus. A.R.B. Etherton's series SCOPE was recommended for use in schools from 1983 to 1992. Having stated that the SCOPE books share the aims of the 1982 Syllabus, Etherton makes no bones about his approach:

"In view of the attention which has been paid in recent years to the communicative approach, it is as well to stress the point that *there can be no effective communication without an adequate language base. . . .* A major aim of this series is thus to provide materials which enable pupils to understand English and then to use the language accurately and effectively." (Etherton, 1982a:iii)

And:

"A completely integrated approach is not practical. Articles, adjectives, adverbs and connectives do not occur in one passage or situation to the exclusion of all others. Problems of agreement and the correct use of tenses arise in almost every English lesson. It thus seems wise to supplement the language work in content chapters by providing a REFERENCE AND REVIEW section . . . Pupils may not always find this type of work interesting. In a sense, that is not a crucial issue. Children come to school to learn and to make progress rather than to be entertained." (*ibid*:iv-v)

Etherton's interpretation, which sees grammatical knowledge as the real organisational focus of the English course and pupil interest as largely irrelevant, appears to be in sharp contrast to the interpretation reflected in New Expressway English, recommended in 1989. In the introduction to this series, the authors state:

"The books have been planned with the Singapore education system in mind, taking into account the primary and secondary syllabuses and the cultural backgrounds and interests of the students. The requirements of the GCE 'O' Level examination have been carefully considered. The English Language syllabus for the Express course, issued by the Ministry of Education, has been followed, and a basic aim of the series has been to provide 'an integrative treatment of the different language components and skills'." (Davis and Watts, 1988a:iv)

The last statement is taken from page 1 of the 1982 Syllabus. Certainly, the authors have tried to use a topic as an organisational focus for each chapter of their books, though not always successfully as the example below will illustrate. The integration of language skills, however, is less clear. In New Expressway English 1 (Davis and Watts 1988a), the last 102 of a total of 302 pages are devoted to a Grammar Reference. This differs from Etherton's Reference and Review section only in terms of organisation. Etherton categorises his exercises according to "parts of speech". Davis and Watts provide grammar exercises to supplement each chapter of the book. The exercises, though, are not related to the topic content of the chapters, and do not provide practice in the language skills required by the activities suggested in the relevant chapter.

For example, Chapter 10 of New Expressway English 1 is organised around the topic of Parents, and the Grammar Reference suggests the pupils consider question tags. This could be related in terms of topic, but is not. Instead, pupils are asked to:

"Fill in the gaps in the following conversation with the appropriate *question tags*."

Enlai: Your name is ____?

Rudy: Yes. Yours isn't Andy, ____?

Enlai: No, it isn't. It's Enlai. You've been taking your exams, ____?

Rudy: Yes, I have. But you haven't taken yours yet, ____?

Enlai: No, I haven't. You don't come from Singapore, ____?

Rudy: No, I don't. I come from Jakarta."

(Davis and Watts, 1988a:220)

Little attention seems to have been paid here to student interest or the use of authentic materials to provide interesting examples of grammar in use (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:2). Chapter 10 asks pupils to: discuss a father's duties; complete written and oral comprehension activities based on two written passages, respectively about a father and a mother; complete a listening comprehension activity based on the sequence of events in a performance by Houdini; present a group reading of a poem about a father; and write a prose description of a person, paying particular attention to how the description is organised. The use of question tags seems to be of less importance to the pupils here than, for example, the identification of the features which contribute to a text's cohesiveness. This is not considered in Chapter 10. However, a description of a performance by Houdini is included. This is hard to justify in a chapter entitled Parents, and reflects the rather uncertain use of a topic as the organisational focus for each chapter's activities.

Despite the stated differences in approach, then, it is possible that teachers using SCOPE and teachers using New Expressway English were teaching very similar English lessons. However, at least one author of a Ministry of Education approved course book hoped that his materials would be used to support a less grammar focussed, more integrated communicative approach to teaching English. Kirkpatrick, one of the authors of the Interlink course books approved from 1984 to 1988, poses the question: "To what extent can Communicative Language Teaching 'work' with a Grammar Based Syllabus?" (Kirkpatrick, 1985:174), and answers "quite happily" (*ibid*:190). He argues that "communicative language teaching is suited to many kinds of syllabuses" (*ibid*:181), though not everyone would agree with him (Widdowson, 1981).

Kirkpatrick *et al* have given some thought to the development of a course book which, whilst not always well integrated, does try to reinforce the teaching of the language content it introduces. There is an attempt to connect the grammar section in the units of work in Interlink to the general topic and suggested writing. For example, in the unit Another Assignment for 707 (Kirkpatrick *et al*, 1982b:97-111) the grammar section requires pupils to use reported speech to re-write a paragraph from Smiley's People. Reported speech is required again in the writing skills section in which pupils are asked to prepare a police statement.

How teachers exploited these approved course books, though, can only be the subject of speculation. No research has been directly conducted into what teachers actually did with the materials. However, a paper written by members of the English Unit in the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning Division gives one reason for revising the 1982 English Language Syllabus:

" . . . many teachers tend to compartmentalise their EL teaching, dealing with grammar, composition, reading comprehension and aural/oral work in separate lessons, without integrating the various language skills." (SIELs 7 and 9, 1987:1)

Evidence for such a statement may have come from the reports on school appraisals conducted by the Ministry of Education in the 1980s.

4.5 Conclusion

The Ministry of Education, then, ensured there was a strong degree of alignment between the 1982 Syllabus and the teaching materials it generated. The teaching of grammar, in particular, was given a high profile in the course books. There was considerable variation in the interpretation of the syllabus's plea for an "integrative treatment of the different language components and skills" (Ministry of Education, Singapore,

1982:1), perhaps reflecting the lack of direction regarding methodology. Nevertheless, the 1982 Syllabus did generate teaching materials in alignment with its principles, thus demonstrating one of the features necessary to successful syllabus implementation.

To some extent, this alignment of syllabus and course books could be accounted for by the clear direction provided by the public examinations. The writers of the syllabus and both the commercial and Ministry of Education teaching materials all shared one goal: to prepare the pupils to be good examination candidates. Despite Kirkpatrick's claim to a degree of independence in interpreting the syllabus, the preface to the Interlink series states:

"The first two books concentrate on reinforcing and then extending the students' English. They provide a platform for the second two books which prepare students for the Singapore G.C.E. (Cambridge) examination."
(Kirkpatrick, Saravanan, Kirkpatrick and Fry, 1983a:iii)

Regardless of how they interpret the syllabus, materials must be seen to contribute towards pupils' success in the public examinations.

It has been suggested (Chapter Two:41-43) that most teachers, too, see their major role to be preparing their pupils for examinations. It is appropriate, then, to look at the requirements of the 'O' and 'N' level English language examinations and consider their relationship to the 1982 Syllabus.

CHAPTER FIVE

1982 Syllabus: Assessment Modes

5.0 Examination Backwash

The assessment mode which dominates and informs all other English language assessment procedures is the GCE 'O' level examination, set by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). It is a high stakes examination, and other modes of assessment used in Singapore need to be considered in relation to it.

The concept of examination backwash has not been clearly defined and insufficient research has been conducted into the real effect of examinations (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Wall and Alderson, 1993). Nevertheless, in Singapore, where the rewards for examination success are great (Lee, 1991), the backwash effect is likely to be correspondingly great. Indeed, it has been argued that the 1982 Syllabus is a feature of the backwash from the introduction of the 1981 revised GCE 'O' level examination (Chapter Three:73-74). This discussion will consider the backwash effect of the GCE 'O' and 'N' level examinations on school-based formal assessment, and the alignment between the national and local assessment procedures and the 1982 Syllabus.

5.1 GCE 'O' Level Examination

The 'O' level examination is taken after four years of secondary education. Assessment is summative and based entirely on candidates' examination performance. The examination was revised for the 1981 candidature, removing multiple choice questions. The revised examination consisted of an oral paper, divided into three sections, and two written papers, one of which was divided into two parts.

Assessment of Aural/Oral Skills

The oral paper, set in England and conducted in Singapore, is worth about 17% of the marks (Examinations and Assessment Branch [EAB], 1991:1, *bibliography 3*).

In 1981, candidates were required to read aloud, answer comprehension questions on the reading, and then converse with the examiner on a topic he or she provided. Typically, even as late as 1990, candidates were asked to read passages like this:

"No one who has witnessed the seemingly effortless soaring of an albatross, the miraculous hovering of a humming-bird or the swift, erratic flight of a swallow can fail to be impressed by the bird's mastery of the air. But the apparent ease with which a bird flies conceals the enormous complexities and skills involved, as Man has discovered when he has tried to copy Nature." (UCLES, International Examinations, 1990c, Oral English Test 1, Day 1)

There are five more paragraphs of similar length comparing the aerodynamics of birds and aeroplanes, and discussing the evolution of birds. Candidates may be awarded up to ten marks for pronunciation and articulation, and up to ten marks for fluency and rhythm.

The questions based on this passage are:

- " 2 (a) How did Man discover that a bird's flight is not as simple as it looks? [1]
- 2 (b) What problem is common to all fliers? [2]
- 2 (c) Explain in what way Man's flight is different from that of birds. [3]
- 2 (d) Give any **two** ways in which nature has enabled birds to be so light. [2]
- 2 (e) What was the primary purpose of feathers? Name one other use not connected with flight. [2]" (*ibid*)

Candidates may use the words in the passage in their answers. The mark scheme is clear, the whole section carrying a maximum of ten marks.

Conversation topics set for the same day were:

- " 1 How do you expect your life to change in the 1990s?
- 2 Talk about a person you have always liked
- 3 How do foreign visitors affect life in Singapore?" (*ibid*)

The examiner selected a topic from this list. Up to ten marks could be awarded for the fluency and content of a candidate's conversation.

This assessment procedure, contributing such a small percentage of the total marks, can only be a token gesture to the idea that listening and speaking are significant aspects of language learning.

A quarter of the marks are for reading comprehension. Conspicuous by its absence is any attempt to assess listening comprehension other than incidentally through the conversation. As many examiners were unclear about their role in the conversation, a number of candidates may not have exercised listening comprehension skills here either, as they may have been required to give a monologue (Gilfillan, 1991). This reflects the criticism that the syllabus neglects important areas of language learning.

The reading aloud and comprehension sections use academic texts of considerable linguistic complexity which are heavily loaded with information, perhaps because of the necessity to base comprehension questions on them. The traditional procedure for testing reading comprehension has been made more difficult by requiring the candidate to read aloud a passage on a subject and in a style and register almost certain to be, and to remain, unfamiliar.

The division between fluency and accuracy when assessing the reading aloud section is artificial and may cause examiners difficulties: for example, is unusual pronunciation the result of an inability to reproduce the rhythms of the language, or should it be penalised in the pronunciation category? A candidate could be penalised twice.

The assessment of oral skills, then, reflects the criticisms of the 1982 Syllabus. Gefen (1982:14) complained about the limited varieties of English presented to pupils, and concern was expressed that the more

fluent speakers would be penalised. However, the syllabus does aim, "to enable pupils to communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1). It intends that pupils should develop the ability to understand the English of everyday situations, and to understand and use the common speech conventions of social English (*ibid*:3). It recommends the role playing of authentic situations (*ibid*:33). Nevertheless, a candidate could achieve good marks in the oral examination without demonstrating the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Not all syllabus aims are examinable, but there could be much greater alignment here between the aims of the syllabus and the mode of assessment.

Assessment of Reading Skills

These are assessed in ninety minutes in Paper Two. This is the second of two written papers, each worth approximately 41.5%, though initially marked out of fifty. The mark scheme is clearly shown on the paper. Questions testing literal and inferential comprehension account for twenty five marks. Five more marks are specifically for defining five words. The remaining twenty marks are for a summary. Five of these are awarded for expression, though the candidate is not penalised for copying relevant extracts from the text to answer the summary. To answer five of the summary questions set since 1981, candidates were required to write from a prescribed perspective, perhaps that of one of the characters in the passage. In the remaining ten passages, candidates were referred to a section of the passage and required to summarise the information.

Since 1981, topics have included the following:

- . Travellers' discovery of an oasis after days travelling through the Gobi Desert
- . Bannister breaking the four minute mile

- . Man's evolution from hunter gatherer to farmer
 - . Crossing a swollen mountain stream
 - . Looting of the tombs near Qurneh
 - . An incident whilst travelling across Ecuador in an old Austin
 - . Meeting with pirates in the South China Sea
 - . A comparison between the hunting and photography of tigers
 - . Moving cattle through Europe, probably in early medieval times
 - . The contribution of the domestication of wild animals to man's evolution
 - . The destruction of forests in Brazil
 - . Bernard Levin's response to a visit to Easter Island
 - . A ferryboat's collision with a quay
 - . A season, in Argentina, in which giant thistles grew unusually well
 - . Problems associated with tourism
- (UCLES International Examinations, 1981-1995)

There has clearly been an effort to make the content of these passages international. With some exceptions, in particular moving cattle through Europe, there has also been a commendable attempt to make the passages interesting. However, the type of text will be unfamiliar to most candidates. It does not reflect the kind of reading the candidate is likely to have to undertake in other curriculum areas, with the possible exception of literature. One reason is the perspective from which many of the texts have been written. Of the fifteen topics identified, eight are written in the first person, two are dominantly narrative, and five are academic texts.

It is unlikely that the candidates would read for pleasure texts which demand as much from the reader as these examination passages. A 1993 survey, commissioned by the National Library of Singapore, found that 90% of the teenage respondents read fiction:

"The more popular fiction read was horror, adventure, thrillers, Singapore stories, romance, science fiction, Asian stories and family stories." (Ngian, 1994:15)

Sophisticated reading comprehension skills may not be required by this reading for enjoyment. However, the account below of an attempt to cross a swollen stream in the Ruo Gorge, perhaps one of the most exciting

narrative passages, demands a lot from candidates. To understand the following sequence of events, they have to re-create a detailed description of an unfamiliar geographical setting:

"I think (the rope) would have continued to hold if the angle and the violent impact of the water on the body had not now with incredible speed whipped Vance along the sharp edge of the rocks, swung him from the far side towards our bank and chafed the rope badly in the process. It still held for a second or two. We worked our way along it towards him - were within two meters of him - when the rope snapped." (UCLES, International Examinations, English Language Paper 2, 1984:3)

This is the conclusion of the passage. The vital point, implied once about five hundred words earlier, is that Vance is likely to be swept into the Ruo Gorge and killed. The accumulation of detail and the necessity to refer back and forth across the text make this a complex passage.

To prepare candidates to tackle such texts, teachers will need to help pupils develop five of the six reading skills identified in the syllabus:

- " . Ability to recognise the central idea or theme of a text
- . Ability to follow the sequence of events in a text
- . Ability to understand explicitly stated information
- . Ability to infer information that is indirectly stated
- . Ability to understand the meaning of words and phrases in context".

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:3)

However, the context in which all these abilities are to be developed are passages which may have little relevance to many candidates, and with which they may have familiarised themselves only by answering past examination papers.

The sixth reading skill identified by the syllabus is the "ability to understand information which is presented partly in non-verbal forms, such as diagrams, charts, tables, etc." (*ibid*). This has never been examined in Paper 2, but a map (UCLES International Examinations, 1981, English Language Paper 1:2) and a series of pictures (UCLES International

Examinations, 1989, English Language Paper 1:2) have been used as stimulus for Part 2 of Paper 1. They required a very elementary level of interpretation.

The syllabus has two reading aims:

- " . to understand and interpret the contents of written texts which include narrative, descriptive and expository prose, instructions and printed forms
- . to read for pleasure." (*ibid*:1)

It is difficult to examine the second aim, but it is possible to assess the understanding and interpretation of instructions and printed forms.

Nevertheless, there is a reasonable degree of fit between the examination and the syllabus. Inevitably, then, both demonstrate the same shortcomings: they do not reflect the needs of Singaporean students in the society in which they live; and pupils' acquisition of language is not adequately related to their use of English across the curriculum.

Assessment of Writing Skills

These are also assessed in ninety minutes, through Paper One which carries approximately 41.5%. Paper One is divided into two parts. The first part, accounting for two thirds of the marks, tests candidates' abilities to write personal and/or imaginative narrative, description, exposition or argument. Typically, in 1981, candidates were given the following titles and required to respond to one:

- " 1 My class at school and two or three of its interesting characters
- 2 Write an **original** story based on:
Either (a) The delivery at the school canteen of a large container, the contents of which had been wrongly labelled
Or (b) A doctor who seriously neglected his patients (N.B. YOU MUST NOT REPEAT A STORY WHICH YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED ELSEWHERE)
- 3 Young people often complain that they have too little to do in their spare time. What is your view?

- 4 Describe **Either** (a) A busy city street
Or (b) A village scene
 - 5 What effect has the "energy crisis" had on daily life in your area? What steps should be taken, or are being taken, to deal with it?"
- (UCLES, International Examinations, English Language Paper 1, 1981:1)

The second part examines the candidates' ability to use and expand on given information to create a coherent account, sometimes in the form of a letter or report. For example, the November 1982 paper required candidates to write a report to their school principal stating what they knew about an explosion in the chemistry laboratory. They were provided with written details about the circumstances surrounding the explosion. As we have seen (this chapter:111-112), in the period 1981-1995 the information was provided twice in pictorial form.

The assessment criteria have never been explicitly stated. Much of what is known about them was obtained through a biennial exercise in which the Ministry of Education invites teachers to direct questions to officers in UCLES who respond in writing. These responses are compiled into a report. Thus, it is known that Part One carries twice as many marks as Part Two (Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore and UCLES, 1990:12); and that writing in a style appropriate to the audience is rewarded in Part 2, whereas using the correct format is, in terms of marks, less important (Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore and UCLES, 1988:3 and 1990:10).

Quite apart from the enormous secrecy surrounding the assessment criteria, which encourages teachers' insecurity, many criticisms could be made of this assessment mode. For example: it provides the candidate with very little support; it encourages rapid, shallow responses, probably based on model answers "encountered elsewhere"; and it examines only

a limited range of writing skills. Pollitt, working with UCLES's research division, pointed out in a 1995 lecture that at least four or five tasks are needed to assess a candidate's ability in writing. He suggests that traditional writing tasks like "Write about a happy day in your life" (typical of those set by UCLES for Singaporean candidates) only enable an examiner to make general descriptive statements of candidates' grammatical ability, not their ability as writers in a particular genre.

Already limited opportunities to display and be rewarded for ability in writing are further reduced by teachers who almost exclusively prepare candidates to write narrative and descriptive essays. UCLES' examiners' reports reflect this. In 1992, only 15% of the candidates responded to invitations to discuss or reflect on an issue (UCLES, International Examinations, 1993a:9).

In addition, the assessment mode does not reflect at least one of the aims of the syllabus: "to improve pupils' ability to write clearly and relevantly for specific social and vocational purposes" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1).

However, these examination papers do assess the four "writing skills" the syllabus identifies:

- " Ability to write relevantly
- Ability to provide adequate subject matter
- Ability to organise material logically
- Ability to use language correctly, appropriately and effectively." (*ibid*:3)

Thus, again, there is a fairly high level of agreement between the intentions of the syllabus and the abilities examined. Inevitably, then, the criticisms of the syllabus can also be levelled at the assessment mode: it does not reflect the needs of the pupils or the society in which they live; it does not reflect the pupils' use of English across the whole curriculum.

"Improving Expression"

Under this heading, the 1982 Syllabus identifies 63 items, knowledge about which will assist the pupils to improve their expression. Apart from vocabulary, these are not directly assessed in the 'O' level English language examination. Obviously, though, a command of the grammar items identified will contribute to a candidate's total examination performance. Since the syllabus recommends "an integrative treatment of the different language components and skills" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1), there is no discrepancy between the approach recommended by the syllabus and that adopted by the assessment mode.

5.2 GCE 'O' Level Examination: Implied View of English Teaching

Generally, this is not an inspiring one. The best preparation for the oral examination is to read aloud passages from an encyclopedia, and respond orally to literal comprehension questions based on them which require the use of vocabulary from the passage. Pronunciation work in the language laboratory might help. The conversation section might encourage some classroom discussion, but fluency may take second place to accuracy. Listening is not specifically tested, so may be neglected. This is unfortunate. The ability to listen well will be vital whether the candidate goes on to work, to further education or begins National Service.

The reading comprehension paper requires familiarity with texts which the pupil is unlikely to have been exposed to if he or she were not preparing for this examination. This in itself is not a criticism, but the fact that pupils are unlikely to be exposed to it again, except perhaps in sophisticated leisure reading, divorces the examination and the teaching leading up to it from reality. Little is acquired that will support learning in other subjects. Teaching, then, may be based on passages from old

papers, and will emphasise vocabulary and summary writing skills.

Preparation for the writing paper is likely to concentrate on narrative and descriptive writing; and pupils will be helped to write reports and newspaper articles since, so far, Part Two has always required one or the other of these types of writing. There is greater scope for both pupil and teacher enjoyment here, perhaps by introducing good short stories to the pupils; and concepts of appropriacy of style and register can be discussed, as well as the sequencing and development of given information.

However, there is evidence to suggest that the examination dictates not only what the pupils are taught to write, but also the way in which they are taught. Goh conducted research into the teaching of composition skills in upper secondary classes in Singapore. His conclusions, contrary to those of Wall and Anderson (1993), suggest that negative backwash from the examinations greatly influenced methodology:

"Another clearly noticeable feature of current practice is that teaching is extremely examination-oriented. Most teachers insist that students' compositions should be started and completed within the specified periods allocated for writing, to provide students with the necessary training to write within a time limit. Because this adherence to a time constraint seems to be the overriding concern of teachers, most students regard writing as a solitary activity and the composition period as a time for testing how well they can write on a given topic, with their teachers acting as assessors and audience for their written product." (Goh, 1986:229, *unpublished*)

So, in a two year course, some pupils will practise rather than develop a narrow range of writing skills. For most pupils, only the skills required by Part Two will be of value after the examination.

What is learnt, then, may be of limited use beyond the examination, and teaching will be based on texts that may have little relevance to the pupils' lives. This will contribute to a situation in which all that matters in the English lesson is gaining the kind of mastery of language which

ensures passing the 'O' level examination.

The examiners' reports suggest they recognise candidates are efficiently trained to deal with the examination rather than the language:

"In general, one suspects that candidates have too often been taught to concentrate on Q.4 (the summary question) at the expense of attention to the other questions. Techniques for summarising are more easily taught and learned than those - not nearly so well defined - that are appropriate to the other questions." (UCLES, International Examinations, 1991a:11)

The reports also suggest examiners try to overcome the negative backwash effect of teachers 'teaching to the test' by surprising the candidates. Examiners reporting on the 1993 examination said:

"The summary proved difficult, since the material required was of three kinds and for once it had to be selected and pieced together from places scattered through almost the whole text." (UCLES, International Examinations, 1994a:63)

It seems examinations are modified in response to previous candidates' performance rather than the principles of a syllabus.

Some interesting work could be done in preparation for the writing paper, but the limitations of this examination are its most striking feature. It will strait-jacket the teacher, and provide pupils with few opportunities to use language which is relevant and appropriate to their needs.

5.3 GCE 'N' Level Examination

This examination, also set by UCLES, is of equivalent standing to the CSE examinations. 'N' level examinations were introduced for all subjects in 1984 in response to the needs of those pupils regarded as less academically able. Prior to 1981, these pupils had not had the opportunity of attending secondary school. The introduction of the 'N' level English language examination required the writing of listening comprehension guidelines (English Unit, 1987) and an additional English language syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1983), so this examination was not directly

influenced by the 1982 Syllabus.

It consists of four papers. Paper 1 requires candidates to write a personal and/or imaginative narrative, description, discussion or argument, and a letter. This paper is very similar to Paper 1 of the 'O' level examination, except that the audience and purpose of the letter is very clearly defined. Paper 2, however, represents a considerable departure from the 'O' level examination. In contrast to a comprehension and summary based on one passage, the contents of which are likely to be outside the experience of the candidates, 'N' level candidates are required to complete: exercises on unifying sentences; a fill-in-the-blanks exercise, testing form and meaning; a comprehension based on a text, and sometimes a table, which considers information related to candidates' experience, for example the management of industrial expansion in Singapore (UCLES in Collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Singapore, Normal Level English Language, Paper 2, 1984:4); a questionnaire, sometimes based on the information in the previous passage; and a second comprehension and a summary based on a passage of descriptive and/or narrative writing.

The testing of oral skills reflects the greater importance accorded to these skills. In the 'N' level examination, listening is directly assessed. Paper 3 is a listening comprehension paper, comprising multiple choice questions on four passages: a news report, a conversation, a dialogue and a narrative. There is also an oral examination requiring the candidate to read aloud and to discuss a topic identified in the examination. There are no reading comprehension questions.

Clearly, although this examination was not directly influenced by the 1982 Syllabus, it more appropriately reflects two of its aims:

" . to provide the necessary skills for functional literacy
 . to enable pupils to communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms."

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

It is also likely to contribute to classroom situations which will fulfil the following objectives of the 1982 Syllabus:

" . to enable pupils to comprehend and communicate in English as used in the classroom and in real-life situations they are likely to face
 . to understand and interpret the contents of written texts which include narrative, descriptive and expository prose, instructions and printed forms
 . to improve pupils' ability to write clearly and relevantly for specific social and vocational purposes." (*ibid*)

Thus, the 'N' level examination encourages teaching based on authentic situations and materials. A candidate preparing for this examination will have more opportunities than an 'O' level candidate to use language appropriate to his/her needs. It is a pity, therefore, that only approximately 25% (between 12,000 and 13,000) of the total number of candidates entering for public examinations after four years in secondary school register for this examination (Ministry of Education, 1994:37).

As we will see, the introduction of this examination had very little effect on the Assessment Guidelines for lower secondary teachers.

5.4 1982 Syllabus: Lower Secondary Assessment Guidelines

Having looked at the requirements of the public examinations, it is possible to trace their backwash effect into the lower secondary classes. This is demonstrated in the Assessment Guidelines (Central Testing Branch, 1985), sent to all secondary schools in 1985. Their purpose was to assist teachers of lower secondary English classes to set the semestral examinations. The concentration was entirely on summative assessment.

A consideration of the similarities and differences between the 1982 Syllabus, the Assessment Guidelines and the 'O' level English examination

will give some idea of the continuity and coherence of teaching programmes likely to be derived from these documents.

Assessment Guidelines: Objectives

The Assessment Guidelines state their objectives clearly:

- " To assess the learner's oral and written competence as expressed in his performance in the following areas:
- (i) Grammar and Usage
 - (ii) Comprehension
 - (iii) Essay/letter writing
 - (iv) Oral/Aural English"

(Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:1)

The 1982 Syllabus's "Improving Expression" section, then, has become "Grammar and Usage"; "Writing Skills" have been reduced to "Essay/Letter writing"; and "Reading Skills" have become "Comprehension". Such a limited interpretation of an already narrow syllabus ensures that the assessment mode will provide candidates with few opportunities to display their ability to use the language. If a teacher pays more attention to the examination requirements than the syllabus, and research suggests this may happen (Tickoo, 1986), then pupils' learning opportunities will be reduced. The Assessment Guidelines also recommend that lower secondary pupils sit for two ninety minute written examinations and an oral examination, as if they were 'O' level candidates. A time frame appropriate for upper secondary pupils may be tiring for lower secondary pupils.

The objectives also suggest that the principle of integration, as recommended in the 1982 Syllabus, will be undermined as grammar and usage are to be examined separately. Such testing need not interfere with the coherence of a programme which will need to teach accuracy. It is the possibility that teaching will concentrate on accuracy at the expense of fluency that is of concern here.

Thus, the objectives imply that the Assessment Guidelines will reflect a limited and perhaps distorted view of the objectives of the 1982 Syllabus. However, except for the discrete testing of grammar and usage, both the objectives and the format of the examinations are similar to those of the 'O' level examination.

Assessment Guidelines: Essay/letter writing

The table of specifications included in the Assessment Guidelines recommends a format for the examinations. Paper One, Section A, will require candidates to respond to one of three or four essay titles:

"Narrative and descriptive essay topics should be set for Sec 1 & 2 but the range could include expository and/or argumentative types." (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:5)

The recommended length of such essays is 200-250 words for Secondary 1 pupils, and 250-300 for Secondary 2 pupils. This is for 25% of the mark allocation.

This led to schools setting papers like the following:¹

"Write a composition on ONE of the following topics. Your composition should be between 250-300 words. You should not spend more than one hour on this section.

- 1 A Town Centre in Singapore
- 2 An Exciting Event in my Life
- 3 A Day at Orchard Road
- 4 Write a composition with the following ending:
. . . . I hope I would not have to go through the same experience again (*sic*)"
(School A, 1991c, Final Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary Two Express)

If this is typical of the writing pupils completed in the two years preparation for this examination, neither pupils nor teachers could have felt challenged or excited by the prospect of a writing lesson.

The Assessment Guidelines were interpreted more broadly, too:

¹ See Appendix B:448-449 for letter requesting schools to submit examination papers, and Bibliography 8:433-440 for list of papers received

"You are advised to spend about 60 minutes on this part of the paper. Write a composition on ONE of the following topics. Your composition should be between 200-250 words.

1 'It was the school holidays. John and Larry agreed to go for a long walk in the country. It was a fine day when they started, but later the sky was overcast and it threatened to rain. They saw a small house nearby and hurried towards it for shelter'

Complete the above story in the best way you can.
(The number of words in your composition does not include the above passage.)

2 A Disastrous Day

3 Television is our daily lives - the good and the bad (*sic*)

4 Qualities of a good friend

5 My Favourite pastime

6 Choose 2 persons: the one you like or admire most and the one you dislike most. Say how these persons are related to you. Explain why you like one and detest the other."

(School G, 1991a, Mid-Year Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One Express)

In this range of titles for secondary one pupils, the school is anticipating the 'O' level examination. Only in terms of the length of the response does this paper differ from any the pupils will sit in their remaining years in the secondary school. However, the range of titles suggests the teaching of writing goes beyond narration and description.

As well as narration and description, the 1982 Syllabus recommends writing "friendly letters" and:

"In addition, pupils should be taught forms of writing which are important for their practical and functional value. Pupils can learn how to:

- 1 write messages briefly and clearly without omitting any important points in the message
- 2 write notices using the proper format so that information or instructions are conveyed with immediate clarity (eg. class notices regarding homework or class activities; club/society notices regarding meetings, competitions, etc.)

3 Fill in personal particulars or information required on various types of application or entry forms. Actual forms can be practised on."

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:24)

Thus, whether a school follows the Assessment Guidelines or anticipates the 'O' level examination when setting Section A of Paper 1,

it is not testing the variety of writing suggested by the syllabus.

In Section B of Paper 1, candidates are given one or two titles, and required to respond to one:

"Besides Letter-writing, pupils may be tested on their ability to present a composition or a report based on given information, printed dialogue, short outlines or instructions."
(Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:5)

It is suggested that length depends on the topic set, but that the composition should be shorter than the one produced for Section A.

15% of the total marks are awarded here.

These two sections of the writing paper have different objectives.

Section B's is identified as assessing the pupils' ability to:

". . . select, organise and present information using the most appropriate register for specific social and vocational purposes." (*ibid*:3)

Despite this, the descriptions of the performance expected from candidates at each grade are the same for both sections, and make no reference to "appropriate register for specific social and vocational purposes". It is likely that both types of writing will be marked as if they were narratives, since the descriptions lend themselves most easily to this. For example, the content description for Grade A is as follows:

"Ample material, fully relevant, high interest value; original, positive merit of form and arrangement; essay shows awareness of significant details, or wide information, or apt illustrations."
(*ibid*:9)

The language description is provided separately:

"Very good to excellent linguistic ability, very few minor slips, no gross errors, wide variety of apt vocabulary, sentence structures and linking devices." (*ibid*)

This mark scheme, then, may reduce further the candidates' already limited writing opportunities, since it is very general and does not specifically reward awareness of appropriate style and register.

This could be one reason why some schools set a second narrative for Section B:

"Begin your answer on a fresh page.
You are advised to spend about thirty minutes on this part of the paper.
Write a story of about 250 words based on the series of pictures which follow:"
(School H, 1991b, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary Two Express)

The six pictures making up the series show a man sitting by a fire watching football on the television, with a parrot for company. The man falls asleep, a burning coal falls onto the carpet, and a fire starts. The man is woken up by the parrot screeching, and dashes into the kitchen to get water to put out the fire. He succeeds, but the room is totally destroyed and the parrot burned to a cinder. The quality of the pictures' reproduction is to be commended, though it would have been interesting to see what Singaporean pupils, accustomed to a tropical climate, made of the burning coal and the carpet.

The point to be made, though, is not the inappropriate cultural bias of the test, but whether it provides candidates with the opportunity to ". . . select, organise and present information using the most appropriate register for specific social and vocational purposes" (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:3). Clearly, it does not. However, the responses elicited will be easy to match with the grade descriptions.

Other schools have attempted to provide candidates with opportunities to satisfy the objective:

- "Choose one of the following and write a letter of about 100 words on it. The number of words should not include the number of words in the address and the salutations. (*sic*)
- 1 Write a letter to a foreign pen-pal telling him or her about your feeling for *School I* after this one year.
 - 2 You have recently offended a teacher by not handing up (*sic*) your work on time and being rude to him/her when

he/she questioned you about it. Write a letter of apology to the teacher to explain your actions."
(School I, 1991a, End-of-Year Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One Express)

Teachers in different schools, then, interpreted the requirements for Section B of Paper 1 in a variety of ways, perhaps reflecting confusion regarding its objectives. For some pupils, this may have resulted in a very narrow range of writing experience, narrower than the 1982 Syllabus writers envisaged.

UCLES is more specific regarding the objectives of Paper 1 Section B, stating clearly that writing in a style appropriate to the audience will be rewarded (Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore and UCLES, 1990:10). Thus, some pupils may have been introduced to ideas regarding appropriacy of register and style only in the last two years of the secondary school course.

The division of the marks into content and language places more emphasis on language. In Section A, to achieve Grade A, a candidate must score between 21 and 24 marks for content, and between 23 and 26 marks for language. In Section B, the candidate must score between 11 and 12 marks for content and 16-18 marks for language. As the descriptions of language performance at each grade emphasise accuracy, it is likely to be this which is most highly rewarded. To achieve Grade C, for example, a candidate's work must reveal:

"Fair to fairly good linguistic ability. More errors than in B but few major ones." (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:9)

The only direct reference here is to accuracy.

Many other criticisms could be made of this marking scheme: it is too brief and too general to be helpful; the language/content division is artificial and likely to confuse the marker; and it fails to establish any

realistic or practical criteria. For example, inappropriate use of tense is a gross error. A candidate in a hurry missing an "s" from the end of a verb is ineligible for a Grade A as no gross errors are admissible in a Grade A candidate's work. The precision of Grade A is not reflected in Grade B, to obtain which a candidate is permitted "few errors". This uncertainty is compounded in Grade C. Candidates awarded Grade C may make, "More errors than in B but few major ones".

A major consideration here is whether the recommended assessment procedures for writing reflect the spirit of the 1982 Syllabus. Certainly, the performance descriptions at each grade reflect most of the skills identified in the syllabus:

- " . Ability to write relevantly.
- . Ability to provide adequate subject matter.
- . Ability to organise material logically.
- . Ability to use language correctly, appropriately and effectively."

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:3)

It is in the last "ability" that the assessment mode and the syllabus part company: the appropriate use language, though an objective of Section B, is not mentioned in the mark scheme. Its absence may limit pupils' classroom writing opportunities, and has reduced the scope of some schools' examination papers.

Though ignoring the functional writing tasks, the Assessment Guidelines do provide teachers with ideas about how to assess the other writing skills identified in the 1982 Syllabus. The skills, however, are examined almost exclusively within the framework of narrative and/or descriptive writing.

Like the 1982 Syllabus, then, in terms of the kinds of writing required, the 1985 Assessment Guidelines do not reflect the needs of

Singaporean pupils or the society in which they live, and the concern for accuracy is dominant. Nevertheless, the assessment modes for writing do have the merit of providing a platform from which to begin a course leading to the 'O' level examination. On the evidence available, it seems there is very little difference between the requirements of Paper 1 as envisaged by the Assessment Guidelines, and Paper 1 of the 'O' level English language examination.

Assessment Guidelines: Grammar and Usage

A candidate's command of grammar was directly tested in the first part of Paper 2. The Assessment Guidelines recommend there should be ten "Fill-in-the -blank" items, testing parts of speech and agreement, and ten "Transformation items", testing sentence structure. These items are similar to those in the early sections of Paper 2 of the 'N' Level examination. In the lower secondary Assessment Guidelines, it is recommended they carry 10% of the marks.

Schools set questions like:

"Read through the passage and fill in the blanks with suitable adverbs formed from the words given in brackets.

We had to wait for a long time but we did not complain.
We waited 1 (patience).

Screams rent the air when Debbie pranced on stage forty minutes later in a pair of multi-coloured trousers, orange-and-green vest, purple blouse and hat.

She and her six dancers electrified the audience with their slick, energetic dance moves.

Even as the opening bars of each song were being played, fans were already screaming 2 (ecstasy).

Some with cameras clicked away 3 (busy) while others, perched on top of the seats, clapped, danced and sang along with her.

She 4 (obligation) shook hands with us and posed 5 (game) for pictures."

(School C, 1991c, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary Two Express)

And:

"Read the short telephone conversation between a man and his

neighbour. Then complete the account in reported speech.

Man Hello, Bert. I'm worried. Sarah went down to the postbox by the road to post a letter this evening and she isn't home yet.

Neighbour Don't worry. She has probably wandered off somewhere.

Man I don't think so. I have been out to look. There aren't any tracks in the snow beyond the postbox, but there are some strange marks in the snow on the field."

(School F, 1991, Final-year Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One Express)

The reference to snow in the telephone conversation may cause pupils problems, but it is clear that some schools have used imagination in the setting of Section A, Paper 2. Nevertheless, this part of the examination is at odds with the demands made, for example, by the essay paper. A sophisticated command of language is required to handle even such a hackneyed title as "An Exciting Event in my Life". In comparison, exercises like those above are not challenging. If control of any part of language is tested discretely in this way, it is likely to lead to teaching which concentrates on form rather than meaning.

This section highlights accuracy at the expense of fluency. It is closely linked to the syllabus's section "Improving Expression". The Assessment Guidelines refer directly to the syllabus:

"Teachers are advised to refer to the NES(S) syllabus (1982 English Language Syllabus) regarding the depth and scope of the topics to be covered."
(Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:5)

The Assessment Guidelines, then, are directly testing the content of the syllabus. However, the 1982 Syllabus does recommend "an integrative treatment of the different language components and skills" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1), a recommendation which does not seem to be followed here.

In this respect, the 'O' level examination more faithfully interprets

the syllabus: or, perhaps, vice-versa. The problem at the school level is to create a programme which balances the need for accuracy and fluency, and allows pupils to satisfy successfully the requirements of both the lower secondary and 'O' level English language examinations. The sample test items above show schools trying to achieve just this.

Assessment Guidelines: Vocabulary and Comprehension

Assessment of vocabulary and comprehension is undertaken in Section B of Paper 2. Teachers are required to set one cloze passage containing between ten and twenty blanks. Eight to ten free response questions and one summary question will be based on a separate reading passage of 400 words in Secondary 1, and 600 words in Secondary 2. Together, the vocabulary and comprehension questions make up 30% of the marks. Candidates who have used poor structure and/or made grammatical and/or spelling mistakes in their answers could lose up to half the marks available for the free response questions, and a third of the marks for the summary.

Once more, correct use of the language is emphasised. Accuracy is not simply a requirement of the mark scheme either. Some schools seem to have lost sight of the fact that the purpose of the cloze passage is to test comprehension. In some papers, items deleted from the passage test only grammatical knowledge:

"Hares and rabbits are rodents, (3) _____ means they have long sharp front teeth. (4) _____ hind legs are longer than their forelegs, so that they actually run faster (5) _____ than downhill! When they are pursued, they resort (6) _____ some clever tricks." (School A, 1991a, Final Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One Express)

Here, the distortion of the purpose of the test item has resulted in a failure to set a cloze passage at all, since a cloze passage requires the

deletion of every seventh word. Only one of the four blanks in the paragraph above could be filled with a content word. However, to put "uphill" in (5) does not indicate an understanding of the passage; it indicates the candidate has learned the opposite of downhill. Writing "their" in (4) reveals an ability to refer back to the previous sentence, but correctly answering (3) and (6) requires grammatical knowledge, not necessarily comprehension, and certainly not reference to anywhere else in the passage. It is noticeable that all four items here have a correct answer. There need be no discussion of the richness and complexity of alternatives offered by a variety of interpretations of the text. Answers will be easily marked: right or wrong.

For the purposes of this study, a survey was made of thirteen comprehension passages set for lower secondary express pupils' mid- or final-year examinations by eight schools in 1991 (Bibliography 8:433-440). The free response and summary questions were based on passages which considered the following topics:

- . An explorer's experience with a group of Sasquatch
- . An encounter with a man-eating tiger in a ravine
- . The introduction of a female scorpion to the lunch table
- . The Pyramids
- . How to make an effective oral presentation
- . Schooner passengers' reactions to being caught in a storm in the Pacific
- . Trapped by a boar
- . A man dying in quicksand
- . Planning and carrying out a bank robbery
- . The beginning of a fantasy story about a girl obsessed with clouds
- . An encounter with a horse
- . A visit to Lhasa
- . An encounter with ghostly hounds on Dartmoor

Seven were written in the first person narrative; authors included Durrell, Verne and Herriot; one passage gave information, another instructions, and the remaining eleven were dominantly narrative, with

varying degrees of activity, involvement, humour, drama and reflection. Thus, the type of passage used in the lower secondary examinations is very similar to that used at 'O' level, where the passages are often first person narratives. With the exception of the fantasy story, the passages were also of a level of difficulty comparable to an 'O' level passage:

"The heavy pack was forcing Pickett down into the quaking sand. But the pack's catch was at his chest, submerged, and he couldn't move his hands through the mire to unhook it. He strained to hold his head up: still the sand rose swiftly to his chin. He gave a last terrified cry as the sand rose to cover his mouth and nose. Only his panic-stricken eyes showed.

'Try to grab the branch!' Stahl shouted.

Again, Pickett struggled to lift his hands from the mire, but this only forced his head deeper. Frantically Stahl, using a rock as a fulcrom (*sic*), pushed the branch into the sand and under Pickett's chest; desperately he tried to pry him upright. But the branch snapped."

(School J, 1991a, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One Express)

In terms of content and speed of action, this passage is very similar to that set in the 1984 'O' level examination (this chapter:111). The vocabulary is sophisticated. "Mire" and "fulcrom" (*sic*) in particular are likely to cause difficulty to secondary one pupils. Fulcrom certainly caused difficulty to the setter. Candidates were not required to give the meaning of either of these words; but the questions and the summary were searching and demanded that candidates understood them:

"Imagine you were Fred Stahl. In continuous writing of not more than 80 words, write a paragraph to include the following points showing clearly the relationships among them.

* what you did to try to save your friend's life

* what you advised your friend to do

Begin your summary with the following words. (All the given words are to be included in the word limit.)

I knew it was hopeless to plunge in to save Pickett . . . "

(*ibid*)

Requiring the candidate to write the summary from a specified perspective, basing the information on a text dense with information

and imposing a penalty of up to a third of the allocated marks for inaccurate expression makes this a very challenging question. The only differences between its demands and those of an 'O' level question are in the length of the passage and the required length of the summary. All papers in the survey set comprehension and summary questions of a type similar to those asked at 'O' level.

The assessment modes for vocabulary and comprehension, then, are similar in kind and level of difficulty to the 'O' level examination. The additional feature, the use of cloze procedure to assess reading comprehension carries a third of the marks for this section and may test grammar rather than comprehension. The mark scheme severely penalises answers which demonstrate incorrect use of English.

In some respects, then, though the candidates are two or three years younger, the assessment of vocabulary and comprehension at the lower secondary level is more rigorous than at upper secondary level.

Nevertheless, as with the 'O' level comprehension paper, the syllabus and the assessment mode are in alignment. The aim of reading for pleasure may not be fulfilled, and pupils are not tested on their "ability to understand information that is presented partly in non-verbal forms, such as diagrams, charts, tables, etc." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:3), as they are in the 'N' level examination. However, the remaining five objectives (this chapter:111) are addressed.

Consequently, both assessment modes reflect criticisms of the syllabus: they do not reflect the needs of Singaporean students or the society in which they live; and the students' acquisition of English is not adequately related to his/her use of English across the curriculum.

Assessment Guidelines: Oral/Aural

There is no difference between the format of the 'O' level oral examination and that recommended by the Assessment Guidelines (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:11).

The same comments regarding the relevance of the examination and its alignment with the syllabus therefore apply (this chapter: 108-109). Clearly, 'O' level candidates will be very familiar with the format of the examination, though it is doubtful whether mere repetition will provide adequate preparation for the examination.

5.5 Assessment Guidelines: Implied View of English Teaching

Many sections of the lower secondary examination imitate the format of the 'O' level examination, frequently testing the same skills at a similar level. As Chapter Two:42-43 has indicated, many teachers place great importance on ensuring their pupils become successful examination candidates. The assessment mode is likely to have a great effect on what, when and how these teachers teach. Pupils studying in classrooms in which the dominant influence was the Assessment Guidelines who compared notes with those in classrooms equally influenced by the 'O' level examination, would have found few differences in approaches to teaching and learning.

There are, of course, many ways to skin a cat, and a similarity of objectives will not necessarily mean a similarity of methodology. However, the most detailed and helpful teacher guidance is found in the Assessment Guidelines, which include sample items and examination papers. In contrast, the 1982 Syllabus was criticised for not giving enough guidance regarding methodology (Gefen, 1982:14; Goh, 1991a:136). Such guidance was provided in the CLUE teacher's guides.

Research into the use of the CLUE materials, though, suggests that some teachers did not see the relevance of the teaching strategies recommended in the teacher's guides. Instead, they used strategies they felt were more appropriate to helping pupils pass the examination (Chan, 1987:234, *unpublished*). In the absence of any other advice, these strategies may have consisted of practising examination questions. Thus, the clarity and detail of the Assessment Guidelines and their similarity to the 'O' level examination, combined with a perceived lack of guidance from other available and approved sources, suggest that English language teaching in lower secondary classes may have been heavily influenced by the lower secondary Assessment Guidelines. It seems that an emphasis on accuracy within a narrow range of reading and writing experience was likely to be the English language learning lot of pupils in many secondary school classrooms, regardless of year level.

The effect on the continuity and coherence of the teaching programme could be regarded as beneficial. If it is agreed that passing the examination is the criterion for success, the similarity of lower and upper secondary assessment modes will ensure a lot of practice in the appropriate examination format, and contribute to an apparently coherent programme, at least for 'O' level pupils. At the expense of pupil boredom, such an approach may also produce "good" examination results. However, English language teaching would be reduced to nothing more than a coherent programme of examination practice.

Again, then, the implied view of English teaching is it prepares pupils for examinations but provides them with few opportunities to use language which is relevant and appropriate to their needs.

5.6 Conclusion

The 1982 Syllabus is based on a classical humanist philosophy. The purposes, content, mode and reporting of assessment, too, are clearly classical humanist. In order to pursue the aims of a meritocratic society, candidates enter for summative examinations which create a rank order of merit (Clark, 1987:97-98). The syllabus and the assessment modes both contribute towards the achievement of an economically successful and harmonious society which uses objective, internationally recognised means of assessment to select its leaders.

There is some tension between the broadly classical humanist nature of the 1982 Syllabus and the assessment modes, and the more progressive tendencies of the CLUE course books. Nevertheless, to a very great extent the course books are in alignment with the assessment modes and the syllabus because they deliberately prepare pupils to be candidates for the summative examinations. This alignment has been achieved because the syllabus and the course books were heavily influenced by the already established external assessment mode. It is the most powerful instrument of the three.

Thus, a criterion for successful syllabus implementation was achieved: syllabus, course books and assessment modes are broadly in alignment. It might be assumed that this alignment would have resulted in the successful implementation of the 1982 Syllabus. The next chapter will examine this assumption.

CHAPTER SIX

1982 Syllabus: Dissemination, Implementation, Evaluation and Revision: 1982-1988

6.0 Responsibility

Dr. Yeoh, then Director of the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS), made clear his institute's responsibility for the production, dissemination, evaluation and revision of its materials:

"Indeed, the systematic approach involving the development, trial, teacher education and continuous formative and summative evaluation of the materials distinguish CDIS from the work of the commercial textbook publisher." (Yeoh, 1984:10, *unpublished*)

And:

"At the close of the full cycle of curriculum implementation then the syllabuses and the CDIS-published materials will be revised on the evidence of the feedback that is available. This is the rational and empirical basis for the process of curriculum change in schools." (*ibid*:5)

The English Unit's File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses Vol. 2 (English Unit, 1981-1992) contains no proposals for or discussion of syllabus dissemination. A member of the 1982 syllabus writing committee from 1979-1981 and a specialist inspector of English until 1985, said in response to a question about syllabus dissemination:

"General briefings were held. However, there was a shortage of manpower, so the implementation fell short of what the Specialist Inspectors would have liked to achieve." (Appendix Ni:481)

In the main, then, dissemination was left to the CDIS writers. Thus, the influence of CDIS on curriculum development in Singapore was potentially enormous. Its personnel interpreted the 1982 Syllabus in the materials they created, then disseminated this interpretation to teachers. They also gave syllabus writers feedback on the implementation of this interpretation, which was to provide the basis for syllabus revision.

Each writer was to undertake all the duties outlined above,

suggesting each writer possessed a multiplicity of talents and a lot of time in which to demonstrate them. In their final report on the project, Sandosham and Schoonbeck, respectively project director and specialist writer of the CLUE materials, discuss the writers' problems:

"(T)he time-frame placed constraints on the team; although the team was given one year to develop materials for each level, in actual fact, 4-5 months of the year had to be set aside for the publisher to meet the publication deadline. This greatly reduced the amount of time the Team had to write, trial the draft materials and revise them. Hence, the trialling of materials was necessarily limited and any revision minimal." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:21)

And:

"(T)he practice of writers doubling as materials promoters; the assumption that the best persons to disseminate and monitor the implementation of new materials are those responsible for producing them is not necessarily true. Writing and dissemination are entirely different tasks and demand different skills and experiences of those who have to perform such tasks. Many a good and sensitive writer shies away from publicly declaring the merits and worth of his/her work." (*ibid*)

Indeed, designing curriculum materials requires very different knowledge and skills from those required to put them into effect :

"Although applied linguistics provides a basis for approach, design and procedure, putting into effect any decisions regarding design and procedure takes us right out of applied linguistics and straight into innovation management. This is because decisions about language curriculum rapidly cease to be decisions about ideas and become actions which influence people. On such matters, applied linguistics is silent . . ." (White, 1988:113)

However, one advantage of having the same personnel write, disseminate, train teachers to implement, and then evaluate the use of the materials is those disseminating, training and evaluating have a clear picture of what the innovation should look like in the classroom. The team drew up a checklist based on four features critical to the implementation of the CLUE materials. These were: the use of the objectives; the integration of reading, writing, listening and speaking; using appropriate methodology; and using the complete set of instructional materials. Table

1, below, demonstrates the writers' concept of successful implementation.

Table 1
Checklist to Assist in the Evaluation of the Implementation of CLUE

Components	Variation (1)	Variation (2)	Variation (3)	Variation (4)	Variation (5)
1 Objectives	Teacher always uses Unit Objectives to plan lessons	Teacher often used Unit Objectives to plan lessons	Teacher sometimes uses Unit Objectives to plan lessons	Teacher seldom uses Unit Objectives to plan lessons	Teacher never uses Unit Objectives to plan lessons
2 Integration of Skills	Teacher always follows sequence as laid out in Coursebook	Teacher often follows sequence as laid out in Coursebook	Teacher sometimes follows sequence as laid out in Coursebook	Teacher seldom follows sequence as laid out in Coursebook	Teacher never follows sequence as laid out in Coursebook
3 Methodology	Teacher always uses pupil-centred approach	Teacher often uses pupil-centred approach	Teacher sometimes uses pupil-centred approach	Teacher seldom uses pupil-centred approach	Teacher never uses pupil-centred approach
4 Use of Instructional Materials	Teacher always uses the complete set of materials	Teacher often uses the full set of materials	Teacher sometimes uses the full set of materials	Teacher seldom uses the full set of materials	Teacher never uses the full set of materials

Variation (1) * Ideal
 Variations (2) & (3) * Acceptable
 Variations (4) & (5) * Unacceptable

Source: Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:Appendix 5.2:1

Assuming a common understanding of "often", "sometimes" and "seldom", the writers were clear about their priorities, reflected in the identification of the critical features of the materials, and of what they hoped to achieve in the classroom through the CLUE materials.

This advantage, however, is outweighed by other considerations. For example, one problem inherent in trying to implement a syllabus through the use of a course book was that relevant in-service training only took place in schools which chose to adopt that course book. Teachers working in English departments which decided to use a commercially produced course book, and which possessed only two copies of the 1982 Syllabus (Appendix Niv:486), could have remained entirely ignorant of the existence of that syllabus. Thus, a situation had been created in which it would be difficult to implement the syllabus on a national scale.

Evaluation of the implementation took place only in schools which

adopted CLUE, and was limited to the CDIS writers' assessment of teachers' exploitation of the CLUE materials. The purpose was the revision of both CLUE and the 1982 Syllabus. Such a narrow interpretation of the enormous task of evaluating syllabus implementation entirely precluded the possibility of opening up to teachers and other stakeholders discussion of, for example, alternative ways of bringing about curriculum change, the effect of the 1982 Syllabus on the syllabuses for other subject areas, and the monolithic external assessment mode for English language. Thus, a thorough and systematic evaluation of the 1982 syllabus and its implementation did not take place.

As the CLUE materials were to be evaluated only in order to revise them, there could be no objective consideration of whether course books are an appropriate vehicle for syllabus implementation. Do they reduce the intended impact of implementation by discouraging teachers from thinking beyond them to the principles underpinning the syllabus? Do teachers regard course books as essential props for managing change or do they use them to maintain the status quo in the classroom? Such questions would not be discussed.

6.1 Dissemination and Implementation

The writers disseminated the CLUE materials and helped teachers implement them throughout the period of writing and for two years afterwards, that is from 1982-1988. These activities included: launching the CLUE materials; holding briefings, talks and seminars; providing an information network; compiling notes and reading materials, including teaching plans for units; and running school-based workshops on request (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:10-13).

Approximately seventy schools did request workshops (*ibid*:12).

Schools just beginning to use CLUE were given an overview of the materials and a demonstration of ways in which they could be used. Schools more familiar with the materials could request a workshop on instructional strategies, which would be tailored to the school's perceived needs. These workshops filled in the gaps left by the teacher's guide, addressing such needs as the organisation of group work and the integration of the activities.

These strategies largely reflect an empirical-rational approach to implementing an innovation (Kennedy, 1987; White, 1988). They assume that teachers could be convinced by rational argument that the changes in classroom procedure implicit in the adoption of the CLUE materials would be beneficial to themselves and to their pupils; and that once convinced the teachers would make those changes. Clearly, there is a place for rational argument in the process of any educational change, but it is unlikely to be enough, as White points out:

" . . . the empirical-rational strategy assumes a relatively passive recipient of input, and in this, together with inadequate attention given to communication difficulties and role conflicts, lies one of its main limitations. Furthermore, the empirical-rational approach has evolved within bureaucratically organised enterprises . . . in which the organization's purposes are given priority and there are codified procedures for carrying out roles and functions. Finally, empirical-rational strategies have been concerned more with diffusion of 'thing' than 'people' technologies, which . . . do not really match the requirements of educational systems." (White, 1988:128-129)

This interpretation is an accurate description of the dissemination of the CLUE materials. Dr. Yeoh, in assuming that the syllabus could be implemented through one course book, was pre-supposing that all schools would adopt that course book. No consideration seems to have been given to the possibility that teachers might need to be persuaded, so "inadequate attention" was given to "communication difficulties and role conflicts".

The Ministry of Education's representatives assumed their priorities were shared by individual schools. The CDIS writers were carrying out the roles and functions ascribed to them by the Ministry of Education in their production and dissemination of the CLUE materials. Constraints faced by the CDIS writers meant they concentrated on the materials rather more than teachers' responses to them (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:21).

The strategies adopted to encourage teachers to implement the CLUE materials, then, may not have been enough to ensure their implementation. They assumed initiators and recipients shared beliefs and objectives, and that the recipients would see the changes as desirable.

Nevertheless, in 1984 75 of the 135 secondary schools in Singapore were using CLUE 1 (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988, Appendix 5.7:3); in 1985, 80 were using CLUE 2 (*ibid*:Appendix 5.8:9); and in 1986, 80 were using CLUE 3 (*ibid*:Appendix 5.9:6). There is, unfortunately, no record of the number of schools using the CLUE 4E and 5N materials, those written for classes preparing to take the 'O' level examinations. The CLUE materials, then, were quite widely disseminated, perhaps to about 60% of Secondary schools by the mid 1980s.

However, it seems that as many as 30 English departments used CLUE for only a short time. In 1987, Chan conducted research into the use of the CLUE materials in lower secondary Express and Normal classes. She contacted all the 80 schools identified in the 1985 CDIS survey:

"It was found that some schools had decided to switch to other textbooks, while others had used the materials for only one term. Eventually, only 50 schools were found to be still using the CLUE materials." (Chan, 1987:85)

This suggests that in 1987, at the lower secondary level, about 37% of secondary schools were still using the CLUE materials.

The CDIS team also monitored the implementation of the materials, usually through informal interviews with teachers. The impression received from these interviews was that the teachers using the CLUE materials could be divided into three groups. The first followed the textbook closely and found they were unable to cover everything, so they frequently omitted the audio-visual materials. The second group used only certain exercises and were not familiar with the teaching approach recommended by the writers. The third group carefully selected desirable units and integrated the relevant audio-visual materials.

Sandosham and Schoonbeck in their official report on the CLUE materials were very concerned about this pattern of use. The first group, which closely followed the textbook, was criticised for not considering the pupils' abilities and needs, and denying pupils an incentive to learn which would have been provided by the audio-visual materials. The second group, "a fair number" (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:25), selected for use only those materials which most closely resembled test materials, and so was criticised for failing to differentiate between teaching and testing. The third group, "a growing number" (*ibid*), was able to select units appropriate to the pupils' needs, and was commended for its exploitation of the materials. The materials, in turn, were praised for being flexible enough to enable teachers to answer pupils' needs (*ibid*).

There are no statements in Sandosham and Schoonbeck's work to indicate the relative size of each of these groups, but Chan's 1987 research suggests the "growing number" of teachers appropriately exploiting the CLUE materials was likely to be small. Approximately 78% of the 48 teachers Chan interviewed said they made no changes to the CLUE materials when they used them.

"One group admitted that they were still in the stage of mastering the tasks required to use the innovation. Another group expressed satisfaction with the CLUE materials and have been using them faithfully." (Chan, 1987:182)

In addition to interviews, Chan sent a questionnaire to 185 teachers of English to lower secondary classes in 50 schools to determine their concerns about the CLUE materials (Hall, George and Rutherford:1979). The responses revealed teachers' three greatest concerns were: "to reap maximum benefit" from the CLUE materials (Chan, 1987:146); "to explore new or better ways to achieve the same goals" (*ibid*); and "fear, worry and doubt about the role they must play in the effective implementation of the innovation" (*ibid*:147).

Chan suggested reasons for teachers' concerns: they did not fully understand or appreciate the aims of the CLUE materials; the greater demands made upon the teacher by the CLUE materials, in terms of preparation time and classroom management, caused the teachers problems; and teachers did not possess the necessary knowledge, skills, or positive attitude to use the materials appropriately in the classroom.

To gain more specific information regarding the current use of the materials, Chan also conducted interviews with 48 of the teachers who had answered the questionnaire, and observed 18 of them using the CLUE materials. She found the majority of teachers used the materials mechanically, that is they focussed:

" . . . most effort on the short-term day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than client needs. The user is primarily engaged in a stepwise attempt to master the tasks required to use the innovation, often resulting in disjointed and superficial use." (Hall, Loucks, Rutherford, Newlove, 1975:54)

Chan suggested reasons for this low level of use:

"Some teachers rarely questioned what they were doing. These teachers were using the new CLUE materials but employing the traditional methods which they had been using for years. They were not prepared to ask searching questions or share ideas or discuss the new materials they were using. Others viewed education in a restricted way with a narrow range of objectives. Their main concern was exclusively to get their pupils to pass the examinations. Hence, they showed no interest in collaborative work or trying out new strategies." (Chan, 1987:234)

However, Chan observed lessons which demonstrated the successful implementation of the materials. On the whole, these were given by teachers who had used the CLUE materials for a few years; who had training in the use of communicative methodology, perhaps in an RSA course; and who had attended a workshop given by the CLUE writers.

On the basis of this limited research, it seems that curriculum change had taken place in a small number of classrooms in which the CLUE materials had been in use for more than a year, and where the teacher had received training appropriate to the interpretation and management of the materials. However, in some classrooms, the use of the materials was limited to supporting more traditional approaches to teaching. Reluctance to go beyond this level of use seems to have been caused by a number of factors. Teachers needed further guidance in the use of the materials and more time to prepare lessons, yet they were reluctant to collaborate in the use of the materials. Some teachers expressed a negative attitude to the CLUE materials; in particular it was felt they would not make a positive contribution to pupils' examination performance. Perhaps for these reasons, some teachers had abandoned the use of the materials altogether.

Thus, only a modest start had been made in the dissemination and implementation of the CLUE materials.

6.2 Evaluation of the *Course in Learning and Using English*

In her 48 interviews Chan, elicited from teachers their evaluation of the CLUE materials.

Approximately 68% of the teachers were concerned about the approach to the teaching of grammar. They felt there were insufficient exercises for practice; most exercises were for testing rather than teaching; and the items were poorly sequenced and ungraded.

About 55% of the teachers did not like the approach to composition writing. They could not see a link between the grammatical items and composition exercises; writing exercises were not graded; and there was insufficient guidance given in the teaching of writing skills.

Around 45% of the teachers were concerned about the approach to the teaching of comprehension. Some passages were uninteresting and/or contained vocabulary which was too difficult; and there were too few summary exercises.

Approximately 43% of the teachers were not in sympathy with the teaching approach and methodology advocated by CLUE. They did not believe it was practical to conduct the suggested communicative activities; pair work exercises were uninteresting and not stimulating; group work was inappropriate for weak pupils (Chan, 1987:174).

Of the admittedly small number of teachers interviewed, less than half felt that the CLUE materials answered their pupils' learning needs.

Sandosham and Schoonbeck suggest that a revision of the materials would be valuable. No revisions to the grammar sections were thought necessary, though this was the area which most concerned Chan's teachers. Sandosham and Schoonbeck agree with them that the writing section could be improved, but believe it should be achieved by giving

more task options to meet the needs of different kinds of learners. They also accept that the comprehension passages should be replaced by new ones, though they are more concerned about the content of the reading and comprehension passages becoming outdated. They agree, too, that more instructional guidance is necessary. However, they state this is needed to help teachers incorporate audio-visual with the other instructional materials, and to provide more activities to support the video programmes and more open-ended questions in the listening comprehension work (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:26-27).

This disagreement regarding what needs to be revised and why reflects the writers' and teachers' very different perceptions both of the role of a course book and of pupils' learning needs. The teachers' evaluation of CLUE indicates they believe a course book should serve one purpose: to help them respond to their pupils' learning needs. Their requests for revisions suggest they perceive their pupils need: more knowledge about grammar; writing opportunities to reinforce that knowledge; to practise, rather than extend, language knowledge through comprehension and summary exercises; more opportunities to work individually. So, approximately 63% of schools may have turned to commercially produced course books because teachers did not think that CLUE provided their pupils with suitable learning opportunities. As has been seen in Chapter Four, some of these alternative course books contained many pages of grammar exercises. The limited research suggests many teachers would have been comfortable with this.

Sandosham and Schoonbeck do not agree that the pupils need more grammatical knowledge. The writers' suggestions for revision imply they believe, with Hutchinson and Torres (1994), that the course book is an

agent of change. This is reflected particularly in Sandosham and Schoonbeck's determination that CLUE be revised to encourage teachers to incorporate audio-visual materials with other instructional materials.

However, a course book cannot be an agent of change if it is not used, or used as intended. The evidence suggests that CLUE was used in the way its writers intended in a minority of secondary school classrooms.

6.3 Revision of 1982 Syllabus and *Course in Learning and Using English*

The revision of the 1982 Syllabus was expected to be based on an evaluation of the CLUE materials (this chapter:136). However, in the official File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses Vol. 2 (English Unit, 1981-1992) there is no record of such an evaluation being given to the syllabus writers. Neither is any reference made to CLUE in the 1987 paper Revision of the English Language Syllabuses (Primary and Secondary) proposing the revision of the 1982 Syllabus (Specialist Inspectors 7 and 9, 1987).

Without the benefit of any formal report on the evaluation of the CLUE materials, curriculum planners decided that the 1982 Syllabus needed revising in accordance with projects of its own (Chapter Three:85-87). Nevertheless, the language teaching principles on which these projects were based were similar to those endorsed by CLUE. Proposals for the revision of the 1982 Syllabus include the following:

"All suggested activities will encourage the teaching of language skills and language items in an integrated and contextualised manner. For example, in understanding vocabulary items pupils will be taught the use of contextual clues, and in the teaching of writing pupils will be taught the use of critical reading and thinking to interact with the drafting process. In this way, pupils will have opportunities to make full use of all language skills in an integrative manner." (Specialist Inspectors 7 and 9, 1987:2)

This proposal may have been old wine in new bottles to those familiar with the principles of the 1982 Syllabus, but Sandosham and

Schoonbeck chose to see these proposals for revision as a validation of the work of the CDIS writers:

"Current thinking on EL teaching and learning emphasizes the following: interactive teaching, integrated teaching of skills, contextualised learning, multi-media learning and cooperative learning. These constitute some of the main principles underlying the design of the CLUE materials. It is understood that the revision of the English Language Syllabus will be along similar lines. In view of this, the CLUE materials can be said to be a fore-runner to the proposed new syllabus." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:26)

The words "It is understood" are significant here, as they suggest a breakdown in communication between the materials writers and the syllabus writers. This suggestion is reinforced in an interview with a member of the CLUE team (Appendix Nii:483). The fact that despite this both parties seem to share similar views on language teaching suggests that a paradigm shift had taken place between 1982 and 1988, permitting for a short while at least a common perception of broad approaches to the teaching of English. (For a discussion of paradigm shift, see, for example, Fischetti, Dittmer and Wells Kyle, 1996:190 on the work of Kuhn).

However, in 1988 this paradigm shift clearly had not extended to Cambridge, and UCLES remained impervious to the influence of CLUE. No changes had been made to the 'O' level examination.

This examination has a very powerful influence on classroom practice. As has been seen, it affected the writing of the 1982 Syllabus, the production of Ministry of Education and commercially approved teaching materials, the way a number of teachers used those materials, and the setting of school-based examinations at all levels. In such circumstances, plans to revise the 1982 Syllabus, and subsequently the CLUE materials, seem peripheral to the major concerns of the majority of teachers, who, like UCLES, were unmoved by the influence of either the

syllabus or the teaching materials it generated.

6.4 Syllabus Dissemination, Implementation, Evaluation and Revision: Teacher Involvement

This discussion of the 1982 Syllabus and its implementation demonstrates teachers were not empowered participants in the process. There is no record in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses Vol. 2 (English Unit, 1981-1992) of teachers contributing to the writing of the 1982 Syllabus. Reference to teachers has been limited to: the need for a textbook to compensate for some teachers' "extremely didactic approach" (Morris and Thompson, 1979:6); the need for a teacher's guide to the CLUE course books to help teachers exploit the materials as intended (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:6); teachers' limited access to the syllabus document (Appendix Niv:486); insufficient time to trial the CLUE materials, which reduced teachers' opportunities to contribute to any revisions (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:21); the use of inappropriate strategies to help teachers implement the CLUE materials (this chapter:140-141); teachers' reluctance to use the CLUE materials, or to use them as the writers intended (Chan, 1987:85; Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:24-25); a lack of awareness, or refusal to take account of, teachers' evaluations of the CLUE materials (Chan 1987:174; Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:26-27); and a lack of research into the use of commercially produced course materials (Chapter Four:104).

Successful syllabus implementation is entirely dependent on teachers' informed and positive participation. Yet, teacher involvement in the activities leading up to the implementation of the 1982 Syllabus was minimal. The collective actions of the Ministry of Education suggest teachers need to have change imposed upon them as the process will

provide them with better teaching materials and in-service training, thus giving teachers much needed professional guidance. The mixed reception to the CLUE materials and the decision by more than half of the secondary schools not to use them ensured this professional guidance was not given to the majority of teachers. Indeed, a number of teachers may not have been aware of the innovation. These teachers could remain uninvolved as evaluation was limited to those who tried to implement the CLUE books.

The implementation exercise is best described as reconstructionist:

"Reconstructionism leads to a 'top-down' approach, in which a committee of government-appointed experts comes to some consensus on what should be done next, and imposes a new curriculum and various educational packages deriving from it on schools, who are then trained to adopt them." (Clark, 1987:92)

Teachers were merely recipients of change.

6.5 Conclusion

Relating the discussion to the list of features which would promote the successful implementation of a new syllabus demonstrates why the implementation of the 1982 Syllabus achieved a limited success. Only two of the suggested procedures for syllabus implementation were present: dissemination was school-based, and since it was conducted by the materials writers it can be assumed that resources were readily available.

Of the features relating to personnel responsible for curriculum renewal, the CDIS writers were clear about their roles, accountable for them and must have been very committed to curriculum renewal to make the sustained and persistent efforts they did to achieve it. They were also in agreement on the critical features of the course books and how these should be reflected in the classroom.

Unfortunately, the presence of these features did not ensure the successful implementation of the 1982 Syllabus.

To be more positive, it is likely that the initiators of the change, the politicians, were delighted with the implementation. The 'O' level English language results improved dramatically:

"The trend in the performance in English Language is given in Annex A. There is a notable trend for both the pass rate and percentage of pupils who obtained distinctions. % Pass increased from 40-45% in the early 1980s to about 65% in the early 1990s while % Dist. doubled from 5% to about 10-11%. These improvements could be attributed to better teaching in schools and the introduction of programmes to raise the standard of English." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993: Point 4, *bibliography 3*)

Though it is possible that improved examination results "could be attributed to the introduction of programmes to raise the standard of English", it would be advisable to look at other factors too: for example, teachers' increasing familiarity with the examination requirements.

Indeed, the Ministry of Education's simplistic statement regarding possible reasons for improved examination performance helps to justify Fullan and Stiegelbauer's description of politically motivated change:

"Politically motivated change is accompanied by greater commitment of leaders, the power of new ideas, and additional resources: but it also produces overload, unrealistic time-lines, uncoordinated demands, simplistic solutions, misdirected efforts, inconsistencies, and underestimation of what it takes to bring about reform." (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991:27)

The parallels between this description and the implementation of the 1982 Syllabus do not need to be laboured.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1982 and 1991 Syllabuses: Comparison and Contrast

7.0 A Framework for Comparison and Contrast

The 1991 Syllabus was seen as a revision of the 1982 Syllabus (Chapter Three:85-86). Their comparison and contrast will be based on the model described by Richards and Rodgers which:

" . . . represents an attempt to provide a framework which can be used to describe, evaluate and compare methods in language teaching. It attempts to define elements which are common to all methods and to highlight alternative realisations of these for particular methods." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:154)

Method is defined as being made up of the three interrelated elements accepted here as common to all methods: approach, design and procedure. Richards and Rodgers' framework was intended as a basis for the discussion of methods. However, syllabuses document methods. Thus the framework is a relevant model on which to base this comparison and contrast of the two syllabuses. Using the framework ensures the coherent development of insights into the different approaches, designs and procedures which inform or are recommended by each syllabus. The framework also acts as a checklist so that all important differences and similarities between the two syllabuses are considered.

Despite some suggested modifications made by other applied linguists, for example Brown J.D.(1995), Richards and Rodgers' original model is still the most appropriate for the purposes of making direct comparisons because of the clarity with which it is presented. This is a particularly important consideration when comparing and contrasting method as embodied in state level syllabuses which necessarily cover a broad, general area and have a tendency to reflect this in wide ranging descriptions and specifications.

7.1 Approach

The first of the elements to be discussed is approach:

"At the level of approach, we examine the theoretical principles underlying particular methods. With respect to language theory, we are concerned with a model of linguistic competence and an account of the basic features of linguistic organization. With respect to learning theory, we are concerned with the central processes of language learning (e.g., memorization, inference, habit learning) and an account of the variables believed to promote successful language learning (e.g., frequency of stimulus, motivation, age, meaningfulness, type of learning, task, communality, activity)." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:148)

As we have seen in Chapter Three, the 1982 Syllabus takes as its model of linguistic competence systematic, rule-based descriptions of the language produced by academic linguists. The 1991 Syllabus also accepts that rule-based descriptions of language contribute to linguistic competence but suggests linguistic competence also requires an ability to use this grammatical knowledge to communicate fluently and appropriately in a variety of situations. Thus, language is also analyzed according to communicative functions. It is suggested, too, that to achieve linguistic competence the learner must not only know the language and use it fluently and appropriately, but also have an awareness of the processes of learning which will ensure the learner can "cope with tasks that demand thinking skills as well as creative activities that encourage the use of the language for self-expression" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11).

Thus, both syllabuses take the basic units of language structure to be the sub-systems of phonology, grammar, lexis and the structural features of discourse, and each provides detailed lists of these units. However, the 1991 syllabus's more complex view of linguistic competence, informed not only by the work of theoretical linguists but also sociolinguists and cognitive psychologists, means that the syllabuses

project a very different view of the nature of language learning.

The 1982 Syllabus accepts the hypothesis that the central processes of language learning are memorization, the rote learning of structures, to be achieved through the constant reinforcement, consolidation and practice of a hierarchically organized and presented succession of language items and skills. Preferably, this practice is conducted in situations relevant to the pupils in "other (academic) subjects and to everyday language situations" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:2), and which demand the increasingly sophisticated use of those language items and skills. Thus, a functional ability is expected to arise from structural knowledge and ability (Krahnke, 1987:15).

However, the means by which this functional ability "arises" are not entirely clear. There is insufficient guidance in the 1982 Syllabus (Chapter Three:77-78) regarding the "variables believed to promote successful language learning" (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:148).

It is clear, though, that the motivating factor is the examination, suggesting the syllabus sees "the human species to be a passive organism, reacting to external environmental stimuli" (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:35) and reflecting its behaviourist orientation. Thus, many of the suggested activities imitate an examination situation, implying they will be completed individually, often within a rigid time frame.

The 1991 syllabus considers the central processes of language learning to be those which have "transfer value":

" . . . that is, the learner can apply the skills to subsequent learning tasks, both in school and out of school. In interpersonal communicative strategies; giving learners the opportunity to interact with each other in 'real time' (ie producing responses, asking for, providing and evaluating feedback at a given moment in time) should promote language acquisition and provide training for interacting in real life situations. Likewise, in the teaching of writing,

opportunities for learners to monitor, evaluate and edit their own and others' work nurture independence in writing." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11)

Thus, this syllabus accepts language learning includes, for example, inferencing, evaluating and monitoring. The emphasis is on interacting, negotiating and expressing, rather than simply acquiring the language.

The 1991 Syllabus is much more concerned than was the 1982 Syllabus with how to promote successful language learning. The centrality of the learner in the language learning situation is emphasised. It is no longer assumed that the need to pass a final examination will be the most effective motivator of learning. Recommendations like the following are made: teaching will recognize that individuals employ different learning strategies and styles; teaching will also take into account "the development of process skills"; factors such as learner self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety and attitudes in acquiring a language must be considered; teaching will be organised in terms of what learners do with the language, not "by ideas of grammatical sequence", so lesson input will be "comprehensible and stimulating". Tasks will be contextualised, purposeful and frequently require collaboration; they will demand thinking skills and provide opportunities to use language for self-expression (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11-12).

This syllabus, then, has a humanistic orientation, concerned as it is with affective factors. It considers both content and learning processes, combining features of White's Type A and Type B syllabuses by focusing on what is to be learned and how it is to be learned. A variety of influences have been reflected. Munby, Breen and Candlin, Keith Johnson, Yalden, Nunan and Rivers were all acknowledged in the interviews with the writers of the 1991 Syllabus. Krashen was not mentioned, though his

influence is particularly clear in the remarks on lesson input, and Morrow is directly quoted (*ibid*:10).

Revision, then, has greatly extended the framework on which the approach to English language teaching in Singapore is established. It now includes a much wider appreciation of what constitutes linguistic competence and reflects features associated with a process syllabus in the greater concern for and engagement with the processes of language learning. The classical humanist orientation of the 1982 Syllabus has been replaced by a more progressive one.

7.2 Design

The second element of organization identified by Richards and Rodgers is design, which considers four areas: the content and organization of instruction; learner roles in the system; teacher roles in the system; instructional materials types and functions.

Content and Organization of Instruction

"With respect to the selection and organization of content, design is . . . the level which is concerned with the general objectives of a method (e.g., choice of language skills to be taught), the specific objectives of the method (e.g., target vocabulary or level to be taught in a conversation method), the criteria for the selection, sequencing, and organization of linguistic and/or subject matter content (e.g., frequency, learnability, complexity, personal utility), the form in which that content is presented in the syllabus (e.g., grammatical structures, situations, topics, functions, exchanges)." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:149)

The 1982 Syllabus has a list of aims, and a second list of specific aims. The 1991 Syllabus also states its aims, which are to be realised through the list of terminal objectives (Appendix C:450-452). For the purposes of this comparison, it is assumed that aims equate to Richards and Rodgers' general objectives, whilst the specific aims and the terminal objectives equate to Richards and Rodgers' specific objectives.

General Objectives

The 1982 Syllabus has four aims:

- " . to consolidate and extend the knowledge and skills that pupils have learnt in their Primary school
 - . to provide pupils with the language proficiency that will enable them to learn their content subjects
 - . to provide the necessary skills for functional literacy
 - . to enable pupils to communicate clearly and effectively in both oral and written forms."
- (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

This pragmatic and restricted view of the reasons for learning English is expressed in terms of what the syllabus will do for the learner. The learner will acquire a knowledge of English in order to complete his or her education and perform essential practical tasks. Only limited possibilities for the learner are implied in these aims.

In contrast, the aims of the 1991 Syllabus are expressed in terms of what the learner will do with what is taught. For example, all aims are prefaced by the stem, "Our pupils learn English to: . ." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:7). Learners are now at the centre of the learning process. All the aims reflect the role of language in facilitating learning and personal development (Appendix C:450). The progressive emphasis is obvious. There is a concern for the development of the individual, how that person learns, takes responsibility for and evaluates his/her own learning. English is a vehicle for all these activities, the means through which individuals establish their identity and social *modus operandi*.

This comparison of the general objectives, then, suggests the 1982 Syllabus was written for pupils for whom the target language was the second language. By 1991, it was assumed pupils spoke the target language as a first language. This was a false assumption and resulted in what some perceived to be inappropriate recommendations for methodology.

Specific Objectives: Thinking Skills, Learning How to Learn, Language and Culture, and Knowledge About Language

As might be expected, the specific objectives of the 1991 Syllabus are much more wide-ranging than those in the 1982 Syllabus. Forty eight terminal objectives are divided into four domains, three of which are entitled Thinking Skills, Learning How to Learn and Language and Culture (Appendix C:452).

Thinking Skills contains objectives which encourage the learner, for example, to "think creatively to generate new ideas, to find new meanings and to deal with new relationships" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:9). Learning How to Learn requires the learner "to use some of the skills related to information technology" (*ibid*). The two objectives in the Language and Culture domain require learners to recognise that English is an international language with many spoken and written varieties. These varieties will be vehicles for foreign ideas to which they are asked to "adopt a critical, but not necessarily negative, attitude" (*ibid*). Taken together, these nine objectives give a sense of independent, creative learners interacting within an international community using both face-to-face and technological means of communication. They have no equivalent in the 1982 Syllabus.

Knowledge about Language is a subsection of the domain Communication and Language Development (Appendix C:452). It does have an equivalent in the 1982 Syllabus as it emphasises the necessity of knowing the grammar and discourse of a language. However, in 1991 this knowledge is needed to communicate and to get things done. Since language is to be used, it has to be used appropriately. One of the six terminal objectives in the Knowledge about Language section requires

pupils to "recognize and distinguish between Standard and non-Standard English as well as other varieties of English, and use them appropriately" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:9).

There is no reference in the 1982 Syllabus to varieties of English. It is assumed there is only one: standard British English. There is, however, a rather forbidding, long list of vocabulary and grammar items in the "Improving Expression" section (Ministry of Education, 1982:3-4). The impression given is that language is merely a list of items to be learned, not a means of communication.

Specific Objectives: Listening and Speaking

The 1982 Syllabus has two specific aims for listening and speaking:

- " . to enable pupils to comprehend and communicate in English as used in the classroom and in real-life situations they are likely to face
- . to enable pupils to speak in clear, correct English suitable to the occasion." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

In the 1991 Syllabus, the fourteen terminal objectives for listening and speaking are located with the reading and writing objectives in the *Communication and Language Development* domain (Appendix C:450-452). They consider the listening and speaking separately and expand on the two specific aims above. For example, the rather prim "suitable to the occasion" is developed in the concept of appropriacy. By 1991, pupils were expected to "observe accepted social conventions and etiquette in oral interaction and be able to respond appropriately, verbally and non-verbally" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8).

However, both syllabuses require pupils to speak "correct English":

"to enable pupils to speak in clear, correct English suitable to the occasion". (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

And:

"At the end of the course, pupils should be able to speak fluently, clearly and audibly, using correct pronunciation, expression, stress,

rhythm and intonation". (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8)

It is not specifically stated what would be regarded as correct speech. However, it must be assumed, in the absence of reference to any other standard, that received pronunciation would be regarded as correct.

In anticipating the oral examination, one 1991 terminal objective related to speaking reflects the 1982 Syllabus's concern for assessment:

"(R)ead aloud written material with fluency, expression and good articulation when required, eg in play reading, in a reading-aloud test" (*ibid*)

Pupils read aloud in order to be tested.

Despite these similarities, the fourteen objectives for listening and speaking do represent a conscientious attempt to give more importance to listening and speaking than they were accorded in the 1982 Syllabus. The fact that listening has been given a separate section which has more objectives than the speaking section will delight those who feel that traditionally listening has been a neglected skill (Mendelssohn, 1995:132-133). In the 1991 Syllabus, listening and speaking do not merely "enable". They are means of communication through which a pupil is expected to "respond creatively and imaginatively", to "understand" and "assess critically", to "participate actively and constructively" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8). There is an interactiveness, life and vibrancy here missing in the 1982 Syllabus.

Specific Objectives: Reading

Again, there is little sense of creative engagement with language in the 1982 Syllabus's two specific aims for reading:

- " . to understand and interpret the contents of written texts which include narrative, descriptive and expository prose, instructions and printed forms
- . to read for pleasure." (Ministry of Education, 1982:1)

In contrast, the twelve objectives for reading in the 1991 Syllabus reflect a sense of reading as a process (Appendix C:451). For example, learners will be able to "use a range of vocabulary skills (including dictionary skills) to build up vocabulary" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8). The objectives broadly identify skills pupils will develop through interaction with a range of texts, including information presented in visual form, fiction plays and media materials. These skills are expected to be used for a variety of purposes: information, pleasure, critical interaction, personal development, and the development of creativity and imagination in particular.

Specific Objectives: Writing

Some of the seven objectives for writing in the 1991 Syllabus share this process orientation (Appendix C:451-452). For example, pupils should be able to "use the process approach to produce (and help peers to produce) a reasonably polished piece of writing" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:9). However, the last writing objective, "Pupils should be able to write adequately and effectively to meet the requirements of school-based and public examinations" (*ibid*) again reflects the concern of both syllabuses that learners are prepared for assessment.

Nevertheless, the seven terminal objectives for writing represent greater expectations of pupils' writing than do the corresponding specific aims found in the 1982 Syllabus:

- " . to achieve a level of written communication which enables pupils to express their thoughts, needs and opinions
- . to improve pupils' ability to write clearly and relevantly for specific social and vocational purposes
- . to express pupils' imagination and creativity in a written form" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

This suggests little is expected from pupils only "enabled" to express themselves.

This comparison of the specific objectives of both syllabuses makes clear that the 1991 Syllabus assumes pupils are capable of much more than was expected of them in 1982. Pupils achieving the objectives of the 1982 syllabus will demonstrate an accurate and clear command of English that is "suitable to the occasion" on which they are required to use it. The impression given is that pupils will use English for specific purposes, pragmatically. In contrast, pupils achieving the objectives of the 1991 Syllabus will use and respond to English confidently, creatively, fluently and accurately as a means of interacting with and learning from their immediate society and the international community.

Criteria for Selection, Sequencing and Organization of Linguistic and/or Subject Matter Content

The selection of the linguistic content of the 1982 Syllabus is based on an analysis of the language's sub-systems, for example, phonology, vocabulary and grammar, and their associated rules. Within each of those sub-systems, the 1982 Syllabus identifies features appropriate for each year level. There is an attempt to progress from simple to more complex forms, structures and/or rules. For example, discussing the teaching of grammar in Secondary Two, the reader is told:

"Beside the use of 'will' and 'shall' taught in Sec 1, the future can be expressed in these ways:

1 be + going to + infinitive

He is going to study French next year

2 present continuous to denote future

He is leaving the company next week

3 simple present as future

The Prime Minister leaves for Japan tonight."

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:26)

There is no concern for whether the students will need to use the

structures, whether they are already very familiar with them, or will find them difficult to learn. Even if it is accepted that moving from simple to complex structures, however they are to be defined, is a valid criterion on which to organise a syllabus, the need to prepare students for the examination sometimes interferes with this planned progression towards a more sophisticated command of the target language.

"The Oral Examination

In view of the English oral examination at the end of Secondary Four, the teacher may have to concentrate on three aspects of the aural-oral English programme.

(1) Reading Aloud

(2) Oral Comprehension

(3) Conversation"

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:43)

The course content of the 1982 Syllabus, then, consists largely of specifications of linguistic product to be taught at each year level. Within each year level, the sequencing of that content is left to the teacher.

The 1991 Syllabus considerably extends the concept of content. It includes an inventory of themes and topics and a list of communicative functions intended to provide the organisational focus for a series of lessons. An "Activities Inventory" provides ideas for classroom procedures. These lists are not sequenced.

Content also includes an eleven page "Spectrum of Skills", also unsequenced (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991c:48-58). The skills are an elaboration of the Terminal Objectives (*ibid*:7) so they are organised within the same domains. Some of those in the Communication and Language Development domain are similar to the taxonomy devised by Munby (1978:123-131), and a number do reflect explicit specification of linguistic product. However, the "Spectrum of Skills" goes beyond this to include the processes of learning. For example, the expectation that pupils

will be involved in "Gathering ideas for a writing task" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:54) is elaborated on by a list of nine ways in which that might be achieved, including brainstorming and using library research techniques. The criterion for the inclusion of this spectrum of skills is it will aid teachers in planning lessons (*ibid*:48).

Also included for this reason is an inventory of grammar items, presented in four categories: grammatical units; word classes (parts of speech); phrases, clauses, sentences and texts; punctuation. Here again, items are not sequenced. Despite some differences in terminology, it is a linguistic description in kind and comprehensiveness very similar to that in the 1982 Syllabus. The reasons for its inclusion, though, are different: the 1991 Syllabus sees the grammar of a language as one of a number of features over which the learner must gain control; the 1982 Syllabus regards grammatical knowledge as the foundation of all language learning.

In 1982, then, the criteria for the selection, sequencing and organisation of the syllabus's content was an analysis of the target language, moving learners from what were considered to be easier to more difficult items, structures and skills. By 1991, the concept of syllabus content had been radically altered and greatly extended. It is no longer merely a specification of linguistic features to be covered in a roughly suggested order to enable learners to practise examinable skills. Rather, it is a set of inventories which indicate not only what is to be learned, but also what the learner wishes to do with that learning through the specification of communicative functions and the provision of frameworks, that is topics, and activities within which a command of these functions may be practised. The inventories, then, consider the "knowledge of what to say, when, how, where and to whom" (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:70).

From them, teachers and materials writers must select their own course content based on criteria which they need to establish for themselves.

The Form in which the Content is Presented in the Syllabuses

The content matter of the 1991 Syllabus, then, is presented as a series of inventories, listing the linguistic and subject matter: an inventory of grammar items; a spectrum of skills; a list of communicative functions; a catalogue of activities; and suggested themes and topics. Teachers and materials writers must co-ordinate and sequence that content themselves.

In contrast, the 1982 Syllabus presents content as four lists of items and skills to be revised or taught at each of the four year levels. The lists are divided into four categories: Aural/Oral English; Reading; Writing; and Improving Expression, through vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Grammar receives more attention than any other component. For example, of eleven pages outlining course content for Secondary 3, six and a half pages describe the grammar items to be revised or taught (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:32-42).

Thus, although teachers and materials writers need to marry the identified skills with items listed in "Improving Expression", what is to be taught in each year level is specified in the 1982 Syllabus. In contrast, there is a total absence of specification in the 1991 Syllabus and a greater number of lists from which to achieve synthesis. Thus, the form in which content is presented in the 1982 Syllabus may be more accessible to teachers and materials writers. Its less complex though less than complete view of language is more amenable to translation into syllabus form:

"One of the paradoxes of progress is that the more sophisticated our analyses of language and language use become, the more variables there are to take into account in formulating a syllabus, and the less able we are to chart anything like a coherent path through the jungle." (Morrow, 1987:35)

Learner Roles

Richards and Rodgers focus the discussion of the role of the learner in a given method in the following paragraph:

"What roles do learners play in the design of formal instructional systems? Many of the newer methodologies reflect a rethinking of the learner's contribution to the learning process and acknowledgement that the design of an instructional system will be much influenced by the kinds of assumptions made about learners. Such assumptions reflect explicit or implicit responses to such issues as the types of learning tasks set for learners, the degree of control learners have over the content of learning, the patterns of learner groupings which are recommended or implied, the degree to which learners influence the learning of others, the view of the learner as a processor, performer, initiator, problem solver, etc." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:150)

The 1982 Syllabus makes very little direct reference to learners. The emphasis is on what the teacher will do with the students. The statement "Pupils should be taught . . ." appears fifteen times, and the use of the word "should" in relation to what it is expected the teacher will do to the pupils is endemic, for example, "All the forms and parts of speech taught in Sec 1 (*sic*) should be revised (see pages 14-17) but with longer sentences and texts" (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:26). The style and tone of the 1982 Syllabus imply that neither the teacher nor the learner has control over the content of learning. Learners are passive participants in a lesson who "should be taught".

Apart from suggestions for role play and conversation, types of learning tasks are rarely recommended. There is no guidance regarding patterns of learner grouping, though teacher-centred lessons are clearly implied since the teacher, or the syllabus as articulated by the teacher, is in total control of the lesson content. Learners, then, are unlikely to have the opportunity of influencing each other's learning. Indeed, they take little responsibility for their own. They are the recipients of information, most

of which will be used in the examination:

"Revise all the writing skills taught in Sec 3, with regard to the two kinds of composition the pupil is expected to write in the examination:

- . the conventional 'free' composition on a narrative, descriptive, or expository topic
- . the 'structured' composition which is based on information provided"

(Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:45)

The 1982 Syllabus seems to assume that the pupils are examination candidates rather than learners.

In contrast, the 1991 Syllabus is informed by research into the "cognitive and affective realms of language learning" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:10). The learner is the "focal point of learning" (*ibid*:11). A more humanistic attitude prevails, and it is necessary to interest learners, be sensitive to their different learning styles and to "make learning conditions as non-threatening as possible" (*ibid*:11). In such a supportive learning environment, the learner is to:

"assume a greater responsibility for his own learning, not only through active participation, but also through initiating and monitoring his own learning." (*ibid*:13)

It is assumed that the learner needs "skills for life" (*ibid*:11) so tasks and activities should be meaningful and provide the learner with "opportunities to learn to negotiate meaning and information not only by himself with a text, but also with other learners in the classroom set-up" (*ibid*:12). The teacher is not the only source of learning in the classroom: pupils learn from each other through activities like monitoring, evaluating and editing each other's writing.

The contrast between the two syllabuses here could not be greater. One sees learners as passive recipients: the other as collaborating with others to take control of their own learning.

Teacher Roles

Richards and Rodgers define the parameters for a discussion of the teacher's role in a particular method:

"Teacher roles in methods are related to the following issues: the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil (e.g. practice director, counselor [*s/c*], model), the degree of control the teacher influences over learning, the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining linguistic content, and the interactional patterns assumed between teachers and learners." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:151)

The 1982 Syllabus assumes teachers are in complete control of learning, determine the linguistic content of the lessons and dominate the interactional patterns in the classroom. However, it is intended that teachers take their direction from an interpretation of the particular learning environments in which they are operating:

"The best method . . . is the method which has taken into account such factors as pupils' needs, the level of their ability, their interests, the teacher's own experience and available classroom facilities." (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:1)

Thus, teachers' authority should be informed by a professional understanding of the inter-dependence of a complex of features affecting learning in their classrooms.

This same professional understanding of local conditions is demanded by the 1991 Syllabus. The teacher's role is clearly spelt out:

"The teacher adopts a varied role in the language-for-communication classroom. No longer is he only a dispenser of knowledge. He is also a facilitator of learning, an advisor, a classroom manager, and one who provides the psychological support for learning in the classroom." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:12)

The 1982 Syllabus evidently regarded the teacher as more than a dispenser of knowledge. That quibble aside, the role of the teacher has been considerably expanded. The quotation suggests a teacher may need to be an organiser of resources and the classroom environment, a source

of knowledge, proficient in the target language, an expert in language development, a parent, friend, and social worker: in short, the teacher will need all the creative, psychological, managerial and practical skills demanded of a theatre director (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:80-81).

Teachers' professional relationships with other teachers are also expected to change. It is assumed they will collaborate to reach decisions which will have a fundamental effect on the school's English programme.

" . . . the level of attainment of the respective Terminal Objectives by lower secondary or upper secondary pupils is very much a corporate decision made by each school in the light of its expectations of its pupils." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:6)

And:

"Teachers will also need to determine collaboratively the depth of treatment to be given to particular skills in the Spectrum as the level of mastery of these skills is also expected to vary." (*ibid*:48)

These are far more demanding tasks than identifying the best method for your particular classroom, required by the 1982 Syllabus. The decisions teachers are expected to reach through collaboration concern attainments which education ministries in many parts of the world in 1991 had yet to articulate clearly. Sophisticated professional insights are demanded by these collaborative tasks.

Again, the contrast between the syllabuses could not be greater. The role of the teacher is now infinitely more varied and demanding, extending into planning for and with the whole department.

Role of Instructional Materials

"The role of instructional materials within an instructional system will reflect decisions concerning the primary goal of materials (e.g., to present content, to practise content, to facilitate communication between learners, to enable the learners to practise content without the teacher, etc.), the form of materials (e.g., textbook, audiovisual, computer display, etc.), the relation materials hold to other sources of input (i.e., whether they serve as the major source of input, or only as a minor component of input), and the abilities of the teacher (e.g., competence in the language, degree of

training, etc.). (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:152)

The 1982 Syllabus makes little direct reference to the role of instructional materials. The teacher and materials writers are encouraged to refer to examples of the passive voice in the science textbook, to use themes and ideas from moral education and literature as the basis for oral practice and composition writing, and to include newspaper reports, shop and road signs, advertisements and school circulars in lessons (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:2). This advice is given in one paragraph. The detailed description of grammar and the emphasis on the examination provide the most significant guidelines to teachers and materials writers.

The majority of instructional materials produced in response to the 1982 Syllabus had as their central goals the presentation of content, and suggestions regarding ways in which that content could be practised to prepare pupils for the examination. (See Chapter Four.) Some materials facilitated communication between learners, though usually in activities which primarily demanded cooperation rather than real negotiation. The role of the teacher was not always clarified, but it was not assumed that learners would be working independently of the teacher. All materials took the form of course books, most with the support of workbooks and listening comprehension materials. All course book writers clearly believed their course books would be the major source of input in the lesson and relatively little was demanded of the teacher in terms of lesson preparation. Indeed, the CLUE materials assumed teachers would need guidance so a detailed guide was provided. Nevertheless, a teacher's competence in the language was assumed to be at least proficient since the teacher was the reference point for the majority of activities, and grammatical accuracy was a key objective of all the materials produced.

The 1991 Syllabus implies that materials should be authentic and organised around topics:

"Because the learner is the focal point of learning . . . This means organizing lessons that relate to the learners' interests, age-range, experiences and expectations. It means utilizing input from the learners themselves. It also means mobilizing resources that include oral and written texts in a variety of formats and in a diversity of registers; audio and video recordings; and magazines, pamphlets etc, to bring in the outside world and help prepare the learner to function successfully within it." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11-12)

Discussion so far suggests that the primary goal of instructional materials supporting the 1991 Syllabus should be to facilitate communication between learners in situations simulating those which they may encounter when they leave the classroom. Such communication will provide opportunities for learners to practise cognitive, linguistic, paralinguistic and meta-linguistic skills which will enable them to cope in a dynamic, international community. Thus, learners will need opportunities to work in collaboration, independently of the teacher, using written texts, audio-visual and computer materials. Tasks should be devised which permit genuine negotiation and unpredictable outcomes.

The materials writer is required to respond to learners' needs so that learners are enabled to achieve the objectives stated in the syllabus at a level and in a sequence determined by their teachers, or perhaps through negotiation between teachers and learners. Logically, then, a variety of materials should be available to reflect the variety of starting points and routes which will be taken to reach the identified objectives. Centralised materials development resulting in the creation of a monolithic course book is an inappropriate response to the spirit of the 1991 Syllabus. Teachers in conjunction with learners are the only people with the knowledge essential to the selection and sequencing of instructional materials which

will reflect the centrality of the learner.

Teachers, therefore, will need to be considerably more competent than they were assumed to be in 1982. Not only should they be proficient users of the English language, they will need to contribute to the development of relevant instructional materials. This is reflected in the sample unit of work (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:22-25). In a two week period, only two activities are based on published materials. Teachers need to: make a tape and accompanying worksheet; locate a newspaper article; prepare roleplay cards; devise two reading comprehension exercises; and create two worksheets.

7.3 Procedure

The final element of organization is procedure:

"Procedure . . . is concerned with issues such as the following: the types of teaching and learning techniques, the types of exercises and practice activities, the resources - time, space, equipment - required to implement recommended practices." (Richards and Rodgers, 1987:153)

The 1982 syllabus makes little reference to any aspect of procedure as defined by Richards and Rodgers. It is suggested that there is a need for continual consolidation and reinforcement of learning (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982:2). Ideas for activities are sometimes given, but they are not usually specific enough to provide any practical guidance. When a particular activity is recommended it is likely to be one which is also found in the examination; for example, "Conduct 'mock' interviews in which pupils are shown how to answer questions clearly and confidently" (*ibid*:33). These skills are needed in the 'O' and 'N' level oral examinations for a similar activity.

The 1991 Syllabus is quite specific about the differences in procedure between what it advocates and the piecemeal and assessment-

driven practices found in many schools. Comprehension, grammar and composition should not appear separately on the timetable; listening, speaking, reading and writing should not be taught in isolation; there should be a move away from teacher-centred procedures to more cooperative ones; there should be an emphasis on use and on process; lesson input should include authentic materials, audiovisual stimuli and learners' contributions; task-based materials should encourage the learner to engage in purposeful learning and interaction to promote fluency, therefore learners need not be correct all the time (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:14).

To help teachers plan lessons reflecting these procedures, the 1991 Syllabus includes a sample unit of work (*ibid*:22-25), based on the topic 'Ghosts' selected from the Themes/Topics Inventory (*ibid*:28). In one lesson, roleplay cards suggested in the Activities Inventory (*ibid*:32) are given to groups of students. The cards contain villagers' arguments, reported in a newspaper article already familiar to the pupils, about whether ghosts were responsible for the disappearance of a bridge. The arguments form the basis of an informal debate in which group members take on the identity and views of various characters in the village. Group representatives then report the outcome of their group's debate to the class. The focus of the activity, identified in the Skills Inventory, is development of the ability to select relevant arguments (*ibid*:57), and to present those arguments persuasively (*ibid*:51). In trying to persuade the audience, pupils are also practising a communicative function, persuading people to do something (*ibid*:60), or, rather, in this case, believe something. Only the Grammar Inventory is not utilised here.

Should this oral communication activity demonstrate that learners

are encountering difficulties with, say, organising their arguments or finding the vocabulary essential to persuade, a focus lesson built into each unit of work allows time to respond to pupils' problems as they arise. Thus, opportunities are provided for teachers and learners to respond positively to formative feedback.

Such procedures are reflective of a Type F Syllabus, commended by White for providing the flexibility which should be part of all teaching programmes (White, 1988:81). Though commendable, in requiring teachers and learners to provide the language focus for sequences of lessons such a syllabus demands sophisticated linguistic insights from classroom participants.

In terms of resources, curriculum and preparation time are never mentioned in the 1991 Syllabus, though clearly more preparation time, at least, will be needed to realise this syllabus in the classroom. The Activities Inventory assumes access to libraries and enough classroom space to conduct drama activities. Reference is made elsewhere in the syllabus to the need for pupils to be computer literate (*ibid*:1), which assumes access to computers. This is the only point at which the two syllabuses differ in terms of the requirements for space and equipment. In 1982 few schools had computers, even for administrative purposes.

In terms of procedure, then, the 1991 Syllabus is much more specific than the 1982 Syllabus. Through the sample unit of work, it even demonstrates one way in which the syllabus is to be operationalised.

7.4 Comparison and Contrast: Critical Differences

Using the framework to compare the two syllabuses has highlighted a number of critical differences. The 1991 Syllabus:

- i reflects a wider research base, in particular insights from sociolinguistics and cognitive psychology
- ii incorporates a humanist rather than behaviourist view of learning, and espouses progressive rather than classical humanist values
- iii has broader general and specific objectives, which make reference to both the processes and the product of learning
- iv presents content, extending beyond the purely linguistic, in the form of unsequenced inventories, in sharp contrast to the outline of content in the 1982 Syllabus which delineated language items and skills to be taught at each year level, using perceived difficulty as the rationale for a loose sequencing
- v defines radically changed roles for both teachers and learners; in particular, both are expected to exhibit and exploit a greater variety of skills and knowledge, and to take more responsibility for the progress of classroom learning
- vi requires materials to be less centralised than those produced to support the 1982 Syllabus, materials which offer choices to teachers and learners to "enable experienced teachers and autonomous learners to develop their own alternatives according to their needs and personal preferences." (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:30)
- vii makes specific recommendations regarding classroom methodology and is explicit about the form in which planning is to be reflected.

7.5 The 1991 Syllabus: A Response to the Criticisms of the 1982 Syllabus?

Did these differences mean that the critics of the 1982 Syllabus were silenced? (See Chapter Three:84-85 for a list of criticisms.) The first criticism suggested that the syllabus did not respond to the needs of Singaporean students or the society in which they live. Instead, it was assessment driven. As we have seen, two of the terminal objectives in the 1991 Syllabus do anticipate the 'O' level examination. Nevertheless, the document reflects an awareness of students' and society's needs. The greater concern for the processes of learning, the recognition of the need to teach skills which will be of use beyond the English classroom, and of the importance of helping learners to be responsible for their own learning all testify to a desire to create independent learners who will "acquire thinking skills . . . evaluate their own progress . . . acquire information and study skills . . . cope effectively and efficiently with change . . . acquire knowledge for self-improvement and fulfilling personal needs" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:7). Such learners will be able to respond to the needs of a dynamic society.

Whether the syllabus responds to the pupils' particular language learning needs is a different question. No research was carried out in this area for the purposes of producing this syllabus. Existing research suggests that Singaporean students have difficulties in identifying main points when reading, responding relevantly to essay questions, organising written material, and choosing an appropriate register and style in speech and writing. This is partly attributed to an insecure grasp of surface structures, especially verbs, time concepts and sequences, number agreement, prepositions and pronouns. (See Chapter Two:53-56). No

particular attention is paid to any of these features in the 1992 Syllabus.

Neither was attention paid to research into the phonological differences between varieties of standard English and Singapore colloquial English (see Brown, A., 1995). This could have informed teachers and materials writers about what areas of pronunciation should be highlighted in their teaching and support materials.

Here was a lost opportunity. Rivers, for example, (in Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:106-107) has suggested that it is important to teach the interlingual contrasts between the students' first language and the target language. The syllabus writers are all Singaporean Chinese, and have a knowledge of these interlingual contrasts which could have been utilised in, for example, the development of a pedagogic grammar and the identification and sequencing of functions.

In addition, the revised syllabus may have introduced culturally inappropriate learning strategies. The change in the status of the teacher, the elevation of the authority of peers, the requirements that pupils perform, are interactive and take responsibility for their own progress may not sit easily in an authority oriented culture.

So, there was an attempt to respond to the needs of Singaporean pupils and their society. Thus, the first criticism has been largely answered. However, opportunities to relate the syllabus firmly to the particular language learning needs of Singaporean learners were lost, and culturally inappropriate learning strategies may have been introduced.

The second criticism states that the 1982 Syllabus pays insufficient attention to the pupils' heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds. As we have seen, the 1991 Syllabus has been written for pupils who speak English as a first language. The assumption that pupils are now native/first language

speakers of English is not borne out by the 1990 census, which found only 20.3% of Singaporean households to be English speaking (Department of Statistics, 1991:i). It is likely, then, that the 1991 Syllabus will be subject to the same criticism as the 1982 Syllabus: it pays insufficient attention to the pupils' heterogeneous linguistic background.

The third criticism of the 1982 Syllabus is its concentration on British literary English at the expense of other varieties of English, and its consequent neglect of the concept of appropriacy. This criticism has been addressed. The objectives in the *Language and Culture* and the *Knowledge about Language* domains imply that Singapore is part of an international community which speaks a variety of acceptable forms of English, of which received pronunciation is only one. Pupils need to use these varieties appropriately.

However, there are opportunities for differences in interpretation of the 1991 Syllabus. An objective in the *Communication and Language Development* domain requires pupils to "speak fluently, clearly and audibly, using correct pronunciation, expression, stress, rhythm and intonation" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8).

Thus, the syllabus's objectives are potentially in conflict, requiring as they do correctness and appropriacy in a society in which it has not yet been established where and when it is appropriate to use standard English as opposed to Singapore colloquial English. For example, would it be appropriate to use Singapore colloquial English in the classroom? The 1991 Syllabus does not reflect a principled approach upon which the teacher or materials writer can begin to answer this question.

In tackling the issue of appropriacy, then, the syllabus highlights the tensions between accuracy and fluency but does not resolve them.

A fourth criticism is that the 1982 Syllabus does not adequately relate the pupils' acquisition of English to their use of English across the whole curriculum. The 1991 Syllabus does consider the processes of learning so there has been an attempt to respond to this criticism. Objectives like: "adjust reading speed to the purpose and task in hand"; "recognise the discourse features that organise and link ideas or thoughts coherently and logically"; and "read to understand information (which may be presented in visual form) and to condense, interpret or rearrange such information (in visual form if necessary)" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:8), could be achieved through the use of authentic materials from other subject areas.

However, there is still no attempt to address the extent to which the teaching of English should inform and be informed by pupils' language needs in other areas of the curriculum. The thematic focus does provide opportunities for the teacher to introduce pupils to a variety of genres through topics like current affairs, scientific discoveries and fiction suggested in the Themes/Topics Inventory. However, no consideration is given to whether certain genres are preferable to others. The teacher and/or materials writer has to make such decisions independently. (See Varghese, 1994, for a discussion of this criticism.)

The 1991 Syllabus, then, provides opportunities to relate the pupils' acquisition of English to their use of English across the whole curriculum, but these opportunities are not articulated. Thus, the criticism still holds.

The fifth criticism of the 1982 Syllabus, that it does not describe a coherent progression of language learning, is also a valid criticism of the 1991 Syllabus. As has been seen, individual English departments are given the responsibility of describing this progression. They are not likely to find

this easy. As Long and Crookes have pointed out:

"Identification of user-friendly sequencing criteria remains one of the oldest unsolved problems in language teaching of all kinds." Long and Crookes, 1992:46)

Assuming schools are successful, a rigorous basis for the evaluation of pupil learning, and of the syllabus itself, will be found only in each school's planning documents.

A further criticism is that the 1982 Syllabus placed too much emphasis on grammar at the expense of other areas of language teaching. In the 1991 Syllabus, grammar is no longer an organisational focus for learning. This status is accorded to "what learners want to do with the language" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11). The importance to the learner of an awareness of the grammar of a language is reflected in the 1991 Syllabus's twenty-six page Inventory of Grammar Items (*ibid*:63-88). Nevertheless, revision has meant a reduction in the status of grammar.

Revision has also addressed the concern that the 1982 Syllabus provided insufficient direction about how to teach. The inclusion of an Activities Inventory and a sample unit of work in the 1991 Syllabus gives the teacher and materials writer a much more specific indication of what are regarded as desirable resources and classroom activities.

The eighth criticism of the 1982 Syllabus is that it did not reflect the views of teaching projects being conducted in schools in 1986. These programmes emphasised pupil-centred, activity-based, interactive and communicative teaching, all recommended in the 1991 Syllabus. The various developments which had taken place in the education system since the 1982 Syllabus had been written were also reflected in the 1991 Syllabus. For example, reference is made to pupils in the Normal stream,

a stream which had not existed in 1982 (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:5). The last criticism, that the 1982 Syllabus had achieved its life expectancy, was answered when the 1991 Syllabus was produced.

Thus, only one criticism of the 1982 Syllabus was not addressed by its revision: there is still no articulation of a clear progression of language learning. However, despite the revision some criticisms are still relevant, and because of it other problems have been introduced.

7.6 The 1991 Syllabus: Perceived Problems

A number have been identified in the discussion: syllabus content was not directly related to the problems of Singaporean learners, for example in the development of a pedagogic grammar; some of the recommended learning strategies may be culturally inappropriate; insufficient attention is paid to the pupils' heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds; tensions between accuracy and fluency, introduced with the concept of appropriacy, are not resolved; insufficient attention is paid to the pupils' use of English across the curriculum; and there is no articulation of a coherent progression of language learning.

Further problems have been implied in the discussion. Reflecting so many viewpoints, the syllabus adopts an eclectic position:

"The weakness of the eclectic position is that it offers no criteria according to which we can determine which is the best theory, nor does it provide any principles by which to include or exclude features which form part of existing theories or practices. The choice is left to the individual's intuitive judgement and is, therefore, too broad and too vague to be satisfactory as a theory in its own right." (Stern, 1992:11)

It is not being suggested that it is possible to base a state's school syllabus entirely on theory. As Brumfit has pointed out, "A syllabus is a document of administrative convenience . . . and will only be partly justified on theoretical grounds" (Brumfit, 1984b:75-76). However, Stern's

remarks emphasise that the broader approach of the 1991 Syllabus has its own inherent difficulties, likely to be most keenly felt in its implementation.

Embracing the "spectre of eclecticism" (Allen, 1992:86), however, enables the 1991 syllabus writers to incorporate a wide variety of linguistic perspectives, reflected in the inventories. They have produced a "pre-syllabus" providing a full statement of topics, situations and grammatical facts from which informed choices can be made to suit different teaching and learning situations (Lee, 1987:42).

There is much to be said for this approach to syllabus design. Morrow argues that a central syllabus could not by its very nature be a meaningful basis for lesson planning for an individual classroom:

" . . . any overall statement would have to be in the form of an inventory; 'syllabus' would only be used to describe the teaching programme of a particular group." (Morrow, 1987:38)

However, he recognises the implications of this interpretation:

"All this would clearly have major resource and teacher-training implications - for which reason it is highly unlikely ever to be seriously implemented, except in a few highly privileged teaching situations outside a national school system . . ." (*ibid*:37)

Yet it is a national school system which is "seriously" implementing such a syllabus, and for which the attendant resource and teacher-training implications have to be considered. Again, the need for a long term, well planned, sensitive and supportive programme to ensure the successful implementation of the 1991 Syllabus cannot be overstated.

This is particularly important because inventories may be misused unless the syllabus also includes "a clear articulation of procedures for translation of abstract listings into concrete classroom behaviour" (Brumfit, 1984a:116). There is no such articulation in the 1991 Syllabus. For example, the activities in the 'Activities Inventory' are not graded in any

way, perhaps for communicative potential or cognitive demand. There are no suggestions about how to exploit the activities, or of their possibilities in terms of language development. For example, piecing together jumbled texts may lead to a consideration of how coherence is achieved in a text, but it is classified as an oral communication activity (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:32).

The need for a pedagogic grammar, and the usefulness of highlighting those phonological features which are most likely to impede communication with speakers of other varieties of English have been stated earlier in the discussion (this chapter:177).

Some guidance in the use and sequencing of the Themes/Topics Inventory would be helpful, too. It is assumed the themes and topics will be recycled (*ibid*:26). Their identification and pedagogic interpretation will be based on the judgement of teachers and/or materials writer regarding what is of interest and relevance to learners. Such judgements should involve learners as they will be crucial to their motivation. Learners must perceive the themes and topics to be varied and interesting. In Singapore, topic choice is limited by national policies. Sandosham and Schoonbeck discuss the problems of producing CLUE:

"(One of the greatest difficulties was) the inherent constraints of writing for an organisation that has to serve national needs and policies; for example, every theme, topic, picture, activity, or task had to be carefully selected to ensure that the materials did not contradict national aims and interests - that they projected values consistent with government policy and as well as inculcated in learners values and ideals which have relevance and meaning for the nation; this meant that the writers were put to the test not only for their craft but for their convictions." (Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988:21)

The Ministry of Education also vets commercial materials (Chapter Four:100-101). Thus, in Singapore, difficulties associated with a topic

based approach are exaggerated. The result may be that Singaporean learners consider a 'safe' topic like the environment in the English course and in other curriculum areas with counter-productive frequency.

Less specific criticisms of the use of a theme or topic as the organisational focus of a sequence of lessons suggest topics "may provide a convenient basis for teaching but the convenience is administrative: it does not emerge out of the essential nature of language itself" (Brumfit, 1984a:93). Long and Crookes criticise topics for "their vagueness and for the tendency for examples of each to overlap" (Long and Crookes, 1992:46). They also suggest that topics have "served merely as carriers of linguistic items, typically lexical" (*ibid*:33). The discussion of New Expressway English (Chapter Four:102-103) demonstrates a failed attempt to make a topic serve as a carrier of structural items too.

Skuja-Steele, discussing the problems the 1991 Syllabus has presented pre-service teachers on teaching practice, identifies the use of a theme as the central organiser for units of work as the main difficulty:

"From a teacher training standpoint, the most problematic area of the current English language syllabus is the fact that *theme*, as opposed to *discourse*, is used as the central organiser for language teaching. The use of theme/topic prioritises context instead of communication goals, and distracts the teacher from focusing on language goals." (Skuja-Steele, 1995:1, *unpublished*)

Approximately 22% of Singapore's English teachers are not trained to teach English (Monitoring Committee, 1991 1B:1 [*minutes*]). They may have only a hazy idea about language development. If the theme coincides with their own area of interest, it is likely to distract teachers' attention from the language focus.

Thus, there are many grounds for criticising both the inclusion of the Themes/Topic Inventory and its lack of sequencing in the 1991 Syllabus.

Another inventory for which guidance is lacking and difficult to formulate is Communicative Functions . It is one thing to recognise that learners will need to perform a variety of communicative functions, but quite another to decide which will be most relevant to the learner at what stage in the learning process. Particularly in Singapore's dynamic language community, only a brave soul anticipates what communicative functions would be most useful to today's learner tomorrow.

There are also enormous difficulties in articulating a coherent progression of mastery of skills. The 1991 Syllabus makes no attempt to do this in the Spectrum of Skills . Indeed, the separation of thinking from reading, writing, listening and speaking skills might invalidate such an attempt. It is difficult to envisage meaningful statements of development in any of these macro-skill areas without reference to thinking skills.

Nevertheless, clear, interim objectives are essential as signposts to the achievement of long term goals. They are vital to course planning as they guide teachers in selecting content and procedures. Yet teachers will have to devise their own. This lack of clarity concerning the learners' destination, traditionally the concern of syllabus design (Nunan, 1991b:283), may encourage teachers to refer to familiar and sequenced destinations: those enshrined in the Assessment Guidelines and the 'O' and 'N' level examinations. Ironically, the attempt to broaden the view of English teaching in Singapore could have the effect of further reducing it.

Brumfit would suggest this is because:

"A syllabus which consists of unrelatable because unsystematisable items can be no more than a checklist."
(Brumfit, 1984a:93)

This is a strong indictment of the 1991 Syllabus. However, it does not "(i) focus upon, (ii) select, (iii) subdivide, and (iv) sequence the

particular knowledge and capabilities which are seen as appropriate outcomes of language learning", principles upon which virtually all syllabuses are constructed (Breen, 1987a:83). Brumfit, discussing syllabuses for general English teaching states, ". . . a syllabus must specify a starting point, which should be related to a realistic assessment of the level of beginning students" (Brumfit, 1984b:75); and should "specify what is taught" (*ibid*:76). The 1991 Syllabus makes no specifications in either of these areas.

There is no rigorous, explicit or generally accepted theoretical base to support language syllabus design, and perhaps it would be high-handed to claim, merely on the basis of opinion, that a particular document is a checklist or series of inventories rather than a syllabus. The discussion does demonstrate, though, that the 1991 Syllabus lacks internal coherence, and is not a syllabus in the traditional sense. Again, the inevitable conclusion is that its implementation will require a carefully thought out programme.

However, the 1991 Syllabus does have "trialability" (Rogers, 1983:15): that is, it would be possible to try it out in stages. For example, there could be an emphasis on formative assessment first, followed at a later stage by a concentration on collaborative learning.

The increased demands made upon learners by the 1991 Syllabus have been discussed in this chapter. They are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning, for example in the selection of linguistic content and the interactional patterns in the classroom. Changes will need to be brought about in learners' attitudes and expectations so they exercise these responsibilities intelligently. In an Asian culture, such changes may be especially difficult to make. Handing over this degree of

control ignores "embedded notions of social relations" in Asian societies, in which the ideal teacher/student relationship casts the teacher in the role of authority (Ellis, 1996:216).

Dubin and Olshtain sensibly recommend that course designers include tasks which "will be overtly directed to establishing new role identities" for learners (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986:80). This implies teachers will have to accept their new roles first, and then actively change the attitudes and expectation of their learners. This will not be easy for teachers, many of whom will be required to make a paradigm shift, and then to become "pedagogically richer" (Harmer, 1995:344).

Implementing the 1991 Syllabus also requires teachers to collaborate in the production of their own programmes; or, after Lee and Morrow, their own syllabuses. Such collaboration may be difficult to achieve. As we have seen in Chapter Two:65-66, most teachers are accustomed to working alone with their classes. It may be, too, that the frequency with which change has taken place in Singapore contributes to a reluctance on the part of school administrators to provide time for teachers to collaborate on what may be a short-lived phenomena.

It is intended that the programmes, or syllabuses, resulting from this collaboration will consider the processes of learning and have a humanist orientation. The leadership style of a number of Singapore's school principals may not be in sympathy with this orientation (Chapter Two:68). Sturman reports on Australian research conducted into the relationship between schools' administrative styles and the curriculum and teaching practices that occur within them. Only nine schools were involved in the research project. Nevertheless, the findings are interesting. Schools characterised by central administrative styles:

". . . made more use of traditional instructional practices, placed greater importance on external sources of authority for the curriculum, attached less importance to process and context in the curriculum, and attached less importance to factual knowledge about everyday life, to enquiry, decision making, methodological, personal and social skills, and to humanitarian values." (Sturman, 1994:22)

This research suggests that in a number of Singapore's secondary schools the 1991 Syllabus will be difficult to implement.

This discussion of the perceived problems associated with the 1991 Syllabus has demonstrated this point clearly: the 1991 Syllabus will be difficult to implement.

7.7 Conclusion

Does the 1991 Syllabus reflect any of the features which would contribute to the successful implementation of an English language syllabus in Singapore? An attempt is made to reflect students' learning and developmental needs in the varieties of English taught, but greater clarity is needed here. The syllabus also permits flexibility of interpretation, though it accommodates rather too many viewpoints to maintain integrity in its key aspects. However, it does have "trialability" (Rogers, 1983:15) if those responsible for its dissemination and implementation choose to exploit this feature. It does address perceived dissatisfactions expressed by linguists and Ministry of Education officials, too. Nevertheless, it is unlikely, in the short term at least, that teachers will regard it as an improvement on existing practice since it requires a considerable extension of that practice and offers no clear benefits in return.

On the evidence of this analysis, then, the 1991 Syllabus may be less in sympathy with its intended audience than was the 1982 Syllabus.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1991 Syllabus: Teaching Materials Generated

8.0 Teaching Materials Produced by The Ministry of Education: *New CLUE*

Teaching materials to support the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus were to be produced by the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS). By March 1990, it had been decided they would take the form of a course book, New CLUE, and accompanying workbook, audio and visual materials (English Unit 1990j, *minutes*).

It has been suggested that a course book would not be an appropriate vehicle for the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus (Chapter Seven:171). Clearly, CDIS did not agree. Perhaps pragmatism influenced this decision:

" . . . if the innovation is well developed in tangible form, it will be more acceptable. . . . Radical innovations, such as the process syllabus, are not able to be packaged in textbook form and so tend to languish in the minds of those who have conceived them or in the papers that they publish." (White *et al*, 1991:183)

The CDIS writers could have perceived the 1991 syllabus as a radical innovation, and thus considered packaging it as a course book to be a means of implementing those aspects which lent themselves to such packaging.

A steering committee was established to provide CDIS with feedback on draft units of work produced for New CLUE. From 1991 to 1994, one specialist inspector was invited to be a member of this steering committee which also consisted of a representative from Examinations and Assessment Branch, an inspector of schools, heads of departments and school principals (CDIS, 1992:ii.). This was the only official channel through which specialist inspectors could comment on CDIS materials.

The time frame for the production of New CLUE caused schools

problems. Table 2, below, shows there is a discrepancy in the time frames for syllabus implementation and the publication of New CLUE. The course books for Secondary 2N, 3N and 4N were not available until a year after the 1991 Syllabus was expected to be implemented at these levels.

Table 2
Dates New CLUE was ready for use in schools

<u>Date</u>	<u>Levels syllabus implementation expected</u>	<u>Materials produced by that date</u>	<u>Levels for which materials intended</u>
Jan 1992	Secondary 1E, 1N, 2N	<i>New CLUE 1</i>	Secondary 1E, 1N
Jan 1993	Secondary 2E, 3N	<i>New CLUE 2</i>	Secondary 2E, 2N
Jan 1994	Secondary 3E, 4N	. <i>New CLUE 3 Express</i> . <i>New CLUE 3 Normal (Academic)</i>	Secondary 3E, 3N
Jan 1995	Secondary 4E, 5N	. <i>New CLUE 4 Normal (Academic)</i> . <i>New CLUE 'O' Level, 4 Express/5 Normal (Academic)</i>	Secondary 4E, 4N, 5N

Lack of time may have contributed to this situation. In March 1990, the New CLUE series still was being conceptualised (English Unit 1990j, *minutes*). Teachers needed the Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N materials well before the school holidays in November 1991. Thus, the writers had nineteen months to write, trial, revise, edit, print and distribute the materials. This left no time to conduct vital research, like analysing current classroom procedures to help identify methods and materials appropriate to Singapore's teachers and learners (Fullan, 1981:316). (See Mosback, 1990:18, for a comparison with the time frame for the development of a national English language textbook for Sri Lanka. To encourage consensus and participation at all levels, materials were piloted for two years before work on the actual textbook began.) The rapidly produced New CLUE 1 for Secondary 1E and 1N pupils reached schools in mid-November 1991 (Curriculum Development Institute of

Singapore, 1991:5), just in time for teachers' holidays.

The materials writers were not helped in their task by the syllabus writers, who, in September 1990, decided that there would be one set of terminal objectives applicable to all levels, rather than a separate set for upper and lower secondary levels as originally planned (English Unit, 1990f, 1.2:1 [*minutes*]). The final version of the 1991 syllabus was not ready until May 1991. Neither was Examination and Assessment Branch very supportive. The Assessment Guidelines were not available until 1993. Thus, the parameters within which the materials writers worked were shifting or not established for much of the time they were conceptualising their series of course books.

In the final analysis, however, it was the teachers who were affected by the lack of time and support given to the CDIS writers, beginning 1992 with unrevised or unfamiliar materials, or having had an abbreviated holiday.

8.1 The 1991 Syllabus and *New Clue*: in Alignment?

It has already been suggested (Chapter Seven:171-172) that for teaching materials to be in alignment with the syllabus, they would need to:

- . be authentic and include, for example: oral and written texts in a variety of formats and a diversity of registers; audio and video recordings; magazines and pamphlets to bring in the outside world and prepare learners to function successfully within it
- . reflect the centrality of learners by organising learning around topics related to learners' interests, age range, experiences and expectations and by utilizing input from learners
- . respond to learners' needs so they are enabled to achieve the objectives stated in the syllabus at a level and in a sequence determined by both teacher and learner
- . provide opportunities for learners to work in collaboration, independently of the teacher, using written texts, audio-visual and computer materials

- . provide tasks which facilitate communication and genuine negotiation between learners in situations which simulate those which they may encounter when they leave the classroom, and which may have unpredictable outcomes
- . provide opportunities for learners to practise cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic, paralinguistic and meta-linguistic skills to enable them to cope in a dynamic, international community

Authenticity of the materials, including oral and written texts and audio-visual and computer materials

New CLUE 1 and 2 (CDIS, 1991 and 1992) in particular provide a variety of oral and written texts in the basic course book, the audio tapes and CDs, and the video tapes. They include narratives, descriptions, reflections, instructions, expositions, arguments, poems, advertisements, brochures, definitions, reviews, timetables, letters, diary entries, reports, extracts from newspapers, registration certificates, questionnaires, dialogues, and drama.

All written texts are in standard English, and much of the listening comprehension material is performed by an expatriate British teacher, reflecting his British public school education¹. Where Singaporean speakers are used, they speak in an educated Singaporean accent. It could be argued that the New CLUE materials create a language community which is not authentic to Singapore, and is therefore inappropriate. (See Kramsch and Sullivan [1996] for further discussion.)

Authentic texts also need to have 'learner authenticity':

". . . learner-authentic materials are mainly learner-centred, and . . . can serve affectively to promote learners' interest in language learning. In cognitive terms, they can provide learners not only with a chance to develop their linguistic and communicative competence, but also with an awareness of conventions of communication, which will enable them to use appropriate styles in different communicative contexts." (Lee, 1995:324)

¹ Private communication

Not all the New CLUE materials meet these criteria. For example, a listening comprehension text for Secondary 1 pupils features talking animals (CDIS, 1991, New CLUE 1, Teacher's Guide:81) and another talking alarm clocks with curly hair (*ibid*:88). Such materials cannot "serve affectively to promote learners' interest in language learning" or provide learners with "an awareness of convention of communication" (Lee, 1995:324)

Nevertheless, there are texts which would meet Lee's criteria, though perhaps not Kramersch and Sullivan's request for appropriacy. For example, New CLUE 2 includes an extract from Bernard Ashley's All My Men on bullying (CDIS, 1992:176-179) and an article adapted from Newsweek, discussing smart homes (*ibid*:191-193).

It may not have been easy for the New CLUE writers to find acceptable learner authentic materials. Lim, a CDIS writer, stated the materials had to observe "syllabus requirements, national policies, values, cultural sensitivities and other perceptions" (Lim, 1995, *unpublished*). Perhaps this is one reason why the passages provided for comprehension practice for the 'N' level examination consider, for example, myopic students, computer-related illnesses and migraine (CDIS, 1994a:229-236).

The type of passage set in the 'O' level comprehension examination (Chapter Five:109-110) ensures those identified in the course book for practice in this area are unlikely to develop "an awareness of conventions of communication, which will enable (pupils) to use appropriate styles in different communicative contexts" (Lee, 1995:324). Inevitably, then, the New CLUE course materials have less "learner authenticity" as the need to prepare pupils for the public examination influences the content of those materials.

No computer materials are provided in the New CLUE package.

The centrality of the learner

The choice of topics does not reflect the centrality of the learner. For example, the target audience for New CLUE 1 is around twelve years old. Topics for the eighteen units include: Singaporeans' reactions to the collapse of a hotel in 1986; games played in other Asian countries, for example kite flying in Thailand; festivals celebrated in other countries, particularly in Japan; a unit devoted to things Egyptian; and two units considering how Singapore has changed in one generation. A third of the material, then, has a cultural bias and may reflect a desire to teach content other than language.

Repetition of topics also suggests learners were not a central consideration in their selection. For example, families and recollections are covered in New CLUE 1, 2, 3N, 3E and 'O' Level. The environment is considered in New CLUE 1, 2 and 'O' Level. Though these topics can be exploited in different ways, the frequency with which they are revisited precludes discussion of other concerns relevant to learners, for example conflict with authority and drug abuse. This limited range of topics perhaps reflects the writers' need to reinforce acceptable national values.

Another indication that learners were not central to the selection of topics is the inclusion of content inappropriate to learners' age. New CLUE 4 has a target audience aged sixteen. It includes a unit Creating Storylines. Pupils read "A Friend in Need" and complete a pictorial representation of the story's main events: a pupil leaves on the 'bus an important book which her friend returns to her (CDIS, 1994a:79-83). In terms of plot and language, the content is more appropriate to a Secondary One class. This impression is

reinforced by drawings apparently of primary school pupils.

However, the New CLUE materials do try to incorporate input from the learner. Many units begin with visual stimulus and pupils are asked to respond in ways which will help them relate the topic to their own experiences. In most subsequent tasks, though, "learners are simply observers describing what happens in the texts in a detached way" (Low, 1989:152). This is because there is an emphasis on reading comprehension passages and activities which anticipate the examination.

Attempts are made, too, to involve learners in creating texts. For example, in New CLUE 1 they read an advertisement for a tour of the moon, and use the information to create a role play. One person is a prospective tourist and the partner is the travel agent who has to persuade the tourist that "travelling in space is an exciting business" (CDIS, 1991:192-193).

Such opportunities for involvement decrease as examination practice increases. The upper secondary books include Further Practice units which consist of comprehension passages intended as examination practice. Here, there is no visual stimulus and no creative involvement.

Syllabus objectives achieved at a level and in a sequence determined by both teacher and learner

There is an emphasis on syllabus objectives assessed in the 'O' and 'N' level examinations, and the level at which those objectives are achieved is dictated by those examinations. For example, all the activities in New CLUE 4 (CDIS, 1994a) reflect the requirements of the 'N' level examination, and the book concludes with a practice paper imitating the format and standard of an actual paper. This is not true of New CLUE 'O' Level (CDIS, 1994b) which

requires pupils to create symbols and includes listening comprehension activities not assessed in the 'O' level examination. Nevertheless, the majority of the activities either imitate or prepare pupils to fulfil the requirements of the 'O' level examination. This book also concludes with a mock examination.

The result is that in the materials intended for the upper secondary classes, no attention is paid to learning how to learn skills, or to different varieties of English, and only a limited range of writing opportunities is provided. However, in units like Faraway Places, Nomadic Peoples and Other Cultures, New CLUE 'O' Level (CDIS, 1994b:70-132), provides discussion questions which encourage consideration of other cultures' values.

At the lower secondary level, there is a wider range of writing opportunities, including journal writing and producing leaflets and brochures. No attention is paid to different varieties of English, though, even when considering advertisements (CDIS, 1991:167-170). Learning how to learn skills are mentioned, for example, pupils are encouraged to "Go to the library to read up on myths and legends" (CDIS, 1992:153). However, no specific help is provided on how to conduct this research.

The requirements of the examinations, then, have influenced the choice of objectives and established levels of achievement.

Assuming teachers teach the units of work in the same order as they appear in the course book, the sequence in which objectives are to be achieved has been decided by the writers. The units are organised in groups according to theme. For example, in New CLUE 2, the first two units consider The World of Personal Relationships, the third and fourth The World of Imagination, and the fifth and sixth The World of Nature. In general, the

subject matter of the course material moves from personal concerns to more abstract considerations. Teachers may be reluctant to change this apparently common sense approach to the sequencing of materials. Paralleling the increasingly abstract nature of the topics, units of work gradually include fewer narrative reading passages and more descriptions and expositions. In addition, the writing tasks appear to be graded. For example, New CLUE 'O' Level groups the units of work consecutively according to four modules: narratives; descriptions; expressing opinions; and developing arguments. It seems unlikely, then, that either teachers or learners will determine the sequence in which the syllabus objectives are achieved.

Opportunities for pupils to work in collaboration

The course book and the teacher's guide leave it very much to the teacher to exploit opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. For example, in Unit Nine of New CLUE 1 there are no suggestions regarding pupil interaction in either the course book or the teacher's guide. In other books, a few recommendations are made regarding pair and group work. Generally, these encourage fairly superficial exchanges between pupils. For example, in New CLUE 4 'O' Level pupils are required to analyze the structure of a story, and "(c) Compare your ideas with a partner" (CDIS, 1994b:62). When learners work alone on a task and then share the result with other learners, there is little real collaboration.

In New CLUE 3 Express pupils are instructed to:

"Work in groups. Choose one of these propositions and write down three strong arguments for or against the proposition." (CDIS, 1993a:196)

Jacobs and Ball's comments are relevant here:

" . . . group activities appear to have been created merely by putting the words 'in groups' or 'in pairs' in front of what were formerly individual activities, without making any changes to encourage learners to cooperate with one another. Such instructions may suffice in some situations, but for effective interactions to take place students will generally need more guidance and encouragement." (Jacobs and Ball, 1996:99)

For real collaborative learning to take place, learners need to recognise that successful completion of the task depends on the coordinated efforts of all group members, and that each group member will be held accountable by other members for his or her contribution to the group's success or failure.

In general, however, the rubric in the course books is addressed to the individual pupil. The tone of the following instruction is typical: "Watch the ETV programme 'When Singapore was Syonan-to' (Part I) and do the exercises in your workbook" (CDIS, 1992:92). The teacher's guide provides no other suggestions as to how to approach this activity. The vast majority of the reading comprehension activities are completed by the individual pupil in response to rubric like: "Answer the following questions using information from the passage" (CDIS, 1993b:91).

Potentially, there are many opportunities for pupils to work in collaboration, but much depends on the teacher's desire to exploit them. It would be possible to use the majority of the materials as class or individual work to be completed in regimented silence.

Tasks which encourage communication and genuine negotiation and simulate life beyond the classroom

There are relatively few tasks which attempt to encourage communication and genuine negotiation. Seedhouse contends it is impossible to replicate natural communication within the classroom, since all classroom

communication is a variety of institutional discourse:

"Whatever methods the teacher is using - even if the teacher claims to be relinquishing control of the classroom interaction - the linguistic forms and patterns of the interaction which the learners produce will inevitably be linked in some way to the pedagogical purposes which the teacher introduces." (Seedhouse, 1996:22)

This view appeals to common sense. Pupils on task in a classroom are involved in activities providing teachers opportunities to monitor progress and/or for pupils to practise identified skills. Thus, the fact that oral tasks in New CLUE rarely simulate life beyond the classroom and almost always have predictable outcomes suggests only that its writers are working within the constraints of the classroom's learning environment.

Many tasks relate to rather than simulate life beyond the classroom and provide practice in the use of grammatical structures. New CLUE 2 includes a series of six drawings depicting two people in conversation in different situations. Below the drawings is the framework of a conversational exchange, for example, "'This camp site is superb. I feel ____.' 'Yeah, it's wonderful here. I feel ____.'" The instructions are:

"Work in groups. Complete the dialogue with suitable adverb clauses of manner beginning with *as if*, *as though*, or *like*." (CDIS, 1992:171)

This exercise neither promotes genuine communication nor encourages meaningful collaboration. Such controlled activities are "pre-communicative" (Littlewood, 1992, in Thompson, 1996:15) if they are designed to lead into activities providing opportunities for more natural communication. However, the example cited above is only marginally useful in preparing pupils for the next activity, which is to write a draft of a play, perhaps based on a real incident (CDIS, 1992:173). The format of the writing ensures this is a task

which few pupils will take on outside the classroom, though the writing process and the play's enactment have the potential to encourage communication, genuine negotiation and simulate life beyond the classroom.

Some writing tasks, however, do imitate activities pupils are likely to engage in throughout life. The 'N' level examination has a positive backwash effect as it requires candidates to complete a form using information in a reading passage. Thus, a number of activities in New CLUE require learners to do the same, for example in New CLUE 4 'N' Level pupils are asked to fill in an application form for volunteers to give tuition to children. The information is provided in a description of a person (CDIS, 1994a:181-182).

The materials, then, encourage learners to operate within the confines of the classroom and the examination. Few opportunities are provided which encourage communication and genuine negotiation between learners or simulate life beyond the classroom.

Opportunities to practise the cognitive and linguistic skills required in a dynamic international community

If learners are to practise the cognitive and linguistic skills required in a dynamic, international community, it would be useful to re-create that community in the classroom. Instead, New CLUE presents Singapore as an ideal community. An extract from The Next Lap, (The Government of Singapore, 1991, in CDIS, 1994a:176-178) depicts Singaporean society as affluent, caring and compassionate. It is also presented as consisting of wealthy consumers (CDIS, 1993a:143-146, and 1993b:135-137). The development of the arts in Singapore is favourably reviewed (CDIS, 1993a:218-221, and 1993b:205-207). Singaporeans are portrayed as brave,

resourceful, sympathetic and humorous in the face of war (CDIS, 1992:92-95 and 107-121) and disaster (CDIS, 1991:90-102); and as kind and considerate (*ibid*:25-27). Singapore is an ideal tourist destination for nature lovers (CDIS, 1992:60-62 and 70-71) and a developing community trying to retain its traditional trades (CDIS, 1991:76-85) whilst at the same time rapidly improving housing and other facilities (*ibid*, 1991:104-114).

New CLUE recognises the existence of other countries in ASEAN, and, for example, of Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands, Egypt and Turkey. In considering this last group, the emphasis is on the remote, the nomadic and the exotic. Singaporean learners exposed to information about the rest of the world only through the pages of New CLUE will have a strange idea about Singapore's place in the international community. Pictures suggest it is the only society to wear western clothes.

Pictures also suggest that the world comprises mostly men. For example, a unit on Hi-tech Crime Detection contains six decorative drawings (CDIS, 1992:203-222). One shows a woman victim of violent crime with an androgynous doctor. The seven other people in these drawings are men. The unit also contains a series of pictures portraying the successful investigation of a murder. 21 people are represented: the single female is a radio operator (*ibid*:220-221). At least she was not the murder victim. The previous unit, Automation, considers smart homes. It has pictures of two women, a drawing of a child and various representations of machinery and house plans (*ibid*:189-202). Women are under-represented and usually seen performing a limited number of traditional female roles. (See Gupta and Lee [1990] for further discussion of the unreality of the world presented in CDIS materials.)

The dynamic, international community for which the 1991 Syllabus was written is not reflected in a balanced way in the New CLUE materials. Taken in conjunction with the distorted representation of the linguistic situation, the materials create a picture of Singapore with which learners may find it hard to identify. Features may be recognisable, but the whole is likely to be bland, lacking the vital characteristics of the original. Within such a framework, it will be more difficult for the writers to create tasks which provide opportunities for learners to practise relevant cognitive and linguistic skills. The cumulative effect on learners may be boredom, even alienation.

This learner reaction may be exacerbated by the repeated pattern of activities in each unit. New CLUE adopts the "writing-last solution" (Low, 1989:147) to the problem presented by the internal organisation of course units. Activities leading up to the writing task repeat the same pattern in every book: discussion, reading comprehension, language use and grammar activities, building vocabulary, listening and a writing task. Sometimes, an activity based on a video is introduced, or the listening activity is placed earlier in the unit. In general, however, the pattern is the same.

Given the limited availability of topics, repeated pattern of unit organisation and emphasis on examinable activities, it is not surprising that writing tasks are similar. New CLUE 2 requires pupils to "Write about a relative in an interesting way" (CDIS, 1992:15). New CLUE 3 Express asks pupils to write about "A person who has influenced me a great deal" (CDIS, 1993a:54). In New CLUE 4 Express pupils "Write about 'Mother', 'Father', 'Sister' or 'Brother'" (CDIS, 1994b:44).

Over time, learners are likely to lose interest in these tasks. They

contrast greatly with Swan's criterion for a good course book:

"The best lessons are those in which the book may do something interesting, but the students end up by doing something even more interesting, as they use their newly learnt language to inform, amuse, entertain, persuade or even move each other." (Swan, 1994:35)

Too often, newly learned skills are used to practise writing learners will be required to produce as examination candidates. Too often, Low's predictions are fulfilled:

". . . unless precautions are taken, the unit-final writing task can easily end up as a summarising exercise, which functions more as a test than a teaching device, and which is structurally poorly integrated into the unit." (Low, 1989:148)

Learners, then, have few opportunities to practise the linguistic skills required in a dynamic, international community.

There is an attempt to promote pupils' cognitive development. After reading an adaptation of Chekhov's The Bet, pupils are asked to respond to this question: "Judging by the outcome of the story, do you think capital punishment or life imprisonment is more humane?" (CDIS, 1993a:238). However, this is the last of seventeen questions in a written comprehension exercise. The teacher's guide recommends teachers to "Accept reasonable answers" (*ibid*:65). The perceived need to provide sufficient examination practice has turned a question which could have contributed to learners' cognitive development into one which will pose a problem to the teacher trying to devise a neat marking scheme. It may be omitted entirely.

There are few opportunities for learners to practise problem solving, even at the lower secondary levels. However, New CLUE 2 provides a useful activity for the development of linguistic and cognitive skills. Pupils are asked

to role play a Singaporean family in World War Two, and to decide whether the family would stay or leave the country as the Japanese advanced. Pupils then list the reasons for their decision, its consequences, and the possible alternative decisions they could have taken (CDIS, 1992:91).

Elsewhere, opportunities are lost. For example, in the unit Growing Up a number of letters to problem pages are reproduced. Instead of requiring pupils to answer the problems, blanks are left in the letters so pupils can fill in the appropriate idioms from a list provided (*ibid*:182-184).

This conflict between the writers' desire to control language use and also provide opportunities for cognitive development too often results in a victory for control. Thus, too often language learning is presented as reproduction rather than problem solving. (Littlejohn and Windeatt, 1989.)

Clearly, then, the New CLUE materials are not in alignment with the 1991 Syllabus. The CDIS writers have provided some tasks which facilitate communication and negotiation, but only a teacher with a thorough understanding of and real commitment to the principles of the 1991 Syllabus would be able to translate the course book and its additional components into a programme the syllabus writers would recognise.

8.2 New CLUE: Teacher Involvement

The steering committee appointed to provide CDIS with feedback on draft units of work did not include teachers (CDIS, 1992:ii). However, New CLUE was piloted in seventeen schools, acknowledged in the course books. This writer has no access to information concerning the extent to which teachers' comments on these trials affected materials development. Fourteen schools piloted New CLUE 1, but fewer schools were involved over the years,

and only four schools piloted New CLUE 'O' Level. However highly teachers' advice was regarded, it was sought less frequently.

It was anticipated teachers would need help to exploit and develop the materials. CDIS writers expressed concern about teachers' ability to adapt and supplement New CLUE in response to pupils' needs and interests (English Unit, 1990j:3, *minutes*). So, teacher's guides were produced:

"The materials are also designed to give teachers scope for flexibility in use. A clearly written Teacher's Guide is provided to assist teachers with the selection of tasks and activities to match the different language objectives, attainment levels and needs of their pupils." (CDIS, 1991:iv)

However, the teacher's guides provide no such assistance. Three pages support each unit in the course book. One gives an overview of the unit with a suggested time frame and the second gives answers to the reading comprehension, language use and vocabulary sections. The third informs teachers which picture cards, OHTs and supplementary grammar activities support the unit, and suggests questions to begin discussion together with ideas for approaching the language use and writing activities. There is no indication the teacher should make a selection from the materials or modify them to suit pupils' abilities.

The teacher, then, is given little help to exploit New CLUE creatively. If the CDIS writers were correct in their pessimistic assessment of teachers' abilities to modify the course book, the outlook for pupils is grim:

"If that creative interaction does not occur, textbooks are simply pages of dead, inert written symbols and teaching is no more than a symbolic ritual, devoid of any real significance for what is going on outside the classroom." (O'Neill, 1982:111)

New CLUE 1 and 2 each provide for the needs of learners in both

express and normal streams. Thus, if the materials are not adapted and supplemented many learners will find teaching devoid of any real significance even inside the classroom. In addition, teachers adopting an authoritarian role in their use of the materials will provide learners with few opportunities to exploit the texts to develop their linguistic competence and awareness. "Learner authenticity" will be lost (Lee, 1995:325).

Thus, creative interaction between teachers and the CDIS materials was essential to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. Yet, there was little teacher involvement in the development of New CLUE. Though writers felt teachers would need help in exploiting the materials, it was not provided.

8.3 Commercial Course Books and Syllabus Implementation

Other course books could have been used to support implementation. The Ministry of Education annually provides schools with a list of approved commercially produced course materials. By 1995, the year in which it was expected all classes would have implemented the syllabus, four of these books were recommended for use (Curriculum Planning Division, 1994b:1-4).

A comparison between the commercially produced course books approved in 1985 and 1995 is provided in Table 3 on the next page. This demonstrates the limited choice available. Throughout the decade teachers of Normal stream students had to select either the CDIS or the Blueprint materials. The market has been dominated by a few authors and institutions. Kirkpatrick *et al* and Lim *et al* were lecturers with the Institute of Education. Davis and Watts were specialist inspectors with the Ministry of Education. Thus, only Etherton and Heaton provide ideas which originate outside Singapore. By 1995 only Etherton had an approved publication.

Table 3
Commercially Approved Materials: 1985 and 1995

	1985	1995
1	<u>SCOPE</u> , Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 A R B Etherton <i>Approved for Express classes</i>	<u>TIES</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 A R B Etherton & Anne Etherton <i>Approved for Express classes</i>
2	<u>Expressway English</u> Books 1, 2 & 3 C W Davis & A J Watts <i>Approved for Express classes</i>	<u>New Expressway English</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 C W Davis & A J Watts <i>Approved for Express classes</i>
3	<u>Blueprint For English</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 C W Davis & A J Watts <i>Approved for Normal Academic classes</i>	<u>New Blueprint For English</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 C W Davis & A J Watts <i>Approved for Normal Academic classes</i>
4	<u>Interlink</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 T A Kirkpatrick, Vanitha Saravanan, Lyn Kirkpatrick & Christopher Fry <i>Approved for Express classes</i>	<u>Forte</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 Shirley Lim, Desmond Pereira & Amy Sobrielo <i>Approved for Express classes</i>
5	<u>Create and Communicate</u> Books 1, 2, 3 & 4 J B Heaton <i>Approved for Express classes</i>	

Sources: Education Services Division, 1984:69-70 and Curriculum Planning Division, 1994b:1-4

Etherton's book SCOPE reflects a structural approach and accepts the premise that pupils' interest in their work is not related to their progress (Chapter Four:101-102). A comparison between SCOPE 3 (Etherton, 1983) and TIES 3 (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a) reveals little has changed. Of the 34 passages used in SCOPE 3, 18 are included in TIES 3. One has been updated and 14 introduced, including a previous 'O' level paper.

Retaining interesting texts is pragmatic, but differences between the 1982 and 1991 syllabuses suggest these texts should provide a basis for different activities in TIES. Its introduction suggests otherwise. Reading comprehension is largely a matter of understanding grammar:

" . . . (pupils) may fail to locate the subject of a complex sentence and wrongly assume that the noun immediately before a verb is the subject. They may misunderstand nouns in apposition, the effect of passive verbs, figurative language, idioms and a number of other common usages. They may confuse the various meanings of a *good many* and *many a good, badly, belong, used to, suspicious* and *late*.

One result is that some pupils may have difficulty in understanding a passage and even greater difficulty in making a summary of it." (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:iv)

The emphasis here is at the word and sentence level, and the only identified purpose for reading is to perform an examinable activity, summarising. This perception of reading is shared by the SCOPE course:

"Comprehension involves understanding vocabulary, syntax, figurative language (often a stumbling block), phrasal verbs, pronoun references and many other points." (Etherton, 1983:iv)

Both TIES and SCOPE include a chapter on Pollution. As with a number of topics, the reason for its inclusion appears to be to inform rather than involve the pupil. The reading passages and many of the activities used in both chapters are almost identical. Initially, there appears to be a difference. The first passage on the effects of lead poisoning has a pre-reading activity in TIES (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:43). However, it is very similar to the discussion topics in SCOPE (Etherton, 1983:35). Indeed, it is suggested in TIES that pupils may prefer to answer the pre-reading questions later in the chapter. In SCOPE literal and inferential reading comprehension questions are all under one heading, *Understanding*, whereas in TIES they are organised under three headings: *Understanding*, *Checking the Details* and *What do you think?*. However, the nature of the questions is similar, as the *What do you think?* section consists of inferential questions, not problems.

Often, questions are identical. For example,

"Write four statements (each containing not more than eight words) to show, in four stages, how people who eat fish may eventually suffer from lead poisoning." (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:45; Etherton, 1983:33).

In TIES there is a question mark instead of a full stop at the end of the

sentence, suggesting one difference between the books is the quality of editing. There is a greater emphasis on vocabulary in TIES, but the entire comprehension exercise concludes with the same summary question. Both books include an exercise on inversion of subject and verb requiring mechanical rearrangement of words in discrete sentences. The exercises on ellipsis and prepositions in SCOPE are replaced in TIES by a section discussing how to interpret a variety of potential 'O' level essay topics. Only one is related to the topic of pollution. Titles are provided and a series of questions are posed which only the examiners could answer. For example, given the topic "Unwelcome Visitors", pupils are asked "How many visitors must we write about?" (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:50).

Immediately following this is a second reading on the Amoco Cadiz disaster. There is no pre-reading exercise in either book. TIES has the grace to include an update on the long term effects of the disaster and a question concerning this. Otherwise, the questions are almost identical, though there are fewer of them in TIES. They are particularly simple questions:

"The following sentences are based on the passage about the 'Amoco Cadiz'. Complete them in any truthful way.

1. The 'Amoco Cadiz' intended to carry a cargo of oil . . . " (Etherton, 1983:38; Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:53)

The answer is *to Lyme Bay, on the south coast of England*, and merely has to be copied from the passage. The entire exercise is of a similar level of difficulty. The following vocabulary section is the same in both books, though pupils using TIES are encouraged to make their own vocabulary list for another topic area, and are asked to consider what certain acronyms stand for. The grammar section comes next in both books and considers passive

verb forms. Again the exercises are identical, requiring pupils to substitute verb forms in sentences adapted from the two passages.

The final writing task is the same, re-writing parts of the passages for different audiences. The audience list has been made more politically correct. For example, "the mass of partly educated people" in SCOPE (Etherton, 1983:42) has become "the mass of ordinary people" in TIES (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:57). Recognising the writing task requires a knowledge of different genres, both books provide an extract from an article on pollution intended for children. It includes the instruction "Don't lick or suck your toys" (Etherton, 1983:41; Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:57), raising the question of the age at which the target audience learned to read. In SCOPE, the only help pupils are given to recognise appropriate features of discourse is "Here is a different way of writing the same passage" (Etherton, 1983:41). TIES advises pupils to "Notice that the vocabulary and sentence patterns are different" (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:57).

The writing activity completes the chapter in SCOPE, but TIES has an oral activity. This deals with pronunciation and naming of parts of a ship, knowledge which has little surrender value. Finally, pupils are asked whether they can do what they have learned in the chapter, a belated recognition of the 1991 Syllabus's plea for opportunities for learner self evaluation. The checklist reveals what a mixed bag of activities the pupils have been asked to complete. It is not possible to identify what language learning principles have dictated their proximity or sequence.

The authors mention pupil collaboration and responsibility for learning:

" . . . teachers may like to allow pupils to work in pairs or in small

groups, especially if they have used this system in Secondary 1 and 2, and have a partner with whom they work efficiently.

We suggest that pupils continue to do almost all written work in pairs or small groups so that the plan and first draft of each composition can be checked, corrected and improved before the final version is written." (Etherton and Etherton, 1995a:iii)

However, the course book makes no suggestions as to how pupils may be encouraged to see writing as a process, or to collaborate and negotiate.

Some grammar activities have been removed to make way for activities with a specific examination focus in TIES, but the rationale for the retention of those that remain is not obvious. As the example from the chapter on Pollution shows (this chapter:209-210), they are not necessarily structures needed for the writing task. The Grammar Reference and Review section in SCOPE is also present in TIES, though it is much abbreviated. It seems the authors were intent on re-shaping SCOPE to provide more examination-oriented activities whilst retaining a comforting emphasis on grammar. TIES may prove to be a commercial success but it does not satisfy any of the criteria which would ensure its alignment with the 1991 Syllabus.

In the market for 'N' level pupils, the Blueprint and New Blueprint books present the only competition to New CLUE. However, the competition is not great. The New Blueprint series was not produced specifically for 'N' level pupils. Its authors also produced New Expressway English. The New Expressway English for Secondary 2E classes is almost identical to the New Blueprint for English for Secondary 3N pupils. The most significant difference is that the pupil workbook is incorporated into the course book for secondary two pupils. The following discussion, then, will consider only the alignment between the 1991 Syllabus and the New Expressway English materials.

The course books incorporate a diversity of materials: questionnaires, surveys, newspaper articles, letters, advertisements, prose and pictorial narratives, posters, maps, forms, diagrams, plays, poems and students' work. However, they may not always engage learners. The choice of some topics, for example People in History and Putting a Newspaper Together (Davis and Watts, 1992b), reflects an attempt to inform rather than involve pupils.

When considering such topics attempts are made to utilize learner input through activities like identifying pictures of Florence Nightingale, Einstein, Churchill and Beethoven and encouraging pupils to ask their history teacher about them (Davis and Watts, 1992b:36). Happily, more practical and culturally appropriate strategies are used elsewhere. For example, when considering sexual discrimination family situations pupils are asked to respond to relevant letters published in The Straits Times (*ibid*, 1992a:94-97).

Pupils are encouraged to work together, though very often they are using the same information to perform the same task or comparing notes on an activity they have just completed. Where more meaningful collaboration or negotiation is called for, the tasks are frequently impractical and unlikely to achieve their purpose. For example, pupils are asked to look at an unconvincing drawing of two dogs fighting. One dog is sinking its teeth into the other's shoulder, and behind them is a large bone. Secondary two express pupils are asked to discuss the following questions in pairs:

"Why are these dogs fighting? How many possible reasons can you think of? Which is most likely?
Which dog is the attacker and which the defender? How can you tell?
Which dog is going to win? Give reasons for you answer." (Davis and Watts 1992a:113)

These questions are not worth considering. Either the answer is

obvious, as in which dog is going to win and the likely reason for the fight, or the drawing provides no basis for conjecture, as in which dog is the attacker and which the defender. The discussion is unlikely to achieve its purpose, which is to introduce the topic of aggression.

This activity included in a unit called The News may produce chaos:

"In your usual group make up a play about kidnapping. Divide the action into four scenes as follows:

Scene 1: A child is captured.

Scene 2: He/She is put in a hideaway.

Scene 3: He/She finds a way of calling for help.

Scene 4: The rescue takes place.

Rehearse the play well and then perform it for the class."

(Davis and Watts, 1992b:77)

Pupils will need to create a great deal of background information regarding character and plot to make this play credible. The linguistic demands are considerable, particularly as the play provides the basis of a writing activity. Its practicality is questionable, too. In a crowded Singapore classroom, with equally crowded classrooms one wall away, the noise of the struggle as a child is captured may cause more consternation than intended.

Unnecessarily complex linguistic demands are made in writing tasks too. After reading a newspaper article describing spirits rumoured to haunt Malaysia, secondary two pupils are asked to summarise it in 120 words, in the form of an advertisement for a team of ghostbusters to eradicate the spirits (Davis and Watts, 1992a:184-185). Producing a summary of a rather incoherent passage is difficult enough, but to write it as an advertisement demands a sophisticated command of language. No help is provided.

At the beginning of each course book, a note to the pupils encourages them to work independently of the teacher outside the classroom (eg *ibid*:ix).

This is clearly in accordance with the principles of the 1991 Syllabus. However, texts and tasks are presented in a haphazard order which will make it difficult for the pupil (and the teacher) to chart a coherent course through them. For example, extracts from The Pearl appear in Book 2 (*ibid*:120-122) and Book 4 (Davis and Watts, 1993:105-107). The Self-editing and Punctuation section in Book 4 devotes a page to full stops and capital letters (*ibid*:319). Even as revision, this exercise is not sufficiently challenging for pupils about to take 'O' level examinations.

The course books are differentiated to a very great extent by the number of references to the examination. Books 3 and 4 contain two practice examination papers, but Book 4 is peppered with activities which replicate those pupils will be required to do in the 'O' level examination together with advice on how to perform well (eg Davis and Watts, 1993: 29, 49, and 118).

In contrast, there are some interesting problem solving activities. For example, a murder case is presented and pupils are required to solve it. The class is to decide which solution best fits all the facts (Davis and Watts, 1992b:159-160). In Book 4, a drawing of a Heath Robinson type of machine "designed to get you out of bed and ready for school quickly and efficiently" is used to stimulate discussion and creativity (Davis and Watts, 1993:76-77).

Thus, the New Expressway English materials do respond to the 1991 Syllabus in a number of ways, but activities are often inappropriate and/or impractical and the units of work have no sense of internal organisation, contributing to a lack of coherent progression in the course as a whole.

The Forte course books, though approved for use in 1995, were published in 1990 in response to the 1982 Syllabus. Nevertheless, the

materials attempt to place learners at the centre of learning by considering topics which should appeal to the majority of pupils and encourage them to participate. Secondary One topics include Growing Up, Love, Doing Things for Oneself and Horror of Horrors (Lim *et al*, 1990a). Such a diversity of subjects enables the authors to use a variety of interesting texts including poems, recipes, cartoons, advertisements, timetables, brochures, instructions, tables, flow charts, interviews, dialogues, jokes, letters, diaries, narratives, descriptions and expositions.

Though unaware of the objectives of the 1991 Syllabus, the course nevertheless encourages pupils to do research in the library (Lim *et al*, 1990b:180), provides opportunities for pupils to "think logically" (*ibid*:142-143) and solve problems (Lim *et al*, 1989a:137), and considers varieties of English other than standard British (*ibid*:168-170). This is in addition to the more traditionally examinable communication activities. The foreword to the course books states that the modules are "sequenced according to the difficulty levels of composite skills, tasks and texts" (Lim *et al*, 1989b:xxviii-xxix) and a comprehension test imitating an 'O' level examination appears in the last module of Book 4 (*ibid*:255-259). So, it is unlikely that teachers or learners will determine the sequence in which objectives are achieved.

Pupils are not encouraged to work independently of teachers. In fact, they are reminded to consult: "Ask your teacher for guidance in sharing out the work amongst group members" (*ibid*:17). However, there are tasks which facilitate communication and negotiation between pupils, for example information gap activities (*ibid*:77-78 and 112).

Although the units lack internal coherence, of all the course books

available to teachers in 1995, Forte comes closest in spirit to the 1991 Syllabus. Not surprisingly, however, given the nature of the 1991 Syllabus, no single government or commercially produced course book adequately responds to that syllabus's requirements of instructional materials.

8.4 Teacher Dependency on Course Books

This last point is all the more significant if course books have an impact on teaching and learning in Singapore's classrooms.

Table 4
Use of Course Books in Planning Units of Work

YEAR	NO. OF SCHOOLS*	NO. OF UNITS*	ACADEMIC LEVELS	NO. & % OF UNITS BASED ON COURSE BOOK	NO. & % OF SCHOOLS NOT USING COURSE BOOK	NO & % OF UNITS NOT BASED ON COURSE BOOK, BY ACADEMIC LEVEL
1992	4	7	1E = 4 1N = 2 2N = 1	7 (100%)	0 (0%)	0
1993	20	30	1E = 7 1N = 2 2N = 5 2E = 8 3N = 8	27 (90%)	2 (10%)	1E = 1 2E = 1 3N = 1 Total = 3 (10%)
1994	70	104	1E = 18 1N = 9 2N = 10 2E = 22 3N = 14 3E = 24 4N = 7	92 (88.5%)	5 (7.1%)	1E = 1 2N = 1 2E = 3 3E = 4 3N = 2 4N = 1 Total = 12 (11.5%)
1995	13	21	4E = 13 5N = 8	13 (61.9%)	5 (38.5%)	4E = 5 5N = 3 Total = 8 (38.1%)
Total	85 (100%)	162 (100%)	162 (100%)	139 (85.8%)	5 (5.9%)*	23 (14.2%)

* Some schools contributed more than one unit at more than one level

An analysis of 162 units of work (see Appendix D:453-454 for a sample) from 85 (approximately 62%) secondary schools, collected for this

study between 1992 and 1995 (Bibliography 9:441-445), suggests course books have a fundamental effect on programme planning in many schools.

Table 4 on the previous page shows only 5 schools did not use course books in any unit included in the survey, though 6 schools did not use course books in all units. 23 units of work came from these 11 schools.

Table 4 also suggests that course books have less influence on units of work planned for graduating classes. The sample is very small and research based on a larger representative sample is needed to investigate whether this is a feature of the backwash effect of high stakes examinations.

The vast majority of the units of work, however, 139 (85.8%) units from 80 (94.1%) schools, were based on course books. The table below shows which course books were most frequently used.

Table 5
Frequency of Use of Recommended Course Books

Year	No. of schools with units of work based on course books	<u>CLUE</u> : No. of Schools Using	<u>NEW CLUE</u> : No. of Schools Using	<u>E'WAYS</u> : No. of Schools Using	<u>B'PRINT</u> : No. of Schools Using	<u>FORTE</u> : No. of Schools Using	<u>TIES</u> : No. of Schools Using
1992	4	0	1	2	1	1	0
1993	18	0	6	4	7	3	0
1994	65	2	41	10	8	10	0
1995	8	0	3	2	0	1	2
Total	80 ¹	2 (2.5%) ²	51 (63.7%)	18 (22.5%)	16 (20.0%)	14 (17.5%)	2 (2.5%)

¹ Some schools contributed units at more than one level

² Some schools used more than one course book to cater for the needs of different levels/streams

It is clear from Table 5 that in the 80 schools from which units of work were obtained, New CLUE was the most commonly used. Table 6 on the next page shows that in the sample schools in the period 1992-1995, only New

CLUE was used to plan programmes at all academic levels.

Table 6
Number of Units of Work Based on Approved Course Books, According to Academic Level

Year	No. of units based on course books	No. based on <u>CLUE</u>	No. based on <u>New CLUE</u>	No. based on <u>E' Ways</u>	No. based on <u>B'Print</u>	No. based on <u>FORTE</u>	No. based on <u>TIES</u>
1992	7	0	1N = 1 1E = 1	1E = 2 2N = 1	1N = 1	1E = 1	0
1993	27	0	1N = 2 1E = 3 2N = 2 2E = 3	1E = 2 2E = 2 3N = 1	2N = 1 3N = 7	1E = 1 2N = 1 2E = 2	0
1994	92	4N = 2	1N = 6 1E = 11 2N = 9 2E = 15 3N = 6 3E = 9	1E = 2 2E = 1 3N = 1 3E = 6	1N = 1 2N = 2 3N = 1 4N = 4	1N = 1 1E = 2 2E = 3 3N = 3 3E = 7	0
1995	13	0	4E = 3 5N = 2	4E = 2 5N = 2	0	4E = 1 5N = 1	4E = 2
Total	139 (100%)	2 (1.4%)	73 (52.5%)	22 (15.8%)	17 (12.2%)	23 (16.5%)	2 (1.4%)

To what extent, then, were units of work informed by course books?

Table 7
Units of Work: Dependence on Course Book

Total No. of Units	No. faithfully reflecting the course book	No. incorporating time for supporting programmes, assessment	No. incorporating additional resources, and perhaps additional activities	No. utilising the course book as a resource
139	62 (44.6%)	20 (14.4%)	53 (38.1%)	4 (2.9%)

Of the 139 units of work based on the course books, 62 never deviated from the authors' suggestions. The units of work reveal a systematic approach to covering all the materials provided. No additional resources were suggested, and no time was allocated to extra programmes run by the department, to class tests, or to examinations.

20 other units also adhered strictly to the sequence of activities dictated by the course book, but did include time for the department's ongoing reading and writing programmes, and/or for tests or examinations,

or for feedback to pupils, perhaps in the form of a focus lesson. Neither the assessment nor the support programmes were necessarily integrated with the activities suggested by the course book.

53 units of work also followed the course book's recommendations, but either provided extra resources to develop suggested activities, perhaps pictures or newspaper articles, or included additional activities to provide more practice in areas like grammar or comprehension.

4 units of work showed departments using the course book to support their own objectives, perhaps by changing the organisational focus from a topic to a skill, or revealing a command of the activities in other ways, for example changing their order to better achieve an objective or integrating appropriate resources to create a more interesting sequence of lessons.

Thus, in this survey, course books were found to be the dominant influence in planning units of work in all academic levels. The most influential course book is New CLUE.

Classroom practice may bear little relationship to planning documents. However, teachers with little time to prepare alternative programmes are more likely to rely on the official one, and the 21.79% untrained teachers may have felt they had no other choice (Monitoring Committee, 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]).

8.5 Conclusion

It is, then, particularly unfortunate that the 1991 Syllabus did not generate teaching materials clearly in alignment with its principles, a feature which would have contributed to successful syllabus implementation.

This discussion of teaching materials has suggested assessment modes did not change. The next chapter examines this implication in more detail.

CHAPTER NINE

1991 Syllabus: Assessment Modes

9.0 1991 Syllabus: Recommendations Regarding Assessment

In direct contrast to the 1982 Syllabus, the 1991 Syllabus recommends a balance of formal and continuous assessment. Such an approach:

"... should evaluate clearly and accurately the extent to which the far-reaching aims of the syllabus are realized, at the same time providing on-going constructive feedback to facilitate their attainment. Assessment should be viable, realistic, efficient and effective. Above all, the assessment approach should be one that sees formal and continuous assessment as complementing each other to the full benefit of the learner." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:102)

Pupils need to be "rigorously trained" for formal assessment which is "an inevitable feature of contemporary society" (*ibid*:92). It provides a means of checking "that the standards and criteria of judgement are consistent among the teaching staff", and of "assessing the progress of a large number of pupils of the same level" (*ibid*:91).

School-based formal assessment should be reliable and flexible. To achieve reliability, teachers are recommended to refer to the guidelines provided by the Examinations and Assessment Branch (EAB). To demonstrate greater flexibility, it is suggested teachers use a wider range of item types to assess skills. For example, the extent to which a pupil has achieved the objective "to summarize and organize salient points of the whole or part of a fairly extended piece for a specific purpose" (*ibid*:9) could be assessed by requiring the pupil to combine sentences, paraphrase short paragraphs, simplify a short passage or rewrite a dialogue as a synopsis (*ibid*:91). A wider variety of test items has a positive backwash effect on language learning:

"First, pupils need not be drilled on a restricted number of item

types for examination purposes and, secondly, teachers could teach a wider range of skills through an interesting array of activities." (*ibid*)

The value of national examinations is recognised, but they:

" . . . exert a powerful influence on teaching methodology in the classroom. At their worst, they could influence teachers to teach towards the examinations, focussing on a limited range of test items and language skills." (*ibid*:90)

To reduce this influence, recommendations are made to help teachers include pupil self-evaluation, peer evaluation and pupil/teacher-negotiated evaluation in a "valid, fair, reliable, constructive, comprehensive, balanced and humanistic" assessment programme (*ibid*:91). To enable pupils to influence what and how they are taught (*ibid*:102), teachers are encouraged to use portfolios of samples of coursework, informal tests, teacher observations of pupils' oral competence, project work and pupils' work based on the school's extensive reading programme. Suggestions for test tasks (*ibid*:97-101), profiling (*ibid*:101-102), checklists for pupil self-evaluation of oral interaction and study skills (*ibid*:124-126), and for teacher evaluation of teamwork in project work (*ibid*:127-128) are all included in the syllabus.

Thus, the 1991 Syllabus emphasises the need to constantly monitor and diagnose a wide range of pupils' work, and to place some of the responsibility for this informal assessment with pupils. Formal assessment is essential, but the provision of guidelines for this is EAB's responsibility.

9.1 Formal and Informal Approaches to Assessment: "Complementing each other"?

Such a division of responsibility is unlikely to be helpful to teachers receiving advice on the same subject from separate ministry divisions. It is also unlikely to enable teachers to see formal and informal modes of

assessment as "complementing each other to the full benefit of the learner" (*ibid*:102). In practice, teachers may find this difficult to achieve.

The purpose, content, mode and reporting of informal assessment as described in the 1991 Syllabus and practised in the formal school-based and national examinations are very different. They are underpinned by two different philosophies: classical humanist and progressive respectively. Though they are not mutually exclusive, devising teaching programmes which enable these assessment modes to complement each other will be difficult.

Where national examinations are the dominant influence on teaching, there may be little attempt to utilize both modes. Since "test scores may partly reflect how well candidates cope with the test format itself rather than their actual proficiency" (Skehan, 1989:1) and "Test formats can only be understood by studying test papers, and coaching in TOEFL does improve scores without any noticeable improvement in general proficiency" (Pollitt, 1995:56), teachers may achieve good examination results by providing regular practice based on old examination papers. Thus, informal assessment modes may be considered superfluous.

They are difficult to introduce into a traditional system (Wall, 1996). Considerable professional expertise is required to conduct informal assessment. Its intention is to enable teachers, learners' peers and learners to participate in monitoring learners' progress and diagnosing learners' problems while completing tasks that "develop the total individual through language learning" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:102). Teachers need to be provided with the skills and time to do this:

"Many curriculum projects involve new roles for teachers in

monitoring student performance. One of the most difficult implementation problems is how these skills can be developed and where does one find time in the teacher's schedule, not only to do the initial training, but also to make it possible for teachers to implement the new role in their daily work. The record keeping and curriculum planning implications are not small." (Fullan, 1981:333)

Learners, too, need time to learn new roles and skills, and may not be receptive to these changes (Ellis, 1996).

Given these difficulties, and no obvious rewards for overcoming them, teachers will be tempted to ignore the syllabus's suggestions for informal assessment. The 23 appraisal reports written between 1992 and 1995 and available to the researcher provide a depressing picture of assignments which "while adequate in number, neither challenge the brightest pupils nor meet the needs of the weaker" (Bibliography 5, MOE, 1994c:14).

It can be assumed, however, that English departments did refer to the 'O' and 'N' level examinations for guidance in devising teaching programmes. Did the 1991 Syllabus have any impact on these examinations?

9.2 1991 Syllabus: Influence on 'O' and 'N' Level Examinations

The original intention was that the 1991 Syllabus would inform new 'N' and 'O' level examinations in 1994 and 1995 respectively. Between July and December 1990, UCLES would be consulted, and in January 1991 EAB was to be notified about the revisions (SIELs 6 and 7, 1988:Appendix 2:2). There are no records of any consultations or notifications in the relevant files or minutes, though a syllabus writer stated UCLES had been informed by letter about the 1991 Syllabus (Appendix Niv:489). There are two syllabus distribution lists in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabus Vol. 2 (English Unit, 1981-1992). UCLES is not mentioned in either of them. The syllabus would

have been sent to UCLES via EAB. Officers in EAB received one copy each, and no instruction was given regarding forwarding a copy to UCLES. It is possible no copies were sent.

The 'N' level examination and the 'O' level written examination for 1995 are no different in kind to the papers which preceded them. Decisions in Singapore as well as ignorance in Cambridge may have been responsible for this. Concluding a status report on national examinations presented in 1995 to members of the ministerial committee, the Deputy Director of the Examinations Branch (DDEX) said:

"While examination modes are reviewed and modified, there is also a crucial need to ensure public acceptance and confidence in the national examinations. The answer might lie not so much in the wide-scale embracing of alternative modes of testing in the national examinations as in exploring how we can make the traditional testing modes which have served us well so far work even better for us." (DDEX, 1995:6-7, *bibliography 3*)

It is perhaps in the nature of ministries to be conservative, and given the importance attached to educational qualifications in Singapore, such caution is understandable. It is also in the nature of examination boards to be cautious (Skehan, 1995:5), though commentators have pointed out they can also demonstrate "imaginative openness to innovations and to ideas and to research" (Davies, 1995:148; see also Skehan, 1989:8).

Certainly, any suggestions for change to the 'O' level English language examination in the period 1992 to 1995 originated in Cambridge. In June 1992 specialist inspectors received the following communication from EAB:

"Guidelines from UCLES on the 'O' Level EL Examination

- 1 The latest guidelines are found in the letter dated 11 May 92 from _____ to _____. The letter states that for the EL papers 1 and 2 for 1993:

- * it has been agreed to make Part 2 of Paper 1 more specific in terms of the type of writing required and the particular audience for which it is intended. The task will still be in the nature of a report or letter.
- * On Paper 2, the summary has been slightly recast in order to require candidates to slant the information which they choose to a particular character or purpose. Obviously, the marking scheme will have to be amended slightly to take account of this. We are still discussing this." (Cayley, 1992, *bibliography 3*)

There is no indication here of consultation, and no suggestion that the 1991 Syllabus played any part in this decision. The minutes of the English Unit meeting of June 1992 describe specialist inspectors' reactions:

"EAB has no plans to inform schools of these changes as these were considered minor revisions to the examination. SIELs unanimously decided that these changes were not minor, and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to EAB to request that they inform the schools. It was also agreed that the Unit write to EAB to request UCLES to provide us with a sample marking scheme in relation to the change made in the summary question in Paper 2." (English Unit, 1992h, 6.5:5)

Some re-thinking of this course of action appears to have occurred in the month before the next meeting of the English Unit:

"ADLL1 has decided that schools will not be informed in writing about the proposed changes to the summary question and the writing section in the 'O' level EL paper as these changes were considered minor. However, it was agreed at the meeting that more information about these proposed changes was needed. ADLL1 will be consulted about re-submitting a letter through EAB to UCLES requesting further information, e.g. what the marking scheme for summary would be (*sic*) like and whether the changes would be (*sic*) effective from 1993 on a regular basis. This information will put SIELs in a better position when they answer teachers' queries once they inform teachers verbally about these changes." (English Unit, 1992i, 1.2:1)

The minutes of the meeting in September reported: "Further information on 'O' level's summary question: ADLL1 has written to EAB about this" (English Unit, 1992j, 2.1:1). In October "ADLL1 has not received a reply from EAB. SIEL __ will follow up" (English Unit, 1992k, 2.1:1). By

December, "SIEL _ had spoken (*sic*) to Mr _____ of EAB about the 'O' level summary question and he will take it up with _____ (*a representative of UCLES*)" (English Unit 1992l, 2.1:1). The subject never surfaced again. The measures were introduced in the 1993 'O' level examination (UCLES, International Examinations, 1993b, Paper 1:2 and Paper 2:5).

The English Unit cannot communicate directly with UCLES. All letters to personnel there are required to go through officers from EAB, as the extracts from the minutes demonstrate. Despite the deployment of tact and high level administrators, no information was given to the specialist inspectors as to the reasons for and/or consequences of the decisions made in Cambridge. No official communication was ever sent to schools. Teachers were informed of the changes verbally by specialist inspectors who could give no explanation of them. Thus, teachers received third hand information about a marking scheme, a knowledge of which many would have regarded as crucial to their professional performance.

A similar incident occurred in 1995. At the monthly meeting of the English Unit on 10 October, a letter dated 5 October from the Assistant Director of the Examinations Branch (ADEX) to the Deputy Director of the Languages and Library Branch (DDL) was given to specialist inspectors (English Unit, 1995h, 9.6:2). It informed them UCLES was considering using a new marking scheme for the language component of the summary question. UCLES had trialled the scheme, which had been found to benefit candidates:

- "5 UCLES is considering
 - a Using this new marking scheme which takes into consideration the four strands, OWN WORDS, RELEVANCE AND ORGANISATION, SENTENCE STRUCTURES AND MECHANICAL ACCURACY (See

- Annex A) from 1997 onwards, and
- b Using a revised version of this new marking scheme which considers three of the four strands, RELEVANCE AND ORGANISATION, SENTENCE STRUCTURES AND MECHANICAL ACCURACY (See Annex B) in Nov/Dec 1995 and 1996.
- 6 We would like to seek your view with regard to their proposals.
- 7 We would be grateful if you could give us your comments as soon as possible as UCLES might implement proposal (b) this year." (AD(1)EX, 1995)

The 1995 'O' level examination was scheduled to take place about six weeks from the specialist inspectors' receipt of the letter. The minutes of the meeting give no indication of the specialist inspectors' response, except that "SIEL _ will be consulting the SIELs regarding the changes" (English Unit, 1995h, 9.6:2). There was no mention of the results of this consultation in the minutes of the next English Unit meeting.

The implications of the above communication are numerous. Lip service was being paid to the need for consultation, as no real consultation could take place in the time available before the examinations, which were presumably already printed, along with the instructions to markers.

In considering any change to the examination, the only concern reflected in the letter was the possible implications for the examination results rather than the backwash effect on teaching and learning.

There is no indication of how and with examination papers from which country UCLES had trialled this new marking scheme, and no suggestion that Singapore had been informed of or involved in these trials. The work of Gupta (1989) and Balasingam (1990) suggests mechanical accuracy, and identifying main points and presenting them clearly are areas in which Singaporean students have difficulty. UCLES' examination reports suggest a number of

candidates have inadequate control over sentence structure (Chapter Two:55-56). It seems, then, there is room for debate as to whether the revised marking scheme would favour Singaporean candidates.

If it was introduced in 1995, however, it is not reflected in the examiners' report (UCLES International Examinations, 1996) or the examination results (this chapter:253). However, since the marking process is not transparent, no definitive statements about changes to it can be made.

In the long term, the requirement for candidates to answer in their own words would have an effect on the examination-oriented teaching found in a number of Singaporean classrooms (Chapter Two:42-43). As Pollitt points out, "Students learn test taking strategies and howl in protest if the rules change without adequate warning" (Pollitt:1995:56). The same is no doubt true of many teachers who learn how to teach test-taking strategies.

Yet these changes are not fundamental. They are certainly in keeping with DDEX's comments concerning making traditional testing modes work better (this chapter:224). However, the manner in which they were introduced demonstrates the powerlessness of both teachers and curriculum developers in the face of the combined authority of the Examinations Branch and UCLES. Neither organisation revealed any sensitivity to the consequences of their actions. UCLES seems to have no awareness of the backwash effect of their examinations in Singapore's classrooms. The tone and timing of the letters gives the impression that there is a tradition of top down change which has little regard for the situation in Singapore.

The 1991 Syllabus had no effect on the 'O' and 'N' level written examinations.

9.3 Revisions to the 'O' Level Oral Examination

However, the 'O' level oral examination was revised and introduced in 1992. The revision was not directly related to the 1991 Syllabus, which in 1992 had been implemented only in Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N. Nevertheless, it was informed by the same communicative principles.

The reading aloud section was retained, but as the comprehension questions were removed, the passages did not have to carry a heavy information load. Instead, they needed to provide candidates with opportunities to read expressively, for candidates were now rewarded for good pronunciation, clear articulation, appropriate rhythm and stress, well-paced and fluent reading, and variation of pitch and tone to convey the information, ideas and feelings in the passage (English Unit, 1990a:5, *bibliography 3*). A maximum of twelve marks was awarded for this section.

Below is an extract from a typical passage:

"With the tourists come problems: fighting on the beaches after too many cocktails; rubbish strewn near fish and chip outlets. Local business people are worried. The manager of a West Indian hotel said: 'Trouble usually starts here when they have had too much to drink, knock someone or something over and then refuse to apologise.'
A famous film director, who often visits the Caribbean, said the cheap holiday boom was destroying the culture of the islands. 'The arrival of the package tourist who gets free and unlimited drinks as part of the deal, has resulted in lots of young, badly behaved, tourists wandering around hotels, annoying people and getting into fights.'
(UCLES, 1995d, English Language Paper 3, Oral English, Part 1, Test 2, Day 7)

This is very different to the dry, academic readings of the previous examination (see Chapter Five:107). In the revised examination, the reading passages are about 25% shorter than those in the original examination.

After the reading, candidates were required to describe and interpret

a picture on the same topic as the reading. The picture relating to the passage given above was of four Caucasian young men, three drinking beer, sitting around a formica topped table on which was a packet of cigarettes and a number of cigarette ends (UCLES, 1995d, English Language Paper 3, Oral English, Part 2, Test 2, Day 7). In describing this picture, candidates were rewarded for using a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures to describe and interpret, and for developing their ideas in a clear and coherent manner (English Unit, 1990a:7). Twelve marks rewarded this section too.

Finally, candidates were to hold a conversation with the examiner in which they gave a personal response to and discussed issues arising from the theme of the picture and the passage, and expressed themselves clearly and succinctly using appropriate vocabulary and structures (*ibid*:9). In this instance, examiners are advised to invite candidates to consider whether tourists are a bad influence on the places they visit (UCLES, 1995d, English Language Paper 3, Oral English, Part 3, Test 2, Day 7, Examiner's Copy). Few candidates would have had difficulty expanding on this topic, as the evils of alcohol, cigarettes and foreign hooligans feature prominently in Singapore's mass media. Expatriate examiners might have found themselves in an awkward position. A maximum of sixteen marks could be awarded for the conversation, four more than for either of the other two sections.

As only the reading aloud section rewards candidates for good pronunciation, this oral examination favours candidates who demonstrate intelligence, poise, self confidence and a desire to communicate. At least one EAB representative disapproved of this emphasis on fluent communication:

"In the Singaporean context, we cannot go all the way with the

communicative approach. . . . Cambridge insists on accuracy in the written examination. We learnt about this conflict between communicative ability and accuracy through the 'O' level oral examination, when pupils who spoke poor English were awarded a Grade 1". (Appendix Nviii:504)

In an informal conversation, which the examination seeks to reproduce (English Unit, 1990a:31), people frequently use less formal accents and non-standard grammar (McCarthy and Carter, 1995). However, the EAB representative believes the oral examination should support the written examinations' rigorous demands for accuracy.

So how did an oral examination which at least one representative of EAB viewed with some scepticism come to be introduced? The answer is in a paper presented to members of a ministerial committee in April 1989:

"An Oral English Committee was set up in 1986 to examine the feasibility of a new 'O'-level Oral English Test to replace the present one. . . . The Field Test and the analysis of the results were discussed with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. The comments of UCLES focussed on the need for testing 'sustained mastery' of English and on the need for the training both of pupils and examiners for the examination. On the basis of their comments, the present examination format was decided upon. This was discussed with the English officer of UCLES when she visited Singapore in March 1988. She envisaged the proposed format would be acceptable to UCLES." (Specialist Inspectors 5 and 13 and ADLL, 1989:2)

Thus, the impetus for change came from members of the English Unit. They communicated at some length with UCLES' personnel, who gave advice on the development of the test instrument. After about three years of work, an examination acceptable to both UCLES and the English Unit had been devised. Unfortunately, it was not acceptable to the members of the ministerial committee. The rejected version consisted of a picture description and an interview with an examiner, and a candidate giving a prepared two minute talk to three other candidates, followed by a group discussion on that

talk chaired by the examiner. The backwash effect in the classroom of the talk and discussion would have been much more interesting than the reading aloud section which replaced it in the accepted version of the examination. Perhaps the ministers were more concerned with the backwash effect on the accuracy of Singaporeans' speech.

The desire to promote accuracy is shared by ministers and the EAB representative. UCLES and the English Unit may have been more concerned with fluency and thinking skills. The tension was resolved by compromise, two parts of the test being retained and two parts replaced.

The preceding narrative illustrates the balancing act involved in the process of revising and introducing high stakes examinations where so many players have conflicting views on the role and function of English. UCLES' approval does not automatically result in the acceptance of a test instrument. Other stakeholders, too, have views on what is desirable for Singapore. They may perceive the role of UCLES to be to give credibility rather than advice.

The narrative also demonstrates that possibilities exist within the present administrative system for introducing changes in national examinations. In 1991, the personnel in the English Unit failed to exploit those possibilities.

9.4 Examinations as Agents of Change

Alderson and Wall's arguments (1993) that more research needs to be done before definitive statements can be made about the backwash effect of examinations, and that currently there is a lot more assertion than evidence about this process, have to be accepted. However, common sense suggests that revisions to high stakes examinations on which judgements are made

about both teachers and learners will have some backwash effect. The key point here is that the examinations are perceived to be high status. Heyneman and Ransom emphasize this in their discussion of the introduction of new national examinations in Sri Lanka in 1974:

"Public pressure forced a reversal of this decision. The new national examinations were not recognized by many universities for admissions purposes. These reforms failed in part because public confidence in the value of the certification of the new examinations was undermined. The power of examinations lies in their ability to allocate life chances. If they lose that ability or are perceived to, they also lose the power to influence educational policy" (1992:108-109)

'O' level examinations in Singapore have not lost that power, and the backwash effect of any changes made to them will be considerable. As we have seen in earlier chapters, when the revised 'O' level examination was introduced in 1981 a syllabus was written to support it, and course books produced to support syllabus implementation. Both the syllabus and the course books took a broader view of English language teaching than did the examination, but the research available (Goh, 1986; Chan 1987; Sandosham and Schoonbeck, 1988) suggests teachers taught to the examination.

This determination to teach to the examination has hampered efforts to introduce less teacher-centred and more interactive methodology into science teaching at the sixth form level in Singapore. Toh *et al* (1996) describe the difficulties in encouraging four teachers to adopt this methodology to teach a topic on UCLES' examination syllabus:

"There was . . . the constant reference by the teachers to examination requirements . . . The teachers were also myopic to the need for a paradigm shift from transmission to transaction. They were concerned with the transmission of factual information which formed the body of knowledge upon which the students were tested during examinations, despite its obvious inadequacies. This external influence was sufficiently overwhelming to dampen their enthusiasm for a

paradigm shift." (*ibid*:690)

This narrowing of the curriculum and reluctance to take risks are negative backwash effects of high stakes examinations. Heyneman and Ransom provide an example of positive backwash. Surveying the effect of examinations on third world countries, they cite Eisemon's 1988 research in Kenya where the testing body took the initiative to introduce health, nutrition, Kiswahili, agriculture and crafts into the examination syllabus. "(T)he changes had the desired result - the coverage of the curriculum increased in both urban and rural schools" (Heyneman and Ransom, 1992:115).

In contrast, Prodromou (1995) bases a description of the backwash effects of examinations on twenty years of observing examination classes in Greece, where examinations play a significant role. Both content and methodology of teaching were negatively affected. Woods' research into the effects of teachers' assumptions and beliefs on their decision making also demonstrates the backwash effect of examinations:

"When a conflict occurred, for example, when one aspect of the final exam - the listening portion - did not seem authentic to him, teacher B weighed and commented on both factors in coming to a decision related to listening texts and listening activities that he planned to use in class. The conflict was initially resolved by prioritizing: in this case, the exam was considered a more important criterion than the authenticity. Although Teacher B discussed both factors, and sometimes complained about the unfortunate effects the lack of authenticity of the exam had on the teaching, he nevertheless consistently used the exam as the primary basis for decisions about listening tasks." (Woods, 1991:7)

In making these decisions, Teacher B put the interests of the students, who needed to pass the examination before any other beliefs about teaching.

This brief discussion suggests that examinations may bring about change in syllabuses, course books, resources, the content and methodology

of classroom teaching and teachers' decisions. It supports Davies' assertions:

"It is best if the change comes in through the syllabus and the examination and the teacher. If a choice has to be made among these in order to move things quickly, then undoubtedly the test/examination is the most sensitive; it is the most controllable, it acts overall, it is most difficult . . . to ignore, it has most certainty in terms of goals. The test/examination is a major and a creative influence for change and development in language teaching, and if there is a need to choose, then that is what should always change first." (Davies, 1985:7)

Examinations, then, make very effective change agents in societies like Singapore which place great importance on the selective function of examinations. Ang and Yeoh, both of whom have worked in the Ministry of Education, recognise this:

"Perhaps the most direct and yet unobtrusive method of influencing teachers' teaching has been the use of the examination as an instrument of change . . . Through the examinations, schools and teachers were alerted to adopt the necessary changes." (Ang and Yeoh, 1991:102)

Yet the specialist inspectors did not take advantage of this means of syllabus implementation.

9.5 Assessment Guidelines for Lower Secondary Classes: A Reflection of the 1991 Syllabus's Recommendations?

The draft version of the revised Assessment Guidelines (EAB, 1993, *bibliography 3*) reached schools in 1993. Teachers were invited to send their comments to EAB, but the draft and final versions of the Assessment Guidelines (EAB, 1994) make identical recommendations.

A syllabus writer was consulted regarding the revision. There was clearly a conflict of views between the writer and members of EAB. The writer did not expect his to prevail:

"SIEL __ (*the syllabus writer*) informed the meeting that the Examinations and Assessment Branch is currently revising assessment guidelines for formal assessment in the lower secondary. However,

SIELs should not expect too much as EAB wanted to test only what can be measured." (English Unit, 1992a, 5.9:3)

When interviewed for this research, the syllabus writer's dissatisfaction with the revisions was stated clearly: there is insufficient testing of grammar in context, and not enough is said about continuous assessment (Appendix Nv:493). In contrast, also during interview for this research, EAB's representative on the syllabus writing committee stated the Assessment Guidelines should consider formal, semestral assessment only.

However, the representative agreed the 1991 Syllabus should inform this assessment:

"We tried to incorporate the idea of integration, and to give more context to the test items. There are no more multiple choice questions, which makes it easier to set the exams because schools had great difficulty setting the multiple choice questions.¹ We try to make sure that emphasis is given to all four skills. Previously, the listening comprehension skills were neglected. Although listening is not directly tested at 'O' level, we still test this skill in the Express classes.² We have also included the picture description as an alternative item in the oral examination, though this is not part of the 'N' level examination.³" (Appendix Nviii:503)

Despite the syllabus writer's complaints, the EAB representative believes two of the syllabus's main principles, integration and contextualization, were considered in the revision of the Assessment Guidelines. However, other factors also influenced the revision:

"Assessment people also have to be aware of practical problems like potential difficulty with markers. If teachers are marking a formal

¹ Multiple choice questions were not recommended in the 1985 Assessment Guidelines.

² In the 1994 Assessment Guidelines, a listening comprehension test is optional for Express classes.

³ The 1994 Assessment Guidelines recommend a conversation based on a picture, rather than a picture description, and it is optional for both Normal and Express classes.

examination, we need to show them exactly what each specific mark is for. We cannot work from principles, we have to be specific. So, the less subjective an examination paper is, the better. This meant that when Curriculum Planning wanted contextualized test items and an integrated approach, I was sometimes in conflict with these ideas." (*ibid*)

Practical considerations must affect how closely assessment modes can be in alignment with a syllabus. These concerns will be a source of tension between curriculum developers and language testers (Skehan, 1995:4-6), though such tension could be very productive.

Given this tension between EAB and the English Unit, how far were the Assessment Guidelines in alignment with the 1991 Syllabus?

Assessment Guidelines: Objectives

As with the 1985 Assessment Guidelines, language competence is to be tested in four areas: Free and Functional Writing (replacing Essay/Letter Writing); Language Use (replacing Grammar and Usage); Reading Comprehension; and Oral/Aural. The last two areas retain the same titles. The syllabus objectives in the domains of Thinking Skills, Learning How to Learn and Language and Culture are not acknowledged. They could be tested within the framework of the four identified areas if appropriate task stimuli were provided, but the 1994 Assessment Guidelines make no reference to them.

Again, the examinations reflect the format of the 'O' and 'N' level examinations, two ninety minute written examinations and an oral examination. The weighting of marks is the same as for the 'O' level examination. As in the 1985 Assessment Guidelines, use of language is tested separately, undermining the integrative approach recommended in the 1991 Syllabus. A listening comprehension examination is optional.

Assessment Guidelines: Free and Functional Writing

In the free writing section, the immediate impression is there are few differences between the recommendations here and those made in 1985. Three of the five questions in the sample paper are the same. However, narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative topics "should be set at Sec (sic) 1 and 2" (EAB, 1994:5). In 1985, testing expository and/or argumentative writing at these levels had been optional (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:5). Teachers are encouraged to select topics which "elicit personal response" (EAB, 1994:5), and include guidance where appropriate. The recommended length of compositions in this section has been altered: the minimum number for Secondary One pupils, 200, and for Secondary Two pupils, 250, remains, but the upper limit has been removed. The band descriptors are the same, making no reference to appropriacy of style and register and retaining the separation of language from content. However, of the 50 marks awarded to this composition, 26 are now for content and 24 for language, a reversal of the situation in 1985. This could be interpreted as a recognition of the 1991 Syllabus's emphasis on thinking skills, which should inform the quality of content.

Schools did not receive the draft guidelines until 1993. EAB is the recognised authority in the area of formal assessment, so schools are unlikely to have altered their lower secondary examinations until that year. However, even on receipt of the Assessment Guidelines some schools made no modifications to their papers.

The results of a small survey of composition papers conducted for this research (Bibliography 8), shown in Table 8 on the next page, suggest not all

schools responded to the request to test expository and/or argumentative writing. The sample is small, but it indicates that little has changed in these schools. Approximately 25% of the papers still offer pupils a choice of only narrative or descriptive topics.

Table 8
Comparison of Numbers of Composition Papers Including
Expository/Argumentative Topics Before and After Schools
Received the 1993 Assessment Guidelines

YEAR	NO. OF SCHOOLS	NO. OF COMPOSITION PAPERS RECEIVED	PAPERS INCLUDING EXPOSITORY/ ARGUMENTATIVE TOPICS	%
91-92 (BEFORE)	9	48	36	75.0
93-95 (AFTER)	9	33	25	75.8

On this slender evidence, it seems the attempt to encourage the teaching of a wider range of text types through the introduction of a wider variety of test types may not have been successful.

A survey of 37 composition papers from 10 schools revealed that only 8 examination papers from 5 schools included in the rubric the revised word limit requirement. 24 examination papers were received from these 5 schools, indicating the information had been received but acted upon by only a few teachers and not enforced by the head of department. This could reflect a respect for teachers' marking schedules.

Functional writing replaces the letter writing section of Paper One. Pupils may be required to write a letter, a report, a series of instructions, an advertisement or describe a process. Teachers are encouraged to test pupils' ability to perform writing tasks that are useful in real life, and which may be completed in response to short notes, a picture series or diagrams (EAB, 1994:3 and 6). Here, a greater choice is given than was offered in the 1985

Assessment Guidelines, which suggested pupils write either a letter or a report. Unfortunately, the sample questions are identical, requiring pupils to write a letter to a friend in America describing three interesting places to visit in Singapore (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:12; and EAB, 1994:19).

In 1985, essay writing and letter and report writing were rewarded according to the same marking scheme. This encouraged schools to set tasks which would elicit narratives from the pupils (Chapter Five:123-124). A separate set of band descriptors has been devised, of far greater relevance to this task, though the division between language and content remains:

Table 9
Band Descriptors for Functional Writing, Paper 1, Section B

Grade	Class	Content	Language
A	Very Good	Good and appropriate interpretation of the facts given in the question, details and extensions to the facts are relevant and interesting; arrangement and layout clear and appropriate	Very good to excellent linguistic ability (including the ability to weave in the given words), very few minor slips, wide variety of apt vocabulary (where stimulus given is non-linguistic), sentence structure and linking devices

Source: Examinations and Assessment Branch, 1994:13

There is still no reference to appropriate register and style, but this is referred to in the skills which this task is intended to test:

"Ability to interpret, use and organise the information given and present it in the appropriate format
Ability to use the language correctly and appropriately in terms of grammar, expression, register (informal/formal) and mechanics."
(EAB, 1994:6)

The emphasis on accuracy has been reduced slightly since 1985, when 18 out of 30 marks were awarded for language. In 1994, half of the marks were awarded for content and half for language.

Thus, a number of changes have been made to the guidelines for this

item, enabling schools to set a greater variety of tasks and ensuring a distinction will be drawn between the two sections of the writing paper. These changes may have been influenced by the 1992 communication from UCLES as much as by an awareness of the 1991 Syllabus (this chapter:225).

Of the 37 examination papers produced by ten schools since receiving the information in the 1993 draft Assessment Guidelines, and collected for the purposes of this research, 33 required pupils to write letters and 4 asked them to write a report. The opportunity to be innovative was not exploited.

Some schools would have had considerable difficulty using the band descriptors, which reward appropriate interpretation and extension of the information given to the pupils. Twelve of the papers provide no information at all, and many others provide very little. For example:

"A cousin is coming to spend a holiday with you. Write a letter to say that you are looking forward to it, and tell him/her how you intend to make his/her stay enjoyable." (School F, 1993, Final-Year Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One Express)

And:

"Write a letter to a friend living in another country, describing Singapore's multi-racial society and explaining how you think people are able to live here in harmony. Your letter should consist of about 150 words, not counting the address, salutation and close which you must include." (School D, 1994d, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary Two Express)

These samples are very similar to the one provided in both Assessment Guidelines. Other questions provide pupils with plenty of information, but will elicit narratives rather than letters:

"Do not spend more than 30 minutes in answering this section. Use between 120 and 150 words for your letter.

You were in a bus when a fellow passenger was pick-pocketed (*sic*) by a youth with long hair. You saw the whole incident. Write a letter to a friend describing it. Use all or some of the notes given below:

(i) when and where it happened

- (ii) what the culprit did
 - (iii) what made you observe the incident
 - (iv) how the pick-pocket was caught
 - (v) advise your friend on how to avoid being pick-pocketed" (*sic*)
- (School E, 1995b, Mid-Year Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One Normal Academic)

At least one task is unlikely to enable pupils to demonstrate the "ability to use the language correctly and appropriately in terms of grammar, expression, register (informal/formal) and mechanics" (EAB, 1994:6):

"Imagine you are an orang-utan in the zoo. Write a letter to the keeper requesting for (*sic*) better conditions. Expand on some or all of the following notes, adding further details:

- (i) protest about your loss of freedom
- (ii) appreciate the care and protection you receive
- (iii) request for (*sic*) better facilities, more space, better location at the zoo
- (iv) complain about the visitors

Your letter should be about 200 words long."

(School H, 1993a, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One Express)

It is difficult to speculate in which register an orang-utan would address his keeper. Some test items, then, did not provide pupils with the opportunity to fulfil the assessment criteria.

In replacing the Essay and Letter or Report Writing sections of the 1985 Assessment Guidelines with Free and Functional Writing in 1994, EAB tried to reflect the objectives in the 1991 Syllabus relating to the need for pupils to write in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes. In placing more emphasis on content and less on accuracy, they may have been motivated by the explicit references to thinking skills in the syllabus. However, the formal assessment procedures of the ten schools in the survey suggest the effort may have been in vain. In 1993, as in 1985, the same narrow opportunities to display writing skills were being offered to pupils who were being "drilled

on a restricted number of item types for examination purposes" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:91).

Assessment Guidelines: Language Use

Again, the pupils' command of grammar is tested separately in the first section of Paper 2, and again this section is worth 10% of the marks. However, in 1994 it is recommended that three test items instead of two be used to assess the pupils' competence in this area: editing a passage; synthesis/transformation of sentences; and a modified cloze passage. The sample provided of a modified cloze item in the 1994 Assessment Guidelines is exactly the same as the one provided in 1985 for the fill-in-the-blank test item. It is designed to test pupils' knowledge of verb forms. The synthesis/transformation of sentences remains from 1985, but has been modified so that the sentences "when combined, tell a story" (EAB, 1994:21). Editing is new. Pupils are required to identify grammar errors by underlining them, and spelling and punctuation errors by circling them. Errors then need to be corrected. Both Assessment Guidelines advise teachers to refer to the respective syllabuses to select the language items to be tested.

The contextualization of the sentences brings this item more into line with the 'N' level examination, which also provides a string of sentences which combines to recount an event. It reflects, too, the principles of the 1991 Syllabus. The inclusion of an editing section is in keeping with the syllabus's concern with the processes of writing. Retaining the fill-in-the-blank, though re-naming it, is a reminder that the 1982 Syllabus also suggested integrating the teaching of grammar items.

A review of 37 Paper 2 examinations set between 1993-1995 received

from 10 schools shows that only 10 of the 37 papers included editing as a test item. The 10 papers were received from 5 of the 10 schools, and observed the recommendations in the Assessment Guidelines.

The synthesis/transformation of sentences was not included in 2 papers submitted by schools which have no pupils studying for the 'N' Level examination. Of the 35 papers in which it might be expected this test item would be found, 14 did not include it, 10 did not contextualize the sentences, and 9 set the test item as recommended in the Assessment Guidelines. 2 did not enable pupils to fulfil the requirements of this part of the examination.

23 papers included a modified cloze passage testing pupils' knowledge of verb forms, set according to the recommendations in the Assessment Guidelines. 6 papers, however, set discrete sentence items, sometimes asking pupils to select the correct form of the verb from a range of choices. The item was not included in 8 papers. Nevertheless, this was the most consistently set item in this section, perhaps reflecting the length of time it has been a requirement, and the importance attached to control of verb forms.

Papers from seven of the ten schools include a greater number of items than those recommended in the Assessment Guidelines. Between them, they tested a control of: punctuation, adverbs and active and passive voice (two schools); adjectives (two schools); the definite article (three schools); prepositions (four schools); and the ability to change direct into reported speech (two schools). Sometimes a context was provided in which to test this control, but the majority, 30 out of 33, were discrete item tests:

"Fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions.

1. I found some oranges the basket.

2. Her eyes were filled tears when she saw her mother in pain.

3. The sick man died cancer.
 4. He tied the parcel carefully.
 5. Everyone was shocked the news of his death."
- (School D, 1995c, Mid-Year Examination, English Language Paper 2, Section A, Part II, Secondary Two Normal Academic)

Though revisions have been made to this section of the Assessment Guidelines which reflect the philosophy of the 1991 Syllabus, schools have not always included those revisions in their examination papers. For example, less than a third of the schools in the survey included editing as a test item and a number of schools tested grammatical accuracy more rigorously than the guidelines recommend, most commonly using discrete item tests. Examination papers from schools which have attempted to observe the Assessment Guidelines and satisfy teachers' testing preferences reflect a ragbag of philosophies in their test items.

Assessment Guidelines: Reading Comprehension

As in 1985, reading comprehension is assessed in two ways: through a cloze procedure, and through open-ended questions and a summary based on a passage within the pupils' reading ability.

In 1994, the cloze procedure is described as a modified cloze, and more specific instructions given as to how to set it: blanks that test world or factual knowledge should be avoided; so should deletions in the first and last sentences of the passage; the passage should be 200-250 words long; there should be 20 deletions (EAB, 1994:7). A paragraph has been added to the 1985 sample passage so the 20 deletions test reading comprehension more effectively. Despite this, the last sentence still includes a deletion.

36 of the 37 papers included a modified cloze passage to test comprehension. Most did test reading comprehension rather than grammar,

as was the case in some pre-1993 school examination papers (see Chapter Five:129-130), though the rather flat nature of some of the passages precludes any discussion of a range of appropriate words to fill the blanks:

"Do you read? No, I don't 1 reading for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in 2 to pass examinations. This utilitarian approach does not 3 reading for pleasure which is 4 for the development 5 the reading habit.

The younger generation is supposed to 6 bilingual in English and one 7 language but 8 may apply more to the 9 than to the written language except when 10 languages are studied at the 11 time. There are easy reading 12 available such as magazines, comics and newspapers.

Apart from educational levels, attitudes 13 reading also 14 a crucial role 15 the development of reading habit. Parents 16 think that reading for pleasure is 17 unknowingly retards the reading habit 18 is most effective when the child is 19.

In 1988, a survey 20 conducted among the literate population whose maximum leisure hours amounted to 40 hours a week." (School J, 1993a, Final Term Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One Express)

Here, numbers 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 20, that is eleven of the blanks, could be filled by only one word. In addition, the passage is not coherent. The last sentence of the second paragraph is not obviously connected to the sentences which precede or follow it. In the last sentence of the third paragraph, if the subject of the sentence is "parents" there are problems with subject verb agreement. The final sentence seems to introduce another related topic. Thus, while most of the samples fulfil the examination's requirements, a number will not provide useful learning opportunities to pupils receiving feedback on their performance (Skehan, 1988:220-221).

In the second item testing reading comprehension the suggested approximate length for the comprehension passage has been removed. The sample passage from 1985 has been retained, but details added to create a richer text. For example, in 1994, "We all got into rickshaws to go after

dinner" (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:16) has become:

"Riding on our individual rickshaw, we had high hopes as we chatted, or rather shouted, to each other. I felt like a giant upon seeing two or three locals, sometimes even whole families on one single rickshaw." (EAB, 1994:23)

No sample questions have been based on this addition. The intention seems to be to demonstrate the need to provide pupils with reading passages which may interest and involve them.

However, there is the same requirement for accuracy in answering as in 1985. Pupils who have demonstrated complete comprehension of the passage, but who have made grammatical and/or spelling mistakes could lose up to half the marks in the free response questions and a third of the marks in the summary. Given the penalties for accuracy in the free writing section, these examinations are "potentially penalizing individual students again and again for the same mistake" (Lynch and Davidson, 1994:737), which does not accord with the objectives of the 1991 Syllabus.

It is expected in 1994 that a maximum of ten questions will be based on the comprehension passage, and that for both Secondary One and Two pupils, one will be a summary question (EAB, 1994:8). In 1985 "Summary writing should be tested in Sec (*sic*) 2" (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:6). What the questions should be testing is also clarified:

- ". Understanding information at literal and inferential levels
 - . Inferring meanings of words using contextual clues
 - . Reconstructing information in various ways, eg paraphrasing, summarizing, information transfer, making generalizations, etc."
- (EAB, 1994:8)

These objectives are similar to statements made in the 1991 Syllabus's spectrum of skills, for example "Understanding to express information not

explicitly stated in a text, through making inferences" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:52); "Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases through the use of contextual clues" (*ibid*); and "Understanding to express, interpret or reconstruct information in the form of a paraphrase, an outline, a summary, charts, diagrams, pictures, tables, etc." (*ibid*:53). The 1991 Syllabus assumes secondary pupils are capable of literal comprehension.

Again, the Assessment Guidelines, though testing a much narrower range of skills than identified in the 1991 Syllabus, reflect an attempt by EAB to respond to the 1991 Syllabus.

However, despite the modifications made to the sample passage, there is little evidence of the Assessment Guidelines' influence on the passages identified by the sample schools. Only one gloriously funny passage from Florence Parry Heide's The Shrinking of Treehorn, identified by School E (1995d), reflects the imaginative detail the sample had been at pains to exemplify. The majority of the passages demonstrate teachers playing safe and including narrative or expository passages similar in tone to those in the national examinations. A minority, seven passages from six schools, are not suitable for lower secondary classes. For example, inappropriacy of style and standard are reflected in a passage on colour taken from the Encyclopedia of Nature and Science and presented to Secondary One Express pupils:

"The prism bends the light rays passing through it, and the angle through which each ray is bent depends on its wavelength. Light with a short wavelength is bent more than light with a long wavelength. In this way, the light rays in white light are spread out into a spectrum according to their wavelengths. Each colour of the spectrum corresponds to light of a different wavelength."
(School B, 1993a, Final Examination, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One Express)

Physics students may have relished this, assuming light is part of the Secondary One Express syllabus. Many pupils, however, would not have found it easy or interesting responding to such flat, academic writing.

Comprehension questions in most of the papers in this sample adhered to the format of the 'O' level examinations rather than the broader opportunities provided by the 1991 Syllabus. However, School G (1993d) showed originality by requiring candidates to fill boxes with appropriate instructions for games described in the passage.

Some schools did not observe the suggestions in the Assessment Guidelines. Five schools set ten papers which asked more than ten questions based on the set passage; four schools did not set summary questions for 1N classes; and three schools set multiple choice comprehension questions.

This limited evidence suggests that many teachers will set examination papers as they wish, perhaps based on what and how they have taught and what they expect will eventually be required of their pupils, rather than on the recommendations of a syllabus or a set of guidelines. On the basis of this sample of papers, the hope expressed in the 1991 Syllabus that a wider variety of test items would have a positive backwash effect on language teaching (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:91) is unlikely to be realised.

Assessment Guidelines: Oral/Aural

Here, a number of changes have been made to bring the Assessment Guidelines into line with both the revised 'O' level oral examination and the more communicative approach of the 1991 Syllabus.

The same percentage of marks is awarded to the oral examination as in 1985, though the marks are differently allocated. They are equally divided

between the two parts of the examination, reading aloud and conversation. The conversation may be based on the same topic as the reading, or on a picture or photograph also thematically related to the reading. The band descriptors for both the reading aloud and the conversation are similar to those in the 'O' level examination, differing only in the separation of the marks awarded for describing the picture as this task is optional.

The sample passage for reading aloud is about a third shorter than the 1985 sample. It contains dialogue and provides opportunities for expressive reading which is rewarded in the mark scheme. The content considers the different attitudes two girls have to friendships, in particular friendships with boys. This is a useful basis for the conversation. In 1994, the onus is on teachers "to engage pupils in conversation" (EAB, 1994:9), in contrast with 1985 when "Pupils should be able to converse effectively on a given subject and communicate the required information/facts to the tester fluently" (Central Testing Service Branch, 1985:11).

There is no reference to listening comprehension in the 1985 Assessment Guidelines. It is now tested at 'N' level, and so is a compulsory section of the formal assessment of Normal Academic pupils. A sample narrative text provides the basis for two multiple choice questions testing literal comprehension. Though a wider range of texts is used to test listening comprehension at 'N' level, for example news reports and dialogues, the multiple choice format assessing literal comprehension is common to each.

The testing of listening comprehension is a welcome development because of the potential backwash effect on the classroom, but only a narrow range of the 1991 Syllabus's objectives for listening are assessed. For

example, listening to take notes and listening critically are ignored.

The Assessment Guidelines, then, have been revised to increase their alignment with the speaking and listening objectives of the 1991 Syllabus, and also the format of the 'O' and 'N' level examinations.

School-based tests of listening and speaking were not available to this researcher, so no analysis can be made of their alignment with the Guidelines.

9.6 The 1991 Syllabus, the 1994 Assessment Guidelines, School-based and National Examinations: in Alignment?

The 1991 Syllabus has a broad range of objectives. The Assessment Guidelines provide suggestions for assessing a sample of those objectives, generally those tested in the national examinations, and often recommend testing using the same format. However, the Guidelines do attempt to reflect some features of the 1991 Syllabus, particularly in offering a wider range of writing tasks. Objectives in the Thinking, Learning How to Learn, and Language and Culture domains are not mentioned. Nevertheless, schools could test many of them by exploiting the wider range of writing opportunities, and by making judicious choices of the passages used as a basis for comprehension and modified cloze procedures and the themes used for the oral examination.

However, a number of school-based examination papers do not exploit even the sample from the 1991 Syllabus identified in the Assessment Guidelines, preferring to test what is tested at the national level and place more emphasis on testing grammar. Many English teachers believe accuracy is a requirement of the national examinations (Chapter Two:42).

This focus on what is believed to be examined works against the

implementation of any syllabus not in alignment with existing examinations:

"Another problem in the relationship between standardised tests and curriculum implementation concerns the findings in Ontario . . . that standard achievement tests for any given curricula frequently only 'cover' or overlap with some 30-40% of the new curriculum being taught (Russell, 1978; Wahlstrom *et al.*, 1977)." (Fullan:1981:331)

Of the 48 terminal objectives in the 1991 Syllabus, 27 are not tested in the national examinations or in the Assessment Guidelines's specifications. Though not as depressing as the Ontario situation, it means that over half the objectives (56.25%) will not be taught by teachers teaching to the test.

The 1991 Syllabus and the national examinations, then, are not in alignment. The national examinations reflect a classical humanist approach, the 1991 Syllabus a progressive one. The Assessment Guidelines try to marry the two approaches. The sample of school-based examination papers suggests that a number of schools favour the classical humanist approach in content and mode of assessment: discrete item grammar testing and a version of the national examinations. Thus, of the four sets of documents, the national and school-based examinations are most in alignment.

9.7 Conclusion

Table 10 on the next page suggests 'O' level candidates for 1995, the first, officially, to be taught according to the principles of the 1991 Syllabus, obtained similar results to candidates in the years preceding implementation. Conclusions about syllabus implementation cannot be made on the basis of a table of examination results. It must be seen in relation to data on implementation. However, it is clear that the 1995 candidature achieved results similar to the 1994 candidature, and performed better than candidates in the years 1990-1993. Discussion in this and the previous chapter suggests

this may be because from 1990-1995 little changed, except perhaps teachers' and learners' skills in preparing for national examinations.

Table 10
GCE 'O' Level English Language Results: 1990-1995

BREAKDOWN OF PERFORMANCE BY GRADES IN %

YEAR	NO. SAT FOR EXAM	NATIONAL AVERAGE (PASS RATE %)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1990	37 111	65.1	4.7	5.9	15.9	8.6	9.7	20.3
1991	35 359	66.0	7.7	3.2	18.9	7.1	19.9	9.2
1992	35 583	67.6	5.8	7.0	17.0	8.6	9.7	19.3
1993	34 376	67.9	5.9	7.8	17.8	7.2	8.0	21.1
1994	33 315	69.3	6.6	8.5	18.6	7.4	7.8	20.5
1995	33 090	69.2	6.7	7.4	16.2	8.9	10.2	19.8

Sources: Information distributed at English Unit Meeting, April 1995, English Unit, 1995c, 1.6:1); and private communication

Teachers have had little opportunity to change anything. They have played an insignificant part in the evaluation of the 1982 Syllabus, development of the 1991 Syllabus, production of its support materials and revision of the assessment modes.

Chapter Two suggests the 1991 Syllabus will be introduced into an environment unlikely to be receptive to any change; Chapter Seven indicates the 1991 Syllabus will be difficult to implement; Chapters Eight and Nine demonstrate neither teaching materials nor assessment modes were in alignment with the syllabus. Neither the course books nor the Assessment Guidelines were ready in time to support the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus, scheduled to begin in January 1992.

The next chapter will examine whether the Ministry of Education which provided the impetus for the 1991 Syllabus was able to create circumstances more favourable to its implementation.

CHAPTER TEN

1991 Syllabus - Dissemination of Information: 1990-1995

10.0 Responsibility for the Dissemination

Specialist inspectors, responsible for writing the 1991 Syllabus, were also responsible for creating circumstances favourable to its implementation through disseminating information about the syllabus.

Teachers apply to be specialist inspectors, though those perceived to have potential are invited to apply. Applicants should have five years teaching experience, be graduates, and prepared to obtain a Master's degree if they do not already have one. Their first degree is likely to be in literature, as the National University has offered degrees in linguistics only since 1991. (Chapter Two:26). Specialist inspectors receive a few days in-house training, largely in administrative matters. Thus, initially, some specialist inspectors will have difficulty in fulfilling their roles as language syllabus developer, instructional programme evaluator, specialist advisor/consultant on curriculum, and change agent/facilitator (Curriculum Planning Division, 1994c:12, *bibliography 3*)

The position of specialist inspector is a step on the promotional ladder towards more general administrative positions. A review of the minutes of the English Unit's monthly meetings shows that in July 1990 there were eleven specialist inspectors. By December 1995, when dissemination and implementation were deemed to have been completed officially, only two of the eleven remained. Thirteen other specialist inspectors had worked with the English Unit for various periods in that time. Thus, a number of inspectors were learning their job during this period of dissemination and implementation.

In addition, the director, deputy director and the assistant director were all replaced between 1990 and 1995.

In that period, the majority of the 24 specialist inspectors were Singaporeans. One British expatriate served for three months and a second remained with the English Unit for the entire period. Many of the specialist inspectors had taught only in junior (*sixth form*) colleges, as this is where teachers with the highest academic qualifications most commonly are to be found. One had worked in a primary school, but subsequently obtained a doctorate from a foreign university. Seven were men. The majority were in their early or middle thirties. About half were bilingual.¹

10.1 The Initial Dissemination: 1990-1991

The specialist inspectors began to create conditions favourable to implementation by disseminating information about the 1991 Syllabus. A review of File NO7-08-024, Review of Syllabuses Vol. 2 (English Unit, 1981-1992) reveals the following information about the initial dissemination.

On 15 March 1990, all secondary school principals were requested to send a representative to collect 10 copies of the trial version of the revised English language syllabus. They were informed, too, that later in the year workshops would be conducted for key teachers, who would be required to disseminate the information to their colleagues. Key teachers were the head of department, and two upper secondary and two lower secondary teachers.

Inspectors of schools (*Chief Inspectors*) were informed about features of the syllabus on 8 May, 1990. A second meeting with them was held on 24 May, 1991, to clarify issues relating to the appraisal of schools' English

¹ Personal communication

language programmes (English Unit, 1991d [*minutes*]). The speakers were syllabus writers. Secondary schools principals, representatives from the National Institute of Education, the Regional English Language Centre, the British Council, CDIS and commercial publishers were invited to a meeting on 16 May, 1990, to listen to talks on the implications of the implementation of the revised syllabus for teaching methodology, assessment and evaluation. The meeting was organised and conducted by the specialist inspectors.

On 25 May 1990, specialist inspectors attended a meeting organised by the Syllabus Writing Committee. They went through the dissemination package the committee had prepared to help specialist inspectors and key teachers disseminate information about the 1991 syllabus to secondary English teachers (English Unit, 1990b, *bibliography 3*). These packages were printed in June 1990 at a cost of Singapore \$891.71.

On 23 May 1991, principals of all secondary schools were requested to send a representative to collect one copy of the final version of the primary school syllabus and enough copies of the secondary school syllabus for all English teachers. These were to be distributed to teachers who were expected to return them to schools when they left. The Syllabus Writing Committee had arranged for a total of 7,000 copies of the secondary syllabus to be printed, at a cost of Singapore \$15134. There were 2143 teachers of English in 1991 (Monitoring Committee, 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]), so there would be no shortage of syllabuses.

10.2 Dissemination to Heads of Department and Key Teachers

Dissemination to heads of department and key teachers in schools began in July 1990, less than two years after CDIS stopped helping teachers

implement CLUE. Information about the syllabus was conveyed by specialist inspectors in two workshops of three and a half hours each to representatives of the schools in their purview (English Unit, 1990b, 1.1:2 *minutes*). In total, there were 462 participants. The workshops, held in schools on Saturday mornings, were based on the package produced by the Syllabus Writing Committee and the trial version of the syllabus distributed in March 1990.

The first workshop consisted of five segments: background to the syllabus; philosophy, content and pedagogic approach; assessment ideas; discussing the year plan¹ and preparing for workshop 2. The session was scripted and the necessary overhead transparencies provided. Time was allowed for questions and answers, but not for activities. These were to be conducted in the time before the second workshops. Participants were asked to: find and bring to the second workshop resources related to an identified theme; identify a terminal objective and write attainment levels for secondary one and secondary two classes to demonstrate the extent to which these classes will achieve that terminal objective; and evaluate the suggested year plan. Clearly, all aspects of the syllabus were to be implemented at once. The syllabus's "trialability" (Rogers, 1983:15) was not to be exploited.

In the second workshop, participants discussed the year plan, planned an integrated series of lessons using the resources they had collected, reflected on how they had done this and problems which had arisen, and spent forty minutes discussing what was expected of the school-based

¹ The Year Plan consisted of two parts: the first comprised a summary of themes covered, and classroom activities and types of assessment to be conducted in each year level; the second comprised statements of the progress expected of each academic stream and year level as they worked towards the achievement of the terminal objectives. These statements were termed *attainment levels*.

dissemination which the heads of department and key teachers would lead. The discussion concerned what classroom teachers were expected to do after attending the school-based workshops. They would be required to: produce part of a year plan for the lower secondary classes by specifying attainment levels for each of the relevant terminal objectives; write and try out three or more units of work for the lower secondary classes; and complete a questionnaire. Apart from this clarification, it seems to have been assumed that the scripts and the overhead transparencies were all the help heads of department would need to conduct their own workshops for teachers of Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N in their schools.

These were expected take place in 1991, though some workshops were completed in 1990 (English Unit, 1990f, 1.3:2 [*minutes*]). It was anticipated school-based dissemination workshops would take place in 1992, 1993, and 1994 for teachers implementing the syllabus the following year. Heads of department and key teachers could turn to their specialist inspector for help in planning the workshops (English Unit 1990h, 3.7.4:4).

The specialist inspectors' gave workshops until November 1990, when:

"ADLL2 informed SIELs that the EL syllabuses have been put on hold until the details of the restructuring of the education system have been finalized. This means that the dates scheduled for printing and distributing the syllabuses to the schools will have to be postponed indefinitely." (English Unit, 1990h, 3.7.1:3)

Restructuring the education system involved offering places in secondary schools to all pupils, including those previously deemed ineligible. A Normal Technical stream was to be added to programmes schools already offered. The immediate effect on syllabus implementation was:

" . . . that a new appendix called 'A Guide to Pupil

Performance', had been drawn up for the secondary syllabus, one for the academic stream and one for the Normal Technical stream. The latter emphasizes the functional skills and technical aspects of language training." (English Unit, 1991b, 3.3:3)

Dissemination workshops did not begin again until the end of April 1991, by which time the final version of the syllabus was established. However, as schools now had far less time to prepare for syllabus implementation they were to pilot only one unit of work instead of three (*ibid*, 1.3:2). The workshops were completed by July 1991.

10.3 Other Means of Dissemination

In October 1991, specialist inspectors held two meetings with heads of department to discuss writing units of work and attainment levels, and to clarify doubts about syllabus implementation (English Unit, 1991h [*minutes*]). 111 heads of department attended the meetings. The majority of them had probably given their own dissemination workshops. Questions related to: the perceived inappropriacy of available course books, whether schools could use a course book which "does not exemplify the integration of skills" (*ibid*, 4.5:2), and whether it was "compulsory" for schools to use a course book (*ibid*); the need to prepare materials; when and in how much detail units of work and attainment levels should be prepared; the difference between attainment levels and instructional objectives (*objectives to be achieved in each lesson*); and what to do about untrained teachers of English. Naturally, these questions demonstrate a concern with how the syllabus was to be implemented and the expectations in terms of documentation, as well as some confusion about terminology. They indicate some heads of department were not yet prepared for the implementation, two months away, and

suggest inadequacies in the workshops given by specialist inspectors, which most present at the meeting would have attended.

Teaching English Language and Literature (TELL), produced by specialist inspectors and distributed twice a year free to every teacher of English, was another vehicle for dissemination. The May 1991 issues included the following articles: The New English Language Syllabus for Singapore Schools (Goh, 1991b); Setting Out the Unit of Work: What to Bear in Mind (Nair and Foenander, 1991); and A Glossary of Some of the Terms Used in the New Syllabus, (Nair, 1991). The October issue contained a sample unit of work for a Secondary One class, and articles such as: How the Syllabus Hangs Together, (Lau, 1991); A Word From CDIS, (Curriculum Development Institute, Singapore, 1991); Pointers for Drawing Up a Unit of Work, (English Unit, 1991a); and Your Questions & Our Answers, (English Unit, 1991b). As the titles indicate, the intention was to give an overview of the 1991 Syllabus, and to provide teachers with practical help in understanding it and planning a programme to implement it.

In December 1991 an article by a syllabus writer appeared in a publication for school principals (Foenander, 1991). It briefly described the key features of the new syllabus, outlined its implications for teachers' workload, and suggested school administrators could help teachers implement the syllabus through: achieving greater flexibility of timetabling; encouraging a balance between formative and summative assessment; deciding how to give students feedback on their strengths and weaknesses; allowing teachers greater flexibility with regard to setting assessment tasks for pupils; and accepting that increased classroom interaction will mean more noise.

From 1990 to 1991, then, means of dissemination were confined to workshops, meetings and articles.

10.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Initial Dissemination

Involving heads of department in disseminating information appears to be a welcome move towards involving teachers in curriculum renewal. However, heads of department had the role of change agents imposed upon them because: "This would save on manpower and time and at the same time provide professional training for HODs to develop their own teachers" (English Unit, 1989:2 [*minutes*]). Heads of department were told what to disseminate but given no professional training in how to "develop their own teachers". This was particularly unfortunate as research suggests many heads of department are inexperienced. Seah-Tay constructed a profile of 156 heads of English and mathematics departments located in 103 secondary schools. 51% were heads of English departments:

"Half of the respondents were below forty years old. For the vast majority, their present school was the school that had appointed them HoDs and most had been in this post for less than three years. Slightly less than half had undergone the Further Professional Diploma in Education course to acquire the skills necessary for department management." (Seah-Tay, 1996:32, *unpublished*)

By November 1990, after five months of dissemination, the natural consequences of this "empowerment" were recognised (Fielding, 1996:402). Specialist inspectors were asked by the Assistant Director to help heads of department with their preparation for the workshops, and, after the workshops had been conducted, to meet all teachers of secondary 1E, 1N and 2N "to prepare them for the implementation of the syllabus in 1992" (English Unit, 1990h, 3.7.4:4 [*minutes*]). Clearly, the idea of saving

manpower and time had been abandoned as the need to support heads of department in their role as internal change agents was recognised.

Earlier involvement of heads of department in developing and implementing the syllabus would have had a positive effect on schools' responses to the 1991 Syllabus. With their knowledge of their school's culture, and the teachers' situation within that culture, heads of department are ideally placed to act as internal change agents. Trained and supported, they could have played a powerful role. This potential was wasted.

The change strategy adopted, then, was the empirical-rational one adopted in the implementation of the CLUE materials. Chan's research (1987) suggests that this approach, which fails "to take account of the receivers' perception of things" (White, 1988:127), had not been very successful. Presenting a rational argument does not guarantee an audience's support.

Some specialist inspectors may have alienated their audience in other ways, as minutes of an English Unit meeting suggest:

"The Unit was reminded that the Principal has the authority to decide how he wants the EL syllabus implementation to take place in the school. " (English Unit, 1991g, 9:6)

At least one principal disliked the recommended approach to syllabus implementation. Specialist inspectors' position on the promotional ladder, below that of a vice-principal (Wee and Chong, 1991:51), means they need to persuade principals of the importance of delivering their message. In the initial stages of syllabus implementation, it seems not everyone was successful in this. The English Unit had much to learn about managerial styles which support and encourage rather than those which inform and expect.

In their different workshops the specialist inspectors did not

consistently deliver the same message, perhaps because they did not share the same views. As the dissemination workshops were about to begin, the Deputy Director of the Languages and Library Division:

" . . . urged the SIs (*specialist inspectors*) to project a corporate image and take a consistent stand in conducting the dissemination workshops even though some of them have different views and reservations about certain aspects of the implementation. These training workshops are crucial to the successful implementation of the syllabuses." (English Unit, 1990c, 4.9:3 [*minutes*])

However, after the initial phase of dissemination the Deputy Director informed specialist inspectors: "Schools felt different SIs were not communicating the same ideas/requirements" (English Unit, 1992e, 1:1). The English Unit's candid 1991 self appraisal report reflects an awareness of this:

"Syllabus Committee members think it is difficult to assess, at this point, the success of the dissemination because it was not strictly standardised and some hitches in communication have resulted." (English Unit, 1991a, 1.1.3:2)

The specialist inspectors did not draw up a checklist of features critical to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus until 1992 (English Unit 1992e, 7:2 [*minutes*]). Had they done this earlier, the dissemination workshops may have focussed on how these critical features were to be realised in the classroom thus communicating a more consistent message.

Limited manpower contributed to these problems. The four members of the Syllabus Writing Committee had a great deal to do throughout 1990 and 1991. They completed the 1991 syllabus by making major revisions and editing; prepared the syllabus dissemination workshops; disseminated these materials and information about the syllabus to other specialist inspectors for their feedback; organised and ran meetings to disseminate information to other stakeholders; held workshops for teachers; and made arrangements for

the syllabus and workshop materials to be printed. This was in addition to completing their other duties as specialist inspectors.

Limited resources were another factor. The dissemination workshops were inadequately resourced. The materials intended to help Secondary One teachers implement the 1991 Syllabus became available only in November 1991, when the workshops had been completed. The Secondary 2N teachers did not receive any materials from CDIS until the end of 1992, a year after implementation officially began at this level. No sample unit of work for Secondary 2N was produced in TELL. No official assessment guidelines were produced until April 1993. Thus, the only reference point was the trial syllabus produced in 1990, which became redundant in 1991.

More support from other branches and divisions within the Ministry of Education would have been useful. In 1990 and 1991, the Staff Training Branch was unable to organise in-service training to support dissemination. CDIS did provide unpublished materials on which to base the sample Secondary One unit of work in TELL, but EAB was unable to produce even draft assessment guidelines until 1993.

The English Unit would have benefitted from advice regarding innovation management. Consultation with a marketing expert may have helped. The audience for dissemination was not wide enough. Parents received no information directly from the Ministry of Education. Greater use could have been made of the mass media and media other than print, particularly as in CDIS the Ministry of Education has its own facilities and personnel capable of producing sophisticated audio-visual materials.

The location and timing of the dissemination workshops, a convenient

school on a Saturday morning, was economically viable. It may have been a false economy. Remedial and extra-curricular activities take place in schools on Saturday mornings. Dissemination workshops could have been held in front of an audience of teachers in a non-airconditioned classroom listening to the presenter competing with the school band for their attention.

These problems were aggravated when the government decided to restructure the education system, which delayed dissemination and required more work from the Syllabus Writing Committee. In the future, the problems presented by the introduction of a technical stream into the schools would be likely to take priority over the dissemination of a revised syllabus.

Better communication, more time and improved human resources would have overcome many of these problems. As it was, the circumstances in which the initial dissemination of the 1991 Syllabus took place were not auspicious. How was it received by heads of department and key teachers?

10.5 The English Unit's Evaluation of the Initial Dissemination

A study of the minutes of the English Unit meetings reveals that the responsibility for evaluating the initial dissemination was accepted by the Syllabus Writing Committee. It intended, rather vaguely, "to obtain feedback" on the dissemination workshops it had prepared (English Unit, 1989:2).

Heads of department and key teachers attending workshops given by specialist inspectors were required to complete a questionnaire (Appendix E:455-456) before leaving the second dissemination workshop. 109 of the 462 teachers who attended the dissemination workshops, approximately 24%, completed Form A. The questionnaire focussed on the syllabus document, probably reflecting the concerns of the syllabus writers recently

turned dissemination evaluators, and Parts II and III were unstructured. The practical implications of disseminating and implementing the syllabus, which would have interested teachers, were largely ignored. No questions were asked about the conduct of the workshop itself, or the heads of department's and key teachers' involvement in the dissemination process. These features may have discouraged workshop participants from responding.

Table 11
Secondary Teachers' Responses to Syllabus Dissemination:
Teacher Questionnaire Form A

Total number of responses = 109

This data is presented in percentages, calculated to one decimal place.

Q	SA	A	U	D	SD	NR*	Total
1	6.4	70.6	16.5	1.8	0.0	4.6	99.9
2	27.5	64.2	6.4	0.0	0.9	0.9	99.9
3	25.7	63.3	8.3	1.8	0.9	0.0	100.0
4	2.8	13.8	26.6	52.3	3.7	0.9	100.1
5	6.4	27.5	21.1	39.4	3.7	1.8	99.9
6	12.8	61.5	16.5	5.5	0.9	2.8	100.1
7	0.0	40.4	30.3	22.9	3.7	2.8	100.1
8	5.5	43.1	27.5	20.2	3.7	0.0	100.0
9	18.3	67.9	9.2	2.8	0.9	0.9	100.0

* Nil response

Source: Specialist Inspector of English Language, 7, 1991:4.

Table 11, above, summarises the responses to Part I of Form A. The most positive responses were made to the second and third statements: *The concept of integration is made very clear in the syllabus*; and *The aims of learning English as specified in the syllabus are very necessary for our pupils*. Teachers thought the syllabus made the concept of integration clear, but were not entirely happy about the eighth statement: *The syllabus makes it very easy to plan integrated lessons*. Approximately 49% agreed. The most

negative responses were made to the seventh statement: *The samples of work suggested for informal assessment (Ch 6) can be easily carried out.*

Comments made in response to Parts II and III were almost entirely negative. Their complaints were identified as follows:

"3.2 The teachers were generally overwhelmed by the workshops, and expressed a feeling of inadequacy with regard to the running of the dissemination workshops in their schools.

3.3 The syllabus has been perceived as being too complex and detailed. The main worry was the time taken to find relevant resources. Writing out the schemes of work seemed a laborious task. They feared that they may not even find common times to meet as a team. . . .

3.5 (Secondary school teachers) have requested assistance from the MOE in the following ways:

- * clarification workshops
- * a comprehensive list of Als (Attainment Levels) to select from
- * more feedback regarding schemes of work prepared for trialling
- * provide more training regarding the writing of los (Instructional Objectives)
- * a video training tape for the schools

3.6 They were concerned about the following:

- * that students who transfer schools would have been exposed to a different set of Als
- * the value of informal assessment
- * that oral assessment would put the reticent pupil at a disadvantage
- * if the exams would change at "O" level
- * deployment problems i.e. shortage of teachers, and the high teacher-student ratio."

(Specialist Inspector of English Language, 7, 1991:1-2)

The English Unit's interpretation of these anxieties is interesting:

"3.7 Overall, many of the teachers' problems arose from their misconceptions of the syllabus or a reluctance to grow professionally." (*ibid*:2)

Most attempts to introduce change are likely to meet with resistance and reluctance (Fullan, 1993). The dissemination workshops made clear to teachers they would now be required to be change agents, programme planners and materials writers. Their responses naturally indicated anxiety about this, and a professional concern about the long term implications of this

dissemination on pupils' progress and assessment. It is unfortunate the English Unit's immediate response was critical rather than sympathetic.

The Unit received more information about teachers' responses to the dissemination of the syllabus from a second questionnaire, Form B (Appendix F:457-458). The intention of Form B was "to get feedback on the trying out of the new syllabuses just before the new syllabuses are implemented in 1992" (English Unit, 1989:2 [*minutes*]).

Form B elicited information about the year plan, planning an integrated sequence of lessons, helping pupils achieve the terminal objectives through the identification of appropriate skills and activities, and whether the teachers felt prepared to start teaching the syllabus in January 1992. No questions were asked about the dissemination process. Valuable insights into this could have been obtained from the perspectives of the heads of department, who delivered the workshops. Their views could have been sought regarding both the workshops and the usefulness of the dissemination packages. Again, there was no reference to the more practical aspects of implementation, for example the availability of appropriate support materials. There were no questions on informal assessment, identified through Form A as an area of concern, so losing an opportunity to investigate teachers' concerns here.

Teachers of Secondary One Express and Secondary One and Two Normal classes, in which implementation was to take place in 1992, were asked to complete the questionnaire after the school-based dissemination workshop had been conducted and at least one unit of work and a year plan had been produced. The questionnaires were collated at the school level and submitted to the specialist inspector responsible for the school (English Unit,

1990d:4). The English Unit then collated the responses, in Table 12 below:

Table 12
Secondary Teachers' Responses to Syllabus Dissemination:
Teacher Questionnaire (Form B)

	QUESTIONS	Y	N	NR
1	Did you find it very difficult to draw up the year plan?	21	26	4
2	Do you think the year plan is a useful document?	46	2	3
3	Was there much disagreement among teachers of a particular year level in deciding the Als?	16	28	7
4	Was it easy to decide the skills/activities to realize the terminal objectives?	21	26	4
5	Were the inventories very useful to you in drawing up the year plan?	42	3	6
6	Could you follow the steps on the planning of an integrated sequence of lessons in the syllabus easily?	33	14	4
7	Did you have very much difficulty planning your integrated sequence of lessons?	27	23	1
8	Do you think the integrated approach helps your pupils learn better?	39	3	9
9	Do you feel adequately prepared to use the syllabus for planning your scheme of work?	28	15	8
10	Do you feel the need for more training in teaching to the new syllabus?	31	18	2

Y = Yes N = No NR = Nil response Total No = 51

Source: Specialist Inspector of English Language, 7, 1992a:4

Only 51 of the 138 schools, approximately 37%, returned Form B, raising the question of whether workshops took place in the remaining 87 schools. Analysis of the limited data which were received does not provide reliable insights into teachers' responses to the initial dissemination. In Table 12, responses from each school have been given equal value, although the number of teachers attending the workshops would have varied greatly from

school to school. Thus, though the majority of schools may not have found it very difficult to draw up the year plan (Table 12, statement 1), the majority of teachers may have found it difficult. In addition, the person delivering the workshop may have been responsible for collating the questionnaires before sending them to the English Unit. In such a situation, it would have been a brave person who returned a questionnaire indicating his/her school-based workshop was not well received by the department. Table 12, then, is not a valid, reliable or representative portrayal of teachers' responses to the school-based dissemination workshops.

The qualitative data obtained from Form B reflects a wide range of views and opinions. For example, the collated response to question 2, "Do you think the year plan is a useful document?", states:

" The teachers found the year plan a useful document (Q2) because it provided them with a clear overview and an insight into the year's work . . . some of the secondary teachers were sceptical about its usefulness or refrained from commenting." (SIEL 7, 1992a:1)

In response to question 5, "Were the inventories very useful to you in drawing up the year plan?", the report states:

"While some teachers felt the inventories provided them with 'working boundaries', others felt that they were too vague, and wanted the language items to be specified for every level." (*ibid*:2)

The conclusion to the report indicates the difficulty of making any definite statement about teachers' responses to syllabus dissemination based on the limited returns of Form B at this early stage of dissemination:

"Finally, all the open-ended responses clearly show that the EL teachers are at different stages of understanding in using the syllabus, and this is quite evident in any school." (*ibid*:3)

Despite its inconclusiveness, it was the only report available to the

English Unit. It was distributed in the January 1992 Unit meeting. Specialist inspectors were asked to "raise points for clarification at the next meeting" (English Unit, 1992a, 2.3:1). At the next meeting, "No points were raised for clarification" (English Unit, 1992b, 1.2:1). There is no record of any discussion of the findings, or, perhaps more surprisingly, of the failure of so many teachers to respond to the questionnaires.

Had the findings been discussed, Table 12 shows almost 61% of the respondents felt they needed more training.

The decision to use questionnaires to obtain feedback caused a number of difficulties. Form A captured information from about 24% of the participants in the specialist inspectors' workshops. Form B was completed by approximately 37% of schools. Thus, the sample was too small to be representative of the target audience, precluding any sensible interpretation of teachers' response to the dissemination.

Perhaps the low response rate could have been anticipated:

" . . . one of the main problems with questionnaires is the relatively low response rate . . . which poses questions about the reasons why certain subjects respond and others do not" (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:172).

Cultural factors may be one reason for the poor response. Cortazzi and Jin (1997) suggest that adult Asian students are unlikely to respond critically to a course evaluation. They believe teachers should be aware of how a course is going without referring to students and, since they do not want to embarrass teachers, they will tone down any critical remarks.

It may have been more useful to have conducted interviews with randomly selected workshop participants, followed up by group interviews

with English teachers in randomly selected schools. The richer, more representative, reliable and valid data obtained would have provided the basis of a more informed interpretation of teachers' concerns at this stage. Unfortunately, a tradition of interpretive, qualitative research has yet to be established in Singapore (Cheah and Chui, 1997).

As it was, by January 1992, when implementation was about to take place, the English Unit did not have a clear picture of even the extent to which dissemination had taken place. How many schools had held dissemination workshops? in 1992, specialist inspectors conducted a survey. Their findings are collated in Table 13, below:

Table 13
School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 1E, 1N and 2N - 1991

LEVEL	NO OF SCHOOLS	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH HAVE DISSEMINATED	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH PLAN TO DISSEMINATE AT END OF '92	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH HAVE NO PLANS TO DISSEMINATE IN '92
1E	123 (100%)	119 (96.7%)	0 (0%)	4 (3.2%)
1N	105 (100%)	104 (99.05%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.95%)
2N	105 (100%)	94 (89.5%)	8 (7.6%)	3 (2%)

Information collected from 123 (89%) of the 138 secondary schools

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1992:2

Dissemination to Secondary 2N teachers in some schools may not have happened because the New CLUE course book was not published until the end of 1992. Nevertheless, the majority of school-based workshops did take place, though it is difficult to say what information was disseminated.

10.6 Other Sources of Information Regarding Teachers' Responses to the Initial Dissemination

The three 1992 appraisal reports available to the researcher all state the 1991 Syllabus had not been effectively implemented (Bibliography 5:423 1992 a, b and c).

Information obtained from specialist inspectors' visits to schools and perceptions of responses to the dissemination workshops were shared at the English Unit's monthly meetings. These sessions were not cheerful:

"Generally, it was noted that teachers at syllabus workshops had expressed the feeling that SIELs should run workshops for all their teachers. This was felt to be out of the question. It was also mentioned that teachers were not reading the syllabus, and some had never even seen it." (English Unit, 1990d, 4:1-2)

And:

"The problem of HODs (*Heads of Department*) and other key teachers who absented themselves from workshops was discussed. SIEL ___ said that she would consult DD (*Deputy Director*) as to the appropriate action to take." (English Unit, 1990e, 4.3:3)

And:

"Some HODs had no intention of conducting syllabus workshops for their teachers, either because of diffidence or because teachers that were trained had been transferred out (*sic*). Other HODs conducted the workshops without going through the training package provided. Several schools had not started writing their units of work although SIELs had already conducted syllabus dissemination workshops for the teachers." (English Unit, 1991b, 6.1:3)

In the period 1990-1991, only one positive comment was recorded:

"SIEL __ reported that the HOD of _____ Secondary had done a good job disseminating the EL syllabus to his department." (English Unit 1991e, 3.2:2)

This head of department was one of eight who, in February 1995, attended a symposium to discuss the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. They stated the initial dissemination had been rushed. Consequently, they had not had time to assimilate concepts which they felt they then communicated inadequately to their large departments. Problems were exacerbated by a lack of teaching materials, staff transfers and too many untrained and relief teachers (SEAMEO/Australia Institutional Links Project, 1995: 32-34).

One head of department at the symposium had conducted unpublished research into the dissemination process. Suvanaris interviewed ten teachers

from six secondary schools, all of whom had attended the dissemination workshops, and five of whom had written units of work (Suvanaris, 1991).

The interviews raised concerns which the English Unit's investigation did not identify. In particular: the high number of assignments required by some schools "will hamper or deter teachers from using the activities suggested in the syllabus as they would (*sic*) be more concerned about meeting the required quota (*number of assignments*)" (*ibid*:59); "teachers need to be trained to teach grammar integratively" (*ibid*:60); "it was unrealistic for teacher (*sic*) to prepare materials" (*ibid*:65); "the content of the syllabus should be sequenced to expedite lesson planning" (*ibid*:65); and, "teachers will have to be trained in writing assessments that reflect the approaches advocated, mainly the integrative approach" (*ibid*:69).

Of particular significance, given its importance in the dissemination process, was the interviewees' attitude to conducting dissemination workshops in their own schools:

"The HODs and key English Language teachers felt they were not able to disseminate the syllabus to the other English Language teachers in their schools. This was not because they were unwilling to do so, but rather because they were not adequately prepared for it. The 8¹ hours of workshops that they had attended were insufficient to even allow for a complete understanding of the syllabus and its intended use. It certainly did not prepare them for training the teachers on how ALs (*Attainment Levels*) should be written and how lessons can be integrated. They were also concerned that the wrong facts (*sic*) might be disseminated since they themselves were uncertain about the syllabus . . . The current package is inadequate as a training package and is open to misinterpretation." (*ibid*:70)

Suvanaris's work emphasises the problems with the English Unit's research procedures. Conducting research from a holistic, interpretive

¹ The two workshops lasted seven hours.

perspective (Davis, 1995:432) and using qualitative techniques, she was able to present an interpretation of the events from the actors' point of view, so providing a more complete picture of teachers' concerns. Some of these concerns were raised in the English Unit's research, but had not been thoroughly explored. The whole concept of the "multiplier effect" or the "cascade" approach to disseminating information about a syllabus so different to its predecessor needed to be re-considered, but received only a brief comment in the English Unit's reports and discussions (this chapter:267).

Another reason for Suvanaris's relative success may have been that she was not a Ministry of Education official. Specialist inspectors recording the teachers' responses to the dissemination were also responsible for appraising schools. Some teachers may have felt reluctant to admit difficulties to those who might eventually sit in judgement on them. Thus, it was perhaps unlikely that the English Unit would ever collect valid, reliable, representative information unless it appointed an external evaluator.

However, information from all the sources discussed in this chapter paints a depressing picture of the anxiety and distress caused by the dissemination process.

10.7 Reporting the Evaluation of the Initial Dissemination

The analysis of data obtained from Forms A and B was initially written up in two reports (SIEL 7, 1991 and 1992a). The intended audience was other specialist inspectors and the Assistant Director, ultimately responsible for the distribution of the specialist inspectors' workload. The reports were used to inform the English Unit's work plan for 1992. They were not included in either Volume 2 or Volume 3 of the official File NO7-08-024 Review of

Syllabuses (English Unit, 1981-1992, and English Unit 1992-1995).

In March 1992 an official report, A Report on the New EL Syllabuses (Primary and Secondary) (SIEL 7, 1992a) was produced. It provides a history of the 1991 Syllabuses from their conception in 1987 to the plans for implementation in 1992 and is included in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2. Here, it is part of the English Unit's corporate memory.

The report suggests the only difficulties encountered were teachers' lack of competence and the need for training to provide this competence:

"While many (teachers) felt adequately prepared to deal with the syllabus, others indicated the need for further training with the intention of becoming more competent with the new approach." (Specialist Inspector of English Language 7, 1992a:6)

It does not consider essential questions of process, for example the quality of the dissemination packages and the evaluation instruments, or the advisability of asking heads of department to disseminate information to their teachers. This is hardly surprising since no information was sought about the process of dissemination. Though the low response to the questionnaires was clear from the tables in Appendices 5 and 6 (*ibid*:14-15), possible reasons for this were not discussed. Such discussion could have considered the underlying teacher attitudes suggested by this reluctance to respond.

Reports, then, are of two kinds. One reflects a formative evaluation, the intention of which is to inform the English Unit's work plan for the following year, and to provide information for other ministry departments which may assist with the dissemination and implementation. Thus, it must be produced in time to contribute to these plans. The second provides an overview, and is more summative in nature. The audience will be any ministry

officer referring to the official files recording the work of the English Unit. If the officer is reviewing this syllabus dissemination and implementation, or planning a similar project, information on processes would be vital. It is just this information which is withheld.

10.8 Responding to the Formative Evaluation Reports

The English Unit's response to the formative reports is reflected in the extract from the 1992 work plan in Figure 4 on the next page.

More, and perhaps more valid, representative and reliable, information about how schools were responding to the 1991 Syllabus was to be gathered under the direction of designated specialist inspectors. 50 "man-days" (*sic*) were to be spent designing monitoring instruments, collecting and collating feedback from primary and secondary schools and planning follow up action for schools at both levels. A further 25 "man-days" (*sic*) were to be spent monitoring the dissemination of information to teachers who would be implementing the syllabus in 1993, again in both primary and secondary schools. Finally, 96.5 "man-days" (*sic*) were to be used for visiting the secondary schools to monitor the implementation. Each visit was expected to last half a day, and would be used for gathering information. Time was allowed elsewhere in the work plan for visits for other purposes.

Developing ways of directly addressing two of the problems teachers raised, writing attainment levels and the value of informal assessment, was to be completed in 90 "man-days" (*sic*). However, no time was allocated to disseminating the results of this committee work to schools. It was intended that sample attainment levels for all the terminal objectives in Domain A would be drawn up by May 1992 (English Unit, 1992a, 5.3:3 [*minutes*]).

These would be used by the specialist inspectors on their visits to schools in the second half of the year.

FIGURE 4
English Language Unit, Work Plan: 1992

Activity	Description	Time Frame	Officers Involved	Man Days	Re- marks
1.1 New EL Syllabus (Pr & Sec)	. To assist schools to implement the EL Syllabuses at P1, P2, S1E, S1N and S2N in all primary and secondary schools	Jan-Dec	All SIELs		
	- writing sample attainment levels	Feb-Jul	SIEL 4, 5 and 11	30	10 man-days x 3 officers
	- drawing up CA (<i>continuous assessment</i>) guidelines	Feb-Jul	SIEL 6, 8, 9 & 12	60	15 man-days x 4 officers
	. To monitor the implementation of the new EL Syllabuses at P1, P2, S1E, S1N and S2N levels in all primary and secondary schools	Jan-Dec	All SIELs	165.5	193 Pr schools 138 Sec Schools 331 x 1/2 man-day per school
	- designing instruments for monitoring - collecting and collating feedback from schools - planning follow-up action		SIEL 1, 2, 3, 7, & 14	50	10 man-days x 5 officers
	. To monitor the dissemination of the new EL Syllabuses at P3, S2E and S3N in all primary and secondary schools	Jan-Dec	SIEL 1, 2, 3, 7 and 14	25	5 man-days x 5 officers

Source: *English Unit, 1991b, Bibliography 3*

Sample continuous assessment "items" and a set of handouts suggesting how to use them were to be ready by September 1992. There was no indication of how these would be communicated to schools (English Unit, 1992a, 5.4:3 [*minutes*]). Teachers' concern was the value of informal

assessment, so the value of the samples would need to be demonstrated.

There would not be time in the "man-days" (*sic*) allocated to the syllabus in the 1992 work plan to respond to teachers' requests for a training video or more workshops to clarify problems. Indeed, specialist inspectors were instructed not to give workshops. The Deputy Director of the Languages and Library Development Branch stated:

"It was not the job of SIELs to be trainers and therefore conducting workshops on call was not a solution to many of the problems raised. It was the role of SIs (Specialist Inspectors) to help teachers and HODs (Heads of Department) develop themselves and in that context SIs should focus on how best they can exploit the multiplier effect." (English Unit 1992b, 4.2:4 [*minutes*])

In addition, some of the teachers' concerns were not within the specialist inspectors' locus of control, for example time for teachers to meet in schools, the shortage of teachers and the high teacher-student ratio.

However, another branch of the Ministry of Education was deployed to assist in the dissemination. In 1992, the Staff Training Branch, located in the Personnel Division, offered three courses which it regarded as supporting the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus: Drama as a Teaching Strategy for English Language and Literature Teachers, attended by 28 teachers; RSA/UCLES Diploma in the Teaching of English in Singapore Schools, attended by 19 teachers; and Using the English Language Syllabus in Lower Secondary Classes, attended by 26 teachers (Staff Training Branch, 1994:1). The first two courses may have been useful in familiarising teachers with methodology appropriate to syllabus implementation, but the only course which directly addressed the teachers' need to know more about the syllabus is the third one, attended by 26 teachers.

The English Unit had requested Staff Training Branch to conduct very different courses in 1992:

"SIEL __ said that Training Branch is asking for suggestions to conduct various courses for 1992. Suggestions from SIELs include integrated EL teaching, classroom management, questioning techniques, teaching/testing techniques and 'the skilful teacher'." (English Unit 1991b, 7.4:4)

It might be argued that in offering the course Using the English Language Syllabus in Lower Secondary Classes Staff Training Branch was responding to teachers' needs more effectively than if it had acted upon the English Unit's recommendations. However, it is unlikely that the Training Branch had much choice about what in-service courses it was able to offer.

Staff Training Branch recruits personnel to teach in-service courses. The availability of in-service courses at any given time is more a reflection of who Staff Training Branch can recruit rather than what teachers may need at a specific time. This problem was raised in discussion at the 1995 symposium on the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus:

"In-service training of teachers is initiated by Staff Training Branch of the MOE. Courses are organised on an *ad hoc* basis or on the basis of what staff are available at NIE (*National Institute of Education*), the British Council and RELC (*Regional English Language Centre*)." (SEAMEO/Australia Institutional Links Project, 1995:36)

Thus, it was unlikely there would be any systematic response to in-service training needs recognised in the evaluation.

10.9 The English Unit's Evaluation of School-based Dissemination: 1992-1995

From 1992-1995, information about the 1991 Syllabus was disseminated to teachers of Secondary 3N-5N and 2E-4E by heads of department and specialist inspectors through school-based workshops. The process was evaluated by specialist inspectors who gathered information

through questionnaires completed by heads of department (Appendices Gi and ii:460-462). Evaluation was overseen by the Syllabus Monitoring Committee comprising specialist inspectors identified in the year's work plan.

In 1992, information was to be disseminated to teachers of 2E and 3N classes. Table 14 below shows the extent to which this was achieved. The information was obtained from 123 (89%) of the 138 secondary schools. It demonstrates nearly a third of the schools with Normal stream classes had no intention of disseminating information about the syllabus in 1992.

Table 14
School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 2E and 3N -1992

LEVEL	NO OF SCHOOLS	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH HAVE DISSEMINATED	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH PLAN TO DISSEMINATE AT END OF '92	NO OF SCHOOLS (%) WHICH HAVE NO PLANS TO DISSEMINATE IN '92
2E	123 (100%)	71 (57.7%)	37 (30%)	15 (12.1%)
3N	105 (100.0%)	22 (20.9%)	49 (46.6%)	34 (32.3%)

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1992:2

The pattern was repeated in 1993, when information was to be disseminated to teachers of Secondary 3E and 4N:

Table 15
School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 3E and 4N - 1993

Level	no of schools that have disseminated	no of schools that plan to disseminate by end of 93	no of schools that plan to disseminate at a later date	Total
3E	89 (76.1%)*	11 (9.4%)	16 (13.7)	116
4N	48	-	11	59

* Percentages have been added, using 117 as the base number for 3E

Source: Adapted from Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1993, 4.2:2

There is reason to question the figures in Table 15. The information was "collected for 117 or 83% of the total of 140 secondary schools at 3E and 4N" (*ibid*, 4.2:2). Responses from 116, not 117, schools are indicated in Table 15. No separate base numbers have been provided for schools with 3E and 4N classes. The percentages for 3E in Table 15 have been calculated using 117 as a base number, as all secondary schools have Express classes. It is not possible, though, to guess how many of the 117 schools offered Normal stream classes. Table 15 indicates it was 59, all of which intended to disseminate. In contrast, 105 of the 123 schools whose responses were included in the 1992 Report offered a Normal stream curriculum. This suggests that more than 59 of the 117 schools would have had Normal stream classes.¹ These may have featured in a column "No. of schools (%) which have no plans to disseminate" in the year of enquiry. This column is found in Table 14, but omitted from Table 15.

The information available, then, permits only speculative comparisons and contrasts of the extent of school-based dissemination in 1992 and 1993. An informed guess would be fewer schools were disseminating information to teachers of Normal stream classes: 71 in 1992 and 59 in 1993.

In 1993, specialist inspectors in their school visits discussed with teachers problems encountered in the dissemination process. These problems were recorded and are summarised in Table 16 on the next page.

Though the areas of need are said to have been identified by schools,

¹ In 1995, 112 schools entered 'N' level students for examinations. (Information obtained by telephone from Examinations Branch, 18 June, 1996.)

Table 16
Summary of Syllabus Dissemination Problems (Secondary): 1993

AREAS OF NEED EXPRESSED BY SCHOOLS		SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP
1	Problems with resources eg. textbooks for 3N, suitable materials Choice of texts for Upper Sec is limited.	Alert HODs/trs to books from commercial sources/publishers
2	Understanding integration and the process approach	Sharing sessions with teachers
3	Increasing repertoire of strategies	Sharing sessions, workshops
4	Equating texts with syllabus Relying on the Teacher's Guide instead of planning their own units	Zonal committees
5	Schools have mistaken dissemination of syllabus to mean writing units of work Planning an effective programme across levels	SIELs/HODs
6	Insufficient copies of the syllabus	School admin
7	Untrained teachers/shortage of EL teachers	School admin

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1993: Appendix C:7

statements like, "Schools have mistaken dissemination of syllabus to mean writing units of work", and "Relying on the Teacher's Guide instead of planning their own units" read more like observations made by an external observer. It is also odd that reference should be made to "textbooks for 3N". The 1993 report was discussing dissemination to teachers of 3E and 4N.

Nevertheless, as we have seen (Chapter Eight:190), the New CLUE course book for 4N was not available in 1993, which would have adversely affected dissemination at this level. Analysis of the dissemination in preparation for the 1995 implementation, in Table 17 on the next page, provided other reasons why dissemination did not take place.

The 1995 implementation involved only classes which would be taking the 'O' level examinations that year. 59 schools saw no need to disseminate information to teachers of 4E and 5N classes, as they had already done so. Of the 11 who had not so far disseminated information, 5 had no plans to do

Table 17

School-based Syllabus Dissemination to Teachers of 4E and 5N: 1994-1995

No. of schools replied: 127

No. of schools that did not reply: 6

Q/N	Question	Collated replies	Collated replies
1	Has information regarding the syllabus been disseminated to the teachers of S4E/5N?	Yes: 116	No: 11
2	When was the information disseminated?	End '94: 43 Beg. '95: 14	Others:(Please state + no.) '90-93: 59
3	How was the information disseminated?	Wkshp by HOD: 37 Wkshp by SIEL: 16	Others:(Please state + no.) NIE training: 2 Departmental meetings: 28 Previous workshop: 19 Distribution of new text, units of work, syllabus: 8 Sharing sessions: 4 Informal discussion: 2
4	Reasons for not disseminating information regarding the syllabus to teachers of S4E/5N	No HOD: 1 Unaware: 1	Others:(Please state + no.) Independent schools: 2 Related or previous dissemination workshops: 3 Not clear about syllabus document: 1 Some 4E/5N teachers attended workshops in previous schools: 1 Late delivery of New CLUE: 1 Teachers' Guide for New CLUE enough: 1
5	When do you intend to disseminate this information?	1st Tm '95: 4 2nd Tm '95: 1 3rd Tm '95: 0 4th Tm '95: 0	Others:(Please state + no.) When I'm clear about syllabus document: 1 Never/No idea: 5
6	How do you intend to disseminate this information?	Wkshp by HOD: 2 Wkshp by SIEL: 2	Others:(Please state + no.) Language meeting: 1 Use first term's Scheme of Work as an example: 1
7	Would you like any assistance in disseminating the information?	Yes: 9	No: 118

Source: Materials distributed at a meeting of the English Unit, 18 May, 1995, English Unit, 1995d

so. Thus, 64 of the 127 schools which responded to the questionnaire (50.4%), would not be disseminating information regarding the syllabus to teachers of 4E and 5N immediately before they implemented it.

43 schools gave reasons, sometimes several, for this in response to the

question: "What are your reasons for not, so far, disseminating information regarding the syllabus to teachers of Secondary 4E/5N classes?" (Appendix Gi:460). One reason was that teachers of these classes were familiar with the 1991 Syllabus. 19 schools stated that information had been disseminated at a previous workshop, and 3 more schools stated their teachers had been to related or previous dissemination workshops.

2 schools stated that teachers of the graduating classes, often regarded by their principals as the English department's most effective teachers, did not need the help teachers of more junior classes needed:

"Concern is not with 4E/5N teachers but lower sec teachers who are subject to staff movement." (Materials distributed at a meeting of the English Unit, 18 May, 1995, English Unit, 1995d:4)

6 schools felt there was no need to disseminate information on the syllabus in schools using recommended course books:

"Some teachers feel that since the new course books such as the CLUE series have been prepared according to the new syllabus, following the course books would mean following what the syllabus recommends." (*ibid*:5)

16 (37%), suggested teachers did not believe the syllabus and the 'O' level examination were in alignment:

"All Sec 4 teachers agree that they are unable to carry out the New Syllabus because they need the time to revise and hone the English Language skills of their pupils for the preliminary Exam (Sept) and for the GCE 'O' Level Examination (October)." (*ibid*:4)

"Sec 4 teachers train students to pass 'O' Levels." (*ibid*)

"SOW (*scheme of work*) for 4E/5N is more exam focussed." (*ibid*)

"Rather difficult to disseminate syllabus as 4E/5N teachers feel preparing pupils for exams is important." (*ibid*)

"The Sec 4E classes are following the thematic approach in the first semester. However, after the mid-year examinations in July, much of

the time is devoted to refining examination skills." (*ibid*)

"The teachers are concentrating more on preparing students for the 'O' Levels and may not find the syllabus useful." (*ibid*)

"For very practical purposes, I have only implemented the new syllabus for Sec 1 to 3, because for Sec 4 students we need to be very exam oriented in order to produce results. Unfortunately, the new syllabus and EL recommended texts for that matter do not adequately meet the exam needs. I had (*sic*) informed (*my specialist inspector*) about it and tailored a scheme of work for our own students that will better prepare them for the exam." (*ibid*)

These comments suggest that the similarity between the 1994 and 1995 'O' level English language examination results was at least partly the result of a similarity of teaching in a number of graduating classes in both years (Chapter Nine:253).

A number of schools, then, saw the syllabus as superfluous, either because it had been superseded by the course book or because it was not in alignment with the 'O' level English language examination. However, not all heads of department provided a reason for not disseminating information to Secondary 4E and 5N teachers. Thus, it cannot be said with certainty how many schools regarded the 1991 Syllabus as unimportant in relation to the course book and the 'O' level examination.

It is clear, though, that fewer schools disseminated information regarding the syllabus as the period of implementation progressed and as implementation was supposed to take place in graduating classes.

These insights were gathered through the qualitative aspect of the questionnaire (Appendix Gii:460-461), which was "general and open-ended" enough to generate responses which resemble spoken opinion (Lynch, 1992:75). However, the questionnaire was submitted by the heads of

department, so little was learned about teachers' perceptions of the dissemination workshops conducted by their heads of department.

This was not the only problem with the English Unit's evaluation of the dissemination. Establishing exact numbers was difficult even when the intention was to gain quantitative information. There was no agreement on how many schools should have been disseminating information about the syllabus: 138 in 1991 and 1992; 140 in 1993; and 133 in 1994-5. There was no statement about how many of these schools offered a Normal curriculum. Information was obtained from a varying number of schools: 123 in 1991 and 1992; 117 in 1993; and 127 in 1994-5. Although these numbers represent a high percentage of returns, an advantage of the Ministry of Education conducting its own evaluation should have been that exact numbers of schools could be established, and that information could be obtained from all those schools.

Analysis of qualitative information also presented difficulties. The differences between the specialist inspectors' interpretations of the "Areas of need expressed by schools" when disseminating (Table 16:283), and the heads of department's statements (this chapter:285-286) are marked. Specialist inspectors perceive difficulties with dissemination to be largely to do with teachers' lack of professional competence and/or limited resources. In sharp contrast, heads of department cite teachers' competence and the lack of alignment between the syllabus and examinations as reasons for not disseminating. Perhaps specialist inspectors unconsciously filtered the information they obtained through their own perceptions. In their discussion of analysis of interview and conversational data, Hitchcock and Hughes state:

"It is important to note that the materials themselves are placed against the research focus and not the other way around which might lead to forcing the materials into the researcher's prearranged ideas and hypotheses." (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989:98)

Different perceptions concerning the reasons for problems with dissemination were never discussed. Clearly, it is important to establish why difficulties have arisen, or the responses to them may be expensively futile.

10.10 Strengths and Weaknesses of School-based Dissemination: 1992-1995

Some information about the process of dissemination was provided in response to the question "Would you like any assistance in disseminating the information?" (Appendix Gii:461). Only nine schools answered positively (Table 17:284). However, sixteen schools said specialist inspectors had given a workshop. It is clear that at least some of these had been helpful:

"Workshop by SIEL useful as teachers generally do not refer to the syllabus, being experienced teachers and exam-oriented." (Materials distributed at a meeting of the English Unit, 18 May, 1995, English Unit, 1995d:4)

And:

"Teachers followed up workshop on syllabus dissemination by SI (*specialist inspector*) through (*sic*) writing SOWs (*schemes of work*) on termly basis." (*ibid*)

And:

"SIEL was very helpful in clearing doubts and providing information/materials." (*ibid*)

However, some schools clearly felt a need for more:

"Would be good for all teachers to go through "refresher" session to clarify any doubts/misunderstandings. Session preferably conducted by SIEL." (*ibid*)

For some heads of department, dissemination had very stressful:

"When I conducted the workshops in 1991, I did it for all the teachers from Sec 1 to 5 - it was a very stressful experience for me at that time because I had to understand the purpose myself." (*ibid*)

And:

"It's difficult to express my feelings in only four lines. Perhaps 'Thank God it was over!' best sums it up." (*ibid*)

Such stress could have been the result of trying to fulfil the role of an internal change agent without adequate support from an external change agent. Some heads of department, however, made little attempt to help their teachers. Table 17:284 indicates that eight schools saw the distribution of new course books, units of work and/or the 1991 Syllabus as adequate means of dissemination. Their comments clarify this process:

"As a new textbook (New CLUE) is being used, the EL teachers teaching 4E/5N classes have been assigned chapters to prepare the scheme of work" (*ibid*)

And:

"Teachers were told to implement the syllabus. They will discuss and incorporate the SIOs (*specific instructional objectives*)¹ into their SOW (scheme of work). (*ibid*)

And:

"I personally told the teachers, especially the teacher who is doing the Scheme of Work for the new CLUE 'O' Level text." (*ibid*)

And:

"Teachers were informed during subject meetings and leaflets and pamphlet (*sic*) was (*sic*) distributed for teachers to read. Each teacher has also been issued with the EL syllabus book and told to incorporate the information in writing their units of work and implement." (*ibid*)

This top down, unhelpful approach was not calculated to encourage professional development. However, as Table 17 indicates, it was to be found in only eight schools. In contrast, 88 (69.3%) schools had used a workshop led by the head of department, a meeting or a sharing session as a means of dissemination. Since the evaluation instruments were addressed to the heads of department, the teachers' perceptions of how effective these workshops were cannot be discussed.

This is very limited information on which to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of school-based dissemination. Only general, inconclusive

¹ There are no specific instructional objectives in the 1991 Syllabus

statements can be made: some schools, sometimes with the help of a specialist inspector, tried conscientiously to disseminate; others made cursory attempts. Thus, dissemination achieved only a limited success in creating circumstances favourable to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. In achieving this limited success, considerable stress was caused to internal change agents, who were inadequately prepared for their role.

10.11 Reporting the Evaluation

From 1992-1995, the Syllabus Monitoring Committee, made up of specialist inspectors identified in the English Unit's work plan for the year, produced an annual report which included a section discussing dissemination. The reports became more summative in nature, their major function becoming their contribution to the English Unit's corporate memory as they were kept in File NO-7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2 and Vol. 3 (English Unit, 1981-1992 and 1992-1995). The reports were intended to be formative and were written before the English Unit made its work plans for the following year. However, the paucity of information gathered about the process of dissemination, and, as we shall see in the next section, the limited response which the English Unit collectively made to the problems which arose, effectively reduced the reports' formative function.

10.12 School-based Dissemination, 1992-1995: Responding to the Evaluation

One point on which all parties agreed was the lack of appropriate resources. However, an examination of the English Unit's work plans for 1993-1995 (English Unit, 1992b, 1993c, and 1994d) reveals that little action was taken to address this problem. One reason is suggested in a discussion of the production by specialist inspectors of worksheets for teachers:

"DDLL (*Deputy Director, Languages and Library*) reminded SIELs that their work should not encroach on the work of other divisions." (English Unit, 1990g, 13.1:5 [*minutes*])

Producing resources was the responsibility of CDIS. Thus, the only answer to the problem could be, "a system of providing regular feedback to CDIS" (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992, 5.2.4:4, *bibliography 3*).

Besides informing CDIS that schools were anxious to receive materials, specialist inspectors suggested suitable commercial materials beyond those on the Ministry of Education's approved lists (eg Curriculum Planning Division, 1994b). Appropriate materials were reviewed in TELL (Nair and Wong, 1992; Nair, Wong and Foo, 1992).

There was no response to the perception that the lack of alignment between the syllabus and the 'O' and 'N' level examinations may be detrimental to the process of dissemination. Making any changes to public examinations, however, would require the assistance of, and subsequent approval from, the Examinations and Assessment Branch.

Other problems too, for example the shortage of trained English language teachers (Table 16:283), could not be addressed by the English Unit acting in isolation. However, more directly within the Unit's locus of control was the dissemination package it had produced. It was recommended that changes be made to the package, which had become outdated (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1993, 4.3:3, *bibliography 3*). The recommendation was accepted and in March 1994 plans were made to revise the package:

"SIEL ____ will be responsible for revising the Syllabus Dissemination Package to share with SIELs at the 9 June Unit meeting." (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994d, 2:1 [*minutes*])

The June meeting of the English Unit took place, but the minutes make

no mention of the revision of the syllabus dissemination package (English Unit, 1994f). A review of the minutes of English Unit meetings for 1994 shows the silence continued.

The 1992 and 1993 reports of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee suggested specialist inspectors continue to help individual schools in their purview with dissemination and implementation (*ibid*, 1992, 5.2.5:4, and 1993, 5.2:3). Some specialist inspectors took full advantage of this recommendation. In 1993, 116 secondary school teachers attended workshops led by specialist inspectors on writing unit plans (English Unit, 1994b, 13:1), a segment of the 1991 dissemination workshops. 52 secondary school teachers attended similar workshops in 1994 (English Unit, 1994c, Appendix 2:7). 12 dissemination workshops for 160 secondary school teachers were held in 1995 (English Unit, 1995b, 9:1 and 1995c, Annex B:9). Thus, from 1993 to 1995, 328 secondary school teachers attended dissemination workshops given by specialist inspectors.

These workshops were sometimes entitled Dissemination of EL Syllabus and/or Writing Units of Work and were one session of three and a half hours (English Unit 1995c, Annex B:9), a reduction from the original seven hours. They now considered translating the principles of the 1991 Syllabus into units of work. Increasingly, specialist inspectors were taking back responsibility for dissemination, and communicating what they considered to be the essential information.

Only once did the English Unit act collectively in response to the lack of positive response to the dissemination. A brochure was produced to help market the syllabus (Curriculum Planning Division, 1993c). Adopting the

format of a newspaper, it has several "articles" explaining the implications of syllabus implementation on planning, methodology and assessment. In colour and interspersed with pictures, diagrams and cartoons, the brochure looks attractive, though the text is no less dense than that used in the syllabus and the message perhaps as unpalatable to teachers:

"When planning for the year's work, teachers have to obtain an overview of the various inventories in the syllabus: the Terminal Objectives (Chapter 1), range of language/language related skills and language functions (Chapter 4) and test tasks (Chapter 6). With this overview in mind, teachers can then collaborate to draw up a Year Plan for the level." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1993c,2)

Sent to schools in December 1993, late in the process of dissemination, the brochure could have been used by the head of department only for disseminating information to teachers of Secondary 4E and 5N classes. Nevertheless, it might have been a useful reminder to all teachers. 25 were sent to each school (English Unit, 1993g, 1.8:2 [*minutes*]), so the majority of English teachers could have received one. This and other marketing strategies targeted at a wider audience could have been used earlier.

Thus, responses to the analysis of the evaluation in the period 1992-1995 were limited by the boundaries of the English Unit's influence, and characterised by reluctance: to tackle more difficult problems like the alignment between the syllabus and assessment modes; to use the full range of the Ministry of Education's resources to publicise the syllabus; and to work as a team. The English Unit seems to have encountered difficulties acting collectively or in co-ordination with other Ministry of Education divisions.

10.13 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Evaluation

Responsibility for the Evaluation

In some respects, it was a good decision to have an in-house formative evaluation. Results could be obtained and acted upon rapidly. Specialist inspectors may have learned a lot from being involved in this process. However, requiring them to disseminate and evaluate caused difficulties:

"DDLL (*Deputy Director, Languages and Library*) suggested. . . At present, teachers perceive themselves as being monitored, and not being given the coaching they need to understand and implement the syllabus. SIELs should communicate clearly to teachers that we are still in the process of training teachers." (English Unit, 1992e, 10:2)

Although it is necessary to evaluate how far a person has progressed before offering assistance, and thus the two roles are not in conflict, it seems there was sometimes a lack of sensitivity about when to wear which cap.

In addition, no specialist inspector had expertise in evaluation. The perceptions and priorities of the overworked syllabus writers who produced the evaluation instruments for the initial dissemination were unlikely to coincide with those of teachers who were to implement it. The rapid turnover of specialist inspectors (this chapter:230-231) meant an equally rapid turnover of personnel on the Syllabus Monitoring Committee, so expertise was unlikely to develop. Asking heads of department to submit Form B, an evaluation of the workshops for which heads of department were responsible, reduced the possibility of eliciting useful information on that process.

The fact that Ministry of Education officials conducted the evaluation may have influenced the high rate of response to the questionnaires sent out between 1992 and 1995, though it had no such effect on the returns of Forms A and B. However, the fact that the information was being received by

the Ministry of Education may have meant that the information was less than frank. Identifying an outside evaluator who could command the respect of all stakeholders to produce a summative report would have contributed a welcome, fresh perspective to the discussion (Alderson and Scott, 1992:60).

Planning the Evaluation

A clear objective for the evaluation was established: to use the reports as a basis for proposing plans to assist schools (Syllabus Implementation Committee, 1992a, 3.6 and 3.7:1 [minutes]). The immediate audience of specialist inspectors and the Assistant Director was not in doubt either.

However, evaluation was not "cyclical, integrated" with the design and implementation of the 1991 syllabus (Hargreaves, 1989:35). Had it been, the need for outside expertise could have been identified, and help sought from the relevant Ministry of Education departments.

Designing the Evaluation Instruments and Gathering the Information

The instruments were not designed to elicit information which would achieve the evaluation's objective: to provide a basis for the proposal of plans to assist schools with the dissemination of syllabus information. The evaluation sought the opinions of only a few stakeholders. Principals' perceptions, for example, would have made a useful contribution to an evaluation of the dissemination. Teachers' perspectives were gathered indirectly through their heads of department. Key features of the 1991 Syllabus, like contextualised grammar teaching and an interactive approach, were not mentioned in Forms A and B. These questionnaires did not address similar concerns, so the responses to them could not be validated.

Had the questionnaires established teachers' common concerns, this

information could have been supplemented with more obtained through qualitative techniques. As Lynch states, after conducting a study designed to evaluate quantitative and qualitative approaches to programme evaluation:

"The approach that would seem to offer the most to program evaluation, in any field, is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data." (Lynch, 1992:94)

Information about attitudes is best obtained through qualitative techniques. Interviews could have asked whether teachers thought adopting the principles of the syllabus was rationally justifiable and would benefit them and their pupils. If teachers did not believe in the utility of the methodological procedures advocated by the 1991 Syllabus, they would be unlikely to adopt them. The result of this lack of information about teachers' attitudes to the recommendations of the 1991 Syllabus could have been expensively mounted and poorly attended in-service workshops/courses.

The process of dissemination was never properly addressed. For example, heads of department were never questioned about what they disseminated or their attitude to their part in the process. An account of their concerns would have helped specialist inspectors to focus their assistance.

Clearly, an outside expert would have been useful here, too. An officer from the Evaluation Branch of the Ministry of Education could have been identified to design instruments to elicit the information necessary to helping the English Unit help the schools.

Analysing the information

The analysis of the quantitative data was not helpful (this chapter:269-270 and 282) and the qualitative data was sometimes recorded so as to suggest they reflected the researcher's rather than the teachers' perceptions

(this chapter: 282-283). Again, outside expertise would have been useful.

Reporting the Information

A report can only reflect the quality of its input. Thus, the evaluation reports give no real indication of the difficulties which schools encountered, or how and what was disseminated. Their formative function, then, is necessarily limited.

Since the reports do not provide a comprehensive picture of the dissemination process, they will not be a useful basis for the development of future projects. All the problems identified here could be repeated in the next dissemination exercise, suggesting the time spent on evaluating this one may have been entirely wasted. Engaging an outside authority to produce a final summative report may have gone some way towards rectifying this situation.

Responding to the Formative Report

Often it was not possible for the English Unit to respond to the problems identified in the reports. Specialist inspectors could not produce course materials, mount sufficient in-service courses or provide more qualified teachers. Clearly, greater networking between divisions and branches of the Ministry of Education, if not a reorganisation of those departments, would have enabled more effective responses to teachers' perceived difficulties.

Apart from the production of the brochure, no coherent or collective action was taken by the English Unit to assist schools with dissemination. It would not have been difficult to provide workshops to help heads of department in their role as internal change agents. This could have had a beneficial and long term effect on the involvement of heads of department in curriculum renewal. However, the English Unit seemed incapable of acting as

a unit to make long term plans. Rather, individual specialist inspectors responded to schools' needs in ways they felt to be appropriate. Such a piecemeal response can only be a stop-gap measure aimed at reducing immediate anxieties rather than generating effective action.

10.14 Conclusion

This discussion reflects how few of the features which would contribute to the successful implementation of an English language syllabus in Singapore were present from 1990-1995.

To begin the discussion with these few features:

- i There was a willingness to learn from the past, as in 1992 the intention was to disseminate information to every teacher
- ii There were personnel inside and outside the school who were responsible for curriculum renewal, though the heads of department had not received any formal training in their role as change agents.
- iii Favourable remarks suggest that some specialist inspectors and heads of department must have employed a managerial style and procedures which supported and encouraged curriculum renewal, though critical remarks suggest others did not
- iv There was a long term plan for dissemination, though it was not realistic as it was not adequately supported by in-service training or resources and, as it considered all features of the syllabus together in each year of dissemination, it did not exploit the syllabus's "trialability" (Rogers, 1983:15)

v Dissemination was school-based. However, if the information in the dissemination package was strictly adhered to, it is unlikely that a school's particular situation would be taken into account

vi There was ongoing evaluation, but it did not enable the rapid identification of problems.

Many of the crucial features, however, were not present:

i The introduction of far reaching changes in the structure of the education system clashed with the dissemination programme

ii The networking between different state education departments and organisations was inadequate

iii Specialist inspectors have no authority over a school's administration, which could refuse to give adequate support to syllabus dissemination

iv There is no evidence that an evaluation of the 1991 Syllabus was planned, although a basis for syllabus evaluation had been provided by the evaluation of its dissemination

v The evaluation conducted by the English Unit is unlikely to influence policy or practice in the future as the reports were not widely available

vi Neither the unit nor the teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to the process of curriculum renewal, though the English Unit demonstrated a strong desire to help teachers

vii Syllabus implementation signalled the need for teacher development, rather than teacher development contributing to curriculum renewal, but lack of appropriate personnel meant courses aimed at teacher development still did not take place

- viii The only recognised channel of communication between teachers and specialist inspectors was the head of department
- ix Teachers, particularly of the upper secondary classes, did not seem to recognise a need for syllabus revision, and clearly did not feel ownership of the 1991 Syllabus
- x The practical, administrative and bureaucratic implications of the dissemination were not handled well. In particular, the limited attempts to market the syllabus and the very low key approach to the dissemination workshops represent lost opportunities
- xi Heads of department may not have been clear about their roles, and a few did not feel accountable for them
- xii The specialist inspectors were not aware of the teachers' "unreadiness" for change, as was demonstrated by the need to produce previously unplanned syllabus support materials in response to the initial evaluation of the dissemination
- xiii The dissemination workshops were not specific about critical features of the syllabus and how they could be reflected in the classroom
- xiv Specialist inspectors were not trained to conduct formative or summative evaluations
- xv No instances of inspiring leadership have been recorded, and not all personnel responsible for curriculum renewal made sustained, persistent efforts to achieve it
- xvi An empirical-rational approach was taken to implementation which did not place the teacher at the centre of syllabus implementation, and did not recognise the role of teachers as mediators in that process

- xvii The dissemination workshops, concentrating on conveying information, were not informed by an awareness of the change process
- xviii The dissemination workshops were not specific about critical features of the syllabus and how they could be reflected in the classroom, so schools could not be helped to achieve these changes
- xix The whole school was not informed about the forthcoming implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. Only the English department was involved in the dissemination
- xx There was no analysis of constraints which would affect school-based dissemination
- xxi The time frame for dissemination was not realistic. For example, it did not allow for the production of support materials
- xxii Effective responses to identified problems could not be provided by the available support systems
- xxiii Appropriate resources were not available for the dissemination workshops
- xxiv An external evaluator was not employed, and no findings were published, though comments were recorded in the report on the SEAMEO/Australia Institutional Links Project (1995:32-34).

The only real criterion for successful dissemination could be the successful implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. The next chapter will discuss the evaluation of the success of that implementation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1991 Syllabus - Implementation: Evaluation and Meta-Evaluation - 1992-1995

11.0 Background to the Evaluation

The evaluation of the implementation was the responsibility of the specialist inspectors (Chapter Ten:254-255). In May 1992 they identified the essential components of the syllabus as:

- . the integrated approach
- . process skills
- . interactive activities
- . attainment levels
- . formative assessment (English Unit, 1992e, 7:2 [*minutes*])

In June, "expected teacher behaviour and practices" were identified:

- . use the questioning technique to encourage/model the thinking/learning processes
- . facilitate collaborative learning
- . be able to incorporate and integrate life-skills
- . make the content, context and tasks meaningful and appropriate to pupils' interests
- . make learning appropriate to ability level
- . ensure that assignments/assessments are formative
- . identify and teach towards instructional objectives and attainment levels
- . know what to do when playing different roles (as facilitator, diagnostician, disseminator, evaluator, guide)
- . teach language appropriacy ie style, register, purpose and language-related functions
- . planning collaboratively (English Unit, 1992f, 5:2 and 1992g, 1:1)

Having created this list of ten teacher "behaviours":

"It was agreed that by 1996, when the new syllabus is fully implemented, these teacher behaviours should be evident in schools." (English Unit, 1992g, 1:1 [*minutes*])

There was clearly no question of implementing the syllabus in stages.

At least in the graduating classes in 1995, all behaviours were to be demonstrated in the year of implementation.

The evaluation was intended to be formative, designed to identify ways in which teachers could be helped to demonstrate these skills (*ibid*). The focus of the implementation exercise was to change teacher behaviour.

Measuring any change in behaviour and evaluating the success of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus was never going to be an easy undertaking. No baseline studies were available by which to measure any changes in teacher behaviour. In addition, as Marsh points out in his discussion of studies of curriculum implementation in Australia:

"No single method can provide in any adequate way, the detailed data needed to analyse and comment upon levels of implementation." (Marsh, 1986:13)

Brumfit compares a syllabus to a social policy, and suggests objectively evaluating the effect of implementation will be difficult because:

" . . . we cannot in a field such as this, where there are so many personal and organizational factors to take into account, expect to devise evaluation instruments which can be context independent. We should, of course, make use of diaries and statistical data in our discussions - quantitative material of all kinds - but we cannot expect to express the success of a social policy, which is what a syllabus really is, with any formal rigour." (Brumfit, 1984b:79)

Recognising the need to devise a variety of context-specific instruments, and undaunted by the probability that the effort was unlikely to provide rigorous results, the English Unit designed a variety of instruments to gather information about teacher behaviour. Specialist inspectors held interviews with teachers to discuss their planning documents, undertook classroom observations, and administered questionnaires to pupils.

11.1 Evaluation: Planning Documents

From 1992 to 1995 specialist inspectors conducted group interviews in selected schools with teachers of classes in which the 1991 Syllabus was

being implemented for the first time. The interviews focussed on a unit of work and the year plan which schools had been asked to produce. Before the interviews, these documents were submitted to the specialist inspectors so they were familiar with them before meeting the teachers (English Unit, 1992c, 2.2:2). The interviews were guided by a checklist. An early version is reproduced in Appendices Hi and Hii, and a later version in Appendix I.

In a long term evaluation, modifications to the instruments are inevitable (Alderson, 1992:293). Changes to this checklist demonstrate the English Unit's changing expectations in terms of syllabus implementation. For example, by 1995 neither Year Plan 1 nor 2 were required.

Schools were not required to prepare Year Plan 2 because it had been decided instead to help schools produce their own attainment levels (English Unit, 1992i, 2.1-2.3:2). Workshops with this objective were offered to schools from January 1994, under the title Working Towards the Terminal Objectives (Curriculum Planning Division, 1994d:2-3). Over two years, only thirteen secondary schools took advantage of this offer (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, [Report], 1994:3 and English Unit, 1995b). Perhaps most schools did not want to produce their own attainment levels.

An area of concern with syllabus implementation at both 3E and 4N was a failure to produce Year Plan 1 (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, [Report], 1994:2). Thus, it was recommended that the English Unit "needs to re-consider its stand on the Year Plan (*ibid*). The English Unit did so and:

"Where an SIEL feels that the Year Plan would be a useful planning tool for a particular school, then s/he will recommend that the school produces one. Otherwise, SIELs will not request a Year Plan." (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994c, 5.1:2 [*minutes*])

So, by 1995 schools were not required to provide any overview of their programmes. Evaluation of a programme's coherent development could be based only on teachers' perceptions. Teachers were asked to reflect on their contribution to the school's English language programme, the appropriacy of that programme for pupils of different ages, interests, abilities and learning styles, and the extent to which the programme responds to some of the recommendations of the 1991 Syllabus. Their comments, made without prior knowledge of the questions and without reference to teachers of other levels or to other documentation, were recorded in the Remarks column corresponding to each statement in section 2 of the checklist. These recorded statements formed the only evidence on which an evaluation of these aspects of schools' individual programmes could be based.

This modification to the evaluation instrument implies evaluators had gone beyond considering the effectiveness of policy implementation to considering the effect of that implementation on the schools (Murphy and Torrance, 1988:xii). Asking teachers to produce an overview of their programmes had elicited a negative response, so the request had been withdrawn. However, the integrity of the syllabus had been compromised.

11.2 Representativeness, reliability and validity of the information obtained

Neufeld, a specialist inspector and member of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee in 1993 and 1995, discusses some of the problems encountered using the later version of the evaluation instrument (Appendix I). Evaluators can only discover what teachers are doing at the planning stage; it is not clear whether there is a match between the planned and the actual curriculum; the checklist does not prioritise the desirable features; insufficient

time was spent on standardisation so evaluators may have had different perceptions regarding some of the items on the checklist, a problem aggravated by staff changes in the English Unit; the responses to the items (*Yes, No* and *To Some Extent*) are difficult to quantify; schools participating in the evaluation did not form a representative sample (Neufeld, 1995:8-9).

In support of the last point, a review of the minutes of the meetings of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee reveals it was not until October 1994 that specialist inspectors were asked to "monitor a representative selection of schools" (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994c, 6.1:2). There is no evidence in the annual reports, or in the minutes of the committee's or the English Unit's meetings that this request was acted upon. In any case, it was made too late to obtain a representative sample in 1995, as so many schools had already participated in the evaluation exercise. Decisions about what constituted a representative sample should have been made in 1991, before implementation began. In the absence of such decisions, it is difficult to say whether the small number of schools visited by the evaluators in 1994 and 1995 is representative of the total. Nevertheless, though findings for each year may not have been representative, from 1992-1995 at least 121 of the 138 secondary schools operating in 1992 contributed to the evaluation.

A point not mentioned by Neufeld was the logistical difficulties of setting up meetings with all teachers of the levels at which implementation was taking place. Inevitably, one of the teachers would have a remedial class to give, an extra-curricular activity to run, or a sick child to care for.

There is no record in the documentation of an optimum time being established for these interviews, yet the time of year at which the interviews

were held could be significant. The same group of teachers might react very differently to the same set of questions being asked in February, at the beginning of the academic year, and in October, as the year draws to a close.

In addition, the relationship between the specialist inspector and the members of the English department will affect the quality of the information obtained. It may also affect the extent to which the teachers' perspectives are reflected in the evaluator's final report.

The lack of verification for the responses to section 2 of the checklist has already been discussed (this chapter:305). Also, the findings reveal only the difficulties each year level encountered in the year of implementation, and give no indication of whether the situation changed in the following years. Neither is it clear how many schools in the sample had to demonstrate a problem before it became an area of concern.

11.3 Findings Based on the Planning Documents

The findings, then, may be questioned, but they are all that is available. A comparison of the reported concerns at each year level, provided in Table 18 on the next page, reveals that each year level experienced problems with planning, methodology and assessment.

Except for teachers of 2E and 3N, many teachers encountered difficulties in using the syllabus to plan programmes. More teachers of 2E and 3N classes successfully integrated the supplementary materials into the framework of the basic programme. Perhaps this is not unconnected to the finding that collaborative planning was more common among teachers of the middle level rather than the entry and graduating 'O' level classes.

The findings suggest teachers of all levels concentrated on the skills in

Table 18: Areas of Concern in Year of Implementation: 1992-1995

YEAR	1992	1993	1994	1995
LEVELS IMPLEMENTING	Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N	Secondary 2E and 3N	Secondary 3E and 4N	Secondary 4E and 5N
NO. OF SCHOOLS	Not known	60	34	27
NO. OF INTERVIEWS	Not known	120 (60 2E, 60 3N)	49 (34 3E, 15 4N)	54 (27 4E, 27 5N)
CONCERNS, NO. OF INTERVIEWS IN WHICH CONCERN IDENTIFIED + %	1 Time needed for: . collaborative planning . planning units of work . teachers to get used to the syllabus		Dependence on the course book when planning 33 (67.3%)	Only a minority of departments found the syllabus helpful when planning 38 (70.4%)
	2 Teachers do not collaborate - HOD writes EL Unit Plan/Year Plan			Programmes not collaboratively planned 38 (70.4%)
	3 Few Year Plans produced	Very few Year Plans 87 (72.5%)	A failure to produce Year Plans 42 (85.7%)	* Year Plans not required in 1995
	4 Inadequate coverage and reinforcement of skills	Instructional objectives from Domain A only 57 (47.5%)	Few schools have developed a programme that covers all four domains 41 (83.7%)	Few programmes have instructional objectives that reflect development 42 (77.8%)
	5 Resources . teachers need guidance in supplementing the use of the course book . waiting for resources		Problems integrating supplementary materials into the sequence of work suggested by the course book 38 (77.6%)	Heavy reliance on supplementary materials which are not integrated into a coherent programme 42 (77.8%)
	6 Training . teachers need more training in writing Unit Plans and in communicative methodology	Limited understanding of process approach 62 (51.7%)		
	7 Integration of skills and activities	Difficulty in matching instructional objectives with tasks and activities 54 (45.0%)		
	8 Teaching grammar in context			
	9 Differentiation . of methodology . how to prepare differentiated materials . how to help 'N' Level pupils cope with the New CLUE course book	Little evidence of differentiated learning 81 (67.5%)	Planning does not reflect a number of the syllabus's important features, particularly differentiated learning 47 (95.9%)	Little evidence of differentiated learning 48 (88.8%)
	10 Diagnosis, monitoring pupils' work	Limited provision for monitoring and diagnosis of learning 72 (60.0%)		Assessment takes the form of examination practice 40 (74.1%)

Adapted from: Syllabus Monitoring Committee Reports, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995, and handout distributed at English Unit Meeting, October 1994 (1994h)

Domain A, the examinable skills. Activities designed to develop study skills, thinking skills, and an awareness of language and culture received scant attention in the plans. When the pupils reach Secondary 4E and 5N, there is little development of even the examinable skills, perhaps because:

"Teachers pitch level at 'O' Levels in the first term and pupils spend the rest of the year trying to attain it'; and, 'Repetitive. Same exam skills emphasised and tested again and again'." (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1995, 2:6)

Yet, the findings suggest, too, that as implementation reached the upper levels, teachers paid more attention to the processes of learning and planned to make more effective use of the integrated approach recommended by the syllabus. For example, contextualising the teaching of grammar is only reported as problematic in Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N classes. However, this awareness of the processes of learning and integration did not lead to the use of more formative means of assessment in graduating classes. In nearly 75% of 4E and 5N classes "assessment takes the form of examination practice" (Table 18:308). Only teachers of 3E and 4N are not recorded as having problems with monitoring pupils' work and diagnosing learning difficulties.

Differentiation, however, was found to be a problem at every level. "Developing and maximizing individual potential" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:1) was clearly not going to be easily achieved.

11.4 Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation

This evaluation instrument provides information only about the first year of implementation at each level. Given that the focus of the dissemination workshops had been more on knowledge about the syllabus than how it would be implemented, it could be argued that teachers in their

first year of implementation were more likely to be at the initiation stage of implementation, that "leads up to and includes the decision to adopt or proceed with a change" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991:47; see also Wildy, Wallace and Parker, 1996:25-26). Thus, only an unrealistically optimistic evaluator would expect the planning documents to reveal many of the criteria listed on the first page of this chapter.

Nevertheless, of the five essential components, one, *interactive activities*, was never an area of concern. A further two, the *integrated approach* and attention being paid to the *processes of learning*, were observed in the unit plans produced by the teachers of 3E, 4N, 4E and 5N. Two of the components, however, were rarely observed: *attainment levels* and *formative assessment*.

It is simplistic to anticipate "expected teacher behaviour and practices" (English Unit, 1992f, 5:2) on the basis of unit plans, so discussion of these will be based on findings from classroom observations, discussed later in this chapter. However, these findings based on the planning documents show that initially there was little collaborative planning as lack of time prevented it.

11.5 Reporting the Evaluation

The reports in which the evaluations are documented are the same reports in which the dissemination of the syllabus was discussed (Chapter Ten:290). The changing nature of those reports has already been discussed (*ibid*). By 1994 the emphasis was on a description of the findings, and the Syllabus Monitoring Committee left it to the English Unit as a whole to suggest follow-up action. The committee confined itself to recommending changes within its locus of control, that is, the evaluation instruments

themselves. In the absence of concrete recommendations which the whole unit could discuss, responding to schools' difficulties increasingly became the responsibility of individual specialist inspectors. Thus, the impact the Syllabus Monitoring Committee's reports could have had on the collective action of the specialist inspectors was never realised. The evaluation was never discussed outside the English Unit and was accessible only to Ministry of Education officials, which reduced the possibility of any long term impact.

11.6 The English Unit's Response to the Findings

One response was to withdraw the request for Year Plans. This would have had the effect of leaving the course books and the examinations as the only means of directing the sequencing of instruction.

In 1992, though more positive action was recommended:

"* . . . a Grammar Task Force of SIELs and POs (*Project Officers*) be formed to develop guidelines for grammar teaching in context and possibly sample resources . . .

* The Committee recommends the formation of another task force/committee to look at what instructional strategies teachers can use to cater to the differentiated learning abilities . . .

* The Committee recommends the formation of a third task force to look into providing teachers with guidelines on formative assessment/CA as well as pupil profiling . . .

* SIELs continue to assist teachers to implement the syllabus through school-based workshops and sharing sessions." (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1992:3-4)

The second and third recommendations had already been taken up by the committees established to respond to the problems identified in the evaluation of the dissemination (Chapter Ten:278). In 1993, Working Towards Terminal Objectives: Syllabus Support Materials for Secondary Schools (English Unit, 1993a) was produced as a basis for workshops offered to schools in 1994 and 1995. These materials included suggestions on how

to differentiate tasks. In 1994, a file of Ideas for Continuous Assessment in Secondary Schools (English Unit, 1994a) was distributed to all schools, and workshops based on these ideas were offered to schools in 1995 (Curriculum Planning Division, 1995:17-18).

The fourth recommendation, that SIELs continue to assist individual schools through school-based workshops and sharing sessions, was repeated in 1993 (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1993, 3:2) and followed up, as Table 19 below demonstrates.

Table 19
Workshops given by the English Unit to Support Syllabus Implementation, 1993-1995

YEAR	TITLE OF WORKSHOP	NO. OF WORKSHOPS	NO. OF TEACHERS ATTENDED
1993	Teaching Vocabulary*	1	30
1994	Teaching Reading Comprehension*	1	15
1994	Use of Audio Visual Aids*	1	48
1994/5	Working Towards the Terminal Objectives#	13	346
1995	Ideas for Continuous Assessment#	8	99
1995	Planning an Overview of the EL Programme*	4	61
	Total	28	599

* Workshops offered by specialist inspectors to schools in their purview

Workshops offered by all specialist inspectors to all schools

Source: Adapted from Syllabus Monitoring Committee 1994 and 1995, (Reports), and English Unit, 1994b, 1994c, and 1995b, Bibliography 3

Only 28 of the 138 secondary schools were reached through in-service workshops, and 599 of the approximately 2,200 English teachers (Monitoring Committee 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]). The impact of these workshops, then, is likely to have been limited, particularly as one-off, in-service workshops often have little effect on teacher behaviour (Lamb, 1995).

The first recommendation, to develop guidelines for grammar teaching, was not immediately followed up, and the findings suggest contextualising

the teaching of grammar was an area of concern only in the first year of implementation. However, in 1995 a committee set up to establish and validate common learning targets for pupils of all levels (English Unit 1994i, 1.2:1 [*minutes*]) was transformed into the Grammar Guidelines Committee (English Unit, 1995c, 4.1:2-3 [*minutes*]). Its intention was to provide all schools with guidelines for teaching grammar.

The impetus for this committee was not the evaluation of syllabus implementation. It originated in concerns voiced by more influential sources. In September 1992, the Director of Education met with representatives of the English Unit and CDIS. The meeting was called:

" . . . because of feedback (the Director of Education) had received from Principals and Vice-principals who were interviewed for promotion at the ESC (*Education Services Commission*). He had been informed that in the new English syllabus . . . grammar was taught only incidentally.

. . . DOE (*Director of Education*) explained further that in his interviews with HODs, he had also received feedback that the use of grammatical terms and labels are seldom used with pupils. He wanted to be assured that teachers are teaching the language properly, including the teaching of grammar." (Minutes of the meeting *The Teaching of English*, 1 and 4:1, in English Unit, 1992-1995)

The Director of Education was assured, temporarily, that teachers were teaching the language properly. However, the following month the Director of Curriculum Planning told specialist inspectors:

"Informal feedback from PSC (*Public Services Commission*), ESC (*Education Services Committee*), NUS (*National University of Singapore*), and NIE (*National Institute of Education*), seems to suggest that the standard of English has declined." (English Unit, 1992k, 1.1:1)

The PSC and ESC are made up of high ranking civil servants who interview students applying for scholarships and teachers applying for promotion. In response to the suggestion that the standard of English had

declined, a study of the oral proficiency of students in junior colleges was undertaken by officers from the English Unit with the help of an officer from the Testing and Assessment Branch (*ibid*), and completed in September 1993. The results were reported to the English Unit by the Deputy Director:

"Generally, students' proficiency in English was good." (English Unit, 1993h, 7.1:2 [*minutes*])

Nevertheless, in April 1994, the Director of Education chaired another meeting. In attendance were ten representatives from the English Unit and CDIS. Apart from three specialist inspectors, all ten were directors, assistant directors or project directors:

"DOE explained that he had convened the meeting because he had received feedback from various quarters that the standard of English was dropping. He was concerned that we were not teaching enough grammar to enable students to express themselves clearly and accurately." (Minutes of the meeting *The Teaching and Learning of Grammar*, 1:1, in English Unit, 1992-1995)

By this time, the teaching of grammar seems to have been equated with the teaching of English. As a result of this meeting, in June 1994 two papers were submitted by members of the English Unit to the Curriculum Development Committee. The first, The Place of Grammar in the Modified PSLE, (Primary School Leaving Examination) 'N' and 'O' Level English Language Examinations (CDC/94/84/l/01), concluded that there was sufficient emphasis on grammar in the national examinations, that this emphasis adequately reflected that placed on grammar in the 1991 Syllabus, but that UCLES' examiners' reports suggested a major problem with the performance of poor examination candidates was grammatical inaccuracy (SIELs 8 and 14, 1994). This implied that teachers were to blame for candidates' poor performance. Thus, the second paper, Grammar Teaching in the Revised EL

Syllabus (CDC/94/84/I/01), requested the secondment of two project officers to the English Unit (Assistant Director [1] Languages and Library Development Branch, 1994). They would help conduct a series of workshops for teachers aimed at improving teachers' grammatical knowledge and equipping them with appropriate strategies, as recommended in the 1991 syllabus, for teaching grammar.

In October 1994, an action plan intended to guide schools towards a more conscious teaching of the rules of grammar was submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee (Deputy Director Languages and Library Development Branch, 1994). In January 1995, the Director of Education met with representatives from the National Institute of Education and the English Unit to discuss what they could do jointly to address what was now agreed to be a national fall in the standard of English (Deans, Schools of Education and Arts, 1995). A further progress report was submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee on 14 March 1995 (Deputy Director Languages and Library Development Branch, 1995a). In June 1995, the Report on Measures to Emphasize the Teaching of English Grammar was submitted to members of the Ministerial Committee (Deputy Director Languages and Library Development Branch, 1995b). This outlined what had been done so far, and further plans to enable pupils to write with greater accuracy and intelligibility. This report stated that the grammar guidelines would be ready for release to schools in August 1995 (*ibid*, 2.4:2 [all papers in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabus, Vol. 3: English Unit, 1992-1995]).

Not surprisingly, with all this high powered interest, they were indeed ready. The guidelines, Teaching Grammar (English Unit, 1995a), owed much

to authors like Celce-Murcia, Harmer, Rinvolucri and Ur, and were very much in keeping with the methodological principles of the syllabus.

The publication was followed by a briefing for heads of English language departments, held in March 1996. Two monitoring instruments were distributed. Heads of department were informed that the first was to record the grammar items their department planned to teach at each level, and the second was to provide an overview of the grammatical items taught at all levels in their schools (English Unit, 1996:4, *bibliography 3*).

By 1996, then, the only overview required from an English department was of grammar items taught. The signals to teachers are obvious: it is more important to teach the grammar of a language than any of its other aspects.

This rather long narrative demonstrates a number of points relevant to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. The time and effort needed to produce syllabus support material were found quickly when high ranking officials intervened. However, this intervention ignored an evaluation of the oral performance of junior college students which suggested teaching grammar was not an area of concern. Rather, the intervention was based on the perceptions of a few influential people. Its effect was to distort one of the original intentions of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus, to view grammar as one aspect of linguistic competence and to teach it in response to pupils' needs (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:62). The working hours given to producing these guidelines and conducting briefings meant that the original purpose to which it was intended these hours be put, to establish and validate learning targets, was never achieved.

Beretta's statement, "Localizing the evaluation increases the chances

of its utilization" (Beretta, 1990:7) was not supported in this instance, perhaps because the English Unit's evaluation had not reached a wide enough audience. There is no evidence that it was ever referred to in this response to a problem which others perceived to exist.

11.7 Responses by other Departments and Institutions

Table 20, below, reflects the courses offered by Staff Training Branch between 1992 and 1995 to support syllabus implementation:

Table 20
In-service Courses offered by Staff Training Branch
to Support Syllabus Implementation: 1992-1994

YEAR AND NO. TRAINED

COURSES	1992	1993	1994	Total
Drama as a teaching strategy for English Language and literature teachers	28	20	16	64
RSA/UCLES Diploma in the teaching of English in Singapore schools	19	19	10	48
Using the English Language Syllabus in Lower Secondary classes	26	- ¹	-	26
Teaching Oral Skills for Upper Secondary English Language Teachers	-	24	14	38
Teaching Writing Skills for Lower Secondary English Language Teachers	-	48	-	48
Language Teaching Methodology	-	46	-	46
Developing Reading and Writing Skills	-	-	19	19
TOTAL	73	157	59	289

¹ - indicates course not offered in that year

Source: Adapted from Staff Training Branch, 1994

The numbers attending the courses are small. A total of 289 teachers from approximately 2,200 (Monitoring Committee 1991, 1B:1 [*minutes*]) attended over a three year period.

In 1993 and 1994, when it closed, the Language Proficiency Centre, part of the Ministry of Education, offered workshops intended to facilitate syllabus implementation. Table 21, on the next page, reflects these courses.

Table 21
In-service Courses and Workshops Offered by Language Proficiency Centre
to Support Syllabus Implementation: 1993-1994

YEAR AND NO ATTENDED

Course/Workshop Title	1993	1994	TOTAL
Basic English Language Teaching	39	- ¹	39
Teaching Grammar in the Communicative Context	45	68	113
Teaching Reading Aloud for 'O' Level Oral	-	34	34
Teaching Choral Reading	-	16	16
Teaching Word Study Skills	-	212	212
TOTAL	84	330	414

¹ - indicates course not offered in that year

Source: Adapted from Language Proficiency Centre, 1994

Though the Language Proficiency Centre provided in-service training to more teachers, the number of teachers attending these methodology courses is less than 20% of the total. The courses Teaching Reading Aloud for 'O' Level Oral and Teaching Choral Reading, with a total of 50 participants, may have had a limited impact on syllabus implementation, as the emphasis was on performance rather than communication.

It is evident from Tables 19:312, 20:317 and 21:318 that the vast majority of in-service courses considered methodology, and did not directly tackle the problems associated with the introduction of change and managing the implementation of a new syllabus. The assumption is that once teachers are shown how to perform the desirable behaviour, they will then perform it.

11.8 Evaluation: Classroom Practice

It proved difficult for the specialist inspectors to gain access to classrooms to observe the process of implementation:

"The need for classroom observations was emphasised. The SIs noted that the present procedure of observations to be arranged by individual SIs with their schools on an informal basis was ineffective. ADLL1 said that teachers in the ACT programme regarded such observations as

being very stressful as adverse reports may be used against them. The meeting agreed that the only way in which formal observations can be arranged is to propose a project or study on teacher development in the light of the new EL syllabus." (English Unit, 1992g, 2:1 [*minutes*])

There is no record of such a proposal being made to the relevant committee. However, in 1994, specialist inspectors appraising schools as part of their normal duties were permitted to use a checklist when observing classes (Appendix J:466-469). The checklist was designed to evaluate the extent to which features of the 1991 Syllabus were present in the classes observed. It was used in the observation of 133 classes in 15 secondary schools. The classes identified were Secondary 1-3 Express and Secondary 1-4 Normal, in which, officially, implementation had taken place. A revised checklist (Appendix K:470-476) was used in 1995 in 17 schools in 172 classes of all levels, as 1995 was the final year of implementation.

Modifications were made because the evaluation instrument had a number of shortcomings. For example, the section on integration (Appendix J:467) does not reflect integration, only whether certain skills were practised; and the pupil interaction section (*ibid*) does not indicate whether the interactional pattern(s) used in the lesson was/were appropriate to the achievement of the lesson's objectives.

11.9 Representativeness, reliability and validity of the information obtained

Despite revisions, however, the 1995 classroom observation checklist did not gather valid, reliable or representative data. Boehm and Weinberg's 1977 criteria for determining the appropriateness of an observation checklist (reproduced in Walker 1988:239-240) informs the following discussion. Some of the evaluators' difficulties originated with the evaluation instrument.

Although extensive, it is not exhaustive. It does not elicit information regarding an agreed criterion of implementation: "teach language appropriacy ie style, register, purpose, and language-related functions" (English Unit, 1992f, 5:2). Yet the number of behaviours to be observed in the lesson is large, and information is required from sources other than the classroom observation, for example the teachers' record books, pupils' workbooks and interviews conducted during the appraisal. It is possible that not all specialist inspectors were able to refer to all these sources. Thus, some researchers may not have found it feasible to complete the checklist.

Distinctions between teaching behaviours to be observed may not have been immediately obvious. An observer in a hurry may not have distinguished between item 21, "Encouraging feedback was provided" and item 23 "Constructive feedback was given on pupils' work" (Appendix K:475). Confusingly, items 25 and 26, "Effective and differentiated classroom tasks were given" and "Effective and differentiated written assignments were given" each use one statement to elicit two items of information (*ibid*:476). Item 13, "Grammar and vocabulary were taught in context" (*ibid*:473), reflects the same problem: grammar and vocabulary need to be considered separately. It would have been useful to state first whether they were taught, and then whether in a meaningful context. Observers are also required to interpret the events in the classroom, stating for example whether objectives were achieved and interaction patterns were appropriate to the achievement of these objectives. No consideration was given to eliminating sources of observer bias. Thus, conditions for observer reliability were not met.

The procedure for sampling teacher behaviours was not systematic.

Lesson observations may have been anything from 35 to 70 minutes in duration, depending on whether a single or double lesson was observed. The only instruction given regarding how often and/or for how long the behaviour was to be observed was "SIELs were to tick the column 'Yes' so long as some evidence of the feature existed" (English Unit, 1994c, 14.1:2 [*minutes*]). The sample of teachers observed was dependent on two factors: the identification of schools to be included in the external appraisal programme, which was made on the basis of the length of time which had elapsed since a school's previous appraisal; and the specialist inspectors' need to create an observation timetable that satisfied the demands of an external appraisal and which could be completed within the duration of that appraisal, five and a half days. External appraisals begin in February and are concluded in September, by which time teachers in their first year of syllabus implementation might be demonstrating more of the expected teacher behaviours. However, this was not taken into consideration in the reporting of the evaluation. Sampling procedures, then, were not appropriate.

The sample was also very small. Over two years, 305 classes were observed in 32 secondary schools. These cannot form a representative sample of the approximately 37,260¹ English language lessons taught every week in Singapore's secondary schools.

The specialist inspectors using the evaluation instrument had not established a common framework of understanding regarding its items. For example, comments made by specialist inspectors on the observation

¹ Schools with 5 Express classes at four levels (20 classes) and 5 Normal classes at five levels (25 classes), conducting 6 English lessons a week for each class, conduct 270 lessons a week. This number is multiplied by 138 schools.

checklist indicate confusion regarding the interpretation of the term "life skills" in item 7 (Appendix K:472):

- ". Summary a life skill?
 - . Writing a letter - would you consider that a life skill?
 - . Would ability to punctuate a sentence be a life skill?
 - . Correcting errors in compo
 - . Creating a setting for an essay
 - . Would the use of discourse markers be a life skill?
 - . Creating sentences?
 - . I suppose planning is a life skill?"
- (Notes distributed at English Unit Meeting, October 1995, [1995h])

The 1991 Syllabus sees life skills as those which have "transfer value; that is, the learner can apply the skills to subsequent learning tasks, both in and out of school" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11). Thus, defining "Creating a setting for an essay" as a life skill would cause some debate.

Apart from this confusion, the minutes of the monthly meetings of the English Unit do not record any discussion of whether the evaluation instrument should be completed during or after the observation. It is likely that both methods were used. Failure to standardise such procedures reflects the specialist inspectors' inexperience as researchers. This inexperience was compounded by the fact that a number of specialist inspectors had never taught in secondary schools (Chapter Ten:255).

One of the factors most likely to prejudice the validity of the evaluation is the fact that the observation took place during an external appraisal exercise. As Bennett points out:

"One of the major problems in observing is the possibility that the presence of the observer significantly alters normal patterns of behaviour, particularly if the observed is aware of the purpose of the study. This could lead to a grossly distorted picture." (Bennett, 1988:82)

In the case of an external appraisal in Singapore, the observed is only

too aware of what the appraiser is looking for. A checklist identifying this was distributed to heads of department in July 1993 (English Unit 1993c, 3.3:1 [*minutes*]). The methodology section is reproduced below:

- "3.1 Classroom instruction incorporates a variety of effective approaches/strategies, eg
 - a) the use of AV materials
 - b) pupil-centred tasks
 - c) peer teaching
 - d) pair and group work
 - e) project work
 - f) the process approach
 - 3.2 Language and language-related skills are introduced and reinforced
 - 3.3 Teaching strategies are suited to the interests, needs and abilities of pupils
 - 3.4 Lessons are well planned, with clear focus and teaching objectives"
- (English Unit, 1993d:5-6, *bibliography 3*)

Clearly, there are many similarities between this and the classroom observation checklists for 1994 and 1995. Since the appraisal checklist was distributed to all heads of department in 1993, all teachers observed in the evaluations of 1994 and 1995 would have had access to it. As teachers in schools which are being appraised are given advance notice of classroom observations, they may have prepared for it with this checklist in mind.

Thus, findings based on the evaluation instrument used to observe classroom teaching were not representative, reliable or valid. However, deriving from the only classroom-based research conducted into the syllabus's implementation, they need to be considered. 16 appraisal reports are available for 1994 and 1995 (Bibliography 5:423-424). Each is one and a half pages long and considers departmental organisation, literature and language programmes. Therefore, their generally critical comments on syllabus implementation are brief. They will be referred to where appropriate.

11.10 Findings Based on the Classroom Observations

In 1995, teachers of Secondary 1E, 1N and 2N were in their fourth year with the 1991 Syllabus and teachers of Secondary 4E and 5N in their first year. Thus, in contrast to the instrument used to gain information about planning documents, the observation checklists gathered information from classrooms in which all stages of implementation should have been reflected:

- * Initiation - the period when teachers consider whether to proceed with an innovation
- * Implementation - usually the first two or three years of use in which teachers try to put the new ideas into practice
- * Institutionalization - the final stage in which the innovation has either been built into the system or has disappeared because of a decision to discard it or through attrition
(Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991:47-48)

Unfortunately, no attempt was made to analyze the findings to see whether these stages were reflected in the different year levels observed.

The 1994 and 1995 findings are reproduced in Table 22 on the next page. In some areas, the information obtained is similar. For example, though less class and more individual work was observed in 1995, relatively little group or pair work was observed in either year. Both years saw grammar and vocabulary taught in context. More authentic materials were used in the classes observed in 1995, though they were not widely used in either year. Processes of learning were not often modelled in the two years, though the majority of classes observed in both years practised what specialist inspectors regarded as appropriate and relevant life skills. Though less specific information was reported in 1994, it is clear that in both years teaching emphasised examinable skills. 1995's observations suggest this was not incompatible with the development of thinking skills. In neither year were

Table 22
Findings from Classroom Observations: 1994 and 1995

YEAR	1994	1995
LEVELS OBSERVED	Secondary 1E-3E and 1N-4N	Secondary 1E-4E and 1N-5N
NO. OF SCHOOLS	15	17
NO. OF CLASSES	133 (1E-21; 1N-24; 2E-20; 2N-16; 3E-22; 3N-15; 4N-15)	172 (1E-24; 1N-10; 2E-26; 2N-13; 3E-27; 3N-12; 4E-26; 4N-18; 5N-16)

		1994		1995	
		YES	%	YES	%
1	<u>OBJECTIVES</u> Lesson objectives were achieved	60	45.1	102	59.3
2	<u>TOPICS</u> Lessons were based on a topic	90	67.7	102	59.3
3	<u>PUPIL INTERACTION</u> There were opportunities for pupils to work:				
	Individually	89	66.9	99	57.6
	In pairs	34	25.6	44	25.6
	In groups	44	33.1	66	38.4
	As a class	96	72.2	113	65.7
4	<u>MATERIALS, METHODS AND DIFFERENTIATION</u>				
	Authentic materials were used	38	28.6	64	37.2
	Grammar and vocabulary were taught in context	67	50.4	90	52.3
	Processes were modelled where appropriate	48	36.1	66	38.4
	Materials were varied to suit different pupils	28	21.1	11	6.4
	Methodology was varied to suit different pupils	27	20.3	17	9.9
5	<u>PUPIL INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING</u>				
	Pupils given opportunities to direct their own learning	42	31.6	75	43.6
	Pupils involved in learning thru' discussion and activity	75	56.4	113	65.7
	Pupils' responses were incorporated into the lesson	67	50.4	112	65.1
5	<u>MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT</u>				
	The teacher diagnosed pupils' learning difficulties	32	24.1	77	44.8
	The teacher monitored pupils' progress	46	34.6	91	52.9
	Constructive feedback was given on pupils' work	47	35.3	95	55.2
	Effective and differentiated assignments were given	9	6.8	10	5.8
6	<u>COVERAGE OF DOMAINS</u>				
	Pupils practised appropriate and relevant life skills	82	61.7	104	60.5
	There was an exclusive concern for examinable skills ¹	89	66.9		
	Learning how to learn skills were taught/practised ²			21	12.2
	Pupils participated in activities demanding thinking ²			89	51.7
	Language and culture objectives were taught/practised ²			6	3.5

¹ Information obtained only in 1994

² Information obtained only in 1995

Source: Adapted from Reports of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee, 1994 and 1995, and handouts distributed at English Unit Meetings, October 1994 and 1995

many differentiated assignments required, though materials and methodology were varied to a lesser degree in 1995. There were differences, though. In general, lessons observed in 1995 were more focused, less likely to be topic-based, involved pupils to a greater extent, and included more instances in which pupils' work was monitored and learning difficulties diagnosed. It is not possible to say whether the higher proportion of graduating classes observed in 1995 contributed to these differences. Appraisal reports suggest lessons in these classes were teacher-centred and focussed on examination performance (Bibliography 5, Ministry of Education, 1995b:8 and 1995f:9).

The evaluation of planning documents suggested teachers relied heavily on supplementary materials which were inadequately integrated into the programme (Table 18:308). The findings from the classroom observations suggest these supplementary materials were not authentic. The emphasis on examinable skills is reflected in responses to both evaluation instruments, as is the limited provision for monitoring, diagnosis and differentiation of learning. Despite the many flaws in the research procedures, then, the frequency of these findings, as indicated in Tables 18:308 and 22:325, suggests they may be true of many teaching situations.

11.11 Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation

The five essential components of the syllabus and a list of ten expected teacher behaviours and practices are reproduced on page 302. The first component, the *integrated approach*, was not adequately investigated in the 1994 observations (this chapter:319), but in 1995 observers considered that 100 (58.1%) of the lessons observed were integrated with lessons taught immediately before or after the observation (handout distributed at English

Unit meeting, October 1995, 1995h, 3.1:1). The evaluation of the planning documents also suggested integration would be observed in the upper secondary classes. However, classroom observations reveal fewer lessons in these classes were topic based, suggesting another organisational tool was used in some lesson sequences.

The second essential component is *process skills*. The 1991 Syllabus regards their development as "largely a matter of teaching learners how to learn through developing different strategies and techniques" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:11). These skills were modelled in only 48 (36.1%) of the classes observed in 1994, and 66 (38.4%) 1995 (Table 22:325). The evaluation of the planning documents indicated that teachers of 2E and 3N had a limited understanding of learning processes (Table 18:308).

The third component is *interactive activities*. There were few opportunities for pupils to interact at the pair or group level in classes observed in 1994 or 1995. In contrast, the evaluation based on the planning documents did not find an absence of interactive activities to be an area of concern (this chapter:310). Plans can be changed, and probably will be when teachers know they are to be observed. Yet many teachers knew appraisers were looking for pair and group work (this chapter:323) and still only a minority incorporated these interactional patterns in their lessons. Perhaps the increased risk of classroom management problems presented by these interactive activities discouraged teachers from using them in lessons which were to be observed.

The fourth component, *attainment levels*, was not required by 1994, and had not been evident in the planning documents.

The fifth component, *formative assessment*, was not often observed in 1994 when there was limited monitoring and diagnosis of pupils' work. In 1995 teachers took advantage of opportunities created to diagnose pupils' learning difficulties in 77 (44.8%) of classes observed (Table 22:325). The evaluation of the planning documents found that diagnosis and monitoring of pupils' work was an area of concern every year except 1994 (Table 18:308).

Of the ten teacher behaviours identified, one, *teach language appropriacy* ie style, register, purpose and language-related functions, was not investigated; a second, *make the content, context and tasks meaningful and appropriate to students' interests*, was investigated by asking the pupils (this chapter:331); a third, *planning collaboratively*, could not be observed in the classroom. The evaluation of planning documents makes clear this was a problem for teachers of entry and graduating classes (Table 18:308).

Of the remaining seven teacher behaviours, *using "the questioning technique to encourage/model the thinking/learning processes"* was demonstrated in around 36% of classes observed in 1994 and 38% in 1995 (Table 22:325). The second, *facilitate collaborative learning*, was not often seen as group and pair work was not often observed.

The third teacher behaviour "*incorporate and integrate life skills*" was seen in 82 (61.7%) of the classes observed in 1994, and in 104 (60.5%) in 1995 (Table 22:325). However, these findings regarding life skills are not reliable (this chapter:321-322).

The fourth and fifth teacher behaviours, *make learning appropriate to ability level* and *ensure that assignments/assessments are formative*, were observed in few classes in either year. A sixth behaviour, "*know what to do*

when playing different roles (as facilitator, diagnostician, disseminator, evaluator, guide)" is not observable behaviour, rather it is knowledge. If teachers had this knowledge, then few chose to play the roles of facilitator or diagnostician. The evaluation instruments do not require information on teachers as guides, though constructive feedback was given in 47 (35.3%) lessons in 1994 and 95 (55.2%) in 1995 (Table 22:325). An evaluation of teachers' skills in summative evaluation cannot be made on the basis of classroom observation alone, though it is clear that few teachers were comfortable with formative evaluation procedures. The observation checklists do not try to assess teachers' ability to disseminate knowledge.

The final required teacher behaviour is to "*identify and teach towards instructional objectives and attainment levels*". Attainment levels were no longer required. However, in 1994, observers considered that 60 (45.1%) teachers had achieved their lesson objectives, and in 1995, 102 (59.3%) were thought to have done so (Table 22:325). These numbers may have been subject to observer bias.

Thus, of the seven teacher behaviours discussed here, only one, incorporating and integrating the teaching of life skills, was evident in the majority of lessons observed. However, this finding must be questioned because of the observers' varied interpretations of "life skills".

11.12 Reporting the Evaluation

The 1994 report of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee discussed the evaluation of classroom practice in 17 lines, giving the information provided in Table 22:325. No recommendations were based on these findings. The 1995 report provided more detail, 39 lines, also summarised in Table 22.

However, there is no discussion of the different stages of implementation achieved in the various year and academic levels. Assuming there were observable differences, a knowledge of them would have helped the specialist inspectors to focus their work for 1996. Again, no recommendations were made in the report, which briefly summarises the information obtained, contributes to discussion of work plans for the subsequent year, and is filed.

11.13 The English Unit's Response to the Findings

Such findings could not have been encouraging to the English Unit. In the main, they reflected the findings of the evaluation of the planning documents, though they suggested that this evaluation may have presented too positive a picture of the patterns of classroom interaction. Thus, in the October 1995 meeting of the English Unit, the representative of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee suggested specialist inspectors provide assistance to teachers in the areas of differentiation and pupil interaction (English Unit, 1995h, 3.1:1). The Unit responded by advertising school-based workshops Catering to Different Learning Needs for 1996. The objectives were to:

- ". Plan and carry out lessons for different ability groups
- . Manage more effectively the different ability groups within the lesson." (Curriculum Planning Division, 1996:16)

An ambitious programme was envisaged. The teacher as facilitator, principles of cooperative learning and techniques of classroom management, differentiation in terms of tasks, type of support, materials and outcomes of student performance, and monitoring and feedback were to be covered (*ibid*).

Responses by other departments and institutions have already been discussed (this chapter:317-318) and no further action was taken in response to the findings from the classroom observations.

11.14 Evaluation: Pupils' Responses

The 1994 evaluation of classroom practice had tried to establish whether pupils were interested in, appreciated the importance of, and enjoyed their English lessons. In 83 (62.41%) of the classes observed, evaluators considered that the pupils' interest was maintained throughout the lesson; in 55 (41.35%) of the classes, pupils were observed to enjoy the lesson; in 62 (46.62%) of the lessons pupils were judged to be aware of the purpose and importance of the lesson's topic and activities (handout distributed at English Unit meeting, October 1994, 1994h, 2.2:2).

The possibility that less than half the pupils enjoyed their English lessons may have contributed to a decision to design a questionnaire to obtain feedback from pupils concerning their English lessons (English Unit, 1994h, 2.2b:2). The intention was to gather information about pupils' attitudes to their English lessons, and to confirm the negative findings regarding monitoring and assessment and differentiation.

Statements describing teacher and pupil behaviour in these areas were given to pupils (Appendix L:477). Pupils had to decide whether *often*, *sometimes* or *never* most closely described the frequency of the behaviour's occurrence in the current academic year. The questionnaire was to be completed by pupils who attended interviews held by specialist inspectors during the external appraisals. The size of the groups would vary according to the individual inspector's preference, and the pupils would be identified randomly by register number.

11.15 Representativeness, reliability and validity of the information obtained

As the questionnaires were used only in schools appraised in 1995, the

representativeness of the sample may be questioned. Of the 17 schools appraised in 1995, three were girls' schools, and these three together with one other school did not offer Normal courses. Thus, girls of above average academic success were over represented. The pupils were well aware that their schools were being appraised, and loyalty to their teachers and their school may have been uppermost in the minds of many respondents.

The minutes of the English Unit meetings in early 1995 contain no discussion on the conduct of the questionnaire, so it must be assumed this was left to the discretion of specialist inspectors. Some may have allowed pupils to discuss their responses. Neither was any consideration given to the time of year, or day, when the questionnaires were completed, though this would have affected the responses. In addition, the responses *Often* and *Sometimes* are not quantifiable.

Some of the questionnaire's statements may not have obtained the information which was sought. "During the year my teacher tells me whether I have improved" may have elicited "Never" from a pupil who had made no improvement. Perhaps the statement "During the year my teacher discusses my progress with me" may have elicited a response giving a better indication of whether pupils were receiving regular feedback on their performance.

As the point above implies, the questionnaire was as much about checking on what teachers were doing in the classroom as about how pupils felt about their English lessons. Intelligent pupils would have realised this.

11.16 Findings Based on Pupils' Responses to the Questionnaire

These are reproduced in Table 23 on the next page. It must have been a relief to discover nearly 95% of the pupils enjoyed their English lessons at

Table 23
Pupils' Responses to the EL Programme: 1995

All pupils except 1N(T) and 2N(T)

No of forms summarised: 939, from 17 schools

	Often	Some-times	Never
Monitoring and Assessment			
1[1] My teacher comments on my work	312 (33.26)	597 (65.0)	29 ¹ (3.09)
2[4] I have to sit for more than two EL tests every term	329 (35.07)	390 (41.58)	219 ¹ (23.35)
3[6] When we make mistakes, my teacher discusses them with us	684 (73.0)	222 (23.69)	31 ² (3.31)
4[9] During the year, my teacher tells me whether I have improved	183 (19.49)	436 (46.43)	320 (34.08)
5[11] My teacher lets us correct our friends' work before we hand it in	150 (15.97)	570 (60.70)	219 (23.32)
6[14] In class, my teacher encourages us to ask questions/discuss problems with our work	612 (65.18)	287 (30.56)	40 (4.26)
7[16] My teacher lets me know what I have to do to improve my English	506 (53.94)	365 (38.91)	67 ¹ (7.14)
Pupil Attitude			
1[3] We discuss interesting topics in class	400 (42.60)	489 (52.08)	50 (5.32)
2[8] I feel I am making progress in my English lessons	290 (30.88)	554 (58.99)	95 (10.12)
3[13] In the EL lesson, I learn skills which I can use outside the school	287 (30.56)	514 (54.74)	138 (14.70)
4[17] I enjoy my English lesson	477 (50.80)	411 (43.77)	51 (5.43)
Differentiation			
1[2] My teacher gives us individual attention when we need it	317 (33.83)	498 (53.15)	122 ² (13.02)
2[5] The work set by my teacher is too easy for me	31 (3.30)	597 (63.58)	311 (33.12)
3[15] The work set by my teacher is too difficult for me	30 (3.20)	749 (79.94)	158 ² (16.83)
4[10] My teacher gives us work which is not in the textbook	429 (45.69)	439 (46.75)	71* (7.56)
5[12] My teacher explains to me how to complete difficult assignments	507 (53.99)	383 (40.79)	49 (5.22)
6[7] My teacher gives separate work to pupils who are good/weak at English	60 (6.39)	153 (16.29)	726 (77.32)

¹ 1 nil response

² 2 nil responses

* One school did not use textbooks. 78 pupils were interviewed in this school

Number in [] is the number of the statement as it appears in the pupils' questionnaire

Number in () is the percentage correct to two decimal places

Source: Adapted from Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report) 1995, Annex H:19

least sometimes. Pupils responding to the questionnaire had a positive attitude to their English lessons.

The responses suggest, too, that failure to differentiate work may be frustrating some pupils. Approximately two thirds of the respondents often or sometimes found their work too easy and over 80% often or sometimes found it too difficult. Despite this, it is likely that a number would not welcome differentiated work:

"77.32% of the pupils reported that their teachers never differentiated through setting separate work. However, one pupil commented in response to this statement, 'She'll be fair', suggesting quite another perspective on differentiation." (Syllabus Monitoring Committee, (Report), 1995:5)

The great majority of pupils, however, had received individual attention and help with difficult assignments, indicating that teachers did recognise and respond to the needs of individual pupils.

Apparently supporting that view is the fact that over 90% of the respondents had been given work which was not in the course book. Indeed, one school did not use a course book at all. However, as we have seen, the evaluation of the planning documents suggests that teachers rely heavily on supplementary materials which were not adequately integrated into the programme, and classroom observations indicate that these supplementary materials are not authentic. Given the apparently widespread use of such materials, they should be identified. They clearly form a part of the operational curriculum, and may well consist of past examination papers.

In the area of monitoring and assessment, these pupils did receive feedback on their work. Over 95% said their teacher discussed their mistakes with them, and 73% often had such discussions. Less than 5% felt they had

never been encouraged to ask questions about or discuss their work, and less than 4% had never received comments on their work. However, nearly a quarter of the pupils had more than two tests in a ten week term, and more than 7% did not know what they could do to improve their English.

On the whole, though, these are encouraging responses suggesting a majority of pupils are reasonably contented with their lot, believing they have helpful teachers who generally conduct interesting and enjoyable lessons.

11.17 Relating the Findings to the Criteria for Successful Implementation

This evaluation instrument considered only one of the essential components of the syllabus, formative assessment. According to the pupils, this takes place, as the great majority of them believe they are encouraged to ask questions about their work, discuss their mistakes with the teacher, and know what they have to do to improve their English. This is in direct contrast to the findings from the interviews (Table 18:308) and the classroom observations (Table 22:325).

With regard to desirable teacher behaviour, only 14.7% of the respondents felt they could not use any of the skills they acquired in English beyond the classroom, suggesting that teachers were incorporating and integrating life skills into their lessons. They seem, too, to make the content, context and tasks meaningful and appropriate to pupils' interests at least sometimes. The majority of respondents saw their assignments and assessments as formative in nature since they knew what they had to do to improve their English. It is not known how specific the advice was; it may have been very general, perhaps encouragement to read more. Nevertheless, the respondents saw it as informing their progress. On the basis of their

responses, it is clear that many pupils see their teachers as diagnosticians, evaluators and guides. There is insufficient evidence here to say whether they also see them as facilitators and disseminators.

The only finding from this evaluation instrument which is in agreement with those of the two instruments already discussed is that learning is not made appropriate to ability level. If it were, pupils might need to have the necessary changes in classroom procedure introduced slowly and accompanied by detailed and diplomatic explanation and justification.

11.18 Reporting the Evaluation

The 1995 Report of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee gave 21 lines to the description of the questionnaire's findings. There was no discussion of differences or similarities in the views of pupils from different year levels and academic streams, though an analysis of the data could have provided that information. The intention was to give an easily digestible overview of the massive amount of information gathered. Yet a detailed interpretation could have informed and focussed the English Unit's work plans to great effect.

11.19 The English Unit's Response to the Findings

The response made by the English Unit to the findings from evaluation instruments used in 1995 was the workshop Catering to Different Learning Needs (this chapter:330). Clearly, this workshop is an attempt to respond to the only problem the pupil questionnaire identified. However, there is no record in the minutes of the English Unit's meetings of discussion of the questionnaire's positive findings about formative assessment and teacher behaviour. This may have been because the research was flawed, but so was that which sought the views of teachers, or which was based on the

specialist inspectors' interpretations of classroom observations. Adelman and Alexander's comments are of interest here:

" . . . it is important to realise that while, methodologically, different perspectives or 'definitions of the situation' gained through 'triangulation' might seem equally valid, in practical institutional terms such definitions are more likely to be in competition. Moreover, the competition is an unequal one, and certain definitions may well be seen to 'matter' more than others - the teacher's more than the student's perhaps, or the administrator's more than the teacher's. The extent to which a plurality of views is permitted to be significant in an evaluation is a function of the power structure of an organisation." (Adelman and Alexander, 1988:300)

Pupils' views were sought late in the evaluation process to verify observations already made. They were acknowledged only insofar as they supported the findings of other evaluation instruments. Nevertheless, pupils' views were sought. Perhaps this indicates greater democracy in the administrative system.

11.20 Evaluating the Evaluation: Meta-Evaluation

Johnson identifies meta-evaluation as "an evaluation of evaluations" (1992:197). A meta-evaluation requires criteria by which to judge the original evaluation. Criteria relevant to this meta-evaluation are given below. Framed as questions, they owe much to the work of Hargreaves (1989), Johnson (1992), Harris (1990), Mitchell (1990), Alderson (1992) and Cousins (1996):

- 1 Was the evaluation an integral part of the implementation?
- 2 Was the purpose the evaluation clear and explicit?
- 3 Was the scope of the evaluation adequate?
- 4 Was it structured so that the findings would be relevant to future syllabus implementation programmes?

- 5 Was a wide variety of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection used?
- 6 Were the evaluation instruments of sufficient technical merit to ensure respect for the data obtained?
- 7 Was the data rigorously analyzed? In particular, was the data obtained from one source in a certain manner compared to and/or integrated with data obtained from a different source in a different manner in a continuously interactive way?
- 8 Was the evaluation responsive to the needs of the "context of practice"? (Cousins, 1996:20) In this particular instance, did the evaluation enable specialist inspectors to respond to the needs of teachers implementing the 1991 Syllabus?
- 9 Did the reports fairly represent the interests and perspectives of the various stakeholders?
- 10 Were insights from the evaluation communicated in such a way as to generate in "the relevant political community" insights into the process of syllabus implementation? (Cronbach [1982:8] in Mitchell, 1990:5)

Discussion of these questions will contribute to a meta-evaluation of the formative evaluation of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus.

The evaluation was not an integral part of the implementation process. Thus, classroom observations were not conducted until 1994.

The evaluation intended to discover to what extent five essential components of the syllabus and ten teacher behaviours were evident in schools. Generally, the components and behaviours were clearly articulated, though some were insufficiently explicit. In particular, the term "life-skill" was

variously interpreted.

The evaluation intended to be very broad in scope, considering fifteen features. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the evaluation instruments were not designed to reveal whether all the criteria were present in practice (this chapter:320 and 328). More positively, teachers from 121 of 138 secondary schools were interviewed (this chapter:306). However, classroom observations and feedback from students were confined to schools appraised in 1994 and 1995, which could not form a representative sample (this chapter:321 and 331). In addition, no thought seems to have been given to the generalisability of the findings. This would have required a consideration of the process of syllabus implementation. The emphasis of the questions was on the results of the current implementation programme, not on its relevance to future programmes. This is understandable given the workload and inexperience of the evaluators. Nevertheless, the scope of the evaluation was too wide in intention and too narrow in practice.

A variety of techniques of data collection was used: group interviews and discussions with teachers; classroom observations; and pupil questionnaires. However, although some of the techniques appear qualitative in nature, for example group interviews, all took "an etic, discrete, mental-process approach" (Davis, 1995:434). No contextual information was sought in the shape of information about schools', teachers' or pupils' backgrounds. The data provide very few insights into teachers' or students' perspectives on the implementation process. The research paradigm, then, was not qualitative. It could not provide thick descriptions (Holliday, 1994b:5) of events surrounding the implementation. Such descriptions would be

particularly useful in a formative evaluation.

Despite revisions to the questions used as a basis for interviewing groups of teachers and to the classroom observation forms, problems were encountered with the use of all the evaluation instruments. Thus, they were not of sufficient technical merit to ensure respect for the data obtained. This would not have highly motivated those who were to analyze that data.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the data were not rigorously analyzed. In particular, information collected through the classroom observations and the pupil questionnaires was not analyzed to demonstrate whether levels of implementation varied systematically according to the length of time the syllabus had been in use. For example, did the syllabus become institutionalized in the year levels in which it was first implemented?

The data obtained from the interviews, observations and questionnaire were not compared and/or integrated in a continuously, interactive way. For example, inconsistent findings were not investigated (this chapter: 336-337).

Nevertheless, the evaluation was responsive to the needs of practice to some extent. The annual report did help to focus the specialist inspectors' work for the subsequent year. However, the evaluation paid more attention to the products of implementation, in the shape of units of work and classroom lessons, than the process of implementation. Thus, the response to the evaluation addressed ways to reduce the perceived gap between desired and the actual practice. This usually meant more professional training for teachers. It may have been more appropriate to examine why certain features were not present rather than continue to report their absence. A more relevant response to teachers' needs may have been possible then.

The brevity of the reports, their limited audience, and their concentration on the results of the implementation meant that the interests and perspectives of the various stakeholders, for example pupils, parents, teachers, principals and senior Ministry of Education officials, could not be fairly represented. Neither did the reports record insights into the process of syllabus implementation, perhaps because the evaluation rarely sought such insights. Remaining at the level of anecdote, these insights could not be communicated to personnel in a position to respond to them.

Thus, the evaluation suffered from a lack of technical rigour, was not responsive to the needs of the relevant stakeholders, and did not contribute meaningfully to short term decisions and action plans. It will not be useful in the long term because the findings were not widely disseminated and the evaluation was not structured "so that at least some causal questions about the operation of the programme are answered" (Harris, 1990:90).

11.21 Conclusion

This account of responses to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus provides more insights into the features desirable to the successful implementation of an English language syllabus in Singapore.

In theory, specialist inspectors are responsible for the design, review, and revision of syllabuses, and for preparing heads of department and teachers for the implementation of that syllabus (Curriculum Planning Division, 1994c:12). However, it is clear from the intervention of the Director of Education which resulted in the Teaching Grammar publication that specialist inspectors' decisions will not survive criticism. In Singapore, use of English is a sensitive issue which is not left to the organisation responsible for

syllabus implementation. Thus, those responsible for introducing, overseeing and coordinating large scale curriculum renewal programmes do not have the respect of more powerful administrators.

No plans were made for a summative evaluation of the syllabus by an external authority, though a formative evaluation of its implementation is a valuable contribution to such an evaluation. There are no established means through which this evaluation could influence long term policy or practice.

It seems, too, that not everyone shared a strong commitment to the process of curriculum renewal. Teachers' negative responses to requests for Year Plans resulted in the withdrawal of that request. Apart from infrequently requested workshops, no action was taken to provide schools with direction concerning the sequencing of linguistic content. Curriculum planners handed this responsibility to course book writers and the examination board.

Teachers were not willing to attend in-service workshops, as the poor response to these reveals (this chapter:312 and 317-318). The findings suggest, too, that in the early stages of implementation, teachers had difficulty in finding time to work together (Table 18:308). This, in turn, suggests there may have been insufficient on-site administrative support for teachers as they tried to implement the syllabus. Though this evaluation provided opportunities for teachers to be involved in classroom research, these were ignored. Thus, opportunities for professional development were inadequately exploited.

Specialist inspectors were not trained to conduct formative evaluations, and prompt and effective responses were not provided to identified problems; for example teachers' problems with formative assessment, identified in

1992, received no response until 1994. In contrast, it took less than a year to produce, print and distribute Teaching Grammar. Responses may have been less than effective, as they usually took the form of workshops which only a minority of teachers attended.

The evaluation demonstrates that documentation associated with the 1991 Syllabus, in particular Year Plans, was inappropriate and unacceptable to teachers. This is perhaps because many teachers were reluctant to accept responsibility for sequencing the content of the language programme. Their protests were reflected in a reluctance to produce the required documentation.

The next chapter will consider in more detail the impact of the implementation and evaluation of the 1991 Syllabus on English language teaching in Singapore.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Looking Ahead: Implementing the Syllabus in 2001

12.0 Learning from the Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus

This chapter will discuss the possible impact of the 1991 English Language Syllabus, and the processes surrounding its implementation, on English language teaching in Singapore. An analysis of the problems encountered in the implementation process will follow, together with suggestions as to how some of these problems could be overcome by 2001, the likely publication date for the next English language syllabus.

12.1 Impact of the Implementation and its Evaluation

A review of the work plans for the English Unit from 1992-1995 reveals that the Unit allocated 1247.5 "man days" (*sic*) both to evaluating and promoting the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus (English Unit, 1991b, 1992b, 1993c and 1994d). What impact did this investment of time and effort have on schools' operational curriculum?

Any discussion of the effect of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus on classroom practice is limited by a lack of data on classroom practice before 1992. Snapshots of practice in certain schools are available in the reports of Morris and Johnson (1979), Widdowson (1981) and Gefen (1982), and in the Ministry of Education's appraisal reports (see Bibliography 5). In these, traditional teacher-centred lessons heavily influenced by the course book and the examinations are more frequently captured than interactive lessons designed to promote communication skills (Chapter Two: 43-45). However, in the period 1982-1992, pupil-centred and activity-based lessons were encouraged in the forty secondary schools participating in the

PASSES project (Chapter Three:84) and by the original CLUE course book (Chapters Four and Six). Thus, some of the principles of the 1992 Syllabus may have been present in a number of classrooms before its implementation.

This and the unconventional evaluation make it very difficult to provide reliable statements about the success of the implementation. It seems that sequences of lessons were integrated (Chapter Eleven:326). However, in other areas of teacher behaviour and performance the evaluation reveals a gap between actual and desired practice (Chapter Eleven:327-329 and 332-334). The similarity of the 1994 and 1995 'O' level English language results (Chapter Nine:253) perhaps reflects the implementation's limited impact.

The reasons for this limited impact in the period 1992-1995 are clear from this study. As we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, the 1981 Syllabus with its emphasis on grammar, accuracy and examination requirements was relevant to the moral concerns, values and ideals of Singapore's English language teachers. A structuralist syllabus based on a description of language familiar to most language teachers, the 1982 Syllabus was likely to inspire confidence. In contrast, the demands of the 1991 Syllabus were likely to inspire anxiety.

Teachers were required to establish relevant attainment levels; prepare a programme reflecting a coherent development of language skills appropriate to achieving these; and devise meaningful, informal assessment modes. These are challenging requirements, to say the least, and could be perceived as threatening. The syllabus did not provide sufficient assistance to teachers trying to satisfy these expectations. For example, the inventories were not sequenced in terms of communicative potential or cognitive demand, and no

advice was given as to how to exploit the Activities Inventory.

Teachers were unlikely to be motivated to respond positively to the requirements of a syllabus they may have perceived to be irrelevant to learners' needs. In 1990, 79.7% of Singaporean households were not English speaking (Department of Statistics, 1991:i). Thus, teachers may have considered an aim like "Pupils learn English to acquire thinking skills to make critical and rational judgements" (Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:7) to be peripheral to the main business of providing learners with a control of the basic rules of grammar. There was no evidence, either, that the syllabus's linguistic content responded to the particular needs of Singaporean learners.

The 1991 Syllabus's acceptance of the validity of varieties of English other than that which is examined and the perceived reduction in the importance of grammar were unlikely to be appreciated by teachers who believed examination success to be positively related to a candidate's accurate control of grammar.

The syllabus's support for interactive classroom activities and the expectation that learners will take some responsibility for their own and their peers' progress demands learner training and a reduction in teacher authority. Such innovations proved hard to introduce in an authority-centred culture, and were not in keeping with teachers' and learners' belief that the objective of an English lesson is to expose learners to formal, standard English.

In the face of the enormous demands of the 1991 Syllabus, its more sophisticated definition of linguistic competence and the perceived inappropriateness of its aims and methodology many teachers responded by basing their programmes on the recommended course books. As we have

seen in Chapter Eight, these could be exploited to support a traditional, grammar focussed approach to language teaching. The majority of English departments ignored the syllabus's request for attainment levels and its recommendations regarding informal assessment; a number ignored revisions the Assessment Guidelines made to suggestions for formal assessment. Thus, in many classrooms, the 1991 Syllabus had none of its intended impact.

However, it had an unintended and unforeseen impact in some classrooms. The English Unit's evaluation did not record this unplanned impact. It reflected only the presence or absence in units of work and classrooms of features of the 1991 Syllabus. In other words, the effects of diffusion were not reflected (Kelly, 1980:68, *see Chapter One:4-5*).

Diffusion may result in indigenization, that is the recasting of imported ideas to make them appropriate to another context (Ho, 1994:260). Such recasting might be expected at the level of procedure, in classroom practice, but evidence suggests it is happening at the level of design.

Skuja-Steele's unpublished paper presented at the 1995 principals' conference, suggested using a theme as an organisational tool in planning an English language programme was restrictive. The English Unit responded:

"The EL Unit recognizes that there are different approaches to organize (*sic*) an instructional programme, and has not restricted the schools in the approach adopted. Some schools have chosen to organize the instructional programme for Secondary Four along (*sic*) the genre approach . . . Their rationale was that the genre approach prepared the pupils more directly for the demands of the 'O' level examination. The SIELs who were consulted at various times . . . allowed the teachers to organize their curriculum on the basis of genre, so long as the linguistic skills were integrated around the organizational tool. In this case, the genre acted as the organizational tool. This is still in line with the principles of the 1992 (*sic*) syllabus." (SIEL 2:1995)

Thus, the effect of the implementation of the 1991 syllabus on some

schools was considerable, though it was not what the Ministry anticipated. Forced (the use of "allowed" in the Ministry's response is revealing) to evaluate their programmes in the light of the thematic approach recommended in the 1991 Syllabus, some schools made revisions at the level of design that neither they nor the Ministry might have considered otherwise. Changes at this level require concerted action by English departments. The fact such efforts were made reflects the dissatisfaction some schools must have felt with the perceived lack of alignment between the syllabus and the public examinations. Perhaps it is to be expected that in an examination driven society, this is the form indigenization would take.

The quotation above also demonstrates that some specialist inspectors worked with schools to design new programmes. It is possible, too, that some schools collaborated to ensure alignment between their teaching programmes and the formal assessment procedures. This collaboration between schools and specialist inspectors could provide a platform for future syllabus development.

Another unintended result of the diffusion of the 1991 Syllabus was a renewed emphasis on grammar teaching (Chapter Eleven:312-316), exactly what writers of the 1991 Syllabus wanted to avoid (Chapter Seven:153).

The responses to the evaluation caused the specialist inspectors to assist teachers through workshops involving 328 teachers in additional dissemination workshops (Chapter Ten:292) and 599 in other in-service workshops (Chapter Eleven:312), a total of 927 (approximately 42.1%) teachers of English. The English Unit also modified the demands made on English departments to devise their own programmes based on the inventories

in the 1991 Syllabus. Eventually, neither Year Plan Part 1 nor 2 was required (Chapter Eleven:304). Thus, the English Unit's investment of time and effort yielded few of the intended results, but had some unexpected consequences.

This is perhaps to be expected. As Bailey's research demonstrates, neither curriculum nor teacher development are linear processes:

"Many of the innovations discussed by these sixty-one teachers were described in terms of slow, gradual, incomplete, partial, ongoing, evolutionary change. Rather than saying teachers don't change, it would perhaps be more accurate for researchers to note that teachers do not always implement the researchers' desired changes within the time frame of a formal experiment." (Bailey, 1992:276)

Fullan points out that, "Deeper meaning and solid changes must be born over time" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991:73). It has been suggested that this could be a lot of time: "It takes 50 years for a new social practice to become widely established" (MacDonald, 1991:8, referring to Miles, 1964). More modestly, White suggests that to implement and institutionalize change it may take "three to five years for even moderately complex changes, with major restructuring efforts taking five to ten years (White, 1993:251).

Despite claims that it was merely a revision of the 1982 Syllabus, Chapter Seven demonstrates the 1991 Syllabus represents a major restructuring effort. The time frame for this study is four years. The ripple effects of this curriculum renewal attempt have yet to be felt, and cannot be recorded here.

12.2 The Implementation and Its Evaluation: Some Missed Opportunities

Neither the evaluation nor the implementation process empowered teachers. The implementation intended to give schools the opportunity to set their own objectives within the framework provided by the syllabus and the

examination. However, most departments lacked the time, professional expertise and local administrative support to exploit such an opportunity for empowerment. Though teachers participated in the evaluation, for the process to have empowered them they needed access to decision making roles too (Garaway, 1995:89). Clearly, they had no such access.

Instead, those in decision making roles, that is leading civil servants, made decisions which ensured that the teaching of grammar continued to be of paramount importance. Teachers may have agreed with these decisions, but their contribution to discussions which led to them was confined to incidental input in interviews designed to assess teachers' suitability for promotion (Chapter Eleven:313).

There was insufficient discussion relating to the syllabus and its implementation at and between all levels of the Ministry of Education; between the Ministry and the general public, the schools and other stakeholders; and between schools and parents. Such discussion may have provided a platform for future syllabus implementation exercises.

Although the evaluation was bureaucratic (MacDonald, 1988:44), and since "evaluators in an accountability system cannot adopt a neutral pose" (Nisbet, 1988:52) it was not neutral either, it still could have had a positive effect by indicating directions for the future.

" the history of evaluation experience makes it clear that evaluations may play only a minor role in direct decision making regarding the programmes they have studied, but make a significant longer-term contribution to future policy and programme development (Simons, 1987:18-20). Thus, the prime 'consumers' of evaluation reports may be groups in somewhat different specific contexts than that studied, considering the future of similar rather than identical programmes" (Mitchell, 1990:5)

However, the existence of the evaluation reports is not widely known and they are kept in a file to which only Ministry of Education officials have access. Thus, their impact on future syllabus implementation and evaluation will be limited. This is particularly unfortunate as a formative evaluation of the implementation of the syllabus, however narrow its perspectives and abbreviated the reports, would make a contribution to an evaluation of the syllabus document, an evaluation which remains to be started.

In addition, the evaluation process failed to exploit the information obtained. Instances of successful syllabus implementation could have been identified, and the factors contributing to that success described. Replication of individual success stories is unlikely. However, the data could have been analyzed to provide more generalisable descriptions of what happens at different stages of implementation (Harris, 1990:90).

Although the evaluation was intended to be formative, there was no consistent focus for the in-service training provided on the basis of the findings, as the wide variety of workshops offered indicates (Chapter Eleven:312, 317 and 318). Conducting workshops was the dominant response to problems teachers encountered with implementing change, though a more perceptive analysis of teachers' responses to the evaluation instruments might have resulted in a complete reconsideration of this approach to supporting change. (See, for example, Breen *et al*, 1989.)

On a more positive note, the specialist inspectors would have learned much about the processes of implementation and evaluation. However, this individual professional development appears to have had no corresponding effect at the organisational level. Neither enhancement of organizational

learning capacity, reflected for example in a collective spirit of enquiry, nor changes in organizational culture are evident as a result of the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus (Cousins, 1996:22). The turnover of staff in the English Unit ensures that the professional development of individuals will not have the expected impact on the expertise of the English Unit as a whole. In January 1997, a committee of specialist inspectors was set up to consider Singapore's English language syllabus for the next century.¹ No-one on the committee was involved in the writing of the 1991 Syllabus or its initial dissemination, though a few were involved in the later stages of implementation and its evaluation.

However, changes at the organisational level are likely to be subtle and incremental. It is possible some may be observed yet.

12.3 Features Desirable to the Successful Implementation of an English Language Syllabus in Singapore

This study makes clear that to implement successfully an English language syllabus in Singapore, or indeed anywhere, it is not enough to make the implementation a matter of policy. For a syllabus to become institutionalized (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991:48), a number of features need to be present. These have been identified in Chapter One:19-24. The following discussion will consider the implications of the absence or presence of these features on the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus. In the light of this discussion, suggestions will be made regarding the implementation of future English language syllabuses in Singapore.

A National Framework for Curriculum Renewal: Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus

¹ Personal communication

Although it is accepted that subject syllabuses are reviewed every ten years (Appendices Nv:491 and Nvi:496), they are produced independently by different subject specialists and do not create an integrated curriculum. Thus, valuable opportunities for the English syllabus to provide a platform from which pupils can learn the discourse of other subject areas are lost.

The dissemination of different subject syllabuses is not coordinated, which has caused problems to those who teach English and another subject. They may have had to cope with changes in two subject areas (SEAMEO/Australia Institutional Links Project, 1995:34).

In addition, in the third year of syllabus implementation, teachers, curriculum planners and materials writers had to cope with the introduction of the Normal Technical course. From 1994, provision had to be made each year for around 10,000 pupils previously ineligible for secondary education. Energy which might have gone into implementing the 1991 Syllabus went into preparing for and responding to the arrival of the Normal Technical pupils.

Poor networking between different state education departments and organisations also contributed to inadequate support for syllabus implementation. Evidence suggests relationships between the Curriculum Planning Division and the National Institute of Education, the Examinations and Assessment Branch and the Curriculum Development Institute were often characterised by distance and/or bickering (Chapter Eight:189; Chapter Nine:225-26 and 235-236; Appendices Nii:483 and Nx:509).

The Curriculum Planning Division is responsible for introducing, overseeing and co-ordinating large scale curriculum renewal. Research has not been conducted into the esteem in which it is held. However, it has no

authority over principals or inspectors of schools. Thus, it has to rely entirely on positive influence to achieve curriculum renewal (Chapter Ten:262).

This task is also just one of a number which fall within the purview of specialist inspectors. They also write syllabuses, appraise schools and advise them on curriculum matters (see Chapter Ten:254). In 1995, there were eleven specialist inspectors for English Language and Literature (Ministry of Education, 1995a), and 361 schools and junior colleges (Ministry of Education, 1995b). At the very least, then, specialist inspectors, will encounter problems of time management when introducing, overseeing and co-ordinating large scale curriculum renewal programmes.

Perhaps in recognition of their many roles, The Curriculum Planning Division Handbook does not suggest specialist inspectors are required to evaluate syllabuses. The need for syllabus revision is based on: feedback from schools; societal changes; developments in a particular subject; pedagogical needs; response to policy changes implemented by the Ministerial Committee; and response to changes in the national examinations (Curriculum Planning Division, 1994c:2). Syllabus evaluation is not part of the job description. Thus, the 1991 Syllabus was never evaluated.

In the absence of this kind of research, the lack of clear mechanisms through which educational research can influence policy and practice is perhaps less significant than it might be. Nevertheless, it would be desirable to establish such mechanisms. Without them research can have little effect.

A National Framework for Curriculum Renewal: Some Recommendations

Clearly, there is no satisfactory national framework for curriculum renewal. A major problem, an international one, is that politicians make

education policies, the implementation of which takes precedence over curriculum development projects originated elsewhere in the education system. Given Singapore's history of education policies being decided by politicians (Wong, 1991:133) it is unlikely that this situation will change in the near future. Political interference is a fact of life in Singapore.

Centralisation is also a fact of life. This study has suggested that it does not lead to effective implementation. However, this is not to say that school-based curriculum development is necessarily the answer (Hargreaves, 1987; Prideaux, 1993; Firestone, 1996). Fullan suggests, "Neither centralization nor decentralization works" (Fullan, 1993:37). Bruckner's experience of implementing change supports this view (Bruckner, 1996:122). Changes need to be made within the Ministry of Education so that centralisation is relaxed, but not removed. This would be in keeping, too, with the generally more authoritative style of doing business in Singapore.

Essentially, the Ministry needs to become a learning company, that is:

" . . . an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself. . . which (is) capable of adapting, changing, developing and transforming (itself) in response to the needs, wishes and aspirations of the people, inside and out." (Pedler *et al*, 1991:1)

This is a powerful if idealistic concept. However, it is useful because it demonstrates how far the Ministry of Education is from this ideal. Even to begin to achieve it, communication between its many branches and the schools which it serves is vital. However, the Ministry of Education is a cumbersome, bureaucratic organisation, and communication even between its many internal branches is not always easy. Written communication has to be routed through supervising officers. At a personal level, it is difficult for

specialist inspectors from different subjects to meet as many are located on different sites. Yet, greater coordination between specialist inspectors of different subjects could avoid the extra burden caused to teachers by the simultaneous implementation of different subject syllabuses.

Establishing common causes to which all relevant parties are able to give high priority, like curriculum renewal in the form of syllabus implementation, is almost impossible because of the conflicting commitments of many Ministry of Education personnel. Shedding some of the Ministry of Education's responsibilities might help to resolve this problem.

Singapore's educational publishing business expanded rapidly in the 1980s (Gopinathan, 1992:27). The Curriculum Development Institute could be reduced to a few specialists acting as advisors to commercial publishers, and responsible for revising the criteria upon which course books are recommended to schools. These specialists could be located in the Curriculum Planning Division, and involved from the beginning in syllabus planning.

The Education Minister has said links with UCLES will be maintained (Straits Times, 1996b:1), so an organisation needs to be responsible for the administration of the UCLES's examinations. In 1994, Examinations and Assessment Branch was divided into two branches: the Examinations Branch with responsibility for conducting national examinations; and the Testing and Assessment Branch, responsible, among other duties, for developing assessment guidelines and providing guidance on school-based examinations (Ministry of Education, 1995a). Support for syllabus implementation programmes could be provided more effectively if personnel from the Testing and Assessment Branch were located within the Curriculum Planning Division.

With expertise in summative and formative assessment located within each subject unit, units could be authorised to communicate directly with UCLES.

Though care must be taken to ensure the Examinations Branch does not become isolated or exceed its administrative functions, these changes would improve networking as many of the key players would be found within a revamped Curriculum Planning Division. Incorporating so much expertise, this division should enjoy a higher profile within the Ministry of Education, and be enabled to adopt more powerful means of syllabus implementation.

For example, personnel from the division, sharing between them skills in syllabus development, materials production and assessment, could form a team with other subject specialists to devise, implement and evaluate an English language syllabus. A team takes time to create, as the literature on teams suggests (Harvey and Brown, 1992:335-353). Nevertheless, a high performing team may have more success overseeing syllabus implementation than previous, less cohesive coalitions.

As the team includes other subject specialists, the resulting syllabus should incorporate a specific focus on the ways in which English teaching could inform subjects for which it is the medium of instruction. Implementing such an English language syllabus would necessitate the involvement of all teachers in a school, greatly assisting the implementation process.

In addition, other stakeholders, for example principals, heads of department, teachers, students and parents should be involved from the beginning so insights into potential implementation problems would be incorporated at the start of the project. Communication channels need to be established to facilitate the involvement of these stakeholders.

The responsibilities of the team should be carefully considered. We have seen that no group or individual has been assigned the task of syllabus evaluation. The team could be empowered to appoint an external agent to conduct this evaluation, which could influence policy and practice.

Such measures would help the Ministry of Education to respond "to the needs, wishes and aspirations of the people, inside and out" (Pedler *et al*, 1991:1), so contributing to the Ministry of Education's transformation into a learning company. Such a transformation would help to overcome difficulties encountered during the implementation of the 1991 syllabus as a result of an inadequately conceived national framework for curriculum renewal.

The Educational Environment: Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus

Singapore does not have a history of gradual, productive curriculum renewal which has emphasised continuity (Chapter Two:59-60). Curriculum renewal is rarely based on an informed evaluation of past experience, since the relevant educational research may not have been conducted (Sim, 1990:5). If it exists, it may have been conducted by the Ministry of Education and is likely to be quantitative in nature (Kam and Soh, 1991:150). Also, it will be available to few people, as this study has demonstrated (Chapter Ten:275-277; Chapter Eleven:340-341). Thus, where there is a willingness to learn from past experience it may be frustrated because of the difficulties in obtaining an objective, evaluative report of that experience.

The literature has demonstrated that teachers are unlikely to have a strong commitment to the process of curriculum renewal, and may not have well defined views on curriculum matters (Chapter Two:63-65). One reason

for this is that rather than viewing curriculum development as an outcome of teacher development, the Ministry of Education sees curriculum development as a means of teacher development. The introduction of a new course book is seen as means of educating teachers (Chapter Four:92; Chapter Eight:205).

This undermining of teachers' professional knowledge and ability and their exclusion from the processes of curriculum renewal may have contributed to teachers' reluctance to attend in-service courses (Chapter Eleven:312 and 317-318). Other factors contributing to this apparent lack of interest in professional development may include a heavy workload and complacency in teachers whose classes achieve good examination results.

There are no established channels through which teachers can engage in meaningful professional exchange. The Singapore Teachers' Union is the only professional teachers' organisation. It has no regular communication with the Curriculum Planning Division, and is concerned only with terms and conditions of service. The Teachers' Centre it runs is a recreation centre.

The absence of any organised, professional teaching community in Singapore means there is no forum in which teachers can discuss evolving professional practices and examine their connection with existing theory and practice. It would be difficult to talk about the "underlying continuity which typically characterises change" in English teaching (White, 1993:245).

Administration at the national level does not help to identify continuity of practice, as the system is characterised by constant change in its personnel. Specialist inspectors do not remain long in their posts (Chapter Ten:254), and therefore may not always be confident or informed. On occasion, specialist inspectors' responses have undermined rather than

respected teachers' views (Chapter Ten:267-268).

At the school level, the literature suggests that some principals are more interested in seeing their own views translated into action than in respecting the views of others (Chapter Two:68). The position of vice-principal is sometimes vacant. In 1992, 52 out of 132 secondary schools had no vice-principal (Tan, 1993:243). In addition, many HoDs are inexperienced (Seah-Tay, 1996:32). Thus, some schools may not enjoy effective leadership.

There is very little, then, to encourage experimentation or risk taking. It is discouraged, too, by a school culture which values examination success as paramount (Ghani, 1992:31). English language teaching in Singapore is conducted in a static climate, generally dependent on external sources to initiate change which often results only in the appearance of change.

The Educational Environment: Some Recommendations

Again, the need for the Ministry of Education to become a learning company is clear. The learning of all personnel needs to be facilitated through a knowledge of past and current practice so that gradual, productive curriculum renewal can take place. Educational research is inextricably linked to educational change (Walker, 1992:17), though as De Lano *et al* point out, "... the implications of making recommendations to pedagogy from research need to be carefully considered in order for changes to be well-founded" (*ibid*, 1994:490). Nevertheless, more research, particularly qualitative research, and a commitment to sharing that research would be welcome developments.

One means of arousing interest in professional development is to provide each teacher with a "personal development budget" (Pedler *et al*, 1991:69). Individual teachers would have total responsibility for managing

this budget, and could use it to buy books, make visits, go to conferences, conduct research, bring in outside consultants, even pool their budget with other teachers' budgets to run exchange visits with schools from other countries. The provision of such a budget would stimulate thought about learning and developmental needs at the individual, departmental and school level. Singapore's Ministry of Education is perhaps one of the few in the world which could find the financial resources to support such a measure.

There is also a need to develop professional organisations, centres and publications through which professional exchange can take place (Clark: 1987; Marsh, 1989). Opportunities have to be created for teachers to meet in circumstances which encourage useful insights into the classroom situation. Analysing the success of a number of innovations in language teaching, Hamilton says, "A combination of circumstances and people is what produced the innovations" (Hamilton, 1996:4).

It is particularly important that communication between heads of department is facilitated. In schools with no vice-principal, heads of department may have to take on extra duties, and will be denied the advice and assistance a vice-principal could provide. Inexperienced heads of department could benefit from the collective wisdom of experienced peers.

Heads of department would benefit, too, from the support of more ancillary staff (Seah-Tay, 1996:96). Such a measure may help to attract and retain middle management personnel. Increased recognition of their status as curriculum leaders may help, too. As this study has demonstrated, the role of HoDs in the dissemination, implementation and subsequent evaluation of those processes was crucial. However, they received neither professional

training to cope with the demands nor empowerment for their efforts.

Some principals need to re-consider their management style, which accords neither respect nor professional dignity to teachers (Chew, 1985; Zhang, 1994). The National Institute of Education, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, runs courses for newly appointed principals and there is a widely discussed mentoring system (Low, 1995; Bush 1995; Low, Chong and Walker, 1994; Chong, 1994). Opportunities could be found to discuss and model appropriate leadership behaviour. Ways in which management support could be solicited by and given to teachers might be considered too. Chong recommends teachers and principals consider inviting an external consultant to facilitate the process of instituting management support (Chong, 1992:4).

Means of enabling teachers to participate in decision making could also be reviewed. Discussing Singh's 1985 survey of 742 teachers in 30 secondary schools, Ho reports that the level of teacher participation in school-decision making was low. As a higher level of participation was related to a more positive school climate, Ho recommends the establishment of teacher work groups as mechanisms for participative decision-making (Ho, 1992:4).

However, none of these suggestions will be taken up unless all stakeholders accept the need for change in the educational environment. Changing this environment is the key to curriculum development in Singapore. A vital element in the achievement of such a paradigm shift would be a widespread, strongly felt dissatisfaction with the current situation (Kelly, 1980; Bailey, 1992; De Lano *et al*, 1994). As Chapter Two demonstrates, teachers have expressed dissatisfaction to researchers and their union. Without changes at the systems level, however, such dissatisfaction will not

be translated into action (Ghani, 1992:35).

There is evidence to suggest that, at the systems level, the Ministry of Education may be dissatisfied with the situation too. Since 1987, eight government schools have been allowed to become independent and eighteen to become autonomous (Tan, 1996:6 and 7-8, *unpublished*). These schools enjoy a greater degree of flexibility in curriculum decision making. However, while some schools have introduced innovations in the lower secondary programme, at the upper secondary levels the curriculum is driven by the need to respond to parents' expectations that their children will perform well in the national examinations (Tan, 1993:247). Thus, the success of independent and autonomous schools is measured in terms of examination results. These schools are also regularly appraised by the Ministry of Education. In reporting on the English departments, inspectors use the same criteria as those applied to government schools (Bibliography 5, Ministry of Education, 1993a, 1993b, and 1993c).

So, this move towards school-based management has not contributed to any real change in the educational environment. In the circumstances described above, this is not surprising. As Hargreaves points out:

" . . . where self-management or local management is accomplished by the retention of central control over what is produced (through stringent controls over curriculum and assessment), then school-based management is no longer an avenue of empowerment, but a conduit of blame." (Hargreaves, 1994:68)

Thus, despite the government's apparent willingness to delegate responsibility for school management to independent and autonomous schools, a positive climate for curriculum innovation has not been created. Risk taking is not encouraged, and these schools are unlikely to develop

norms which will support institutional change or professional autonomy.

The critical factor here appears to be the high stakes national examination system. This study suggests that change is less likely to become institutionalised where the pressures of high stakes assessment are more keenly felt (Chapter Ten:285-286). Singapore is unlikely to create an educational climate which is receptive to curriculum innovation until the public's attitude to national examinations has changed.

In the meantime, then, it is vital that examinations have a positive backwash effect. As we have seen in Chapters Five and Nine, this is not the case. More detailed and focussed examiners' reports disseminated to all major participants are essential (Wall, 1996:350-351). Currently, for a price and in response to queries about candidates' grades, informative reports on the performance of individual schools can be obtained from UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995b and c). Ideally, such information should be available freely to all stakeholders.

A more radical way of improving the situation would be to set examinations which provide candidates with the opportunity to bring their critical abilities to bear on what they normally read and listen to. This more functional approach will need to take account of "the effect of the Internet on transnationalism, subcultures and variants of English" (Twedde, 1995:10). An examination set in Cambridge is unlikely to do this. Singapore needs to prepare for a future when examinations are set and marked locally, even if the government feels the results need to be verified by UCLES.

The National University of Singapore, the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education need to begin taking responsibility

for national assessment. The process will take time, perhaps five years of preparation and five years of gradual implementation. Examples provided in Chapters Five and Nine demonstrate the gap between actual and desirable school-based and national assessment tasks. However, Singapore has the money and the interest in education to address these problems. All that is required is the political will and national confidence. Without an indigenous system of national assessment, curriculum renewal will be fraught with communication problems. Given the challenges faced by education systems as the technological age advances, Singapore does not need this handicap.

Again, the Ministry of Education needs to become a learning company, anticipating the needs of its clients.

The Teaching Force: Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus

Not all members of the public regard Singapore's teachers as professional (Chapter Two:58-59); and the teaching force is not stable, robust, informed or empowered. Few teachers are involved in curriculum renewal or classroom research, so the profession as a whole could not feel ownership of the 1991 Syllabus or, indeed, know why it was introduced.

Research demonstrates that teachers who are clear about the purpose and benefits of a syllabus which they perceive to be relevant, worthwhile and interesting are likely to be committed to its implementation. Teacher commitment was the "outstanding factor" in the success of the curriculum innovation described by Whelan (1995:62). The research reported in Chapters Ten and Eleven suggests few teachers were committed to the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus which was intended to de-centralise the curriculum

development process. Teachers were not prepared to accept the responsibility this involved. Those who saw the proposed changes as desirable may have had difficulty obtaining support for their implementation either from other teachers (Chapter Two:65-66) or from an administration and school culture which discourage innovation and risk taking (Chapter Two:67-68).

The Teaching Force: Some Recommendations and Considerations

In March 1996, the Ministry of Education attempted to address teacher recruitment and retention problems by introducing a more attractive and competitive salary structure to enable rapid progression through salary scales. To do this, \$420 million a year was added to the education budget. Some of this money will be used to create 6,000 senior education officer positions, many of which will be awarded to good classroom teachers whose task will be to act as mentors to less experienced teachers (Poey, 1996:4-5). This is clearly a response to the many problems outlined in Chapter Two, and will also begin to raise the public standing of teachers (*ibid*:4). More money and increased recognition may alleviate the staff shortages at middle management, discussed in the section on the educational environment. Such measures may reduce the rate at which teachers leave the profession, too, though research suggests this may take more than money (Chapter Two:60).

Research also suggests that a salary structure which encourages competition between teachers may be counterproductive as it could reduce teacher commitment (Firestone and Pennell, 1993:517-518). However, such competition could promote curriculum development too:

" . . . work has been done on career ladders, mentor programs, and other policies that create differentiated roles for teachers. Where the competitive aspects of such roles are not too strong, they can

provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate more closely, to increase task variety without role overload, and even to participate more fully in strategic decisions about curriculum and instruction." (*ibid*:518)

Time will demonstrate whether Singapore's education system can create the optimum level of competition.

As trainee teachers are now on the Ministry of Education's pay role too, the intake for initial teacher training increased by 55% in July 1996 (National Institute of Education News, 1996:1). Again, though, a word of caution needs to be sounded. Discussing American education, Firestone reports that "Past experiments at educational reform by bringing in cadres of fresh faces have not worked well" (Firestone, 1996:218-219). Newly qualified teachers will work in a professional climate established by more experienced teachers, and it is easier for beginning rather than more experienced teachers to leave the profession This is borne out by the number of Singaporean teachers leaving the profession during the first four years of service (Chapter Two:62). So, the key to professionalising teaching lies in "reform(ing) existing schools to both create a more conducive context for new cohorts of better trained teachers and to increase the knowledge and change the commitments of those already present" (*ibid*:219).

This will not be easy. Suggested measures in the literature include site-based management to increase teacher participation in decision making (Rice and Schneider, 1994) and collegial interaction (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Ng, basing her discussion on her experiences with primary school teachers in Singapore and Brunei, suggests that such measures aimed at empowering teachers are not appropriate in South East Asia, where:

" . . . the teacher is often part of a bureaucratic system that is traditionally autocratic. Our in-service teachers were not nurtured in the liberal, humanistic tradition of the West . . . to aim for the 'empowered' teacher ideal, we fear, would be too big a leap. Instead, we opted for adaptation - to support the teacher in an exercise to adapt exemplary practices to local conditions." (Ng:1994:368-369)

However, as we have seen in the previous discussion of Singapore's educational environment, the government has moved towards site-based management, and Singaporean researchers like Ho (1992) and Chong (1992) have recommended increased teacher participation in school level decision-making in the belief that it will have a positive effect on school climate. Ee's analysis of the responses to a questionnaire sent to 305 teachers in six secondary schools in Singapore shows those teachers expected principals to delegate authority and responsibility to them to co-ordinate school activities (Ee, 1988:18). There may be many other teachers who will not welcome these moves to empower them. Nevertheless, these moves are being made.

More experience of and research into site-based management and teacher participation in decision making in Singapore schools is required before their relevance and effects can be confidently discussed. Tan's research (1993) suggests the measures taken by Singapore's government to give some schools more authority have not yet resulted in significant professional development. This could be because real empowerment has not taken place (this chapter:363). Experience in other countries shows that devolution of authority is fraught with problems. (See, for example, Goldwasser, 1993; McKay, 1994; and Fielding, 1996.)

However, the traditional authoritarian style of leadership, exemplified by the Ministry of Education and a number of principals, has not contributed

to a professional teaching force in Singapore. Gradually moving towards a less centralised approach to decision making is perhaps the way forward.

Currently, there is little evidence of collegial interaction in Singapore's secondary schools (Chapter Two:65-66). Hargreaves (1994:247) suggests collaboration can be superficial and manipulated by administrators for their own ends. Firestone (1996:222-225) points out that unless teachers are knowledgeable, aware of alternative approaches to teaching, working in a situation which is receptive to these alternative approaches, and are in agreement with the values inherent in such approaches, then collegial interaction will not encourage professional development.

Nevertheless, it is clear that teachers working alone in Singapore's secondary schools have not been able to create an image of teaching as a highly regarded profession. Teachers working together with an awareness of the pitfalls described above can only contribute to the creation of a more professional teaching force, and to an increased control over their own working conditions. In time, developments in information technology may help to generate a more collaborative culture (Markee, 1994b; Twedde, 1995). Given appropriate and timely support, perhaps from specialist inspectors (Goodman, 1994), or lecturers from the National Institute of Education (Toh *et al*, 1996), teachers working together are more likely to become involved in classroom research and curriculum renewal.

This study shows that in a few schools this is happening. Unhappy with the lack of alignment between the 1991 Syllabus and the 'O' level examination, some English departments responded by devising alternative syllabuses (this chapter:347-348). Such curriculum initiatives could be

supported if schools provided a special room for teachers' seminars and workshops, equipped with relevant books and materials (Shkedi, 1996:709).

Successfully working together at the school level might encourage teachers to collaborate at the national level. Such collaboration is potentially very powerful, and could result in, for example, teachers "articulating a code of behaviour, (and) disciplining those who contravene that code" (Pring, 1996:9). Teachers will measure up to their own standards, rather than those set by the Ministry of Education (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991:318).

This emphasis on collaboration, initially at the school level, to promote professionalism demonstrates the need for schools to be communities, with the myriad inter-relationships that word implies (Sergiovanni, 1994). Perhaps schools could more usefully be thought of as learning communities, developing in tandem with the Ministry of Education's progress towards becoming a learning company.

Personnel Responsible for Curriculum Renewal: Problems Encountered in the Dissemination and Implementation of the 1991 Syllabus

Personnel responsible for the dissemination and implementation of the 1991 Syllabus were located both inside and outside the school. Ideally:

"The change agent should have personal characteristics such as an open mind, a good sense of humor (*sic*), and a high tolerance for ambiguity. The change agent must *not desire to lead but must strive to be a catalyst*, organising the group to use its own 'people power' to obtain social change." (Scileppi, 1988:169 in De Lano *et al*, 1994:491)

These characteristics need to be demonstrated by both external and internal change agents. Research has not been conducted into whether change agents in Singapore demonstrate these abilities, but they are not considered in the recruitment of external change agents (Chapter Ten:254).

Heads of department, the internal change agents, are identified on the quality of their classroom teaching rather than their ability to bring about change.

Heads of department felt they received inadequate training from the Ministry of Education (Chapter Ten:274), so they may not have been clear about their role as internal change agents. Their late entry into the curriculum renewal process will have compounded this uncertainty. They were asked to disseminate and implement a syllabus for which they could have felt no sense of ownership. It is also difficult to say to whom they were accountable, since they were acting in response to instructions from specialist inspectors, but their supervising officers are their principals. The literature suggests that the leadership style of a number of principals would not have supported heads of department in their role as internal change agents (Chapter Two:68).

Despite their possible lack of training and support, heads of department were probably better able to deal with the practical, administrative and bureaucratic implications of syllabus implementation than were specialist inspectors, the external change agents. Heads of departments should understand the physical resources and cultures of the schools in which they work, the teachers' situations within those cultures, and be able to anticipate teachers' responses to recommended changes. It is possible, too, that their managerial style, informed by this local knowledge, may have better encouraged and supported curriculum renewal. External change agents needed to be better informed about the culture of individual schools.

In a top down system, the external change agents, the specialist inspectors, needed more experience than they had, more influence than they were permitted and greater unity of purpose than they demonstrated. They

were not in agreement about the critical features of the syllabus and how these would be reflected in the classroom, so different messages were communicated to the internal change agents (Chapter Ten:262-263). Those involved in the formative evaluation of the syllabus's implementation learned on the job (Chapter Ten:254), and there was no summative evaluation.

Inspired leadership is a rare commodity. There is no record of it in the description and analysis of the 1991 Syllabus implementation. Curriculum leadership could be demonstrated by various people in schools. Principals, for example, have a vital role to play in establishing the climate in which curriculum renewal can take place (Sturman, 1994; Fenech, 1994). Research suggests transformational leadership is most effective in establishing such a climate (Leithwood, 1994). Such leadership is not common in Singapore.

As internal change agents, heads of department have considerable responsibility as curriculum leaders. Yet a number of heads of department did not disseminate information regarding the syllabus to teachers of graduating classes (Chapter Ten:285-286 and 289). Commitment, then, was lacking.

Personnel Responsible for Curriculum Renewal: Some Suggestions

To implement a syllabus successfully, heads of department need to be included in the first stages of curriculum renewal (Wallace *et al*, 1995). Only then will a sense of commitment to the process be developed. A relationship in which power is shared equally between internal and external change agents is essential. The agents are inter-dependent. The knowledge each possesses is vital to the successful role performance of the other.

The characteristics of those responsible for the dissemination of innovations need to be carefully considered. Interpreting curriculum renewal

as a set of relationships between people (Breen, 1995:105) emphasises the essentially human nature of change: people promote change by providing a climate in which others feel comfortable about changing their behaviour.

Thus, curriculum leadership should not be confined to specialist inspectors, principals and heads of department. Curriculum renewal is a continuous process in which all teachers could play a number of different leadership roles at different stages. For example, Shkedi, discussing the need for teachers to attend school-based workshops regularly to help them "deliberate" on the curriculum process (Shkedi, 1996:699), suggests teachers should be trained to lead the workshops and "guide the process of adapting the curricula to the particular needs of their school" (*ibid*:709). This could be a role for the some of the 6,000 newly appointed senior education officers.

The need for a transformational style of leadership is obvious. Again, we see the need for schools to become learning communities.

The 1991 English Language Syllabus: A Part of the Process of Curriculum Renewal?

As we have seen in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, the 1991 Syllabus has few of the characteristics which would have contributed to its successful implementation. A fundamental reason for this is that the writers of the 1991 Syllabus and those empowered by the political and educational system had little understanding of the process of curriculum renewal.

Ideally, curriculum renewal is continuous and cyclical, with each cycle being informed by what has gone before. Writing a syllabus is not the first stage in a particular cycle. Other stages, and the people involved in those stages, must inform that writing (Jennings, 1993:141). Syllabuses should be

characterised by reference to locally produced classroom research and teachers' views, to nationally accepted statements of students' attainments, to the perceptions of the community, to work in other subject teaching areas, and to the circumstances in which they will be implemented. Syllabus writers' work will be informed by a knowledge of what is happening in other countries, but the syllabus produced should recognise and respect local conditions and traditions as well as introduce new ideas which observation and classroom research suggests can be mediated effectively and appropriately (Widdowson, 1993:271).

In the final analysis, the product, the syllabus, is less important than the process which creates it. The syllabus interprets and defines a current paradigm. It is a public statement of views and attitudes held by certain people at a particular time. It contributes to ongoing discussion of English teaching. Such discussion is a part of the continuous process of curriculum renewal, and should be a feature of any dynamic education system. The value of this process outweighs its product. In Singapore, the problem is to persuade those empowered by the political and educational system that this process is necessary, and must involve people outside the education ministry.

Again, the Ministry of Education needs to become a learning company: its work needs to respond to the needs, wishes and aspirations of the learning communities it supports.

Procedures for Syllabus Implementation: Comments and Considerations

As Chapters Ten and Eleven demonstrate, very few of the procedures which would contribute to the successful implementation of an English language syllabus in Singapore were reflected in the implementation process.

Procedures which were included were not fully supported (Chapter Ten:298-299). For example, internal change agents were appointed but not trained.

The failure to comprehend fully the role of heads of department and teachers as mediators of change was fundamental:

" a curriculum is, in essence, *a set of relationships between people*. Any proposed educational change is always interpreted through the frames of reference and experiences of those whom it is likely to affect An innovation will be filtered through local, institutional, teacher and student reinterpretations, perhaps even to the extent that its outcomes may become quite distinct from the original intent of the planners. For a curriculum to become action rather than a plan on paper, it *has to be diversely reinterpreted*." (Breen, 1995:105)

Had teachers been perceived as mediators of change rather than as in need of imposed change which would force professional development upon them (Ang and Yeoh, 1991:102), a very different approach to curriculum renewal and syllabus implementation might have emerged.

Curriculum development is indivisible from teacher development (Killion, 1993; Markee, 1994a). It is the result of teacher development. Meaningful teacher development is unlikely to take place as a result of one-off workshops (Breen et al, 1989; CEE Commission on Inservice Education, 1994; Lamb, 1995). In-service education needs to be built on principles of adult learning, perceived as practical and to take place regularly in school time (Whitehead, 1980:58; Elliott, 1985). Above all, it needs to be continuous, influencing how, rather than what, teachers think (Wallace, 1991; Widdowson, 1993).

Without teacher development, revised teaching materials, however good, will be used to support existing teacher practices (Chapter Six:142 and 144). Nevertheless, resources which "are so structured that the teacher is compelled to re-assess his teaching strategies" (Whitehead, 1980:58) have

a role to play. Unfortunately, as Chapter Eight demonstrates, teaching materials claiming to support innovations may do nothing of the kind.

In addition to the failure to provide for meaningful teacher development, the procedures for curriculum renewal did not consider the possible psychological responses to imposed change. Fossum describes Kubler-Ross's grief cycle as a likely response to change: the three stages of denial, anger and acceptance form a cycle which is repeated as people come to terms with loss (Fossum, 1989:31). Nias's fifteen year research into the lives and careers of British primary school teachers led her to characterise coming to terms with change as a process of "grieving for a lost self" (Nias, 1993:139). She describes teachers who have had complex changes imposed upon them as "bereaved" (*ibid*), and points out that time and support are needed to help teachers construct a new self concept.

Whilst it is unlikely that the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus caused teachers severe psychological damage, a gradual process of curriculum renewal would be less stressful than a suddenly imposed change.

Other constraints to syllabus implementation were not fully considered either. Insufficient attention was paid to the high premium the community places on examination results. Change agents intending to bring about curriculum renewal in Singapore must begin with the high stakes assessment procedures. If the public examinations are not to be modified, then there must be a clear demonstration of how the proposed changes will better prepare pupils for the existing examinations. Instead, this syllabus implementation exercise tried to broaden the concept of assessment. The research suggests the attempt was not successful (Chapter Eleven:310 and 327-328), though

pupils felt they were formatively assessed (Chapter Eleven:334-335).

A thorough evaluation of the syllabus document and its dissemination and implementation, exploiting multiple perspectives and a wide range of qualitative and quantitative evidence, should provide a useful platform for discussion of alternative approaches to curriculum renewal. "The recognized need for change should be data-based as rational argument alone is generally not sufficient to bring about change" (De Lano *et al*, 1994:492). Such an evaluation should be carried out by an external institution whose report would be both publicly available and responded to.

Thus, the 1997 committee of specialist inspectors charged with the task of reviewing the 1991 Syllabus has much to consider. Perhaps its first duty is to re-define the nature of its task and relocate the review of the 1991 Syllabus within a wider framework of curriculum renewal. This would mean that rather than concentrating on the document, the committee would be establishing networks of communication with other stakeholders in the process of curriculum renewal. The Ministry of Education would be setting out on the road to becoming a learning company.

12.4 Future Directions

The case study has indicated that areas for further research include:

- * single site case studies, using techniques of illuminative evaluation (Parlett, 1981 and Parlett and Hamilton, 1987), to focus on the processes and unintended consequences of syllabus implementation
- * what Singaporean pupils can be expected to do with English at various stages of their learning
- * the backwash effect of examinations

- * the nature of the supplementary teaching materials used
- * the quality of the local administrative support given to teachers in the curriculum renewal process
- * the role of heads of department in that process
- * teacher collaboration
- * the effects of site-based management
- * the consequences of the recent increase in the education budget
- * the characteristics of those schools which modified the recommendations of the 1991 Syllabus
- * the factors which encourage individual English language teachers in Singapore to improve professional practice

In conducting such research, those involved will be confronting the major task facing English language specialists in Singapore and elsewhere, which is to contribute to the development of a teaching community capable of generating continuous, productive curriculum renewal:

"The primary purpose of any change should be to enhance the possibility of further change and . . . pedagogy is likely to remain meaningful to the extent there is a process of ongoing/perpetual change." (Prabhu, personal communication, in Coleman, 1992:236)

This study has demonstrated the difficulties in the way of establishing a process of ongoing/perpetual change and has set some directions concerning how to overcome those difficulties. In doing so, its intention is to contribute towards developing pedagogy meaningful to English language teaching in Singapore. It is for the reader to determine whether, in illuminating the process of change, the study has also provided insights into what approaches to planned change are possible and/or desirable in other settings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 1

Published Materials

- Adelman, C. and Alexander, R., 1988
'The Integrity of Evaluation', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., in Association with The Open University, 294-310.
- Alderson, J.C. and Scott, M., 1992
'Insiders, Outsiders and Participatory Evaluation', Alderson, J.C. and Beretta, A., eds., *Evaluating Second Language Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 25-60.
- Alderson, J.C., 1992
'Guidelines for the Evaluation of Language Education', Alderson, J.C. and Beretta, A., eds., *Evaluating Second Language Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 274-304.
- Alderson, J.C. and Wall, D., 1993
'Does Washback Exist?', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 14/2, 115-129.
- Allen, J.P.B., 1992
'Current Trends in Second Language Curriculum Design', Tarinayya, M., ed., *English Language Teaching: Theory and Practice*, Madras: T.R. Publications, 69-89.
- Alsagoff, L., 1995
'Colloquial Singapore English: The Relative Clause Construction', Teng, S.C. and Ho, M.L., eds., *The English Language in Singapore: Implications for Teaching*, Singapore: Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics, sponsored by Singapore Teachers' Union, 77-87.
- Ang, W.H. and Yeoh, O.C., 1991
'25 Years of Curriculum Development', Yip, S.K.J., and Sim, W.K., eds., *Evolution of Educational Excellence: 25 Years of Education in the Republic of Singapore*, Singapore: Longman, 81-105.
- Bailey, K.M., 1992
'The Processes of Innovation in Language Teacher Development: What, Why and How Teachers Change', Flowerdew, J., Brock, M., and Hsia, S., eds., *Perspectives on Second Language Teacher Education*, Kowloon: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, 253-282.
- Bailey, K.M. and Nunan, D., eds., 1996
Voices From the Language Classroom, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Bennett, N., 1988
 'Surveyed From a Shaky Base', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., in Association with The Open University, 81-83.
- Beretta, A., 1990
 'The Programme Evaluator: the ESL Researcher Without Portfolio', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1-15.
- Beretta, A., 1992
 'Evaluation of Second Language Education: An Overview', Alderson, J.C. and Beretta, A., eds., *Evaluating Second Language Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5-24.
- Breen, M., 1987a
 'Contemporary Paradigms in Syllabus Design. Part 1', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 81-92.
- Breen, M., 1987b
 'Contemporary Paradigms in Syllabus Design. Part 2', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 157-174.
- Breen, M., 1989
 'The Evaluation Cycle for Language Learning Tasks', Johnson, R.K., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 187-206.
- Breen, M., Candlin, C., Dam, L. and Gabrielson, G., 1989
 'The Evolution of a Teacher Training Programme', Johnson, R.K., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 111-135.
- Breen, M., 1995
 'The Teacher's Voice in Curriculum Change', *The Implementation of the English Language Curriculum in Singapore: Symposium, 16-18 February 1995*, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 102-113.
- Brindley, G. and Hood, S., 1990
 'Curriculum Innovation in Adult ESL', Brindley, G., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum in Action*, Sydney: National Centre for English Language Testing and Research, Macquarie University, 232-248.
- Brock, M.N., 1996
 'Innovation in the Composition Classroom: How ESL Students Respond', *Prospect*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 45-59.

- Brock, P., 1996
 'Telling the Story of the New South Wales Secondary English Curriculum: 1950-1965', Green, B. and Beavis, C., eds., *Teaching the English Subjects*, Australia: Deakin University Press, 40-70.
- Brown, A., 1992
Making Sense of Singapore English, Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Brown, A., 1995
 'Minimal Pairs: Minimal Importance?', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/2, 169-175.
- Brown, J.D., 1995
The Elements of Language Curriculum: A Systematic Approach to Program Development, Massachusetts: Heinle and Heinle.
- Bruckner, M.M., 1996
 'Changing the High School Schedule: A Test of Fullan's Lessons', *Planning and Changing*, Vol. 27, 1/2, 115-123.
- Brumfit, C.J., 1984a
Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brumfit, C.J., 1984b
 'Function and Structure of a State School Syllabus for Learners of Second or Foreign Languages with Heterogeneous Needs', Brumfit, C.J., ed., *General English Syllabus Design*, Oxford and New York: British Council ELT Document 118, Pergamon Press, in association with the British Council, 75-82.
- Bucko, R.L., 1994
 'Conditions for Change', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 8, No. 5, 4-6.
- Bush, T., 1995
 'Mentoring for Principals: Pre-Service and In-Service Models', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1-13.
- Butler, S., 1992
 'The Publishing History of the Macquarie Dictionary - A Personal Narrative', Pakir, A., ed., *Words in a Cultural Context*, Singapore: Unipress, 7-28.
- CEE Commission on Inservice Education, 1994
 'Inservice Education: Ten Principles', *English Education*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 125-128.

- Chandrasegaran, A., 1991
 'Classroom Management for Developing Discourse-Level Reviewing Skills for General Paper and Other Essays', *Guidelines*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 18-30.
- Chang, S.C.A., 1990
 'A Study of Learning Strategies Employed by Secondary 4 Express and Normal Pupils', *Southeast Asian Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 27/28, 36-48.
- Chang, A. and Ho, W.K., 1992
 'Singapore Students Are Rote Learners: Fact or Myth?' Toh, K.A., ed., *Curriculum Research and Practice: Cauldron or Crucible? Proceedings of the 6th Annual Conference of the Educational Research Association, Singapore*, Singapore: Educational Research Association, 40-52.
- Cheah, Y.M. and Chiu, S.M., 1997
 'Exploring the "Mixed Forest" of Qualitative Research', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 58-66.
- Chew, O.A.J., 1985
 'Attitudes Towards Innovations in Primary Schools: A Study of In-Service Teachers', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 13-21.
- Chia, S.K., Diong, C.H. and Toh, K.A., 1994
 'Professional Characteristics and Teacher Professionalism of Secondary School Teachers', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 55-66.
- Chong, K.C., 1992
 'Management Support: Can Teachers Expect Help from Principals?' Ho, W. K., Koh, A., Saunders, J., Lim, S. and Chin, C., eds., *Review of Educational Research and Advances for Classroom Teachers*, Singapore: National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, 1-4.
- Chong, K.C., 1994
 'OD in Practice', *Educational Change and Development*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 15-20.
- Clark, J.L. 1987
Curriculum Renewal in School Foreign Language Learning, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coleman, H., 1992
 'Moving the Goalposts: Project Evaluation in Practice', Alderson, J.C. and Beretta, A., eds., *Evaluating Second Language Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 222-249.

- Cortazzi, M. and Jin, L., 1997
 'Communication for Learning Across Cultures', McNamara, D. and Harris, R., (eds), *Overseas Students in Higher Education*, London: Routledge, 76-90.
- Cousins, J.B., 1996
 'Consequences of Researcher Involvement in Participatory Evaluation', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 3-27.
- Crewe, W.J., ed., 1977
The English Language in Singapore, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, Sdn. Bhd.
- Crookes, G. and Schmidt, R.W., 1991
 'Motivation: Reopening the Research Agenda', *Language Learning*, 41:4, 469-512.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1991
 'A Word from CDIS', *Teaching English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 5-7.
- Das, B. and Crabbe, D., 1984
A Survey of the Needs of Employed Adults in Singapore, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Das, B., 1994
 'Language Education and the Working Adult - the Experience in Singapore', Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho, W.H. and Saravanan, V., eds., *Language and Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 368-387.
- Davies, A., 1985
 'Follow My Leader: Is That What Language Tests Do?', Lee, Y.P., Fok, C.Y.Y.A., Lord, R. and Low, G., eds., *New Directions in Language Testing*, U.K.: Pergamon Press, 3-13.
- Davies, A., 1995
 'Language Testing in the 1990s', Alderson, J.C., and North, B., eds., *Language Testing in the 1990s*, U.K., Prentice Hall International Limited, 136-149.
- Davis, K.A., 1995
 'Qualitative Theory and Methods in Applied Linguistics Research', *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 427-453.
- De Lano, L., Riley, L. and Crookes, G., 1994
 'The Meaning of Innovation for ESL Teachers', *System*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 487-496.
- Department of Statistics, Singapore, 1991
Census of Population, 1990: Advance Data Release, Singapore: Singapore National Printers Limited.

- Deterding, D., 1995
 'Intonation and Stress Placement in Singapore English', Teng, S.C. and Ho, M.L., eds., *The English Language in Singapore: Implications for Teaching*, Singapore: Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics, sponsored by Singapore Teachers' Union, 68-76.
- Dubin, F. and Olshtain, E., 1986
Course Design: Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ee, C.H., 1988
 'Teachers' Educational Attitudes and Their Perception of Principals' Leadership Behaviour', *Singapore Journal of Education, Special Issue: Selected Papers of 1st Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, 18-22.
- Elliott, J., 1985
 'Some Key Concepts Underlying Teachers' Evaluations of Innovations', Tamir, P., ed., *The Role of Evaluation in Curriculum Development*, London and Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 142-206.
- Ellis, G., 1996
 'How Culturally Appropriate is the Communicative Approach?' *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 213-218.
- English Unit, Ministry of Education, 1991a
 'Pointers for Drawing up a Unit of Work', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 3.
- English Unit, Ministry of Education, 1991b
 'Your Questions and Our Answers', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 35-36.
- Fagan, E.R. and Cheong, P., 1987
 'Contrastive Rhetoric: Pedagogical Implications for the ESL Teacher in Singapore', *RELC Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 19-30.
- Felder, R. M., 1995
 'Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education', *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 21-31.
- Fenech, J.M., 1994
 'Managing Schools in a Centralised System: Headteachers at Work', *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 131-140.
- Fielding, M., 1996
 'Empowerment: Emancipation or Enervation?', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 399-417.

- Firestone, W.A. and Pennell, J.R., 1993
 'Teacher Commitment, Working Conditions, and Differential Incentive Policies', *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 489-525.
- Firestone, W.A., 1996
 'Images of Teaching and Proposals for Reform: A Comparison of Ideas from Cognitive and Organisational Research', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 209-235.
- Fischetti, J., Dittmer, A., Kyle, D.W., 1996
 'Shifting Paradigms: Emerging Issues for Educational Policy and Practice', *The Teacher Educator*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 189-201.
- Foenander, S.H., 1991
 'Implementing the Revised English Language Syllabus', *Singapore Educator, A Bi-Annual Publication of Singapore Secondary School Principals' Association*, Issue No. 12, pp. 16, 17 and 24.
- Foley, J.A., 1988
 'The English Language Syllabus and the Pre-School Child', Foley, J.A., ed., *New Englishes: The Case of Singapore*, Singapore: Singapore Universities Press, National University of Singapore, 51-69.
- Foley, J.A., 1991
 'Developmental Features of Children's Writing in Singapore', Kwan-Terry, A., ed., *Child Language Development in Singapore and Malaysia*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 255-281.
- Foley, J.A., 1994
 'Moving from "Common-sense Knowledge" to "Educational Knowledge"', Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho, W.K., Saravanan, V., eds., *Language, Society and Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 267-295.
- Fossum, L.B., 1989
Understanding Organizational Change: Converting Theory to Practice, Los Altos, California: Crisp Publications.
- Fry, C. and Mercer, M., 1979
 'The Role and Use of Textbooks as a Vehicle for Teaching English as a Second Language in Singapore Schools', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 20-27.
- Fullan, M., 1981
 'The Relationship between Evaluation and Implementation', Lewy, A. and Nevo, D., eds., *Evaluation Roles in Education*, London, Paris: Gordon and Breach, 309-339.
- Fullan, M.G. with Stiegelbauer, S., 1991
The New Meaning of Educational Change, London: Cassell Educational Limited.

- Fullan, M.G. and Hargreaves, A., 1991
What's Worth Fighting For? Working Together For Your School, Hawthorn, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Administration.
- Fullan, M.G., 1993
Change Forces, London and Washington D.C.: Falmer Press.
- Garaway, G.B., 1995
 'Participatory Evaluation', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 85-102.
- Gardner, R.C., 1982
 'Language Attitudes and Language Learning' Ryan, E.B. and Giles, H., eds., *Attitudes Towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*, London: Edward Arnold, 132-147.
- Gardner, R.C. and MacIntyre, P.D., 1995
 'An Instrumental Motivation in Language Study: Who Says It Isn't Effective?', Brown, D.H. and Gonzo, S.T., eds., *Readings on Second Language Acquisition*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Regents, 206-224.
- Ghani, Z., 1992
 'Sustaining Curriculum Innovation through Contextual Change', Toh, K.A., ed., *Curriculum Research and Practice: Cauldron or Crucible? Proceedings of the 6th Annual Conference of the Educational Research Association, Singapore*, Singapore Educational Research Association, Singapore, 24-39.
- Gilfillan, B., 1991
 'A Pupil's Guide to Nuts and Litter, Or What Should We Be Doing in the Orals?', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 15-17.
- Goh, S.G., 1991a
 'Trialling of the New EL Syllabuses for Singapore Schools', in Anivan, S., ed., *Issues in Language Programme Evaluation in the 1990s*, Anthology Series 27, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 136-151.
- Goh, S.G., 1991b
 'The New English Language Syllabus for Singapore Schools', *Teaching English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2-3.
- Goldwasser, M., 1993
 'Are All The Wagons Headed West? Practitioners' and Policymakers' Roles in the Restructuring Exercise', *Planning and Change*, Vol. 24, No. 1/2, 101-124.

- Gonzalez, A., 1987
 'On Language Syllabus Design and Development: The Philippine Experience', Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Language Syllabuses: State of the Art*, Anthology Series 18, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 90-104.
- Goodman, J., 1994
 'External Change Agents and Grassroots School Reform: Reflections from the Field', *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 113-135.
- Gopinathan, S., 1992
 'Publishing in Singapore in the 1990s', *Media Asia*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 24-29.
- Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho W.K. and Saravanan, V., eds., 1994
Language, Society and Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends, Singapore: Times Academic Press.
- Government of Singapore, The, 1991
Singapore: The Next Lap, Singapore: Times Editions Pte. Ltd.
- Green, B. and Beavis, C., eds., 1996
Teaching the English Subjects: Essays on English Curriculum History and Australian Schooling, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Gupta, A.F., 1989
 'Singapore Colloquial English and Standard English', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 33-39.
- Gupta, A.F. and Lee, S.Y.A., 1990
 'Gender Representation in English Language Textbooks Used in the Singapore Primary Schools', *Language and Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 29-50.
- Gupta, A.F., 1994
The Step-Tongue: Children's English in Singapore, Clevedon (England) and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Gupta, A.F. and Siew, P.Y., 1995
 'Language Shift in a Singapore Family', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 301- 314.
- Hall, G.E., Loucks, S.F., Rutherford, W.L. and Newlove, B.W., 1975
 'Levels of Use of the Innovation: A Framework for Analyzing Innovation Adoption', *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. XXV1, No. 1, 52-56.
- Hall, G.E., George, A.A. and Rutherford, W.L., 1979
Measuring Stages of Concern About the Innovation - A Manual for Use of the SoC Questionnaire, Texas: The University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

- Hamilton, J., 1996
Inspiring Innovations in Language Teaching, Clevedon, U.K.:
 Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Hargreaves, A., 1987
 'The Rhetoric of School-Centred Innovation', Murphy, R. and
 Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*,
 London: Paul Chapman Publishing Limited in association with the
 Open University, 101-122.
- Hargreaves, A., 1994
*Changing Teachers, Changing Times - Teachers' Work and
 Culture in the Postmodern Age*, London: Cassell.
- Hargreaves, P., 1989
 'DES-IMP-EVALU-IGN: an Evaluator's Checklist', Johnson, R.K.,
 ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York:
 Cambridge University Press, 35-47.
- Harmer, J., 1995
 'Taming the Big "I": Teacher Performance and Student
 Satisfaction', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/4, 337-345.
- Harris, J., 1990
 'The Second Language Programme-Evaluation Literature:
 Accommodating Experimental and Multifaceted Approaches',
Language, Culture and Curriculum, Vol. 3, No. 1, 83-92.
- Harrison, I., 1996
 'Look Who's Talking Now: Listening to Voices in Curriculum
 Renewal', Bailey, K.M. and Nunan, D., eds., *Voices From the
 Language Classroom*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge
 University Press, 283-303.
- Harvey, D.F. and Brown, D.R., 1992
An Experiential Approach to Organization Development,
 Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall International Inc.
- Henrichsen, L.E., 1989
*Diffusion of Innovations in English Language Teaching: The ELEC
 Effort in Japan - 1956-1968*, New York, London: Greenwood
 Press.
- Heyneman, S.P. and Ransom, A.W., 1992
 'Using Examinations and Testing to Improve Educational Quality',
 Eckstein, M.A. and Noah, H.J., eds., *Examinations: Comparative
 and International Studies*, Oxford (U.K.) and New York: Pergamon
 Press, 105-120.
- Hitchcock, G. and Hughes, D., 1989
*Research and the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-
 based Research*, London and New York: Routledge.

- Ho, W.K., 1992
 'Participation in School Decision-Making: Do Teachers Want It?',
 Ho, W.K., Koh, A., Saunders, J., Lim, S. and Chin, C., eds.,
*Review of Educational Research and Advances for Classroom
 Teachers*, Singapore: National Institute of Education, Nanyang
 Technological University, 1-4.
- Ho, W.K., 1994
 'The English Language Curriculum in Perspective: Exogenous
 Influences and Indigenization', Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho, W.K
 and Saravanan, V., eds., Singapore: *Language, Society and
 Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Times Academic
 Press, 235-266.
- Ho, W.K, 1996
 'Singapore: Review of Educational Events in 1994 and 1995',
Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Vol. 16, No. 2, 79-87.
- Holliday, A., 1994a
 'Student Culture and English Language Education: An
 International Perspective', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*,
 Vol. 7, No. 2, 125-143.
- Holliday, A., 1994b
Appropriate Methodology and Social Context, Cambridge:
 Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, T. and Torres, E., 1994
 'The Textbook as Agent of Change', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 48/4,
 315-327.
- Jacobs, G.M. and Ball, J., 1996
 'An Investigation of the Structure of Group Activities in ELT
 Coursebooks', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 2, 99-107.
- Jacobs, G.M., and Ratmanida, 1996
 'The Appropriacy of Group Activities: Views From Some
 Southeast Asian Second Language Educators', *RELC Journal*,
 Vol. 27, No. 1, 103-120.
- Jennings, Z., 1993
 'Curriculum Change in School Systems in the Commonwealth
 Caribbean: Some Implications for the Management of Curriculum
 Development' *International Journal of Educational Development*,
 Vol. 13, No. 2, 131-143.
- Johnson, D.M., 1992
Approaches to Research in Second Language Education, New
 York and London: Longman.

- Johnson, R.K., 1989
 'A Decision-making Framework for the Coherent Language Curriculum,' Johnson, R.K., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1-23.
- Jones, J.F., 1995
 'Self-access and Culture: Retreating From Autonomy', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/3, 228-234.
- Kachru, B.B., 1988
The Alchemy Of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes, Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press.
- Kachru, B.B., 1992
 'Models for Non-Native Englishes', Kachru, B.B., ed., *The Other Tongue*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 48-74.
- Kam, K.W. and Soh K.C., 1991
 '25 Years of Research and Testing', Yip, S.K.J. and Sim, W.K., eds., *Evolution of Educational Excellence: 25 Years of Education in the Republic of Singapore*, Singapore: Longman, 131-151.
- Kelly, P., 1980
 'From Innovation to Adaptability: the Changing Perspective of Curriculum Development', Galton, M., ed., *Curriculum Change - the Lessons of a Decade*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 65-80.
- Kennedy, C., 1987
 'Innovating For A Change: Teacher Development and Innovation', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 41/3, 163-170.
- Kennedy, C., 1988
 'Evaluation of the Management of Change in ELT Projects', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 329-342.
- Kennedy, J., 1991
 'Perspectives on Cultural and Individual Determinants of Teaching Style', *RELC Journal*, Vol. 22, No 2, 61-75.
- Killion, J.P., 1993
 'Staff Development and Curriculum Development: Two Sides of the Same Coin', *Journal of Staff Development*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 38-41.
- Kirkpatrick, A., 1985
 'The Role of Communicative Language Teaching in Secondary Schools - with Special Reference to Teaching in Singapore', Das, B.K., ed., *Communicative Language Teaching*, Anthology Series 14, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 171-194.

- Kirkpatrick, A.A., 1995
 'Language, Culture and Methodology', Tickoo, M.L., ed.,
Language and Culture in Multilingual Societies, Anthology Series
 36, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 64-80.
- Kon, S., 1989
Emily of Emerald Hill, Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers.
- Krahnke, K., 1987
Approaches to Syllabus Design for Foreign Language Teaching,
 Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, prepared by Clearinghouse
 on Language and Linguistics.
- Kramsch, C. and Sullivan, P., 1996
 'Appropriate Pedagogy', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 199-212.
- Kuo, E.C.Y., 1985
 'Language in the Family Domain in Singapore: An Analysis of the
 1980 Census Statistics', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 7,
 No. 1, 27-39.
- Kuo, E.C.Y., and Jernudd, B.H., 1994
 'Balancing Macro- and Micro-Sociolinguistic Perspectives in
 Language Management: the Case of Singapore', Gopinathan, S.,
 Pakir, A., Ho, W.H. and Saravanan, V., eds., *Language and
 Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Singapore: Times
 Academic Press, 25-46.
- Kynnerseley, C.W.S., 1980
 'Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English
 Education in the Colony (the Kynnerseley Report), 1902', Wong,
 F.H.K. and Gwee, Y.H., eds., *Official Reports on Education in the
 Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States 1870-1939*,
 Singapore: Pan Pacific Book Distributors (S) Pte Ltd, 36-60.
- Lamb, M., 1995
 'The Consequences of INSET', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/1, 72-80.
- Lau, A., 1991
 'How the Syllabus Hangs Together', *Teaching of English
 Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2.
- Le Page, R.B., and Tabouret-Keller, A., 1985
*Acts of Identity: Creole-based Approaches to Language and
 Ethnicity*, New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, K.C., 1983
Language and Language Education, Singapore: Singapore
 University Press, National University of Singapore.

- Lee, M.F.F., 1989
 'Sources of Enthusiasm and Discouragement: Another Aspect of Teacher Professional Satisfaction and Its Link with the Quality of Teaching and Learning', *Singapore Journal of Education, Special Issue: Selected Papers from the Second Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, Singapore: Educational Research Association, 69-87.
- Lee, W.O., 1991
Social Change and Educational Problems in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.
- Lee, W.R., 1987
 'Some Thoughts on the Make-up of Language Teaching Syllabuses', in Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Language Syllabuses: State of the Art*, Anthology Series 18, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 39-43.
- Lee, Y.C.W., 1995
 'Authenticity Revisited: Text Authenticity and Learner Authenticity', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/4, 323-328.
- Leithwood, K., 1994
 'Leadership for School Restructuring', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 498-518.
- Leong, S.H., 1993
 'Distinctive Features of Chinese and Western Thought Patterns as Seen in Mandarin and English', *Guidelines*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 38-44.
- Lewin, K.M., 1991a
 'Introduction', Lewin, K.M., ed., with Stuart, J.S., *Educational Innovation in Developing Countries: Case-Studies in Changemakers*, London: Macmillan, 1-6.
- Lewin, K.M., 1991b
 'Changemakers and Change Models: Educational Innovation in Developing Countries', Lewin, K.M., ed., with Stuart, J.S., *Educational Innovation in Developing Countries: Case-Studies in Changemakers*, London: Macmillan, 7-20.
- Lim, C., 1989
 'The Taximan's Story', Yeo, R., (ed), *Singapore Short Stories*, Singapore: Heinemann, Asia, 54-58.
- Lim, K.B., 1979
 'Bilingualism in Singapore', *Singapore Journal Of Education*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 6-8.

- Lim, S., Skuja-Steele, R., Sullivan, C. and Seow, A., 1995
 'The English Language Curriculum in Singapore: Critical Aspects and Implications for Teacher Training', *The Implementation of the English Language Curriculum in Singapore: Symposium, 16-18 February 1995*, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 49-78.
- Lim T.T., 1995
 'Learning Styles Relevant to Identified Personality Types of Secondary Level Students' *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 42-51.
- Littlejohn, A. and Windeatt, S., 1989
 'Beyond Language Learning: Perspectives on Materials Design', Johnson, R.K., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 155-175.
- Littlewood, W., 1994
 'Curriculum Design', Bowers, R. and Brumfit, C., eds., *Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching*, London and Basingstoke: Modern English Publications and the British Council, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 11-22.
- Long, M.H. and Crookes, G., 1992
 'Three Approaches to Task-Based Syllabus Design', *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 27-56.
- Long, M. and Robinson, L., 1995
 'The Course Experience of Year 12 Students', *SET: Research Information for Teachers*, No. 2, Item 14, 1-4.
- Low, G., 1989
 'Appropriate Design: The Internal Organisation of Course Units', Johnson, R.K., ed., *The Second Language Curriculum*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 136-154.
- Low, G.T., Chong, K.C. and Walker, A., 1994
 'Passing on the Baton', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 35-37.
- Low, G.T., 1995
 'Mentoring in Singapore: What and How do Proteges Learn?', *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 19-27.
- Low, L., Toh, M.H. and Soon, T.W., 1991
Economics of Education and Manpower Development: Issues and Policies in Singapore, Singapore: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Lynch, B., 1992
 "Evaluating a Programme Inside and Out", Alderson, J.C. and Beretta, A., eds., *Evaluating Second Language Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 61-99.

- Lynch, B.K. and Davidson, F., 1994
 'Criterion-Referenced Language Test Development: Linking Curricula, Teachers, and Tests', *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 727-743.
- MacDonald, B., 1988
 'Evaluation and the Control of Education', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Limited in Association with the Open University, 36-48.
- MacDonald, B., 1991
 'Critical Introduction: From Innovation to Reform - A Framework for Analysing Change', Ruddock, J., *Innovation and Change*, Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1-13.
- Maley, A., 1984
 'Constraints-based Syllabuses', Reed, J.A.S., ed., *Trends in Language Syllabus Design*, Anthology Series 13, Singapore: Singapore University Press for SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 90-99.
- Markee, N., 1993
 'The Diffusion of Innovation in Language Teaching', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 229-243.
- Markee, N., 1994a
 'Curricular Innovations: Issues and Problems', *Applied Language Learning*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1-30.
- Markee, N., 1994b
 'Using Electronic Mail to Manage the Implementation of Educational Innovations', *Systems*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 379-389.
- Marsh, C., 1986
 'Curriculum Implementation: An Analysis of Australian Research Studies: 1973-83', *Curriculum Perspectives*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 11-21.
- Marsh, C., 1989
 'Attempting to Fill a Void - A New Curriculum Journal', Harman, G., ed., *Review of Australian Research in Education 1*, Melbourne: Australian Association for Research in Education, 71-77.
- Marsh, C., 1992
Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum, London and New York: Falmer Press.
- McCarger, D.F., 1993
 'Teacher and Student Role Expectations: Cross Cultural Differences and Implications', *The Modern Language Journal*, 77ii, 192-207.

- McCarthy, M. and Carter, R., 1995
 'Spoken Grammar: What Is It and How Can We Teach It?', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/3, 207-218.
- McKay, I., 1994
 'Devolution and Teachers' Wellbeing', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 30-37.
- McKnight, A., 1992
 'Chinese Learners Of English: Cultures in Conflict?', Ferguson, T., ed., *Language in the "Clever Country" - Selected Papers from the Australian Council of TESOL and Multicultural Education National Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 13-17 January, 1992, Volume 3 - Further Issues and Calls to Action*, Melbourne: VATME, 98-113.
- Medgyes, P., 1992
 'Native or Non-Native: Who's Worth More?', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 46/4, 340-349.
- Mendelsohn, D., 1995
 'Applying Learning Strategies in the Second/Foreign Language Listening Comprehension Lesson', Mendelsohn, D.J. and Rubin, J., eds., *A Guide for the Teaching of Second Language Listening*, San Diego, California: Dominic Press Inc., 132-150.
- Ming, C., 1995
Spider Boys, New Zealand: Penguin.
- Mitchell, R., 1990
 'Evaluation of Second Language Teaching Projects and Programmes', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 3-17.
- Moag, R.F., 1992
 'The Life Cycle of Non-Native Englishes: A Case Study', Kachru, B.B., ed., *The Other Tongue*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 233-252.
- Mok, R., 1984
 'The English Language Syllabus in Singapore - Its Design and Development', Read, J.A.S, ed., *Trends in Language Syllabus Design*, Anthology Series 13, Singapore: Singapore University Press for SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 231-243.
- Mok, R., 1987
 'Likely Directions for the Revised English Syllabuses in Singapore', Tickoo, M.L. ed., *Language Syllabuses: State of the Art*, Anthology Series 18, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 147-154.

- Morrow, K., 1987
 'Language Teaching Syllabuses: Fact or Fiction?', in Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Language Syllabuses: State of the Art*, Anthology Series 18, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 33-38.
- Mosback, G., 1990
 "National Syllabus and Textbook Design on Communicative Principles - 'English Every Day'", *ELT Journal*, 44/1, 18-24.
- Munby, J., 1978
Communicative Syllabus Design, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., 1988
Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., in association with The Open University.
- Nair, S. and Foenander, S.H., 1991
 'Setting Out the Unit of Work: What to Bear in Mind', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 4-12.
- Nair, S., 1991
 'A Glossary of Some of the Terms Used in the New Syllabus', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 13-15.
- Nair, S. and Wong M.W., 1992
 'Suggested Materials for a Teacher's Resource Cupboard', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 27-31.
- Nair, S., Wong M.W. and Foo, R., 1992
 'Teaching Resources for English Language and Literature', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 20-24.
- Nair, S., 1994
 'An Investigation into the Implementation of the New English Language Syllabus at the Lower Secondary Levels', *Teaching of English Language and Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 30-32.
- National Institute of Education News, 1996
 'Scholars in the Teaching Profession' *NIE News*, No. 22, 1-2.
- Neufeld, L.S., 1995
 'Monitoring the Implementation of the English Language Syllabus (1991) Primary Level', *The Implementation of the English Language Curriculum in Singapore: Symposium 16-18 February 1995*, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 7-14.

- Newbrook, M., ed., 1987
Aspects of the Syntax of Educated Singaporean English: Attitudes, Beliefs and Usage, European University Studies, Series 14, Anglo-Saxon Language and Literature, Vol. 117, Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang.
- Ng, S.M., 1994
 'Changing the English Language Curriculum in Brunei Darussalam', *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 361-370.
- Ngian, L.C., 1994
 'Singaporeans: Their Reading Habits and Interests', in *Promoting Reading in an Urban Environment: Report on the National Reading Seminar, 1994*, Singapore: National Library, Singapore, 13-30.
- Nias, J., 1993
 'Changing Times, Changing Identities: Grieving for a Lost Self', Burgess, R.G., ed., *Educational Research and Evaluation for Policy or Practice?*, London and Washington D.C.: Falmer Press, 139-156.
- Nisbet, J., 1988
 'The Role of Evaluators in Accountability Systems', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Limited in Association with the Open University, 49-56.
- Noss, R.B., ed., 1984
An Overview of Language Issues in South-East Asia, 1950-1980, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Nunan, D., 1991a
 'Square Pegs in Round Holes: National Curricula and Learner-Centred Philosophies', Burton, J., ed., *Implementing the Learner-Centred Curriculum: NCP Seminar Plenary Papers*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney: Macquarie University, 47-64.
- Nunan, D., 1991b
 'Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum' *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 279-295.
- Nunan, D., 1992
The Learner Centred Curriculum, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nwakoby, F. with Lewin, K., 1991
 'Vocationalising Secondary Education: A Study of the Junior Secondary Schooling Innovation in Nigeria', Lewin, K., with Stuart, J.S., eds., *Educational Innovation in Developing Countries*, London: Macmillan, 219-255.

- O'Neill, R., 1982
 'Why Use Textbooks?', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 36/2, 104-111.
- Oxford, R.L., 1989
 'Use of Language Learning Strategies: A Synthesis of Studies with Implications for Strategy Learning', *System*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 235-247.
- Oxford, R.L. and Anderson, N.J., 1995
 'A Crosscultural View of Learning Styles', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 201-215.
- Pakir, A., 1991
 'The Status of English and the Question of 'Standard' in Singapore: A Sociolinguistic Perspective', in Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Languages and Standards: Issues, Attitudes, Case Studies*, Anthology Series 26, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 109-130.
- Pakir, A., ed., 1992a
Words in a Cultural Context, Singapore: Unipress.
- Pakir, A., 1992b
 'English-knowing Bilingualism in Singapore', Ban, K.C., Pakir, A. and Tong, C.K., eds., *Imagining Singapore*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 234-262.
- Pakir, A., 1993a
 'Two Tongue-Tied: Bilingualism in Singapore', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 14, Nos. 1 & 2, 73-90.
- Pakir, A., ed., 1993b
The English Language in Singapore: Standards and Norms, Singapore: Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics.
- Pakir, A., 1994
 'Education and Invisible Language Planning: The Case of English in Singapore', Kandiah, T. and Kwan-Terry, J., eds., *English and Language Planning: A Southeast Asian Contribution*, Singapore: Times Academic Press for Centre for Advanced Studies, National University of Singapore, 158-181.
- Pakir, A., 1995
 'Expanding Triangles of English Expression in Singapore: Implications for Teaching', Teng, S.C. and Ho M.L., eds., *The English Language in Singapore: Implications for Teaching*, Singapore: Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics sponsored by Singapore Teachers' Union, 1-13.

- Parlett, M., 1981
 'Illuminative Evaluation', Reason, P. and Rowan, J., eds., *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*, Chichester, New York, Brisbane and Toronto: J. Wiley and Sons, 219-226.
- Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D., 1988
 'Evaluation as Illumination: A New Approach to the Study of Innovatory Programmes', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Limited in Association with the Open University, 57-73.
- Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J. and Boydell, T., 1991
The Learning Company, U.K.: McGraw Hill Book Company, Europe.
- Phoon, M.K. and Cheah, C.M., 1981
 'Measuring Functional Literacy Among Secondary One Pupils in Singapore', Read, J.A.S., ed., *Directions in Language Testing*, Anthology Series 9, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, Singapore University Press, 207-222.
- Platt, J.T., 1977
 'The Sub-varieties of Singapore English: their Sociolectal and Functional Status', Crewe, W., ed., *The English Language in Singapore*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, Sdn. Bhd., 83-95.
- Platt, J., Weber, H. and Ho, M.L., 1983
Varieties of English Around the World: Singapore and Malaysia, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Poey, E., 1996
 'Big Boost for the Teaching Service', *Singapore Principals' Executive Centre Bulletin*, Issue No. 2, 4-5.
- Pollitt, A., 1995
 'Giving Students a Sporting Chance: Assessment by Counting and by Judging', Alderson, J.C. and North, B., eds., *Language Testing in the 1990s*, U.K.: Prentice Hall International, 46-59.
- Prodromou, L., 1995
 'The Backwash Effect: From Testing to Teaching', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 49/1, 13-25.
- Prabhu, N.S., 1987
 'Language Education: Equipping or Enabling?', Das, B.K., ed., *Language Education in Human Resource Development*, Anthology Series 20, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 190-201.

- Prabhu, N.S., 1993
 'Descriptive and Prescriptive Approaches to the Norms of English in Singapore', Pakir, A., ed., *The English Language in Singapore: Standards and Norms*, Singapore: Singapore Association for Applied Linguistics, 1-5.
- Pring, R., 1996
 'The Professional Education of Teachers', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 7-19.
- Prideaux, D., 1993
 'School-Based Curriculum Development: Partial, Paradoxical and Piecemeal', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 169-178.
- Purdie, N., 1995
 'What Do Students Think "Learning" Is and How Do They Do It?', *SET: Research Information for Teachers*, No. 2, Item 4, 1-4.
- Rajah, J. and Tay, S., 1991
 'From Second Tongue to Mother Tongue: a Look at the Use of English in Singapore English Drama from the 1960s to the Present', Thumboo, E., ed., *Perceiving Other Worlds*, Singapore: Times Academic Press for Unipress, 400-412.
- Rea-Dickins, P. and Germaine, K., 1992
Evaluation, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rea-Dickins, P., 1994
 'Evaluation and English Language Teaching', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 71-91.
- Reves, T. and Medgyes, P., 1994
 'The Non-Native English Speaking EFL/ESL Teacher's Self-Image: An International Survey', *System*, Vol. 22. No. 3, 353-367.
- Rice, E.M. and Schneider, G.T., 1994
 'A Decade of Teacher Empowerment: An Empirical Analysis of Teacher Involvement in Decision Making, 1989-1991', *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 43-58.
- Richards, J.C. and Rodgers, T., 1987
 'Method: Approach, Design and Procedure', Long, M.H. and Richards, J.C., eds., *Methodology in TESOL: A Book of Readings*, New York: Newbury House Publishers, 145-157.
- Rogers, E.M., 1983
Diffusion of Innovations, Third Edition, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company Inc.

- Saravanan, V., 1994
 'Language Maintenance and Language Shift in the Tamil-English Community', Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho, W.H., and Saravanan, V., eds., *Language, Society and Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 175-204.
- SEAMEO/Australia Institutional Links Project, 1995
Implementing the English Language Curriculum in Singapore, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional English Language Centre.
- Seedhouse, P., 1996
 'Classroom Interaction: Possibilities and Impossibilities', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 16-24.
- Seliger, H.W. and Shohamy, E., 1989
Second Language Research Methods, Oxford and Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Sergiovanni, T.J., 1994
 'Organisations or Communities? Changing the Metaphor Changes the Theory', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 214-226.
- Shaw, W.D., 1983
 'Asian Student Attitudes Towards English', Smith, L.E., ed., *Readings in English as an International Language*, United Kingdom and New York: Pergamon Press Ltd., 21-23.
- Shkedi, A., 1996
 'School-based Workshops for Teacher Participation in Curriculum Development', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 699-711.
- Shohamy, E., Donitsa-Schmidt, S. and Ferman, I., 1996
 'Test Impact Revisited: Washback Effect Over Time', *Language Testing*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 298-317.
- Sim, W.K., 1990
 'Towards Prioritising, Orchestrating and Evaluating Action Research in Singapore', *Singapore Journal of Education, Special Issue - Selected Papers from the Third Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, 5-13.
- Singapore Teachers' Union, 1995
12th Biennial Report: 1993-1995, Singapore: Singapore Teachers' Union.
- Skehan, P., 1988
 'Language Testing: Part I', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 211-221.

- Skehan, P., 1989
 'Language Testing: Part II', *Language Teaching*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1-13.
- Skehan, P., 1995
 'Progress in Language Testing: the 1990s', in Alderson, J.C., and North, B., eds., *Language Testing in the 1990s*, U.K.: Prentice Hall International. 3-21.
- Soh K.C., Lam T.L. and Poh S.H., 1985
Teaching as a Career: A Survey of Pre-University Students' Views, Occasional Paper No. 25, Singapore: Institute of Education, Singapore.
- Soh K.C., 1987
 'Teacher Stress as a Correlate of Attitudes Towards Responsibility and Change', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 89-91.
- Stephenson, H., 1994
 'Management and Participation in ELT Projects', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 48/3, 225-231.
- Stenhouse, L., 1988
 'The Conduct, Analysis and Reporting of Case Study in Educational Research and Evaluation', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., in Association with The Open University, 212-224.
- Stern, H.H., eds. Allen, P. and Harley, B., 1992
Issues and Options in Language Teaching, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stoller, F.L., 1994
 'The Diffusion of Innovations in Intensive ESL Programs', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 300-327.
- Straits Times, The, 1993
 'Singlish: Can or Not?', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 14 May, 34.
- Straits Times, The, 1994a
 'English: A Singaporean Mother Tongue?', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 14 June, Section 2, 4-5.
- Straits Times, The, 1994b
 'NUS to Phase Out Linguistics Programme', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 13 September, Section 2, 2.
- Straits Times, The, 1995a
 'Literature: Who needs It?', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 26 May, 32.

- Straits Times, The, 1995b
 'Book as Interesting for its Contents as for its Street-Slang Language', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 27 May, Section 2, 32.
- Straits Times, The, 1995c
 'School discipline "not worse but problem pupils more defiant"', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 30 June, 12.
- Straits Times, The, 1995d
 'Bestsellers', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 5 August, Section 2, 12.
- Straits Times, The, 1995e
 'More scholars with better grades choose to become teachers', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 16 September, Life!, 4.
- Straits Times, The, 1995f
 'Principals can best cut stress levels among teachers: study', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 30 September, 3.
- Straits Times, The, 1995g
 'Simple actions by principals combat stress in teachers', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 30 September, 25.
- Straits Times, The, 1996a
 'Classified Advertisements: 736 - Tuition', *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 2 March, 46.
- Straits Times, The 1996b
 "Education system on 'right track'", *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 4 July, 1.
- Sturman, A., 1994
 'School Administrative Style and the Curriculum', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 16-23.
- Swan, M., 1994
 'The Textbook: Bridge or Wall?', Bowers, R. and Brumfit, C., eds., *Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching*, Modern English Publications and the British Council, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 32-35.
- Talib, I.S., 1994
 'The Development of Singaporean Literature in English', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 15, No. 5, 419-429.
- Tan, C.H. and Gupta, A.F., 1992
 'Post-Vocalic /r/ in Singapore English', Harlow, S.J. and Warner, A.R., eds., *York Papers in Linguistics 16 (1992)*, England: University of York, 139-152.

- Tan, J., 1993
 'Independent Schools in Singapore: Implications for Social and Educational Inequalities', *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 239-251.
- Tan, P.T., 1988
 'A Description of Patterns of Code-Mixing and Code-Switching in a Multilingual Household', Foley, J.A., ed., *New Englishes: The Case of Singapore*, Singapore: Singapore Universities Press, National University of Singapore, 70-99.
- Tan, Y.S. and Soh, Y., 1994
The Development of Singapore's Modern Media Industry, Singapore: Times Academic Press.
- Tay, M.W.J., 1979
 'The Uses, Users and Features of English in Singapore', Richards, J., ed., *New Varieties of English: Issues and Approaches*, Occasional Papers, No. 8, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 91-111.
- Thompson, G., 1996
 'Some Misconceptions About Communicative Language Teaching', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 9-15.
- Tickle, A., Delk, C. and Staub, D., 1995
 'Action Research on Peer Review: What Do Students Think?', Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Reading and Writing: Theory into Practice*, Anthology Series 35, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 85-100.
- Tickoo, M.L., 1986
 'Syllabuses, Scholars and Schooling Systems', Noss, R. and Llamzon, T., eds., *Sociolinguistic Aspects of Language Learning and Teaching*, Occasional Papers, 41, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 43-60.
- Toh, K.A., Yap, K.C., Lee, S., Springham, S.V. and Chua, P., 1996
 'Developing Curriculum in Singapore: Teacher-Academic Partnerships', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 683-697.
- Tongue, R.K., 1974
The English of Singapore and Malaysia, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, Sdn. Bhd.
- Tremblay, P.F. and Gardner, R.C., 1995
 'Expanding the Motivation Construct in Learning', *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 79, No. 4, 505-518.
- Tweddle, S., 1995
 'A Curriculum for the Future: A Curriculum Built for Change', *English in Education*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 3-11.

- Varghese, S.A., 1994
 'Reading and Writing Instruction in Singapore Secondary Schools', Gopinathan, S., Pakir, A., Ho, W.K. and Saravanan, V., eds., *Language, Society and Education in Singapore: Issues and Trends*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 296-312.
- Vulliamy, G., 1990
 'The Potential of Qualitative Educational Research Strategies in Developing Countries', Vulliamy, G., Lewin, K. and Stephens, D., eds., *Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries*, London: Falmer Press, 7-25.
- Walker, R., 1988
 'Techniques for Research', Murphy, R. and Torrance, H., eds., *Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., in Association with The Open University, 225-247.
- Walker, R., 1992
 'Educational Research and Educational Change: An Unfinished List of Assertions', Sim, W.K. and Toh, K.A., eds., *Fifth Annual Conference of the Educational Research Association 'Research and Educational Change' - Proceedings*, Singapore: Educational Research Association, Singapore, 9-17.
- Wall, D. and Alderson, J.C., 1993
 'Examining Washback: the Sri Lankan Impact Study' *Language Testing*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 41-69.
- Wall, D., 1996
 'Introducing New Tests into Traditional Systems: Insights from General Education and Innovation Theory', *Language Testing*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 334-354.
- Wallace, J., Parker, L. and Wildy, H., 1995
 'Curriculum Reform and the Case of the Disappearing Agents', *Educational Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 41-54.
- Wallace, M.J., 1991
Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wee, H.T. and Chong, K.C., 1991
 '25 Years of School Management', Yip, S.K.J. and Sim W.K., eds., *Evolution of Educational Excellence: 25 Years of Education in the Republic of Singapore*, Singapore: Longman, 31-58.
- Whelan, I.M., 1995
 'Quality and Qualifications: Ignorance, Insight, and the Experienced Teacher in Successful Curriculum Change', *Curriculum Perspectives*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 55-64.

- White, R.V., 1988
The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation and Management, Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- White, R., Martin, M., Stimson, M. and Hodge, R., 1991
Management in English Language Teaching, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White, R.V., 1993
 'Innovation in Curriculum Planning and Program Development', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 244-259.
- White, R. and Robinson, P., 1995
 'Current Approaches to Syllabus Design: A Discussion with Ron White', *Guidelines*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 93-101.
- Whitehead, D.J., 1980
The Dissemination of Educational Innovations in Britain, Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton Educational.
- Widdowson, H.G., 1987
 'Aspects of Syllabus Design', in Tickoo, M.L., ed., *Language Syllabuses: State of the Art*, Anthology Series 18, Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 65-89.
- Widdowson, H.G., 1992
 'ELT and EL Teachers; Matters Arising', *ELT Journal* Vol. 46/4, 333-339.
- Widdowson, H.G., 1993
 'Innovation in Teacher Development', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 260-275.
- Widdowson, H.G., 1994
 'The Ownership of English', *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 377-389.
- Wildy, H., Wallace, J. and Parker, L., 1996
 'Decentralising Curriculum Reform: The Link Teacher Model of In-Service Training', *School Organisation*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 17-28.
- Winder, R.V.P., 1994
 "*I Am Gay*": *Language and Identity in a Marginalised Community in Singapore*, Working Papers on Language, Literature and Theatre, No. 4, Singapore: Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore.
- Wong, K.Y., 1991
 'Curriculum Development in Singapore', Marsh, C. and Morris, P., eds., *Curriculum Development in East Asia*, London and New York: Falmer Press, 129-160.

- Wong, Y.L.R., 1988
'The Relationship Between Teacher Morale and School Climate',
*Singapore Journal of Education, Special Issue - Selected Papers
of 1st Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, 41-
45.
- Woods, D., 1991
'Teachers' Interpretations of Second Language Teaching
Curricula', *RELC Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1-18.
- Yeo, H.C., Liow, S.R. and Gupta, A.F., 1994
'Specific Language Disorders in Singaporean Children: Four Case
Studies', *Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1-10.
- Yeo, R., ed., 1989
Singapore Short Stories, Singapore: Heinemann, Asia.
- Yip, S.K.J., Eng, S.P. and Yap, Y.C.J., 1991
'25 Years of Educational Reform', Yip, S.K.J. and Sim, W.K.,
eds., *Evolution of Educational Excellence: 25 Years of Education
in the Republic of Singapore*, Singapore: Longman, 1-30.
- Yip, S.K.J., 1992
'Research and Educational Change: Singapore Perspective', Sim,
W.K. and Toh, K.A., eds., *Fifth Annual Conference of the
Educational Research Association - Research and Educational
Change - Proceedings*, Singapore: Educational Research
Association, Singapore, 1-8.
- Zhang Y., 1994
'Leadership Attributes in a Cultural Setting in Singapore',
International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 8, No. 6,
16-18.
- Zhiming B., 1995
'Already in Singapore English', *World Englishes*, Vol. 14, No. 2,
181-188.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 2

Unpublished Works

Balasingam, A., 1990

An Analysis of Some Linguistic Patterns in English of 'O' Level Pupils in Singapore, a Special Project, Award of the Diploma in Applied Linguistics: Singapore.

Chan, P.G.L., 1987

Curriculum Innovations: A Study of the CLUE Programme with Reference to Teachers' Attitudes and Concerns, unpublished MA thesis, National University of Singapore: Singapore.

Chan, S.K., 1992

A Study of the Perception of Teachers and Students Regarding Explicit Grammar Instruction in Communicative Language Teaching, a Special Project, Award of the Diploma in Applied Linguistics: Singapore.

Chia. S.L.L., 1986

Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of Communicative Activities as Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning, unpublished MA thesis, National University of Singapore: Singapore.

Dhillon, R.K., 1984

The Attitudes of the Singapore Government to English - A Historical Account, unpublished project, Diploma in Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre: Singapore.

Goh, S.G., 1986

The Teaching of Composition Skills at the Upper Secondary Level in Singapore Schools, unpublished MA thesis, National University of Singapore: Singapore.

Lim, C., 1986

English in Singapore: A Study of Its Status and Solidarity and the Attitude to Its Use, unpublished PhD thesis, National University of Singapore: Singapore.

Lim, C.S., 1995

'Culture and Pedagogy: Their Impact on the Development of English Language Materials for Singapore Schools', unpublished paper presented at the RELC Seminar, *Exploring Language, Culture and Literature in Language Learning*: Singapore.

- Phun, J., 1986
The Institutionalization of English in Singapore and Its Implications for English Language Teaching, unpublished project, Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre: Singapore.
- Seah-Tay, H.Y., 1996
Role Conflict Among Heads of Department in Singapore Secondary Schools, unpublished MEd thesis, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University: Singapore.
- Skuja-Steele, R.V., 1995
'Current Concerns Related to the Secondary English Language Syllabus', unpublished paper presented at the Second Principals' Conference, 4-6 Sep: Singapore.
- Suvaranis, S., 1991
A Study of the New English Language Syllabus for Lower Secondary Classes, unpublished special project, Diploma of Applied Linguistics: Singapore.
- Tan, J., 1996
'The Marketisation of Education in Singapore: Policies and Implications', unpublished paper delivered at the 10th Annual Conference of the Educational Research Association: Singapore.
- Yeoh, O.C., 1984
Curriculum Innovations and the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, unpublished paper in SEAMEO Regional Language, Singapore: Singapore.
- Yeoh, O.C., Lam T.L.P. and Foong Y.Y., 1994
Teacher Curriculum Beliefs, Concerns and Practice: Implications for Implementing Curriculum Change in Primary Schools, unpublished paper delivered at the 8th Annual Conference of the Educational Research Association: Singapore.
- Yim, L.W., 1993
Relating Teachers' Perceptions of the Place of Grammar to Their Teaching Practices, unpublished MA dissertation, National University of Singapore: Singapore.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 3

Unpublished Ministry of Education Papers, Documents, Reports and Communications

- Assistant Director (1), Examinations Branch, 1995
GCE 'O' Level English Language - Paper 2, unpublished letter to Deputy Director, Languages and Library Branch, 5 October 1995.
- Assistant Director (1) Languages and Library Development Branch, 1994
Grammar Teaching in the Revised EL Syllabus, unpublished paper CDC/94/84/1/02, presented to the Curriculum Development Committee, 27 June, 1994 in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Cayley, Christine M., 1992
Guidelines from UCLES on the 1993 'O' Level Examination, unpublished letter to EA(O) 11 May, 1992.
- Central Testing Service Branch, Research and Testing Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1985
Assessment Guidelines-English Language-Sec 1 and 2 (Special/Express), Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1987
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1988, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1988
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1989, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1989
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1990, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1990
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1991, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991a
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1992, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991b
English Language Syllabus (Secondary), Ministry of Education: Singapore.

- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1992
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials For Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1993, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993a
List of Approved Supplementary Materials Primary & Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1993, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993b
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials For Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1994, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993c
The EL Syllabus, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994a
List of Approved Supplementary Materials Primary & Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1994, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994b
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials For Secondary Schools, Singapore, 1995, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994c
Curriculum Planning Division Handbook, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994d
School-Based Workshops, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995
School-Based Workshops, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Curriculum Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1996
School-Based Workshops, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Deans, Schools of Education and Arts, National Institute of Education, 1995
With Reference to the "Report on Measures to Emphasize the Teaching of English Grammar", unpublished letter to Deputy Director, Languages and Library Development Branch, 2 May, 1994, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Deputy Director, Examinations Branch, 1995
The Development of the National Examinations in Singapore: A Status Report, unpublished paper to Members of Ministerial Committee, 2 November.
- Deputy Director, Languages and Library Development Branch, 1994
'Teaching of Grammar and Phonics', unpublished paper CDC/94/85/1, presented to the Curriculum Development Committee, 15 Oct, 1994 in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.

- Deputy Director, Languages and Library Development Branch, 1995a
'The Teaching of Grammar - 2nd Progress Report', unpublished paper CDC/95/87/I, presented to the Curriculum Development Committee, 14 March, 1995 in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Deputy Director, Languages and Library Development Branch, 1995b
'Report on Measures to Emphasize the Teaching of English Grammar', unpublished paper, presented to the Members of the Ministerial Committee, 29 June, 1995 in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Education Services Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1984
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary, Singapore, 1985, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Education Services Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1985
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary, Singapore, 1986, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- Education Services Division, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1986
List of Approved Textbooks/Instructional Materials, Primary and Secondary, Singapore, 1987, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1981-1992
File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2, unpublished papers.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1987
Listening Comprehension Guidelines for Secondary Schools: Normal, Express and Special Courses, Ministry of Education: Singapore.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990a
The New GCE "O"-Level Oral English Examination: Teacher's Training Manual, Ministry of Education, Singapore.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990b
EL Syllabus Dissemination Package: Core Training Package (Secondary).
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991a
Self-Appraisal Report, 1991.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b
1992 Work Plan.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992-1995
File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3, unpublished papers.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992a
The English Unit Self Appraisal Report, 1992.

- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992b
1993 Work Plan.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993a
Working Towards Terminal Objectives: Syllabus Support Materials for Secondary Schools.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993b
English Language Unit, Self Appraisal Report, 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993c
1994 Work Plan.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993d
Checklist for Appraisal of the English Language and Literature Programmes in Secondary Schools.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994a
Ideas for Continuous Assessment in Secondary Schools.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994b
1993 Training Activities of Less Than 8 Hours.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994c
English Language Unit, Self Appraisal Report, 1994.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994d
1995 Work Plan.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995a
Teaching Grammar, Secondary One to Five, Ministry of Education, Singapore.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995b
Training Activities for Secondary Schools, 1995.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995c
English Language Unit, Self Appraisal Report, 1995.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1996
Briefing on the Teaching of Grammar at the Secondary Level on 4 March 96 in the 4th level Theatre, Environment Building, Scotts Road, unpublished notes distributed to secondary schools.
- Examinations and Assessment Branch, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991
Singapore-Cambridge GCE 'O' Level Examination, 1991: Marking Scheme for English Language Oral Examination.

Examinations and Assessment Branch, Research and Testing Division,
Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993

*Assessment Guidelines (Draft)-Lower Secondary English
Language Sec 1 and 2 (Special/Express/Normal)*, Ministry of
Education: Singapore.

Examinations and Assessment Branch, Research and Testing Division,
Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994

*Assessment Guidelines - Lower Secondary English Language Sec
1 and 2 (Special/Express/Normal Academic)*, Ministry of
Education: Singapore.

Foo Choh Hoon, 1995

MOE Publication - Contact, communication to school principals
and MOE branch heads.

Gefen, Raphael, 1982

*Indications of Possible Directions In Coping with Some Major
Problems in EL1 Teaching in Singapore - A Report of a Visit 1-29
May, 1982.*

Goh Keng Swee and the Education Study Team, 1979

Report on the Ministry of Education, 1978, Ministry of Education:
Singapore.

Language Proficiency Centre, 1994

*Courses and Workshops Facilitating the Implementation of the
New English Language Syllabus for Secondary Schools.*

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1982

*New Education System Secondary: English Language Syllabus
Sec 1-4 Express/Special Course*, Ministry of Education:
Singapore.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1983

*New Education System Secondary: English Language, Secondary
1 to 4 Normal Course (Draft)*, Ministry of Education: Singapore.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993

*MCM Paper MC/93/019 - Performance in GCE 'O' Level Subjects
from 1982-1991*, 11 January.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994

Education Statistics Digest, 1994, Ministry of Education:
Singapore.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995a

Directory 1995, Ministry of Education (Headquarters), Ministry of
Education: Singapore.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995b

Directory of Schools and Educational Institutions 1995, Ministry
of Education: Singapore.

- Morris, Robert W., and Thompson, Gerald P., 1979
Curriculum Development in Singapore: A Brief Review.
- Pastoral Care and Career Guidance Section, Pupil Services Branch,
Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995
*Report Presented at the National Conference on Career Guidance,
1995*, unpublished.
- Public Relations Branch, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994
Contact, Volume 1, Number 1.
- Research Section, Management Information and Planning Division,
Ministry of Community Development, Singapore, 1988
*A Study of Singaporean Youths: Their Perceptions and
Aspirations*, Ministry of Community Development: Singapore.
- Sandosham, Linda, and Schoonbeck, Evelyn, 1988
A Report on the CLUE Project, May 1982-December 1988,
Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore: Singapore.
- Specialist Inspector of English Language 5, 1984
*Project to Assist Selected Schools in English Skills (PASSES) - A
Preliminary Report*, paper presented to Members of Ministerial
Committee, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspectors of English Language 7 and 9, 1987
*Revision of the English Language Syllabuses (Primary and
Secondary)*, paper CDC/87/61/D/01, presented to the Curriculum
Development Committee, 18 October, 1987, in File NO7-08-024
Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspector of English Language 5, 1988
*Report on the Project to Assist Selected Schools in English Skills
(PASSES)*, paper presented to Members of Ministerial Committee,
in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspectors of English Language 6 and 7, 1988
*Further Amendments to Time Frame for Phasing in Revised EL
Syllabus (Primary and Secondary)*, paper CDC/88/64/I/01
presented to the Curriculum, Development Committee, 22 August
1988, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspectors of English Language 5 and 13, and
Assistant Director Languages and Library Development Branch, 1989
Revision of the GCE "O"-Level Oral English Examination, paper
presented to Members of Ministerial Committee, in File NO7-08-
024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspector of English Language 7, (collator), 1991
Feedback for the EL Syllabus Committee (1991).

- Specialist Inspector of English Language 7, 1992a
EL Syllabus Dissemination Committee: Feedback Based on Data Collected from Form B.
- Specialist Inspector of English Language 7, 1992b
A Report on the New English Language Syllabus (Primary and Secondary), in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Specialist Inspectors of English Language 8 and 14, 1994
The Place of Grammar in the Modified PSLE, 'N' and 'O' level English Language Examinations, paper CDC/94/84/I/01, presented to the Curriculum Development Committee, 24 June, 1994 in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Specialist Inspector of English Language 2, (compiler), 1995
Response to Papers Presented by NIE Lecturers at the Second Principal's Conference, 4-6 Sept 95.
- Staff Training Branch, Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994
Memorandum: In-Service Courses Offered to Teachers to Support the Implementation of the EL Syllabus at the Secondary Level.
- Syllabus Monitoring Committee, The, English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992
Report of the Syllabus Implementation Monitoring Committee, 1992, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2.
- Syllabus Monitoring Committee, The, English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993
Report of the Syllabus Implementation & Dissemination Monitoring Committee, 1993, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Syllabus Monitoring Committee, The, English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994
Report of the Syllabus Implementation Monitoring Committee, 1994, File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Syllabus Monitoring Committee, The, English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995
Report of the Syllabus Implementation Monitoring Committee, 1995, in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3.
- Widdowson, H.G., 1981
Observations on English Teaching in Singapore - A Report on a Reconnaissance Visit - 21 Jan-3 Feb, 1981.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 4

Minutes of Meetings

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1989

Notes of a Meeting of the English Unit, held on 1 December 1989.¹

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990a

Notes of 1st Meeting (90) of the English Unit, held on 19 Jan 90.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990b

Notes of 3rd English Unit Meeting, held on 25 April 90.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990c

Minutes of 4th EL Unit Meeting, held on 27 June 1990.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990d

Minutes of 5th EL Unit Meeting, held on 24th July.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990e

Minutes of the 6th EL Unit Meeting, held on Wednesday 29 August.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990f

Minutes of the 7th EL Unit Meeting, held on Wednesday 26 September.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990g

Minutes of the 8th English Unit Meeting, held on Friday 26 October 1990.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990h

Notes of Meeting of the English Unit held on 28 November 1990.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990i

Notes of the Meeting of the English Unit held on 19 December 1990.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1990j

Minutes of a Meeting of CDIS New English Teams (NET) with English Language Specialist Inspectors held on 17 March 90 (in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2).

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991a

Notes of the Meeting of the English Unit, held on 30 January 1991.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b

Minutes of the EL Unit Meeting held on Wednesday 27 Mar 91.

¹ Unless stated otherwise, all minutes of English Unit Meetings are located in an unofficial file: English Unit Meetings File

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991c
Notes of the 4th EL Unit Meeting (91) held on Tuesday 30 Apr.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991d
Notes of the Sharing Session with Inspectors of Schools by
Specialist Inspectors (English Language) on 24 May 91
(in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2).

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991e
Notes of the 5th EL Unit Meeting (91) held on Wednesday 29
May 91.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991f
Notes of the 7th EL Unit Meeting held on 31 July 1991.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991g
Notes of the 9th EL Unit Meeting held on 25 September 1991.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991h
Minutes of EL HODs/SSTs Zonal Meetings for Secondary
Schools. on 1 Oct 91 and 2 Oct 91
(in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 2).

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1991i
Notes of the 10th EL Unit Meeting held on 30 October 1991.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992a
Notes of the 1/92 English Unit Meeting held on 30 Jan 92.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992b
Notes of the 2/92 English Unit Meeting held on 6 Mar 92.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992c
Notes of the 3/92 English Unit Meeting held on 16 April 92.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992d
Notes of the 4/92 English Unit Meeting held on 13th May 92.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992e
Notes of the meeting on syllabus implementation held on Friday
25 May 1992.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992f
Notes of the meeting on syllabus implementation held on
Saturday 6 June 1992.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992g
Notes of the meeting on syllabus implementation held on
Wednesday 10 June 1992.

English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992h
Notes of the 5/92 English Unit Meeting held on 29th June 92.

- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992i
Notes of the 6th English Unit Meeting held on 6th August 1992.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992j
Notes of the 7th English Unit Meeting held on 3 Sept 1992.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992k
Notes of the 8th English Unit Meeting held on 8th Oct 1992.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1992l
Notes of the 9th English Unit Meeting held on 1 Dec 1992.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993a
Notes of the 1st (93) EL Unit Meeting held on Friday 15 Jan 93.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993b
Notes of the 2nd (93) EL Unit Meeting held on Wednesday 10 February, 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993c
Notes of the 3rd (93) EL Unit Meeting held on Thurs 11 Mar 93.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993d
Notes of the 5th EL Unit Meeting held on 10 June 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993e
Notes of the 6th EL Unit Meeting held on 15 July 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993f
Notes of the 7th EL Unit Meeting held on 9 Sep 93.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993g
Notes of the 8th EL Unit Meeting held on 14 Oct 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993h
Notes of the 9th EL Unit Meeting held on 11th November 1993.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1993i
Notes of the 10th EL Unit Meeting held on 9th December 93.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994a
Notes of the 1st EL Unit Meeting held on 14th January 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994b
Notes of the 2nd EL Unit Meeting held on 3 Feb 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994c
Notes of 3rd Unit Meeting held on Thursday 10 Mar.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994d
Notes of 4th Unit Meeting held on Thursday 14 April.

- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994e
Notes on the 5th Unit Meeting held on Friday 13 May 1994.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994f
Notes on the 6th Unit Meeting held on Thursday 16 June 1994.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994g
Notes on the 7th Unit Meeting held on Thu 14 July 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994g
Notes of the 8th Unit Meeting held on 8 Sep 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994h
Notes of the 9th Unit Meeting held on 6 Oct 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1994i
Notes of the 10th Unit Meeting held on Thursday 10 Nov 94.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995a
Notes on the 1st EL Unit Meeting held on Monday 16 Jan 95.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995b
Notes on the 2nd EL Unit Meeting held on Tuesday, 14th March 1995.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995c
Notes on the 3rd EL Unit Meeting held on Tuesday, 11 April 1995.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995d
Notes on the 4th Unit Meeting held on Thursday 18 May 95.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995e
Notes on the 5th Unit Meeting held on Tuesday 11 July.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995f
Notes on the 6th English Unit Meeting held on Mon 7 Aug.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995g
Notes on the 7th Unit Meeting held on Tue 19 Sep 95.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995h
Notes on the 8th Unit Meeting held on Tues 10 Oct 95.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995i
Notes on the 9th EL Unit Meeting held on Thu 9 Nov 95.
- English Unit, Curriculum Planning Division, 1995j
Notes of a meeting of the EL Unit to discuss Syllabus Monitoring held on 25 Nov 95.

Monitoring Committee, 1991

Notes taken at the 3rd Monitoring Committee Meeting on 9 July 1991

(in unofficial Monitoring Committee File).

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992a

Syllabus Implementation & Monitoring for 1992: Activities and Strategies.¹

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992b

Notes of the 2nd Meeting 1992, 18 Feb 1992.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992c

Notes of the 4th Meeting 1992, 3 March 1992.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992d

Notes of the 5th Meeting of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 11 Mar 92.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992e

Notes of the 6th Meeting of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 13 Apr 92.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992f

Notes of the 7th Meeting of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 6 Oct 92.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992g

Notes of the 8th Meeting of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 16 Oct.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992h

Notes of the 9th and 10th Meeting of the Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on:

- (i) 19 Oct 92
- (ii) 20 Oct 92.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992i

Notes of the 1st Meeting of the 1993 Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 22 Dec 92.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1992j

Notes of the 2nd Meeting of the 1993 Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 31 Dec 1992.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee Division, 1993a

Notes of the 3rd Meeting of the 1993 Syllabus Implementation and Monitoring Committee held on 7 June 1993.

¹ All minutes of the meetings of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee are kept in an unofficial file: Syllabus Monitoring Committee File

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1993b
Notes of the 6th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee (1993)
held on 14 June 1993.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1993c
Notes of the 7th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee (1993)
held on 19 June.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1993d
Notes of the 8th Meeting of the Monitoring Committee (1993)
held on 4 October 1993.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994a
Notes of the Meeting of Syllabus Monitoring Committee for the
EL Syllabus, 11th January 1994.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994b
Notes of the Meeting of the Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 3rd
March 94.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994c
Notes on a Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, 31st Oct
1994.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1994d
Notes on a Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, Nov 8 94.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995a
Notes on the First Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, 23 Jan.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995b
Notes on the Second Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, 7
March 1995.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995c
Notes on the Third Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, 9 May
1995.

Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995d
Notes on the Fourth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee, 8 Aug
1995.

The Teaching of English, 1992
Notes of the meeting on *The Teaching of English* on 14 Sep
(in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3).

The Teaching and Learning of Grammar, 1994
Notes of the meeting on the *Teaching and Learning of Grammar*
on 22 April
(in File NO7-08-024 Review of Syllabuses, Vol. 3).

BIBLIOGRAPHY 5

School Appraisal Reports

- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1990a
Report 1: Government Secondary School, 23 February to 1 March.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1990b
Report 2: Government Secondary School, 18-24 April.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991a
Report 3: - Government Secondary School, 2-8 May.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991b
Report 4: Government Secondary School, 17-23 July.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991c
Report 5: Government Secondary School, 14-20 August.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1992a
Report 6: Government Secondary School, 26 February to 3 March.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1992b
Report 7: Government-Aided Secondary School, 15-21 July.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1992c
Report 8: Government Secondary School, 20-26 August.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993a
Report 9: Independent Secondary School, 17-24 February.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993b
Report 10: Independent Secondary School, 24 March to 2 April.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993c
Report 11: Independent Secondary School, 22-29 April.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993d
Report 12: Government-Aided Secondary School, 19-24 July.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994a
Report 13: Government Secondary School, 23 February to 1 March.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994b
Report 14: Government Secondary School, 23-29 March.
- Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994c
Report 15: Government Secondary School, 23-29 March.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994d
Report 16: Government Secondary School, 20-26 April.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994e
Report 17: Government Secondary School, 27 April to 4 May.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994f
Report 18: Government Secondary School, 27 July to 2 August.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994g
Report 19: Government-Aided Secondary School, 17-23 August.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994h
Report 20: Government-Aided Secondary School, 24-30 August.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995a
Report 21: Government Secondary School, 22-28 February

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995b
Report 22: Government Secondary School, 22-28 February.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995c
Report 23: Government Secondary School, 22-28 March.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995d
Report 24: Government Secondary School, 29 March to 4 April.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995e
Report 25: Government Secondary School, 26 April to 3 May.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995f
Report 26: Government Secondary School, 26 April to 3 May.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995g
Report 27: Government Secondary School, 19-25 July.

Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995h
Report 28: Government Secondary School, 17-23 August.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 6

Course Books

- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1983a
Course in Learning and Using English: 1 Express, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1983b
Course in Learning and Using English: 1 Normal, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1984a
Course in Learning and Using English: 2 Express, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1984b
Course in Learning and Using English: 2 Normal, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1985a
Course in Learning and Using English: 3 Express, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1985b
Course in Learning and Using English: 3 Normal, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1986a
Course in Learning and Using English: 4 Normal, Singapore:
Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1986b
Course in Learning and Using English: 'O' Level (4E/5N),
Singapore: Federal Publications (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1991
New CLUE, 1, Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1992
New CLUE, 2, Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1993a
New CLUE 3, Express, Singapore: Federal Publications.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1993b
New CLUE 3, Normal (Academic), Singapore: Federal
Publications.
- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1994a
New CLUE 4, Normal (Academic), Singapore: Federal
Publications.

- Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1994b
New CLUE 'O' Level, 4 Express/5 Normal (Academic), Singapore:
 Federal Publications.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1988a
New Expressway English 1, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1988b
New Expressway English 2, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1989a
New Expressway English 3, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1989b
New Blueprint for English 1, Singapore: FEP International Private
 Limited.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1989c
New Blueprint for English 2, Singapore: FEP International Private
 Limited.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1989d
New Blueprint for English 3, Singapore: FEP International Private
 Limited.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1989e
New Blueprint for English 4, Singapore: FEP International Private
 Limited.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1990
New Expressway English 4, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1992a
New Expressway English 2, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1992b
New Expressway English 3, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1992c
New Blueprint for English 3, Singapore: FEP International Pte.
 Ltd.
- Davis, C. and Watts, A.J., 1993
New Expressway English 4, Singapore: FEP International Pte. Ltd.
- Etherton, A.R.B., 1982a
SCOPE 1, Singapore: Book Emporium, Pte. Ltd.
- Etherton, A.R.B., 1982b
SCOPE 2, Singapore: Book Emporium, Pte. Ltd.
- Etherton, A.R.B., 1983
SCOPE 3, Singapore: Book Emporium, Pte. Ltd.

- Etherton, A.R.B., 1984
SCOPE 4, Singapore: Book Emporium, Pte. Ltd.
- Etherton, A.R.B., and Etherton, A., 1995a
Thematic and Integrated English Series Book 3, Singapore: Shing Lee Publishers Pte. Ltd.
- Etherton, A.R.B., and Etherton, A., 1995b
Thematic and Integrated English Series Book 4, Singapore: Shing Lee Publishers Pte. Ltd.
- Kirkpatrick, T.A., Saravanan, V., Kirkpatrick, L. and Fry, C., 1982a
Interlink 3, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkpatrick, T.A., Saravanan, V., Kirkpatrick, L. and Fry, C., 1982b
Interlink 4, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkpatrick, T.A., Saravanan, V., Kirkpatrick, L. and Fry, C., 1983a
Interlink 1, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Kirkpatrick, T.A., Saravanan, V., Kirkpatrick, L. and Fry, C., 1983b
Interlink 2, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Lim, S., Sobrielo, A. and Pereira, D., 1989a
Forte Book 3, Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte.) Ltd.
- Lim, S., Sobrielo, A. and Pereira, D., 1989b
Forte Book 4, Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte.) Ltd.
- Lim, S., Sobrielo, A. and Pereira, D., 1990a
Forte Book 1, Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte.) Ltd.
- Lim, S., Sobrielo, A. and Pereira, D., 1990b
Forte Book 2, Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte.) Ltd.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 7

Public Examinations and Related Reports

Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore, and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1988

'O-Level English Language (1120)', in *1987 & 1988: Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations: Area Advisory Committee Biennial Meetings with Principals and Teachers: Answers from Cambridge Syndicate to Questions Submitted by Schools and Junior Colleges*, (2-6).

Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore, and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1990

'N-Level English Language (1180)' and 'O-Level English Language (1120)', in *1989 & 1990: Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations: Area Advisory Committee Biennial Meetings with Principals and Teachers: Answers from Cambridge Syndicate to Questions Submitted by Schools and Junior Colleges*, (1 and 8-18).

Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore, and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1992

'English Language Subject 1120', in *1991 & 1992: Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations: Area Advisory Committee Biennial Meetings with Principals and Teachers: Answers from Cambridge Syndicate to Questions Submitted by Schools and Junior Colleges*, (7-11).

Ministry of Education, Republic of Singapore, and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1993

'English Language Subject 1120/1 & 1120/2', in *1992 & 1993: Answers from Cambridge Examinations Syndicate to Questions Submitted by Schools and Junior Colleges*, (1-9).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1987

'English Language', in *Report on the N Level Examinations, N Level (Singapore), September 1986*, (6-11).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1991

'English Language', in *Report on the N Level Examinations, N Level (Singapore), September 1990*, (2-7).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1992a

General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level), English Language Paper 3, Oral English Tests Parts 1, 2 and 3, Day 8.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1992b

'English Language', in *Report on the N Level Examinations, N Level (Singapore), September 1991*, (5-8).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1993
'English Language', in Report on the N Level Examinations, N Level (Singapore), September 1992, (6-10).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1994a
'English Language', Report on the N Level Examinations, N Level (Singapore), September 1993, (6-10).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1994b
Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995a
'English Language', in General Certificate of Education, N Level (Singapore), Report on the 1994 Examination, (6-11).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995b
General Certificate of Education, November 1994, Group Report, English Language (Sing/Brunei), Composition, Centre Number S2086, Syllabus Code 1120, Component Code 01.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995c
General Certificate of Education, Autumn 1994, Group Report, English Language, Comprehension, Centre Number S2086, Syllabus Code 1120, Component Code 02.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995d
General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Paper 3, Oral English, Parts 1, 2 and 3, Days 1-10.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995e
Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1996
General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Paper 3, Oral English, Parts 1, 2 and 3, Days 1-10.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1984
Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1985a
'English Language', in Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, Reports on the September 1984 Examinations, (5-9).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1985b
Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1986a

'English Language', in *Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Report on the September 1985 Examinations, Normal Level, (4-7)*.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1986b

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1990

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1992

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1993

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1994

General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in Collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1995

General Certificate of Education, Normal Level, English Language, Papers 1, 2 and 3.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1977-1989

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1990a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1989 Examination, (7-12)*.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1990b

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1990c

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level), 1990, 1120/3, Oral English Tests I and II, Days 1-10.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1991a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1990 Examination*, (7-13).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1991b

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1992a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1991 Examination*, (5-8).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1992b

General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language, Paper 3 Oral Examination, Parts 1, 2 and 3, Day 8.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1992c

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1993a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1992 Examination*, (8-11).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1993b

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1994a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, General Paper, Theatre Studies and Drama, Report on the November 1993 Examination*, (57-64).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1994b

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1995a

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1994 Examination (for Centres in Singapore)*, (4-14).

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1995b

Joint Examination for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level, English Language Papers 1 and 2.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate International Examinations, 1996

'Subject 1120', in *English Subjects, GCE Ordinary Level, Report on the November 1995 Examination (for Centres in Singapore)*, (4-12).

BIBLIOGRAPHY 8

School-based Examinations

- Secondary School A, 1991a¹
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1991b
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1991c¹
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1991d
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1992a
End of Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1992b
Final Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1992c
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Paper 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1992d
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1993a
End of Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1993b
End of Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1993c
End of Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1993d
End of Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.

- Secondary School A, 1994a
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1994b
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1994c
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1994d
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1994e
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Three, Express.
- Secondary School A, 1994f
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Three, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1994g
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Four, Normal.
- Secondary School A, 1994h
End of Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Four Express and Secondary Five Normal.
- Secondary School B, 1991a
Mid-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School B, 1991b¹
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School B, 1991c
Final Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School B, 1992a
Final Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School B, 1992b
Final Examination, 1992, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One, Normal.

- Secondary School B, 1993a
Final Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School B, 1993b
Final Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School C, 1991a
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School C, 1991b
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School C, 1991c¹
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School C, 1991d
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School C, 1992a
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School C, 1992b
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School C, 1992c
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School C, 1992d
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School C, 1993a
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School C, 1993b
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School D, 1992
Mid-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Paper 1, Secondary Two, Normal.

- Secondary School D, 1994a
Mid-Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1994b
Mid-Year Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Three, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1994c
Final Term Examination, 1994, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1994d
Final Term Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1994e
Final Term Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Three, Normal.
- Secondary School D, 1994f
Final Term Examination, 1994, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Three, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1995a
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School D, 1995b
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal Academic.
- Secondary School D, 1995c
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal Academic.
- Secondary School D, 1995d
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School E, 1995a
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School E, 1995b
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal Academic.
- Secondary School E, 1995c
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.

- Secondary School E, 1995d
Mid-Year Examination, 1995, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal Academic.
- Secondary School F, 1991¹
Final-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School F, 1992
Final-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School F, 1993
Final-Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1991a
Mid-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 1, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1991b¹
Promotion Examination, 1991, English Language Paper 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1991c
Promotion Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School G, 1991d¹
Promotion Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1991e
Promotion Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School G, 1992a
Second Semestral Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1992b
Second Semestral Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School G, 1992c
Second Semestral Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1992d
Second Semestral Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.

- Secondary School G, 1993a
Second Semester Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1993b
Second Semester Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School G, 1993c
Second Semester Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School G, 1993d
Second Semester Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School H, 1991a¹
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School H, 1991b¹
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School H, 1992a
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School H, 1992b
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School H, 1993a
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School H, 1993b
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1991a¹
End-of-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1991b
End-of-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School I, 1991c¹
End-of-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.

- Secondary School I, 1991d
End-of-Year Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School I, 1992a
End-of-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1992b
End-of-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School I, 1992c
End-of-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1992d
End-of-Year Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School I, 1993a
End-of-Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1993b
End-of-Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School I, 1993c
End-of-Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School I, 1993d
End-of-Year Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School J, 1991a¹
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1991b
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School J, 1991c¹
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1991d
Final Term Examination, 1991, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.

- Secondary School J, 1992a
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1992b
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School J, 1992c
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1992d
Final Term Examination, 1992, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.
- Secondary School J, 1993a
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1993b
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary One, Normal.
- Secondary School J, 1993c
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Express.
- Secondary School J, 1993d
Final Term Examination, 1993, English Language Papers 1 and 2, Secondary Two, Normal.

¹ Paper 2 included in survey of comprehension passages, Chapter Five:130

BIBLIOGRAPHY 9

Units of Work

1992: Secondary 1E and 1N-2N

Secondary School 1

1E, three weeks, *Expressways*

1N, six weeks, *Blueprint*

2N, four weeks, *Expressways*.

Secondary School 2

1E, four weeks, *Expressways*.

Secondary School 3

1E, five weeks, *FORTE*.

Secondary School 4

1E/1N, four weeks, *New CLUE*.

1993: 1E-2E, and 1N-3N

Secondary School 5

2E/2N, one term, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 6

1E, one term, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 7

2E/3N, two weeks, *Expressways*.

Secondary School 8

3N, one term, *Blueprint*.

Secondary School 9

2E/2N, six weeks, *FORTE*

1E/1N, four weeks, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 10

1E/1N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 11

3N, three weeks, *Blueprint*.

Secondary School 12

1E, one week, *Expressways*

2N, one term, *New Blueprint*

3N, one term, *New Blueprint*.

Secondary School 13

3N, one term, *Blueprint*.

Secondary School 14

2E/2N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 15

2E, one term, *FORTE*.

Secondary School 16

1E, two weeks, no course book.

Secondary School 17

2E, one term, *Expressways*.

Secondary School 18

3N, two weeks, *Blueprint*.

Secondary School 19

1E, seven weeks, *FORTE*.

Secondary School 20

1E, one term, *Expressways*.

Secondary School 21
2E, two weeks, no course book
2N, three weeks, no course book.
Secondary School 22
3N, two weeks, *Blueprint*.
Secondary School 23
2E, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 24
3N, two weeks, *Blueprint*.

1994: 1E-3E, and 1N-4N

Secondary School 25
2E/2N, one term, *New CLUE*
1E/1N, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 26
1E, two terms, *FORTE*
3E, one term, *FORTE*.
Secondary School 27
3N, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 28
2E/2N, one term *New CLUE*
3N, one term, *FORTE*.
Secondary School 29
2E, two weeks, *New CLUE*
3E, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 30
2E, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 31
3N, two weeks, *New CLUE*
3E, two terms, *FORTE*.
Secondary School 32
3E, two weeks, *Expressways*.
Secondary School 33
1E, six weeks, no course book.
Secondary School 34
2E, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 35
1E, one term, *Expressways*.
Secondary School 36
1E, three weeks, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 7
3E, three weeks, *Expressways*
4N, two weeks, *Blueprint*.
Secondary School 37
1N, one year, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 38
3E, all year, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 39
2E, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 40
1E/1N, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 41
2E/2N, one term, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 42
 3E, one term, *Expressways*.
 Secondary School 43
 2E, one term, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 8
 4N, one term, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 44
 2E/2N, three weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 45
 2N, one term, *Blueprint*
 3E, one term, *Expressways*
 4N, two terms, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 46
 3E, four weeks, *FORTE*
 4N, two weeks no course book.
 Secondary School 47
 1E, one term, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 48
 2E/2N, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 49
 3E, one term, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 50
 1E, four weeks, *New CLUE*
 3E, four weeks, *FORTE*.
 Secondary School 51
 3E, six weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 52
 3N, one term, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 53
 2E, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 54
 1E, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 55
 3E, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 56
 2E, one term *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 57
 3N, one term, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 58
 2E, two weeks, *Expressways*
 3E, one year, no course book.
 Secondary School 13
 2E/2N, one year, no course book.
 Secondary School 59
 2E, one term, *FORTE*.
 Secondary School, 60
 1E/1N, six weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 61
 3N, two weeks, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 62
 4N, one year, original *CLUE*.
 Secondary School 63
 1E/1N, one year, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 64
 2E, one year, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 65
 1E, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 66
 3E, one term, *Expressways*.
 Secondary School 67
 2N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 68
 3E, two weeks, *FORTE*.
 Secondary School 69
 1E, three weeks, *New CLUE*
 2E, three weeks, no course book
 3E, one term, no course book.
 Secondary School 70
 2E, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 3
 1E/1N, one term, *FORTE*
 2E/2N, four weeks, *FORTE*
 3E, three weeks, *FORTE*
 4N, four weeks, original *CLUE*.
 Secondary School 16
 1E, one term, no course book.
 Secondary School 71
 4N, four weeks, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 72
 1E/1N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 73
 2N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 74
 3E, one year, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 75
 2N, one term, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 17
 1E, one term, *Expressways*.
 Secondary School 18
 3N, one year, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 76
 1N, one term, *Blueprint*.
 Secondary School 77
 2E/2N, four weeks, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 78
 3E/3N, one term, *New CLUE*.
 Secondary School 19
 1E, seven weeks, *FORTE*.
 Secondary School 79
 3N, one week, no course book.
 Secondary School 21
 3E, four weeks, no course book
 3N, six weeks, no course book.
 Secondary School 23
 3E, one term, *New CLUE*
 3N, one term, *New CLUE*.

Secondary School 80
3E, one term, *Expressways*.
Secondary School 81
2E/3N, two weeks, *FORTE*.
Secondary School 82
2E/2N, two weeks, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 83
3N, one term, *Expressways*.

1995: 1E-4E, and 1N-5N

Secondary School 29
4E/5N, one term, no course book.
Secondary School 84
4E/5N, three weeks, *Expressways*.
Secondary School 44
4E/5N, three terms, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 48
4E, one term, *Thematic and Integrated English Series*.
Secondary School 57
4E/5N, one year, *Expressways*.
Secondary School 59
4E/5N, one term, *FORTE*.
Secondary School 62
4E/5N, one term, *New CLUE*.
Secondary School 85
4E/5N, one term, no course book.
Secondary School 72
4E/5N, two weeks, no course book.
Secondary School 16
4E, one year, no course book.
Secondary School 75
4E, one term, no course book.
Secondary School 80
4E, four weeks, *Thematic and Integrated English Series*.
Secondary School 82
4E, two weeks, *New CLUE*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 10

Lectures

Gilroy, Peter, 1993

Three Cultural Challenges to Curriculum Innovation in Singapore, lecture delivered 27 Aug, 1993, at Singapore Polytechnic, Dover Road: Singapore.

Gupta, Anthea Fraser, 1994

Who Do Our Students Want To Sound Like?, lecture delivered 30 Nov, 1994, at the Singapore Tertiary English Teachers' Society Seminar, National Institute of Education: Singapore.

Mok, Choon Hoe, 1994

Opening Address at the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Planning Division's Biennial Seminar, Curriculum Implementation: A Framework for Action, 26 Oct, 1994, at the Regional English Language Centre: Singapore.

Pollitt, Alistair, 1995

The Communicative Dilemma: Testing, lecture delivered 22 May, 1995, at the British Council: Singapore.

APPENDIX A**Content of 1982 and 1991 English Language Syllabuses**1982 English Language Syllabus: Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Outline of Course Content
- 3 Secondary one syllabus
- 4 Secondary two syllabus
- 5 Secondary three syllabus
- 6 Secondary four syllabus

Source: Ministry of Education, 1982:unnumbered page

1991 English Language Syllabus: Contents

Introduction

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Aims and Terminal Objectives |
| Chapter 2 | Pedagogic Approaches and Implications for Methodology |
| Chapter 3 | Suggested Themes, Topics and Activities |
| Chapter 4 | Spectrum of Skills and List of Communicative Functions |
| Chapter 5 | Inventory of Grammar Items |
| Chapter 6 | Assessment Guidelines |
| Appendix A1 | A Guide to Pupil Performance (Academic)
Suggested Outcomes Based on Terminal Objectives |
| Appendix A2 | A Guide to Pupil Performance (Technical)
Suggested Outcomes Based on Terminal Objectives |
| Appendix B1 | Checklist for Self-evaluation of Oral Interaction (Discussion) |
| Appendix B2 | Checklist for Self-monitoring and Evaluation of Study Skills |
| Appendix C | Form for Teacher to Monitor and Evaluate Teamwork in
Project Work |

Source: Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:iii

APPENDIX B Sample of Letter Requesting Copies of School-based Examination Papers

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(Kay Siang Road, Singapore 1024)

Curriculum Planning Division
c/o Environment Building, 8th Level
40 Scotts Road
Singapore 0922
Republic of Singapore



Telephone: 7327733
Telefax : 7379320

Your Ref:

DID No:

Our Ref:

Date : 20 Sep 94

The Head of Department, English

Through: The Principal

_____ Secondary School

Dear Sir/Madam

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATION PAPERS

Research is currently being conducted into the implementation of the revised English Language Syllabus.

2 As part of that research, it is necessary to look at the effect syllabus revision has had on the setting of lower secondary English Language papers.

3 Therefore, a random sample of schools has been identified to submit examples of these examination papers. Your school is part of that random sample.

4 I would very much appreciate it if you could send one copy of each of the following examination papers:

- . The end of year English Language papers for the Secondary 1 and 2 Express classes, 1991-1993 inclusive
- . The end of year English Language papers for the Secondary 1 and 2 Normal classes, 1991-1993 inclusive.

5 The date for submission is 10 Oct 94.

6 Please send the papers to:

Mrs Susan Nair
SIEL 4
Languages and Library Branch
Curriculum Planning Division
8th Floor
Ministry of Environment
Scotts Road
Singapore 0922.

7 If you have any enquiries regarding this request, please contact Mrs Nair, tel. 7319838.

8 Thank you in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours faithfully

Susan Nair

SUSAN NAIR (MRS)
SPECIALIST INSPECTOR, ENGLISH
LANGUAGES AND LIBRARY BRANCH
CURRICULUM PLANNING DIVISION

APPENDIX Ci
Aims of the 1991 English Language Syllabus

Our pupils learn English to:

- * Communicate effectively (both in speech and writing) in everyday situations to meet the demands of school and society
- * Acquire good reading habits to understand, enjoy and appreciate a wide range of texts, including the literature of other cultures
- * Develop the ability to express themselves imaginatively and creatively
- * Acquire thinking skills to make critical and rational judgements
- * Negotiate their own learning goals and evaluate their own progress
- * Acquire information and study skills to learn other subjects taught in English
- * Cope effectively and efficiently with change, extended learning tasks and examinations
- * Acquire knowledge for self-improvement and for fulfilling personal needs and aspirations
- * Develop positive attitudes towards constructive ideas and values that are transmitted in oral and/or written forms using the English language
- * Develop a sensitivity to, and an appreciation of, other varieties of English and the cultures they reflect

Source: Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:7

APPENDIX Cii
Terminal Objectives of the 1991 English Language Syllabus

A Communication and Language Development

A.1 Communication Skills

Oral Communication

Focus on Listening

Pupils should listen to a wide variety of authentic and simulated spoken texts of appropriate length and complexity and from diverse speech situations. They should listen to such texts for enjoyment, for exposure to different written genres, and to develop listening competence.

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to demonstrate listening competence in the following ways:

- * recognize and distinguish between the basic sounds and phonological features of the English language
- * understand and carry out instructions (simple to complex) given orally
- * recognize a range of spoken text types/speech situations (eg story, talk, conversation, debate, interview) and respond appropriately when required
- * answer recall, inferential, evaluative and application questions based on what is heard
- * recognise discourse and other features in extended spoken texts in order to follow effectively what is spoken (eg words/expressions signalling exemplification, amplification, digression, introduction, conclusion)
- * respond creatively and imaginatively where required
- * respond appropriately, using non-verbal signals if necessary, in a speech situation (eg a discussion, debate, conversation, presentation or talk)
- * take notes where required
- * assess critically spoken texts that are persuasive and controversial in

nature

Focus on Speaking

To develop competence in speaking, pupils should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of speech situations.

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * speak fluently, clearly and audibly, using correct pronunciation, expression, stress, rhythm and intonation
- * speak with confidence in a variety of speech situations or to express a wide range of communicative functions, taking into account the purpose of the delivery, the setting, target audience, etc
- * participate actively and constructively in discussion
- * observe accepted social conventions and etiquette in oral interaction and be able to respond appropriately, verbally or non-verbally
- * read aloud written material with confidence, fluency, expression and good articulation when required, eg in play reading, in a reading-aloud test

Written Communication

Focus on Reading

To develop reading competence, pupils should be encouraged to read and understand a wide range of written texts of different genres, and from different sources, for knowledge, information, study or enjoyment.

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * read independently and extensively for pleasure
- * read to respond creatively and imaginatively
- * adjust reading speed according to the purpose and task at hand
- * skim for general ideas and scan for details
- * infer/make deductions based on what is explicitly stated
- * use contextual and other clues to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words
- * use a range of vocabulary skills (including dictionary skills) to build up vocabulary
- * recognize the discourse features that organise and link ideas or thoughts coherently and logically
- * read to understand information (which may be presented in visual form) and to condense, interpret or rearrange such information (in visual form, if necessary)
- * show an appreciation of a wide range of literature and relate literature to life and personal experiences
- * read fiction, plays and media materials critically
- * appreciate how a text may be enhanced or an effect achieved by the exploitation of diction, literary and other devices

Focus on Writing

To develop writing competence, pupils should be given opportunities to write a wide variety of texts on different topics and for different purposes, audiences and situations.

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * use the process approach to produce (and help peers to produce) a reasonably polished piece of written work
- * write effectively in a variety of forms, viz. story, poem, narrative accounts of experience, letters (formal and informal), explanations, messages, directions or instructions, reports, commentaries etc
- * write effectively for a variety of purposes: to express feelings, intentions; to convey facts, ideas; to argue or persuade; to explain a situation or

- procedure; to comment on an incident/situation; etc
- * summarize and organize salient points of the whole or part of a fairly extended text for a specific purpose
- * reconstruct a text (in response to audio-visual stimuli, if required) for a specific purpose
- * present a written text in a variety of forms that can require interpreting simple graphics (eg graphs, grids, flow charts, diagrams, pictures, illustrations, tables) and/or using them to enhance the presentation
- * write adequately and effectively to meet the requirements of school-based and public examinations

A.2 Knowledge About Language

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * understand the rules and functions of the major aspects of grammar and discourse and be able to use this knowledge to enhance and refine communication or when engaged in the discussion of language during peer editing
- * recognize and use language for different occasions, purposes, effects
- * be aware of the part played by verbal and non-verbal cues in effective communication
- * recognize and distinguish between Standard and non-Standard English as well as other varieties of English, and use them appropriately
- * recognize and demonstrate understanding of the various ways in which spoken English differs from written English
- * recognize that language is a dynamic phenomenon (ie it is constantly undergoing modification) and have some knowledge of the history of the English language as well as current usage

B Thinking Skills

Some of these skills are already included in the objectives for reading competence. The following are other skills.

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * explore an idea, argument, issue, problem or situation thoroughly for a specific purpose
- * think creatively to generate new ideas, to find new meanings and to deal with new relationships
- * apply analytical and evaluation skills for a specific purpose

C Learning How to Learn

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * apply a repertoire of library and information skills
- * use study skills to manage their language and other studies efficiently and effectively
- * take responsibility for their own learning
- * use some of the basic skills relating to information technology

D Language and Culture

At the end of the course, pupils should be able to:

- * appreciate that there are varieties of English reflecting different cultures, and use this knowledge appropriately and sensitively in communication
- * adopt a critical, but not necessarily negative, attitude towards ideas, thoughts and values reflected in spoken and written texts (in English) of local or foreign origins

Source: Curriculum Planning Division, 1991b:7-9

APPENDIX D
 SAMPLE UNIT OF WORK
 School 29
 Scheme of Work (Secondary Two Express)

THEME: THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Topic and Sub-topic	Tasks/Activities	Time Frame	Resources	Instructional Objectives
Extra-Terrestrial Creatures	Oral Interaction Individual Work Pupils to write down some of the ideas they have read about the topic. Share with the class their thoughts.	2 periods	New CLUE Unit 4, page 43	Pupils should be able to: listen during sharing and respond accordingly.
Zero Hour	Pair work Pupils read the poem and discuss the questions. READING Class work Pupils to read the passage with focus questions in mind (What is unusual about this game?) Pupils answer questions 1-12 orally. Pupils answer questions focussing on details Pupils given questions for written work.	3 periods	page 44 Course book, Unit 4, pages 45-48	understand the feelings conveyed by the poet. read purposefully show understanding at the literal and inferential levels & identify the main points of the passage
	POST READING Vocabulary development Class work Pupils match words with their equivalents Teacher draws their attention to contextual clues SUMMING UP	1 period	page 50	guess the meaning of words in context

Topic and Sub-topic	Tasks/Activities	Time Frame	Resources	Instructional Objectives
Zero Hour	<p>POST READING Summary Imagine you are Drill. In about 50 words explain your reason for coming to earth and how you propose to fulfil your mission.</p> <p>PRE-WRITING Oral Interaction In pairs, students to read dialogue between Trog (alien) and Zakariah Imagine you are Zakariah telling your (word missing) what questions you asked Trog (use reported speech).</p> <p>Group work Imagine you have come face to face with an alien and write down all the questions you would ask.</p> <p>WRITING In groups pupils discuss a topic chosen Pupils write out first draft Tr/pupils revise and edit a pupil's first draft for content on OHP Peer editing and revising first draft. Pupils write second draft Pupils revise & edit above for mechanical accuracy. Pupils write final draft</p>	<p>H/W</p> <p>2 periods</p> <p>4 periods</p> <p>H/W</p>	<p>Course book, Unit 4, pg 51</p> <p>page 51</p> <p>page 52</p> <p>Page 55/57</p>	<p>list out the main points (sic) and write it (sic) out in a paragraph</p> <p>demonstrate understanding of the use of reported speech</p> <p>evaluate a description</p> <p>generate ideas for a writing task</p> <p>revise and edit a description paying attention to correct tense and spelling</p>

APPENDIX E

SYLLABUS DISSEMINATION TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE (FORM A)

PART I

Please be very frank and honest in your views when responding to the statements in this part of the questionnaire. Indicate your responses by putting a (✓) in the appropriate column.

Please note the following before you fill in the questionnaire.

SA = strongly agree with the statement

A = Agree with the statement

U = Uncertain with (*sic*) the statement

D = Disagree with the statement

SD = Strongly disagree with the statement

		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	The section entitled 'The Nature of Language and Language Learning' (Ch 1) is very clear to me.					
2	The concept of integration is made very clear in the syllabus.					
3	The aims of learning English as specified in the syllabus are very necessary for our pupils.					
4	The terminal objectives listed in the syllabus are not adequate for the levels intended.					
5	The section entitled 'Planning an integrated Sequence of Lessons' (Ch 2) is very confusing.					
6	The inventories in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are easy to use.					
7	The samples of work suggested for informal assessment (Ch 6) can be easily carried out.					
8	The syllabus makes it very easy to plan integrated lessons.					
9	The syllabus allows for more creative lessons to be planned.					

APPENDIX E**SYLLABUS DISSEMINATION TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE (FORM B)**

Please give your frank views when responding to the questions in this questionnaire. For each question circle the appropriate response, and then write your explanations in the space provided.

1 Did you find it very difficult to draw up the year plan? Say why.

YES/NO

2 Do you think the year plan is a useful document? Say why.

YES/NO

3 Was there much disagreement among teachers of a particular year level in deciding the attainment levels? Say why.

YES/NO

4 Was it easy to decide the skills/activities to realize the terminal objectives? State your reason(s).

YES/NO

5 Were the inventories very useful to you in drawing up the year plan? Say why.

YES/NO

6 Could you follow the steps on the planning of an integrated sequence of lessons in the syllabus easily? Give your reason(s).

YES/NO

7 Did you have very much difficulty planning your integrated sequence of lessons? Say why.

YES/NO

8 Do you think the integrated approach helps your pupils to learn better? Say why.

YES/NO

9 Do you feel adequately prepared to use the syllabus for planning your scheme of work? Say why.

YES/NO

10 Do you feel the need for more training in teaching to the new syllabus? Say why.

YES/NO

Source: Specialist Inspector of English Language 7, 1992b, Appendix 4:12-13

APPENDIX Gi**Letter Requesting Information about Syllabus Dissemination**

3 Jan 95

To: Heads of Department, English

Through: The Principals
All West Zone Secondary Schools

Dear Sir/Madam

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS IN SECONDARY 4E/5N CLASSES

- 1 It is expected that implementation of the revised English Language Syllabus will take place in Secondary 4E/5N classes this year.
- 2 We would appreciate your assistance in gathering information regarding the means through which information about the syllabus has been disseminated, at the school level, to Secondary 4E/5N teachers.
- 3 To this end, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it by **Wednesday 25th January** to:

_____, SIEL __
 Languages and Library Development Branch
 Curriculum Planning Division
 Ministry of Education
 8th Floor
 Environment Building
 40 Scotts Road
 Singapore 0922

- 4 If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact _____, tel: _____.

- 5 Thank you in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours faithfully

 ASST DIRECTOR
 LANGUAGES AND LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT BRANCH
 CURRICULUM PLANNING DIVISION
Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995, (Report), Annex A:7

APPENDIX Gii

Questionnaire: Syllabus Dissemination

THE ENGLISH SYLLABUS: STATUS OF DISSEMINATION 1995 (SECONDARY)

Please return the completed questionnaire by Wednesday 25th January to:

_____, SIEL ____
Languages and Library Development Branch
Curriculum Planning Division
Ministry of Education
8th Floor
Environment Building
40 Scotts Road
Singapore 0922.

1 Has information regarding the syllabus been disseminated to the teachers of Secondary 4E/5N classes?

Yes (Now please answer questions 2, 3 and 8)

No (Now, please answer questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

2 When was the information disseminated?

3 How was the information disseminated?

4 What are your reasons for not, so far, disseminating information regarding the syllabus to teachers of Secondary 4E/5N classes?

5 When do you intend to disseminate this information?

6 How do you intend to disseminate this information?

7 Would you like any assistance in disseminating the information?

Yes

No

8 Are there any comments you would like to make on the dissemination of information regarding the syllabus to Secondary 4E/5N teachers?

Thank you for your help.

School: _____

HOD: _____

Date: _____

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995, (Report), Annex A:8-9

APPENDIX Hi

UNIT OF WORK CHECKLIST

Level/Class: _____ Date: _____

This checklist is designed to enable you to identify areas where you can provide guidance and assistance to teachers in implementing the new EL Syllabus.

1	UNIT OF WORK	Y	S	N	N/A	Remarks
1.1	Topics:					
a)	are used as an organisational tool					
1.2	Suggested activities and tasks					
a)	show integration of skills					
b)	include a variety of interaction patterns					
c)	incorporate the process approach					
d)	provide opportunities for differentiated learning					
e)	provide for the teaching of vocabulary and grammar in context					
f)	allow time for focus lessons					
g)	provide opportunities for monitoring and diagnosis					
h)	are sufficiently detailed to give clear guidance					
i)	are suitable and appropriate to the level of pupils					
j)	are varied					
k)	are well-sequenced					
1.3	Resources:					
a)	include the use of authentic materials					
b)	are varied					
c)	are appropriate and interesting					
1.4	Instructional Objectives:					
a)	show a range of domains					
b)	are clear					
c)	match the activities and resources					
d)	are reinforced (where appropriate)					
1.5	Overall:					
a)	reflects the year plan					
b)	is collaboratively planned					
c)	is reviewed collaboratively					
d)	is reviewed regularly					
e)	reflects development					

APPENDIX Hii

YEAR PLAN CHECKLIST

2	YEAR PLAN 1	Y	S	N	N/A*	Remarks
2.1	Overall					
a)	has been drawn up					
b)	is reflected in the units					
c)	is reviewed half-yearly/yearly					
d)	is collaboratively planned					
2.2	Topics are:					
a)	appropriate to the level					
b)	varied					
c)	sufficient for the year					
d)	developed at progressively higher levels					
2.3	Activities					
a)	incorporate the 4 main skills					
b)	promote the process approach					
c)	are varied					
d)	include supportive programmes					
2.4	Assessment Modes					
a)	are wide-ranging and varied					
b)	are both formal and informal					
c)	provide for self-evaluation					
d)	informal assessments are informal and developmental (follow-up to work)					
e)	informal assessments are on-going					

* Y = Yes S = To some extent N = No N/A = Not applicable

Source: Checklist distributed to Specialist Inspectors on 20 April, 1992

APPENDIX I

MONITORING OF SYLLABUS IMPLEMENTATION IN ALL SCHOOLS: 1995

Name of School: _____ Date unit was/will be taught: _____

Y = Yes S = To some extent N = No NA = Not applicable

* denotes questions to be asked of *all level teachers* during interview

denotes that the remarks column should be used

1	UNIT OF WORK	Y	S	N	NA	Remarks
1.1	<u>General questions:</u>					
	a) Did you refer to the syllabus when writing Units of Work?*					
	b) Were all the chapters/sections in the syllabus helpful?*					
	c) To what extent are the Units of Work based on a textbook?					
	d) Were the Units of Work planned collaboratively by teachers in the school?*					#
	e) Do you think the Units of Work actually inform classroom teaching?*					
1.2	<u>Themes/Topics:</u>					#
	a) are based on the textbook*					#
	b) are interesting*					#
	c) are relevant to pupils' experiences/needs*					#
	d) demand an increasingly mature response from pupils*					#
1.3	<u>Suggested Activities and Tasks:</u>					
	a) show integration of skills					
	b) are well sequenced					
	c) include a variety of interaction patterns					
	d) take into account processes demanded by the activity/task					
	e) provide opportunities for differentiated learning					
	f) provide for the teaching of vocabulary and grammar in context					
	g) allow time to respond to pupils' learning difficulties*					#
	h) are sufficiently detailed to give clear guidance					
	i) are suitable and appropriate to the level of pupils*					#

	Y	S	N	NA	
1.4 <u>Resources - Textbook:</u> a) meets the learning needs of the pupils*					#
b) makes learning interesting*					#
1.5 <u>Resources - Supplementary Materials:</u> a) suggest a variety of interesting activities					
b) are integrated with activities suggested by the textbook					
c) include authentic materials					
d) address the need for differentiation					
e) are appropriate to the pupils' learning needs*					#
1.6 <u>Instructional Objectives:</u> a) are taken from more than one domain					
b) are clear					
c) match the activities and resources					
d) are reinforced where appropriate					
e) are realistic and achievable					
2 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE PROGRAMME, BASED ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS					
2.1 <u>Overall, the programme:</u> a) provides for the needs and abilities of different pupils*					#
b) reflects collaborative planning across the year levels*					#
2.2 <u>Instructional Objectives:</u> a) reflect a good balance of all <i>four</i> Domains*					#
b) reflect development*					#
2.3 <u>Topics:</u> a) demand an increasingly mature response from pupils*					#
2.4 <u>Resources:</u> a) are multi-media*					# Examples?
2.5 <u>Reviews are done:</u> a) collaboratively*					#
b) regularly (eg after every unit, term, semester, etc)*					#
2.6 <u>Assessment Modes - Formal and Informal:</u> a) are wide-ranging*					#
b) provide for self-evaluation*					#
c) are diagnostic and developmental*					#
d) are ongoing*					#
e) are recorded*					#

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995, (Report), Annex B:10-13

APPENDIX J

MONITORING SYLLABUS IMPLEMENTATION: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

This form is to be used by SIELs on appraisal when observing classes in which features of the new syllabus are expected to be evident. It would be appreciated if one form was completed for each of these classes. In 1994, it is anticipated that this will usually mean seven classes. In addition, please remember to complete one form for 'N' (T) Committee.

School : _____

-

Class : _____ Date/Time : _____

A Please state briefly the following :

1 Lesson objective(s)

2 Activities through which these objective(s) were to be achieved

3 Please answer the following questions:

- i) Were the objectives achieved?
- ii) Why? Why not? (eg, inappropriate activities)

B Please respond to the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

Legend : Y = Yes NA = Not applicable
 N = No

Topics

	Y	N	NA
1 The lesson was based on a topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The topic was made relevant to the pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Integration

3 There were opportunities for the pupils to participate in			
reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
related skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Time was allocated appropriately to the skills which were taught/practised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Activities logically sequenced to achieve lesson's objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pupil Interaction

6 There were opportunities for the pupils to work			
individually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in pairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
as a class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Time was allocated appropriately to these interaction patterns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Materials, Methods and Differentiation

Y N NA

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8 Appropriate authentic materials were incorporated into the lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Grammar and vocabulary were taught in context | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Where appropriate, processes were modelled | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 Instructional materials were varied to suit the needs of different pupils | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 Methodology was varied to suit the needs of different pupils | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 The needs of individual pupils were met | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Pupil Involvement in Learning

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 14 Pupils were appropriately challenged | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 Pupils were given appropriate opportunities to direct their own learning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 Pupils were actively involved in learning through discussion and participation in activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 Pupils were given opportunities to practise knowledge/skills needed to achieve lesson's objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 Questions and responses from pupils were incorporated into the teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 Encouraging feedback was provided to pupils throughout the lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Monitoring and Assessment

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 20 Activities enabled the teacher to diagnose pupils' learning difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 Activities enabled the teacher to monitor the pupils' progress | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	Y	N	NA
22 Time was allocated appropriately to each phase of the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 Effective and differentiated assignments were given	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 Constructive feedback was given on pupils' work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevance and Interest of Activities

25 Pupils' interest was maintained throughout the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 Pupils enjoyed the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 Pupils were aware of the purpose and importance of the topic and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29 Pupils acquired/practised appropriate and relevant life skills/knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30 General comments :

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please include this information in the Summary Form.

Please submit the Summary Form to SIEL 4 by **7th Sept 94**.

Source: Checklist distributed at English Unit Meeting, 10 March, 1994 (English Unit, 1994c, 14 and 15:2-3)

APPENDIX K

MONITORING SYLLABUS IMPLEMENTATION: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION (1995)

This form is to be used by SIELs on appraisal when observing ALL classes. Please ensure that at least one form for a 1N(T) and one for a 2N(T) class are submitted to SIEL 8 after each appraisal

School : _____

Class : _____ Date/Time : _____

1 Please tick the appropriate box:

Teacher states/knows objectives

Teacher not clear about objectives

2 Please state briefly the following:

i Lesson objectives(s)

(Where the teacher states her objectives, please give them. If no objectives are stated, please write what you assume to be the lesson's objectives)

ii Activities through which these objective(s) were to be achieved

3 i) Were the objectives achieved?
ii) Why? Why not? (*eg inappropriate activities*)

B Please respond to the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box, and expanding on this tick, where appropriate, in the lines provided below the statement

Legend : Y = Yes N = No

Theme/Topic

	Y	N
1 The lesson was based on a theme/topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 The theme/topic was made relevant to the pupils <i>(If relevance has been established in earlier lessons, please state this, with any other comments you may have, below)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------

Coverage of Domains and Integration

3 The lesson was integrated with the lessons immediately before and after it <i>(You might want to refer to the record book)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------	--------------------------

4 Please indicate in the boxes below which of the following domains/skills were included in the lesson:

reading writing speaking

listening

thinking learning how to learn language and culture

5 Activities were appropriately sequenced to achieve the lesson's objectives

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 The domains/skills covered were appropriately integrated within the lesson

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

7 Pupils practised appropriate and relevant life skills (eg word attack skills)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Pupil Interaction

8 There were opportunities for the pupils to work

individually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in pairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
as a class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9 The interaction patterns observed were appropriate to the achievement of the lesson's objective

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Materials, Methods and Differentiation

Y N

10 The lesson was based on a textbook
(Please comment on whether additional
materials were used)

11 The additional materials were
successfully integrated with the textbook
materials
(Please write N/A below if no additional
materials were used)

12 Appropriate authentic materials were
incorporated into the lesson

13 Grammar and vocabulary were taught in
context

14 Where appropriate, processes were
modelled.

15 Instructional materials were varied to suit the needs of different pupils

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16 Methodology was varied to suit the needs of different pupils

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Pupil Involvement in Learning

17 Pupils were given appropriate opportunities to direct their own learning (eg they were able to direct group work as they saw fit. *This implies pupils are able to make responsible choices, not that they are left floundering*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

18 Pupils were actively involved in learning through discussion and participation in activities

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

19 Questions and responses from pupils were incorporated into the teaching

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

20 Pupils were given opportunities to practise the knowledge/skills needed to achieve the lesson's objectives

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 Encouraging feedback was provided

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Monitoring and Assessment

(Responses to statements in this section are to be based on information gleaned from classroom observations, pupil and teacher interviews, the pupils' submitted work and any other means at the SIEL's disposal)

22 The teacher took advantage of opportunities created to diagnose pupils' learning difficulties

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

23 Constructive feedback was given on pupils' work

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

24 The teacher monitored the pupils' progress

Y

N

25 Effective and differentiated classroom tasks were given (eg oral presentation)

26 Effective and differentiated written assignments were given

27 General comments:

Please submit the forms to SIEL 4 by 26 May 95 for first semester appraisals; and 2 Sept 95 for second semester appraisals

Thank you for your cooperation

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995, (Report), Annex E:16-22

APPENDIX L

PUPILS' RESPONSES TO THE EL PROGRAMME

Sec ____ Express/Normal/Technical

Please tick (✓) in the column which best describes your response to the statement below:

		Often	Sometimes	Never
1	My teacher comments on my work			
2	My teacher gives us individual attention when we need it			
3	We discuss interesting topics in class			
4	I have to sit for more than two EL tests every term			
5	The work set by my teacher is too easy for me			
6	When we make mistakes, my teacher discusses them with us			
7	My teacher gives separate work to pupils who are good/weak in English			
8	I feel I am making progress in my English lessons			
9	During the year, my teacher tells me whether I have improved			
10	My teacher gives us work which is not in the textbook			
11	My teacher lets us correct our friends' work before we hand it in			
12	My teacher explains to me how to complete difficult assignments			
13	In the EL lesson, I learn skills which I can use outside the classroom			
14	In class, my teacher encourages us to ask questions/discuss problems with our work			
15	The work set by my teacher is too difficult for me			
16	My teacher lets me know what I have to do to improve my English			
17	I enjoy my English lesson			

Source: Syllabus Monitoring Committee, 1995, (Report), Annex G: 24

APPENDIX M

Semi-structured interview questions, used as a basis for discussion with Ministry of Education personnel involved with the writing and/or implementation of the 1982 and 1991 English Language Syllabuses

Writing: 1982 and 1991

- 1 Why was it felt necessary to produce the syllabus?
- 2 What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and 1991 syllabuses?
- 3 What was the philosophy behind the syllabus?
- 4 Who was responsible for writing it?
- 5 How and by whom were these people identified?
- 6 Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutions in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?
- 7 What sources proved most useful in writing the syllabus?
- 8 How long did it take to produce the syllabus?
- 9 What difficulties were encountered in its production?
- 10 Were they overcome? If so, how?
- 11 What circumstances best facilitated its production?
- 12 Was the writing monitored? If so, how?
- 13 Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?

Assessment: 1982 and 1991

- 1 Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?
- 2 Were the officers from Examinations and Assessment able to provide input for the new syllabus?
- 3 Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?
- 4 If a revision was undertaken, was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the new syllabus?

Implementation: 1982 and 1991

- 1 Who was responsible for the implementation of the syllabus?
- 2 How and by whom were these people identified?
- 3 Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutions in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?
- 4 Over what period of time did the implementation take place?
- 5 What strategies were used to disseminate the information?
- 6 Was any in-service teacher training conducted? If so, how was this organised? Who was responsible?

- 7 Did the implementation of the syllabus have any effect on pre-service teacher training?
- 8 Were any problems encountered during the implementation process? Were they overcome? If so, how?
- 9 What strategies were found to be the most successful?
- 10 Was the implementation monitored? If so, how and by whom?
- 11 Was the implementation documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?

Syllabus Support Materials: 1982 and 1991

- 1 Were any syllabus support materials produced?
- 2 Over what period of time?
- 3 By whom?
- 4 How and by whom were these people identified?
- 5 Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutions in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?
- 6 What sources proved most useful in producing syllabus support materials?
- 7 How faithfully did these materials interpret the syllabus?
- 8 How were they disseminated?
- 9 By whom?
- 10 How and by whom were these people identified?
- 11 Were any problems encountered in the writing and/or dissemination of the syllabus support materials? Were they overcome? If so, how?
- 12 What strategies, in writing and/or dissemination, were found to be most successful?
- 13 Were the materials and/or their dissemination monitored/evaluated? If so, how and by whom?
- 14 Was the work of the syllabus support team(s) documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?

Global Questions: 1982 and 1991

- 1 How successfully was the syllabus implemented in the schools?
- 2 Are you aware of any directives, developments and /or programmes originating from the Ministry of Education which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the syllabus?
- 3 Are you aware of any developments not originating in the Ministry of Education which may have had an effect on the implementation or interpretation of the syllabus?
- 4 In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the syllabus?

APPENDIX Ni

Interview with a member of the 1982 Syllabus Writing Committee, 1979-1981:
10.30-11.45 am, 7 May, 1993

Writing: 1982

- 1 *Why was it felt necessary to produce the 1982 English Language Syllabus?*
The syllabus currently in use had been in use for over ten years.
The 1982 English syllabus was produced to coincide with the implementation of the New Education Syllabus, which came about as a result of the Goh Report.
- 2 *What was the philosophy behind it?*
Perhaps you could refer to the article I wrote on this. The syllabus incorporated good, current thinking and methodology which was relevant to Singapore. It recommended a spiral approach to teaching language skills. Grammar was to be taught in context, and teaching was to be interactive and participative.
- 3 *Who was responsible for writing it?*
There were four main writers, the four curriculum development officers. From 1983 they became known as specialist inspectors of English. There was also a syllabus committee which consisted of people from the Institute of Education, the Examinations and Assessment Branch, the Curriculum Development Institution, the senior inspectorate and the schools. This committee insisted on a grammar inventory, and categorizing the grammar items according to the year levels at which they would be taught. One of the curriculum development officers felt so strongly about this that they left the Ministry. There was a tension between autonomy and centralization.
- 4 *How, and by whom, were the syllabus writers identified?*
People identified were people who were experienced, good teachers. Where possible, officers were brought in with training in linguistics, or post-graduate qualifications in English language.
- 5 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
Henry Widdowson was a paid consultant to the Ministry of Education. He gave input at the draft stage. Essentially, he said that we must decide for ourselves. Goh Keng Swee wanted a more definite statement. He met Gefen and was impressed by him so he invited him to give advice. Gefen was more definite in his advice. He endorsed the 1982 syllabus.
- 6 *How long did it take to produce the syllabus?*
Two years
- 7 *What difficulties were encountered during its production?*
The personnel turnover. Also, we were not full-time writers. Often, there were more pressing demands on our time. We were new to the job of syllabus writing, so we needed to do lots of research and discussion. It was also an awful feeling of responsibility. It would have been nice if someone could have given some concrete feedback. On the plus side, the major principles were accepted by the CDC. We had very supportive bosses and a lot of moral support.
- 8 *What circumstances best facilitated its production?*
The four writers were very united. We had no major arguments. The key people were very supportive, for example the representatives of the syllabus committee and the CDC.
- 9 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
It was monitored by the syllabus committee, who read the drafts. The changes tended to be cosmetic. It then went to the CDC. Again, changes tended to be cosmetic except the changes regarding the grammar inventory.

- 10 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*

It was documented in that the CDC drafts were probably retained, and the minutes of meetings will have been kept.

Assessment: 1982

- 1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*

Officers from EAB were consulted, and gave input, on the sections of the syllabus which related to their work.

- 2 *Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?*

A number of circumstances contributed to major revision in the means of assessment. The syllabus recommended the teaching of grammar in context. So, the Assessment Guidelines for secondary one and secondary two contained fewer multiple choice and more open-ended questions. In 1983, the 'O' level language examination also changed. Before 1983, there had been a multiple choice section testing grammar and comprehension. The multiple choice questions were removed. This change was initiated in Singapore, and had repercussions for other overseas' centres. It could be that the Public Services Commission, who interview all candidates for the teacher training courses, complained at that time about the standard of English. I'm not quite sure about this. There was a perception, however, that multiple choice testing may not be appropriate to the development of productive skills.

- 3 *Was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the new syllabus?*

They were released at about the same time.

Implementation: 1982

- 1 *Who was responsible for implementing the 1982 syllabus?*

The specialist inspectors of English were responsible. It was recognised that teachers needed to be familiar with the syllabus in order to translate it into classroom practice. General briefings were held. However, there was a shortage of manpower, so the implementation fell short of what the Specialist Inspectors would have liked to achieve.

- 2 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*

The implementers had access to consultants and experts who visited Singapore during this period. They emphasised the importance of getting people to understand the document. There was a problem of manpower, of lack of time.

- 3 *Over what period of time did the implementation take place?*

The initial implementation took place through briefings given to senior subject teachers of English. They then briefed the teachers in their own schools. Perhaps the message was diluted through the 'multiplier effect'. In 1984 and 1985, there was an expansion in the number of specialist inspectors of English, and this enabled the inspectors to follow up the initial implementation with programmes, which were more effective. PASSES was an example of such a programme, and reflected the close teamwork of the specialist inspectors. Between them, they took approximately twenty schools for a period of three to four years, and worked closely with the teachers of those schools on planning materials, lessons and reading programmes. Implementation also took place through workshops. Each Saturday, about half the specialist inspectors would be out in schools giving workshops, considering the teaching of skills which would support the syllabus.

- 4 *Was any in-service teacher training conducted? If so, how was this organised? Who was responsible?*
In-service training was done indirectly through the specialist inspectors' workshops.
- 5 *Did the implementation of the syllabus have any effect on pre-service teacher training?*
Representatives from the Institute of Education were on the syllabus committee.
- 6 *Was the implementation monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
It was monitored through the documentation for PASSES, and the workshops which incorporated a follow up session.

Syllabus Support Materials: 1982

- 1 *Were any syllabus support materials produced?*
In, I think, 1981, CDIS produced the PEP materials for the primary schools, and the CLUE materials for the secondary schools. Apart from CDIS, there were competing commercial publications, a number of which came later, for example Blueprint and Expressways.

Global Questions: 1982

- 1 *How successfully was the syllabus implemented in the schools?*
Over time, about four or five years, it was successfully implemented in schools. The instructional materials produced by CDIS truly reflected the syllabus, and were used in the majority of schools, so the principles were practised. The PASSES project was a major project covering twenty of the weakest schools, and closely involving five specialist inspectors. All the schools registered improved pass rates. There was a full programme of workshops.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*
Everything was moving in the same direction. Teacher training was also moving in the same direction. I was called upon to talk to trainee teachers. CDIS officers also went into the Institute of Education, and IE trainers, when dealing with methodology, referred to the CDIS materials.
- 3 *Are you aware of any developments not originating from the Ministry of Education, between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*
No.
- 4 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1982 syllabus?*
In the early stages, we could have spent more time on familiarizing schools with the syllabus. Perhaps we could have reached all teachers, personally. It would have been feasible. You make the time if it is important enough. A syllabus is determined by time, place and the personnel available. The luxury of time, of identifying personnel, of being able to organise a thorough implementation would have been wonderful.
On reflection, it was an exciting, challenging time.

APPENDIX Nii

**Interview with a member of the CLUE team, 1982-1988:
2.30-3.00 pm, 25 September, 1995**

Syllabus Implementation: 1982

- 1 *Who was responsible for implementing the 1982 syllabus?*
There was no formal dissemination of the syllabus. The teachers were responsible for its implementation, but members of the English Unit, specialist inspectors of English, helped; and the CLUE writers, as they produced textbooks which reflected the syllabus.

Syllabus Support Materials: 1982

- 1 *Were any syllabus support materials produced?*
Yes, the textbook.
- 2 *Over what period of time?*
While the CLUE project team was in operation in CDIS, 1982-1988.
- 3 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
Mr Gefen was the consultant. He is a very knowledgeable person.
- 4 *What sources proved most useful in producing syllabus support materials?*
The syllabus itself, teacher interviews and staff from the Institute of Education.
- 5 *How faithfully did the materials interpret the syllabus?*
The syllabus was faithfully interpreted.
- 6 *How were these materials disseminated?*
They were disseminated through heads of department and key teachers. The CDIS writers gave school-based workshops, and newsletters were sent to schools twice a term.
- 7 *How and by whom were the CDIS writers identified?*
We wanted people with writing and teaching experience, perhaps with RSA training. Writers must have the ability to revise, they must be interested in writing. We had to let some people go.
- 8 *Were any problems encountered in the writing and/or dissemination of the syllabus support materials? Were they overcome? If so, how?*
Communication with members of the English Language Unit, the specialist inspectors of English, was sometimes difficult. They were not very supportive of the CLUE textbooks. One stated at a meeting that the CLUE books did not prepare pupils for the examinations. Two wrote their own series of textbooks, commercially produced.
- 9 *What strategies, in writing and/or dissemination, were found to be the most successful?*
The writers sitting down and reflecting on every unit they wrote. They went carefully through each unit. People were very objective.
- 10 *Were the materials and/or their dissemination monitored? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
The materials were monitored on the basis of teacher feedback at the end of each year.
- 11 *Was the work of the syllabus support team documented? If so, how and by whom?*
A report was written when the project was completed.

Global Questions: 1982

- 1 *How successfully was the syllabus implemented in the schools?*
Hard to judge because, if anything, it was assumed that if the materials were disseminated then the syllabus was disseminated. However, teachers did not seem to be aware of its existence or link with the 1982 Syllabus.

- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*

The introduction of communicative programmes like REAP and ACT might have made it more difficult to implement the 1982 syllabus, and PASSES would have had an effect, too. REAP made it difficult to implement the 1991 syllabus, too, because it was a very structured programme.

- 3 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1982 syllabus?*

There should have been a more formal, structured implementation. The 1991 syllabus implementation suffered because there wasn't one. If the 1982 syllabus principles had been more widely known to teachers, the 1992 implementation procedure would have been easier. It was assumed that teachers were familiar with concepts like integration, but they weren't.

APPENDIX Niii

**Interview with Dr. Makhan L. Tickoo,
Regional English Language Centre:
8.45-9.15 am, 16 November, 1993**

1 *Were you consulted with regard to the writing of the new English Language Syllabus?*

No. This is what happens in Singapore, they distrust theoreticians. They believe they can do it better themselves, using the practitioners. They ignored Widdowson's comments, but accepted Gefen's input. He's an articulate man, a good practitioner, but they can see now they should have listened to Widdowson. They should have invited people like Michael Breen, Clarke, who has done an excellent PhD, and Keith Johnson in Hong Kong. They did not consult with the teachers, and did not connect the syllabus to existing programmes like ACT. There was insufficient needs analysis and insufficient means analysis. The original work done on the syllabus was good, but it seems to have been developed and implemented in a hurry by people who had lost contact with the original work. There seemed to be lots of enthusiasm, but not enough knowledge, reading, awareness of all that is involved in writing a syllabus. It's not rigorous, not thought through, certainly not the best work in the region, which is unusual for Singapore.

2 *Do you think it has been successfully implemented?*

Potentially, this is a good syllabus, but the people working with it have not realised or understood its potential. There's a huge gap between the theoretician, that is the syllabus, and teacher practice. The teachers believe they are, for example, using learner-centred methods, and they're not. Some of my students have been doing research into this gap between what teachers do and what they think they're doing. The gap is enormous.

The implementation has not been effective. The procedures for testing used in schools are very different to those advocated by the syllabus. The textbooks, good structural textbooks, are not reflective of the syllabus either. Textbooks and the examinations still dominate the syllabus. The syllabus won't do much harm, but it certainly won't do much good.

Singaporeans should have a far better standard of English than they do. The standard of English in the Polytechnics is very low. Singapore has the facilities, the resources, the money. It should be much better and more widely spoken. It's a mother tongue for around twenty five percent of the population, who speak it in all situations in life.

APPENDIX Niv

Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee, 1986-1991: 5.00-7.00 pm, 13 October, 1993

Global Questions: 1982

- 1 *How successfully was the syllabus implemented in the schools?*

I am not certain if there had been a dissemination programme for the syllabus. We knew that it was a structural syllabus, containing a list of grammar items to be taught. But this syllabus apparently did not have an impact on the teachers as they were using the structural approach anyway. Each secondary school had only two copies of the 1982 syllabus. These were usually kept in a cupboard and few teachers referred to them.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*

By around 1986, some specialist inspectors of English considered that improvements to the teaching of English in secondary schools were necessary. This was a result of the successful PASSES programme in which a number of inspectors, including myself, were involved. We worked closely with a number of secondary schools, 20 in 1984, helping the teachers to use a less teacher-centred, more integrative, theme-based approach to English teaching. However, we were not interpreting the 1982 syllabus, we were recommending improvements to current teaching practices as and when we felt it was necessary. Also, there were a lot of *ad hoc* developments; for example, the listening comprehension examination for 'N' Level, which was recommended by Raphael Gefen, the consultant for the CLUE project. This is a good examination. In 1984, we went to look at the CLUE books being written, to give our views and input in terms of the communicative approach. We also encouraged the teaching of process writing. In fact, the sentence combining section in the 'N' level examination came from the concern with process writing and the need to edit work. The 'O' level oral English examination was also revised as a result of the work done with PASSES. Also, during the 1980s, there was a lot of discussion on communicative language teaching.
- 3 *Are you aware of any developments not originating from the Ministry of Education, between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*

No. Only the MOE was involved in syllabus changes.
- 4 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1982 syllabus?*

The 1982 syllabus was implemented quietly. As it advocated an eclectic approach, it did not create a lot of excitement. Most teachers took it as an affirmation of the structural approach they were already using.

Writing: 1991

- 1 *Why was it felt necessary to produce a new syllabus in 1991?*

In 1986, I wrote a CDC paper on the need to revise the 1982 syllabus as a result of the work done on the PASSES programme. And Rebecca (Mok) presented a paper at a RELC Seminar on directions for improving the 1982 syllabus. That syllabus, of course, was written by Rebecca and Pearl Goh. A lot of changes had been made since then. For example, Robert had written the Listening Comprehension Guidelines for the Normal Examination of 1984. These changes needed to be reflected in a new Syllabus.

- 2 *What was the philosophy behind it?*
ICI. We wanted teaching to be integrative, contextualized and interactive. A lot of the ideas came from the PASSES programme, which has not been adequately documented. The idea that teaching is recursive, cyclical, is very important. The diagram on page three of the syllabus is significant here.
- 3 *What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and the 1991 English Language Syllabuses?*
The 1991 syllabus is much more communicative in its approach. It encourages teachers to integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing using a thematic format, and to provide opportunities for pupils to practise all four language skills in each lesson.
- 4 *Who was responsible for writing it?*
There was a syllabus committee made up of one representative from Exams and Assessment Branch; two lecturers from the Institute of Education, one secondary and one primary; two specialist writers from CDIS; and six specialist inspectors. It was the inspectors who did the writing, but the other members of the committee gave feedback on what we wrote. I suggested the titles of the six chapters, and the general framework of both syllabuses, primary and secondary. This was discussed thoroughly with other specialist inspectors who were not part of the syllabus committee, and changes were made as a result of these discussions. Essentially, though, the six chapters remained much as they had originally been conceived. I wrote the Introduction and Chapter One, Siok Hoon wrote Chapters Two and Three, Siok Hoon and I wrote Chapter Four together, Lillian and I wrote Chapter Five and Robert wrote Chapter Six.
We wanted the syllabus for both the primary and secondary to follow a basic pattern so the development was clear. Initially, this presented a problem. Eventually, we decided to start with the secondary syllabus, and the primary one was a scaled down version.
- 5 *How, and by whom, were these people identified?*
I had been involved in both the REAP and PASSES programmes, which gave me an overview of what was happening in both secondary and primary education. So, I volunteered to coordinate the committee's work. This position later became chairman. Of course, this had to be approved both by the Assistant Director and Deputy Director of the Languages and Library Development Branch. Then I had a free hand to choose which specialist inspectors I wanted to help me. I identified them on the basis of professional knowledge. There were two other inspectors to help me with the secondary syllabus, and three primary specialists. After a year, the three primary specialists left, so they had to be replaced, then a replacement left and had to be replaced; and one of the secondary inspectors left, so he had to be replaced, too.
- 6 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
At first, it was thought we should have a consultant, but I said to the Assistant Director that we should use the collective expertise and experience of the specialist inspectors and other officers in the Ministry of Education in Singapore. I did get some ideas from an inspectors' course I attended in UK in 1987, but we did not ask for assistance from any other country. However, it was obviously necessary to seek the advice of the Examinations and Assessment Branch, the Curriculum Development Institution and the Institute of Education, who would all be closely involved in the dissemination of the syllabus. So, they were represented on the syllabus committee. We also went to meet some lecturers from tertiary institutions to find out the kinds of English they would like their students to learn, as these people will eventually receive our pupils. And we went to observe PAP kindergarten classes, and primary classes, so we could determine the take off point for the primary one syllabus. In 1989, we piloted the syllabus in twelve schools, six primary and

six secondary. We identified the schools through a process of stratified random sampling, so we got two top schools, two middle range schools and two with a poorer intake at both the primary and secondary level. We helped the teachers plan, then observed their teaching using the new approach, and then modified the draft syllabus. I presented a paper at the 1990 RELC Seminar in which I included comments on this piloting, what was found useful and what was not.

7 *What sources proved most useful in writing the syllabus?*

When I went on the inspectors' course, in UK in 1987, I did buy a lot of books, and we referred to quite a few, but mostly it was the people who gave feedback who were the most useful source. In fact, Linda (the current Assistant Director) once asked which books we had referred to when writing the syllabus, and I said it was all from our own expertise and experience. The librarian did print out a great number of references, but they were not very useful. Our own specialist inspectors' collective wisdom and experience, the teachers who were part of the piloting exercise, the people from IE . . . these were the most useful sources.

8 *How long did it take to produce the syllabus?*

The ideas were mooted in 1986, and the syllabus was finished on 29 May, 1991, so it took about four years to complete. The time frame for writing and implementation was suggested by the committee and approved by DDLL.

9 *What difficulties were encountered in its production?*

The turnover of writers was a big problem.

10 *Were they overcome? If so, how?*

We were lucky enough to find good replacements for the writers who left.

11 *What circumstances best facilitated its production?*

The REAP, ACT, LEAP and PASSES programmes all helped, because people were familiar with the strategies. The strategies recommended in the PASSES programme were available to all secondary schools because workshops promoting them were announced through the Curriculum Planning Division's workshop booklet, though these workshops were only given in response to school request. The fact that the secondary classes are streamed into Normal and Express classes means that teachers are able to proceed at a pace of instruction suitable to the pupils, and this means that pupils can be given more attention.

12 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*

It was monitored through regular discussions with the Specialist Inspectors, and the other members of the syllabus committee who gave feedback.

13 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*

It was documented through feedback to the CDC, and then the MCM. All this was kept in the official syllabus file. It was also be documented through the minutes of the EL Unit Meetings.

Assessment: 1991

1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*

Yes. A representative was on the syllabus committee.

2 *Were the officers from Examinations and Assessment able to provide input for the new syllabus?*

There was some input from the examination officer, particularly in the assessment chapter of the syllabus.

3 *Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?*

Yes. The lower secondary Assessment Guidelines were revised, and guidelines regarding the format of the new PSLE examination were given to principals and teachers.

We were asked to help set the examination papers, for example the new 'O' level oral examination, the 'N' level listening comprehension examination, the

Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). We were glad to help. The examination format could only change slowly, though. Editing skills are now tested for the PSLE examination, and perhaps in about two years time, the examinations will be even more in line with the syllabus.

4 *If a revision was undertaken, was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the new syllabus?*

The syllabus came first, and the lower secondary Assessment Guidelines next. But at various stages, teachers were informed about the content of the new syllabus. We need two years' notice to change an examination, so we wrote to UCLES about the new syllabus. And we had to inform CDIS, which would be producing the new CLUE textbooks, to give them time to write the materials.

Implementation: 1991

1 *Who was responsible for implementing the 1991 syllabus?*

From MOE, all the specialist inspectors of English, and in the schools the English teachers.

2 *How, and by whom, were these people identified?*

By definition of their job.

3 *Has it been possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*

We did not directly consult any foreign experts, because it was unlikely they would have understood the needs of our local situation. However, if there were any experts coming to or through Singapore, they were invited to come to the English Unit to talk on syllabus or curriculum implementation.

4 *Over what period of time will the implementation take place?*

Dissemination workshops took place throughout part of '89, all of '90, until May '91, when the final syllabus was distributed. The syllabus was phased in gradually and the implementation will take from four to five years.

5 *What strategies have been/are/will be used to disseminate the information?*

Seminars were held at the Institute of Education for all principals, since they are the instructional leaders. Articles were written for the Singapore Educator and TELL. I insisted that schools should have enough copies of the syllabus to give each teacher a copy. This copy is the property of the school, and must be returned to the school by the teacher when he or she leaves. The printing cost over \$30,000. We held workshops for teachers, based on the syllabus dissemination package produced by members of the writing committee. This package was produced to overcome the problem of specialist inspectors who were not familiar with the syllabus. The schools were divided up amongst the specialist inspectors, who had thirty six schools each. It was the responsibility of each specialist inspector to disseminate information about the syllabus to each of their schools. Project officers attended dissemination workshops held by specialist inspectors, and then they too gave workshops. They were helped by their previous experience in the REAP programme. A copy of the syllabus dissemination package was given to all schools.

6 *Has/Is any in-service teacher training been/being conducted? If so, how was/is this (being) organised? Who is responsible?*

The syllabus dissemination workshops constituted in-service training for all the teachers. The EL Unit was responsible for this training.

7 *Has the implementation of the syllabus had any effect on pre-service teacher training?*

Yes. Since representatives from the Institute of Education were on the syllabus committee, they have disseminated information about the new syllabus to trainee teachers.

8 *Were/Are any problems (being) encountered during the implementation process? Have they been overcome? If so, how?*

Teachers' resistance to change was a key problem. They wanted the examination format to change in line with what we advocated in the new

syllabus. Assessment Guidelines for the primary and lower secondary classes have since been drawn up.

- 9 *What strategies have been found to be the most successful?*
Specialist inspectors went into schools to help teachers to write units of work and schemes of work. Slowly, the exam format is changing. The specialist inspectors helped teachers set papers according to the new syllabus; for example, encouraging them to set more contextualized items. Eventually, we produced the performance indicators as an appendix in the syllabus to help teachers assess pupils. Also, I was on the planning committee for the 1989/90 Curriculum Planning Division Seminar, so we chose as the theme for the seminar, how to implement change. This has helped specialist inspectors to advise the teachers.
- 10 *Is the implementation being monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
It is being monitored by the specialist inspectors through school visits.
- 11 *Is the implementation being documented? If so, how and by whom?*
The important documents and reports on syllabus implementation are in the syllabus file.

Global Questions: 1991

- 1 *How successfully has the syllabus been implemented in the schools?*
Very successful. Every EL teacher has a copy of the syllabus, and knows about the syllabus. We went to give talks to trainee principals and heads of department between '89 and '90. I observe trainee teachers in IE reading the TELL articles on syllabus implementation.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments, and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education since the writing of the 1992 syllabus was begun, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1991 syllabus?*
The implementation schedule for schools was modified, slightly to take into consideration the production of appropriate textbooks. Another development in early 1991 was the decision by MOE to have a Normal (Technical) stream in the education system. This made it necessary for us to write the performance indicators in the syllabus to cater to this stream.
- 3 *Are you aware of any developments since the writing of the 1991 syllabus was begun, and not originating from the Ministry of Education, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1991 syllabus?*
No.
- 4 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1991 syllabus?*
No. The Assistant Director of the time was very far sighted, and he recognised that marketing and effective dissemination were vital. There was a lot of hard work in the writing of the syllabus, but we had good and supportive leadership, and a lot of input from the other specialist inspectors which was very beneficial. Profiling was a new idea at the time and we had a lot of difficulty with the band descriptors, but I don't think anything could have been done better. We had good writers, like Siok Hoon; Lillian was very knowledgeable about grammar; Robert is an expert on testing. There was a lot of relevant experience in the Unit. We had a very good group of people at the right time. The syllabus is a practical one, the result of our collective wisdom and expertise. Everyone in our Unit cooperated fully in the dissemination of the syllabus, giving workshops to all schools based on the EL syllabus dissemination package that was written between 1990 and 1991. We can feel a great deal of pride in having successfully produced and implemented the syllabus.

APPENDIX Nv

Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee, 1986-1991:
10.30 am-12.30 pm, 30 November, 1993

Global Questions: 1982

- 1 *How successfully was the syllabus implemented in the schools?*
It was referred to in schools, but they considered the textbooks to be more important. In fact, I'm not sure the textbooks didn't come before the syllabus. There was no formal implementation of the syllabus, and no monitoring programme. There was a lot of argument about the syllabus, and I can remember Catherine Lim coming over, and there being a lot of discussion.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*
The REAP and ACT programmes in the primary schools were national programmes. REAP was begun about 1982, and its aim was to improve the reading ability of primary school pupils. ACT was much more influenced by the communicative approach. PASSES, was a programme for secondary schools whose results were poor, and only affected about thirty schools. It was not a national programme, and was not the major influence which the REAP and ACT programmes were.
- 3 *Are you aware of any developments not originating from the Ministry of Education, between 1982 and 1992, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1982 syllabus?*
The communicative approach was very much in vogue in the eighties, and had considerable influence. RELC ran courses and held seminars promoting it.
- 4 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1982 syllabus?*
Teacher training in the sixties was not very good. I was trained then, and unless you upgraded yourself, you really did not have a good idea of how to teach. A lot of our current problems originate in the sixties. There were some useful materials, in advance of their time, before REAP, some supplementary reading programmes. I think they were called Playway, perhaps by Yeo Lai Cheng. They weren't appreciated.

Writing: 1991

- 1 *Why was it felt necessary to produce a new syllabus in 1991?*
The new projects, like REAP and ACT, were accepted, but not reflected in the syllabus. It was understood that after ten years, it was time to review a syllabus anyway. There were syllabuses being produced in other subject areas, too, like maths. The 1988 Secondary School Guidelines had stated that oral skills needed to be stretched, and we needed to incorporate the work that had been done on listening comprehension. A lot of textbooks being produced were based on the communicative approach, rather than the approach found in the PEP and NESPE books, which were not very good. Lee Seow Ling produced some good CDIS materials, open-ended supplementary reading exercises.

2 *What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and the 1991 English language syllabuses?*

The 1992 syllabus is less structured, more flexible, open. In particular, the grammar part is not structured. The old primary syllabus is very structured, the secondary one more like an outline, more compartmentalised. Also, the new syllabus includes language related skills, though it's still lacking because there is no consideration of language arts. The old syllabus is a rudimentary document. The new one suggests a teaching approach. It's very ambitious and not widely understood by teachers.

3 *Who was responsible for writing the 1991 syllabus?*

The members of the English Unit are curriculum planners. A writing committee was set up, made up of some of the members of the English Unit, and representatives from IE, CDIS and EAB. The Committee met with people from the polytechnics, and heads of department and teachers were involved in piloting the syllabus.

4 *How, and by whom, were these people identified?*

The members of the writing committee from the English Unit invited people onto the committee who would be end users of the new syllabus. The coordinator of the English Unit, Rebecca at the time because there was no AD or DD, selected the people from the English Unit. I remember Soon Guan asked me to join. I would have been willing to head the writing committee, but Soon Guan said that I already had my promotion, and he needed to do something like this to obtain his promotion. As people left the unit, so the newcomers, regardless of abilities, joined the writing committee.

5 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*

We did not seek the views of people from other countries. We did not have a consultant because it was felt that it was unlikely a consultant would have understood the local situation. However, we did get the views of the institutions represented on the committee.

6 *What sources proved most useful in writing the syllabus?*

Syllabuses from other countries, for example Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Australia were helpful, and the literature on syllabus design, for example Munby and Keith Johnson. Munby is much more detailed in his approach than we were.

7 *How long did it take to produce the syllabus?*

We started round about the second half of 1987, meeting people and writing the draft. It was finished in 1990, so two to three years.

8 *What difficulties were encountered in its production?*

The lack of expertise of the writers. And the people who sat on the committee had very different views, including the representatives of other institutions. Time prevented any in-depth discussion at meetings. The representatives from other institutions probably did not have time to prepare for discussions of the draft syllabus. The time frame which was created by the writing committee and approved by DD was also approved by CDC. Its approval by CDC made it very difficult to change. There were many reasons for not going back to CDC: for example, it would look as though we hadn't properly considered what we were doing. In retrospect, I can't see why we needed to be in such a rush. It was our greatest fault, the lack of courage to change the time frame. It caused tremendous difficulty to CDIS, who were further disadvantaged because the syllabus was held back by the introduction of the 'N' level Technical stream. CDIS had a draft document of the syllabus, but they could have been waiting for a formal one, and they did not have a project director.

9 *Were they overcome? If so, how?*

It was not possible to overcome these problems.

- 10 *What circumstances best facilitated its production?*
A few good writers would have helped. A holistic approach would have helped, too. Parts of the syllabus were given to different people to write. Looking through the primary syllabus for the curriculum conference last year, it was very obvious that the conceptualisation, the framework and the following explanation were not clear. The conceptual framework should have been the responsibility of one experienced person. The basic principles on which to develop the syllabus should have been established.
- 11 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
It was monitored by the committee, who met frequently to shred what had been written.
- 12 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
It was not monitored. Meetings were not minuted. There was no clear record of decisions taken and why.

Assessment: 1991

- 1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*
Yes, because there was a representative of the Branch on the committee. However, she was frequently either busy or sick. So, the input was limited.
- 2 *Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?*
It was necessary to revise the guidelines, and they were revised. However, revisions concentrated only on formal, traditionally testable items. Continuous assessment was not considered in sufficient detail. The testing of grammar in particular needed to be reviewed. There is still not enough testing of grammar in context.
- 3 *If a revision was undertaken, was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the new syllabus?*
No. The guidelines were not released until March 1993.

Implementation: 1991

- 1 *Who is responsible for implementing the 1991 syllabus?*
Members of the English Unit, heads of departments and teachers.
- 2 *How, and by whom, were/are these people identified?*
It is the nature of their job.
- 3 *Has it been possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
Implementation is the responsibility of specialist inspectors and teachers only.
- 4 *Over what period of time will the implementation take place?*
If we consider the 'N' Technical stream starting in January 1994 as part of the process of syllabus implementation, it will not be complete until 1998.
- 5 *What strategies have been/are/will be used to disseminate the information?*
There were two dissemination workshops: one lecture, one hands-on. Then specialist inspectors have been using data gathering forms and interviews to monitor.
- 6 *Has/ls any in-service teacher training been/being conducted? If so, how was/is this (being) organised? Who is responsible?*
The dissemination workshops were in-service training. IE has incorporated information about the syllabus into its course for heads of department. LPC and the British Council also run courses which support the ideas in the syllabus.
- 7 *Has the implementation of the syllabus had any effect on pre-service teacher training?*
No idea.

- 8 *Were/Are any problems (being) encountered during the implementation process? Have they been overcome? If so, how?*
 There was an information overload during the dissemination workshops. Despite feedback to the contrary, the syllabus is difficult to digest. Two dissemination workshops were not enough. The focus for the monitoring is only the data from the unit plans. We have neglected assessment. The textbooks were not ready on time. We cannot observe teachers, and have to rely on heads of department who may have a limited understanding of the syllabus, and there's a high turnover of heads of department.
- 9 *What strategies have been found to be the most successful?*
 A good textbook would be.
- 10 *Is the implementation being monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
 It is being monitored, but the priorities have changed. The 'N' Level Technical stream is now the main priority.
- 11 *Is the implementation being documented? If so, how and by whom?*
 It is being documented through the feedback forms.

Syllabus Support Materials: 1992

- 1 *Were/Are any syllabus support materials (being) produced?*
 Yes. The textbooks, the CA materials, the Working Towards the Terminal Objectives workshops and materials, and anything the teachers have produced, perhaps through the pooling of units of work. It is ongoing.
- 2 *By whom?*
 CDIS, teachers and specialist inspectors.
- 3 *How, and by whom, were/are these people identified?*
 Through their job labels. The identification criteria have never been examined.
- 4 *Have they been able to seek/have they sought the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
 No. The CA committee wanted a consultant but it was not possible.
- 5 *What sources proved most useful in producing syllabus support materials?*
 There are very few helpful sources. There's a lot of literature on formal assessment, but very little on continuous assessment, for example. Methodology books have been quite helpful.
- 6 *How faithfully do these materials interpret the syllabus?*
 As faithfully as they can on general principles, but in the practise, use of these materials, I don't know.
- 7 *How have they been disseminated?*
 Through zonal meetings, support groups, briefing meetings and the sending out of checklists by the specialist inspectors.
- 8 *Were any problems encountered in the writing and/or dissemination of the support materials?*
 Time and expertise.
- 9 *What strategies, in writing and/or dissemination, have been found to be the most successful?*
 It would have been helpful to have had a series of workshops with teachers, which included observing and helping teachers. It would have been good to have used teacher training strategies and worked in the classroom with teachers.
- 10 *Were the materials and/or their dissemination monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
 The materials were not monitored, and neither was their dissemination. Informal feedback was not systematic.
- 11 *Was the work of the syllabus support team documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
 The work of the Continuous Assessment Committee and the Working Towards the Terminal Objectives Committee is being monitored.

Global Questions: 1991

- 1 *How successfully has the syllabus been implemented in the schools?*
The primary schools are writing units of work, but whether they are being translated into practice I do not know. As specialist inspectors, we are not accountable for the implementation. We haven't really done anything to see whether implementation has taken place.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments, and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education since the writing of the 1992 syllabus was begun, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1992 syllabus?*
The priority given to the 'N' level Technical stream is bound to affect the implementation. The interpretation of the syllabus for this stream will inevitably be narrower.
- 3 *Are you aware of any developments since the writing of the 1992 syllabus was begun, and not originating from the Ministry of Education, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1992 syllabus?*
There is a dire shortage of English teachers, and the importation of foreign teachers is bound to have some effect, good or bad, depending on the situation where they have come from and their understanding of the situation here. However, IE will have trained people to directly interpret the syllabus, and this will help. The examinations developed for the 5N Technical students may have an effect on the 5N Academic examinations. National campaigns may also effect the implementation at the primary level in particular, for example the Trim and Fit campaign.
- 4 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1992 syllabus?*
More time for writing and implementation. This would have resulted in better textbooks. We should let the commercial people have a go. CDIS need not have the monopoly on writing textbooks. Ideally, the syllabus designers should have gone to CDIS to be writers.

Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee
1988-1991: 3.00-5.00 pm, 4 September, 1993

Writing: 1991

- 1 *Why was it felt necessary to introduce a new syllabus in 1991?*

The writing committee was inaugurated in late 1986, early 1987, and I joined it in 1988, so the reasons for the syllabus's production were not clearly enunciated to me, so these are my own perceptions.

However, the teaching programmes in use in the schools at that time, REAP, ACT and PASSES, were communicative in approach. There was an anomaly between the 1982 structural syllabus and classroom practice in 1988.

The 1982 syllabus was very skills focussed. It did not consider, for example, thinking skills, skills other than those conventionally accepted as English language skills. Also, teachers accepted schemes of work that were textbook bound. They were bound by the dictates of the scheme of work or the textbook writer. It was felt that it would be good for teachers to prepare lessons which were appropriate for their own pupils.

The 1982 Syllabus had been in nearly ten years.

There was a special syllabus for the Normal stream, a listening comprehension syllabus . . . a lot of *ad hoc* materials existed as separate documents to be used in conjunction with the syllabus. They all needed to be brought together.
- 2 *What was the philosophy behind it?*

The committee wanted the pupils to go beyond the traditional skills; to prepare pupils for the society in which they would be living. For example, the Language and Culture Domain encourages sensitivity to cultural differences.

We were also interested in processes rather than product, how to encourage the pupils to think.

The concern was with the total individual, preparing them with the basic skills for life, to adapt to life.
- 3 *What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and the 1991 English language syllabuses?*

The 1982 Syllabus was very structural. It was very concerned with traditional skills. There was a lot of emphasis on grammar and the discrete teaching of grammar items. The 1991 syllabus tried to get away from the four skill areas and include new domains, for example research and reference skills. There is more concentration on processes. The 1991 syllabus is more comprehensive and meant for all streams.
- 4 *Who was responsible for writing it?*

The writing committee of specialist inspectors of English. Representatives from CDIS, the Institute of Education and Exams and Assessment Branch gave input and feedback.
- 5 *How, and by whom, were these people identified?*

The Deputy Director of Curriculum Planning, with the approval of the Director of Curriculum Planning, identified willing specialist inspectors of English. However, no-one was trained in syllabus design.

- 6 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
 The original writers conducted a survey and interviewed teachers and teacher trainers to find out what kind of syllabus they wanted . . . the kinds of changes they would like to see reflected. We got copies of other recent syllabuses, for example the German, New York and Hong Kong syllabuses, to identify features which would be relevant to Singapore. We incorporated those features. We did ask the opinion of a don from Lancaster University, who had developed a series of textbooks, but this was not very helpful. Other branches of the Ministry of Education and other institutes in Singapore were represented on the writing committee, but specialist inspectors were not very receptive to their views.
- 7 *What sources proved most useful in writing the syllabus?*
 Our own reading in the library and of other syllabuses.
- 8 *How long did it take to produce the syllabus?*
 If we began in 1987 and it was published at the end of 1990, about four years. Two draft copies had been produced previously, the first in perhaps 1988, or early 1989, and the second in 1989.
- 9 *What difficulties were encountered in its production?*
 The committee was not sure what approach to take - skills based or task based. We had lots of meetings with all the specialist inspectors of English, including those not on the writing committee, to thrash this out. Also, there was uncertainty about whether there should be a lower block and an upper block syllabus, or whether the syllabus should be a combined document.
 There was concern, too, about how to integrate the REAP programme, which has a clear grammar focus, with the methodology of the other programmes being promoted in schools.
 In addition, the writing committee was not trained in syllabus design and had no consultant. Members of the committee felt they were not adequately supported either by their peers or their superiors.
 There was considerable uncertainty about the coverage of skills, which is obviously cyclical, but at what stage could mastery be expected? Or, should mastery be expected at all? And how, in view of all the variables, was mastery to be explicitly stated?
 Editing was another problem. It was really re-writing each other's work so it was coherent in the light of the spirit of the syllabus and all parts contributed to the same whole.
 Writing the assessment chapter was a problem because the committee did not know whether Exams and Assessment Branch would endorse, for example, profiling. Or, would they agree to test skills which are not traditionally tested, or agree to test skills in non-traditional ways? For example, would they agree to test knowledge of grammar through editing rather than the setting of discrete grammatical items? The representative from Examinations and Assessment was not always accessible, or was not in a position of sufficient authority to be able to make a decision regarding such matters.
 Another difficulty was the introduction of a third stream, a development of which the committee was not aware until shortly before the final version of the syllabus was due to be printed.
 A number of the members of the writing committee left whilst the syllabus was being written, which did not help. And, in general, the approach to syllabus writing was too top down.

- 10 *Were they overcome? If so, how?*
The problem of what approach to be taken was eventually solved by members of the English Unit reaching a consensus after the members of the writing committee had reported frequently to the Unit. The whole question of mastery, its achievement and statement, was answered in the performance outcomes in the back of the syllabus, which state what we would expect pupils to be capable of in each domain, according to whether they are in the Academic or Express stream. In general, most problems were overcome through diligent reading, and discussion with colleagues both inside and out of the writing committee.
- 11 *What circumstances best facilitated the syllabus's production?*
Writing a syllabus requires concentrated work on the computer and library reading. So, other duties, like visiting schools, took a back seat. This was probably true of everyone on the committee. Having one person in charge of the secondary syllabus and one person in charge of the primary syllabus, to oversee and coordinate the content of each syllabus, was helpful. A general overview is necessary.
- 12 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
The writing was monitored because the chapters, when written, were looked over by other members of the writing committee, and the Assistant Director and Deputy Director. Other specialist inspectors of English who were not on the writing committee were also given bits and pieces to look at. Different drafts, before being sent to the printers, were edited by members of the English Unit. The Curriculum Development Committee, comprising the Director of Education, the Director of Curriculum Planning and representatives from Exams and Assessment Branch and the Curriculum Development Institution, also looked at the drafts. The chairman of the writing committee had to defend his committee's drafts and proposals, which the Curriculum Development Committee sometimes wanted to change. For example, the writing committee had to add an appendix to the syllabus when it became known that the 'N' level Technical stream was to be introduced.
- 13 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
It was documented through the minutes of meetings of the writing committee, and through proposals made and the feedback to those proposals.

Assessment: 1991

- 1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*
Yes, they were on the Writing Committee.
- 2 *Were the officers from Examinations and Assessment able to provide input for the new syllabus?*
Not much. They were junior officers.
- 3 *Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?*
It was necessary. The Primary School Leaving Examination had been changed before I left, and the Primary 3 streaming examination had been replaced by the Primary 4 examination. The 'O' level oral examination had already been changed because it was not in line with the approaches recommended in the PASSES programme. They were working in the Assessment Guidelines for lower secondary classes when I left.
- 4 *If a revision was undertaken, was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the new syllabus?*
It was not synchronised. There was a problem here. Neither the lower secondary nor the public examinations set by UCLES were really in line with the spirit of the syllabus when it was introduced.

Implementation: 1991

1 *Who is responsible for implementing the 1991 syllabus?*

The implementation was the responsibility of the specialist inspectors. Heads of department, principals and inspectors of schools were required to endorse it. A distinction needs to be made. The specialist inspectors implemented by disseminating and monitoring. The teachers, especially the heads of department, and key personnel, to whom the ideas were disseminated, clarified, were finally responsible for the implementation in a detailed way, through looking at units of work, methodology and marking, for example.

2 *How, and by whom, were/are these people identified?*

Heads of department were identified by virtue of their position. Key personnel were usually the level coordinators, also identified by virtue of their position. All specialist inspectors were identified to disseminate information because the syllabus was seen as a product of the English Unit, so everyone was responsible for its implementation.

3 *Has it been possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*

Other people were not referred to. We were so busy just trying to get it out. Perhaps we should have consulted Tickoo in RELC. However, there was a feeling that this is our syllabus: we must do what is best for us. There was just no time. A lot of unrealistic deadlines had been set in the original proposal to CDC. So, we had to implement by 1991. There was no time to consider implementation strategies. One person produced the dissemination package. Time constraints prevented that person consulting anyone. Originally, it was thought there should be a different committee in charge of the dissemination. But then it was felt that the writers had a clearer grasp of the syllabus's content, so were in a better position to disseminate

4 *Over what period of time will the implementation take place?*

Implementation will be completed by 1995.

The dissemination was suspended for five months because of the introduction of the New Education System. We should have had at least two years for dissemination. It was done in less than nine months. A clear distinction was made between dissemination and implementation. We went wrong here. In fact, dissemination and implementation should have been done simultaneously, with monitoring. Dissemination should have been extended to give teachers the theory, and then provide them with a lot of time to try out the methodology. Teachers were not ready for the independent judgement, decision making, the 1991 syllabus required. The whole process should have been more consultative, less top down. We should have synchronised the dissemination with the publication of the textbooks.

5 *Has/ls any in-service teacher training been/being conducted? If so, how was/is this (being) organised? Who is responsible?*

The Heads of department course now requires prospective heads of department to write units of work. The language teaching section of RELC is doing something. The Language Proficiency Centre, the only institution with which we liaised, is also doing something. Specialist inspectors were told by a Deputy Director of Curriculum Planning that they were not to be involved in in-service teacher training. However, many SIELs felt that they should be involved. So, there was a conflict in the perception of the specialist inspectors' role here. In-service teacher training is not in the specification of the specialist inspectors' duties. One specialist inspector was told by the Director of Curriculum Planning that a specialist inspector's job was not with schools.

6 *Has the implementation of the syllabus had any effect on pre-service teacher training?*

I don't know

- 7 *Were/Are any problems (being) encountered during the implementation process? Have they been overcome? If so, how?*
Teachers' linguistic knowledge, competence, was the biggest obstacle. Many lack the basic knowledge of how to put ideas into action in the classroom. Also, teachers were not given enough time for professional planning. There are a lot of ingrained notions about how grammar should be taught, and a reluctance to change what has worked in the past. Some teachers felt that as the public examination had not changed, why should they embark on something which will not match with the final outcome?
By the end of 1992, there seemed to be less resistance, and there appeared to be greater understanding of the rationale behind the syllabus and how to go about implementing it.
- 8 *What strategies have been found to be the most successful?*
Working with a teacher and making use of what they are teaching in class to explain how something could be improved or made more in line with the principles of the syllabus.
- 9 *Is the implementation being monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
Yes. By the specialist inspectors, who are monitoring the units of work and recording this on forms.
- 10 *Is the implementation being documented? If so, how and by whom?*
It is being documented by the monitoring committee.

APPENDIX Nvii

Interview with a Member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee,
1987-1990: held from 5.30-6.45 pm, 5 August, 1994

Writing: 1991

- 1 *Why was it felt necessary to produce a new syllabus?*
- 2 *What was the philosophy behind it?*
- 3 *What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and the 1991 English language syllabuses?*

The old syllabus was structurally based. A rationale for the new syllabus was that it should not follow the structures of the language. The old syllabus did not provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to teach language meaningfully. In the new syllabus, language is seen as communication. The suggestions about the integration of the teaching of grammar also reflect that the emphasis of the syllabus is on meaningfulness.

The new syllabus includes suggestions regarding methodology, activities and assessment guidelines. It provides methods and content for assessment. Banded criteria are provided for the assessment of macro skills. The inventories proved useful to the teachers, as the old syllabus only had structures.

Pupils need to be provided with the opportunity to acquire language. Research into language acquisition suggests that there is a difference between this and language learning.

Language teaching needs to be interesting, and the new syllabus was intended to help teachers be interesting. There should be active pupil participation in the lessons, and a task based approach was adopted to ensure that pupils were not just passive learners.

Curriculum renewal is necessary every few years. It was timely to revise the syllabus, so it would be in keeping with current ideas.

The specific motivation for change came from the Specialist Inspectors for English. However, there was also some motivation from the REAP and ACT programmes.

- 4 *Who was responsible for writing the new syllabus?*
- 5 *How and by whom were these people identified?*

Specialist inspectors were responsible for writing it. Individual inspectors volunteered to be on the syllabus writing committee. Whoever was interested gave their name to Andrew Watts. The committee was already established when I joined the English Unit, and I did not become a member of it until late 1987. I had volunteered earlier, because I had just completed my MA and was interested in curriculum development, and influenced by theories of language acquisition. However, I was only taken into the writing committee later, as very little work had been done. They had realised that I could make a contribution to the writing.

- 6 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, or other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*

Before writing the syllabus, I observed teachers teaching, and discussed with teachers what they would like to see in the syllabus. This was very helpful. We did not receive any local help. We visited the Singapore Polytechnic to seek the views of their people on the syllabus when we had just begun writing it, but their contributions were not useful.

My own views were shaped by two conferences I attended and the discussions I had with people I met there. I paid for my own attendance at these conferences, and made use of my leave to attend them. The one held in Canberra, Australia, in January 1988 was the most useful, and influenced me to use topics as an organisational focus of the Syllabus. I presented a paper on this at the 1989 RELC Seminar. I also attended a conference at Lancaster on testing, which was useful.

- 7 *What sources proved most useful when writing the syllabus?*
I did a lot of research. The Council of Europe papers were helpful; Yalden; Breen and Candlin; Christina Bratt Paulston; David Nunan; Wilga Rivers. I did a lot of reading on assessment, Harris for example. The International Applied Linguistics Journal was useful, and curriculum enquiry journals.
After the first draft of the syllabus had been completed, we met with teachers to obtain feedback. Two seminars were held, one for secondary and one for primary teachers. We also got feedback from the annual zonal meetings with the Heads of Department. Teachers found the syllabus very comprehensive, and thought the inventories were very helpful. They were generally positive, except for the amount of time they were going to have to spend on preparation. Teachers would have been much happier if they could have written their schemes of work in their own way.
- 8 *How long did it take to produce the syllabus?*
It took one year to write, from planning to completion. The primary syllabus was written first, and the ideas from this were then used in the secondary syllabus.
- 9 *What difficulties were encountered in its production?*
There were four of us on the team writing the primary syllabus. I did most of the writing for this syllabus. I was asked to take over towards the end of 1987, theoretically after the writing had begun. There was no documentation, and little had been done. One of the other three team members was helpful with the editing, but the others were really there in name only. They gave oral input, but their background was in Literature and they lacked theoretical expertise. In fact, some people were not doing their work. Most of all, though, we lacked time.
- 10 *Were these problems overcome? If so, how?*
I had a linguistics background and acquired the necessary theoretical knowledge myself, through reading. The others did some work, but very limited reading. In the absence of support, I did the writing myself.
- 11 *What circumstances best facilitated the production of the syllabus?*
It was a priority area, so top management was very supportive. My working conditions were flexible, and I was never queried as to my whereabouts. So, I could devote all my time to writing it. I had a lot of freedom. RELC is a good library, and I made a lot of use of it.
- 12 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
After every chapter had been written, feedback was obtained from other Specialist Inspectors of English. This was not always helpful, though. The best feedback came from other members of the writing committee. The bosses did not vet anything until the syllabus was completed.
- 13 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
No minutes were taken.

Assessment: 1991

- 1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*
- 2 *Were the officers from Examinations and Assessment able to provide input for the new syllabus?*
The EAB personnel were not helpful because they did not have an assessment background.

APPENDIX Nviii

**Interview with a Member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee,
1986-1991: held from 2.30-4.00 pm, 12 January, 1994**

1 *How closely do you think the previous Assessment Guidelines reflected the 1982 syllabus?*

As a head of department in a secondary school at the time the 1982 syllabus was being used, I did refer to it, but the textbook and the Assessment Guidelines were more important. I did not check the correlation between the guidelines and the syllabus.

2 *How did you come to be identified as a member of the Syllabus Writing Committee?*

I replaced an officer who had already been identified to join the writing committee. I was new to the Ministry and to the Examinations and Assessment Branch, so I found I was giving input from the point of view of the teacher in the classroom rather than an officer from Examinations and Assessment Branch.

3 *How long were you on the committee?*

For its entire existence.

4 *Do you think you were able to give useful input towards the writing of the new syllabus?*

I sometimes felt a need to defend existing test items, those already in the guidelines. There's a conflict, really, between Curriculum Planning and Assessment. Curriculum planners say that testing must always reflect what has been taught. So, if the pupils have been taught to answer multiple choice questions, then this must be the way they are tested. Assessment people say that if the pupils have been taught thoroughly, then it does not matter what format is used to test them. Assessment people also have to be aware of practical problems like potential difficulties with markers. If teachers are marking a formal examination, we need to show them exactly what each specific mark is for. We cannot work from principles, we have to be specific. So, the less subjective an examination paper is, the better. This meant that when Curriculum Planning wanted contextualized test items, and an integrated approach, I was sometimes in conflict with these ideas.

5 *Do you think the new Assessment Guidelines reflect the new syllabus?*

Curriculum Planning Division recognises that Assessment Guidelines and formal examinations, for example the public examinations and the end of year school-based examinations, are the responsibility of Examinations and Assessment Branch. Continuous, informal assessment and teaching methodology are the responsibility of Curriculum Planning. Actually, the schools' concern is for the examinations and they teach towards them. So, no matter how well written a syllabus is, it goes into cold storage.

6 *In what ways do you see the new Assessment Guidelines to be different to the old guidelines?*

We tried to incorporate the idea of integration, and to give more context to the test items. There are no more multiple choice questions, which makes it easier to set the exams because schools had great difficulty setting the multiple choice questions. We try to make sure that emphasis is given to all four skills. Previously, the listening comprehension skills were neglected. Although listening is not directly tested at 'O' Level, we still test this skill in the Express classes. We have also included the picture description as an alternative item in the oral examination, though this is not part of the 'N' level examination.

7 *Do you think there is a conflict between the communicative approach to teaching English and the testing of English Language?*

In the Singaporean context, we cannot go all the way with the communicative approach. Curriculum Planning feels that if you interrupt a pupil's flow of language, he or she will be inhibited. But Cambridge insists on accuracy in the written examination. We learnt about this conflict between communicative ability and accuracy through the 'O' level oral examination, when pupils who spoke poor English were awarded a Grade 1.

8 *Did you trial the new Assessment Guidelines?*

We sent out a draft copy to schools. Before we sent out the draft, we got feedback on the table of specifications from two specialist inspectors of English, a number of teachers and one person from CDIS. Some new test items were contributed by one specialist inspector, and I recycled other test items. The draft copy went out to schools in March 1993. At the end of 1993, I sent out a structured questionnaire on the draft copy. I went through the guidelines page by page, asking the schools for their views. Every school responded to the questionnaire, and most of the comment was favourable. The greatest concern was about the marking scheme for the open-ended comprehension questions. The teachers wanted a more detailed coverage of the type of comprehension questions which could be asked. They wanted more examples of every type of comprehension question, and examples of what type of question, for example, deserves two, four marks . . . So, I came out with the examples. Fortunately, the passage was good, so I could devise appropriate examples of the question types the teachers wanted. The examples are with the AD now, waiting for approval before they are sent out. Some teachers also felt that the secondary one and two guidelines did not reflect closely enough the 'N' and 'O' level examinations. I do not think that the secondary one or two examinations should be a rehearsal for the 'N' and 'O' level examinations. I deliberately included more interesting, perhaps contextualized questions. The word number requirement for the lower secondary composition examinations falls between the requirement for PSLE and the 'N' and 'O' level examinations. However, some teachers thought it would be better to demand more words, to be in line with the 'O' level, or even beyond that, 800 words for example.

We need to remember that the guidelines are just that, guidelines. They are flexible, and open to professional interpretation. As long as the four skills are covered, and there is, for example, functional writing, the teachers are free to decide the weighting of the marks within that framework.

9 *Are the teachers setting different examinations now? Have you any means of finding out?*

We do not have any means of finding out. There are no immediate plans to see if there is any difference in the setting of examinations at the lower secondary level. At present, the concern is more for the primary schools.

10 *Is there anything else you would like to say about the implementation of the syllabus?*

Really, unless the head of department is prepared to identify resources to support the syllabus, then the syllabus will not be seen to be as important as either the textbook or the examination requirements. As long as the teacher has the textbook and knows what the examinations require, then she's OK. A syllabus is mainly for the textbook writers and Examinations and Assessment Branch. I think schools would find attainment targets more useful than theories of learning. With the content subjects, it is easier to identify what you have to teach, and a syllabus is necessary. Maybe that places pressure on skill-based subjects, for example English language, to produce a syllabus. I'm not really sure what the aim of an English language syllabus is. The linguistic aspects of the syllabus and the methodology it advocates will all be translated into the textbook, and if it's not the teachers will all interpret the syllabus differently.

If the curriculum planners had wanted to introduce a different approach to

English language teaching, it would have been more effective to re-train teachers. The current training in IE is not very effective. What I learned on the RSA course was my first introduction to teaching English language. Previously, teaching English, as far as my training was concerned, meant teaching English literature.

The syllabus is intended to show teachers how language should be taught, but you really need a linguistics background to be able to read it and fully appreciate its implications. So it's not effective as a vehicle for re-training teachers. Textbooks are more influential than the syllabus or in-service training.

APPENDIX Nix

Interview with Assistant Director, Languages and Library Branch, 1990-1995: 3.00-3.30 pm, 25 September, 1995

Writing: 1991

- 1 *What was the philosophy behind the 1991 syllabus?*
The intention was to educate teachers through the use of the syllabus. The original CLUE materials had this underlying philosophy, too. This is why the syllabus is so detailed. The writers wanted teachers to determine for themselves the needs of their pupils, and wanted to give them help, to enable teachers to do this.
- 2 *What do you think are the main differences between the 1982 and the 1991 English Language Syllabuses?*
The main difference is that the 1991 Syllabus did not prescribe what should be taught at each level, whereas the 1982 Syllabus did.
- 3 *Who was responsible for writing it?*
The specialist inspectors of English.
- 4 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
The views of people at the Regional English Language Centre, the National Institute of Education, and the Curriculum Development Institute were sought. The people at the university were not approached.
- 5 *What difficulties were encountered in the syllabus's production?*
The writers' main difficulty was the time factor. They had other duties to perform besides writing the syllabus.
- 6 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
At certain points in the writing, the writing committee shared its work with other specialist inspectors in the English unit, usually at the monthly English Unit meeting. A lot of argument took place on these occasions. There was some resentment against members of the writing committee, perhaps because it was regarded as a prestigious committee, and maybe other specialist inspectors thought they should be on it.
- 7 *Was the writing process documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
It was not really documented.

Assessment: 1991

- 1 *Were the syllabus writers able to liaise with officers from the Examinations and Assessment Branch?*
Yes. There was a representative from the Branch on the committee.
- 2 *Was it possible/necessary to revise the Assessment Guidelines in accordance with the new syllabus?*
The old Assessment Guidelines were revised, though they still make no mention of continuous assessment. In an exam conscious society where members of parliament, and even the elected president, have their qualifications checked, they are a guide as to how to set formal assessment only. Co-ordination here could have been improved.
- 3 *If a revision was undertaken, was it possible to synchronise the publication of the revised guidelines with the release of the revised syllabus?*
The guidelines came after the syllabus.

Implementation: 1991

- 1 *Who was responsible for implementing the 1991 Syllabus?*
The specialist inspectors of English.

- 2 *Was it possible to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or other interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
They planned their own implementation. It was assumed that teachers would be familiar with many of the ideas in the syllabus.
- 3 *Over what period of time will implementation take place?*
For the secondary schools, 1992-1995; for the primary schools, 1992-1996.
- 4 *What strategies have been used to disseminate the information?*
Workshops to heads of department and key teachers; flyers; articles in TELL magazine; and zonal meetings.
- 5 *Has any in-service teacher training been organised? If so, how has this been organised? Who is responsible?*
Staff Training mounted some workshops on communicative teaching strategies and process writing. Specialist inspectors of English have given workshops.
- 6 *Has the implementation of the syllabus had any effect on pre-service teacher training?*
The Institute of Education would have discussed it with their trainees.
- 7 *Were any problems encountered in the implementation process? Have they been overcome? If so, how?*
Coordinators rather than teachers were targeted. Many teachers are dependent on textbooks, and these were late in the early stages of implementation. Other syllabuses were being implemented at the same time, particularly in the primary schools. Teachers do not perceive the syllabus to be preparing pupils for the examination. Monitoring the syllabus was also a problem, because teachers cannot be observed frequently. They are apprehensive about being observed, perhaps because teacher observations are usually conducted as part of an appraisal procedure.
- 8 *What strategies have been found to be most successful?*
It was useful to interview and talk to teachers. Going through the units of work also gives an idea of what stage of implementation the teachers are at.
- 9 *Is the implementation being monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
It is being monitored by the specialist inspectors of English through questionnaires and interviews.
- 10 *Is the implementation being documented? If so, how and by whom?*
It is being documented by the specialist inspectors of English.

Syllabus Support Materials: 1991

- 1 *Were any support materials produced?*
Yes, the Terminal Objectives and the Continuous Assessment packages.
- 2 *Over what period of time, and by whom?*
1991-1994, by the specialist inspectors of English.
- 3 *Have they been able to seek the views and/or assistance of experts and/or interested parties in other branches of the Ministry of Education, other institutes in Singapore and/or other countries? If so, who and to what effect?*
No. They worked in isolation.
- 4 *What sources proved most useful in producing syllabus support materials?*
The support materials for the UK National curriculum, and a variety of publications on testing. These can be found in the bibliography to the CA package.
- 5 *How faithfully do these materials interpret the syllabus?*
Absolutely.
- 6 *How have they been disseminated, and by whom?*
Through workshops, by the specialist inspectors of English.
- 7 *Were any problems encountered in the writing and/or dissemination of the support materials? Were they overcome? If so, how?*
Shortage of time was one problem. Another was the absence of any national norms of achievement. The syllabus did not prescribe any.

- 8 *What strategies, in the writing or dissemination, were found to be the most successful?*
The collaboration of specialist inspectors.
- 9 *Was the writing of the materials and/or their dissemination monitored? If so, how and by whom?*
An attempt has been made to monitor the dissemination through the monitoring committee.
- 10 *Was the work of the syllabus support teams documented? If so, how and by whom? Is the documentation available?*
Documentation has been achieved through minutes of meetings and the reports of the monitoring committee.

Global Questions: 1991

- 1 *How successfully has the syllabus been implemented in the schools?*
Probably more successfully in the primary schools. Primary school teachers seem to be more compliant, more open to suggestion. Primary school principals seem to be more interested, too. They have attended syllabus workshops given to teachers.
- 2 *Are you aware of any directives, developments and/or programmes, originating from the Ministry of Education since the writing of the 1992 syllabus was begun, which may have had an effect on the implementation/interpretation of the 1991 syllabus?*
The introduction of the New Education System and extending the education system to include a Normal Technical stream interrupted the dissemination process in 1991. The syllabus writing committee was asked to devise outcomes for the technical course pupils, and it was not clear what these should look like.
- 3 *In retrospect, was there anything done or not done, or which could have been done differently, to have further ensured the successful implementation of the 1991 syllabus?*
More time for dissemination would have been useful. Greater teacher involvement in the whole process would also have been good, perhaps having more teachers using the trial materials and reflecting on their use.

APPENDIX Nx

Interview with a member of the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee, 1986-1991: 6.30-8.00 pm, 5 February, 1997

1982 Syllabus

1 *Are you familiar with the 1982 Syllabus?*

2 *What would you regard as its strengths/shortcomings?*

It was based on structural grammar items at a time when communicative teaching was at its height. It was a simple syllabus to teach as it was sequenced. However, the order was not related to the learners' natural acquisition of language.

Writing: 1991

1 *How were you identified to join the 1991 Syllabus Writing Committee?*

2 *Were you given any particular roles/responsibilities?*

3 *Did you encounter any difficulties fulfilling these roles/responsibilities?*

4 *How could you have been enabled to fulfil them better?*

5 *What sources proved most useful in writing the syllabus?*

6 *Was the writing monitored? If so, how and by whom?*

Because I was coordinator of the post graduate diploma in education programme for pre-service secondary school teachers, I was appointed by my head of department.

I was not assigned any particular roles or responsibilities. We were all brainstorming for ideas for the syllabus. However, I was told to shut up as my comments were irrelevant. The Ministry representatives just wanted to get on with the job. I wanted to do a survey to look at implementation in other countries, for example Australia and New Zealand, so we could anticipate the problems encountered there. I also wanted a genre approach. I asked NIE library to look for relevant materials, and the recently acquired ERIC silver platter printed out a pile of abstracts. However, the Ministry officials said they did not want any information. I was taken into an office and shown a calendar on which were circled deadlines which the syllabus committee had to meet, and asked not to prevent them from meeting this deadline. I was speaking too much at meetings, for example by explaining the need to consider discourse rather than theme, and I was asked to keep quiet so as not to delay things. I became discouraged.

I felt that using the focus wheel as a basis for planning units of work would not work. It reflected approaches to EFL teaching and was inappropriate. The thematic base would encourage a social studies approach to the teaching of English. I did not like the name **Terminal Objectives**. I could not see the purpose of the eclectic list of activities. I was worried about the likely overlap when teaching different year levels. The appendices added to cater for the Normal Technical students were structural in nature and helpful only to the course book writers. The focus lesson for grammar was a cop out.

I felt teachers would need an MA in applied linguistics to implement the syllabus, but I was told that it was a national document and teachers could not be expected to work from it.

External sources were not referred to and no outline or overview was developed. The Ministry obtained the services of people from key institutes, but there was no forward planning, no vision. Everything was at the details level, so everything was included. The speech situations identified reflect this desire to include everything.

They should have looked at the previous syllabus, identified the problems, then developed an overview and a format, written drafts and piloted them. They needed to consider implementation details and to listen to the teachers' voice in

order to identify problems.

I don't know who read the drafts. There was no discussion about changing the testing situation. They were like beavers with their heads down.

I felt confused by what they were doing, and saddened about the quality of middle management in the Ministry. They role play to please the boss, but won't take risks.

1991 Syllabus: Strengths/Shortcomings

1 *What would you regard as the major strengths/shortcomings of the 1991 Syllabus?*

The 1991 Syllabus was said to be eclectic. The word is a cop out. The syllabus does not consider stakeholders, only the bosses, who knew little about EL syllabuses. The Ministry officials broke all the rules about how to approach their task. A basic rule is that to implement a syllabus, account must be taken of possible resistance. At NIE, even changing a series of twelve lectures is difficult. We needed to use videos, provide training . . . There's a lot to understand about learning from tasks. Had it been a process, task-based syllabus it may have been more relevant at the time. The list of thinking skills included in the syllabus are processes, means of carrying out a task. They could have used thinking skills as a basis for task analysis, reflecting the cognitive difficulty of the task. They did not want to structure either content or format.

1991 Syllabus: Effect on pre-service training

1 *Has the implementation had any effect on the pre-service courses for teachers?*

We had to adopt a survival approach, for example by providing students with a matrix so they could find their way around the syllabus. A request for assistance from the Ministry received no response. We wanted some training ourselves so that NIE understood the Ministry's intentions. We should have been briefed early in the implementation process as we were implementing the syllabus on their behalf at the pre-service level. We wanted to see the Ministry's training materials to assess their usefulness for the pre-service courses. We couldn't even get copies of the syllabus. We eventually got hold of six and had to photostat them. We're still doing what we were doing before the syllabus was implemented, that is teaching students to use discourse as the organisational focus when producing units of work. We teach decision making at NIE, and want students to devise their own units, but the schemes of work we see from schools show that schools use the course books as the basis of units of work. I worry more about the course books, and we warn students about their reliance on themes.

So, the effect of syllabus implementation at the pre-service level has been to interrupt rather than assist our programmes. We have had to ignore the syllabus and concentrate more on the course books, which have more influence on schools' programme planning.

I attended two meetings to discuss the development of the CLUE course books. The emphasis was on themes. It seems that teachers were happy with the use of themes on the PASSES programme, so it was felt their use should be introduced in the syllabus. There was no research done into the usefulness of a theme as an organisational focus.

1991: Implementation

1 *Do you think the 1991 Syllabus has been successfully implemented in schools? Why? Why not?*

2 *What do you think have been the effects on programme planning, classroom methodology and/or pupil assessment?*

3 *What kinds of help do you think teachers need now?*

The syllabus is a ghost. We all think we can see it, but where is it? Schemes of

work given by schools to students when they are on school experience show that the activities and goals of the units of work are derived from the course books. So where is the syllabus? The use of themes seems to have had no effect on language teaching. Video tapes of classroom practice would reveal the same reading lessons, for example. Teachers say they don't have time for fancy stuff, and exams don't allow time for "it", whatever "it" is.

We collected schemes of work used in schools by our students because we were not getting any information from the Ministry and we were worried that we were not equipping students for the situation in schools. However, now who knows where we are? I understand a new syllabus is being prepared. There has been no analysis of the last one. We seem to have been going through a period of nothingness.

Someone should have studied the implementation of the 1991 Syllabus and presented a paper on how not to do it. The people implementing it were ill-equipped and there was no leadership. The government should have sent people on overseas courses on curriculum implementation. There is no local expertise. Courses on what a curriculum document is would have been useful, too.

Perhaps PASSES skewed it. PASSES used more pair and group work and more interesting materials and it worked. This influence meant that the syllabus writers moved from technique to theory. They lacked training and a committed person as leader. Although the people who implemented the syllabus had limitations, with training some of them could have been successful.

As it is, there seems to have been no effect on programme planning, classroom methodology or pupil assessment. We seem to be in freefall.

We need to re-group and start again. EL teaching in Singapore is no longer relevant. It has turned into some weird kind of content subject. We need to look at the effects of information technology on EL teaching. We need to look at text types as they are affected by Internet. We need to look at reading and writing from a cross-curricular viewpoint. Narrative, or rather recount, has been most commonly taught. However, expository writing will be more in demand. Expressing information will be more important than self expression. Grammar, word choice, etc. on computer programmes require different strategies to those traditionally used. The present situation requires an analysis of new communication trends. The focus has to change to prepare pupils' for what is relevant. Language teaching has completely lost relevance. New strategies are required because of different interaction modes. For example, we need to study the language of computer instructions, how we can exploit resources like segments of a video

The Future

1 *What do you think might be the lessons to be learnt from the writing, disseminating and implementing of the 1991 Syllabus?*

We must prepare. We cannot just jump in. More awareness of implementation strategies is necessary. We need to do the opposite of everything that was done. It was amateur hour.