CURRICULUM RENEWAL IN SCHOOL FOREIGN

LANGUAGE LEARNING: A PROJECT IN CONTEXT

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To Nirina, Andrew and Mialy without whose love and understanding nothing would have been written.

To Lothian Region's Modern Language teachers and pupils without whose commitment and co-operation nothing could have been written.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCC: Central Committee on the Curriculum (Scotland)
CILT: Centre for Information on Language Teaching
CR: Curriculum Renewal
CSE: Certificate of Secondary Education (England)
DES: Department of Education and Science (England)
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
FL: Foreign Language
FLL: Foreign Language Learning
FLT: Foreign Language Teaching
GLAFLLL: Graded Levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning
GOML: Graded Objectives in Modern Languages
H Grade: Higher Grade
HMI: Her Majesty's Inspector
INSET: In-Service Education
L1: First Language, ie mother-tongue
NCLE: National Congress on Languages in Education
NFER: National Foundation for Educational Research
O Grade: Ordinary Grade
OMLAC: Oxfordshire Modern Languages Achievement Certificate
RSGML: Regional Study Group on Modern Languages
S1 - S6: Secondary 1st year - Secondary 6th year
SCCML: Scottish Central Committee on Modern Languages
SEB: Scottish Examinations Board
SED: Scottish Education Department
INTRODUCTION

"But as for certain truth, no man has known it
Nor will he know it; either of the Gods
Nor yet of all the things of which I speak,
And even if by chance he were to utter
The final truth, he would himself not know it
For all is but a woven web of guesses."
(Xenophanes)

This thesis is an attempt to describe the genesis, process and interim products of a project designed to improve the quality of the teaching and learning of Modern Languages in secondary schools in Lothian Region, Scotland. It sets out to describe the educational context in which the project took place, and to relate what occurred to other contemporary theoretical and practical work in the field.

The project was essentially a developmental rather than an experimental one. It sought to promote curriculum renewal on a broad front rather than to investigate a limited set of propositions. It set out to create a framework within which teachers could develop awareness and skills which would enable them to explore alternative strategies to the ones currently employed, in order to improve the attitudes and achievements among pupils. The thesis argues for an open-minded evolutionary form of curriculum renewal that brings teachers together to work co-operatively towards self-development.

Curriculum renewal can perhaps be likened to the creation of a jigsaw puzzle, in which the various pieces are cut and recut to fit together into an ever-evolving whole. Changes to the shape of one part of the picture will inevitably affect other parts. A concentration on only one part of the whole to the exclusion of other equally important parts inevitably leads to a distorted view. This thesis attempts to show how the various parts of the foreign language curriculum jigsaw can and should be interrelated. It also attempts to demonstrate how theory and practice can be brought together to inform each other, how broad educational and narrower
utilitarian aims can be harmoniously pursued, how social, individual and epistemological claims can be integrated, and how various values from apparently opposing value-systems may be reconciled. The thesis describes the way in which the project worked gradually towards a broad pragmatic approach to the foreign language curriculum, designed to encourage each school to reshape its own particular jigsaw in the light of its own particular context. Teachers were encouraged to identify their own chosen starting point, and then to work outwards from there to attempt over time to embrace the whole picture.

The term 'curriculum renewal' was preferred to 'curriculum development', since it indicated rather more clearly that the exercise did not start from scratch, but from an existing state of affairs, and did not stop at the production of some curriculum package to be used in schools, but implied an ongoing process of re-examination and of recreation.

In order to clarify what is meant by the term 'curriculum renewal' and by 'school foreign language learning' in this thesis, a definition of the former and a brief description of the latter within the Scottish context are given.

The term 'curriculum renewal' is used in its widest sense to cover re-examination and recreation of:

- subject aims and objectives
- the materials, equipment and other resources
- the teachers' attitudes and skills
- the teaching/learning process in the classroom
- the assessment scheme.

School foreign language learning in the Scottish context starts in the first year of the secondary school (S1) at age 12. All pupils study one foreign language for two years (until the end of S2), and may then opt out, or choose to go on for a further two years up to the end of S4; which marks the end of compulsory schooling. At
the start of the project in 1976/77, only 35% of the total age group continued with their study of a foreign language into S3, and only 1 in 8 of this age group succeeded in achieving a pass in the first national examination at Ordinary Grade in S4.

The project entitled GLAFLL (Graded Levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning), arose from the general feelings of frustration and failure felt by teachers and pupils alike. Both the value and the feasibility of school foreign language learning to all were in considerable doubt. The first priority of the GLAFLL project, therefore, was to work towards an improvement of pupil attitudes and of teacher morale, and through this to better the quality of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the schools of the Region.

It is hoped that this thesis may contribute something to the debate about how curriculum renewal is brought about, and about how school foreign language learning can be made more effective, more pleasant and more successful for all concerned.
# Chapter I

## THE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THE PROBLEM

### Introduction

1.1 The advent of comprehensive education

1.2 Brief outline of the social background to FLL in Britain

1.3 Three contemporary reports on school FLT

1.4 Impressions of the teaching/learning process in Lothian schools in 1976/77

1.5 The Munn and Dunning reports and FL teachers' reactions

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CHAPTER 1

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THE PROBLEM

Introduction

"It might have seemed that the day of second language learning for all had dawned. If it had, many pupils and teachers were loath to get up and greet it."

(R J Hill, Adviser in Modern Languages in Lothian Region, 1976)

It was without doubt the switch from a classical humanist pattern of schooling, in which foreign language learning (henceforth FLL) was reserved for the elite, to comprehensive schooling in which all pupils were to study a Modern Language that exposed the weaknesses in the existing school FL curriculum. Chapter I is devoted to a brief historical account of how comprehensive schooling came about with an analysis of the problems which it highlighted.

1.1 The advent of comprehensive education

Before the reorganisation of secondary education along comprehen¬sive lines most authorities in Scotland had had a bipartite system involving senior secondary schools and junior secondary schools, although there were a large number of rural schools that had always combined both types of schooling. About one-third of the total secondary intake had been allocated to senior secondary schools and had followed courses leading to the Scottish Certificate of Education Ordinary Grade examination, which was taken by pupils in S4. The other two-thirds of the secondary intake had gone to junior secondary schools and had followed for the most part 'non-certificate courses'. All children in senior secondary schools had studied a FL, while only a very few in the junior secondary had.

In 1965 the Scottish Education Department issued Circular 600 which advocated that there should in future be only one sort of comprehensive secondary school, providing education to children of all levels of ability and achievement from the age of 12 in S1 to the age of 17
in S6. At the time of this circular compulsory schooling ceased at the age of 15.

In order to prevent the emergence of a senior secondary stream and a junior secondary stream in S1 within the new comprehensive schools, the SED issued Circular 614 (SED 1966) abolishing entrance tests to secondary schools. All pupils were now to be given an equal opportunity at the start of secondary school.

"The initial stage of secondary education should be regarded as a period of orientation during which pupils of all abilities should be able to acquire a firm foundation for the later years of their education, and, at the same time, explore a variety of subjects to find out for themselves where their particular aptitudes, interests and abilities lie." (SED Circular 614 1966)

Circulars 600 and 614 were followed by the Ruthven report (SED 1967) and its specific proposals for a common course of subjects for all in S1 and S2. This two-year common course was to include a FL. The report pointed out:

"Although pupils will continue to take the same subjects, this does not necessarily imply that they must all work at the same rate, use the same methods, or indeed, follow exactly the same syllabus. It is easier in some subjects, eg. physical education, religious education, music, for the pupils to continue to work together in their original classes, each making such contributions as he is capable of ... In others, such as mathematics or a foreign language, to take the class as a whole may mean either slowing down the ablest unduly or losing contact with the least able. Where this is the case, either group methods must be used within the class or the subject must be set across a number of classes. The methods of teaching and the level of difficulty can then be suitably differentiated for the various groups or sets in each subject. The stage at which this becomes necessary may differ from subject to subject." (SED 1967)

The Ruthven report thus envisaged that all pupils would now study a FL, albeit to different levels and with differing approaches, as appropriate. To teachers who had hitherto been used to teaching
their subject to the top 25–35% of pupils in relatively homogeneous groups towards the Ordinary Grade examination this would clearly pose a problem. They had been accustomed to working towards the same examination objectives (0 Grade in S4) and to using the same academic curriculum content and methodology for all pupils, teaching to the whole class, which would move as a common body at the same pace through the various units of whatever course-book had been selected. There was thus no experience of differentiation upon which to build.

After comprehensivisation, as before it, pupils were to be permitted to opt out of FLL at the end of S2. Those pupils who were considered able to work towards the national 0 Grade examination in S3 and S4 were encouraged to do so and placed in "certificate" classes. Those who were thought unlikely to succeed at 0 Grade were usually advised not to pursue the subject beyond S2. A few schools, however, began to experiment with non-certificate classes in S3 and S4 during the late 1960s and early 1970s. More schools were to attempt to do this when in 1972 the school leaving age was raised from 15 to 16, and when pressure was exerted on Modern Language departments to play their part in providing courses for those who were now to be staying longer in school.

Thus, within a relatively short period of time, from the publication of Circular 614 in 1966 to the raising of the school leaving age in 1972, school FLL changed from being an elitist pursuit and became a compulsory subject for all in S1 and S2. It had also become an option for a small but increasing number of non-certificate pupils in S3 and S4. Not only did teachers suddenly find themselves with a new non-academic clientele for whom they would have to learn to adapt aims, objectives, materials, methods and assessment, but in S1 and often in S2 they had to cope with pupils of widely differing abilities within the same class. This called for a policy of differentiation for which they had not been trained. Before turning to the problems to which this sudden change of policy led, a brief outline of the social background to FLL in Britain is required.
1.2 Brief outline of the social background to FLL in Britain

Given the role of English as the first foreign language for speakers of other languages, and as the most commonly used language for international communication, it has not been possible, as in other European countries, to call upon any social awareness of a self-evident practical need for those who speak English as a mother tongue to learn any one particular FL. Clearly it is not possible to predict which FL, if any, an English-speaking adult might need. This will depend upon personal leisure and vocational patterns. A number of practical reasons have been cited as justification for FLL in schools. These have included the following:

- the industrial and commercial needs of the country indicate that in order to sell goods it is necessary to be able to use the language of the prospective buyer (British Overseas Trade Board 1979)
- professional people require a reading knowledge in certain foreign languages for certain purposes (eg. German for scientists, French for caterers). They also require an ability to cope with the use of FLs at international conferences
- membership of the European Community implies a political commitment to better communication with other member countries and to better understanding of their cultures
- increasing freedom of movement and of labour within the European Community may mean that those who have learnt a FL at school feel more able to take advantage of the widening range of vocational opportunities now becoming available
- the massive increase in tourism has led to many adults taking up the learning of a FL in an evening class or at home following radio and TV courses. Many of these adults express regret at not having had the opportunity to learn a FL at school, or at not having taken it.

With all of the above reasons it is argued that whether or not the
pupil learns the actual FL(s) in school that he requires in adult life, the experience of school FLL will provide him with strategies for future learning. Thus Hawkins (1981) has viewed the early years in FLL at school as "an apprenticeship in a trial language", which can be built upon later.

While not disputing the potential practical value of school FLL, educationists have tended to be more attracted to the broader educational aims to be pursued through school FLL. The most commonly cited of these have been as follows:

- FLL can play an important role in enabling British children to grow beyond the ethnocentric limitations of their own linguistic and cultural group, towards a better appreciation of the multilingual, multicultural, nature of the world in which they live (Trim 1981). It can thus encourage an attitude of tolerance and of empathy towards a potentially enriching cultural diversity

- FLL plays a role in the raising of awareness as to the nature and function of language in human life. It is argued that the experience of communicating in a FL permits learners to step outside their unilingual categorisation of reality and see the world in terms of a differently organised linguistic system. This may permit them to focus on their own language more easily, and to reflect upon its relative nature. (Byram 1978, Hawkins 1981, Trim 1981.)

The problem with these broader educational aims is that while they may appeal to educationists, they are as yet less easily perceived by a society which remains deeply ethnocentric.

This ethnocentricity has given rise to a web of social myths which seriously undermine school FLL. These myths find expression in statements like:

- FLL is difficult

- the British are particularly bad at FLL, whereas foreigners have a natural gift for it.
To these must be added the common sentiment that school FLL has proved a less than successful exercise, seldom leading to any worthwhile level of communicative ability.

Given this sort of social background, together with doubts as to the feasibility and value of FLL for all, it is perhaps not surprising that the Ruthven report advocating a common course in S1 and S2 felt obliged to allow for exceptions in the case of FLL.

"If, after a reasonable period, it is clear that pupils are gaining very little ... they should be allowed either to drop it or to continue it on a reduced time allocation with very restricted aims."  (SED 1967)

Uncertainty as to the feasibility and value of teaching a FL to low achievers is a theme that reappears frequently in the literature of the time (eg Hornsey 1972). Given the negative findings of a number of reports and studies of FL teaching at the time, the doubts were understandable.

1.3 Three contemporary reports on school FLT

The three reports to be described are the Burstall report on Primary French (Burstall et al 1974), the HMI report on Modern Languages in comprehensive schools in England (DES 1977), and the observational study of the foreign language classroom conducted by Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981).

We start with the Burstall report which was the result of a study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research.

As in England, Primary French was introduced into a large number of Scottish primary schools during the early 1960s. Primary French provided a testing ground for the practice of extending FLL to pupils of all abilities in mixed ability classes.

The Burstall report was based on a 10 year research project which took the form of a longitudinal study of 18,000 pupils in three cohorts in 125 primary schools in England. Some of these were
followed into secondary schools. The major part of the work was concerned with collecting data relating to the pupils' level of achievement in French and to their attitudes towards learning the language, in order to determine "on what conditions it would be feasible to contemplate the general introduction of a modern language into the primary school" (Schools Council 1966).

Although the major question to which the research team addressed itself was to determine whether there was any substantial gain in mastery of a foreign language to be achieved by beginning to teach it at 8 instead of 11, it was the findings in some of the other areas of research that were to prove extremely relevant to what was about to occur at the secondary level.

Two of the questions to which the research team sought answers were:

(a) "Are there levels of ability below which the teaching of a foreign language is of dubious value?

(b) What methods, incentives and motivations are most effective in fostering learning of a foreign language?"

From their research the NFER team concluded that although no unequivocal answer could be given to the question as to whether there were levels of ability below which the teaching of French was of dubious value, "there were large numbers of children who patently failed to achieve even a modest and impermanent measure of success". The team came to the conclusion that unless there was a substantial effort to redefine the objectives of teaching French in order to meet differing needs, some children would not realise their full potential, while others would inevitably experience failure. The team highlighted the fact that some children seemed already to have developed a sense of failure during their first year of French. They also observed that an early experience of success affected later achievement and attitudes towards learning languages.

"In the language-learning context nothing succeeds like success."

(Burstall et al 1974)
They found that no one method was universally suitable. High achievers preferred the more traditional methods, while low achievers preferred the audio-visual approach. There was, however, universal dislike of the "enforced passivity, repetition and incomprehension associated with the use of the tape recorder".

Girls did better than boys, and children of high socio-economic status did better than those of lower ones.

Children who actually went to France reached higher levels of achievement than those who did not, but they tended to come from high economic status families. The most powerful incentive to learn French was the prospect of being able to establish contact with French-speaking people. Those in the South of England who had greater opportunities for this did better than those in the North.

There were two other important findings:

- the pupils were rarely involved in genuine communication in the classroom

- in both the primary and secondary schools observed, the major teaching problem was that of coping with pupils of widely differing achievements within the framework of a class moving at the same pace through the same materials. There were very few secondary teachers who advocated mixed-ability teaching and even fewer who organised any sort of group-work.

The report concluded:

"The conditions necessary to ensure success in teaching a foreign language in the primary school are so difficult to create that the enormous effort involved is beyond the resources of all but a limited number of schools. Furthermore, it is preferable not to undertake French teaching at all in the primary school rather than to start it with inadequate resources and therefore with little or no prospect of success."

(Burstall et al 1974)

This, together with a similar negative report by the SED (1968), was to lead to the abandonment of Primary French in Scotland. The
problems, however, were to reappear in a very similar fashion at the secondary level in the new comprehensive schools as can be seen in the findings of the HMI report on Modern Languages in comprehensive schools in England (DES 1977) described below.

A study of learning and teaching of foreign languages in a representative sample of 83 comprehensive schools in England was initiated by the Department of Education and Science in 1975, against the background of the rapid changes that had taken place in England, as in Scotland, due to comprehensivisation and the raising of the school leaving age. Although the picture of classroom practices in England may not have been exactly the same as that in Scotland, much of what the HMI found undoubtedly also rings true for the Scottish scene at the time.

The report concluded that in all but a few of the schools FLL was characterised by some or all of the following features:

- underperformance in all foreign language skills by the abler pupils
- the setting of impossible or pointless tasks for average (and in particular less able) pupils, and their abandonment of modern language learning at the first opportunity
- excessive use of English, and an inability to produce other than inadequate or largely unusable statements in the modern language
- inefficient reading skills
- writing limited to mechanical reproduction which was often inaccurate.

"In all too many language classes, there was an atmosphere of boredom, disenchantment and restlessness. At times this developed into indiscipline of a kind which made teaching and learning virtually impossible."

(DES 1977)

The report highlighted the fact that teachers were not able to cope with the mixed-ability situation. The objectives set were often
unsuitable, insufficiently challenging in one or more of the four skills for the abler pupils and making unrealistic demands on the less able.

In the English equivalent of the Scottish S3/S4 'non-certificate' classes there was a tendency to use huge amounts of background information material of an unstructured and unenlightening nature.

Although the report provides little precise information to back up these general impressions, the overall picture given of FLL in English comprehensive schools at this time was bleak indeed. A not dissimilar picture, but one with a great deal more detailed information, was produced by Mitchell et al (1981), and it is to this that we turn next.

Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone aimed in their study in Scottish schools to provide an in-depth description of classroom practices in a small number of schools using the Longman's Audio-Visual French Course. This was the one most prevalent in Lothian schools at the time.

Data was obtained in 1977/78 from 6 schools with mixed-ability S1 classes of an average size (24-33 pupils), of which 2 were in Lothian Region. The researchers divided lesson content into segments. A segment was defined as "a stretch of lesson discourse having a particular topic, and involving the participants in a distinctive configuration of roles, linguistic and organisational". Within these segments they analysed the topic of discourse, the type of language activity, the mode of involvement of teacher and pupils in the discourse, and forms of class organisation. In addition, teachers' views of what they were trying to achieve were elicited by interview, and towards the end of the year an oral achievement test was given to a sample of pupils from each class "to obtain a picture of the general level of achievement in these classes, and to provide material for some tentative exploration of possible relationships between the performance of pupils and the teaching strategies observed" (Mitchell et al 1981).
Topic Frequencies

An analysis of the data revealed that the relative frequency of topics was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Relative Frequency %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Linguistic Notions</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course-related language points</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other language points</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course situations</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other situations</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real life</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmented/non-contextualised</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine procedures</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil performance</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This indicates that the most common topic was a third-party situation arising out of the course material. This was followed by what was described as "fragmented, non-contextualised" discourse involving no one coherent or substantive topic, but concerned with formal aspects of the language being practised. These two topics accounted for approximately 54% of the segments. Explicit discussion of particular structures or points from the course book accounted for approximately 10%, as did classroom organisation. Only approximately 9% of the time was spent discussing aspects of the pupils' or teachers' real life or interests, and this was almost entirely embedded within drills and exercises.

Language Activities

The relative frequency of language activities was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Relative Frequency %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk in LI (English)</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Foreign Language Use</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transposition (mainly reading aloud and dictation) 7.4
Presentation 6.9
Imitation 12.3
Drill/Exercise 34.6
Compound 5.1

This shows that the two most common activities were drills or exercises and talk in English (largely by the teacher). Less than 2% of the time was spent in real use of the FL "in which substantive messages are being transmitted, and the focus of attention is on the meaning of what is being said". What little there was occurred within the context of classroom management.

When the topics and language activities were cross-tabulated, the highest-frequency cell was where the fragmented/non-contextualised topic (concerned with form and not meaning) intersected with the drill/exercise activity. This also revealed that discussion about background and linguistic explanation were all largely conducted in English rather than the FL, as was most routine classroom management and most discussion relating to previous pupil performance.

Mode of involvement of teachers and pupils

There was a pronounced bias in favour of aural/oral activities. In 81% of the segments the pupils were expected to listen to something and in 68% to speak. Reading was involved in 48% of the segments and writing in 21%. Where listening and reading were involved teachers required overt pupil response in nearly all cases.

Class Organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>Relative Frequency %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class with pupil demonstrating</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative, same task</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative, different task</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual, same task</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual, different task</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative and individual</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This confirms that the overwhelming majority of the segments involved a whole-class grouping.

Teacher Variation

Inevitably teachers varied as to the emphasis they placed on different aspects. Two teachers, for example, never engaged in any metalinguistic explanation, three placed much greater emphasis on civilisation than did others, and only one teacher made any substantial use of the FL for real communication. Five made no use of the FL at all. Only one teacher had less than 80% whole-class activities.

In only one school was there any evidence of a departmental as opposed to an individual profile of teaching.

Teaching Materials in use

Inevitably, perhaps, the text-book, blackboard and jotter, whether singly or in combination, played the dominant role in the classroom.

In term 3 the picture was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items in use</th>
<th>% of total teaching time</th>
<th>Number of lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text-book</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotter</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmstrip</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tape</td>
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The text-book was used in more than three-quarters of the lessons.
and was thus the key element around which activity was structured. Comparatively little use was made of technological aids such as OHP, film/video, tape and filmstrip.

Pupil Achievement

A sample containing good, average and poor pupils was given an achievement test involving questions on two sequences of pictures from the text-book, personal questions about the pupil and the school day, a simple oral composition based on one of the sets of pictures already discussed, and brief phrases in English for translation into the foreign language.

The tests revealed a picture of incomplete mastery in virtually every area scored, even amongst the most able. Given that oral structural control had been shown to be the major classroom concern the researchers felt bound to pose two questions:

- "Can ways be found of bettering beginners' structural mastery of the foreign language?"

OR

- "Is structural mastery itself an appropriate goal, regardless of teaching strategy?"

The researchers found a positive correlation between time spent discussing the structure of the language and better pupil performances. They also found that the more segments there were involving pupil speech, the higher the performance levels. Conversely they found that the more time spent on organisational matters, the worse the performance levels.

The picture that emerges from this study is of a classroom in which teachers and pupils communicate for real in English. Use of the FL is restricted to various manipulative exercises.

"The communicative use of French to transmit substantive messages between participants was almost completely absent ... Children do develop foreign language competence of a sort in our classrooms, but if they find it hard to improvise, cope with the unexpected, do without a
text of what is being said, and talk about their personal needs and concerns, perhaps this paper suggests some possible reasons."
(Mitchell et al 1981)

In order to complete the picture of what was occurring, an attempt is now made to summarise my own impressions at the time of the classroom teaching/learning process.

1.4 Impressions of the teaching/learning process in Lothian schools in 1976/77

Although no formal evaluation was done to examine the state of FL teaching and learning in Lothian schools, as a newly appointed member of the Lothian Regional Advisory Service, whose task it was to visit schools, evaluate needs and attempt to run in-service courses to satisfy them, I was able to build up a picture of what was being done in the classroom, through discussion with teachers and through classroom observation. The situation was of course dynamic, not static. It bore traces of the past, influences of the present, and was moving slowly towards a rather different future.

Teachers tend to avoid the purist approaches that derive from theoretical work in favour of an eclectic mixture of views and practices that seem to have worked to some effect for them at some point in time, whether as learners in their own school days or as teachers. It is thus not possible to label what was being done in classrooms as strictly grammar-translation, or behaviourist-structuralist or audio-visual, although there were visible traces of aspects of all of these approaches.

A common factor among all teachers was that language was viewed as a construction of forms – an external body of knowledge that could be broken down into its component parts, sequenced from simple to complex, and then deliberately studied, practised in form-focussed ways, and hopefully internalised by the learner.

The text books of the day set out a sequence of points of grammar and vocabulary embedding them in contrived dialogues or texts, whose meaning was mediated through visual aids such as pictures,
flash cards, or film-strips which accompanied the language being presented.

The class would study these dialogues or texts as a whole, and the teacher would attempt to ensure comprehension of each part of them through lengthy question and answer routines in the FL.

After having ensured comprehension, the teacher would turn attention to the practice of the forms to be concentrated upon. In this phase of the lesson teachers tended to adopt an eclectic approach switching between deductive and inductive methods as the task seemed to indicate. Slot and filler drills and written exercises focussing on form were common.

In the exploitation part of the lesson structured oral role-plays or written assignments would be given to permit reuse of the recently learnt forms and situational routines.

Errors were to be avoided. Pupils were not encouraged to try to express meanings that they had not rehearsed, in case they remembered the errors they or their class friends would inevitably make. Thus opportunities for spontaneous communication were not provided.

Language was not only viewed as a construct of forms, however, but also as a set of skills through which to display formal knowledge. Each of the four skills was rehearsed separately. Initially the emphasis was on aural/oral skills, based on the notion of the primacy of speech, though teachers no longer felt guilty about introducing reading and writing after two or three months.

Teachers tended to demand immediate reuse in form-focussed speech of elements heard or read in the presentation phase of the lesson. What "went in" was expected to "come out". Indeed if it did not "come out" it was thought that it would not be memorised. There was no notion of a natural acquisition sequence nor of a gestation period. It was believed that learners could internalise anything at any time, given sufficient form-focussed productive practice.

The audio-visual approach had brought with it the belief that lan-
guage and physical situations were in some sort of fixed relationship.

Language was seldom viewed as an interactive activity concerned with the personal negotiation of meanings. 'Conversation' was restricted to question and answer sessions between teacher and class in which the answers were known by the questioner. The purpose of such activity was to offer the pupils an opportunity to display their knowledge of the language, rather than to pass messages. Paired work involved the exchange of previously rehearsed conventional tokens. This, however, was not popular among teachers, since it created noise and gave rise to uncorrected errors. Any personalisation of language that was done was restricted to requests concerning pupils' likes and dislikes, habits and family patterns of life.

Teachers and pupils would fall back on English for all real communication related to ongoing classroom needs and concerns. There were, however, instances of a number of language practice games such as 'bingo' or varieties of 'happy families', where what mattered to the pupils was the game and the winning of it, rather than the forms to be used, though doubtless the latter was in the forefront of the teacher's mind.

Pupils were seldom if ever involved in the choice of topic or activity to be pursued. These were dictated by the textbook. Nor were pupils given any sense of responsibility for the management of their own work.

The teachers' curricular skills tended to be limited to the interpretation and implementation of the particular course book in use, and to the training of pupils for the O Grade examination in S4, which cast a long shadow right back into S1 and S2. There was no such thing as a school-created syllabus at that time. In response to a survey, typical comments were:

"We have no specific syllabus beyond the course-book."

"We base our first-year syllabus on the course book, pages 1–40."
"We expect to reach Unit 18 by the end of S1."

There was thus nothing against which to measure the content of any particular textbook in use.

In S4 'certificate' classes, the classroom became a rehearsal for the coming O Grade examination. There was a choice of two alternatives in this, neither of which were in any sense communicative. The 'Traditional' O Grade had a bias towards written language and featured the following:

- a listening comprehension test, comprising a written text to be read aloud by an examiner and heard twice by pupils. Questions were in English as were answers
- a passage of prose in the FL for translation into English
- a test of language practice involving a passage in the foreign language with questions related to it to be answered in the FL
- two written compositions (150-200 words) requiring the expansion of a given short summary, or the telling of a story based on a picture series, or the writing of a letter
- an oral proficiency test involving reading an unprepared passage aloud, answering 5 questions on it in the FL, and conversing on a topic chosen by the examiner.

The 'Alternative' O Grade examination had an emphasis on spoken language and featured the following:

- an oral test to be done on tape involving reading a passage, answering ten pre-recorded questions, and telling a story from a sequence of pictures
- a listening comprehension test based on two passages, one of which was a dialogue. These were recorded on tape and heard twice by pupils. Questions and answers were in English
- a reading comprehension test consisting of a passage of modern prose with questions and answers in English
- a written composition in the form of a letter (100-130 words).
For administrative convenience the aural/oral parts of this exam were normally done in a language laboratory.

Despite its more progressive look, the Alternative O Grade examination attracted only 30% of Lothian candidates in 1976 to the Traditional exam's 70%. Pupil performance in both exams was assessed negatively in terms of deviance from native-speaker norms.

'Non-certificate classes' in S3 and S4 in 1976 tended, as in England, to adopt a background studies approach to the subject, much of which was done in the mother-tongue. One school, however, in 1976 pioneered the way towards use of the Northern Regional Examinations Board's CSE Mode 3 examination. For this, schools were required to prepare their own syllabuses and assessment schemes and to submit them for approval to the board. This practice was to grow in popularity over the years as the GLAFLL project took root, so that by 1982 forty submissions had been made from Lothian Region. There were two types of CSE course to choose from. The first was a "language studies" course in which as much as 50% of the total marks could be devoted to background studies leading to an appreciation of the contemporary French/German/Italian/Spanish/Russian-speaking world, thus reducing the weighting to be given to pure language work. The alternative was a pure language course in which the main objective was to develop the four language skills, though background studies could also be included up to a maximum of 10% of the marks. While initially it was only the 'language studies' alternative that attracted teachers, by 1982 sixteen schemes were pure language ones while twenty-four schemes remained 'language studies' ones.

Teacher management skills were limited to the operation of whole class activities. There was some paired work, but no group work of any consequence. Differentiation was restricted to the watering down of the more difficult form-focussed exercises, set out in text books, for the lower achievers. The following is a fairly typical teacher comment of the time:

"As we find some of the material and many of the exercises unsuitable for some of our pupils, we make up a series of easier worksheets for them"
for the different units. They do these while the better pupils are doing the exercises in the book.”

Wheeldon and Hamilton (1977), however, were experimenting with a core and extension model for mixed ability classes. In this they extracted that part of a unit of work deemed essential, and provided core learning experiences on it for all. Extension material on the more advanced parts were added for the higher achievers only.

Most schools, however, expected all pupils in S1 and S2 to do the same work to the same level. Inevitably, in classes with a wide spread of ability, the teacher was forced to tailor the rate of progress to the average learners. This meant that the higher achievers became bored and the lower achievers began to fall further and further behind as the course advanced.

There were no examples of differentiated targets, or syllabuses to lead towards them, nor were there any attempts to set out differentiated levels of performance to be aimed at by different pupils.

It was, therefore, not surprising to find that during the latter part of S1 and the whole of S2 many pupils at the top and bottom end of the various classes became progressively more and more dissatisfied. This inevitably led to a lowering of morale among teachers whose training had not equipped them for the curricular and management skills they now required. Teacher attitudes towards what had happened to their subject can perhaps best be seen against the background of the proposed changes to be made to Scottish Education for the 14-16 age group. These changes, and the attitudes among FL teachers that they provoked, are now discussed.

1.5 The Munn and Dunning reports and FL teachers' reactions (SED 1977a and 1977b)

The Munn and Dunning committees were set up by the Government in 1975 to review curriculum and assessment in Scottish schools in S3 and S4. They reported in 1977 (SED 1977a and 1977b).

As ever in the case of FLL the major issue was to decide whether or
not the subject should be compulsory for all pupils in S3 and S4, or compulsory for some and optional for others, or optional to all, or optional for only the better pupils but not available to the less able. There was a considerable range of opinions on this. This was reflected in the two submissions made by the Scottish Central Committee on Modern Languages (henceforth SCCML), a body selected by the Scottish Education Department to reflect the interests of universities, colleges of education, local authorities, HMIs and teachers. This body was itself an advisory body to the national Central Committee on the Curriculum (henceforth CCC), who in its turn advised the Scottish Education Department and the Secretary of State for Scotland. The membership of the SCCML changed in between the first submission to the Munn and Dunning committees which was made in 1975, and the second submission in 1977, which was sent as a reaction to the two reports. The earlier SCCML advocated to the Munn Committee that a FL be "a compulsory component in the curriculum of abler pupils in S3/S4, including those pupils who do not intend to specialise in languages", but went on to recommend that "those pupils who show little aptitude for learning a Modern Language in S1 and S2 should be allowed to drop the language at the end of S2".

The Munn committee appears to have heeded part of this advice and excluded FLL from the core on the grounds that:

"Pupils of low linguistic ability may see little relevance in foreign language study and may in fact have only a limited degree of competence in English itself." (SED 1977a)

In addition to this, on the advice of the first SCCML, the Munn committee maintained that:

"The materials and methodology of language teaching for less able pupils have not yet been developed to a point where effective learning can readily take place." (SED 1977a)

This was a repetition of the view taken earlier in the Ruthven
report (SED 1967). FLL was thus to remain an optional subject in S3 and S4, whereas English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Creative Arts and Religious and Moral Education were to be in the core.

The decision not to make Modern Languages a compulsory subject in S3 and S4 was welcomed by the majority of language teachers. Lamond saw it:

"as a return to sanity – a recognition that the involvement of language staff in S3 and S4 non-certificate classes over recent years has been the result of an egalitarian argument and not an educational one."

(Lamond 1978)

Lamond argued that since slow learners lacked conceptualising ability and recall they should not study a FL. There were, however, a small number of progressive teachers, who had begun to experiment with a more communicative approach and with group work (Howgego 1971, Johnstone 1972 and 1973), who were by now convinced that it was both feasible and potentially valuable to teach the FL to the whole ability range. The later SCCML, formed in 1977, seems to have been composed of a small majority of such teachers, who, when asked to react to the Munn and Dunning recommendations, concluded:

"that a Modern Language should be placed in the core area, either as an obligatory core subject such as English or Maths, or as an obligatory subject which if not taken up in the Munn Core would become an 'obligatory' elective."

A close reading of this second submission leaves the impression that the members of the later SCCML were so distressed by the Munn report’s downgrading of the prestige of their subject, so perturbed at the possible consequences this would have on the numbers coming forward to continue a Modern Language, and at the reduced time allocated to the study of it, that they felt compelled to plead for Modern Languages to be made compulsory for all.

In fact, when they conducted a survey of teacher opinions, inviting reactions to questions relating to Munn and Dunning issues, they
found "a very deep division of opinion within the Modern Language teaching profession on the desirability of teaching a foreign language to all pupils" (SCCML 1978).

Of the 1443 returns only 9% were in favour of the subject being compulsory for all. The majority (over 60%) rejected the idea of compulsion because they felt that certain pupils could not learn a Modern Language to a useful level by the end of S4, whatever materials and methods were used. More than half the teachers were opposed to elaboration of a syllabus and certification scheme for the low achievers at what was to be called "Foundation" level, and only 49% were even in favour of allowing all pupils the option of continuing the study of a Modern Language in S3 and S4 (SCCML 1978).

It was clear that the experiences of FL teachers in the new comprehensive schools had been far from positive.

A final picture of the state of FLL in schools can be obtained from the statistics relating to the provision and take-up of Modern Languages in Lothian Region.

1.6 1976/77 Lothian Regional statistics concerning the provision and take-up of FLL in schools

Regional statistics showed that in 1976/77 65% of pupils chose or were obliged to opt out of FLL at the earliest possible opportunity, i.e. at the end of S2. This left only 35% to continue into S3, of whom the vast majority were 'certificate pupils'.

FLL further up the school was in an equally worrying state. At the national level Dickson (1979) showed that over the years there had been a massive decline in FLL in the post 0 Grade sector in favour of other subjects, and in particular Science. Using the presentations in English at Higher Grade (taken in S5) as a yardstick against which to measure Modern Language presentations, Dickson revealed that whereas in 1967 42% of S5 boys were presented in H Grade French, by 1978 this had dropped to 18%. For girls 62% in 1967 had dropped to 40% in 1978.
Perhaps even more distressing than this was the fact that the decline was particularly noticeable among the more able. Among able boys between 1967 and 1978 the numbers presenting for Higher Grade French had been reduced from 42% to 19%, and among girls from 62% to 40%. A similar decline was visible at the regional level.

Although no accurate statistics are available at either national or regional level, it is clear that there had also been a gradual decline in the numbers of pupils opting to take a second foreign language. The rough regional calculation that can be made shows that in 1976 only 6% of the entire S3 population in Lothian schools chose to study a second foreign language.

Another regional figure showed that boys tended to drop out much more readily than girls. Thus in 1976/77 the figures among those who had opted in to S3 indicated that only 28% of the pupils were boys, while 72% were girls.

It was also revealed that only 1 in 8 pupils in the age range concerned had actually achieved an O Grade pass (A, B or C Grade) in a FL. This meant that in terms of national recognition only 12% of pupils who had set out on a Modern Language course had anything to show for it.

These figures give some indication of the state in which FLL in Lothian Region found itself in 1976.

Take-up, of course, is not a simple reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. It depends upon such factors as national and social motivation towards FLL, and the image that the subject has within the public education system and within particular institutions.

The lack of motivation for language learning as manifested in the regional drop-out rate was thus likely to have been brought about by a combination of factors comprising:

- the low prestige attached to FLL by society, to which must be
added the myth that had grown up as to the difficulty of FLL
- little perception of vocational utility by pupils and little encouragement from school guidance staff towards FLL, particularly among boys
- the poor image of the subject in schools where it was generally regarded as academic, difficult and unrewarding for all but the most able
- the academic non-communicative nature of the examinations, which pupils perceived as somewhat irrelevant to their basic aspirations
- the removal of a sense of any absolute need for an O Grade Pass in FL in order to gain access to university
- the hesitancy displayed by FL teachers as to the feasibility and value of teaching their subject to all, and their low state of morale
- the lack of success felt by many pupils while following a FL course.

It was agreed that the only way to begin to resolve some of these problems was to attempt to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, so that pupils might feel success in their FLL, which in the long run might assist in the gradual changing of social attitudes towards the subject.

1.7 Envoi

From the general picture of FLL at the time of the start of the GLAFLLL project it was clear that there were a number of major areas of concern. These can now be summarised as follows:
- poor attitudes among teachers and learners as to the feasibility and value of school FLL to all, and consequently lack of a sense of purpose
- failure to promote a communicative ability among pupils so that they might feel a sense of success
- lack of any coherent policy on differentiation
- lack of curricular and management skills among teachers leading to total reliance on text-books and the rehearsal of examination techniques
- failure to promote pupil responsibility.

In order to attempt to work towards a resolution of these problems, it seemed necessary to look beyond the limited experimentation that was being attempted in Scottish classrooms towards alternative strategies. With this in mind, an examination was made of current thinking in educational linguistics in order to discover whether there were indications of possible ways forward. At the same time a study was made of curriculum renewal in general and of contemporary projects in school FLL in particular, from which it was hoped to glean useful insights. The thesis moves forward to a discussion of findings from these studies and to the conclusions drawn from them, before turning to a description of the GLAFLL project itself.
CHAPTER 2

THE APPLIED LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY AND FLL

Introduction

2.1 From linguistic competence to communicative competence

2.2 Speech act theory

2.3 The interpretation and creation of discourse

2.4 Classroom FLL

2.5 Conclusion
CHAPTER 2

THE APPLIED LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY AND FLL

Introduction

In order to come to terms with contemporary theories about communicative ability and FLL it was decided to take a broad view and to attempt to summarise the most important trends. This would provide theoretical perspective which could then inform the GLAFLL curriculum renewal process.

The summary that follows is set out in two parts. The first part attempts to trace how the narrow concern for linguistic competence has grown into a much broader view of what might constitute communicative ability. Given the teachers' limited view of language ability, as a display of the knowledge of native-speaker forms through the four skills on the one hand, and as the knowledge of a number of set phrases related to particular visual contexts on the other, it was important to investigate what else might be involved in communicative ability, in order to incorporate relevant insights into the project curriculum.

The second part of this summary examines what is currently hypothesized about classroom language learning processes. Here the problem is that much of the research literature has been related to L1 acquisition or to FL acquisition in natural untutored circumstances. Thus the researcher has often been concerned with a rather different situation to that of the classroom teacher. It seemed sensible, therefore, to adopt a somewhat critical stance towards theories which were not based on classroom data. This was not to say that we should reject such models, until classroom data was available, but rather, as Hatch (1979) put it, that we should approach them with caution.
2.1 From linguistic competence to communicative competence

Chomsky had rejected the need to study language in use in favour of introspection into the linguistic competence of an ideal speaker-hearer.

"The most obvious and characteristic property of normal linguistic behaviour is that it is stimulus-free and innovative ... It is only under exceptional and quite uninteresting circumstances that one can seriously consider how 'situational text' determines what is said, even in probabilistic terms."

(Chomsky 1966)

Thus the Chomskyan theory of competence had deliberately excluded:

"aspects of sentence use and comprehension that are not explicable through the postulation of a generative mechanism as the reconstruction of the speaker's ability to produce and understand sentences, and ... conceptual features such as the physical and sociological setting of utterances, attitudes, and beliefs of the speaker and hearer, perceptual and memory limitations, noise level of the settings etc."

(Katz and Postal 1964)

All of these features were to be subsumed under performance. Campbell and Wales (1970) pointed out, however, that a knowledge of how to produce grammatically correct forms failed to account for our ability to produce and understand sentences, which are not just grammatical but are also appropriate to the context in which they are made.

Hymes (1971) described the Chomskyan view of competence as a "Garden of Eden" one, based on idealisations such as a homogeneous speech community with uniform knowledge which was not differentiated according to socio-cultural background. It viewed the human being as a cognitive mechanism unaffected by the social world in which he lived. Like Campbell and Wales, Hymes maintained that there were "rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless". These governed the use of different forms in different situations, and were as much part of competence as were the rules governing phonology, syntax or semantics. It was, therefore, necessary to study
language in use and to attempt to describe these rules.

Hymes (1971) was perhaps the first to attempt a relatively full account of what might constitute the language user's communicative competence. He saw this as having several components, of which linguistic competence was only one. He maintained that an adequate theory should take account of the speaker's knowledge of:

- what was formally possible (grammatical competence)
- what was feasible, ie. not subject to psychological limitations
- what was appropriate in relation to the context
- what was probable in terms of likelihood of occurrence.

In order to discover rules of use with regard to appropriacy and probability of occurrence, he advocated the study of real speech events, and of the relationship between their constituent components and language. He listed these components as: the roles and relationships of the participants, the physical setting, the psychological scene, the actual linguistic form of the message, the topic, the purpose, the attitudinal key, the channel of communication, the code of language variety, the norms of interaction, the physical distance, the norms of interpretation, and the genre.

His view of communicative competence also included the ability to use whatever knowledge had been internalised, since he felt that "it is especially important not to separative cognitive from affective and volitive factors so far as the impact of theory on educational practice is concerned" (Hymes 1971).

The rules of appropriacy were not simply to be grafted on to grammatical competence at a later time but were to be acquired as part of the same developmental matrix.

Halliday (1973, 1975, 1976, 1978), like Hymes, adopts a socio-cultural perspective, maintaining that language is a shared possession rather than an individual one. He is, however, critical of Hymes for seeming to take an "intra-organism" view of what he sees as an
"inter-organism" issue, and, therefore, rejects the need for any specification of competence.

"If it is possible to describe the linguistic interaction (between speaker and hearer) ... as the actualisation of a system of potentials, then it becomes unnecessary to introduce another level, that of knowledge."
(Halliday 1978)

Halliday prefers to think in terms of what the speaker/hearer is able to do, rather than in terms of what he might know. Thus he is concerned to create a "systems network" specifying what potential choices are available to the speaker, from which he makes his actual selection. He views these choices as taking place at four inter-linked levels:

- the behavioural level at which the speaker chooses what to do. One of the available choices is to use language, with or without other non-verbal forms of action. This is **behavioural potential**

- the semantic level at which the speaker chooses what to **mean**. This is **meaning potential**

- the lexico-grammatical level at which the speaker chooses what to **say**, i.e. what forms to use. This is **formal potential**

- the phonological level at which the speaker chooses what to **sound**, i.e. what sounds to make. This is **vocal potential**.

Halliday is in agreement with Hymes about the basic functions language serves, about its role in cultural transmission, and about the various components of speech events. He sees culture as a system of meanings or of information that is encoded in the behavioural options available to members of a particular group, and he views language as the main channel through which cultural patterns are transmitted to the individual through his interactions with others. He is at pains to point out, however, in contrast to Whorf (1956) that we can learn to behave and to mean in other ways.

"We are not the prisoners of our semiotic, we can all learn to move outside it."
(Halliday 1975)
Studies of cross-cultural interference have shown, however, how difficult it is to learn to move outside one's own cultural patterns (Loveday 1982, Lehtonen and Sajavaara 1982). In order to conform to another culture's conventions one may have to learn to manage interactions in a different way, to avoid topics one is used to discussing, to use other forms of address, and to encode one's speech acts in different ways. If one employs one's own cultural patterns in another speech community one may appear either dull of mind or deliberately rude. Alarmingly it is often in the most common interpersonal speech events such as greetings, apologies, compliments and requests that such cultural differences abound.

Halliday sees language development from a functional perspective.

"Language is as it is, because of the functions it has evolved to serve."
(Halliday 1978)

Any attempt to describe the nature of language must therefore take these functions into account. He sees adult language as encompassing three basic functions:

- the ideational function, through which the speaker expresses his internalised experience of the world and the state of his own consciousness

- the interpersonal function, through which the speaker participates in a speech event, adopting a particular role vis-à-vis the other participants, to whom he assigns a status and roles which they either accept or reject. This is the means by which the speaker expresses his own judgements, attitudes and personality

- the textual function, through which the speaker is able to relate what he says to what has been said before and to the context of situation, and as a result create organised and relevant discourse. This is the "stitching together" function of language (though the term is mine and not Halliday's).

The ideational, interpersonal and textual components are intertwined in connected discourse.
2.2 Speech act theory

Austin (1962) distinguished between three various kinds of acts one performs when speaking:

- locutionary acts (what the speaker says in terms of a proposition or series of propositions with determinable sense and reference)
- illocutionary acts (what the speaker intends)
- perlocutionary acts (what effects the speaker brings about on other participants - the acts one achieves through saying something).

Austin suggested that all sentences have an illocutionary component to their meaning. Some sentences involve the use of performative verbs (e.g. "I promise to come on Tuesday" or "I warn you it's dangerous"), where the speaker's intention to promise and to warn is explicit; whereas most sentences are less explicit (e.g. "I'll come on Tuesday" and "You'd better not touch it, it bites"). The speaker's intention in these sentences can, however, also be interpreted as an attempt to promise something and to warn about something. Austin believed that the basic functions of language could be traced to some 3000 performative verbs.

Following on Austin's work, Searle (1977) categorised speech acts into five basic types:

- representatives, in which the speaker expresses belief that the propositional content of an utterance is true
- directives, in which the speaker expresses a desire regarding an action specified in the propositional content
- commissives, in which the speaker expresses his intentions concerning some future action
- expressives, in which the speaker expresses a psychological state with respect to a proposition
- declarations, in which the speaker's words are intended to create a correspondence between the proposition and the state
of affairs in the world.

Searle (1975) introduced a useful distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' speech acts - an 'indirect' speech act involving "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another", eg. when a question about someone's ability ("Can you speak a little louder") is intended as a request for action. He pointed out that indirect speech acts predominate in normal everyday conversation.

Both Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) attempted to outline the conditions that have to be met for an utterance to count as a satisfactory performance of a particular speech act. It was recognised that these would vary from culture to culture.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) used speech act theory to analyse discourse into a hierarchy of functional units that would describe data at several interlocking degrees of delicacy, from the "move" (the smallest unit) up to the "conversation" (the largest). They took as their basic unit the "exchange", which was usually composed of an initiating "move" (or illocutionary act) and a responding "move". The "exchange" is similar to what has elsewhere been called an "adjacency pair" (Sacks et al 1974). Thus, for example, 'inviting' is normally followed by 'accepting' or 'declining'.

Widdowson (1978) also makes use of speech act theory, and in particular of the notion of illocutionary acts, to account for our ability to understand and create discourse, sometimes without any overt propositional connections, as in the sequence:

"A: That's the telephone.
B: I'm in the bath.
A: O.K."
(Widdowson 1978)

Widdowson maintains that in order for this exchange to have been meaningful to both participants, we must assume that A's first utterance was interpreted as having the illocutionary value of a
request, and that B's utterance was seen as a reply with the value of an excuse for not complying with it. A's second utterance must be seen both as an acceptance of B's excuse, and as an agreement to answer the telephone.

Helpful though the concept of illocutionary value is to the understanding of discourse structure, there are weaknesses in speech act theory. Speech acts are usually defined in terms of a static sequence of intentions, whereas conversation depends on a negotiated interaction.

"The expression of claims regarding inner states is not what takes up most of the individual's speaking time. Nor is much time actually spent in giving orders, decisions, declining requests, making offers and the like. And when any of these possibilities do occur, they often do so indirectly, operating through something else. They are an effect that is produced, but an effect that tells us little about the details of the strip of activity that produces it."

(Goffman 1974)

Since an utterance may be deliberately ambiguous or multifunctional, it becomes extremely difficult to identify the exact intentions of a speaker, which are not, of course, open to examination anyway.

2.3 The interpretation and creation of discourse

The way in which discourse is interpreted and created has been examined from a variety of angles. Those who have analysed discourse as text, by studying the spoken or written product of discourse events, have described regularities such as cohesion devices that link propositional content (eg. Halliday and Hasan 1976), information structure through information units and tone groups (Halliday 1967), and the series of interlocking units leading from "moves" to "conversation" referred to earlier (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). More recently, some discourse analysts have rejected attempts to analyse discourse as static text, in favour of an attempt to unravel the dynamic means by which discourse is created (Brown and Yule 1983). They maintain that in order to explain
how utterances are interpreted, it is necessary to appeal beyond formal features to a variety of areas of experience and knowledge that we gradually build into our mental schemata through the process of living and interacting with others. In conversation our interpretation is assisted by such things as our understanding of the context in which the utterance was produced, shared presuppositions with other interlocutors, our knowledge of the world, and our experience of previous similar discourse.

Information-processing theory sees the human being as a complex mechanism struggling to impose organisation on information derived through the senses. Bottom-up data-driven processing permits us to attend to perceptions, organise them and then extract meaning from them. Top-down conceptually-driven processing enables us to obtain a rapid expectation of what is likely to occur on the basis of previous experience, and to match this against the incoming data. We do not have to process all the information available to us through our senses, we use contextual clues and expectations based on past experiences and general knowledge to avoid having to process the whole input. Expectations produced by top-down processing eventually merge with the bottom-up processes to complete whatever task is in hand. Where tasks encountered present novel problems with little relationship to existing schemata and with few contextual clues, bottom-up processing becomes more important.

Since our attention is limited, there are problems when task demands exceed our available capacity. It is, therefore, important that we build up a series of automatic processes requiring very little of our attention, so that we can release our resources for other concerns which require more deliberate processing.

There is no complete agreement about the form in which experience is stored in the memory, but it is generally presumed to be systematically organised, with numerous cross-references, so that it can be easily accessed for the interpretation of incoming data and the projection of future possibilities.
In line with this information-processing approach, Sanford and Garrod (1981) describe a linguistic text "as a series of instructions which tell the reader how to utilise the knowledge he already has, and contingently modify this knowledge in the light of the literal content of the discourse itself". We sample only enough of the data to confirm or disconfirm our predictions. Comprehension of spoken or written language is, therefore, not a simple matter of linguistic decoding, but is one of predicting, sampling, and verifying, which Goodman (1967) has called a "psycholinguistic guessing game."

While reception involves a matching of incoming data with existing schemata, production involves converting multi-dimensional simultaneous experiences into unidimensional sequenced discourse. This is not easy, since our experiences are personal, while the categories of language through which we express them are public. Thus to express experience in discourse involves a substantial effort of mental reorganisation of information.

Grice (1975) hypothesises that we make things easier for each other in conversation by conforming as best we can to certain maxims:

- to say only that which is necessary
- to say what we believe to be true
- to be relevant
- to be clear and brief.

Thus we co-operate with each other in a joint negotiation of meaning.

2.4 Classroom FLL

Howatt (1979) sees the development of L1 literacy as being in a sense the L1 learner's first encounter with a FL, since it implies a switch from oral "mother dialect" to written "mother tongue". It is a "deliberate analytic action" in which the learner must learn
to replace words by images and create new forms to symbolise the sound images in written signs. When learning to read, learners have to learn that written language is disembedded from the flow of simultaneous events. They must learn to unravel the writer's meanings without recourse to an interlocutor or to a shared physical context.

The initial encounter with a FL may also represent a similar sort of experience, requiring a deliberate analytical approach on the part of the learner to relate the FL to existing schemata. In contrast to those theorists who hypothesise that FL learners regress to earlier states of L1 interlanguage (Corder 1981), Howatt suggests that they start their FL from the point at which they find themselves in their L1 development.

"They move forward from there. They do not remetamorphose like quasi-chrysalids turning into new butterflies. They are butterflies already, learning how to fly in a different way which may be useful if and when they change their habitat."

(Howatt 1979)

Here, of course, wittingly or unwittingly, he touches upon the central problem facing FL learners in compulsory schooling. They may not see themselves as needing to change their habitat at all. It is thus exceedingly difficult for some to avoid the empty formalism of learning a language simply because it is on the programme, rather than for any well motivated purpose.

If we are to base school FLL on the learning processes available to adolescent pupils, then it seems sensible to accept that they will retain the natural acquisition process by which they learnt their L1, and that they will also be able to call upon their growing level of deliberate disembedded learning.

There seems little doubt that the learning process that school FLL has consistently neglected up till now has been the natural acquisition process, because it did not fit the traditional transmissive
view of teaching and learning.

Acquisition depends upon the learner placing some interpretation upon what an interlocutor is saying. Having acquired an L1, FL learners are aware of the intentionality of language and of the functions that it serves. They are thus primed to seek out propositional meaning and illocutionary value with all the faculties and experiences that they can bring to bear on the matter.

Thus, when interpreting spontaneous teacher talk or any other input which has a focus on meaning, the FL learner is likely to process only the essential semantic units. It would seem that it is this reduced intake, rather than any attempt to simplify native-speaker syntax, that gives rise to their early simple codes. In normal meaning-based communication, FL learners would appear to pay attention to content words rather than grammatical markers, to rely on word order to convey propositional meaning, to avoid the rearrangement or interruption of linguistic units, and to pay some attention to the ends of words (Slobin 1973).

Acquisition is a subconscious process leading to the build-up of implicit knowledge. This appears to follow a common developmental sequence, in which learners of a particular FL, irrespective of mother tongue, progress, fossilize or regress along the same continuum, albeit at different rates (Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974, Hyltenstam 1977, Corder 1981). Deliberate learning is a conscious process feeding an explicit knowledge. Krashen (1981, 1982, 1983) has maintained that acquisition and deliberate learning are separate processes, and that the mental representations derived from each are in some way stored and accessed separately. He believes that in communication our utterances are initiated by implicit knowledge. The role of explicit knowledge is restricted to that of monitoring these utterances, either before or after production. Implicit knowledge may also act as a monitor on the basis of "feel" rather than of conscious knowledge. He maintains that we can only make use of explicit knowledge as a monitor if:
- we are given sufficient time to do so
- we focus on form
- we know the rule we wish to apply.

Krashen's acquisition-learning distinction seems to provide an explanation for the well-known phenomenon of the FL learner, who consciously knows the rule of how to produce a particular structure, yet produces an interlanguage "error" in spontaneous communication. It seems also to provide an explanation for the fact that learners, who are able to perform structures correctly in a drill situation, may get them wrong in real communication (Dakin 1973, Clark 1969). By stating that both conscious understanding of rules and deliberate practice through drills and exercises form part of the learning process, but not of acquisition, and by restricting the role of explicit knowledge to that of a monitor, Krashen appears able to explain the failure of both the grammar-translation and audio-lingual/audio-visual approach to bring about spontaneous use of language. It must be pointed out, however, that since conscious understanding of rules involves cognitive activity, while drills may not, it seems less than useful to associate them both with an apparently identical mental process.

Krashen claims that there is no interplay between that which has been learnt and that which has been acquired. He therefore concludes that a deliberate focus on form in the classroom, whether in the input to which the learner is exposed, or in the feedback on learning provided by the teacher, will not lead to any improvement in implicit knowledge. He even goes so far as to state:

"Language appreciation [by which he means conscious understanding of structure] is quite peripheral to the main function of the classroom."
(Krashen 1981)

Krashen, therefore, makes a strong case for classroom FLL to be based on acquisition-promoting activity on the basis of caretaker speech rhetorically "gross-tuned" to the learner's level.
There are several problems with Krashen's model. It fails, for example, to explain how some people learn languages from 'teach-yourself' books. The major objection, however, is that he appears to forget that through the experience of literacy in L1 the vast majority of classroom adolescent learners of a FLL in our schools will already be aware of the "standard" nature of the written language, of patterns and of norms and of the concept of error. They will have noticed that some of the formal variations observed in speech are no longer tolerated in writing. They will have got used to learning language explicitly. They will have become accustomed, to some extent at least, to looking consciously for sound-symbol regularities, and to using visual images of 'words' to assist memorisation. They will have become aware of language as a symbolic representation of experience, rather than just as an embedded component in the fleeting reality of the moment. Having acquired literacy in L1, it seems counter-productive to expect learners to will themselves back into a pre-literate phase in their approach towards FLL.

Other theorists adopt a less extreme position and acknowledge that there can be interplay between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge and vice-versa. Thus Bialystok (1978) maintains that it is possible to transfer explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge through communicative practice. She also points out that inferencing permits that which was implicitly known to become explicit knowledge. Bialystok's position is more in tune with the intuitions of FL teachers than is Krashen's.

An alternative view of the way knowledge may be stored and accessed is offered by McLaughlin (1978), who makes a distinction between automatic processes which can be built up through repeated experience and accessed without the active control or attention of the individual, and controlled processes which have to be more deliberately engaged. This is closely related to Lawler and Selinker's (1971) mechanisms that guide automatic performance, and mechanisms that guide problem-solving. Both models would seem to be based on
information-processing theory, according to which, effective internalisation can be brought about by either acquisition or deliberate learning.

Craik and Lockhart (1972) emphasise that retention is a function of depth of processing and that this is brought about by the learner finding or deliberately making the incoming data meaningful so that it can be passed to the existing material in the long-term store. It would appear that incoming data is taken into the short-term perceptual memory, where messages reverberate and fade, unless we take deliberate steps to process them in some way into long-term memory. Miller (1956) revealed that we can only retain 7 (+ or -2) discrete bits of information at any one time in the short-term memory. In order to increase this a relation between items has to be discovered or imposed by the processor, thus forming a "chunk". Further chunking permits yet further quantities of information to be retained. Since short-term memory is largely a perceptual store, limited to some 2 seconds retention, it is important to shift information into the long-term memory store as quickly as possible. This can be effected by the use of "elaborative rehearsal strategies" (Norman 1976). These embrace various mnemonic techniques for finding sound or meaning association between items, or between items and the context in which they occur. They seem to involve the creation of some superordinate pattern combining the relevant discrete elements. Thus the learner is always looking for ever more complete systems to make sense of the discrete phenomena to which he is exposed. These are then linked to the existing schemata in the mind and may be adapted to conform to them.

The lesson to be learnt from the depth of processing hypothesis is that utterances that are devoid of illocutionary value and, therefore, of any meaning, are unlikely to be processed properly. Many classroom "sentences", made up to exhibit structures or vocabulary that have signification but no illocutionary value, may not reach the long-term store.
In favour of deliberate rule-learning, Seliger (1975) found that adults who were given prior knowledge of the rule system of the English article, displayed greater long-term gains in mastering it, than subjects lacking this knowledge. Rules may sometimes be a short-cut to laborious hypothesis-creation and testing, and of particular use to those people who have become "rule learners" rather than "data gatherers" (Hatch 1974). Many rules, however, are so complicated to explain that it is unlikely that we could remember them through conscious understanding. It seems likely that such rules must be acquired and be guided by feel (Krashen 1981).

Dakin (1973) adopts an interesting position that is in favour of both induction and of the deliberate form-focussed organisation of learning experience. He cites the case of a young pupil who had interpreted passives as actives in the story she was reading. When confronted with the sentence: "The door was shut by Tom", she realised that the door could not be doing the shutting; she had, therefore, to rethink her syntactic hypothesis to conform to her knowledge of the world. Dakin goes on to suggest that we might attempt deliberately to set up "problems", which enable learners to draw appropriate hypotheses about such complex forms. This is very much in line with the argumentation of Donaldson (1978) and others, who point to the need for teachers to direct the learner's attention to those features of a problem that are crucial to its solution, and who also believe that where problems are motivated and structured in such a way that pupils can bring their everyday experience to bear upon them, they are capable of solving them. On this view what would seem to be required is a study of:

- the problems that arise in the internalisation of system
- ways to harness the learner's existing experience
- ways of focussing the pupils' attention on salient features of the problems.

Teachers have to learn to decentre from their state of knowledge and experience to the one currently available to the learner.
It is dangerous to attempt to draw any simple conclusions from the conflicting claims of induction through spontaneous learning or through deliberate problem-setting and deduction, but it seems sensible to accept that they can all be effective in different ways, to different extents, with different learners, on different tasks.

Most models designed to promote effective FLL in the classroom point to the need for the promotion of both implicit and explicit knowledge in a variety of ways.

Thus Rivers (1973) sees the need for "skill-getting" before "skill-using", Paulston (1971) for a similar graduated approach leading from closely controlled drills and exercises through meaningful drills to communicative activities. Brumfit (1979a, 1981b) maintains that there is a need for an appropriate emphasis on "accuracy" and on "fluency". Widdowson (1977) draws the distinction between "reference rules" concerned with "usage" and "expression rules" concerned with "use", and sees the need for a promotion of the internalisation of both. Dodson (1983) draws on his studies of young bilinguals in Wales to emphasise the need for "medium-orientated" and "message-orientated" work. He discovered that young bilinguals who had one preferred language for particular areas of experience would engage in medium-orientated activities relating to their second language quite naturally. They frequently asked for the meaning in their preferred language of words and phrases in the weaker one and vice versa, and compared and contrasted utterances in both languages. They would also express the same concept consecutively in the two languages, permutate elements of utterances in both languages out aloud to themselves when playing with toys, and rehearse chains of utterances in the weaker language for some possible future use.

"The lesson here for us was that if any 'natural' language learning procedure was to be adopted in the classroom, it should be the way a young bilingual learns and reinforces his second language and not the way a child learns and reinforces his first and only language."

(Dodson 1983)
Dodson's findings and conclusions accord with the experience of many teachers, who have noted that, in classrooms where awareness is encouraged, pupils often ask for "system" information as well as "communicative" information, especially when they are brought to the conclusion that their implicit knowledge of the moment is in some way inadequate (Clark 1981c).

It is time to turn our attention to what has been discovered about the "good learner" and about the particular strategies they adopt in classroom FLL. On the basis of observations of learners and of student self-reports and diaries, Rubin (1979, 1981) set out a number of strategies adopted by successful FL learners. What is interesting to note about these is the immense variety of them. They can be summarised as follows:

- use of clarification requests
- monitoring of self and others' performance
- use of a variety of mnemonic techniques for making semantic, visual, auditory and kinesic associations
- inductive inferencing (whole to parts), through using clues from the linguistic and non-linguistic context
- deductive reasoning (parts to whole), through conscious awareness of pattern
- practice techniques (e.g. experimenting with new sounds, talking to oneself in the FL subvocally or out aloud)
- use of communication strategies to convey meaning (cf Tarone 1981).

A similar picture emerges from studies by Stern (1975) and Bialystok (1981a). These highlight the fact that good learners use deliberate strategies to practice their knowledge, to monitor their language production, and to infer hypotheses about linguistic forms on the basis of intralingual and extralingual knowledge.

Rubin (1979) and Stern (1975) also suggest that there are psychological traits such as self-confidence, risk-taking and empathy that lend themselves to successful language learning.
In addition to building up a picture of the good FL learner it is useful to consider what might lie behind the failure of many to learn. Miller (1981) has shown that in typical audio-visual language classrooms the sort of strategies encouraged by teachers and adopted by pupils may well be extremely inefficient, if they are simply form-focused and not meaning-related. Pupils had learnt, for example, to associate the ending of a verb with the nearest subject pronoun, which was sometimes error-producing (e.g. vous nous invitons). Hosenfeld (1976), too, showed that students concentrating on form rather than meaning process "only the information in the sentences that is essential to determining the answer required" (Hosenfeld 1976). They, therefore, look for short-cuts to solve formal problems. As one pupil had said: "I don't pay any attention to what the sentence is saying."

The absence of real speech acts in which language is used to convey intentions is clearly detrimental to the development of effective learning strategies. Where classroom concerns are turned uniquely towards formal matters, and attempts are made to teach syntax in a semantic vacuum, there is little likelihood that the pupil will develop useful hypotheses about the structure of the language being learnt. In addition, very little of what is done will be processed into the long-term memory.

Hawkins (1981) suggests that there are two major reasons for the fact that some of our pupils fail to learn - the absence of an intention to mean in classroom activities, and the lack of preparation in awareness. This brings together the need for meaningful language experience in the classroom and for fostering conscious awareness. Where the two processes are interlinked, so that awareness is based on experience, and experiences are brought into conscious focus, learning is likely to be more durable and regression reduced to a minimum. This is all the more important given the extremely disadvantageous circumstances in which languages are taught in schools.
Hawkins (1981) has referred to school FLT as "gardening in a gale", where the teacher plants a few frail seedlings which just begin to take root at the end of a 40 minute lesson, only to be blown away by the gale of the mother tongue in all the other activities of the day. There is considerable evidence to show that a total commitment to acquisition, without the back-up of some deliberate formal learning and awareness, may lead to rapid regression. Children who learn a FL in natural circumstances, in the school playground, for example, or on the street, and who do not learn to read and write in that language, very quickly lose what they have acquired, when they are no longer in the same language environment.

Education is in any case not simply limited to the encouragement of practical skills. As Donaldson puts it:

"In school pupils learn not just to talk, but to choose what to say, not just to interpret but to weigh up possible interpretations." (Donaldson 1978)

One of the purposes of education is to bring about a certain level of conscious and deliberate awareness, built upon more spontaneous experiences, while ensuring that there is no inhibition to creativity.

Miller, Gallanter and Pribram (1960), in their attempt to account for how cognition is translated into action, suggest that we make plans - hierarchical processes that control the order in which a sequence of operations is performed. The operations are constantly monitored by the execution of various tests which provide feedback as to how the plan is proceeding. Any deficiencies between an original intention and ongoing performance are repaired, unless the original intention is changed or abandoned en route. Learners have to develop the skills of planning and of self-monitoring.

"Humans are not automatons, smoothly and automatically encoding and decoding whatever messages they wish. The system is full of bugs, and its capabilities frequently fall short of the demands placed upon it ... The language learner must wage an almost constant battle to make the best of limited resources." (Morrison and Low 1983)
Other explanations for learning failure are more psychological in nature. Anxiety is likely to prevent effective deep-processing (Stevick 1976, 1980). Group identity and self-confidence are important (Stevick 1976). It is essential, therefore, that the teacher establish a classroom atmosphere in which individual learners can feel security and a sense of belonging, and where the learning experiences bring success, so that a healthy self-image is fostered. It is perhaps unfortunate that it is in adolescence that school FLL starts, since adolescents tend to lack self-confidence and to be worried about themselves, their looks and their capacities. This insecurity makes it particularly difficult for them to take risks in FL speech.

2.5 Conclusion

It would seem then, from a reading of the literature, that in the planning of a curriculum designed to bring about a communicative ability, a number of dimensions of communicative competence need to be taken into account. These, as Canale and Swain (1980) have indicated, would seem to include:

- linguistic competence (an ability to understand and use forms to interpret and express meaning)
- sociolinguistic competence (an ability to understand and use forms related to context)
- discourse competence (an ability to process information and negotiate meanings)
- strategic competence (an ability to use strategies to compensate for any linguistic or other deficiencies one may have)

In order to foster communicative ability within an educational context the teacher should draw on:

- the adolescent's ability to learn spontaneously from language experiences that are personally meaningful
- the learner's developing battery of deliberate learning strategies and mnemonic techniques
- the learner's developing powers of reflection and awareness.
It would seem that the teacher should aim to provide a wide range of meaningful learning experiences, some designed to promote acquisition, some designed to bring about communicative use, some designed to focus on underlying competencies and skills, some designed to promote awareness of pattern and function, and some designed to assist the learner to develop control in the use of the FL.

Other keys to the effective setting up of learning experiences would seem to lie in the teacher's ability to decentre and structure tasks in such a way as to harness the learner's existing knowledge and experience, and to create an atmosphere and a purposeful context in which learners are willing to take risks and invest themselves in the solution of the various problems posed.
# CHAPTER 3

**CURRICULUM RENEWAL: THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT**

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CHAPTER 3

CURRICULUM RENEWAL: THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

"But you, who are wise, must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our Ideas of this Kind of Education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some Experience of it. Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces: they were instructed in all your Sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were Bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods ... neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing.

We are, however, not the less oblig'd by your kind Offer, tho' we decline accepting it: and, to show our Grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them."

- Response of the Indians of the Six Nations to a suggestion that they send boys to an American college, Pennsylvania, 1744.

The above quotation underlines the fact that education is required to serve the particular values of the society in which it is placed. What may be found suitable in one context will not necessarily be appropriate in another. What is adequate for today may be considered of little use tomorrow.

The task of those involved in curriculum renewal (henceforth CR) is to ensure that education promotes and extends the perceptions and values of the society it serves.

The GLAFFL project must be seen as one small part of a total complex of CR within the contemporary Scottish education system designed to foster the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are thought to be of most value to our pupils.
It would be quite unrealistic to attempt to characterise all the various influences that affect the current CR process in Scotland, yet it seems important to sketch the educational background out of which the project emerged. I have chosen, therefore, to present the educational context in the form of three broad value systems which seem to underlie and influence current CR. Rather than seeing these as incompatible, I shall view them as ideological tensions to be reconciled into some integrated whole.

This is followed by an attempt to describe two broad alternative approaches to CR. These will be exemplified later in Chapter 4, when I examine contemporary FL curriculum proposals and practices.

Finally, I attempt to portray the particular process of CR adopted in the GLAFLL project.

3.1 Three broad value systems within the current educational context

Skilbeck (1982a) has identified three broad value systems underlying current education - classical humanism, reconstructionism and progressivism. These are of course extremely broad categorisations and there is a danger of turning them into caricatures.

Recent CR in school FLL, as in other subjects in the curriculum, can perhaps best be described in terms of the attempt to move away from a classical humanist ideology towards something more egalitarian on the one hand and more learner-centred on the other. Egalitarianism is represented in the reconstructionist ideology, and learner-centredness in progressivism.

We start, however, with a brief description of the basic characteristics of classical humanism, because it is from this background that current CR springs.

3.1.1 Classical humanism

Classical humanism is by far the oldest of the three ideologies and can be traced back to the writings of Plato.
Various manifestations of classical humanism have emerged over the years, but in the British state education system there have been three relatively stable factors:

- elitism
- the belief that for the elite group education meant the development of intellectual capacities, through induction into traditional modes of enquiry and thinking. This has sometimes degenerated into a transmissive view of education as a process of handing over a set of closed truths
- a determination to ensure that the cultural heritage of a society, or of a particular group within it, was maintained from generation to generation.

Traditionally classical humanism has favoured the establishment of at least two distinct types of schooling, one for those who could cope with "high" culture and abstract intellectual work, and one for those who required a more practical education more in tune with their own less abstract cultural patterns.

In order to gain a place within the elitist curriculum, FLL was forced to adopt the aims and traditions of the classics. Consequently it neglected its utilitarian potential in favour of the following aims:

- to develop intellectual capacities through exercising the memory, reasoning processes, and critical and aesthetic faculties
- to provide access to foreign culture - the mark of an educated person.

Thus the basic diet of the FL learner was the study of grammar, translation and an introduction to literature. It is not surprising, therefore, that FLL was seldom included in the educational diet of the masses, but was restricted to the elite.

3.1.2 Reconstructionism

Reconstructionism in the twentieth century draws its inspiration from the work of Dewey (1921) and his followers.
It is an essentially optimistic ideology which believes that man can improve himself and his environment. Reconstructionists envisage that social and economic improvement, and intellectual and spiritual advance can all be rationally planned for. Education is seen as an important agent for social change - as a means of redressing the injustices of birth and of upbringing, and of promoting national and international unity through consensus. Reconstructionism thrives at times of social and economic upheaval, such as we face today in Britain, since it is believed that the natural evolutionary forces are not sufficient to bring about the changes required. Reconstructionists tend to believe in the power of planning and of intervention from outside the school to effect curriculum change.

The egalitarian forces behind reconstructionism have led to the establishment of comprehensive schooling, of mixed ability teaching, and of a common core curriculum for all. Crosland expressed a powerful reconstructionist view when he wrote:

"Now by selecting for a superior school, children who are already well favoured by environment, we are not merely confirming, we are hardening and sharpening an existing social division. This can surely not be thought desirable. I will not argue the point in terms of equality. But I will argue it in terms of a sense of community, of social cohesion, of a nation composed of people who understand each other because they can communicate ... We have only to consider our industrial relations and the lack of communication and mutual understanding reflected in them to see the depth of social division in Britain today ... so long as we choose to educate our children in separate camps ... for so long will our schools exacerbate rather than diminish our class divisions."
(Crosland 1974)

Reconstructionists argue that human beings must be seen as persons, as purposive agents, to be valued as equals irrespective of their variations in ability. Of the ideal teacher, Daunt wrote:
"He is egalitarian, not in the absurd sense of believing that all talents and aptitudes are equal, but yet in a stronger sense than merely advocating equality of opportunity. He wishes to see all members of society equally valued."
(Daunt 1975)

In school FLL, reconstructionists emphasise the practical value of an ability to communicate, and through this to promote understanding and unity among groups and nations. It is possible to see reconstructionist values behind the Council of Europe's recent work in Modern Languages (Council of Europe 1981). In Recommendation R(82) 18 the Committee of Ministers enjoins member states through their school systems:

"to encourage the teaching of at least one European language other than the national language or the vehicular language of the area concerned to pupils from the age of ten ... with adequate time allocation and in such a way as to enable them by the end of the period of compulsory schooling, within the limits set by their individual ability, to use the language effectively for communication with other speakers of that language, both in transacting the business of everyday living and in building social and personal relations on the basis of mutual understanding of and respect for the cultural identity of others."
(Council of Europe 1982)

In brief we can characterise Reconstructionism as concerned with:

- social change through education
- egalitarian ideals of equality and fraternity
- the achievement of a consensus on objectives, followed by rigorous planning
- comprehensive schooling with a common core curriculum and prescribed objectives for all
- communication as a means of achieving unity.

3.1.3 Progressivism

Progressivism looks to Rousseau for its inspiration and to Piaget among others for its pragmatic support.
It is essentially a learner-centred approach to education which attempts to promote the learner's development, both as an individual with intellectual and emotional needs, and as a social being. The learner is seen as a whole person and not just as a "disembodied intellect" (Stevick 1976).

Progressivists tend to see education as a means of guiding children into experiences from which they can learn by their own efforts. Learning is envisaged as a continuum which can be broken up into several broad stages of internal development. For Progressivists 'growth' is the key word. Transmitting a cultural heritage is made subservient to following the developing rhythms of the individual child. There is, therefore, a tendency towards a goal-free style of learning. Yet the education Rousseau proposed for Emile (Boyd 1956), far from being haphazard, was a thoroughly structured affair, with the pupil's spontaneity harnessed to a well worked-out developmental programme.

For progressivists, education is not seen as a process for the transmission of a set of closed truths, but as a way of enabling learners to learn how to learn.

"The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has learned that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security."
(Rogers 1969)

Knowledge is not seen as a set of inert ideas (Whitehead 1932), but as a creative problem-solving capacity that depends upon an ability to retrieve appropriate schemata from a mental store, to utilise whatever can be automatically brought to bear upon a situation, and to bend the existing conceptual structures to the creation of novel concepts that offer a working solution to the particular problem in hand.

For progressivists knowledge is never static.
"The dependence of knowledge on a conceptual structure means that any body of knowledge is likely to be of only temporary significance. For the knowledge which develops from the use of a given concept usually discloses new complexities of the subject matter which call forth new concepts. These new concepts in turn give rise to new bodies of inquiry and, therefore, to new and more complete bodies of knowledge stated in new terms."

(Schwab 1964)

Education should, therefore, be concerned with developing an open speculative view of knowledge, based on an understanding of the transient nature of our current conceptual structures. Learning involves the perception and internalisation of ever "better" schemata, which appear to describe and explain phenomena for us better than those in our current mental store. This is not achieved simply by replacing one set of schemata by another, as one would replace plugs in a car, but by gradually building on existing conceptual structures through the assimilation of new perceptions and the adapting of what exists to accommodate these. There is no implication that the schemata are in any objective sense "better". They may still be incomplete or inadequate conceptualisations. What matters is that they work for us at the time.

Learners are seen as active participants shaping their own learning, with the teacher cast in the role of guide or facilitator. Thus progressivists lay great stress on the need for learning by doing rather than by being taught. Gide, reflecting on the inadequacy of his own formal education, wrote:

"J'ai passé trois années de voyage à oublier tout ce que j'avais appris par la tête. Cette désinstruction fut lente et difficile, mais elle me fut plus utile que toutes les instructions imposées par les hommes, et vraiement le commencement d'une éducation."

(Gide: Les nourritures terrestres)

Progressivists are more likely to be concerned with learning processes and methodology, than with predetermined objectives or content.
A further aspect of progressivism is its view of the school or the classroom as a self-contained community, responsible for creating its own sub-culture and interaction networks among various participants. One of the major roles of education is to promote healthy personal relationships.

"The first principle of human nature is mutuality ... A person is always one term in a relation of persons ... For this reason the first priority in education is learning to live in personal relation to other people. Any kind of teaching involves establishing personal relationship between teacher and pupil, and the success or failure of the teaching depends very largely on the character and quality of this relation."

(MacMurray - date untraced)

In FLL the progressivist approach is represented by those who would base their curriculum upon the notion of interlanguage development (Corder 1981). Language learning is seen as an implicit intuitive process for which human beings have a natural capacity rather than as the product of the deliberate study of a linear series of linguistic elements.

In brief, we can summarise progressivism as being concerned with:

- individual growth from within
- guided discovery
- a speculative view of knowledge
- natural learning processes and stages of development
- sensitivity to the interests, rhythms and styles of learning of individual learners
- the learner as a whole person
- the social nature of the learner and a development of healthy relationships
- the promotion of learner responsibility.

3.1.4 Brief summary of the effects of the three value systems on school FLL

In terms of basic aims:
- classical humanism tends to focus on intellectual and study skills, and the development of a conscious awareness of the structure of a language. In addition, it aims to promote access to the literature and "high culture" of the FL community.
- reconstructionism tends to focus on communicative and social skills.
- progressivism tends to focus on acquisition and the development of responsibility and self-confidence.

In terms of learning processes:
- classical humanism tends to lay stress on deliberate study and awareness-raising.
- reconstructionism tends to lay stress on the most effective means of preparing for predetermined communicative objectives.
- progressivism tends to lay stress on the promotion of natural learning processes.

3.1.5 Towards a reconciliation

It can reasonably be claimed from a pragmatic point of view that the ideal of healthy self-generated evolution requires from time to time a deliberate injection of reconstructionist medicine to redress what have come to be seen as ills. Thus, for example, at a global curriculum level, strategies have to be devised for coping with racism or discrimination against women, and at a more mundane FLL level for coping with fossilization or lack of fluency. There remains of course the problem of the choice of medicine best suited to the task.

Perhaps the curriculum blueprint that best expresses the hope that there can be a natural reconciliation between the social concerns of reconstructionists and the learner-centred concerns of progressivists is the SED report on Secondary Education (1947), in which it is stated:

"If the end of education is individual excellence, we are at once led to ask how does the individual life develop, and the answer immediately brings
back all the social references and claims that the doctrine of self-realisation seemed for a moment to banish. For the reply must be that selves can develop only in accordance with their own nature and that their nature is social."

(SED 1947)

We are not, in reality, forced to choose between static tradition, totalitarian upheaval or aimless growth, each of which would represent the worst aspects of the three 'isms' outlined. In a democratic state it is the task of education to ensure that the creative energies of the young are enabled to develop along individual lines which are broadly socially desirable and in general accord with the community's traditions, values, and ethos. In a pluralistic society such as ours there should be wide scope for diversity.

3.2 Two alternative approaches to the curriculum

Reconstructionism gives rise to a carefully planned 'ends-means' approach to the curriculum, while progressivism gives rise to a 'process' approach. In the section which follows these two approaches are outlined. In Chapter 4 it will be seen how they have been applied to contemporary FLCR, which may sometimes appear to have an independent life of its own, but is in reality closely bound up with other educational developments, in response to the general spirit of the times.

The structure of the curriculum is determined by the inter-relationship between ends, content and processes. Inevitably, through the teaching and learning process, certain ends will be reached, a certain content will have been adopted and certain processes will have been engaged. What is open to debate is whether the ends should be predetermined or seen as the individual outcomes of an open-ended learning process, whether the content should be selected in terms of predetermined ends or on its own inherent merits, and how best to translate conflicting views about how learning is best achieved into an effective methodology.
The 'ends-means' approach focuses on ends to be achieved. The 'process' approach focuses on the processes which promote learning.

3.2.1 The 'ends-means' approach

Tyler (1949) is generally taken to be the 'father' of the 'ends-means' approach. He saw curriculum development as an exercise in which particular behavioural patterns specified as ends could be brought about through an instructional process designed as a means towards them.

The structure of the 'ends-means' curriculum and the steps required to elaborate it have been set out by Taba:

"Step 1: diagnosis of needs
Step 2: formulation of objectives
Step 3: selection of content
Step 4: organisation of content
Step 5: selection of learning experiences
Step 6: organisation of learning experiences
Step 7: determination of what to evaluate and of the ways of doing it."

(Taba 1962)

This indicates a strictly linear view of curriculum development which is effectively objectives-driven, starting with a diagnosis of needs and ending with evaluation.

Tyler was critical of the traditional practice of basing a curriculum upon the activities to be carried out by teachers:

"Since the real purpose of education is not to have the instructor perform certain activities but to bring about significant changes in the students' patterns of behaviour ...."  

(Tyler 1949)

He also rejected the listing of topics or other elements of content as objectives, since this "does not specify what the students are expected to do with those elements". Thirdly, he argued that it was not helpful to specify highly generalised patterns of behav-
iour as objectives (eg "to develop critical thinking"), since although these were indeed behavioural in nature, they were not specific enough to guide the choice of curriculum content. Tyler's own prescription for the setting out of educational objectives was as follows:

"The most useful form for stating objectives is to express them in terms which identify both the kind of behaviour to be developed in the student and the content or area of life in which this behaviour is to operate." (Tyler 1949)

The objectives, then, were to be maximally explicit so that they would:

"guide the making of curriculum decisions on what to cover, what to emphasise, what content to select and which learning experiences to stress." (Taba 1962)

It became common to advocate that all objectives should be expressed in behavioural terms. Thus Mager, for example, declared:

"Curriculum objectives must always be pre-specified in terms of measurable changes in student behaviour." (Mager 1962)

Bloom (1956) produced a handbook outlining a taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain. These were "designed to be a classification of the student behaviours which represent the intended outcomes of the educational process", and were set out in six categories representing an ascending order of complexity covering knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, each one of which contained illustrative objectives, a discussion of testing problems, and examples of items testing objectives in the category concerned. A second handbook on objectives in the affective domain was produced by Kratwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964), and a third taxonomy concerned with the psycho-motor domain was planned but never completed.

For the classroom teacher, course objectives were broken down into unit objectives or learning tasks, and these in turn were analysed into component knowledge and skill areas. Both within units and
across units a linear sequence was established from the simple to
the more complex, and from the parts to the whole.

The 'ends-means' curriculum was thus objectives-driven. Its con-
tent and learning experiences were selected and sequenced to lead
in small steps from the simple to the more complex, building cum-
ulatively upon the known towards the achievement of a specified
target level of performance expressed in behavioural terms. The
materials and methodology were expected to embody these principles.
Both were to be the subject of experiment. Whatever means seemed
to lead to the target objectives in the minimum amount of time was
to be adopted.

Evaluation in the 'ends-means' model meant determining the extent to
which the objectives specified as learning outcomes had been attain-
ed by the learners (Bloom 1956, Gagne 1967), and on the basis of
this attempting to bring improvements to the curriculum as a whole.
To achieve this Scriven (1967) proposed the use of both summative
and formative assessment. The role of summative assessment was
to see to what extent pre-specifed learning outcomes had been
achieved at the end of a course or cycle. Formative assessment
was to be used during the curriculum process to find out whether
students were learning what they were supposed to, and if not, to
pinpoint those areas where amendments would have to be made.

In order to determine whether pupils were achieving the objectives
set in a particular curriculum, it soon became apparent that the
classical version of assessment based on norm-referencing was inade-
quate, since norm-referenced tests produce measurements, which pro-
vide information relating an individual's performance to that of
other individuals in a group, but say nothing directly about per-
formance in absolute terms. Thus the information provided by
such tests does not allow us to determine whether or to what extent
intended outcomes have been attained. In its place, Glaser (1963)
proposed a model of criterion-referenced assessment which would
"provide explicit information as to what the individual can and
cannot do", by measuring performance against a well-defined criterion
rather than against the performance of others in the peer group.

It was clearly important for those who were setting out to improve the quality of teaching and learning to be able to demonstrate through an evaluation of pupil performance that learning achievements were getting better. This could not be done through norm-referenced measurement, in which test items were devised to discriminate clearly between pupils in order to reproduce the normal or Gaussian curve, and in which fixed proportions of a total population tested would fall into prefixed percentiles or grades, whether or not the performances as a whole were better or worse than desired. One could not, through norm-referencing, assess in any objective way whether students had achieved a particular goal or standard. Criterion-referenced assessment, on the other hand, provided a means whereby educators could specify target domains of behaviour, predetermine mastery levels, and then set a test comprising a sample of representative items from a particular target domain in order to determine whether students had attained mastery or not. In this form of assessment it was possible for all pupils to achieve mastery if their performance measured up to the criterion. Norm-referenced assessment is classical humanist in origin, and is designed to identify high-flyers, average performers and low achievers. It is an instrument for selection. Criterion-referencing, on the other hand, is a reconstructionist tool devised to measure the extent to which intended changes in individual behaviours have been achieved.

Research in the 'ends-means' model has usually been characterised by the attempt to discover through an experiment involving a control group using a 'traditional' course or method, and an experimental group using an innovative one, which particular course or method led to better achievement of the prespecified target objectives. The terms "agricultural-botany paradigm" (Parlett and Hamilton 1972) and "factory-farming approach" (Monippally 1983) have been used to describe this approach.
"Students rather like plant-crops are given pretests (the seedlings are weighed or measured) and then submitted to different experiences (treatment conditions). Subsequently ... their attainment (growth or yield) is measured to indicate the relative efficiency of the methods (fertilisers) used."
(Parlett and Hamilton 1972)

3.2.2 Objections to the 'ends-means' model

There are several objections to the 'ends-means' model and I shall attempt to summarise these.

From a democratic viewpoint the 'ends-means' model is criticised, because within it the teacher becomes a servant of the curriculum, whose task it is to bring about certain behavioural changes in all pupils in a stereotypical manner. Neither teachers nor pupils seem to be considered as individuals with a right to teach and learn in mutually responsive ways towards ends that they themselves have agreed upon. There is no notion of a plurality of values or of outcomes.

From an epistemological viewpoint it is argued that in those areas of the curriculum that depend upon knowledge and understanding rather than the training of specialist skills, any attempt to specify predetermined objectives and target levels of performance will set arbitrary limits to speculation, and will suggest to the learner that knowledge is a closed set of truths, rather than a series of hypotheses borne of our current perceptions, serving transient contemporary purposes (Stenhouse 1975, Widdowson 1983).

It is argued that the 'ends-means' model conceptualises knowledge as something external to the learner, to be fed in, rather than as something that grows within, in response to the need to impose a pattern upon the world. Learners are active agents transmuting input through imposing the pattern of existing schemata upon it. The causative view of teaching appears to ignore the evidence for an 'inbuilt syllabus' or stages of development, where mastery of
certain knowledge or skill areas would seem to unfold in a sequence not directly related to the teaching one.

The 'ends-means' approach is based upon the assumption that learning tasks should be broken down into their component parts. Welford, however, has shown that this may well not be the best way to approach the teaching of complex skills:

"Where the whole task is a closely co-ordinated activity such as aiming a rifle or simulated flying of an aircraft, the evidence suggests that it is better to tackle the task as a whole. Any attempt to divide it up tends to destroy the proper co-ordination of action and subordination of individual actions to the requirements of the whole ... and this outweighs any advantage there might be in mastering different portions of the task separately." (Welford 1968)

From a pragmatic viewpoint many of the higher-order outcomes of educational experiences that we aspire to are notoriously difficult to set out as explicit behavioural objectives, eg those concerned with artistic or creative pursuits, with critical or reflective ones, or with areas to do with awareness or with responsibility (Ebel 1971, Eisner 1969, Stenhouse 1975). Yet, if we exclude these from our list of syllabus objectives, because they cannot easily be made explicit, we are in danger of losing the all important shape of the wood through an over-concentration on some of the more easily discernible trees. It is argued that it is neither possible nor indeed helpful to predetermine the outcomes of certain inherently valuable learning experiences. Teachers can, through experience, tell what makes a good lesson. They do not always need explicit objectives. It is not necessary to reduce every lesson to the predetermined outcomes that learners should achieve. Stenhouse (1970), for example, points to the futility of attempting to specify predetermined behavioural outcomes from the study of a work of literature such as Hamlet, and concludes:

"Education as induction into knowledge is successful to the extent that it makes the behavioural outcomes of the students unpredictable." (Stenhouse 1975)
Teachers on the whole have not found long lists of objectives, such as Bloom's (1956), of much use to them in their work. Popham's (1983) belated conclusion is that any list of objectives should therefore be very short, with each objective set out in general terms to include the criteria that capture the essence of what is to be undertaken.

We pass now to an examination of the 'process' approach, which represents a deliberate attempt to create a paradigm in conflict with the 'ends-means' one, and which takes account of many of the criticisms made above.

3.2.3 The 'process' approach

I shall take as my example of a 'process' approach the one proposed by Stenhouse (1975), since this appears to have considerable affinity with some of the FL curriculum models recently proposed. The 'process' approach is built upon the notion of "principles of procedure" by which to guide the teaching/learning process, and a light "syllabus specification" to assist teachers to set the process in motion.

As an example of what he meant by "principles of procedure" Stenhouse (1975) set out those established for the project *Man: A Course of Study*.

"- to initiate and develop in youngsters a process of question-posing
- to teach a research methodology where children can look for information ...
- to help youngsters develop the ability to use a variety of first-hand sources as evidence from which to develop hypotheses and draw conclusions
- to conduct classroom discussions in which youngsters learn to listen to others as well as to express their own views
- ... to give sanction and support to open-ended discussions where definitive answers to many questions are not found
- to encourage children to reflect on their own experiences
- to create a new role for the teacher, in which he becomes a resource rather than an authority."

(Hanley et al 1970)

These principles are clearly designed to bring about a classroom where inquiry, activity, discussion, reflection and open-ended personal interpretations feature, rather than predetermined objectives, content and mastery levels.

Stenhouse goes on to propose that having established the principles of procedure that will govern a particular process, it is necessary to provide only a very light syllabus specification to assist teachers to create their own particular scheme of work adapted to their own context. He is at pains to point out that a specification should not take the form of a monolithic predetermined package to be implemented unthinkingly. It is offered "as a starting point for experiment" to be modified in the light of experience (Stenhouse 1975).

The basic building blocks for such a provisional specification were to be an indication of content and of activities. Stenhouse leans to Peters' (1966) view that education should be concerned with relevant knowledge, with its nature and its significance, and not with the predilections of pupils, the demands of society and the values of politicians. Thus content and activities were to be selected for "the standards immanent within them rather than because of what they lead to" (Peters 1966).

Stenhouse cites Raths' (1971) criteria for the selection of activities. These can be summarised as indicating that they will be of maximum value where they engage learners actively in inquiry, in making informed choices, in taking risks in carrying out tasks which can be accomplished at several levels, in co-operation with others, and in transferring the knowledge or skills acquired to new settings.

A 'process' approach to evaluation has been outlined by Parlett and Hamilton (1972), who draw attention to the fact that curricula and
methods inevitably take on different shapes, as they are interpreted by teachers and learners in different learning milieux. They were sceptical of attempts to try to test the general value of one curriculum or one methodology against another, because of the mass of human and other contextual variables that were often not taken into account in such experiments (e.g. Scherer and Wertheimer 1964, or Savignon 1972). They underlined the importance of attempting to portray the process of innovation as it unfolded over time, rather than of judging its outcomes in terms of an initial specification of objectives. They aimed, through various techniques, to illuminate the constraints, adaptations to the initial specification, and achievements, as well as the attitudes and reactions of those involved. They proposed a model of "illuminative evaluation" based on three stages - observation, further inquiry, and attempts to explain what had actually occurred.

"Within this three-stage framework an information profile is assembled using data collected from four areas: observation, interviews, questionnaires and tests, documentary and background sources." (Parlett and Hamilton 1972)

3.2.4 Summary

At one pole we have a deterministic 'ends-means' approach based on a needs analysis, and designed to bring about certain changes of behaviour, by whatever means are found to be the most economical and successful, while at the other we have an open-ended 'process' approach, based upon principles of procedure and a light syllabus specification to guide the teaching and learning process. Whereas the former is subject to a form of evaluation designed to test the product of teaching against the initial specification of objectives, the latter is to be subject to an illumination of the process through observation and attempted explanation of the events and reactions that occur. Recent FL curricula, as we shall see in Chapter 4, adopt a position somewhere along the line that runs between these two extremes.

We pass now to an examination of how the whole process of CR in a
particular educational context might best be effected.

3.3 Curriculum renewal: the process

"If you give a man a fish, you feed him for one day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." (Confucius)

Moving away from the 'laissez-faire' approach characteristic of the classical humanist tradition, CR can either take the shape of a 'top-down' reconstructionist strategy, or a 'bottom-up' school-based progressivist one - the former ideally concerned with the sort of task that is better undertaken by a small team, usually at national level, and the latter with developmental work that can best be done by involving teachers at a more local level. It will be maintained that these need not be seen as in conflict with each other, as is often argued, but that they are best viewed as interdependent. It will also be argued that both rely on the provision of effective in-service education (henceforth INSET) provided in the Scottish context by regional advisory services, and that this is the key to effective CR in the classroom.

3.3.1 The 'top-down' approach

The 'top-down' reconstructionist approach, which has been called the Research, Development and Diffusion (or RD and D) model (Havelock 1973), typifies Scottish CR at the national level. This has traditionally involved the setting up of a small central team of 'experts' and of practising teachers selected by the SED, who meet on an ad hoc basis to develop new curricular guidelines. The Scottish Central Committee on Modern Languages (SCCML) has produced, for example, a number of discussion documents, working papers, and bulletins since 1970. Useful though these were as an indication of official thinking at the time, they had little or no effect on the classroom practices of the period. More recently, however, the SCCML set up a team to produce new French materials to suit the whole ability range in the early years of the secondary school. This has been a more typical and more successful version of RD and D.
The team conducted initial research into what was required, produced draft materials, obtained feedback from classroom teachers, who used the draft materials in a number of designated pilot schools, and finally revised the materials for publication (*Tour de France*, SCCML 1982). Schon (1971) has called this form of innovation the "centre-periphery" model. He claims that this rests on three premises:

"- the innovation to be diffused exists, fully realised in its essentials prior to its diffusion
- diffusion is the movement of an innovation from a centre out to its ultimate users
- directed diffusion is a centrally managed process of dissemination, training and provision of resources and incentives."  (Schon 1971)

The centre itself may be responsible for supporting and training the users, or in larger educational contexts it may be the role of a primary centre to train those in secondary centres to provide training for the teachers in their area. Schon refers to this version as a "proliferation of centres" (Schon 1971). In this way, as outlined by Havelock (1973), CR in the RD and D model, proceeds in a logical way from research, to development, to adoption by schools.

In the *Tour de France* project the central materials-writing team acted as a 'primary centre', supported by the Scottish Education Department. Not only did they create and find the materials, but they also conducted training courses at national and regional level on how to use the package. In addition, regional advisers and pilot teachers were called to courses at the primary centre in order later to function as trainers at secondary centres in the regions, in order to help teachers to come to terms with the new materials.

If the RD and D model is to succeed, however, not only is a training or adoption phase essential, during which teachers are informed
about the new curriculum and helped to develop the new knowledge and skills required to put it into use, but more importantly there needs to be local school-based INSET of a wider educational nature, designed to assist teachers over time to adapt the external package to their classroom requirements. Teachers have to be helped to view the new package, not as a panacea, but as an enlightened hypothesis, whose various aspects have to be tested against the realities of the particular classroom in which it is to be used. The assumption behind RD and D productions tends to be that all classrooms are more or less alike, whereas it is clear that there are divergences of ability, personality, achievement and attitudinal climate across schools, teachers, and pupils, that make such an assumption untenable. Ongoing INSET at a local level must ensure that the teacher does not become a passive recipient of the new curriculum package, and that it is continually renewed in the light of local perceptions, reflections, and experience. It is the common fate of externally-imposed curriculum packages that various internal constraints are allowed to reduce their effectiveness. Thus such things as the timetable, class sizes, insufficient teacher allocation etc may well frustrate the exercise. It is also common for teachers to remove all the innovatory parts from such packages in order to make them conform to their own existing practices, rather than to attempt to work within the spirit of the whole (Brown, McIntyre et al 1976).

While it is clear that RD and D packages are potentially open to abuse or neglect at the classroom level, it is nevertheless important to state that some teachers are reluctant to begin to work towards a new approach, unless a carefully prepared curriculum package is available to assist them to do so. These teachers may lack the confidence, the ability, or the time to develop their own solutions. For them 'top-down' CR is the catalyst for change.

It is vital to the health of an educational system, however, that there is sufficient encouragement to able and willing teachers to innovate beyond existing patterns at regional and school level,
since it is from such work that the next generation of national
development derives its impetus. Inevitably the RD and D type
of CR, if it is not to be irresponsible, must be based on class-
room reality. Its primary concern, therefore, is to discover
where the best generalisable classroom practices are being done,
and to embody these in a new curriculum, rather than to set out
to create a new order based on untested hypotheses. Ultimately,
therefore, responsible RD and D work is dependent upon effectively
organised school-based CR. It is, of course, possible for national
CR to be organised along progressivist, rather than reconstruction-
ist lines, though this has not been the practice in Scotland. It
is, perhaps, interesting to note that in England the Schools Council
decided, after ten years of RD and D style of curriculum development,
to shift the emphasis from the production of ready-made curriculum
packages, which despite massive investment had seemed to produce
meagre dividends, to the support of local curriculum initiatives
involving teachers in their own development programmes. This they
did from the firm belief, as expressed by Skilbeck, that:

"Externally imposed syllabuses, textbooks and examinations all define educational values and set certain standards which are important from the standpoint of the individual as well as for national and social purposes; however, they make the spontaneity, flexibility and diversity which are an equally important part of education much more difficult to achieve." (Skilbeck 1982b)

3.3.2 The 'bottom-up' approach

"The first requisite for educational reform is the school as a unit with its approved curriculum based on its own needs, and evolved by its own staff. If we fail to secure that, we simply fall from one formalism into another, from one dung-hill of inert ideas into another." (Whitehead 1932)

The 'bottom-up' progressivist approach is characterised by a concern for school-based CR. Whereas the reconstructionist model of CR presents schools with 'solutions' to their problems, that have been
devised externally, the progressivist model encourages teachers to diagnose their own problems and then offers whatever support seems necessary to assist them to solve them.

There would seem to be two basic ways of accomplishing this. The first is to provide teachers with outside agents with whom they can work in collaboration. The research or developmental expertise is provided by the outside agent and the teachers are cast in the role of clients seeking a solution to their problems through dialogue with the 'expert'. This has been called the "problem-solving approach" (Macdonald and Walker 1976). It has the disadvantage that there are very few researchers to whom classroom teachers can turn, and that researchers tend to be more concerned with academic purity and non-intervention, than with the need to assist the teacher to take difficult decisions.

The other more common and more generalisable model is to provide teachers with an accessible and permanently available support service, whose basic task is teacher development. Those in the support service act as consultants, providing information or access to it, and as facilitators supplying the organisational requirements for teachers to meet together to analyse problems, discuss alternative solutions, implement them and evaluate the results in the light of their own classroom reality. Teacher development means enabling teachers to carry out ongoing action-research as part of their normal classroom procedure. In this approach CR and teacher development become one and the same thing.

The term 'teacher development' is potentially ambiguous. It can mean both teacher development of curricula, and the professional development of teachers. I believe that where a certain level of training has been provided, as in Scotland, the professional development of teachers, who have a few years of classroom experience, is best effected through involving them directly in the development of curricula for their own classroom use. Involvement in CR enables teachers to develop the curricular skills which it was not
possible for them to acquire in pre-service training. Through various task-related activities they become proficient at translating broad aims into pedagogical objectives, at developing strategies for negotiation, at creating syllabuses, at thinking through alternative classroom teaching/learning strategies, at creating assessment instruments, at producing teaching/learning resources, and at working out ways of obtaining feedback on their classroom endeavours. Equally importantly, however, teacher involvement in CR leads to a growth in self-confidence and the building up of a healthy self-image; it provides a sense of professional achievement and personal value that leads to better teacher morale and commitment.

As Cane (1969) has shown, the majority of teachers prefer a participatory task-based form of CR. Findings from his large-scale survey of teacher opinion on INSET showed that there was an overwhelming desire among most teachers for a democratic participatory style of workshop rather than a transmissive form of lecture. The case for CR through teacher development is powerfully put by a number of writers - Eraut (1972), Hoyle (1973), Rudd (1973), Stenhouse (1975 and 1980), Skilbeck (1982b) and Elliot (1982), Rudd writes:

"I regard it as axiomatic that the teacher who learns from his own experience understands in a way which is just not available to persons who merely try to follow the instructions of others ... Experience-based innovation not only promotes pedagogical skill; from the manner in which the new skill is accumulated the teacher also learns concurrently the art of mastering new professional skills, and that confidence and sureness of touch which are hallmarks of the full professional. In short, I see the local curriculum development group as a setting within which teachers can become the willing agents of their own continuing professional education." (Rudd 1973)

The aims of this form of professional development are well summarised by Eraut:
"- to solve specific problems identified by schools
- to create extra manpower resources in the region, ie teachers
  who can advise other schools and assist in in-service education
- to institutionalise the process of innovation in schools by
  helping them to develop permanent mechanisms for self-evaluation
  and problem identification, together with a development
  programme." (Eraut 1972)

Recent innovations in school FLL afford a striking example of
effective 'bottom-up' CR. The various schemes that have emerged
under the broad umbrella of the Graded Objectives in Modern Lan-
guages movement (henceforth GOML) have been created by groups of
Modern Language teachers, who have come together to solve the prob-
lems posed by the teaching of FLs to the whole ability range
(Harding, Page and Rowell 1980, and Page 1983). These groups have
been serviced by regional or local support services in the form of
regional advisory teams (eg Lothian and West Sussex schemes),
University Language Teaching (or similar) Centres (eg York and
Leeds schemes), an Examination Board (eg East Midlands), or a local
Modern Languages Advisory Committee with access to local funds and
outside expertise (eg Oxfordshire). Without the mediation of such
support services to provide a forum for debate and action, school
or classroom-based innovation is often dissipated through lack of
appropriate information, lack of funds, and lack of an essential
critical climate. As Hoyle writes:

"If problem-solving is seen in terms of the
individual school then it is unlikely to be
successful, unless the school can draw on
external materials, services and other forms
of help from outside ... People's attitudes
are changed by other people and this suggests
the greater use of group methods in effecting
value changes." (Hoyle 1973)

3.3.3 Theory and practice

"To be successful, in-service tutors need to
establish a dialogue between the constructive
objections of the experienced teacher and the
theoretical argument of educational reformers." (Watkins 1973)
One of the major problems facing CR in FLL in this country, at this time, is that there is a wide gulf between theory and practice. This has arisen because the relatively new academic disciplines which feed into applied linguistics, whose hypotheses and research findings underpin our theoretical understandings about language, language learning, language teaching and language use, have not yet come to be accepted in many university language courses for future teachers. Nor is it possible for the study of applied linguistics to feature in any serious way in pre-service training courses which are required to cover a wide range of educational topics, and to equip teachers with the basic principles and practical skills of teaching, all within an unacceptably short time-scale. Thus the existing teaching force and the majority of teacher trainers, FL Inspectors, Advisers and others concerned with CR and with teacher development, have not been given the opportunity, other than through personal effort, to become properly acquainted with the theory lying behind their discipline. It must also be added that applied linguists in Britain have not paid much attention to the problems of teachers of FLs in schools, preferring to concentrate their work on the teaching of the mother tongue, of English as a second language, and of English as a foreign language. There is thus at present in FL teaching a wide gulf between theory and practice which must somehow be bridged.

Stern's (1983) hierarchical model of the various levels of concern in language education can be used to highlight the problems to be overcome:
Despite the existence of arrows which indicate that there should be some form of exchange of information between those at Level 1 and Level 2, and between those at Level 2 and Level 3, the diagram conveys the idea of a hierarchy of bodies each with separate functions, in which teachers never come into contact with Level 1 at all except through Level 2. It is not difficult to criticise such a rigidly hierarchical model on the pragmatic grounds that, in the form in which it currently exists, it does not appear to work very well. Each establishment at each of Stern's three levels pursues its own interests and creates its own sub-culture and language in relative isolation from the other levels. Thus those at Level 1 tend to neglect the problems of those at Level 3 and are often unable to make what Bruner has called the necessary "courteous translation of knowledge" to present their findings or their hypotheses in a manner adapted to the teachers' frame of reference. For their part it is common for teachers to affect a cynical lack of interest in theory, borne of the fact that so little of it that comes their way seems tailored to their immediate concerns. This lack of interest in theory has been further fuelled by the fact that the traditional RD and D form of CR does not involve teachers in thinking through problems. This encourages them to expect that the necessary thinking and planning and choosing among alternatives will all have been done for them. It is not surprising then that Hoyle claimed that:

"taken as a whole, teachers tend to be ... atheoretical, unimpressed by research, and influenced in their curriculum decisions by factors internal to the school ..."

(Hoyle 1973)

To combat the lack of fit between theory and practice in our discipline, it would seem clear that much greater national efforts need to be made to persuade university language departments, teacher training lecturers, the Inspectorate, the regional Advisers and teachers to come to terms with applied linguistics, and that in order to achieve this many more opportunities and more financial resources need to be made available to them to attend post-graduate
courses of the sort recommended by the James Report (1972), and the more recent report submitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland by the National Committee for the In-service Training of Teachers (1979). Both of these recommend the provision of a variety of styles of course, including those implying a period of secondment from teaching duties. The case for such courses is made by James (1973), who argues that they are necessary because:

- knowledge changes
- techniques of teaching change
- society changes
- educational demands change
- teachers, advisers, Inspectors etc need to avoid inertia.

It is important, however, not to underestimate the essential role in CR played by teacher experiential wisdom gained from classroom practice. This is an essential counter-balance to abstract theoretical speculation. Some have argued that since education is such a complex process, teacher experience is likely to prove of much more value than abstract conceptualisations.

"For centuries ... skilled craftsmen have been making metals. They have learned to add a little of this substance and a little of that, then heat the batch for a certain length of time until it reaches a certain colour, then let it cool at a certain rate ... Meanwhile, 'scientific' approaches to metallurgy have not succeeded in fully explaining all that the master craftsman does ... Isn't it possible that teaching is at least as complex as metallurgy." (Atkin 1968)

The 'feel' about educational practices that teachers develop unconsciously, or the 'awareness' that they reach consciously as a result of reflection upon experience, can both be harnessed to prevent the formulation of curriculum intentions that are unrealisable or of instruments that are unworkable, however 'right' in the abstract they may appear to be. Teachers, however, unless supported to do so are no more naturally inclined to experiment and go beyond established routines than any other group of people. Nor are they always inclined on the basis of pragmatic failure to abandon well-
established routines and patterns for new ones. As the SED report on Secondary Education puts it:

"The direction of education is in the hands of men whose formative years antedate the emergence of our profoundly changed situation, and there is a real sense in which the demands of revolution are never fully met save by the sons of revolution itself." (SED 1947)

A further way in which theory and practice can be related is through applied research projects that are set up to investigate particular problems of the moment. These may be initiated in a 'top-down' manner by university applied linguistic or education departments, or by central educational agencies. In a 'bottom-up' manner they may be requested by a particular school or group of schools. There is little doubt that such projects can serve the purpose of highlighting particular issues and of providing both theoreticians and practitioners with essential information and feedback. In the Scottish context the work achieved by the research projects of the University of Stirling has added a very significant dimension to FLCR (eg Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone 1981, Parkinson, Mitchell and Johnstone 1981, Mitchell forthcoming).

3.3.4 The role of regional advisory services

In the picture already presented it can be seen that regional advisory services have the crucial role of ensuring that curricula derived from 'top-down' CR approaches are effectively diffused and are adapted to suit each school's unique context. They also have the role of facilitating 'bottom-up' CR from which the next generation of national developments can draw inspiration, and without which the professional development of teachers is impossible. Advisory services are thus the linchpin for both forms of CR.

The role of an advisory service can thus be summed up as one of helping teachers to develop the knowledge and skills which will enable them to research, plan, develop, implement, obtain feedback and evaluate their curriculum in a professional and responsible
manner. As such the advisory service becomes a forum for interaction, where theory meets practice, and where appropriate adjustments may be made to both in the light of classroom experience.

A regional advisory service must aim to respond to the various needs and aspirations of all its teachers. This is no easy task since, like school learners, teachers are not an abstract generality, but a complex set of individuals with differing levels of experience, personalities and attitudes. It has to be accepted that not all teachers are willing to take an active part in INSET, the majority of which is conducted on a voluntary basis.

Teacher development and CR are inevitably evolutionary processes in which the concept of some fixed curriculum product, or some notional level of mastery, are irrelevant, due to the transitional nature of knowledge about teaching, the individual variations among teachers, and the changes in educational demands. In a healthy educational system education itself becomes the subject of research by teachers, whose classrooms become observatories or laboratories (Stenhouse 1979). It is the role of the advisory service to attempt to act as a built-in governor or pilot, whose task is to respond to changing external demands on the educational system on the one hand, and to the requirements of the schools on the other (Gatherer 1984 - personal conversation).

Advisory services should be subject to the same forms of self-evaluation as teachers in schools. Thus they need to develop an effective means of looking inwards to monitor their own functioning, and to ensure that their activities are effective.

3.3.5 Constraints on CR

There are within education a number of forces that resist change. As Curle remarked:

"... in most societies for most of recorded time, education has been a reactionary force rather than a progressive one. Education, often closely associated with religion, has tended rather to hallow antiquity than to promote innovation."

(Curle 1964)
Parents have understandably been reluctant to allow educators to treat their children as guinea-pigs, and in democracies, politicians, dependent on the electoral votes of the parents, have not always dared to promote reforms, even when they have perceived the need for them.

Many hopeful innovations have foundered on immovable bureaucratic rocks, such as the apparent inability to effect change in examinations, in timetabling within school, in pupil-staff ratios, and in many other areas. Bureaucracy is inevitably inert, based on rules, regulations and principles of precedence, and is inimical to change or to exceptions to the rule.

Inevitably one must also mention material constraints, such as shortage of teachers, lack of funding, inadequate resources and equipment, inappropriate buildings and furniture, too large class sizes, too many contact teaching hours and too little opportunity for teacher professional self-development through reflection and discussion with others.

The major constraint on CR, however, is teacher attitude. Experience of INSET and of CR in various countries leads me to suggest that from an attitudinal point of view there are perhaps four basic types of teacher. At the risk of creating caricatures, these might be labelled the 'conservatives', the 'adopters', the 'adaptors' and the 'innovators'.

The 'conservatives' are those who have discovered a style of teaching and who have developed an approach, strategies and techniques that suit their existing knowledge, skills and attitudes, and who do not wish to change these. They may not wish to do so through strong faith in the rightness of their attitude, through fear of the unknown, or because their own education has not equipped them with either the desire or the tools for learning how to learn any further. They are often, but not always, effective teachers with a transmissive teacher-centred approach in the classroom. It is understandable that there are 'conservatives' among older teachers,
whose education and teaching experience may have been acquired in less rapidly changing times, but one also finds a number of 'conservatives' among younger teachers too. They sometimes attend INSET courses, but find it difficult to come to terms with ideas or strategies that do not accord with the approach they have developed. They adopt new curricula somewhat reluctantly, and when they do, they often transform them to accord with their existing approach.

The 'adopters' are those who wait for the 'official' stamp of approval on any innovation before making a move. They are very concerned about whether they are doing the 'right' thing, and tend to have a somewhat naive faith in the notion of the 'official' panacea which will solve their problems. They become rigorous attenders of INSET courses when, for example, the examinations change. Only then do they become keen to come to terms with innovations that they have kept at arms' length.

The 'adapters' like to tinker with official guidelines and with course materials in order to make them more suitable for their own classroom circumstances. They are sufficiently independent to wish to bring their own personal ideas, attitudes and practice to bear upon classroom procedures, but may not wish to jettison existing materials and practices entirely, often for very pragmatic reasons. They are usually keen to attend INSET meetings, but only if they are seen to be concerned with the problems that reflect their own classroom reality.

The 'innovators' believe that they can devise curricula which respond to their pupils' needs and aspirations better than any external body. They work best when they are experimenting with new ideas and new techniques. There are 'solo innovators' who work best in isolation from others, either as individuals or as a school department with a fierce loyalty to its work. 'Solo innovators' find it hard to share their ideas and experiences with others or to work with them, and tend through this to cut themselves off from general developments. Like Corneille's Cinna, their aim is to be "maître
de moi comme de l'univers", but they forget that Cinna was a tragic figure whose aspirations made normal social interaction difficult.

'Interactive innovators', on the other hand, are more open and work more naturally in group mode.

Whereas 'top-down' CR inspires the 'conservatives' and the 'adopters' to take some interest in INSET, 'bottom-up' CR, of a more self-made type, tends to attract the 'innovators' and 'adopters'. This is perhaps a further reason for suggesting that in the present climate, where INSET is largely a voluntary issue rather than part of a professional contract, it is necessary to embrace CR of both types.

It seems no more reasonable to wish to impose a standard teaching style on teachers than to wish to impose a standard learning style on pupils. The most obvious area in which there are current problems is in the extent to which it is possible to expect all teachers to adopt a more learner-centred and democratic style of classroom teaching. Many have been educated themselves by a transmissive approach, and find it comfortable to have a structured classroom with submissive pupils, who are kept at a certain distance. It is clearly an extremely delicate matter to attempt to help such teachers to move towards a more democratic classroom. It is interesting to note in passing, however, that a communicative approach to FLT in the classroom has probably achieved much more in this respect than any amount of worthy exhortatory sentiments. It seems however, that an effective classroom process depends upon teacher comfort and self-confidence.

All the research into mixed-ability teaching would seem to indicate, where the teacher is doing it by compulsion, somewhat reluctantly, it is less than effective. Yet as Corbishley discovered:

"If the teacher favours streaming it works, if mixed ability then that too works."

(Corbishley 1977)

Some teachers thrive on reconstructionist techniques involving predetermined targets, well-structured lessons, and management effic-
iency. Others are more at ease with progressivist values which call for less planning and more room for responsive teaching. It seems somewhat arbitrary to impose change on either group. It seems altogether more sensible to seek to widen the conceptual and pragmatic base of both and thus enable them to develop towards each other.

3.4 Conclusion and Envoi

A case would seem to have emerged in terms of value systems, for a fusion of the best of classical humanism, reconstructionism and progressivism, in which broad educational, epistemological, social and learner-centred aims can all be harmoniously pursued.

It has been shown that the two processes of CR, the one dependent on 'top-down' reconstructionist values and the other on 'bottom-up' progressivist ones, can and should be integrated.

It has also been indicated that teachers vary in their preferences for particular approaches, strategies and techniques, and that it is wise to attempt to enable them to evolve from there. A case can therefore be made on pragmatic grounds for a curriculum approach that is wide enough to permit all teachers to identify with certain parts of it and grow into others. Such an approach is exemplified in Chapter 5, but first, in order to trace how this was achieved, I examine some of the major contemporary FL curriculum approaches that have influenced, or are related to the GLAFLL project.
## CHAPTER 4

CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM APPROACHES

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CHAPTER 4

CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM APPROACHES

Introduction

As I indicated in the previous chapter, there have been two distinct pathways followed in recent years in the elaboration of FL curricula. The one has been based on the 'ends-means' approach and has therefore been objectives-driven, with the content of the teaching and learning determined by the goals pursued. The other has been based on the 'process' approach and has been concerned to promote the growth of an internal capacity to use language. Both have seen the ability to communicate as the major outcome to be pursued in FLL. In this chapter an attempt is made to examine proposals and practices deriving from both schools of thought, in order to work towards the integrative approach underlying the syllabus and methodological developments in the GLAFLL project.

4.1 'Ends-means' approaches

There have been two varieties of the 'ends-means' approach. In the first, objectives were determined on the basis of what was understood about the structure of the subject matter to be taught, while in the second the objectives were to be derived from a prior analysis of the learner's communicative needs. In both approaches content was to be determined on the basis of the predetermined objectives according to the model of language description found most helpful. 'Ends-means' approaches lay great stress on the need for a carefully articulated instruction syllabus worked out in advance of classroom teaching and learning.

The 'process' approach, based on the concept of internal interlanguage development, has given rise to a broad methodology based on two concerns - the promotion of acquisition, and the development of negotiative skills through communicative practice. This lays less stress on syllabus definition, but more on the need for a method-
ology that sets learning processes in motion, and that creates a climate in which communication can flourish.

The following broad 'ends-means' approaches are discussed:

- situational approaches
- ideational approaches
- functional/notional approaches.

4.1.1 Situational approaches

At the start of the GLAFLL project the Scottish school scene was dominated by two broad versions of the situational approach. Both embodied the notion that language took place in some physical context. One, however, the Audio-Visual approach, combined the notion of situation with the well-established traditions of systematic structural progression, while the other was a more holistic approach. This presented relatively unsystematic language in a range of situations, and left learners to discover the system of the language by themselves. We have already outlined the main features of the Audio-Visual approach in Chapter 1. The other less grammatically-based version of the situational approach is examined briefly here, since it was this that was proposed by the early GOML schemes in Oxfordshire and in York (Harding, Page and Rowell 1980), whose initiatives inspired the GLAFLL project.

This version of the situational approach has an extremely long history stretching back at least into the 15th Century (Howatt 1984). It was based on the notion that in many contexts language could be predicted, and that syllabuses and units of work could, therefore, be created round the sort of situations that the learners were assumed to be likely to encounter. On a general course such as in school FLL this was usually interpreted as meaning that lessons should be organised round everyday situations related to tourism. A story-line approach was usually adopted to link the various situations together.

The syllabus-writer and course-producer introspected to find out
what native-speakers might say when performing roles associated with these situations, and then presented the resulting language in idealised texts or dialogues. Courses at the beginning level would involve the use of what was thought to be the simplest native-speaker forms in terms of learnability (eg "La gare, s'il vous plaît?" rather than "Est-ce que vous pourriez m'indiquer le chemin pour aller à la gare s'il vous plaît?"). It was assumed that, like L1 acquirers, FL learners would develop their own internalised system out of these heterogeneous simple forms. It was maintained that both the conscious learning of rules and the drill approach had failed to enable many learners to internalise forms. In practice, however, when using a situational approach of this nature, most teachers paused at particular moments to focus on particular rules, or to tie together the threads of a particular paradigmatic sub-system, which they felt their pupils should consciously study and practice.

In principle, it was possible to create a set of modules based on situations for a particular level of language learning, and to leave teachers and learners free to choose the order in which they were to be tackled. As the learner progressed up the levels of learning, situations could be reintroduced, and more complex forms employed in response to less predictable twists and turns and more finely-tuned role-relationships.

The Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee (henceforth OMLAC) (1978) produced just such a situational syllabus based on 'survival' situations (both social and transactional). This was the first of the syllabuses associated with the GOML movement (see Harding, Page and Rowell 1980, and Page 1983). The OMLAC French Level 1 modules were based on the following situations: Travel, Au Café, Restaurant, Shopping, Accommodation, The Town, and Personal Information and Conversation. The Level 2 modules reintroduced most of these situations "adding new material and transferring vocabulary from passive recognition to active production" (OMLAC 1978). Personal Information and Conversation was extended at Level 2 into
Personal Reactions, and the following new themes were added: House/Family/Letters, Food and Drink in the home, Illness, Leisure Interests, and School and Holidays. The Level 1 and 2 modules were all to be constructed around the notion of a young person's visit to a French family.

The situational approach can be said to have several drawbacks:

- in real communication the physical context does not determine a great deal of what is said, other than in limited transactions, rituals or social routines;
- the restriction of focus to tourism places severe limits on what is taught and learnt. Classroom activity tends to be reduced to transactions concerning bus-tickets, ice-creams and rooms for the night, or to reading signs, notices and advertisements, or to listening to weather forecasts, public announcements and road traffic reports. As a total diet this is trivial;
- the approach leads to a permanent 'as if' climate in the classroom;
- the lack of concern for system means that learners must fall back on memorising each individual phrase or utterance as a separate unit, unless they are able to acquire the underlying system without any deliberate teaching. Given the lack of exposure and the limited motivation likely to be inspired by an 'as if' approach, this seems unlikely.

The last two points deserve further elaboration. The situational approach tends to present the language to be learnt in the form of an idealised dialogue, from which normal performance phenomena (slips, hesitations, rewinds etc) and personal idiosyncrasies have been largely removed. The pupils learn to perform stereotypical roles, using the language of the dialogues. They 'act out', but do not 'create' what they say and do. In real life, however, the roles that we adopt are functions of the interactions we engage in, rather than static possessions. The language we use originates from deep roots in our personality, rather than from a predetermined
script. If we do not have practice at making the necessary links between the deeper processes of our cognitive and affective make-up and the selection and negotiation of language tokens, we may never learn how to mould the foreign language to our own ends. As Di Pietro puts it:

"The textbook which provides only samples of stereotypical exchanges among people in its dialogues will never allow learners to develop the verbal strategies which go with being a person in a new language ... To be somebody in another language, you must know how to speak not only in accordance with your own age group, your own sex-membership, but also with regard to your personal psychological disposition towards others." (Di Pietro 1976)

Burstall et al (1974) found evidence to support this in their research into Primary French:

"There is some evidence that dependence on rote learning may actually inhibit any natural inclination towards a less rigid form of conversation." (Burstall et al 1974)

To learn to be somebody in a foreign language one needs practice, not just in role-play in the sense of acting out someone else's script, but in role-making and role-negotiating of a sort that involves the inner self, whether this is done through behaving as oneself, or as some other adopted but well-internalised persona as suggested in 'suggestopedia' (Lozanov 1978).

The situational approach has often overlooked the fact that the classroom is itself a situation with its own routines and its own interaction norms. These can be harnessed as a means for the communicative use of the FL. The limited focus of the situational approach tends to restrict the use of the FL to the various simulations set in a foreign context. Classroom management and general teacher and pupil talk are often conducted in the mother tongue.

In the modular situational approach, the lack of attention to system, and therefore to creativity, means that learners are expected to memorise and reproduce a large number of situationally appro-
priate phrases or chunks of a socialising and transactional nature. Indeed the OMLAC (1978) syllabus resembles a phrasebook. Situational communication, however, calls for an ability to deal with the unexpected as well as the expected. A creative language capacity is needed to cope with the situation that arises when the shopkeeper has not got what the buyer wants, or when the food obtained in the restaurant is cold, or when the train ticket issued will clearly take the passenger to the wrong destination. The learner, therefore, needs not only a stock of useful phrases and generative chunks, but a capacity for transferring these to novel contexts, and for taking them apart and assimilating the elements within them into a developing generative capacity to interpret and express novel meanings. We do well, however, to bear Trim's caveat in mind:

"Have we not seriously underestimated the importance of the concrete learning of words, fixed locutions and fixed sentence frames in everyday language usage, because they are of so much less theoretical interest than the complex internalised rules which enable fluent native speakers to produce and interpret an infinity of sentences."

(Trim 1982)

In this respect it is also interesting to note Pawley and Syder's conclusion from research that:

"memorised clauses and clause-sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of native-speaker speech ... Such holistically stored sequences can be quickly retrieved."

(Pawley and Syder 1983)

There would seem then to be a good reason for making some sort of compromise and attempting to teach those chunks of language that are seen to be highly useful in particular situations (eg "Pour aller à ... s'il vous plaît"), or that help to oil the social wheels ("Je t'en prie", "Ne t'en fais pas"), or that convey intentions generalisable to a multitude of different situations ("Je voudrais ...", "Je peux ...?"). These help to provide the learner with a few islands of refuge in an otherwise uncharted, ever-moving
and sometimes frighteningly tumultuous sea of language demands. But, in addition to this, the learner must be enabled to acquire a generative capacity, and it was this that was often overlooked in the situational approach.

4.1.2 Ideational approaches

Cook suggested that a topic-based approach might have considerable advantage over either a structural or a situational approach.

"Compared to structural grading, topical control does not involve assigning particular cognitive status to linguistic descriptions and it remains neutral about the relationships of competence to performance. Compared to situation control it continues to be effective long after a situational ordering has petered out, and it can make the student participate in the situation rather than observe it. Compared to a completely free approach, it can break the language up into chunks that are under the teacher's control, and it can ensure a more complete coverage of the language. Topical control also has the great advantage that it combines some degree of control over the language with almost complete freedom for the student to express himself."

(Cook 1971)

Howatt (1979) has pointed out that most contemporary courses, particularly in the initial stages, are concerned with the interpersonal function of language to the exclusion of the ideational one. The language presented is, therefore, full of social routines that are implicit and difficult to unpack, whereas in order to build up a level of generative linguistic ability the learner needs vocabulary and the urge to decode and encode interesting information. Although young children may learn language through doing and interacting at the same time, the natural language use of adolescents and adults is not so often subordinate to action-related situations.

The advantage of an ideational approach is that it can focus directly on the communication of personal experience, rather than on 'as if' situations, and thus encourage the vital connection between the
learner's 'self' and the foreign language being learnt. Course material can be centred on themes of interest to the age group concerned, rather than on illustrations of foreign family life or tourist situations. Hawkes (1981) maintained that, for young children, a FL course should be based on their everyday L1 experiences. This, however, is not without its dangers, since L2 acquisition on the basis of L1 conventions and experiences may lead, as Paulston (1974) points out, to communicative performance in the FL, but not to the sort of communicative competence that is related to the socio-linguistic profile of the other community.

An effective compromise can be reached, through harnessing the personal experiences and interests of the learners concerned and then relating these to the experiences and interests of the similar age-group in the foreign culture. The Nuffield team who were engaged in the production of FL materials for British schools attempted some sort of solution to this problem along the lines suggested above. They studied children's interests with a view to incorporating them into their materials (Handscombe 1969). Through examining recordings of children's speech and writing they hoped to extract centres of interest and the sort of language used. Recordings were made not only of British children but also of French pupils, in order to be able to include the appropriate French language equivalents for the interests exposed. Handscombe rightly noted, however:

"It is possible to have all the right ingredients - a real and potentially interesting topic, natural and appropriate language - and still have no success with it as far as the children are concerned." (Handscombe 1969)

There needs to be that vital spark - often just some curious imaginative twist to a topic - which connects the pupil to the material.

The inevitable problem posed by the topic approach is that there is no inherent systematicity of language one can call upon within a topic to ease the learner's search for system. Howatt (1974), following Dakin (1973), emphasises the need for the use of oral
text-types that have a great deal of in-built repetition, and that package information in such a way as to highlight particular features. Stories, songs, rhymes, and simple poems are of this sort, and belong to the traditions of orate societies, who, without literacy, were dependent upon oral devices to ensure learner retention.

A further solution to the problem of retention is the concept of recycling items to be learnt. Corder (1973), Howatt (1974) and Martin (1978) emphasise the need for an approach in which the teacher systematically reintroduces items to develop a better understanding of them and to ease their integration into material already learnt.

4.1.3 Functional/notional approaches

It was the Nuffield team working on the production of a German course for schools (Vorwärts) who were the first to introduce the category of what they called "linguistic activities" into school FL course design. Following the suggestions of Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964), the course-writing team attempted to identify a list of "speaker intentions" (Peck 1969). These they labelled "linguistic activities". They were to include items such as: requesting information, expressing wishes, apologising, telling people how to do things. These were the forerunners of Wilkins' category of communicative functions (Wilkins 1976).

The full list of syllabus categories used by the Vorwärts' team (Schools Council 1974) embraced linguistic activities, semantic fields (a mixture of topics, situations, and what were to become Wilkins' semantico-grammatical categories, eg "expressions of time", "numbers"), and grammatical categories of one sort and another, together with an alphabetical dictionary of vocabulary. This extremely rich mixture heralded the type of approach to be adopted in the Council of Europe Project No. 4 (Council of Europe 1973, 1981).

The Council of Europe's early work, leading to the production of the Threshold level documents, was based on Taba's 'ends-means' model of
curriculum development which advocated a series of inter-related steps leading from needs analysis, to syllabus content, to course design, and eventually to assessment and evaluation (Taba 1962). As Trim described it:

"We set out to identify a number of coherent but restricted goals relevant to the communicative needs of the learner. We then attempt to work out in detail the knowledge and skills which will equip the learner to use the language for the communicative purposes defined. In the light of his characteristics and resources we have then to establish a feasible learning programme leading to the mastery of this body of knowledge and skills, and a means of testing and evaluation to provide feedback to all parties concerned as to the success of the programme." (Trim 1978)

The initial impetus for the Council of Europe team's work sprang from Trim's proposal that the provision of language learning in member countries of the Council of Europe might be seen in terms of an interlocking set of unit/credits (Trim 1973). Each unit would reflect the needs of a particular group of learners. Each unit was to be "a principled cluster of modules which together provide the basis for acquiring the communicative potential to deal with a defined language need" (Trim 1973). Where the needs of groups of learners overlapped, the corresponding units would have objectives and content in common, thus allowing the formation of common groups and the exchange of common materials on a wide international scale. Accreditation on similar-sized units in different countries would permit international equivalences in qualifications to be established. This would open up the possibilities for a greater exchange of ideas and resources for language teaching, and for greater inter-European co-operation in the creation of multi-media language programmes destined for similar audiences in a number of different countries.

Trim's proposal rested upon the premise that it was possible to analyse a learner's communicative needs in advance in such a way as to guide the planning of syllabus content. Richterich (1973) was
to devise a model to accomplish this. Richterich defines communicative needs as follows:

"Définir des besoins de communication consistera à décrire ce qui manque à un individu ou à un groupe d'individus pour changer par une action langagière ou autre l'état de déséquilibre dans lequel il se trouve en ce moment." (Richterich 1973)

The categories devised by Richterich (1973) for analysing needs were adopted and amplified by Van Ek (1975) and turned into a behavioural specification that comprised:

- the situations in which the learner might wish to use the FL. By this was meant "the complex of extra-linguistic conditions which determines the nature of a language-act."

Four components of situations were proposed - the social roles the learner aimed to perform (eg friend/friend, tourist/stranger, client/salesman), the psychological roles (eg neutrality, friendliness, sympathy), the settings in which he would use the FL (eg in private life, in public life, outdoors), and the topics he might wish to handle (eg leisure-time, food and drink);

- the language activities the learner might wish to engage in. This meant describing what learners would expect to do in the listening, speaking, reading and writing modes;

- the degree of skill which the learner could be expected to attain in the various activities.

Mastery at Threshold Level would be deemed to have been achieved if the learner could understand and make himself understood "without obliging the native-speaker to exert himself unduly" (Van Ek 1975).

Thus a unit specification was to start out with a statement of:

- the content to be learned
- the behaviour to be adopted
- the circumstances in which the behaviour would occur
- the criteria for acceptable performance.
At the same time as the Council of Europe's team was working on a needs-related curriculum approach, Munby (1978) produced a system-based syllabus model for specialist language learning employing a similar but more detailed and complex set of interlinking categories for the specification of language needs. Munby's (1978) model set out a "communication needs processor" which would identify and organise objective facts about the learner (age, sex, nationality etc) and proceed systematically through an ordered set of variables specifying target language requirements (purposive domains, settings, interaction roles and relationships, mediums, modes, channels, dialect needs, target level requirements, communicative events, and communicative keys). When this needs profile was complete the next step was to produce a specification of the language skills required to realise the communicative events, or alternatively, via a meaning processor, to interpret the communicative events in terms of micro-functions marked for attitudinal tone. Finally, the units of meaning that emerged from the meaning processor were to pass through a linguistic encoder and emerge with one or more language exponents for each unit of meaning. It was suggested that syllabuses for courses designed specifically for reading in some specialist area of study were probably more appropriately specified in terms of micro-skills established in the language skills part of the instrument, while syllabuses for conversational purposes were probably better set out in terms of the micro-functions established in the meaning processor (Hawkey 1979).

Both the Council of Europe's and Munby's models were designed to permit curriculum development to start from an analysis of the language-learner's needs, rather than from any preconceived ideas of what he should learn in terms of the subject matter. Both adopted similar but not identical categories through which to translate needs into syllabus content. We shall confine our examination of this aspect to the Council of Europe team's model.

Wilkins had proposed that in order to establish the language content of a syllabus, it was:
"necessary to abandon the conventional grammatical syllabus which attempts to teach the entire grammatical system without regard to its application to specific language needs and to the fact that not all parts of the system are equally important to all learners." (Wilkins 1973)

Instead he proposed a notional or semantic approach which would reflect the behavioural needs of learners, would take the communicative facts of language into account from the beginning, without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors, and would attempt to set out what the learner might want to do and to say through language.

"The whole basis for a notional approach to language teaching derives from the conviction that what people want to do through language is more important than mastery of the language as an unapplied system." (Wilkins 1976)

The language content was to be based on three meaning categories:

- semantico-grammatical categories which cover "our perceptions of events, processes, states and abstractions" (Wilkins 1976)
- semantic categories through which the speaker "expresses his own attitude towards what he is saying"
- categories of communicative function "which are intended to handle the use of language". These were clearly related to Austin's notion of illocutionary value (Austin 1962).

He further proposed that a notional syllabus might be set out in two basic parts - one covering "functions or functional meanings, ie the social purpose of the utterance", which would include the modal component, while the other would cover "concepts or conceptual meaning".

It was this latter proposal that Van Ek was to adopt in the Threshold Level (Van Ek 1975), in which the meaning categories were set out in terms of functions, general notions, and specific notions set out in topic areas.

The threshold level was to be the first unit in the unit/credit system. It was at first envisaged as the "lowest global learning objective in the framework of a unit/credit system, below which no
further levels could be usefully distinguished”. The aim was to set out the content of a "general communicative ability minimally adequate to the general range of language-using situations in a speech community, which is thus an appropriate objective for initial courses" (Trim et al 1973). Since school learners were clearly also attempting to build up a "general communicative ability" on an "initial language course", it was considered possible to use the same principles for the design of a school curriculum. Thus the threshold levels in English and French, which had been established with an adult audience in mind, were quickly adapted to provide inventories of objectives, content and language exponents to be used in the school sector (Van Ek 1977, Porcher et al 1979).

The school versions contained the same rich tapestry of behavioural, semantic, and linguistic categories, and of native-speaker language exponents as the adult ones. In the case of the school version of Un Niveau Seuil (Porcher et al 1979), the various inventories set out covered the following:

- speech acts set out as 'first order acts' and 'second order acts' in the form of possible adjacency pairs, whose inter-relations were shown, thus indicating to some extent the dynamic nature of language use which had not been captured in the discrete functions of the Van Ek school inventory (Van Ek 1977);
- a grammar in which categories and exponents were set out in a semantic classification divided into three parts labelled: "actance", "détermination" and "relations logiques";
- general notions covering deixis, existential matters, time, space, quantity, quality, substance, evaluation, and relations;
- specific notions set out in the following topic areas: personal identification, education, foreign language, house and home, environment, travel, accommodation, food and drink, shopping, public services, health and hygiene, sensory perceptions and feelings, careers and jobs, leisure pursuits, social relations and current affairs.
The authors remarked that although the sub-categories in the left-hand columns of their inventories remained the same as for the adult version of *Un Niveau Seuil* (Coste et al 1976), the exemplificatory right-hand columns of language exponents had had to be enlarged:

"car les choix doivent être plus grands lorsqu'on vise un public d'enfants plutôt qu'un public d'adultes. Les enfants parlent aux adultes ... et parlent entre eux: ils ont donc en communication les mêmes besoins potentiels que les adultes, plus d'autres qui leur sont propres. C'est donc d'un accroissement qu'il s'agit lorsqu'on passe de l'adulte à l'enfant en termes de compétence de communication, et non pas d'une diminution comme on l'a toujours cru." (Porcher 1980)

The school version of *Un Niveau Seuil* was a massive volume which ran to 648 pages. It was emphasised that it was not to be viewed as a syllabus, but as a resource or set of suggestions from which a syllabus could be established. It was also emphasised that neither the categories nor the exponents were intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive - they were to be seen as suggestions based on native-speaker intuition. Unlike the Van Ek Threshold Level the aim of *Un Niveau Seuil* was not to produce one syllabus, but a resource from which any number of syllabuses could be drawn, tailored to the particular groups for which they were intended.

It is often less than clear how the Council of Europe team envisaged that the threshold level inventories were to assist in curriculum development. There would appear to be little in common, for example, between those, like Wilkins and Van Ek, who seemed to place a heavy emphasis on the predetermined instruction syllabus and on the deliberate learning of native-speaker forms, and those, like Holec, who were more concerned with acquisition and internal growth. We shall attempt, however, to examine the Wilkins' view as set out in *Notional Syllabuses* (1976) and as developed by others into teaching materials and a methodological approach.

For Wilkins (1976) syllabus design involved the selection and sequencing of language content designed to provide the learner with a growing capacity to express meanings:
"In a notional approach the aim is to ensure that the learner knows how different types of meaning are expressed, so that he can then adapt and combine the different elements of this knowledge according to the requirements of a particular act of communication." (Wilkins 1976)

Any act of adapting and combining elements clearly involves grammar, and Wilkins himself was at pains to point this out:

"It is taken here to be almost axiomatic that the acquisition of the grammatical system of a language remains a most important element in language learning." (Wilkins 1976)

Wilkins was, therefore, not proposing to do away with grammar. The basic units of organisation were to be semantic, however, since:

- it was meanings and not forms that the learners would have to be able to understand and express;
- setting out the meanings that a learner would wish to learn to convey would guide the teacher in the determination of which parts of the total grammatical system, should be taught.

In answer to the criticism that semantic categories would give rise to heterogeneous exponents, Wilkins claimed:

"It is perfectly feasible to meet the need for systematicity by focussing on some part of the grammatical system within an environment that is not controlled linguistically." (Wilkins 1981b)

This would represent no departure from what has been done before, except in so far as the sequence of grammar that emerged from a semantic approach might be rather different to the sequence adopted in the structural approach.

Wilkins claimed that a semantic approach would highlight the generalisations that could be made as to form-meaning relationships. Although there were no predetermined one-to-one relationships between forms and functions, and between forms and semantico-grammatical categories, "conventions of use do exist and it is these that would be exploited in the construction of a notional syllabus" (Wilkins 1976).
For beginners, the exponents to be taught were to be chosen on the basis of maximum usefulness and of learnability. An unmarked form that could be used for the same function in a wide range of situations would be preferable to a more contextually marked one. Forms that could fulfil a number of different functions would be preferred to those with narrower coverage. Some forms would have generative capacity within them, and in these the grammatical components would be focused upon; while others, whose grammar was complex or opaque, would simply have to be learnt as fixed locutions, if indeed they were essential to particular situations. Fine judgements would have to be made, when the criteria of maximum usefulness, native-speaker appropriacy, and learnability clashed, as they undoubtedly would.

As they progressed learners were to be recycled through the same semantic categories at different levels, with a wider range of exponents being offered at each succeeding level to reflect a richer complex of particular nuances.

There are a number of problems that arise when the Council of Europe team's proposals are examined closely. These will be discussed in three sections:

- problems concerning the concept of communicative needs
- problems concerning the use to be made of the descriptive categories proposed
- problems concerning methodology.

4.1.4 Problems concerning the concept of communicative needs

It has become increasingly common for educationists to make reference to the importance of catering for learner needs.

Given the importance attached to the concept of learner needs in the Council of Europe team's work, some examination of what is meant by this is necessary.

The German language makes a useful distinction between 'Bedarf'
(objective needs not necessarily felt by the individual) and 'Bedürfnisse' (needs internally felt by the individual). There is unfortunately no such distinction encoded in English. There is also, along very much the same lines, a distinction between 'things done in the best interest of the pupils' and 'things done in accordance with pupil interests'. Education is more likely to be concerned with 'needs' ('Bedarf') and the 'best interests of pupils', while pupils may be more motivated by appeal to 'felt needs' ('Bedürfnisse') and their own individual interests.

Dearden (1972) warns:

"The two notions of needs and interests offer glorious opportunities for seeming both to have one's cake and eat it, for, by sliding about between the ambiguities of meaning, curricular recommendations can be made to seem to satisfy everybody." (Dearden 1972)

There is little doubt that the interpretations that have been placed upon the initial needs analysis approach adopted by the Council of Europe have indeed slid about between the concepts of 'Bedarf' and 'Bedürfnisse' and have often failed to make the distinction. That it is important to do so is obvious when one realises that learner motivation is harnessed by 'Bedürfnisse', but may not be by 'Bedarf'.

From the outset, however, Richterich (1972, 1973, 1978) has shown an awareness of the tension between the desire to predetermine a rational curriculum based on the learner's socially predictable communicative needs ('Bedarf'), and the wish to cater sensitively and flexibly for the individual's changing 'Bedürfnisse'.

Richterich was also aware that there was something fundamentally odd about trying to forecast communicative needs, since the essence of communication was that it was frequently unpredictable.

"A fundamental contradiction may be seen ... between the desire to define precise needs and aims and the fact that the use of a language as a means of communication and of controlling social situations requires a capacity to react appropriately to things which cannot be accurately foreseen or defined ..."
Whereas what is really needed is an ephemeral educational theory fully meeting the needs of individuals, production requirements may well impose an educational theory which corresponds only to the general and theoretical needs of a few broad categories of people... Nuances, differentiation and a certain degree of individualisation will have to be introduced when it comes to creating specific units."

(Richterich 1972)

Porcher captures the essential problem of a 'Bedarf'-based curriculum for school FL learners as follows:

"Pour un apprenant scolaire l'avenir adulte est toujours incertain, aléatoire et même seulement potentiel. Cet apprenant ne peut donc avoir qu'une conscience floue de ses besoins langagiers."

(Porcher 1980)

His remarks are of course particularly pertinent to British school learners, for whom, as we have seen, the international nature of English and the lack of social motivation towards FLL distort the purpose of the exercise, so that it is not easy for them to be aware of any 'Bedarf'. In Britain, where perceptions of 'Bedarf' play a minor role, it is 'Bedürfnisse' above all that need to be awakened. Yet, given the transient nature of pupil interests, and the fact that they are limited by the pupil's own experience of life, it would be foolish to base the FL curriculum on these alone. The conclusion drawn in the GLAFLL project was that while it seemed sensible to attempt to come to some broad consensus on 'Bedarf', and to set these out as objectives that were common to all pupils, it was important not to set out such a rigidly predetermined specification that it left no room for manoeuvre for teacher and pupils to negotiate their own route towards the 'Bedarf' objectives on the basis of day-to-day 'Bedürfnisse'.

A similar conclusion was also reached by Richterich and his colleagues, who, according to Trim (1979), have now moved away from the strategy of trying to encapsulate learner needs in a rigidly predetermined syllabus, towards a two-stage strategy. The first stage is concerned to provide initial data about the learners and their
aspirations, based on simple and rapid techniques of analysis. Where the learners form a reasonably homogeneous group in terms of the purposes for which they are learning the FL, this data can be used to provide some sort of initial stereotype of 'Bedarf'. The second stage in the strategy involves ongoing classroom negotiation to ensure that the teaching learners receive is in line with their 'Bedürfnisse'. This is intended to ensure a matching of teacher and learner intentions. It allows for individual differences to be catered for, and for any change in needs to be incorporated into the teacher's provision of learning experiences. On this view the predetermined syllabus remains one source of reference, but is no longer viewed as dictating what should happen.

A serious flaw in the particular way in which the Council of Europe team conceptualised communicative needs, was the fact that they assumed a total identity of concerns between what native-speakers might need and what FL learners would need. As Holec (1980a) emphasised, however, where learners suffer from limited tools of vocabulary and syntax, and have insufficiently diversified interactive and illocutionary options for their purposes, what they need most are strategies to make up for such deficiencies. Thus any initial specification reflecting learners' rather than native-speakers' needs should include some concern for the development of communicative strategies. The Council of Europe team's model fails to take this into account, since it seems to operate from the principle that it is through accumulating native-speaker language norms that a learner learns to communicate.

Finally, it seems important to point out that there is a massive quantum leap that has to be made between a behavioural or semantic specification and a choice of linguistic exponents,
since there is manifestly no one-to-one relationship between a communicative need in the abstract and any one particular linguistic exponent, whether or not one benefits from the whole gamut of contextual features that can be called upon to guide the choice. Individuals, whether native-speakers or learners, call upon different resources to effect whatever intentions they may be said to have. The range of successful means that may be chosen is potentially infinite.

4.1.5 Problems concerning the use to be made of the descriptive categories proposed

"On se prend parfois à rêver à des catalogues raisonnés et exhaustifs auxquels on pourrait simplement se référer pour préparer du matériel pédagogique et déterminer des stratégies d'apprentissage adéquates, mais on déchante rapidement devant l'infini des besoins et des facteurs dont ils dépendent, et l'on est réduit à se satisfaire d'approximations dont l'efficacité et l'utilité peuvent souvent paraître douteuses." (Richterich 1973)

From a theoretical point of view a number of critics have pointed out that the categories proposed by the Council of Europe for the specification of language content are of dubious value. They conform neither to any theory of language acquisition (Paulston 1981) nor to any theory of language use (Corder undated). They are "plucked out of the air" (Brumfit 1981a), could be "specified to infinity" and are "repetitive across lists" (Hill 1977).

The problem that the course-writer or language teacher inevitably faces is summed up by Monippally:
"The categories we create for descriptive and referential purposes are so convenient and so indispensable that the temptation to accord them ontological status is great. But they are nothing but conceptual artefacts." (Monippally 1983)

Description inevitably reduces the dynamic and creative character of language to a static inventory of parts, whether these are expressed in the form of activities or functions or notions. It is necessary for course-writers and teachers to find a means of bringing the static parts to life again and to provide experiences of coherent discourse, so that through time learners can develop their capacity for the negotiation of personal meanings, if indeed they are to learn to communicate rather than merely to display the status symbols that have been assigned to a particular behavioural or conceptual category (Brumfit 1980, Widdowson 1983, Monippally 1983).

We do not in reality choose functions and notions to communicate with, any more than we choose to display particular grammatical categories. We communicate, and if it is found useful we can look at the product and discuss what has occurred by examining the exponents and attempting to relate them to particular functions and notions or to grammatical and lexical categories. This helps us after the event to break up the flux and flow of a particular communicative activity, and to point to what we might wish to highlight in the hope that some deliberate focus of attention may help the learner to learn.

It is clear that a single-minded focus on a particular functional or notional category in a particular unit might distort the language input. People no more choose to utter only requests for information, or only expressions of time or concepts related to health and hygiene, than they deliberately repeat partitive
articles or conditional clauses.

As Howatt remarks:

"In the end an instruction syllabus is a sequence of texts (rather than categories)." (Howatt 1979)

This does not deny that the teacher and pupil may need to focus on particular elements of rhetorical, semantic and grammatical content in texts. It seems important to insist, however, that such focuses arise out of language in use, so that learners are enabled to discover rules of use, form-meaning relationships and formal rules and systems against the backcloth of real discourse.

Since the grammatical system provides the learner with the most economical, systematisable and generative layer of language in use, Brumfit has argued that:

"The simplest proposal is to use the grammatical system as the core of the syllabus in a ladder-like series of stages and to be prepared to relate all other essential material to this series. Thus notional, functional, and situational specifications can be conceived of as a spiral round a basically grammatical core." (Brumfit 1980)

Brumfit maintains that a focus on grammar need not divert the learners' attention away from the meaning of what they are exposed to, provided, of course, that the course-writer has succeeded in embedding the particular pattern(s) into a communicative framework in a natural way.

There is little doubt that it is easier to find pedagogical logic, though alas not psychological reality, behind the sequencing of grammar, provided it is set in a communicative framework, than behind the sequencing of any of the other contending categories proposed so far (eg topics or themes, situations, functions or notions). There is no obvious reason, for example, to wish
to introduce "requests" before "expressing wishes", or "hobbies" before "food and drink", or "in the shop" before "at the railway station".

There would appear to be a consensus that it is essential to include a focus on structure as one, if not the main, component of initial courses for school learners (Wilkins 1974 and 1976, Johnson 1976 and 1982, Brumfit 1979b). For intermediate learners Wilkins (1976) and Johnson (1982) claim that a functional/notional focus can be adopted to recycle linguistic material previously controlled along grammatical lines. A more sophisticated version of this sort of approach is suggested by Allen (1980), who proposes a three-level approach with a major focus on formal features of language at the beginner level, a major focus on discourse features at the intermediate level, and a major focus on the experiential use of language at higher levels. All three focuses, however, would be present at all three levels to differing degrees. This is set out in diagram form below:

Levels of Communicative Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rhetorical</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instrumental</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on language (formal features)</td>
<td>Focus on language (discourse features)</td>
<td>Focus on the use of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Structural control</td>
<td>(a) Discourse control</td>
<td>(a) Situational or topical control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Materials simplified structurally</td>
<td>(b) Materials simplified functionally</td>
<td>(b) Authentic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Mainly structural practice</td>
<td>(c) Mainly discourse practice</td>
<td>(c) Free practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Three levels of communicative competence in second language education

(Allen 1980)

It is this model that most accurately describes the new Tour de France materials produced in Scotland.
We conclude this discussion about descriptive categories with the reflection that in recent years the urge to produce ever better analytical tools through which to categorise language has obscured the essential fact that for the learner the categories matter less than the verisimilitude, interest, level of challenge and apparent relevance of the texts and tasks to which they give rise. Learners do not come into direct contact with the teaching syllabus in order to learn. They encounter and create texts, and it is the quality of these texts as texts that matters, rather than the particular linguistic, semantic, rhetorical or situational features that may have led to their choice.

There is a certain irony in the fact that the Council of Europe team set out to reject the "systematic taxonomic division of language as a subject-matter in favour of an analysis of learning situations" (Trim 1979). Yet, what they ended up by doing was to turn syllabus design from a cottage craft concerned with one or two taxonomic divisions into a multi-dimensional industry in which more and more ways of dividing up the subject matter were devised. The end product in the various Threshold Levels is like a thesaurus, a grammar book and a lexicon all combined, whose categories and exponents have indeed been established with a particular audience in mind, but which says nothing about how the learning is to take place.

4.1.6 Problems concerning methodology

It has been argued with some justification that the Council of Europe's work has been based on the assumption that if one can describe the product of learning in sufficient detail, this will guide one in the choice of learning experiences to bring it about. Yet, as we outlined in Chapter 2, in the development of implicit knowledge, progress is subject to laws that cannot be derived from a study of the end product. To describe in detail what a flower looks like when it is in full bloom, for example, is not to describe how it grows to be like that. It is never entirely clear what sort of methodology is envisaged by the Council of Europe team. Wilkins
(1974), however, had written:

"When objectives have been defined, the most important single methodological principle is to ensure that the linguistic and learning experience is planned so as to be completely representative of components of those objectives ... The quantity of each activity in the classroom should reflect its place in the overall objectives." (Wilkins 1974)

This would seem to imply a deliberate learning of predetermined formulae and an "as if" rehearsal methodology, which, as Widdowson (1983) points out, is training rather than education. Learning a language involves more than being able to recognise and reproduce language tokens or "status symbols" (Monippally 1983) attached to particular syllabus categories. As Brumfit puts it:

"We are not teaching a limited set of behaviours but a capacity to produce these behaviours." (Brumfit 1980)

The learner has to be helped to generalise from particular instances and to exploit whatever language resource he/she possesses for the personal interpretation and expression of meaning. This is dependent not just upon being able to adopt shared conventions of communicative competence, but also upon a creative capacity to bend the socially accepted norms to one's own personal ends in order to negotiate meaning with others.

Pedagogical decisions do not simply depend upon a description of end products but must also derive from a study of learning processes.

Having examined the various proposals and problems associated with 'ends-means' approaches, attention is now turned to 'process' approaches to the FL curriculum.

4.2 'Process' approaches

The 'process' approach to the FL curriculum leads to the establishment of principles of procedure to guide the teaching/learning process, and to a light specification of learning activities, rather than to a predetermined content leading to specific objectives. The role
of the teacher is to provide an environment in which the natural processes of language learning are set in motion.

In the 'process' approach to FLL principles of classroom procedure are designed to assist the teacher to become a sensitive caretaker who provides comprehensible input of a motivating sort to the learner, so that the acquisition process is activated. For beginners, this, as Terrell (1980) suggests, implies that the teacher must adopt:

- a slow rate of speech (clearer articulation, fewer contractions, longer pauses, exaggerated intonation)
- comprehensible vocabulary (less slang, fewer idiomatic turns of phrase, avoidance of proforms through repetition of names for people and things)
- extra definition and explanation strategies (repetition, use of gesture)
- a simplified syntax (short units set out conceptually rather than in subordinate clauses or embeddings, simple propositions giving a clear topic focus, helping the learner to complete utterances)
- discourse facilitating techniques (giving a possible answer within the question, yes/no questions), to which we might add confirmation checks and clarification requests, and techniques for building in redundancy.

Other proponents of the 'process' approach have stressed the need not only for acquisition-promoting activity, but also for a wide range of communicative experience that includes pupil production of the FL. In order to provide communicative experiences it became crucial for teachers to be able to distinguish between activities that were communicative and those that were not. Principles of procedure have had to be established here too. These have been based on information theory.

"Information can be received only when there is doubt; and doubt implies the existence of alternatives where choice, selection or discrimination is called for." (Cherry 1956)
Lyons (1968) elaborated this into the concept of the information gap. Following this a number of attempts have been made to produce a working definition of communication of use to teachers. One such attempt, which seems to cover most of the features suggested by the others, is that of Canale (1983), who, following Breen and Candlin (1980), Morrow (1977) and Widdowson (1978), set out the following principles.

**Communication:**

- is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;
- involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;
- takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances;
- is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;
- always has a purpose, (for example to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise);
- involves authentic, as opposed to text-book contrived language;
- is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes..

(Canale 1983)

Since communication is purposeful it has become usual to see it in terms of problem-solving tasks and activities (Birckbichler 1977), in which the learner is actively engaged in the generation of hypotheses in order to create an appropriate solution. These tasks and activities have formed the basis for the light syllabus specifications associated with the process approach.

In communication there are many ways of achieving a solution, and therefore divergent rather than convergent thinking is encouraged. De Bono (1972) has shown that children are particularly creative in their thinking when they come to school, but that the convergent transfer of predetermined knowledge, characteristic of the contemporary education system, destroys this. De Bono emphasises that in order to enable children to learn, and to learn how to learn,
the teacher has to set them challenging tasks with the appropriate level of contextual support and leave them to find their own solution. Subsequently through discussion they are to be helped to become aware of what they have done and of how else they might have done it. Such an approach has an obvious appeal to those who adopt a 'process' approach to FL teaching.

4.2.1 Proposals for a pre-production phase in FLL

It has frequently been observed that in natural acquisition in a FL environment, learners will listen for quite a long time before venturing to say very much beyond necessary routines (Ervin-Tripp 1978, Savignon 1981). A similar picture has emerged in classroom FLL. In a discussion of her experiences as a teacher in a Glasgow school, where the foreign language was used for normal classroom interaction, McGregor (1982) noted that in the first year of learning pupils made little creative use of what they were exposed to. They would merely regurgitate lesson material in question and answer work, and would reuse phrases in paired role-play. They would also reuse whole routines that had been consistently associated with classroom management activities. It was not until the second year that they showed signs of a generative capacity to transfer some of these routines and patterns to new situations and to create novel combinations.

Asher (1969), noting the high drop-out rate, low standards, and negative attitudes of the traditional two-year American school FL learner, concluded that what was required was a more limited objective restricted to listening fluency. He found that by getting beginners to listen to simple commands and carry them out physically, (Total Physical Response or TPR method), acquisition was more effective than with those who listened without response or who responded verbally. Those who responded physically also learnt better than those who were asked to translate into L1 what they had heard. Asher, Kusudo, and De la Torre (1974) found that the aural comprehension skills of those taught by TPR were far in advance of a control group who had received
normal college instruction. In addition to this, they were shown
to be able to adapt their aurally acquired competence very quickly
to the skills of speaking and reading, in which they also out-per¬
formed the control group.

On the basis of Asher's and other similar findings (cf Postovsky
and Krashen 1982, Richards 1983) it has been suggested that the
initial activities in which beginners are involved should involve
listening and that there should be a delayed start to speaking.

It has also been suggested that it is a knowledge of vocabulary
(rather than syntax) that is of most use to the beginner:

"The view of the profession has been to restrict
vocabulary in order to focus on syntax ... my
view is just the opposite: emphasize vocabulary
in order to encourage the acquisition of syntax."
(Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982)

Vocabulary orientates the listener towards certain expectations which
may well be fulfilled by the conceptual order of the words.

It was maintained that too early insistence on beginner speech led
to task overload and a fallback on L1 grammar (Krashen 1981). Thus
during the time when the emphasis was to be on listening, Terrell
(1977) advocated that students be allowed to respond in L1 first,
or in L1 or L2 as the spirit moved them for quite some time. L2
responses were to be encouraged only when a learner's "self-image
and ease in the classroom is such that a response in the second
language will not produce anxiety" (Terrell 1977).

The sort of activities that have been suggested for a pre-production
phase in FLL, which might form the basis of a light syllabus specifi¬
cation, are indicated below. All involve teacher-talk:

- commands and instructions which pupils carry out physically
  (Asher 1969). This can be extended to the notion of pupils
  acting as robots, or be done in the form of a game (eg "O'Grady
  says"), or be turned into a gymnastics or aerobics session, or
be converted into a cooking lesson, or an origami or model-making one
- routine classroom management talk
- descriptions of objects, people or diagrams for pupils to draw
- description as above requiring some minimal response from pupil, such as choosing an appropriate picture from among several alternatives, naming a person described, putting pictures in an order, or matching them
- story-telling, with pictures to assist understanding. Well-known stories can be told where students can process meaning by latching onto a few cognate words
- information related to a map or grid involving pupils in a minimal response or a mark at an appropriate spot
- simple games which involve the pupils in little or no speech (eg Bingo).

As Krashen and Terrell (1983) point out with respect to a number of the activities outlined above, there is little "real communication" involved. They are merely designed to:

"- provide comprehensible input
- maintain focus on the message
- help lower affective filters.

Thus, we can be assured that the acquisition process will begin." (Krashen and Terrell 1983).

4.2.2 The procedural syllabus: Problem-solving tasks

The earliest course to be based on problem-solving tasks that we have discovered is Concept Seven-Nine (Wight, Norris and Worsley 1972), which was designed to enable the ESL learner to use whatever language resource he/she already had in tasks that linked conceptual and language development. To do this the authors devised a series of listening problems (Unit 1), classification problems (Unit 2), and communication problems in which pupils passed messages through a screen (Unit 3). In the latter, one pupil had to describe, for example, a picture or a place on a map to another pupil, who had to draw the picture or find
the place indicated.

To our knowledge only one school FLL syllabus, that being developed by a team led by Prabhu in the Bangalore Project in South India (Prabhu 1980a and 1980b), has chosen deliberately to shun all forms of predetermined language content and to concentrate instead on a graded series of problem-solving tasks. A similar proposal, however, was recently made by Tongue and Gibbons (1982).

In Prabhu's scheme the FL curriculum was to be governed, not by predetermined objectives or language content, but by principles of procedure and a specification of graded problem-solving tasks. Acquisition was to be ensured through teacher-talk in interaction with pupils and through other source material. There was to be a focus on meaning and on the truth-value of utterances and not on form, though the normal caretaker techniques of expansion, rephrasing, meaning verification, and incidental correction, were permitted.

No attempt was to be made at any stage to tackle grammar through explanation or illustration, or to set form-focussed exercises. Nor was it thought sensible to teach rules of use, which might run to thousands of statements, and would therefore be unlearnable in any explicit manner (Carroll D 1980). Linguistic data was neither to be selected a priori nor focused upon a posteriori, because this would falsify the nature of communication through introducing an element of exemplification into the teaching. Even if such a focus might be useful for one learner at one particular time, it would not necessarily help another, since different learners needed different data at different times. It was deemed better to insist that pupils be left to acquire grammar in their own way and in their own time.

To the argument that there was a need for teachers to be able to guarantee coverage of the most useful aspects of grammar, Prabhu replied that if a structure was worth covering it would certainly appear in the course of a year's problem-solving work. To the argument that there was a need to ensure coverage of language appropriate to predictable language needs outside the classroom, Prabhu
maintained that there was no certain way of knowing these. He insisted, however, that having ensured that language was used naturally inside the classroom, it was reasonable to hope that pupils would be able to use it outside the classroom, whether they had been rehearsed for this or not.

The tasks were to be selected on two principles: that they should represent an appropriate level of challenge (neither too easy nor too difficult) for the pupil, and that they should engage the pupil's mind, so that there would be "a genuine preoccupation with understanding, thinking out, doing or saying something" (Prabhu 1980a). It was believed that the effort made by the pupils to cope with the negotiation of meaning through such tasks would enable them to develop a communicative ability based on a truly generative capacity. Teacher experience over the years would determine which tasks worked well and might also permit finer judgements to be made about how best to grade them.

Where tasks were found to be too complex for a particular group of learners to tackle all at once, they would be broken down into sub-tasks. There would be teacher to whole-class preparation for each task through dialogue. Each pupil would then do an individual written task, related to, but different from the spoken interactive one. There would then be an evaluation of success to guide the choice of the next task to be undertaken. The tasks were to be sequenced in such a way that the earlier easier tasks would lead on to the later ones procedurally, conceptually or linguistically. There was to be a deliberate reliance on teacher-class interaction rather than on paired or group interaction, since the project team feared that with the latter pidginisation would be promoted (Prabhu 1982a).

Johnson (1980b and 1982) has argued that in Prabhu's preparation phase, where tasks may be reduced to sub-tasks, these latter become units similar to Wilkins' (1976) semantic ones. In this he seems to be arguing that there may be little distinction between a funct-
ional-notional approach and a procedural approach at this level. Prabhu, however, rightly points out that where Wilkins would seem to imply a deliberate predetermined focus on particular form-meaning relationships, the focus in the Bangalore project was always on the task to be completed.

"You are being truly procedural if you start off into a task and see that language comes out of it; you are being notional if you start off with notions and prescribe pieces of language to fit them." (Prabhu 1980b)

He does not seek to deny that the preparation phase results in a deal of covert repetition of structures, but claims that this repetition is not deliberately staged and is not made explicit to the pupil. One is I think justified, nevertheless, in claiming that from the pupil's point of view there is at this time a focus on form, since it is clear from lesson transcripts of the preparation phase (Carroll D 1980) that pupils are sensibly attempting to repeat whatever forms the teacher uses.

There are a number of reservations to Prabhu's proposals. The first is that there is no expressed educational purpose to FLL other than acquisition itself. Neither cultural awareness nor language awareness appear to be promoted. Indeed both would seem to be excluded in so far as they demand a level of conscious reflection. Since there is no educational purpose, there is no means by which tasks can be selected other than on the basis that pupils can do them or feel challenged by them. Prabhu is at pains to point out that when pupils are engaging in a map-reading exercise, for example, this is not done to teach them map-reading.

"The set of procedures are not things in themselves to teach children. Instead they are a weapon to teach English." (Prabhu 1980b)

Here he would seem to fail to capitalise on the possibility that there are tasks, such as map-reading, that are inherently educationally valuable in enabling the pupil to cope with ordinary life skills.
It would seem reasonable to suggest that a checklist of functions of language and of important topic and semantic areas might help to ensure a broader base to the tasks selected. A checklist need not control the language input in any way, but could exercise a healthy control on what may otherwise be a somewhat arbitrary list of tasks.

Another reservation is that while there may be a case for refusing to allow predetermined language content to control input, few would accept that it was a waste of time to focus on form *a posteriori* when needs have been exposed. As we saw in Chapter 2, there is no consensus to support Krashen's hypothesis that "learning" of a deliberate sort cannot become implicit knowledge. And it is clear that focus on form provides comfort for the literate learner looking for system.

Inevitably, as with all curriculum innovations, the Bangalore Project must be judged in the light of classroom reality and of the reactions of teachers and learners. The results of evaluation conducted so far would appear to be extremely positive (Prabhu 1982b).

We turn now to another 'process' approach, which differs from Prabhu in so far as there is no preparation phase. There is also a deliberate *a posteriori* focus on form. Brumfit (1979b) has called this the 'deep-end' approach, in which the learners communicate as far as possible with what they can. The teacher then teaches to the weaknesses exposed, before returning to a new communicative activity.

4.2.3 The 'deep-end' approach

Breen and Candlin (1980) proposed just such a version of the 'process' approach shunning any prespecification of objectives or of content, but permitting conscious observation of language experience, discovery of rules and metalingual discussion.

Breen and Candlin adopted the Hallidayan view of language as the product of ideational, interpersonal and textual components intertwined into a "system of systems". They maintained that although one might
be able to relate units of language in a regular way to the textual and ideational strands, and with rather more difficulty to the inter¬
personal strand, it was not sensible to attempt to reduce the rela¬
tionship between language in use and the product of the intertwining of the three strands to some predictable and finite system of rules. On this view there was an unsystematisable element of communicative ability which set a limit to the feasibility of any predetermination of syllabus content.

In their curriculum approach the classroom was not to be seen as a sort of artificial rehearsal of real world activities, but rather as a resource for learning in its own right with its own participants, its own conventions and its own reality. It was to become a place in which there would be ongoing negotiation about learning, commun¬
ication-as-learning, and communication about language in use itself. In the latter phase the classroom was to become "an observatory of communication as everyday human behaviour" (Breen and Candlin 1980).

They maintained that both communication and learning were dependent upon the same negotiating process. Both learners and communicators had to negotiate between incoming messages and existing mental schemata, or between meanings arising in the mind and outgoing messages, or between outgoing messages and whatever comprehension cues were manifested by an interlocutor. They concluded that learning to communicate meant communicating in order to learn.

"Rather than encourage learners to learn language in order to communicate, we may encourage learners to communicate in order to develop their own learning." (Breen, Candlin and Waters 1979)

'Content' materials based on authentic FL data were to be adapted to the learner's level and chosen through negotiation to be appropriate to the pupils' ongoing needs, interests and motivations. These would promote acquisition, and be graded in terms of increasing unpredictability. Continuity would be ensured across units and within units on thematic grounds rather than on any linguistic principles. Learners would acquire system in their own way.
In reflection and observation phases they would be encouraged to discover rules and regularities. There would also be 'process' materials designed to involve the learner in productive problem-solving activity. They would enable learners working as individuals, or more often in pairs and groups, to bring different contributions to the resolution of problems, to adopt different routes through the tasks set, and to carry them out at different levels of proficiency. "Content" and "process" materials, which in traditional courses had been closely interlinked, were thus to be seen as separate strands running through the curriculum.

The final 'process' approach to be outlined is the use of the FL as a medium of instruction for another subject in the curriculum.

4.2.4 The medium of instruction approach

Widdowson (1978), among others, has argued that for school FLL to be maximally effective, it must become the medium of instruction for one or more subjects in the curriculum. Such a view clearly belongs to a process approach to FL. It is, however, a more goal-directed approach than that of Prabhu's or Breen and Candlin's, in so far as it has both a language acquisition and an educational objective. It is not simply FL acquisition for its own sake. Such an approach enables conceptual, linguistic and rhetorical development related to a particular area of knowledge to take place in unison. The language and skills to be acquired are those necessary for the fulfilment of the various rhetorical acts associated with the subject matter. There is thus no dislocation between form and function.

Reports from Canada on 'immersion' programmes (Swain 1974, 1978) have indicated that while much higher levels of communicative ability are normally reached in medium of instruction contexts than in traditional FL classrooms, there is nevertheless a tendency for a class pidgin to become established, which, without deliberate intervention, does not appear to improve. This seems to point to the need for a blend of acquisition and more formal instruction. It is to this blend that we turn in the next chapter, which outlines the approach adopted in the GLAPLL project.
### CHAPTER 5

**THE GLAFLLL APPROACH TO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM**

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CHAPTER 5

THE GLAFLL APPROACH TO THE FL CURRICULUM

Introduction

In Chapter 1 four of the major problems that were highlighted were:

- poor pupil attitudes, in large part due to a sense of lack of success
- the failure to promote a communicative ability among pupils
- the lack of a policy on differentiation
- the failure to promote pupil responsibility.

In this chapter I attempt to tie together the various conclusions drawn from theory and practice in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, in order to outline the way in which these problems were tackled in the GLAFLL project.

First I describe the attempt to create a curriculum that would ensure that pupils were enabled to communicate in a FL at some worthwhile level. Then I outline the various strategies adopted for coping with individual differences, for promoting pupil responsibility, and for ensuring that pupils felt success in their learning.

5.1 The GLAFLL approach to promoting communicative ability

In the section that follows, an attempt is made to draw a number of threads together into the hypotheses that lie behind the GLAFLL approach to the promotion of communicative ability. These are set out in terms of what is believed about language learning processes and about the conditions that may best activate these in the classroom. This is followed by an attempt to outline the nature of the two-level approach to the GLAFLL curriculum, based on the integration of an 'ends-means' instruction syllabus and a 'process' communication one.
5.1.1 The hypotheses

Given the lack of any existing coherent theory of language learning and teaching, the web of hypotheses that has been created represents a blend of practical experience, theoretical surmise, current wisdom, commonsense, and intuitive hunch, drawn from the various reflections and experiences already outlined in the earlier chapters. It is intended not as a method to be slavishly adhered to, but as a set of hypothetical principles to guide the teacher's thoughts, plans and actions, and to encourage classroom action research of the type described in Chapter 3.

Classroom FLL would appear to be best promoted through providing opportunities for an appropriate integration of:

- data to feed the acquisition process and implicit knowledge;
- study and practice to feed the deliberate learning process and explicit knowledge;
- communicative experience to enable the learner to acquire, to test hypotheses, to negotiate meanings, to make deliberate processes more automatic, and to shift explicit knowledge into the more immediately accessible implicit knowledge;
- teacher feedback on learner performance to ensure maximum progress in minimum time;
- awareness-raising.

The above would appear to take place best in a classroom in which the learners are seen as whole persons, whose intellectual, affective, creative and social characteristics are taken into account. Each of these areas is examined in turn.

5.1.2 Data to feed the acquisition process and implicit knowledge

While it is accepted that acquisition-promoting activity is really a sub-section of communicative experience, it seems important at this point to highlight it as a separate focus for attention, to ensure that in the classroom a sufficient range of suitably graded FL data is made available, upon which the learner's acquisition process can
work. There is a serious risk in current perceptions of what communication in the classroom means, that pupils may spend an excessive amount of time talking to each other at a relatively poor interlanguage level, and too little time on gaining access to further native-speaker data that will serve to extend their communicative capacity. It is, of course, possible for pupils to acquire from each other, and to reinforce each other's communicative capacity, but there is a distinct danger of an interlanguage 'pidgin' level becoming established, from which it is difficult to progress.

Internalisation through acquisition into existing schemata would seem to be achieved best when deep processing occurs, ie when learners engage their existing experiences and knowledge in 'top-down' processing, and are also prepared to work through 'bottom-up' processing to achieve an appropriate level of comprehension.

"The deeper the source of a sentence within the student's personality, the more lasting value it has for learning the language ..." (Stevick 1976)

The pupils need access to data that is comprehensible but challenging, ie within the grasp of their interlanguage capacity, but encouraging its further growth. Data may take the form of unplanned teacher interactive talk, which can be sensitively fashioned to suit the pupils' level and reshaped in accordance with cues and signals given by them. Such unplanned and often context-bound interactive activity would appear to be the most effective way of promoting the sort of implicit knowledge that underlies everyday conversational ability. It can be effected by the teacher or Foreign Assistant, or indeed by anyone else who visits the classroom with the ability to speak the foreign language.

In addition, teacher talk can embrace planned graded activities designed to elicit some form of pupil reaction, initially in the form of a number of alternative non-verbal indications of understanding (eg actions, marks on paper, drawings, or mother-tongue reactions) or, as time goes by, in the form of verbal reaction in the FL.
Further to this there needs to be a rich source of spoken and written FL data, adapted to the pupils' level, so that they are enabled to achieve success in coping with the tasks associated with them. The material can be on tape, video, micro, or in book, magazine or worksheet form.

Pairs or teams of teachers can also interact with each other, either in an informal manner, or in some dramatised version of a particular event, upon which pupils have to work later. This can be done with large groups of pupils, who can then be divided into smaller groups to work with individual teachers (Johnstone 1973 and Burns 1984).

It would seem reasonable to suggest that in the early stages of FLL a substantial proportion of time should be devoted to the sort of acquisition-promoting activity, which does not rely much on the pupil's production of the FL, since a gestation period is necessary before the pupil is able to create FL utterances on the basis of implicit knowledge. Since pupils come to FL classes expecting to learn to speak, however, they lose interest if there is a total concentration on teacher talk, or on tapes and video work. Some relatively unstressful production work involving explicitly learnt knowledge will be necessary to motivate them and to develop motor skills.

Teachers should allow for gestation before expecting new information to become part of implicit knowledge. An instruction syllabus should plan for recycling of data in a range of contexts. In the development of implicit knowledge it should be remembered that the concept of all-or-nothing mastery of native-speaker norms on first-time exposure is an unattainable and distorting ideal. Acquisition would seem to be a gradual rather than a sudden process, subject to its own laws of progress which do not reflect the teaching sequence. Implicit knowledge is subject to fossilization and to rapid regression when active steps are not taken to maintain and to develop it.

Where pupils do attempt to produce utterances on the basis of their implicit knowledge, interlanguage errors should be expected. As
there would appear to be a relatively common sequence of acquisition for a number of grammatical forms, it seems possible to hope that we can build up a clearer picture of the various milestones of attainment to look out for, so that fossilization and regression can be spotted, diagnosis of the cause attempted, and appropriate further learning experiences provided.

There is little doubt that at the start of the GLAFLL project teachers had not been made aware of the role of acquisition-promoting activity. Most input was viewed as fodder for immediate output, rather than as potentially feeding an internal growth that might be capitalised upon later. It was thought that all language which had not been actively produced would automatically be forgotten. The active role of the receptive skills in the building up of a communicative capacity was underestimated, thus reading had been neglected and listening often reduced to an input-for-output activity. This meant that much of what was listened to had been contrived in terms of syntactic control and trivialised in terms of ideas.

5.1.3 Study and practice to feed the deliberate learning process and explicit knowledge

It seems reasonable to hypothesise that a focus of attention on the rules, regularities, systems and sub-systems of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence is necessary for a number of reasons. These may be summarised as follows:

- it makes available data which may feed implicit knowledge if the learner's inbuilt syllabus is able to receive it;
- it provides data for explicit knowledge which may be worked into implicit knowledge through communicative experiences;
- learners can fall back on information in explicit knowledge to monitor spontaneous performance, and in certain circumstances to out-perform the interlanguage that derives from implicit knowledge;
- explicit knowledge is less subject to regression than is implicit knowledge.
It seems wise to continue to accept that we cannot rely entirely on the unconscious acquisition process, and that planned or responsive intervention is required to assist its development. As Howatt points out, such a policy:

"has the advantage of implying that learning is a natural process involving a learner and a task which teaching is designed to assist rather than to cause." (Howatt 1979)

It seems sensible to follow the hypotheses of Bialystok (1978) and McLaughlin (1978), and the intuitions and experiences of generations of teachers who believe that through learner effort explicit knowledge can and does feed into implicit knowledge at a time when it can be worked into the existing schemata.

It also seems sensible to focus at times in a deliberate manner on the various skills and sub-skills involved in communicative performance while remembering Welford's (1968) caveat about the need for integrated activity.

Studies of learners have revealed that they make deliberate and conscious efforts to come to terms with both the form and the meaning of what they are learning (Rubin 1979 and 1981, Stern 1975, Bialystok 1981a, Dodson 1983). They adopt a great variety of strategies (eg inferencing, formal practice, search for communicative opportunities to try out hypotheses, requests for explanation and translations, monitoring of self and others, inner-chuntering etc). Some of these seem to be common to all learners, while others may have a more or less prominent role to play according to individual learning styles. The picture that emerges from these studies is that there is a wide range of effective deliberate learning strategies, to which pupils might be introduced, and which they might be encouraged to try out in order to determine which ones they find most effective.

It seems important, however, to express caveats about a number of traditional deliberate learning techniques. It may not be helpful to explain rules where previous experience of abstract thinking is limited, and it is useless to do so where the learner has little or
no contextual experience to which to relate the particular rule in question. This is not to be interpreted as a condemnation of rule-explanation, which is clearly useful to those who can be enabled to make use of it. It seems that it is better to encourage pupils to discover language rules for themselves and to encourage them to articulate them. Courtillon (1984) claims that this can best be done in groups, where pupils discuss the rules they have discovered in the language to which they have just been exposed. It is probable that where rules have been discovered by personal effort, they are subject to deeper processing and are more easily accessed than rules that learners have been told.

The attempt to help memorisation through massive repetition of the same form appears largely counter-productive, as do drills designed to form habits where there is no semantic challenge. Drills encourage inappropriate processing strategies. The battery of more imaginative ways of providing covert practice in grammar that is gradually emerging from work done by Rinvolumi (1982), Caré and Debyser (1978), Byrne and Rixon (1979) and others, would seem a more promising way of attempting to promote control over particular linguistic patterns.

Form-focused question and answer work, where the questioner knows the answer and merely wishes to check that the learner knows a particular exponent, stereotyped role-play, and speech events built up by pupils on the basis of heavily-cued discrete functions, should not be confused with communicative activity (Clark 1983a), though they may play some role in working towards this. They often fail to connect the learner's self to the utterances, and may give the idea that in order to communicate in a FL all one needs is an appropriately prepackaged set of phrases suitable to a particular range of situations. As already suggested, however, a certain amount of rehearsal of situational routines and generalisable patterns is useful and does provide the learner with some security.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that while study and practice of knowledge and skill areas serves to build up explicit
knowledge, it is also essential to devote an appropriate amount of time to the global activity of communication which integrates the various components. In communication the whole is more than the simple addition of various well-rehearsed parts.

5.1.4 **Communicative experience**

Communicative experience, in which the learner engages at some level of personal involvement, enables the learner:

- to gain access to FL data for further acquisition;
- to activate areas of knowledge within communicative contexts and thus help to make them more readily available for future use. This may enable learners to shift explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge;
- to test out hypotheses, and on the basis of feedback (which may be direct or indirect), to retain or modify them;
- to develop a range of different rhetorical styles to promote appropriacy skills;
- to develop the holistic skill of communicating, integrating various levels of planning, information-processing and monitoring, thus working towards more automaticity;
- to harness the existing ability to negotiate roles, topics and meanings with others, and to develop a range of communicative strategies through which to bring about a satisfactory meeting of minds with an interlocutor, so that an adequate level of mutual comprehension can be achieved;
- to further develop the social skills associated with effective communication;
- to develop confidence and a feeling of success through the attainment of some manifestly worthwhile level of communicative proficiency.

Given the number of individual learners in the normal class, we need to foster pupil-to-pupil communication in the FL, as well as pupil-to-teacher talk, if the level of communicative practice is to be sufficiently high. This lends itself to two dangers. On the one
hand, teachers who wish to ensure that what pupils say to each other has been thoroughly well-rehearsed, may fail to enable pupils to develop higher level communication skills, since the exchange of prefabricated routines does not involve any real information-processing, creativity or negotiation. On the other hand if genuine inter-pupil communication is encouraged on too massive a scale:

- it may limit the amount of authentic FL data through which further acquisition can be effected;
- there may not be sufficient feedback of a nature designed to help the pupil to modify erroneous hypotheses.

Both of the above may mean that the pupil's interlanguage may fossilize at a particular point in its development for want of further nourishment. As Coste notes, the question we need to ask ourselves is not simply:

"comment peut - on communiquer en classe?", but rather: "comment peut on acquérir/apprendre une langue étrangère et en quoi la classe peut - elle contribuer à de tels processus?" (Coste 1984)

5.1.5 Feedback on performance

The learner needs feedback on performance in order to know whether progress is being made. Awareness of progress is an incentive to further learning. Experience has indicated that nothing is more distressing to some adolescent learners than the extremist style of those who make an ideology of non-intervention. On the other hand experience has also shown that an over-emphasis on correction inhibits. An over-emphasis on positive feedback in the form of verbal encouragement tends to make pupils dependent upon teachers. No encouragement is frustrating. It is feedback that is sensitive both to the cognitive and the emotional requirements of learners that we must seek to develop.

An assessment policy which attempts both to monitor whether pupils are learning what has been taught, and to chart interlanguage development is required. Such an assessment policy should aim to inform
the teaching/learning process so that appropriate decisions are made as to how best to proceed. If fossilization appears to be occurring, emphasis may need to be placed on further acquisition-promoting activity and on a deliberate focus on form. If deliberate learning appears to be proceeding, but little fluency occurring, further communicative experience may be indicated.

Pupils can be encouraged to monitor each other's performances. Courtillon (1984) suggests that pupils can learn a great deal from group correction sessions, in which pupils draw attention to what they think are their friends' mistakes. This motivates, raises awareness and allows pupils to learn from each other. The ultimate aim of such monitoring, however, must be to encourage an appropriate level of self-monitoring.

It would seem that what is required is a differentiated approach towards error, which takes into account the nature of the task being worked upon, the relative seriousness of the error made, the likely effect of correction on the particular learner who made the error, and the realistic expectations of improvement.

Current practice seems to suggest that in communicative phases it is above all the truth-value of utterances that should be monitored. Thus incomprehensible or ambiguous utterances should be verified, expanded or reformulated for the learner. It will often be useful for the teacher to make a note of formal errors made, in order to work on some of them at an appropriate time. In lesson phases when the focus is on particular forms, where errors occur in the areas being concentrated upon, correction is necessary. It must be remembered that the accumulation of small errors may make a learner's utterances extremely irritating to have to listen to. While many errors may not appear to be important in themselves, in quantity they reduce the overall redundancy in an utterance. What are small formal errors in one context may give rise to semantic ambiguity in another.
In brief, teacher intervention is justified where it is believed that it will lead to an improvement in either implicit or explicit knowledge without undermining learner confidence.

5.1.6 Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising can be seen to cover a number of areas of which perhaps the most important are:

- awareness of the nature of language and of its various functions in human life;
- awareness of the particular nature and functions of the FL being learnt;
- awareness of the relativity of culture and of the multi-cultural nature of the world;
- awareness of aspects of the culture of the foreign-language-speaking community(ies);
- awareness of why FLL is on the school curriculum;
- awareness of the nature of FLL, of the processes that seem to be involved, and of the various strategies that might be helpful;
- awareness of why one is doing what one is doing at any particular moment of time, and of the nature of the task one is engaged in;
- gradual awareness of self, of one's own progress, of one's own strengths and weaknesses, of one's own motivations, and of what is and is not possible.

It would seem that only experimentation will enable us to find out:

- how best to integrate awareness-raising into the rest of our concerns;
- which strategies to adopt to promote an ever-increasing level of consciousness, without undermining the pupil's confidence to take risks on the basis of implicit knowledge;
- to what degree particular types of learners benefit from awareness-raising or can be helped to do so.

It seems sensible to claim that whether or not the raising of awareness as to the nature and function of language in human life can be
shown to have a positive effect upon proficiency in a foreign language, it is an inherently valuable exercise in itself. It seems likely that the best way to bring such awareness about is through enabling pupils to reflect upon their own language experience and to build upon this. It is reflection upon the particular instances of perceived language regularity that leads to the general concept of system. It is reflection upon observed language variation that leads to understanding of the context-sensitive nature of language.

Given the various findings indicating that awareness of pattern is an enabling factor in FLL, it seems important to help pupils to develop the skills required to perceive rules and regularities (Hawkins 1981 and 1984).

The use of authentic foreign materials embodying the culture of the native speakers concerned, and the promotion of various forms of direct contact between pupils and members of other cultural groups seem to provide the best means of enabling pupils to have direct experience of another culture. Guided reflection upon this may assist in the raising of awareness about cultural relativity, and the potential for mutual enrichment through diversity.

Learners benefit from having a clear idea of what it is that they are being asked to do in each lesson, so that teacher and pupil intentions are harmonised as far as possible. This would seem to imply a negotiative style of teaching and learning. It was discovered very early in the GLAFLL project that the semantic categories of 'function' and 'notion' provided teachers and learners with a useful weapon through which to negotiate lesson content. Whereas previously pupils had not really perceived a need for learning, for example, 'the conditional tense of pouvoir', it became much more possible for them to perceive a purpose behind 'learning how to make suggestions'. 
5.1.7  The learner as a whole person

Acquisition, learning and communication are more effectively brought about when the pupil is engaged in them at some depth of personal involvement. A number of recent FL teaching approaches have therefore laid great stress on the need to view the learner as a whole person. This implies that in addition to appealing to the pupil's intellect we need to pay more attention than before to such things as:

- affective growth and the development of confidence;
- imagination and creativity;
- the relationships to be established in the classroom, and the development of social skills.

Johnstone (1982) writes:

"The ability to communicate effectively is not a static, cold abstract quality (called communicative competence). We have come to see it as an organism - something that expands (and in so doing becomes more refined, sophisticated, multi-functional and dynamic), but that also contracts, that lives and dies, that requires the proper sort of nourishment and exercise in all three areas of knowledge, mental operations and affective skills. For many years, conscientious attempts have been made to teach 'the living language' but the organism processing it has often been stillborn or at least under-developed." (Johnstone 1982)

To develop communicative ability one must promote a sense of security in the learner through non-threatening accuracy work, and encourage risk-taking through an atmosphere of trust, where mistakes are expected and not ridiculed. The need for a supportive atmosphere is also highlighted by Di Pietro who notes:

"Conversations are special because they involve us in taking risks to our self-image and our status as members of a particular society." (Di Pietro 1976)

There is need however to recognise that not all learners can or need to become overtly outgoing and risk-taking. Some achieve their ends in more restrained, reflective, deliberate and self-reliant ways.
There must be room in our methodology for them too.

Adolescents like working together in pairs and groups. It seems sensible to set a variety of tasks which involve co-operative activity. In groups, pupils discover that it is relatively easy to take risks and to create language that can be understood by others. In communicative activities they learn to work co-operatively, to take turns, to listen to others, to decide on courses of action, and to defend their judgements. In brief they build up confidence and social skills.

Healthy relationships between teacher and pupils permit a sharing of minds, mutual empathy and respect. Where this can be achieved it is possible for teachers to work towards a classroom where responsibilities can be shared with pupils. This does not imply that the teacher has to give up the role of teacher and general class manager in order to take on some sort of spurious equal participant role.

As well as engaging their intellect in such information-gap, opinion-gap and jigsaw activities as are suggested, for example, by Rixon, (1979), Ur (1981), Geddes and Sturtridge (1979 and 1982a) and Byrne and Rixon (1979), it is important to appeal to the imagination of pupils and to harness their creativity through the sort of simulations and games proposed, for example, by Maley and Duff (1978). Di Pietro (1978), Maley (1982), Caré and Debyser (1978), Byrne and Rixon (1979), and Clark and McDonough (1982). It is helpful to engage the minds and the imaginations of pupils in stories (Morgan and Rinvulucri 1983), in self-created fantasies (Debyser 1980, Caré 1980), in odd pictures to which they have to react (Strangeman undated, Maley, Duff and Grellet 1980), in intellectual puzzles and challenges (Maley and Grellet 1981, De Bono 1982), in word games and in simple linguistic but creative activities (Maley 1982, Caré and Debyser 1978). It is both possible and motivating to get learners to create their own Haiku-style or other closely structured poetry, where the formal constraints of rhythm, rhyme and number of
syllables per line are not impediments but motivators to creativity (eg Password: Form Two, Book One: Phillips, Pudaruth and Clark 1978).

It is important to provide opportunities for project work of the sort that engages the attention of the learners over a span of time on tasks in which they are prepared to invest personally (Jones 1979, Legutke 1984).

It may occasionally be helpful to involve pupils in the sort of soul-bearing exchanges suggested by Moskowitz (1978). It is certainly true that in order to harness the pupil's interest, we have to create tasks and discussion frameworks that go beyond the relatively banal and unmotivating forms of "personalisation" associated with most current FL courses, (eg "When did you get up this morning?", "Describe the rooms in your house", etc). It is important, however, to draw a distinction between therapy and education, and to suggest that it is not the role of the teacher to be a psychotherapist, whose task it is to get the pupils to expose their private inner worlds. Pupils need to be able to engage that part of themselves that they feel able to, but to retain their own privacy. Most adolescents are more likely to express their feelings obliquely rather than engage in direct confessions.

The key to the awakening and maintenance of motivation lies in the extent to which the teacher can create learning experiences which give rise to genuine communicative needs, because the pupils are engaged in activity at some level of intellectual and emotional involvement. This, rather than the 'as if' rehearsal of potential 'Bedarf', is the real meaning of communicative need in school FLL.

5.1.8 Teacher roles

In order to respond to the various requirements set out above, the teacher would seem to have to perform a variety of roles and functions.

For many teachers it represents a challenge of some magnitude to
move away gradually from the teacher-dominated classroom with its
total emphasis on deliberate learning, towards a classroom in which
acquisition and communication are also promoted, and in which
learners are guided towards discovery, awareness, and some level
of responsibility for the promotion of their own learning. It is
ultimately a question of teacher attitude and courage to innovate.

Studies of the 'good' teacher have indicated that they share a number
of features in common which accord in general with the sort of pic¬
ture outlined above. Moskowitz (1976), Robinett (1977), Sanderson
(1982) and Ellis (1984) have all drawn attention to the fact that
on the whole 'good' teachers:

- create a warm atmosphere and trusting relationships
- smile and use eye-contact a lot
- listen to their pupils carefully
- provide a sensitive level of feedback
- create a sense of purpose in which pupils know what is
  expected of them
- offer a wide variety of learning experiences
- ensure that each pupil succeeds at his/her own level
- attempt to involve the pupils as themselves
- use the FL a great deal
- expect and encourage pupils to use the FL.

5.1.9 The two-level approach to the GLAFLL curriculum

In order to fulfil all the requirements discussed, the conclusion was
drawn that a two-level approach to the curriculum was required. This
would embrace the fact that an 'ends-means' approach drawing on recon¬
structionist values was best suited to the establishment of an instruc¬
tion syllabus designed to lead in a disciplined way towards certain
objectives based on a consensus on 'Bedarf'. It also acknowledged
the fact that a 'process' approach deriving from progressivist values
was best suited to the elaboration of principles of procedure and of
tasks and activities for a communication syllabus. This would be
open to negotiation with pupils on the basis of both 'Bedürfnisse'
and 'Bedarf'. Explicit knowledge could be built up from the instru¬
uction syllabus, implicit knowledge fed through data and activities deriving from both syllabuses, and a personal communicative capacity promoted through the communication syllabus.

Such a two-level approach to the FL curriculum is not a novel idea. It has been normal for teachers to interrupt the flow of the instruction-based syllabus to interject various communicative activities (e.g., readers, songs, drama), in which the language is relatively uncontrolled, and the focus is on information-processing for meaning rather than on form. It is in line with Dodson's (1983) insistence on the need for both medium-orientated and message-orientated work. It is also favoured by Johnson (1980a) who called for an amalgamation of the "systematic" and "non-systematic" components in the communicative approach. He argued that a systematic component would help learners to internalise rules and regularities, and an unsystematic component would help them to come to terms with the non-systematisable nature of communication.

"One might well conclude that in the same way the insight that there is an unsystematisable element of communicative knowledge sets limits on the feasibility of systematic teaching, so the existence of system in language sets limits on the necessity for process-type teaching." (Johnson 1980)

Widdowson too argues for a focus on both the conventional and the creative:

"Normal language use is seldom entirely a matter of conformity (unless in a particular speech routine) nor is it entirely free (unless one wishes to be misunderstood). A realistic view of language education would concern itself both with creativity and routines and patterns, whereby what is learned is a set of schemata and procedures for adapting them to cope with problems which do not have a ready-made formulaic solution." (Widdowson 1983)

Several attempts have been made to set out how such a two-level approach might work.

The first approach we might label the 'appendage' approach. This is the one featured in Savignon's (1972) experiment in which a
communication dimension was simply added on to an existing instructional programme, but not in any explicit way integrated into it.

The second approach might be labelled the 'build-up' approach. This has been outlined by, for example, Paulston (1971) and Rivers (1972). It involves the learner moving from controlled practice to guided practice to free communication with an increasing emphasis on choice of what to say along the way. The inevitable drawback to this approach is that the student may not be given sufficient opportunity to build up creative and negotiative strategies.

The third approach is the one adopted in the GLAFL project which we might label 'the outside-in and inside-out approach'. This attempts to integrate an instruction or 'outside-in' syllabus with communicative and acquisition-promoting activities, and a communication or 'inside-out' syllabus. Other writers have proposed something similar. Brumfit (1979a) has argued for an integrated concern for accuracy and fluency. He suggests the possibility of an instructional syllabus with gaps, the gaps being filled with communicative fluency work on the 'deep-end' principle. He suggests that the instructional syllabus based on accuracy work should occupy a large proportion of an initial language course, but should gradually decrease in importance in favour of fluency work (Brumfit 1984).

Littlewood (1981) has also argued for a mixture of what he has called pre-communicative and communicative activities, moving from the controlled to the free, covering form, situation, function and social meaning, which teachers would draw upon in order to respond in a flexible way to the learner's needs of the moment. Littlewood suggests that pre-communicative activities are necessary to train learners in the part-skills of communication, so that lower-level processes can unfold automatically in response to higher-level plans based on meaning. The communicative activities are necessary to provide whole-task practice, to maintain motivation, to engage 'natural' learning processes and to create a context which develops social skills in the classroom. The teacher might choose to start
from the controlled end and build up towards a freer form of activity, or alternatively might adopt a 'deep-end' strategy and respond to weaknesses revealed.

In the GLAFLL version of the two-level approach the instruction syllabus is guided by an explicit set of broad communicative objectives established on the basis of pupil and teacher consensus. These indicate the activities that pupils are expected to be able to perform and the mode of communication involved. They are further analysed into skills and sub-skills on which particular focuses of attention can be placed during the course of instruction. Appropriate language resource suggestions are given. These are sequenced according to the criteria of grammatical 'learnability' and semantic 'usefulness'.

The communication syllabus is based on a series of rhetorically graded communicative tasks and activities designed to feed the acquisition process and to mobilise and expand the learner's existing communicative capacity. The tasks and activities are chosen in terms of their potential for:

- harnessing existing pupil interests and awakening new ones
- promoting experiences of inherent educational value
- engaging the intellectual, emotional, creative and co-operative capacities of the pupils.

There are communicative tasks and activities related to the target communicative objectives of the instruction syllabus which tend to be set in an 'as if' framework. There are communicative tasks and project activities related to real contacts with adolescents in the foreign country (class links, pen-pal correspondence, visits and exchanges). There are communicative activities centred on the real world of the classroom in which the FL is used for a variety of normal social and pedagogical purposes. Finally, there is a whole range of information-gaps and other tasks and activities based on the pupils' world, relating this wherever possible to that of pupils in the foreign country.
Most of the above tasks and activities would be based on authentic materials treated and adapted for self and group access (cf Jones 1984). Listening material was to be created by Foreign Assistants on the basis of semi-scripts designed to effect some control on the nature of the subject matter (Geddes and White 1978).

The instruction syllabus can be seen either as a means of leading deliberately towards certain target objectives or as a means to remedy weaknesses exposed in communicative work based on the communication syllabus. The particular balance to be struck at any time between the instruction syllabus leading to communication, and the communication syllabus exposing gaps for the instruction syllabus to fill, remains a matter for teachers to determine in the light of their own classroom experience.

Having established a broad approach designed to promote communicative ability, I turn now to the problem of attempting to devise strategies to cope with differentiation and responsibility.

5.2 Strategies for coping with individual differences, for promoting pupil responsibility and for ensuring pupil success

"Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen." (Karl Marx)

5.2.1 Introduction

In this section an attempt is made to outline various alternative strategies for coping with individual differences and to describe the particular ones adopted in the GLAFLL project.

At the time of the change to comprehensive education FL teachers had adopted one of three alternative strategies. They had either imported the classical humanist curriculum in use in the senior secondary school and used this in all classes irrespective of level of ability; or through adopting a setting or streaming policy as early as possible, they were able to use the academic curriculum for the middle
to high flyers, and water it down for the others; or they retained the academic curriculum for the higher achievers and created an entirely different course for the others. In the latter case two broad alternatives were tried, the first in the form of the situational approach described earlier in Chapter 4, and the second in the form of a course centred on the study of the background of a particular country (or countries) in English, with most if not all of the FL components removed. The objections to the sort of watering down and removing of conceptual challenge that such courses for the lower achievers implied have been put by many educationists and perhaps most powerfully by Hirst:

"It is all too easy, with the best intentions in the world, to cease to teach the subject to the less able in any significant sense at all. By not really bothering whether or not they have got hold of the concepts and can use them, by being content with memorised statements, by allowing pure repetition of operations, by omitting anything which demands even the briefest unhearsed argument or justification, we simply evade all the problems and totally fail to develop any significant understanding. However, we accommodate ourselves to the less able, it must not be by losing the essential concepts, by losing genuine operations with them, by being uncritical of invalid reasoning and so on." (Hirst 1969)

As we saw in Chapter 1, however, none of the attempts outlined above succeeded in coming to terms with the problems in ways that satisfied pupils, teachers, or official evaluators. New strategies were required.

The mastery learning approach adopted by the Tour de France project was one such strategy. Since the GLAFLL project evolved against a background in which the mastery learning approach was being promoted by the Scottish Education Department, it is important to examine it and to indicate why it seemed to us to provide only a very limited solution.
5.2.2 The mastery learning approach

The mastery learning approach springs from an overtly reconstructionist 'ends-means' view of curriculum planning and from a consequent emphasis on nurture rather than nature. It has had a considerable impact on Scottish education in recent years. One might adduce four reasons for this:

- it is based on a relatively simple but powerful set of premises;
- it advocates the use of a common curriculum for all;
- it is designed to operate in mixed ability classes;
- it proposes that classes should continue to move as a whole from unit to unit.

All of the above had a particular attraction for those anxious to move away from an elitist tradition, and at the same time to resist the apparent shapelessness of an overtly progressivist approach.

The initial inspiration for the principles behind mastery learning had come from Carroll's (1963) hypothesis that a student's aptitude should not be viewed as the factor determining the level to which he could learn, but was more accurately defined as determining the amount of time he required to learn a particular task to a given level in ideal conditions. If each student were allowed the time he needed, and given the instruction he required, he could achieve whatever level he wished to (Carroll 1971a). Reiterating this, Bloom maintained that:

"if students are normally distributed with respect to aptitude for some subject and all students are given the same instruction ... then achievement measured at the subject's completion will be normally distributed ... conversely if students are normally distributed with respect to aptitude, but the kind and quality of instruction and learning time allowed are made appropriate to the characteristics and needs of each learner, the majority of students will achieve subject mastery, ... The normal curve is not sacred. It describes the outcome of a random process. Since education is a purposeful activity in which we seek to have students learn what we teach, the achievement distribution should be very different from the normal curve if our instruction is effective. In fact, our educational efforts may be said to be unsuccessful to the
extent that student achievement is normally distributed." (Bloom 1971)

In later writings Bloom went much further than Carroll had done, maintaining that:

"most students become very similar with regard to learning ability, rate of learning, and motivation for further learning when provided with favourable learning conditions." (Bloom 1976)

and

"Learning characteristics such as good-poor and fast-slow are alterable by appropriate school conditions. The research demonstrates that under appropriate conditions almost all can learn whatever the schools have to teach." (Bloom 1978)

Bloom proposed that the essential variables which were alterable were the pupil's past history of learning or "cognitive entry behaviour" to each learning task, and his "affective entry characteristics". These, combined with the "quality of instruction" the pupil received, determined the actual level and type of achievement reached by the pupil, his rate of learning, and the attitudes that he would emerge with regarding the subject matter, the school and himself.

Bloom proposed that pupils should learn in mixed-ability groups and move from unit to unit together, once they had all reached the predetermined criterion for mastery on each unit. Some might achieve this in the normal time provided, others might require extra time.

Bloom recognised that variations in pre-school learning experiences meant that each pupil had a learning history that had prepared him differently from other pupils with regard to the learning to be undertaken. Bloom, therefore, proposed that in the early stages of any course it was essential to concentrate attention on those with inadequate cognitive entry behaviour in order to remedy whatever weaknesses in their learning there might be.

"Inequality of treatment may be needed at least at certain stages of the learning process if children are to attain equality of learning outcomes." (Bloom 1976)
Bloom maintained that extra time spent on helping those with learning difficulties to achieve mastery in early units, and the inevitably slow start that this implied for all, would be compensated for by the fact that the learning of these initially slow pupils would tend to become as rapid as that of the initially faster learners.

"Although the variation in time taken and help required never reaches a vanishing point, we have observed sets in which the variation in time and help required on the later units was only about one-third of the variation observed on the first learning task in the sequential series." (Bloom 1976)

As will have been observed, Bloom's proposals are overtly reconstructionist. It is therefore natural that in his proposals for course design and implementation he should adopt an 'ends-means' approach. Course objectives were to be broken up into smaller unit objectives or learning tasks, each lasting from one to ten hours. These tasks were then to be analysed into elements (knowledge or skills), and the relations among the elements made explicit. Cues and directions were to be provided by the teacher to help the student to understand what to do to master the elements and relationships. Formative tests of a diagnostic nature, designed to provide feedback on the state of the students' learning, were to be given towards the end of a unit, since:

"the key to the success of mastery training strategies largely lies in the extent to which students can be motivated and helped to correct their learning difficulties at the appropriate points in the learning process." (Bloom 1976)

Bloom proposed various patterns of corrective remedial work for weaknesses exposed in a formative diagnostic test:
- small groups of pupils helping each other;
- self-access worksheets related to particular areas of weakness;
- tapes of programmed instruction units;
- direct teacher assistance;
- more advanced pupils helping weaker pupils.

Ideally corrective work was to be done outwith the regular classroom time.
Bloom claimed that these techniques obviated any requirement for predetermined differentiation, which he saw as the creation of a "pernicious and self-fulfilling prophecy".

"The instructor expects a third of his pupils to learn well what is taught, a third to learn less well, and a third to fail or just "get by". These expectations are transmitted to the pupils through school grading policies and practices and through the methods and materials of instruction. Students quickly learn to act in accordance with them, and the final sorting out through the grading process approximates the teacher's original expectations. A pernicious self-fulfilling prophecy has been created." (Bloom 1971)

Some strong claims based on case-studies in particular contexts have been made for mastery learning, not least that it "enables 75 to 90 per cent of the students to achieve the same high level as the top 25 per cent learning under typical group-based instructional methods" (Block 1971).

The Tour de France team adopted a weak version of the mastery learning approach which accepted that all pupils could achieve a certain level of mastery given the appropriate teaching. They were reluctant, however, to embrace the stronger claim that the rate of learning among initially slower and faster learners could relatively quickly be equalized (Johnstone, Mitchell and Parkinson 1980). In Stages 1, 2 and 3 of their course materials the concept of mastery of core objectives of a discrete functional and formal nature was retained, as was the principle that all pupils were to move as a whole class from unit to unit. Diagnostic tests were set towards the end of each unit, after which extension work was provided for high-flyers, and remedial work for those who had not achieved mastery on the core material.

Macrae (1983) describes an even more sophisticated version of the same approach, involving three levels of differentiated work after diagnostic testing - remedial work, reinforcement work for those who have only just achieved mastery, and extension work for the high-flyers.
Parkinson, Mitchell and Johnstone (1981) conducted a case-study of mastery learning involving the use of Tour de France materials with beginners in a small number of classrooms. For this they chose to restrict the concept of mastery to aural/oral skills and to structural and lexical matters, devising their own diagnostic tests for the purpose. In terms of the criteria they set, they were able to show that through use of mastery learning techniques "most of the pupils passed most of the time", though even with these limited aims "none of the teachers succeeded in eliminating failure completely on the final diagnostic check (ie after remediation)". 80% of the pupils obtained a mark of 80% or better in the summative attainment tests. They concluded:

"Over all ... we think that our study lends support to the hypothesis of a positive relationship existing between the implementation of a partial mastery learning strategy and high levels of attainment."

(Parkinson et al 1981)

It is possible, however, to criticise mastery learning on several grounds. Progressivists would argue that it fails to take into account that acquisition is not linear and that mastery does not occur on an all-at-once basis simply as a result of teaching. As Prabhu remarks:

"We take in several items, more or less at once; some of them only momentarily, superficially, others a little more, maybe one of them such that it is retained for a while. Thus the learner has at one time several things at several degrees of imperfection, and some of them mislearnt. These things are encountered again and some of them are learnt a little more and some of them which had been mislearnt modified and so on. Therefore the model is not one thing thoroughly at a time but several things at a time at several degrees of thoroughness." (Prabhu 1980b)

On this view a cyclical gradualist approach with less concern for immediate mastery might pay more dividends. As Parkinson et al point out:

"One class might be brought to complete mastery of three units ... whilst a parallel class using traditional methods might have attained partial mastery of ten, and learned more worthwhile things outside the basic course." (Parkinson et al 1981)
In so far as it sees teaching as able to cause internalisation at will, and fails to observe any distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning', the mastery learning approach would seem to be based, in part at least, on a fallacy.

A powerful argument that can be used against the strong approach to mastery learning, which sets out to bring about an equalization of achievement, is that this implies inequality of opportunity, since the high-flyers are to be held back by the low achievers until the learning rate of the latter catch up with the former. Leaving aside the question as to whether such a notion is not simply wishful thinking, I would argue that contriving an equalization of achievement is every bit as unacceptable a form of "pernicious self-fulfilling prophecy" as the one Bloom was aiming to avoid. Bloom's is an approach that insists that nurture can readjust the inequalities of nature. Teacher experience would indicate that this is an unlikely proposition.

"All students do not learn a foreign language - or anything else in the curriculum equally. Incontrovertible evidence of this fact, albeit circumstantial evidence, is provided by hundreds of thousands of teachers worldwide in whose classrooms student achievement runs the gamut from zero mastery to full mastery of the material to be learned." (Altman 1979)

Many educational psychologists would reject Bloom's view that the cognitive differences between children are entirely due to environment rather than being in part at least innate.

"Equality of innate ability is not a fact of nature, and any educational system founded on such beliefs is doomed to failure; equality in the sense of being permitted to develop whatever abilities one is born with to the highest degree is quite another matter. A democratic society is almost by definition dedicated to such ends." (Eysenck 1972)

An unfortunate corollary to the decision to predetermine mastery, and to test at regular intervals to ensure that it is being achieved, is that there is a risk of creating anxiety among the pupils, particularly among those who repeatedly find themselves in the "remedial" group after the test. Much of the current American 'humanistic'
concern (eg Rogers 1961, Curran 1972, Stevick 1980) springs from a reaction against such anxiety-creating techniques.

The most important concern of mastery-learning is to promote a feeling of success in the learner. A feeling of success, however, as indicated by Clark's (1967) findings, is not necessarily determined by the teacher, and is more a question of the pupil's own perceptions of what he/she wishes and is able to do. It seems more sensible to plan for differentiation in what constitutes success and mastery rather than to set common criteria arbitrarily. On this view a mastery level is a matter to be negotiated between teacher and pupil on the basis of what the teacher knows about that pupil and his/her aspirations, and what the pupil decides in terms of personal commitment. As Altman noted:

"Some learners would willingly and happily settle for a lower evaluation of their efforts, for example a B or a C instead of an A, if the lower evaluation assured the commitment of less of their time and energy." (Altman 1979)

A differentiated view of success accords with the fact that in inter-language development there is clearly a continuum of performance levels rather than one simple all-or-nothing mastery point.

To finish on a more positive note, however, while rejecting the ideology and some of the assumptions underlying mastery learning, it can be argued that some familiarity with the techniques of mastery learning can make an important contribution to teacher awareness and self-development. Some teachers, when adopting aspects of the approach, have seemed to find great value in:

- having to make their objectives more explicit to themselves and their pupils;
- keeping a more formal watch over pupil progress than they were accustomed to;
- attempting to respond to feedback from assessment in a more sensitive way;
- ensuring that pupils feel success in the mastery of unit-by-unit objectives.
Pupils have been shown to benefit from being helped:
- to approach the learning task in a more purposeful and deliberate way than usual;
- to achieve a feeling of success in every unit - an outcome often denied to the lowest achievers in conventional classes;
- to compete against the criteria laid down rather than against each other, thus encouraging them to work co-operatively rather than competitively.

5.2.3 The initial 'Graded Objectives in Modern Languages' schemes: A reconstructionist 'outside-in' approach

The traditional view of school FLL was the one outlined by Wilkins:
"A characteristic of the general language learning course is that the learner does not claim the return in his investment in learning until that learning has been proceeding for some years. He does not expect to be able to use the language communicatively as soon as the learning effort has begun, and since he or she is often in a situation where the occasion to use the language rarely arises, it does not matter if the development of communicative ability is deferred." (Wilkins 1974)

Trim (1978) has called this the "gradus ad Parnassum" approach - a seemingly endless climb up a "straight and narrow path beset with difficulties and dangers towards a distant goal which few but the truly devoted ever reach" (Trim 1978). Progress was seen in terms of a linear advance through the subject matter and was described with labels such as "beginner", "intermediate" and "advanced", with little attempt to be explicit about what these meant. What was "intermediate" in one system might be "advanced" in another.

The broad movement in Britain which now goes under the label 'Graded Objectives in Modern Languages' (GOML), embraces a variety of approaches to school FLL. It is an error made by a number of commentators (eg Byram 1984) to assume that all GOML schemes share the same approach to the school FL curriculum as the one outlined by the pioneers in Oxfordshire (Downes 1978, Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee 1978, Gordon 1980) and in York (Buckby 1976, Clarke 1980). Not only were very different approaches
to this introduced by Lothian (Clark 1978, 1980) and the East Midlands schemes (Dunning 1983), for example, but the original OMLAC and York proposals have themselves evolved considerably. Compare, for example, OMLAC 1978 with OMLAC 1983, or York Area Working Party 1978 with Buckby et al 1984. All schemes, past and present, however, whatever their differences, share the common objective of wishing to break down the traditional "gradus ad Parnassum" into smaller units set out in some sort of sequence from the bottom upwards. Through this they aim to provide appropriate and attainable transitional and end objectives for the whole range of pupils in school, some of whom opt out at the end of the compulsory period of FLL, while others go on to complete further studies or to take up a second FL. The notion of a graded approach to FLL is not a new one. It can be traced back at least to Comenius (1592-1670), who wrote of the child growing towards wisdom through a gradual "unfolding of the objective world to the senses" (Comenius: quoted in Howatt 1984). Comenius had envisaged a four stage education in a language, symbolised as a journey through the Temple from the outer porch to the inner sanctum. The pupil would progress through:

- the Vestibulum (the porch) in which a basic vocabulary sufficient for simple conversations would be provided;
- the Janua (the gates) in which there would be a textbook composed of graded texts of intrinsic value for expanding linguistic knowledge;
- the Palatium (the great court) in which there would be a concentration on the use of language in context and on style;
- the Thesaurus (the inner sanctum) in which comparisons and translations between languages would be made.

The study of a language was to be completed in a year and a half:

"The complete and detailed knowledge of a language, no matter which it be, is quite unnecessary and it is absurd and useless on the part of anyone to try and attain it." (Comenius – quoted in Howatt 1984)

Such views as these are uncannily reminiscent of those current in the contemporary debate about school FLL in Britain.
Following the move to comprehensive education and to FLL for all, Perren had called for an approach based on "levels":

"Each level needs its own useful surrender value, and determining exactly what this shall be calls for a great deal of careful experiment in many schools by many teachers ... It would indeed be capricious to put Modern Languages in the curriculum for all as a mere gesture, without specifying realistic goals..." (Perren 1972)

All GOML schemes have shared Perren's vision of a series of "levels", explicitly defined in some way, each with its own surrender-value. The early GOML schemes were based on the notion of a graded series of levels each expressed in the form of externally defined syllabuses (Harding and Honnor 1974) and common external tests (Davidson 1973, Page 1973, Harding and Page 1974, Buckby 1976, Clark 1977).

As a model, reference was made to the graded syllabuses and examinations produced by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music for instrumental performers. The analogy between the learning of a musical instrument and the learning of a foreign language seemed a particularly fruitful one. The musician practises notes, progressions, scales and arpeggios, and tackles simple pieces contrived to suit his capacity at the time. Gradually these pieces increase in complexity and in the demands made on the musicianship of the performer. Thus the musician practises deliberately, plays pieces tailored to his current ability, acquires musicianship, develops a deliberate control over his playing, and over time becomes increasingly aware of the nature and value of music. School FL learners also have to practise deliberately, carry out communicative tasks adapted to their level, acquire a feel for the language, develop deliberate stylistic control and over time become aware of the nature and function of language.

The examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music contained set pieces, theory and sight-reading. The Oxfordshire and York schemes for FLL were unfortunately to neglect the theory and the sight-reading aspects, and to concentrate solely upon the set pieces. The Lothian GLAFLL scheme, however, reintroduced 'sight-reading' in
the form of a concern for unrehearsed performance, and 'theory' in the sense of an overt concern for the grammatical and other rule-governed aspects of FLL (Clark 1979b, 1980).

The only other existing FL curriculum model which set out to break down FLL into 'units' or 'levels', and to retain the notion of surrender value for each, was the Council of Europe one (Council of Europe 1973). It is therefore not surprising that over the years the GOML groups have drawn heavily on Council of Europe documents (particularly the early Lothian and West Sussex schemes – see Clark 1979b, Garner 1981). It is also not surprising that the Council of Europe's network of projects in the school sector has also been influenced by GOML work (Bergentoff 1981, Harding 1983).

While providing guidelines as to how one might conceptualise a 'unit' or 'level', it was nevertheless clear that the Council of Europe's needs-related free-standing units, envisaged by Trim for adult learners (Trim 1973, 1978), would not be entirely suitable for school pupils. Somehow the concept of free-standing units with surrender-value had to be married to the notion of a common sequential general FL course whose wider educational aims and broad 'Bedarf' objectives would be similar for all pupils. It seemed unnecessary to wish to set different objectives for different pupils working towards the same level, since, as we have discussed earlier, school learners do not have readily definable objectives related to their vocational and/or social aspirations which can be immediately encapsulated within a series of free-standing units. Nor was the actual height of the Threshold Level as proposed by Van Ek (1973, 1975) of much immediate relevance to lower secondary school learners, since they were unlikely ever to reach such a level. Most Scottish commentators agreed that the Threshold Level, worked out by Van Ek, was nearer H Grade or CSYS than O Grade.

It was not possible, therefore, to accept the original claim that the Threshold level represented "a minimum level of foreign language competence ... below which no further levels could be usefully distinguished". Nor was it accepted that in school circumstances it
could be seen as a "short-term objective requiring no more than an average learning period of 8-9 months" (Van Ek 1975).

In contrast to the Council of Europe's original intentions for adults, all GOML schemes have:

- set out a number of levels below Threshold level;
- related one level to the next in a sequential way, while retaining the notion of each one forming a free-standing unit with its own surrender value.

The early levels in both the OMLAC and the York schemes were based on the notion of the pupil as potential tourist. Thus the syllabus and tests were set out in terms of tourist-related social and transactional tasks in various situations (OMLAC 1978, Clarke 1980).

Both the OMLAC and the York schemes adopted a one-dimensional 'outside in' view of progress. Their aim was to reduce the 'input' to be learnt to the sort of level expected as 'output' from the learner, and thus to concentrate on a thorough mastery of a highly restricted content. The distinction between the levels was seen largely in terms of the quantity of predictable phrases and vocabulary that the learners were expected to produce and to understand in the various situations given.

OMLAC also envisaged some sort of differentiation between the levels on a psychological basis. At Level 1 "the pupil is on a family visit with parents who do not speak the language, and the pupil acts as interpreter"; while at Level 2 "the pupil is going to France to stay with a French pen-friend" (OMLAC 1978). This concept was elaborated further by Harding and Naylor (1979) on the basis that a pupil's education in general could be seen to reflect a "distancing process from the self to the outside world". The plan for foreign language development that they produced, however, reflected mother-tongue development, forgetting that the pupils they were dealing with were already adolescents. This led them to propose, for example, that the reading of any fiction should be postponed till Level 4, and the need to draw inferences or to make any value judgements till Level 5.
Most GOML schemes followed the early OMLAC and York one-dimensional 'outside-in' approach to the establishment of 'levels' on the basis of tourism.

For those who wish a fuller picture of the origins and development of the GOML movement these have been well documented by Harding, Page and Rowell (1980) and Page (1983).

Attention is now turned to an alternative progressivist way of conceptualising progress in FLL.

5.2.4 A progressivist 'inside-out' approach: Levels of performance

Whereas the 'outside-in' approach was concerned to promote accuracy at each level over a small but growing formulaic content, the 'inside-out' approach aimed at enabling the pupil to cope with a much wider range of tasks but with less concern for accuracy.

'Inside-out' approaches have conceptualised progress in terms of scales of growing language ability. Such scales have generally been established as a series of ad hoc statements describing the sort of performance to be expected in a particular skill at a particular level, or as a series of statements related to a set of predetermined criteria thought to represent the essential features of communicative proficiency at the level in question. Examples of ad hoc statements at various levels are the FSI Language Proficiency Ratings (Wilds 1975), the IBM Foreign Language Level Rationale and Performance Chart (Appendix B in Trim 1978), Wilkins' Proposal for Level Definitions (Appendix C in Trim 1978), the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (Ingram and Wylie 1982), the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages - undated), Carroll's Sample Rating Scales (Appendix III in Carroll B1980), and the Graded Related Criteria proposed by the Joint Working Party on Modern Languages for the Standard Grade exam in Scotland (Scottish Examination Board 1984).
An example of the second type, in which statements at particular levels for particular skills are related to predetermined criteria, is Carroll's Oral Interaction Assessment Scale (Carroll B 1980, based on Munby 1978). This is set out in terms of the following criteria: size, complexity, range, speed, flexibility, accuracy, appropriacy, independence, repetition and hesitation. A further example of the second type is the RSA's characteristics of performance to be expected at the various levels of examination in Modern Languages (Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board - forthcoming). The latter attempts to describe features of performance to be expected at different levels in each skill against the following criteria: experiential competence, linguistic competence, rhetorical and discourse competence, fluency, socio-cultural appropriacy and strategies for coping with difficulties. Clearly there is no objective way of determining the number of levels or the size of the increments in the performance continuum. This is highlighted by the fact that Carroll B (1980) sets out 9 levels, Wilkins (in Trim 1978) 7, and the FSI (Wilds 1975) 5, each purporting to lead from zero ability to native-speaker-like proficiency.

All of these schemes suffer from the limitations pointed out by Trim (1978). They tend to employ impressionistic and relational terms, to which no precise meaning can be attached (eg 'adequate' or 'intelligible'). They also tend to over-discriminate at the lower end and under-differentiate at higher levels. More worrying, however, as Clark (1984) points out, they tend to assume that learners develop in all aspects of proficiency in roughly the same way along a predetermined path, whereas in reality one learner may develop fluency to a high level but remain relatively inaccurate, while another may do the reverse, and yet in terms of global proficiency an assessor might wish to give them the same overall grade. It might be better to attempt to chart progress in each of the sub-components of communicative proficiency separately. A learner might then be scored at a notional level 3 with respect to strategic competence, while remaining at a notional level 1 in sociolinguistic competence. This sort of scoring, however, is extremely complex, and may well
be impractical in the school setting. It would seem that all that we can do at present is to settle for the crude verbal descriptions at various levels to guide assessors.

One final point needs to be made. Whereas the 'outside-in' approach tended to adopt an all-or-nothing view of mastery, usually in the form of a 70 or 80% pass mark, the 'inside-out' approach acknowledged the fact that successful communication can be achieved at many levels, thus permitting not only differentiation across levels of work but within them as well.

I turn now to an outline of the GLAFLL framework of Stages and Levels which attempted to reconcile the 'outside-in' and the 'inside-out' views of progress.

5.2.5 The GLAFLL framework of Stages and Levels

The GLAFLL syllabus was to be broken down into Stages. Each Stage was to have its own explicit surrender value. It was to be realised in the form of an instruction syllabus with explicit objectives and a suggested language content, and a communication syllabus with suggested acquisition-promoting and communicative tasks and activities. Each pupil's progress was to be monitored within each Stage through internal assessment, until he/she was ready to take an external proficiency end-of-Stage test to mark successful achievement of that particular Stage, and readiness to move on to the next one.

A graded series of Levels of performance was also to be established based on the study of pupil performance on end-of-Stage communicative tasks, in order to develop as reliable a set of criteria as possible for monitoring pupil progress. In addition to this, progress in day-to-day learning was also to be monitored, and schools encouraged to develop their own internal system of assessment to inform the teaching/learning process. The GLAFLL framework attempted, therefore, to establish:

- a series of graded Stages with an instruction and communication syllabus for each;
- an internal assessment scheme designed to inform the teaching/learning process
- a Level of performance scale to monitor progress on end-of-Stage communicative tests.

Using this framework it was hoped that schools would be equipped to cope with differences in pupil achievement and proficiency, so that all pupils could achieve success on an appropriate Stage at an appropriate Level. Through negotiation with the teacher each pupil was to choose:

- an appropriate Stage to work at
- an appropriate Level of achievement on day-to-day learning tasks to maintain or to improve on
- an appropriate Level of performance on end-of-Stage tasks to aspire towards.

The scheme was eventually to cover all levels of FLL in school and to provide a framework for pupils of all abilities. Although ideally each Stage would represent a free-standing unit, to be worked through in whatever time-scale was required, it was accepted that the vast majority of schools would be operating in two-year blocks within the same pattern of relatively restricted 'drip-feed' provision. The decision as to how many Stages to have and the nature of the increments between them was determined according to these institutional constraints.

It was agreed that there should be three incremental Stages to cover the range of pupil achievement in S1/S2 (GLAFLL Document 1: Appendix 1). It was thought appropriate in S3/S4 to reintroduce Stage 3 as an appropriate unit for those who might only have attained a Stage 1 or 2 in the earlier years, and to add Stages 4 and 5 as further units for those who would go on. In S5/S6, Stage 5 would be reintroduced and Stages 6 and 7 added.

Whereas the objectives of the Stages from Stage 1 to 5 would be the same for all pupils in S1 to S4, those of Stages 5, 6 and 7 for pupils in S5 and S6 might vary according to the vocational,
professional, socio-cultural, specialist or leisure-based interests of the learners concerned (Lothian Regional Study Group in Modern Languages 1983). For all learners in S5 and S6, however, there would be a common core element of media information and social communication.

It was not envisaged that pupils should have to go through each Stage successively. Pupils would undertake whatever Stage they and their teachers judged most appropriate to them, given their present achievement level, apparent potential, personal commitment, and the amount of time at their disposal. The increments between Stages 1, 2 and 3, for example, would represent conceptualisations of the differences required to cater for the capacities of the very low achievers, the average achievers and the high achievers respectively. It was accepted that initial conceptualisations could at best be hypotheses, and that they would have to be amended in the light of classroom reality.

Each Stage was to represent an advance, both of a quantitative and of a qualitative nature over the preceding one. Each successive Stage would therefore:

- contain all of the previous Stages plus a bit more;
- call for a higher Level of communicative performance as a result of an expected increase in communicative capacity.

Each Stage would overlap the preceding one, making it possible but not easy for the teacher to cope with a range of pupils in the same class, some of whom might be working towards Stage 1, while others were aiming at Stage 2 or Stage 3.

The notion that at each successive Stage a higher Level of communicative performance was to be expected, led to the proposal that for each Stage an 'average' successful Level of performance on the tasks in the Stage test should be described, so that over the years explicit criteria for each Level could be established. This would avoid the danger associated with criterion-referencing, that criteria may
be plucked out of the air on the basis of intuition, and also overcome the problem associated with norm-referenced assessment, that pupils are assessed against each other rather than against explicit criteria. In this way it would be possible to raise the criteria expected from year to year, if the learners appeared to be learning better as time went by. Improvements in learning were expected to come from better learning conditions, promoted by better teaching, and not as is sometimes suggested as a result of arbitrarily raising the height of the bar to be jumped.

It was also agreed that in reality some pupils would perform above and below the notional 'average' level, and that there should be some way of acknowledging this. It was therefore decided to use a system of accreditation that would indicate the Stage worked at and the Level awarded. For those who clearly performed above the average Level, it seemed reasonable to suggest that they were well on the way towards the next Level of performance, and that they should, therefore, be awarded the next one up. For those below the Level normally required at the Stage in question, but who had nevertheless clearly succeeded in carrying out the tasks set, it was suggested that they should be seen as at a point on the continuum more appropriately associated with the Level below. It was thus possible, for example, for a pupil to be given an award on Stage 2 at Level 2 (indicating an average Level for that Stage), or at Level 3 (indicating a high Level for that Stage more closely associated with Stage 3), or at Level 1 (indicating a low Level for that Stage more closely associated with Stage 1). Thus an overlapping series of Levels was to be established in line with the overlapping nature of the Stages. Should the pupil have been judged unable to carry out the tasks set at a particular Stage, then no Level could be awarded at all. Since pupils and teachers had a lengthy period within which to negotiate what was an appropriate Stage to undertake, and since pupils in principle would only take a test, when they had shown on the basis of their internal assessment profile that they were ready for it, it was hoped to remove or at least minimise failure.
As set out in Clark and Hamilton (1984) (Appendix 4, p4) the framework of Stages and Levels established for the S1–S4 years was as follows:

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At the start of the Project it had to be accepted that only in S1 and S2 were pupils of all abilities likely to work within the GLAFLL framework, since in S3 and S4 the most able ones would be preparing for the very different objectives of the O Grade examination. Effectively, therefore, Stage 5 was not likely to attract any
clientele. Stages 3 and 4, however, would attract both those who were working towards CSE Mode 3 with the Northern Regional Examinations Board, and those who preferred to work towards the regional GLAFLL awards. It was agreed that as far as possible work on all 5 Stages should be pursued in the hope that eventually the proposed new national examination system would be able to draw on the GLAFLL blueprint and experiences. Fortunately for all those Lothian teachers who worked on GLAFLL, events have proved that the work effected was not in vain, since the new standard Grade proposals are based to some extent on GLAFLL work.

One of the important principles of the project was that individual schools and teachers were required to participate actively in the planning of their own particular version of GLAFLL. Since the various Stages towards which pupils would work were relatively long-term events, and might in some cases take up to two years to complete, it was decided that each school should establish its own series of Waystages leading to a particular Stage or range of Stages (GLAFLL Document 9: Appendix 1). The number of Waystages that a school might decide to set out would depend on internal school policies, preferences and constraints. In practice it was normal for schools to have between 3 and 4 Waystages during a two-year period. Waystaging involved matching the content suggested for each Stage in the GLAFLL Syllabus Guidelines (Lothian Regional Study Group on Modern Languages 1978/79, updated by Clark and Hamilton 1984) against one's own intuitions, pupil wishes and the commercial and home-made resources available. It was then necessary to draw up a scheme of work to cover syllabus content, resources to be used or created, and assessment to be given, in order to lead pupils from wherever they were to wherever they wished to go, through a series of staging posts which provided short-term transitional targets to be reached.

The policy in an increasing number of schools for having mixed ability classes till the end of S2 meant that, although it might be possible for all pupils to work on the same first Waystage in S1, it became increasingly necessary to provide differentiated work beyond this (GLAFLL Document 15: Appendix 1).
5.2.6 Mixed ability or setting?

"The teacher of the streamed class or set is inclined to perceive the individual through the group ... through the fiction that the group is significantly homogeneous ... The teacher of mixed ability is impelled to advance the authenticity of his knowledge and understanding of individual children and to promote individual learning as one of his predominant methods." (Daunt 1975)

The GLAFLL project adopted a neutral stance as regards the organisation of pupils into sets or mixed ability, since this was essentially a matter for schools to determine through consensus. There were clearly powerful arguments in favour of mixed ability on grounds of equality of value and of fraternity, but the pragmatic virtues were less certain. As a result of a large research project the NFER had concluded:

"There are no certain outcomes, either positive or negative which can be assumed to follow inevitably from mixed ability grouping or, probably, from any other form of organisation." (Reid et al 1981)

This research revealed that where the teacher is comfortable with mixed ability grouping, through having built up strategies and resources to enable pupils to work individually and in groups, this produces positive results. On the other hand, where teachers are forced to teach a mixed ability class against their will, and/or without having formulated appropriate strategies, failure and frustration for both teacher and pupils ensue (Reid et al 1981, Corbishley 1977). All too frequently Reid et al had come across schools where, as one Head had admitted:

"We teach mixed ability groups but we do not do mixed ability teaching." (Reid et al 1981)

Despite the positive reports on the beneficial effects of group teaching in FLs in mixed ability classes in Scotland by Howgego (1971), Leitch (1972), and Johnstone (1972, 1973), the overwhelming majority of FL teachers undoubtedly disapproved of mixed ability teaching, largely, it must be said, because:

- they had not been helped to come to terms with the philosophical and educational arguments that lay behind it
- they were ignorant of the pragmatic strategies required to make it succeed
- it was frequently argued that the teacher's contract and conditions of work did not provide adequate time or finance for preparation of the necessary resources for a more learner-centred classroom
- class sizes were deemed too large for effective monitoring of group work.

Most FL teachers, therefore, agreed with Linton (1973) when he argued in favour of setting from Easter of the first year, which he claimed improved motivation and discipline instantaneously. Reinforcement of the desirability of setting as early as possible also came from a number of influential sources. The HMI in England and Wales (1977) remarked:

"There seem to be no grounds for believing that mixed ability grouping can offer any advantages to the modern language class, even in the hands of an able teacher; in the hands of those less skilled or experienced it can have positively harmful effects."

(Her Majesty's Inspectorate 1977)

And at a Colloquium at the University of Sussex, the assembled delegates recommended:

"From the end of the first year, pupils learning foreign languages should be arranged in homogeneous groups. Mixed ability is not suitable for languages and should be resisted even in schools where it is practised for all other subjects. It requires skill, energy and resources beyond those possessed by most teachers."

(Bearne and James 1976)

While remaining neutral as to the virtues or disadvantages of mixed ability classes, the GLAFLL project, by the nature of the approach adopted, insisted on the need for teachers to come to terms with various modes of work including individual, paired, group, and whole class activities. It was believed that it was possible over time to work towards an orderly transition from a transmissive teacher-directed classroom towards a more differentiated learner-centred one (GLAFLL Document 23: Appendix 1).
Although the project has only just turned its attention to this area, it seems important at this juncture to attempt to outline those individual characteristics of learners that seem likely to affect FLL in school (GLAFLL Document 30: Appendix 1).

5.2.7 Individual learner characteristics

It seems clear that although differential achievement is one important dimension giving rise to individual variation, there are many others which make classes that are homogeneous in terms of achievement heterogeneous in many other respects.

Various writers have attempted to establish lists of individual characteristics which have some bearing on FLL, to which teachers should aim to respond (eg Altman 1979, Chastain 1975, McDonough 1981, Krashen and Terrell 1983, Stern 1983). In terms of school FLL the most important would seem to be sex, cognitive, affective and social maturity, language experience and language awareness, aptitude factors, personality, learning styles, and motivational variables. These are discussed briefly below.

5.2.7.1 Sex

Sex appears to discriminate in favour of girls in adolescent school foreign language learning, particularly among lower socio-economic groups (Burstall et al 1974, Hawkins 1981). That girls do better than boys would seem to be connected with the fact that in adolescence girls mature earlier and develop self-confidence and outward-looking tendencies earlier than the less mature, more self-conscious boys. There is also, undoubtedly, a sexual stereo-typing effect. Boys are typically guided towards scientific/technological careers, while girls are directed towards commercial/secretarial ones, where languages are perceived to be more useful. For boys Modern Languages appears to be a 'sissy' subject and one of little immediate vocational relevance. Teachers of Modern Languages in British schools tend also to be predominantly female - in Lothian this year, for example, the ratio is 192 female teachers to 92 males. This, too, no doubt affects the way in which the subject is perceived.
5.2.7.2 Cognitive, affective and social maturity

Most 12 year olds will not yet have attained Piaget's formal-operational stage, where they are able to deal relatively confidently with generalisations or with abstract language rules. Most will still be operating at the concrete level, and will require considerable contextual support in deriving and in handling abstract rules.

"The intellectual evaluations of younger adolescents are dominated by circumstantial and descriptive comment limited to the here and now. The capacity to hold more than one hypothesis and discuss a problem in terms of alternative possibilities is a feature of late adolescent or early adult thinking." (Peel 1971)

A few adolescents may be comfortable in formal operations by the time they start language learning and may have become "rule-gatherers" (Hatch 1974); the majority however will find this difficult. Yet, as Collis and Biggs point out:

"Deliberately choosing to present material at a totally concrete level, requiring no abstractions on the part of the student, may disadvantage those students who are capable of giving extended abstract responses, by masking the generalisations or patterns that they should be searching for." (Collis and Biggs 1979)

Affective and social maturity are also important in a communicative approach to FLL, where the individual's experience of co-operating with others and of managing tasks through communication becomes an important variable. Adolescents can be expected to vary enormously in the extent to which they have learnt to decentre from their own concerns and viewpoints.

5.2.7.3 Language experience and language awareness

A number of studies have found a positive correlation between tests involving mother-tongue ability and FLL success (eg Carroll 1971b, Pimsleur et al 1963, von Wittich 1962). Pimsleur (1968), Carroll and Sapon (1959), and Green (1975) all discovered in their various research studies that the ability to perceive pattern is highly correlated with success in FLL. It seems likely that this grammatical
ability together with memorising ability may lie behind Oller's "grammar of expectancy" (1972), which enables the language user to predict from past context what is likely to come. Oller found that this ability measured through cloze tests correlated with success in reading comprehension and in listening comprehension. Hawkins concludes:

"The evidence from all these research areas points to an underlying factor in foreign language learning closely similar to what we have earlier called 'awareness of language'." (Hawkins 1981)

5.2.7.4 Other aptitude factors

There would seem to be an IQ factor correlated with success in school FLL (Gardner and Lambert 1959, Pimsleur et al 1963, Green 1975).

There would also seem to be a factor of general academic ability as manifested in school grades that makes for success in FLL (von Wittich 1962, Burstall 1975).

5.2.7.5 Personality factors

There are a number of personality variables that are said to affect the way in which people prefer to learn FLs, and the extent to which they may be successful.

Extroverts who are willing to take risks may benefit more from an approach that lays stress on their involvement in communication, while introverts may be more at home with a formal approach that attempts to ensure accuracy before they venture forth. Risk-takers may under-monitor their performance, while the more cautious may over-monitor (Krashen 1981).

Guiora et al (1975) claimed to have found that the ability to empathise, ie to take the other person's point of view, is related to successful FLL. In an earlier study (Guiora et al 1972) he had postulated the existence of a "language ego", built up over time through the mother-tongue, which took the shape of a "self-representation with physical outlines and firm boundaries". At the
heart of this was pronunciation - "the way we sound". Learning a new language meant taking on a new "self-representation", which might appear threatening or attractive depending on the learner's empathic capacity.

"Individual differences in the ability to approximate native-like pronunciation should reflect individual differences in the flexibility of psychic processes or as we have chosen to conceptualise this ability empathic capacity." (Guiora et al 1972)

Most teachers will certainly have come across the particularly British phenomenon of pupils whose allegiance to the ethnocentricity of the peer-group, and whose reluctance to appear to show interest in FLL, leads them to resist making efforts to pronounce the FL properly. Indeed a certain prestige is attached to those who hold out against this longest!

5.2.7.6 Learning styles

Individuals vary in the way in which they prefer to learn.

Field-dependent learners are heavily reliant on a context for their learning. Field-independent learners are more able to handle language items out of context, and to transfer them to other situations. They are also more able to cope with ambiguity.

Some learners appear to prefer holistic forms of learning, while others prefer serialist ones. The former prefer to learn through global contextualised activity, shaping their behaviour as a whole more and more closely to a model, while the latter prefer to have learning tasks broken down into their component parts and to build up towards the whole. Holists are adventurous and need space to experiment in. Serialists are prudent and need guidance and reassurance.

Broad categorisers tend to overgeneralise a limited language rule. Narrow categorisers tend to limit the application of a rule to the context in which it was encountered.
A reflective learner tends to review all the evidence before making a choice, whereas an impulsive one takes a gamble after a quick review (Brown 1973).

Traditional formal teaching methods may be said to advantage analytic, field-independent, reflective learners, but current more global approaches to school FLL may cater better for the holistic, field-dependent, broad-categorising, impulsive learner.

Hosenfeld (1975) divides learners into those who require a great deal of structure ("low conceptual level" students), those who require some structure ("intermediate conceptual level"), and those who work best with less structure ("high conceptual level"). Each requires a different amount of direction from the teacher for cognitive and emotional security.

5.2.7.7 Motivational variables affecting school FLL

In a study of motivational variables among 10, 14 and 17/18 year old learners of French in Edinburgh schools (Clark 1967), it was found that those who claimed to find French interesting were on the whole the same people who tended to find French study useful. It is difficult to know which motivation might have led to which, but it suggests that if the teacher can make lessons interesting the pupils may see an eventual purpose in learning French, and vice versa, if the teacher can make the lessons seem relevant to their leisure or career prospects the pupils may find the subject interesting. In this study it was discovered that more than half of the pupils in the total sample found the subject interesting, with the 10 year olds reflecting a greater motivation than the 14 year olds or 18 year olds, and the girls more than the boys. Dissatisfaction with courses increased with age. Particular distaste was expressed for grammar drills, pronunciation work, and telling stories orally from pictures. The situations and topics in the course material were found by 14 year olds in particular to be trivial and uninteresting. Filmstrips used in audio-visual courses were disliked. The language laboratory was disliked by some pupils, because they felt harassed when they
were not given a chance to understand what they were listening to, or to react adequately to questions when answering them. They disliked the fact that the teacher might secretly be monitoring their endeavours. It is interesting to note that inability to understand what was said in the foreign language, either by the teacher or on the tape-recorder, was the most frequently mentioned cause for feelings of anxiety, frustration and failure. There was universal agreement among pupils that there was not enough real conversation, even though some pupils expressed anxiety at being asked to speak, and some (particularly boys) disliked role-play in the form of acting out memorised dialogues. It was felt that there was too much concentration on reading non-authentic texts, and on various forms of non-functional writing. There was a strong desire expressed for more authentic foreign material in the form of magazines, songs, records, films etc.

It was found that pupils were very unlikely to choose to do French simply because they liked the teacher, but that the teacher was an important factor in their motivation, particularly among girls of all ages.

From this research it appeared that in Edinburgh, socio-economic background played no part in determining the initial level of motivation towards FLL. It also appeared that the vast majority of parents seemed to favour the study of French according to the pupils. Parental encouragement, as perceived by the pupils, was associated positively with pupil attitudes towards France and French learning.

The pupils' own acquaintanceship with France and things French was associated both with motivation and with favourable attitudes towards France and the French. It is difficult to know whether being interested in French leads to the desire to get acquainted with France and the French, or vice versa. As in Burstall's findings (1975), however, actual contact with France was found to be related positively to motivation. In Burstall's study it was also seen to be correlated with achievement.
It is interesting to report that in Clark's study, the self-ratings that 10 and 14 year old pupils made in terms of perceived global success in learning French in general, and in speaking French in particular, were not closely related to the teachers' estimate of their position in class. This suggested that feelings of success were individually perceived and not as rigidly determined by position in class as maintained, for example, by Bloom (1976).

The final conclusions of this study were:

"Motivation seems to be even more a matter of individual personality and teacher effect than was hypothesised... If class and home background... are not significantly associated with pupil motivation, then it must be personal attitudes, personal goals, personal feelings of success and failure, and personal intrinsic interest that is motivating the pupils... This survey would suggest... that it is therefore up to the teacher to motivate his pupils by making French pleasant, giving pupils reasons for learning it, making them feel successful at it, and providing direct experience of people and things French."

(Clark 1967)

5.2.8 Strategies for coping with individual differences within the classroom and for promoting pupil responsibility

There are various strategies that might be adopted to cope with individual variables. At one extreme it might be decided to ignore the differences and to treat all pupils alike for ill-conceived egalitarian reasons, or because the differences are too complex to be tackled. At the other extreme it might be suggested that teachers should adapt their teaching style, and the learning materials offered, to suit each individual. Even if there were the time available for such a policy, our present state of knowledge about how to effect such a procedure would render this impossible. Some, such as Johnstone (1982), have proposed a reconstructionist strategy of training pupils to adopt the characteristics associated with 'good learners'. While this might be feasible in certain study habit areas, it is unlikely that in aspects of personality, for example, the naturally introverted and cautious can be persuaded to become
risk-takers, or the careless and carefree to become optimal monitor users. Others might suggest that the best teachers can do is to be aware of the differences involved, so that they might diagnose the cause of particular learning problems. This tactic would only be of use if they then knew how to set about rectifying the problem.

It seemed, during the early phase of the GLAFLL project, that the most promising approach to adopt was to attempt to develop strategies that would provide the learners with some growing space, and some areas of responsibility, so that they could discover how they themselves learnt best. Teachers could not be expected to be in all the minds of all the learners at once. Negotiation seemed to be the only way to resolve the problem. The teacher would have to learn to listen to the pupil, to interpret needs, and to negotiate the way forward.

"It is far better to engage the student in a sort of conversation about how he ought to learn. I have already ranked free learning as worse than an organised strategy ... and I am now saying that even better than programming is the sort of conversational interaction in which the student is presented with strategic alternatives and is allowed to choose between them." (Pask 1970)

Heindler comes to a similar conclusion in her project among Austrian school learners:

"Wir meinen, daß der Lehrer — mehr als bisher — Unterrichtszeit darauf verwenden soll, um mit den Schülern über ihr Lernen zu reden. Es soll auch Ziel des kommunikativen Englischunterrichtes sein, einen Denkprozeß bei den Schülern in Gang zu setzen, was den eigentlichen für das Handeln in einer fremden Sprache wichtig ist und was zu tun ist, wenn dieses mißlingt." (Heindler 1980)

It is interesting to note that, as in the GLAFLL project, Heindler (1980) thought it important that all learners should try to come to terms with a wide variety of learning experiences and teaching styles, such as they would meet in the world beyond school, and that they should be encouraged to develop their own strategies for coping with these. The danger of restricting what was offered to learners to
accord solely with their strengths and preferences was clearly recognised.

In coping with individual variation the early GLAFLL years were devoted to promoting ways of developing pupil responsibility. In agreement with Allwright it was felt that:

"Language teaching that does not cope satisfactorily with the problem of independence training is simply a sad waste of time, no matter what else gets done well in the classroom."

(Allwright 1979)

With the size of classes, amount of hours, and variety of learning tasks teachers now had to manage, it was essential for them to share responsibility. What was required was to discover strategies through which different levels of responsibility could be encouraged to suit both teacher and learner.

As Dickinson (1983) points out there is "a notional scale from fully directed to fully autonomous learning", with an infinite variety of practices involving choices of one sort or another in between. Learners may choose to work alone or to work with others, to accept responsibility for finding appropriate materials or to ask for teacher guidance, to evaluate their own efforts or be evaluated by the teacher, to pursue their own objectives or to follow a common set of goals.

The project attempted to encourage experimentation in the provision of:

- a choice of Stage to work towards;
- a choice of activities/learning experiences;
- a choice of level of achievement to aim for in day-to-day work;
- a choice of level of communicative performance to aspire towards on the end-of-Stage test;
- a choice of when to be assessed;
- a choice of level of commitment to give to the work.

Pupils would be encouraged to take some level of responsibility and be enabled:

- to work individually on assignments and self-evaluative procedures;
- to work in groups with others and to determine together how they could best contribute to the common task in hand;
- to negotiate and plan their work over a certain time-span and thus learn how to set themselves realistic objectives and devise a means of attaining them;
- to monitor their own progress through progress cards;
- to record their knowledge for themselves for revision purposes;
- to search out information for themselves from dictionaries, grammar books, and commercial or teacher-made self-instructional material;
- to elicit rules from language in use and to discuss their hypotheses with others;
- to maintain a folder of completed written work and a personal cassette(s) of spoken work;
- to evaluate their own work.

I now turn to an examination of the particular strategies adopted in the GLAFL project to carry out the above objectives. These were set out in GLAFL Document 25, p8 and 9: Appendix 1.

5.2.8.1 Progress cards and negotiation

The progress card has been a feature of the GLAFL project since its inception. (See GLAFL Document 10: Appendix 1). Over the years it has come to be used in a variety of different ways to perform a number of different functions.

It has been seen as a means of making the ongoing learning content and objectives explicit to the learner, as a means of negotiating with the learner what to do next, and it has been used as a learning diary or after-the-event description of what the pupil has done. For all of these roles it has been seen as essential that each pupil has his/her individual progress card.

The prototype suggested had three columns (Clark 1980), to which a fourth has been added. In the first column the learning tasks were to be set out. In the second column a space was left for pupils to
tick when they had completed the task to their own satisfaction. In the third column a space was left for the teacher (or a peer if appropriate) to tick, should there be a need for a check to be made. The additional fourth column was for pupil, peer or teacher to assess performance on the learning activity, according to the scheme of levels of achievement worked out by individual schools for the profiling of pupil progress.

In the early stages of the Project the first column tended to contain lists of discrete functions and notions, eg:

- I can say my name.
- I can ask for a railway ticket
- I can count from 1 to 10.

(See GLAFFL Document 10: Appendix 1)

This led to a great deal of 'mim-mem' teaching and learning, which was often not extended into communicative activity. For subsequent versions of the progress card it was recommended that holistic activities should be set down and that these might then be broken down into functions or notions where relevant (see Syllabus Guidelines Part 1 p 10: Appendix 4). This has led to a concentration on communication as well as on atomistic semantic components.

The pupil progress card would have permitted the institution of a fully fledged individualised contract scheme, such as that adopted in the Dalton plan (Grittner 1975). This latter however had led to much pupil dissatisfaction.

"It's a system under which the teachers do nothing and the pupils have to find everything out for themselves. At least, that's what it looks like to me ... The Dalton thing is a washout. No one can understand a thing ... There is no way of working in the lab. because of the noise. It's the same every day. At the end of the month you have to hand in your tasks and nothing is finished ... Damn that Dalton Plan." (Ognyov 1928)

Findings from this and other contract schemes (eg Miller and Hargreaves 1925) seemed to indicate that students did not like a permanent individualised learning mode. It would appear that the
refusal to allow the teacher to negotiate with learners or to play a more active role in planning, instructing and responding to individual differences, made these contract schemes just as inflexible as the teacher-directed classrooms they sought to replace.

Three styles of negotiation through the progress card emerged - a weak style, an intermediate one, and a strong one. In the weak version the teacher determined what should be done in advance, and made up a progress card for the class which was then distributed to each individual. Negotiation in this style meant explicitation of the objectives and activities to ensure that pupils understood very clearly what was expected of them. Although the pupils might have considerable freedom to carry out the tasks in their own way to their own level, they would be given little or no choice in the formulation of them. Teachers who were wedded to their course books tended to adopt this style, and to set out progress cards that followed their exact sequence of objectives and activities. By discussing the tasks and activities to be performed, however, the teacher was taking an important step in orientating the pupils towards what had to be done, and in attempting to engage their interest and their involvement. Without such negotiation there was the risk that the pupils' preconceived intentions as to what was to be derived from the exercise would not be the same as the teacher's.

The intermediate style of negotiation is well described by Boomer:

"Here the teacher ... reflects ... to find worthwhile curriculum content and strategies based on past experience, coming to fairly non-negotiable conclusions about the basic content of the unit ... At this stage the teacher talks openly to children about the topic to be covered, why it is to be included, why it is important and what constraints prevail ... The next step is for teacher and children to plan the unit, the activities, the goals, the assignments and the negotiable options. ... When the products of learning have been written, made, modelled, promoted or dramatised, the teacher and children carry out the crucial process of reflection." (Boomer 1982)
In GLAFL classrooms what tended to happen was that the teacher would determine the activity to be undertaken, which might involve, for example, going to a cafe to get something to eat and drink. Pupils would then suggest what sort of language activities this might give rise to. They would then attempt to work out in groups how the scenario might develop, and would ask for help from the teacher when required. Gradually a number of different versions of the same activity would emerge and would be subjected to examination and reflection by all.

In the strong style of negotiation objectives and activities are determined entirely through negotiation, and the pupils have a genuine say in the formulation of tasks and in the contributions they will make to them. Thus, for example, the pupils in one school created their own first progress card on the basis of those expressions they felt they needed to survive in a beginner's German class.

![PUPIL PROGRESS CARD 1](image)

(Ferguson 1984)
In the same school a demotivated third year non-certificate class was given a choice of what activities they wished to learn through, and were able to spend a year learning French through various culinary pursuits. It was reported that they enjoyed their French lessons and learnt a great deal into the bargain.

In all schools progress cards enabled pupils to work by themselves and in pairs or groups with appropriate resource material. Such self-generated activity was new to FLL. They also provided a visible record of progress achieved - an important motivation in a subject where it is often difficult for learners to get a sense of advance at all. They could be referred to for revision or further practice purposes. There were also reports of pupils using them to attempt to teach their parents some aspects of the FL for holiday or other purposes.

The additional fourth column for indicating the level of achievement meant that over the weeks the teacher could attempt to negotiate with each individual pupil about the sort of level to be maintained. This could be determined on the basis of that pupil's apparent potential, normal achievement pattern, and professed aspirations. Originally a three-point scale of assessment was proposed where 1 indicated a "low but adequate" level of achievement, 2 an "average to good" one, and 3 a "high" one. Pupils would only be assessed when they were ready. The practice of giving a diagnostic test to a whole class all at the same time was not favoured, since it was shown to lead to the same inevitable small group of pupils failing to master the objectives on each unit. In the GLAFLL approach, in principle, no-one was to be tested unless they felt ready. Such a practice was commonplace in art or craft classes, where pupils worked on the creation of a product - a picture, a design, a model of some sort, a cake, or a sculpture or whatever - until they were ready to submit it. There would be no question in such classes, other than perhaps under examination conditions, of making all pupils submit their product for evaluation at the same moment. There seemed little point in testing pupils whose conceptual frameworks were incomplete, or whose skills
were not yet developed enough for them to feel ready to submit themselves to a test. In practice however it was discovered that it was necessary to encourage and cajole some pupils to test out their knowledge, since they would insist on being word-perfect before attempting anything, while with others it was more a question of persuading them to practice a bit more, since they were often all too willing to be tested before having attained a reasonable level of achievement.

Progress cards were private, and no public record was made of any of the levels of achievement attained. This was deemed extremely important, since it encouraged pupils to wish to be assessed by peers or by a teacher in order to monitor their own progress without any fear of an official mark being taken of the results. Official mark-taking was restricted to class tests, or to Waystage tests, the former taken when the teacher decided they should be done, and the latter taken when pupils felt that they had completed or revised the various progress cards leading up to a particular Waystage to their own satisfaction.

It must be added that many tasks and activities on the progress card involved no assessment at all. Some would involve a self-assessment on an individual assignment, while others would ask pupils to note down what they had done (eg a book read or a tape listened to etc).

5.2.8.2 Language resource booklets

Pupils were encouraged to keep a 'Language resource booklet', or a 'This is what I know' jotter, in which they learnt how to record their knowledge in a disciplined and organised way (Appendix 4, p12). There were several reasons for this:

- there was a fear that the emphasis on speech might lead to a great deal of material passing by without leaving much trace in the memory;
- pupils of all levels of achievement insisted on seeing things in writing, since it helped them to remember them;
- it encouraged pupils to learn how to record useful information in an easily recoverable fashion;
- through the way in which they were encouraged to record the information, pupils could be helped to understand the rule-based nature of language;
- it enabled pupils to revise the knowledge they had learnt, just as the progress card enabled them to rediscover the activities they had performed.

The prototype suggested in the GLAFLL project was a blank booklet in which each page had a heading indicating what would be recorded there. The booklet had a page index and was divided into various sections covering functions, notions, grammar, and phrases and vocabulary related to particular topic areas. In this way pupils learnt to record information in the appropriate section in a way that helped them to get some feeling for the way in which language could be described and discussed. This seemed a much more purposeful way of recording knowledge than the traditional unsystematised vocabulary jotter. The practice enabled pupils to build for themselves their own reference systems adding items as they went along. Inevitably it was found that when left to their own devices pupils would dutifully record everything without passing it through a personal filter and discriminating between that which they needed to note down and that which they did not. It was believed, however, that only through the experience of doing it, and through reflection upon this, would they become more proficient at this important aspect of study skill work.

5.2.8.3 Folders of work and personal cassettes

Teachers were also encouraged to help pupils keep a folder of their best completed written work and a cassette of their best spoken work. It was found particularly motivating for pupils to listen to their own earlier efforts at speech in the FL. This demonstrated to them that despite the pauses, hesitations and errors that they inevitably still displayed, they had made recognisable progress.
5.2.8.4 Activity options

GLAFL material production has been restricted to the creation of communicative material to insert into the more structured and less proficiency-inclined commercial courses. It is to the activity options that such materials afford that attention is now turned.

The notion of activity options is not a new one. It has been common practice in many institutions to give learners a choice of activity on a haphazard or on a programmed basis (Geddes 1978, Cross 1980, and various articles in Geddes and Sturtridge 1982b). It is also becoming more common for materials to provide learners with a choice of level to work at within an activity area (eg Bibliobus 1982/83).

What was required was the gradual building up of banks of graded material (written, taped and on video), each treated for self-access or group-access, without the need for a teacher to control and direct the use of them. In order for activity options to function successfully pupils had to learn how to:

- decide what activity to do;
- find the material for themselves;
- understand the instructions or cues given;
- work through the material by themselves or with others;
- correct or evaluate themselves or the group's efforts where appropriate.

It takes an enormous amount of time, and trial and error, to build up such banks, but the GLAFL framework, through providing a swapshop of school-made resources, has gone a long way to resolving this problem. There is little doubt that it is more the increased availability of such self-access or group-access resources that has brought many Lothian teachers to experiment with activity options, with group and paired work, and with aspects of devolved responsibility, than the pedagogical arguments in favour of such practices.

The GLAFLL-inspired self-access or group-access graded material now available, much of it about to be published (see Appendix 3), includes
material for listening, reading, communicative tasks, simulations, games, pen-pal correspondence, and micro-activities (only a few as yet). In addition to these, most schools have developed their own self-instruction work sheets for various grammar areas. Most will also have a regular supply of teenage reading material in the FL.

With activity options at school level, it has been shown that some teacher guidance in the choice of activities and of levels of material is essential. Pupils are all too ready to choose the games options and to play them ad infinitum! It is important to ensure that over time they cover a range of different activities. It is also important to ensure that each pupil chooses a task that he will be able to tackle, but not without putting some effort into overcoming the problems, into the discovery of needed information, and into the creation of a personal or group solution.

It has also been shown to be vital that the teacher walks round and assists. The teacher also needs to make a mental or unobtrusive written note of repeated errors which occur, some of which may be corrected on the spot, others of which it may be better to deal with later.

5.2.8.5 Equipment available

Innovations have also been made in the provision and lay-out of equipment. Instead of having a language laboratory, which has to be timetabled and which encourages a lockstep method of use, classrooms are gradually being equipped with peripheral work-stations. These take the form of a continuous work-top along a wall (or walls) to which pupils can quickly draw their chairs. Above these, at an appropriate height, are cassette-recorders placed vertically against the wall on shelves. Individually or in pairs pupils can work at these on listening material or on individual or paired speaking activities. The cassette-recorders can be switched to class, group, or individual mode, thus permitting a variety of activities to take place.
The work-stations are designed in such a way, that when and if individual video monitors become available they can be added (McDowall and Mulphin 1983). Similarly micros may soon be available at a cost which would permit their use for small groups, pairs or individuals. It is possible to look forward to the day when micros, cassette recorders and video monitors might all be interlinked at the same work-station.

5.3 Envoi

Having established the broad approach to promoting communicative ability and to differentiation that was adopted in the GLAFLL project, the final chapter is devoted to a description of the CR process and to syllabus and assessment work. Finally an informal evaluation of the project is attempted.
### Chapter 6

**GLAFLL: The Process and The Product**

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CHAPTER 6

GLAFLL: THE PROCESS AND THE PRODUCT

6.1 The process of CR in the GLAFLL project

"It is in the long run through the raising of the level of consciousness of teachers and, as a result of this, through the adoption of better practices, that our learners will experience better learning." (GLAFLL Document 9: Appendix 1)

6.1.1 Introduction

It will be remembered that in Chapter 3 the CR process favoured was a 'bottom-up' progressivist one, based on the firm belief that improvements in the teaching and learning process depend crucially upon the professional development of teachers, and that the professional development of teachers is best accomplished through involving as many volunteers as possible in analysing and discussing problems, devising alternative strategies, producing resources, testing them out in the classroom, and providing feedback for further development.

Being a regional project, officially endorsed by the regional authorities, GLAFLL was able to call on the curriculum development structures of the Region's advisory service. The geographical area covered was such as to make it possible for any teacher in a regional school to attend regional meetings or divisional meetings without undue difficulty, since all schools lay within 45 minutes of the regional advisory service centre, and within 15-20 minutes of a divisional teachers' centre. It was therefore relatively easy to establish an evolutionary framework for CR dependent upon a co-operative form of INSET. This embodied the principle that CR should not be characterised, as at present at the national level, by long periods of inactivity punctuated by sudden upheavals dictated by forces outside the classroom, but rather by an ongoing evolutionary process. Any notion of time constraint was rejected, since it was believed that this inevitably led to the premature pickling of embryonic schemes and packages, which sometimes did more to distort progress
than to assist it. It was hoped that the creation of a quite different approach would avoid the anxieties caused by deadlines to be met, and the need to take unnecessary risks and short-cuts to complete some sort of product within a pre-determined time scale.

The pace of such a CR process would be determined by how much time and energy teachers would be willing to devote to the necessary work. It is indicative of the commitment of Modern Languages teachers in the Region to find solutions to the serious problems outlined in Chapter 1, that after only 2 years of work 27 out of 49 schools had become participants, and that now after 7 years all 51 existing schools are involved to some extent.

6.1.2 The structure of CR in Lothian Region

The Region's curriculum policy is co-ordinated by a Regional Consultative Committee on the curriculum.

"This takes a global view of all curricular matters ... For every specialist area of the curriculum we have Regional Study Groups. These, consisting of specialist teachers and normally chaired by a head teacher, take responsibility for guidance on their specialist area. A Regional Study Group may set up working parties and may conduct surveys for research and development projects. At any time it may seek the Regional Consultative Committee's support for a major change in the Authority's policy. While its status must remain an advisory one, it is nonetheless a potent influence in the region..." (Gatherer: Foreword in Clark and Hamilton 1984)

The Regional Study Group in Modern Languages (henceforth RSGML) was thus the natural forum for CR in FLL. A framework was created in which there was a co-ordinating committee, with a Head Teacher as chairperson, which attempted to give shape to and keep track of the various developments. This co-ordinated the work of a number of sub-groups with Modern Language teachers as chairpersons, each charged with a particular area of responsibility and given a particular task to fulfil. The chairperson of each sub-group was a member of the co-ordinating committee to ensure communication between the
various groups. All groups were composed of volunteers.

It may be interesting to note that at first, from tradition, teachers preferred to work along language-specific lines, and there was thus a French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian sub-group. It was not long before it became clear to all concerned that this meant that there were five separate groups all doing much the same work and confronting much the same problems, whereas a task-based series of groups might be able to break down the artificial language barriers, permit a greater cross-fertilisation of ideas, and allow more rapid progress in the five languages simultaneously over a wider range of issues. It was agreed therefore that the groups should be based on tasks, but that each group, whenever possible, should contain representatives from the various languages. These groups all meet in their own time after school hours. Over the years a vast number of teachers have become involved and have participated, returning to their particular schools to act as multipliers during staff-meetings in those areas of work in which they have been concerned.

6.1.3 Principles of procedure

In retrospect it is possible to establish a number of principles of procedure that have governed the development of the Project. These can be summarised as follows:

- to place the teacher and school department at the centre of all CR work;
- to maintain the principle that involvement in the project meant that schools had to develop their own version of GLALFLL, rather than simply adopting a predetermined package, thus involving teachers in a department in discussing, planning, creating instruments, experimenting, obtaining feedback, and evaluating. There were to be no designated pilot schools;
- to ensure an adequate means of involving any teacher or department who might wish to participate in the project at any level of commitment;
- to permit would-be participants to start from whatever entry-point they wished (in practice often assessment);
- to create a set of guidelines, instruments and resources flexible enough to fit a variety of different patterns of organisation in a variety of different school contexts;
- to promote simultaneous development in all languages taught in regional schools.

6.1.4 Project co-ordination

The project was co-ordinated by myself as project leader. I interpreted my roles as follows:

- as project leader: to establish a framework through which teachers could participate in and give direction to the various developments;
- as counsellor: to listen to the anxieties and problems of teachers and to react to their requests and needs;
- as facilitator: to establish a framework for co-operation among schools and teachers; to organise meetings, courses, and workshops, in central and divisional centres, and in school, to respond to requirements and to produce minutes and reports;
- as information-seeker and provider: to seek out and present information in various modes that would assist teachers to resolve the various problems raised and to ensure an adequate theoretical base to the innovations;
- as educator: to assist schools and teachers to develop the knowledge and skills required to conduct their own CR through analysing their own problems, examining solutions, experimenting with them, obtaining feedback and evaluating them; to enable teachers to take responsibility for promoting co-operative CR at the regional level; to render myself as Project Leader less and less needed in the planning and promotion of the project;
- as motivator: to encourage teachers to participate in the project and to encourage a sense of purpose and of involvement;
- as co-ordinator: to attempt to harness the different strengths and energies of teachers in appropriate ways; to pull the threads of the various developments together into a coherent whole, and to ensure continuity;
- as public spokesman: to secure support from Head Teachers, Regional Directors of Education, Chief Adviser and others in positions of authority; to prepare progress reports for various bodies internal and external to Lothian; to write articles outlining GLAFLL principles and practices; to attempt to secure an appropriate level of funding and of personnel on secondment to sustain the project in its early years;
- as communications-network organiser: to establish contact with other regional, national and international school FLL projects, and to exchange information with them; to ensure GLAFLL participation and involvement in as many courses, conferences and exchange visits as could be financed; to encourage GLAFLL teachers to write of their experiences for the regional GLAFLL news and for other journals with wider circulation.

For three years I was assisted in the development of the project by a full-time seconded teacher, Judith Hamilton, who, in addition to taking on a number of the roles outlined above, interpreted her role as development officer as follows:

- as innovator: to experiment with a number of techniques in a variety of classrooms in co-operation with GLAFLL teachers;
- as diffuser of innovation: to answer requests by classroom teachers to assist them in their classrooms to come to terms with new techniques; to build up a video-bank of classroom innovatory styles and strategies which would provide material for viewing and for discussion at regional courses;
- as co-ordinator of the GLAFLL swapshop of materials for pupils: to co-ordinate the various efforts of individual teachers; to obtain feedback on the new materials in use; to exercise quality control, and through this to create a range of publishable pupil material which would be available to Lothian schools at discount prices.
6.1.5 Relationships and responsibility

From the experience of the project I have learnt that the two most important factors in school-focused CR are the quality of relationships between participants and the sharing of responsibility. Education is about people, whether it be teacher education or pupil education, and the most valuable contribution that a project leader can make is to ensure that the diverse strengths, energies and personalities of those involved are harnessed and forged together harmoniously. For this to occur a democratic framework of shared responsibilities is essential, rather than a simple hierarchical structure. The sort of accountability that seems to work best is not managerial (of teachers to their managers), nor consultative (the pseudo-democratic model employed, for example, by the Scottish Education Department, which effectively retains power and carefully selects those with whom it wishes to 'consult'), nor proletarian (of the managers to their teachers), but rather one of "mutual responsibility" (Adelman and Alexander 1982), in which participants are accountable to each other for the work that they accept to undertake. This admits of the necessity for some control and co-ordination, but relies heavily on the sense of voluntarily shared responsibility and on the mutual shaping of goals and of patterns of action to attain them. The health of a project, like that of education in the classroom, is ultimately determined by whether or not there is a sense of purpose, a sharing of responsibilities, clear goals, cohesiveness, flexibility to accommodate new theoretical concepts and new findings from practical experience, open communication, a sense of involvement, and a feeling of success.

Verrier (1981) rightly points to the difficulty posed by the fact that the Adviser is in some respects a hierarchical figure representing management. This is a danger in those regions where educational administrators have unwisely succumbed to political pressure and required advisers to carry out inspectorial duties, rather than encouraging them to act as consultants concerned with the development of self-evaluation in schools. In Lothian however the advisory service has managed so far to retain a relatively healthy balance
between its often conflicting concerns of representing management, and of doing what is in the best interests of teachers and pupils and schools.

6.1.6 Modes of communication and interaction

In addition to the practical work undertaken in the various groups of the RSGML, other forms of communication and interaction were established. These included courses and conferences covering:

- an annual 2-day seminar in the first term of every academic year with a specific focus on an issue to be highlighted during that year;
- short courses on topics of importance (held after school);
- ad hoc meetings and workshops on particular issues;
- information-exchange meetings for special groups, at which GLAFLL matters would be raised, eg for Principal Teachers on a termly basis, or for Probationers.

The above took a variety of forms embracing lectures, followed by discussions, conducted by outside consultants or by project members, demonstrations on video-tape of classroom interaction followed by discussion, demonstrations and simulations involving the participants in trying out various techniques with each other, group discussions, and workshops.

The role of such INSET, as Early and Bolitho put it, was to achieve:

"a change of attitude, a genuine lifting of the spirits such that teachers feel able to reapproach the problems confronting them in a more positive frame of mind and go away personally and professionally refreshed; prepared not so much to implement any hand-me-down solutions ... but to find their own answers or, perhaps, more modestly, feeling able to cope just a little better."

(Early and Bolitho 1981)

Schools also conducted their own INSET on a regular basis, and it is here that most of the school-based developmental work was done. Occasionally the project-leader, or the seconded teacher in the role of developmental officer, were invited to join these.
Over the years some 30 GLAFLL Documents have been produced. These are attached at Appendix 1, since they show how the project developed. Each school keeps its own set of GLAFLL Documents, which are accessible to all members of staff. Most of these arose as starter papers attempting to examine some of the problems that had been raised. They set out theoretical issues and possible strategies to be adopted. Some however represent information sheets giving details of guidelines or decisions taken by various groups on various matters. Others are updates of earlier papers and show the evolution in the thinking that has gone on during the years.

Topics covered have included:

- the aims, principles and planned schedule of work for the project;
- syllabus design;
- a report on a survey of pupil aspirations and wishes;
- the framework of Stages and Levels adopted;
- assessment guidelines;
- the elaboration of pupil progress cards;
- methodological experimentation;
- communication in the classroom;
- the conduct of conversation tests and the evaluation of pupil performance;
- syllabus rationale;
- differentiation: coping with individual differences.

Within Scotland relationships of a formal and an informal kind were established with the Tour de France project, whose French materials now serve as the basis for GLAFLL schemes in a large number of regional schools. Liaison with other regional schemes is maintained through the regular meetings of the various Advisers in Modern Languages.

Wider communication networks have been established through the GOML framework with other schemes in the United Kingdom, and GLAFLL participants have attended the various courses and workshops organised by GOML, and by the French Institute and the Goethe Institute for
teachers involved in GOML schemes. GLAFLL teachers have benefitted each year from the opportunity provided by the French Embassy to attend a course in Sèvres, where, in addition to lectures and discussions on various curricular topics, they have collected authentic written material, made audio and video recordings, interviewed French pupils, and returned to feed the various materials assembled into the growing stock of regionally-available resources.

Contacts have also been established with a number of school CR schemes in Europe through the network created by the Council of Europe (Bergentoft 1981).

Further afield, close contact has been maintained with Australian schemes, particularly those in South Australia, following the Project Leader's visit to that country (Clark 1982, Education Department of South Australia 1984).

There is little doubt that such communication networks have provided the project with many things - access to fresh information, new insights and alternative strategies, but above all with a renewal of faith in the ultimate purpose of FL education which is to enable people to communicate through geographical, cultural and linguistic barriers, to perceive common purposes, and to strive for better relationships while cherishing the wealth of divergence among different peoples in different contexts.

6.1.7 GLAFLL work undertaken

It would be foolish to pretend that in the real world events follow a predetermined sequential path. It is possible, however, to indicate the sort of sequence that some of the GLAFLL work took:

- a problem was diagnosed and discussed by teachers;
- the project leader produced a starter paper attempting to provide information related to the problem to be resolved;
- project members read and discussed this and prepared and examined alternative strategies for resolving the issue;
- where appropriate a RSGML sub-group was set up, or an existing one asked to work on the production of an appropriate set of guidelines or resources;
- project teachers experimented using the guidelines or resources, and adapted these to their circumstances;
- feedback was obtained from classroom practitioners through discussion, visits to classrooms, the use of video-tape, and questionnaires;
- if there was an eventual product the RSGML sub-group, or the project leader, and/or the developmental officer, was asked to work on a revised version of this for offer to a publisher. If the product was some methodological technique, a video might be made for observation and discussion purposes. This was available for schools to borrow and was shown at courses and conferences.

It was considered important that, where appropriate, eventual productions should be published, since both teachers and pupils were becoming increasingly distressed at the flood of paper and the poor quality of locally-produced material. Both preferred properly presented and professionally laid-out documents and material. Additionally it helped both the teachers and the pupils to take some pride in the fact that they were participating in a project whose results could be seen to have more than just local interest.

During the life-time of the Project, each year has seen a particular focus of attention introduced at the annual seminar and developed throughout the year in the various courses, workshops and in-school sessions. Thus:
- the first year was devoted to a study of theory and contemporary practices and to the establishment of the notion of Stages and Levels;
- the second year was the 'year of the syllabus';
- the third year was the 'year of assessment';
- the fourth and fifth years were 'years of methodology';
- the sixth year was the 'year of resources';
- the seventh and eighth years have been 'years of review, consolidation and further development', during which new Syllabus Guidelines were drawn up, new Stage Tests were produced, the methodology was further developed, a large number of video-recordings of classroom interaction were made, the bank of pupil resources was further extended, and a number of pupil materials prepared for publication. In addition, work was started on a GLAFLL approach beyond 0 Grade, in which appropriate modules and courses were planned to cater for the wide range of vocational, leisure-related, professional and specialist interests of pupils in the upper school.

It must be emphasised that the decision to focus upon one theme per year did not prevent schools from continuing to develop on a wide front on those aspects of CR that they considered to be important at the time. It merely served to provide a common focus of attention on one particular area of problems for a sufficient length of time to ensure effective reflection, some experimental experience, and evaluation of possible solutions related to it. CR is an interactive process where any move in one part of the system may affect a number of other parts. Problems and solutions were constantly being reprocessed in the light of further developments, and the various parts of the system had to be mutually adjusted until a satisfactory fit had been found.

6.1.8 Current and immediate future work proposed

The current year is the 'Year of individualization', when ways of coping with individual differences in the classroom, and of encouraging further self-direction, will be examined (GLAFLL Document 30: Appendix 1). During this year a project on Language Awareness in all the primary schools feeding into two neighbouring secondary schools has been launched. This will feed ideas into the project, so that next year will be the 'year of Language Awareness'.

I pass now to a brief description of how the Syllabus Guidelines and Materials evolved.
6.2 Syllabus Guidelines and Materials

It will be remembered from Chapter 5 that the curriculum approach adopted was a two-level one involving an instruction syllabus and a communication one.

The plan for the integration of the two is set out in the Syllabus Guidelines, both parts of which are submitted as part of this thesis. These are attached at Appendix 4. A syllabus rationale was prepared and circulated to schools as GLAFLL Document 29 (Appendix 1).

The discussion in this section will, therefore, be restricted to a brief outline of how the Syllabus Guidelines and the GLAFLL materials emerged.

6.2.1 Types of syllabus

Syllabuses come in various shapes and forms, and fulfil a variety of purposes. The first task was to agree for what purposes the syllabus or syllabuses to be created were required and what form they should take. An examination of syllabuses revealed that there were perhaps four types serving four different purposes, each of which merited consideration.

First there were inventories, such as the Council of Europe Threshold Level documents, or pedagogical grammar books or phrase books, which attempt to describe the products of learning in particular areas of knowledge and/or behaviour. Inventories are not pedagogically sequenced in any way, nor do they say how the various language items specified are to be learnt. At best they can be used as sources of inspiration, upon which syllabus-writers, materials-writers and teachers can draw. Given the existence of a great deal of such reference material, and of the Council of Europe's Threshold Levels in particular, there seemed little point in creating any more. Instead it was decided to use the existing ones:

- to draw upon in the selection of material for the instruction syllabus;
- to use as check-lists to ensure coverage;
- as a means to check intuitions about native-speaker forms for particular functions and notions.

Secondly there were examination syllabuses. These are usually limited to broad statements about what pupils are expected to be able to do for a particular examination. Examination syllabus material is not pedagogically sequenced, and is not directly concerned with the teaching/learning process, since it is a statement of what should occur AFTER this has been completed. An examination syllabus, like an inventory, can at best serve as a checklist of target areas of behaviour and knowledge that the teacher has to reinterpret in terms of teaching and learning criteria. It was agreed that a statement of target objectives for each Stage Test would be necessary to guide the elaboration of a school's instruction syllabus, and those parts of its communication syllabus that were specifically designed to reflect these objectives in a fairly direct way.

Thirdly there were learner syllabuses designed to assist learners to conceptualise what it is they are expected to learn and to be able to do as they progress. We have already discussed these under the label of Progress Cards.

Finally there were teaching syllabuses, which are addressed to the teachers or created by them as a guide to what is to be done in the classroom. A teaching syllabus translates educational aims into subject-specific ones, which are then set out as target objectives at different Stages. These are then further translated into the sequence of holistic and atomistic pedagogical objectives that are to be embodied in resource material.

It was agreed that for the GLAFLL project teaching syllabuses would be based on the two-level approach outlined earlier. It was decided, therefore, to produce the Syllabus in two parts, one concerned with Communication suggestions and the other with Language Resource suggestions. These are both attached at Appendix 4.
6.2.2 Achieving a consensus on communicative objectives ('Bedarf')

In order to guide us in the selection of communicative objectives for the various Stages, it was decided to conduct an initial survey into what pupils thought they would like to learn in their FL classrooms. A questionnaire was devised (GLAFLL Document 3: Appendix 1) and distributed to a representative range of S1 and S2 classes studying French, German, Spanish or Russian, and a few S3 pupils studying Italian as a second language. 1083 returns were received.

This produced some interesting results, which showed that a number of the suggestions currently in vogue were not in tune with our pupils' wishes. The results are shown in GLAFLL Document 4 (Appendix 1), but it may be useful to highlight one or two of the major features here:

- contrary to the content of the Oxfordshire and York GOML schemes, pupils wished to go beyond tourist language to embrace everyday friend-to-friend communication, and beyond functional material to more substantial forms of listening and reading for information and for pleasure. 90% also wanted to learn to write in the FL;
- contrary to the suggestions made by Salter (1972) the vast majority of pupils (86%) said they wished to be able to converse in the FL and would not be satisfied with simply being able to understand it.

In addition to the adult-orientated world of communication, embodied, for example, in the Council of Europe Threshold Level documents, school learners also wished to see topics and activities that took account of the adolescent world.

In brief the picture of pupil wishes that emerged was an extremely broad one that called for a wide variety of activities and of learning experiences.

The objectives in the present Syllabus Guidelines Part 1 (p14 and 15) have embodied findings from this survey of pupil wishes, and from
further soundings of pupil opinion, to which have been added the guidance obtained from the Council of Europe's work and from teacher-expertise. The latter were able to add information from their own personal experience of communication in a FL, and from their experience of what it is reasonable to expect of learners at different Stages.

6.2.3 Elaborating the Syllabus Guidelines

Over the years the project has moved from an approach that was based heavily on a functional/notional instruction syllabus, as set out in the first Draft Syllabus Guidelines (Lothian Regional Study Group 1978/79) towards the more balanced 'inside-out and outside-in' approach. In this the instruction syllabus has remained much the same, but the communication syllabus has been expanded on the basis of inherently valuable activities that have seemed to work well in the classroom.

The communication syllabus suggestions have embraced ever-wider possibilities covering a whole range of discourse-types, task-types, contexts and modes of communication in real, simulated, and imaginary worlds. Indeed one of the major problems in the setting out of such a syllabus has been to find a way of categorising the mass of possibilities. Since the communication syllabus was not concerned with a deliberate focus on skills it was decided to reject a skill-based taxonomy. Instead a pragmatic classification system was devised based on Communication Areas as follows:

- Communication in the classroom and in school
- Communication with speakers of the foreign language:
  (a) face-to-face communication
  (b) pen-pal correspondence
  (c) class-to-class links
- Communicative activities for pleasure:
  (a) viewing and listening for pleasure
  (b) reading for pleasure
  (c) songs
- Communication tasks embracing:
  (a) conversation and correspondence tasks
  (b) multi-skill tasks
  (c) potential tourist transactions
  (d) foreign visitors in Britain
  (e) staying in a foreign home
  (f) projects
- Games:
  (a) language practice games
  (b) communication games
- Simulations and plays.

In order to relate all of the above to the Language Resource suggestions of the instruction syllabus, each communicative task or activity indicates the probable functional and notional content involved. In addition, the Language Resource suggestions have been set out in both functional/notional and grammatical sections. This permits the functional/notional components to act as go-betweens or negotiating coins between the two parts of the Syllabus Guidelines. This enables teachers:

- to select communicative activities which appear to have probable functional/notional content related to that which they wish pupils to work on;
- to check that pupils have a sufficient basis in language appropriate to the carrying out of a particular activity;
- to indicate which language exponents might be appropriate to fill gaps in pupil knowledge exposed during 'deep-end' communication phases.

In addition, sections indicating the communicative skills and sub-skills which might require a deliberate focus of attention have been provided under the headings: interaction skills, information-processing and study skills, and social skills (Syllabus Guidelines Part 1 pp 67-69: Appendix 4). Linguistic skills which might have to be deliberately exercised have been indicated at the end of the Syllabus Guidelines Part 2 (Appendix 4).

Communicative strategies to cope with any language deficiencies have been indicated in Syllabus Guidelines Part 1, p70 (Appendix 4).
In brief an attempt has been made to cover communication, the development of skills and strategies, and the building-up of a creative context-sensitive language resource.

Given the fact that each school involved in GLAFLL was free to choose the particular array of materials it wished, it was important to develop a style of syllabus that would indicate clearly the target objectives to be pursued, but that would leave a great deal of freedom to teachers and departments to choose their own route towards them, and the particular blend of learning experiences and of deliberate focuses of attention that accorded with their contexts and constraints. Thus, while the broad target objectives were to be prescriptive, the communicative activities and language resource content proposed were to be seen as suggestions. These were to assist teachers to create their own schemes of work, based on their own interpretations of pupil needs and on the various resources available to them.

"We wish to make it clear that we are not presenting it [the syllabus] as a defined syllabus, but as a set of suggestions to help teachers and pupils to create their own syllabus and scheme of work in the light of their own requirements."

(GLAFLL Document 29: Appendix 1)

Some teachers used the GLAFLL syllabus suggestions as a way of indicating how they might supplement gaps in their own materials. For this, groups of teachers, using a particular course book (eg Eclair or Tour de France or Vorwärts) met to relate their own materials directly to the syllabus suggestions, and drew up Waystage grids showing where particular syllabus items could be found in the course books concerned, and where supplementary material might be added, or alternatively where course-book units might be left out or amended (eg Wheeldon 1980). Others were brave enough to create their own scheme of work on the basis of the syllabus, and to create their own teaching/learning material (Chapman 1980).

All schools were responsible for creating their own schemes of work with Waystages and Progress Cards.
It is important to state that the present Syllabus Guidelines are not seen as a definitive statement, but rather:

"as an attempt to encapsulate a few ideas and suggestions recorded at a particular moment in the Lothian Project's life. They will no doubt need to be revised frequently in the light of fresh insights and further classroom experience."

(Clark and Hamilton 1984 p12: Appendix 4)

6.2.4 GLAFLL Materials

Where gaps in existing commercial materials have been discovered, GLAFLL teachers have combined in groups to create supplementary resources. Inevitably the resources produced have been related to the communication syllabus rather than the instructional one, since the latter has usually been well catered for in existing course books and ancillary commercial material. The communicative material produced, however, often contains sections which have a deliberate focus on particular rhetorical, semantic, and grammatical features of the language data incorporated.

The nature of these materials, designed as activity options for self-access and group-access work, has already been discussed in Chapter 5. A list of the publications existing and forthcoming is shown at Appendix 3.

I turn now to a description of the GLAFLL Assessment scheme.

6.3 The GLAFLL assessment scheme

6.3.1 Introduction

At the start of the GLAFLL project there were two particular trends which were influencing assessment. The first was the general educational move away from norm-referencing towards some form of criterion-referencing. The second was the subject-specific attempt to move away from tests eliciting language-like behaviour to tests attempting to elicit communicative behaviour.
In order to set the scene for some of the decisions taken in the GLAFLL project, it is perhaps helpful to attempt to summarise the existing assessment context briefly.

At the start of the GLAFLL project school assessment was a norm-referenced affair, in which each subject department was obliged to set a common test to the whole age group in S1 and S2, irrespective of whether all the pupils had covered the same ground, in order to get a wide spread of marks which would permit the allocation of a grade to each pupil. Approximately 10% of the pupils would be awarded an A, 20% a B, 40% a C, 20% a D and 10% an E. These grades would be reported to parents in 6-monthly or annual reports. Classes would be set on the basis of these grades, some in S2, all in S3, in terms of likely examination prospects in S4. The main purpose of such an assessment policy, therefore, was to select pupils for examination classes in a manner that appeared fair to the parents.

There were several criticisms made against this system. The grades were not absolute as was sometimes thought, since from year to year the age-group population would not be exactly the same in terms of achievement, and thus certain pupils who got a Grade A on one year might only have got a Grade B the next. Also, given the variations in catchment area and in levels of achievement among school entrants, a Grade A in one school would not be the same as a Grade A in another. A pupil's grade provided little information about what he/she could or could not do. It merely indicated how the pupil had performed in relation to others in the group.

Given the way in which grades were allocated, 10% of pupils had to be awarded the bottom grade of E, irrespective of how well they might have performed. It was understood by pupils that only those with Grade C and above had any hope of obtaining a certificate in the national examination system. Thus pupils given a Grade D or E would already see themselves labelled as 'non-certificate' or as 'failures' after only 6 months in S1. Such pupils understandably lost motivation and caused discipline problems.
There was a tendency among teachers to confuse achievement with ability, and to assume that pupils labelled Grade E in terms of achievement were automatically Grade E in terms of ability. The notion of a fixed unalterable level of ability led to the "pernicious self-fulfilling prophecy" outlined by Bloom (1971).

To overcome these objections, it was proposed to establish a criterion-referenced form of assessment which would:

"... provide information about the specific knowledge and abilities of pupils through their performances on various kinds of tasks that are interpretable in terms of what the pupils know or can do, without reference to the performance of others." (Brown 1979)

In criterion-referenced assessment it was possible for any number of pupils to attain a pass or to attain a high grade, provided that their performance matched the criteria set. It was maintained that criterion-referencing would improve classroom teaching and learning because:

- it would make teachers re-examine what they wished pupils to know and to do, and to come to conclusions about how well they should be expected to perform;
- it would improve pupil motivation because pupils would be competing against a particular standard rather than against each other;
- it would improve the quality of information that could be provided by an analysis of test results. In formative assessment the pupils' strengths and weaknesses could be diagnosed and appropriate treatment provided, and in summative assessment there would be a clear statement of what pupils could do and how well they could do it.

Whereas norm-referencing leaves much to be determined by the statistician, criterion-referencing places the onus upon the curriculum planner's ability or willingness to set out:

- objectives in behavioural terms, usually set into various domains reflecting the construct of a subject, so that an appropriately large enough sample of items can be created to assess the pupil's achievement on the domain concerned;
explicit criteria for the assessment of performance on each test in terms of a mastery level or cut-off point, or pass/fail distinction, or alternatively on the basis of clearly defined levels of performance (or grades) representing progressive mastery towards some ideal objective (Gronlund 1973).

Limits to the predetermination of behavioural objectives have already been discussed and will not be repeated here. It must however be emphasised, as Ebel (1971) and Gronlund (1973) have done, that there are no absolute criteria on which to establish the concept of mastery in areas involving the creative use of complex skills. This is as true in FLL as in other school subjects (Davies 1978, Partington 1981). Any pre-established criteria relating to mastery cut-off points or to levels of achievement must, therefore, be subject to amendment in the light of the reality of pupil performance.

Gronlund concludes:

"Since there is little empirical evidence to support any given level of mastery in classroom instruction the best we can do is arbitrarily set a standard and then adjust it up and down as experience dictates." (Gronlund 1973)

In a later passage Gronlund warns:

"Interpret criterion-referenced test results cautiously. If a number of students fail to master an objective, the fault may reside in the instruction, the test items, the standard of mastery, or the objective itself. Since these are all matters of judgment, none of them is infallible." (Gronlund 1973)

At the national level where examinations are still primarily concerned with selection, the adoption of a criterion-referenced style of assessment clearly poses considerable problems, given the apparent requirement for fine discrimination among pupils of a particular age group, and the lack of any as yet satisfactory way of establishing clear enough non-arbitrary criteria on which to determine grades (Clark 1984, Stromach 1984).

In order for a national system of grade-related criteria (adopted for the new Standard Grade in Scotland and about to be adopted in
England) to work, several pre-suppositions have to be made:

"- That we know what it is that we aspire towards and that we can specify this in the form of explicit target objectives in appropriate domains
- That, should we wish to do so, we can differentiate between what low, middle and high achievers should aspire towards in terms of these target objectives
- That we can create external test-types through which to assess pupil performance in carrying out a wide range of these target objectives
- That, should we wish to, we can provide differentiation within the tests
- That we can describe the critical features of pupil performance in the carrying out of the various tests in sufficiently explicit a manner as to enable an assessor to know exactly what to look for, and to recognise it when he/she sees it
- That we can attach particular descriptions of pupil performance to particular grades, so that the assessors involved can allocate pupils to these grades in a reliable manner
- That teachers and learners can successfully operate the new system within the existing national, regional, institutional and classroom constraints." (Clark 1984)

The GLAFLL assessment scheme has attempted over the years to grapple with these problems, but without the necessity of making fine age-related discriminations among pupils. The purpose of GLAFLL assessment was not to set pupils in any rank order, or to grade them in terms of achievement at a particular age, but rather to encourage pupils to attain ever-improving levels of success relative to their potential and their aspirations.

The summative tests used in schools at the start of the GLAFLL project tended to reflect the sort of tests used in the external examinations set by the Scottish Examinations Board. Only one out of fourteen O Grade test-types could be said to represent a purposeful communicative activity of a sort likely to occur in a real-life
situation (eg answering a stimulus letter in the FL). All the others (eg questions on a picture, writing the other half of a dialogue, oral composition, unmotivated listening and reading comprehension with random questions at the end, etc) were more likely to elicit language-like behaviour.

Morrow (1977) has indicated a number of features of normal language use not normally present in external examinations. These are as follows:

- the interaction-based nature of most communication;
- unpredictability;
- context (extralingual or intralingual);
- purpose;
- authenticity;
- the behaviour-based nature of interaction.

It was necessary to create a range of communicative task-types in which such features would be present, and to investigate valid and reliable ways of assessing pupil performance on them.

It was important however not to lose sight of the fact that the assessment of pupil learning was not just concerned with communicative proficiency, although this was of paramount importance, but also needed to concern itself with ongoing pupil achievement in components of the instruction syllabus. It seemed important therefore to strike an appropriate balance between classroom formative achievement testing, internally determined on the basis of the instruction syllabus, and both classroom and external proficiency testing concerned with the pupil's internal acquisition syllabus as manifested in communicative performance (GLAFLL Document 24: Appendix 1).

To the often posed question as to whether tests should be mirrors of reality or instruments constructed from a theory of what language learning involves (eg Alderson in Alderson and Hughes 1981), the answer seemed to be to retain achievement tests for the latter and to ensure that proficiency tests reflected the former. In this way it would be possible to have some parts of the assessment scheme
whose basic concern was with face validity and the relationship of the test with real life, and others whose prime motivation sprang from content and construct validity relating assessment to the syllabus and to the methodology adopted in a particular classroom. It seemed essential however to give a much more prominent place in assessment, as in the classroom teaching/learning process, to face-valid proficiency tests with whose content and processes pupils could readily identify. The nature of such proficiency tests is well described by Clark (1975).

"A proficiency test is considered as any measurement procedure aimed at determining the examinee's ability to receive or transmit information in the test language for some pragmatically useful purpose within a real-life setting ... The emphasis in proficiency testing is on determining the student's ability to operate effectively in real-life language use situations." (Clark JLD 1975)

6.3.2 The purposes of the assessment scheme

In the first stages of the development of the GLAFLL assessment scheme, it was necessary to establish the purposes to be fulfilled by assessment. These were agreed as follows:

- to create a form of assessment that would allow pupils to achieve a level of success commensurate with their capacities and aspirations. Success would breed success and lead to healthy attitudes towards learning the subject. The practice of rank-ordering and of norm-referenced grading was to be abandoned;

- to help the pupil and teacher to know where pupil strengths and weaknesses lay, so that they could take the necessary action to improve knowledge, skills and performance;

- to help the pupil and teacher to monitor progress and to record this for parents, future employers etc. The aim here was to build up a profile covering the whole range of outcomes towards which learning a foreign language in the classroom was orientated;
- to help pupils come to terms with their own progress in language learning so that they could make realistic decisions about future courses of action in conjunction with those whose task it was to guide them;
- to help pupils to learn to evaluate their own efforts;
- to enable the teachers and learners in the project to develop the sort of classroom strategies that would promote acquisition, deliberate learning, awareness, communicative proficiency, differentiated success, individual and group work and a measure of pupil responsibility - in brief to effect a healthy backwash effect upon teaching and learning.

6.3.3 The regional Record of Achievement in Modern Languages
(See GLAFLL Document 21: Appendix 1)

Teachers were keen to follow the successful schemes in Oxfordshire and York and to have a form of accreditation that would allow pupils of all levels of ability to receive official validation of their achievements. Although this was seen as of limited public value, it was hoped that the existence of such accreditations would help to create a more positive climate towards school FLL both among pupils and among parents, and that it might help to break through the public view of FLL as a difficult subject, in which failure rather than success was the likely outcome.

A few teachers argued for a certificate based on internal assessment within the school only. The majority however wished to have a rational mixture of internal and external assessment leading to an award at the regional level. The Lothian Regional Consultative Committee on the Curriculum insisted on the need for a common external examination to ensure comparability of standards between schools. The vast majority of teachers proved to be happy with this condition, since they felt the need for a consensus-based end-of-Stage external proficiency test to provide them with some guidelines as to what sort of proficiency to aim towards. With the extent of freedom given to schools to interpret the Syllabus Guidelines as they wished, and to develop their own routes towards the Stage objectives, it
seemed practical and sensible to have external Stage tests as a focal point for all.

It was agreed, however, that the award of a Regional Record of Achievement should not depend entirely upon an external Stage test. This would have had the effect of limiting what was taught or done in the classroom to the parameters covered in the external examination, and of distorting the proficiency nature of the exam. Important educational and subject-specific outcomes might have been overlooked. The classroom might well have been transformed from a place of education, able to respond to a wide range of influences and interests, into a simple rehearsal or training area for the external Stage Test. This was to be avoided if possible. Teachers were asked, therefore, to make a distinction between the limited testing syllabus relating to end-of-Stage targets to be assessed in the external regional Stage tests, and the much richer teaching syllabuses which they were asked to devise on the basis of the Syllabus Guidelines.

It had been decided in the early stages of the project that the Record of Achievement should be made as simple as possible for pupil and parent. It had therefore been decided that a system of Pass and Credit awards should be indicated at each Stage successfully completed. The regional Record of Achievement explained what was meant by each 'Stage' and by a 'pass' and a 'credit' on its reverse side as follows: "An award on the Record of Achievement in Modern Languages is given on the basis of Continuous Assessment in class and of the results obtained in a Regional Stage Test of communicative ability.

At each succeeding Stage the learner is required to show a higher level of performance, i.e. more communicative ability, greater accuracy, a wider range of grammar and vocabulary, more fluency and the ability to cope with longer and more complex stretches of language. Learners who reach the required level of achievement at any Stage will be awarded a Pass. A Credit indicates a very high level of achievement."
Assessment will be based on the following activities:

**Stage 1**
- Exchange simple personal information
- Exchange simple general information; discuss and make choices, decisions and plans at a simple level
- Understand and take some part in simple everyday conversation
- Understand basic signs and notices
- Undertake simple tourist transactions such as buying, ordering food and drink, making travel and accommodation arrangements, travelling and asking directions
- Help a foreigner in Britain to do the above
- *Understand an authentic letter or postcard from a foreign friend and be able to reply to it in English.

**Stage 2**
- Stage 1 Activities at a higher level of performance
- *Look for and extract basic information from simple authentic reading material (eg adverts, articles, instructions).

**Stage 3**
- Stage 1 and 2 Activities at a higher level of performance
- *Write a simple postcard or letter to a friend in the foreign language
- *Read simple stories for pleasure.

**Stage 4**
- Stage 1, 2 and 3 Activities at a higher level of performance
- Hold a simple telephone conversation
- Look for and extract basic information from simple authentic spoken media sources
- Write simple instructions and explanations for a friend in note form
- *Prepare a holiday abroad (eg write for information, read tourist brochures, book accommodation etc)
- *Find information in the foreign language related to a topic of personal interest, write it up in English, and be able to talk about it at a simple level in the foreign language.

*The use of a dictionary may be permitted in these activities."

(GLAFLL Document 14: Appendix 1)

6.3.4 **Internal assessment**

For internal assessment there were two instruments - the pupil progress card and the pupil profile of achievement. We have already discussed the multifarious roles of the pupil progress card. For assessment purposes it was essentially an instrument which permitted an individual diagnosis of achievement to be effected when the pupil was ready for it. It encouraged peer assessment and self-assessment.

Each teacher was asked to keep a record of each pupil's progress on an individual pupil profile. Ideally this was to accompany the pupil throughout the school so that a cumulative record of achievement was available to each teacher in whose care the pupil was put. The profile was to provide the sort of information that would allow the pupil to invest more time and energy in those activities or dimensions of competence that had to be improved.

It was suggested that the profile be made up from a wide range of internal assessment instruments, some formal, some informal, embracing homework assignments, class tests, self-directed work, teacher-subjective judgements, and above all the results of the periodic summative Waystage tests (GLAFLL Document 24: Appendix 1).

Inevitably the problems that arose were related to decisions as to:

- what dimensions to use through which to chart the pupil's progress;
- how to indicate what had been achieved;
- how to make the proposal practical given the numbers of pupils teachers would normally have to deal with.
There were various ways of conceptualising dimensions of progress. The traditional one was in terms of the four skills. Another alternative was to attempt to chart progress in terms of the components of communicative competence as suggested, for example, by Canale and Swain (1980). The notion of a profile raised the question as to whether or to what extent communicative performance, as one of the outcomes aspired to in the classroom, depended upon some unitary global competence factor such as Oller's "expectancy grammar" (Oller 1972). Contemporary theory and classroom evidence seemed to point to the conclusion that there was indeed a sizeable global factor of some sort (Bachman and Palmer 1980), but that there were other discrete factors related to specific uses of language (Oller and Khan 1981).

It was agreed that we wished to encourage the use of mixed skills in the classroom, rather than to perpetuate the present rigid division between the four skills, which led to a compartmentalised teaching and assessment programme. A compromise was eventually struck in which it was suggested that a profile of progress might be kept in terms of:

- Conversation skills
- Correspondence skills
- Listening/Viewing for information skills
- Listening/Viewing for pleasure
- Reading for information skills
- Reading for pleasure
- Language Resource development - pronunciation
  - grammar
  - vocabulary and phrases.

Additional areas were suggested: covering study skills (for more advanced stages), language awareness, cultural awareness, responsibility for one's own learning, co-operative skills, and communication strategies. In practice most schools chose to restrict their profile to the more traditional dimensions of conversation, reading, listening, correspondence, and language resource areas. A few schools included some of the other dimensions such as language awareness and responsibility.
The decision as to how to record the information in the profile in a manner that was comprehensible to all posed serious problems. Some schools were already moving towards a criterion-referenced form of reporting to parents, in which the norm-referenced single grade was to be replaced by a profile in each subject, with grades based on verbalistic descriptions such as those in the example below:

In schools with a reporting policy of this sort, it was clearly sensible for the Modern Languages Department to harmonise their levels of achievement in their profile with those of their reports to parents. Other schools attempted to adopt the profile and the three-point scale of levels of achievement for each Waystage that had been initially proposed for the project (GLAFLL Document 14: Appendix 1). It seemed better to leave each school to develop its own system of determining how it wished to allocate levels of achievement, since
each school had its own idiosyncratic reporting system to which the Modern Languages Department would normally have to adhere. Achievement levels could not sensibly be standardised from school to school, given the wide variety of catchment areas and pupil achievement levels. It seemed sensible to accept that what was labelled "quite good grasp of the work" in one school might be called "very good grasp of the work" in another. Absolute standards imposed from outside would be largely meaningless unless the syllabus, tests and profiles were common from school to school. This would have been alien to the basic GLAFL principles of school and teacher responsibility in the establishment of their own internal curriculum.

The problem of how to organise an internal assessment profile that would permit pupils to be assessed on Waystage Tests when they were ready for them, and at the same time have information ready for the 6-monthly or annual report to parents, often proved irreconcilable. In addition, the vast majority of teachers were unwilling to allow individual pupils or even groups of pupils to move at a different pace through course materials. It must therefore be admitted that few teachers found it possible to experiment with either individual or group pacing, or with testing on demand. Most schools however have produced some sort of profiling system for reporting to parents. It has been a matter of some pride for Modern Language departments that, instead of appearing in the traditional role of odd-man-out, unable to take part in general school developments, they have been able to assist other departments and to take a lead in this work.

6.3.5 The regional external Stage Tests

The regional Stage Tests were to be created by the RSGML assessment group, whose members would discuss what had to be done, divide up the work, meet again to examine the results, and amend the drafts as necessary. The first set of Stage Tests created were based on the first Draft Syllabuses (Lothian Regional Study Group on Modern Languages 1978/79). The second set of Stage Tests were more ambitious and innovative in various ways, and were a result of the thinking that lay behind the current Syllabus Guidelines (Appendix 4).
To create the Stage Tests it was necessary to work towards the establishment of a range of test-types which had face-validity in terms of normal language use and which lent themselves to assessment, i.e. led to the production by the pupil of some overt behaviour on which judgements of a pupil's communicative proficiency could be made. It was necessary to experiment with criteria for judging Levels of performance, which had face-validity in terms of seeming to represent the sort of judgements which might be made by the sort of native-speakers with whom interactions were to be simulated, construct-validity in terms of what was understood about the parameters of a capacity to communicate, and practicality in terms of being relatively simple to operate. There was an inevitable danger of producing criteria so complex that they would be inoperable, and put teachers off the necessary reflection and experience that would enable them to assimilate them. There was a clear need for INSET to assist teachers to act as sympathetic native-speaker interlocutors, and to operate the criteria with reasonable intermarker reliability.

A brief description is given below of the various test-types used in the first and the second versions of GLAFLL Stage Tests. An illustrative sample of French tests is attached at Appendix 2.

6.3.5.1 'Paper and pencil' Tests: First Version

(a) At Stages 1 and 2 there was a sequence of mixed listening and reading items in which pupils were assigned a role (usually that of a tourist) and asked to respond to spoken or written stimuli such as they might encounter on a trip abroad. The items were linked together into a story, thus providing the pupil with a psychologically coherent context for each item. This form of test had been pioneered successfully by the Oxfordshire group (Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee 1978). It permitted the sampling of a number of syllabus items covering the sort of predictable functions and notions associated with fairly well-defined tourist situations. Listening items involved the understanding of:
- answers from an imagined interlocutor to questions that the pupil might have put. These might be related to prices, directions, times, distances, food and drink, people, places etc.;
- statements, questions, requests, comments etc initiated by an imaginary interlocutor;
- information in the form of some simple public announcement related to travel, shopping, directions etc.

Reading items might involve the recognition of:
- signs;
- notices;
- short messages;
- lists of facilities/goods (menus, shopping offers etc);
- simple adverts.

Answers were normally to be written in English, or a grid was to be filled in, or a mark made at an appropriate spot on a map or a plan.

Pupils were able to study the questions before listening to items played twice on tape, or before reading the information given. Their task was to locate and extract information from the sort of everyday speech and writing they might come across in the foreign country.

The test proved popular with the pupils who enjoyed the storyline. It was however limited to language-like behaviour in many respects, since for the listening items, in which there was a conversation with the candidate's contribution missing, there was a lack of discourse coherence and reality.

(b) At Stages 1 and 2 a letter from an imaginary pen-pal was given. The pupil was asked to believe that a friend had just received it and needed some help in understanding and answering it. The letter would normally be handwritten and whenever possible would be an authentic one. The pupil was asked to answer
his/her friend's questions in English about the content of the letter, and then had to write an answer. This was to be in English at Stage 1, and, by popular request from the pupils, in French (rather than the English suggested in the instructions) at Stage 2. A dictionary was provided. The simulated interactive nature of this test lent some reality to what would otherwise have been a fairly traditional reading comprehension, however well disguised. Whereas the sequence sampled the tourist transactional side of the syllabus, the letter permitted a sampling of the language of personal social interaction.

(c) At Stages 1, 2 and 3 a separate **listening** test was given. In this, the pupil was given a role as a visitor to the foreign country staying with a pen-pal and family. The rubric indicated in English the context within which a conversation would take place. The foreign family would discuss events and arrangements concerning the pupil and, therefore, of interest to him/her. It was hoped therefore that there was some purpose to the listening. The conversations were scripted and, therefore, idealised, and ran to some 3-6 exchanges between the participants involved. The pupil was asked to listen for particular bits of information, heard the conversation twice and then answered questions in English. This test was little more than a traditional listening comprehension test, but it did make an honest attempt to create some psychological reality to the pupil's listening. It became known as the "involved fly-on-the-wall test". It permitted the examiner to assess the pupil's ability to pick out relevant information from short stretches of conversation.

(d) At Stages 2, 3 and 4 a separate **reading** test was given. This allowed the examiner to sample a number of the authentic reading materials suggested in the syllabus. A dictionary was provided. Test-types included were:

- material received from a pen-pal or a class-to-class exchange with a foreign school;
- adverts;
- extracts of various sorts from foreign teenage magazines.

The pupil was asked to answer questions in English of a motivated sort. This was a fairly traditional reading comprehension test, with what was considered to be more relevant material than was normally encountered. It permitted the examiner to assess the pupil's ability to cope with a certain amount of unknown material with the aid of a dictionary.

(e) At Stages 3 and 4 a writing test was set. This invited pupils to write a letter and a message given some stimulus material.

6.3.5.2 'Paper and pencil' Tests: Second Version

The second version of the 'paper and pencil' tests was in many respects more innovative than the first, and attempted to move away from the limitations of tourist situations.

In this version all the various 'paper and pencil' tests formed a unity at a particular Stage rather than being divided into separate elements.

The Stages 1 and 2 test (shown at Appendix 2) involved the pupil listening to a tape and reading scripts sent by a foreign class. Stages 1 and 2 pupils were asked to summarise the contents of the letter from the foreign school for a friend who had just joined the class and who had not learnt the foreign language. The pupil was asked to give as much information as possible. This was an attempt to create an open-ended style of question in which the pupil could be rewarded for the amount of correct information extracted.

Stages 1 and 2 pupils also had to listen to a tape in which a number of foreign pupils spoke about themselves. They had to select two with whom they thought they might like to effect a pen-pal exchange, provide information about them, and say why they had chosen them. Again this was an attempt to provide a more selective open-ended style of listening.
Stage 2 pupils were asked to write a letter in French to their first choice of pen-pal telling them about themselves.

Stage 2 pupils were also asked to read other written scripts included by the foreign class. These related to photos of their school and of their classmates. There was also the script of an interview with a member of the foreign class. Stage 2 pupils were asked to explain as much as they could about what was written below each photo. They were also asked to complete a grid giving information about the foreign pupil interviewed.

There was an equivalent, but more demanding style of test produced for Stages 3 and 4.

It was hoped that a bank of 'paper and pencil' tests could be established so that unpredictable versions of these could be made available to schools on request, thus retaining the proficiency nature of the examination. This however has, so far, proved impossible, given the lack of personnel to create the tests. At present therefore schools are obliged to use the existing tests with succeeding batches of pupils as they are ready for them. Over the coming years it is hoped to work on the bank of tests envisaged.

6.3.5.3 Conversation Tests

The most important part of both versions of the Stage tests was the conversation element. The format for this did not change from one version to the other. Pupils were aware that irrespective of any other achievements in internal assessment, or on the external 'paper and pencil' tests, an award in the regional Record of Achievement would only be made if the pupil 'passed' the conversation tests.

There was a pupil-to-teacher conversation test, in which the pupil played the role of him/herself and the teacher the role of a 'sympathetic' foreigner. This permitted the sort of transactional task associated with tourism, as well as the 'getting to know you and your interests' style of test. Ideally a Foreign Assistant was to play the part of the foreign interlocutor and the teacher was
thus free to concentrate on assessment. In practice this was often not feasible and the teacher had to act as both interlocutor and assessor.

There was also a pupil-to-pupil conversation test, or a group test, in which pupils were asked to carry out an information-gap or an opinion-gap task of some sort. In this test pupils imagined that they were speaking to a friend rather than to a foreign stranger. Since a great deal of classroom activity was to involve pupil-to-pupil interaction, it seemed sensible to have pupil-to-pupil conversations in the Stage test, however unrealistic it might seem to expect pupils to talk to each other in the FL in real life. When at the end of the test it was thought that a particular pupil had not had a reasonable opportunity to participate in the conversation, because of the inability of an interlocutor to play the role asked of him/her, the teacher was asked to go through the task again with the pupil in order to make a rational decision about a Level of performance.

In order to avoid the passing on of information about the tasks set, when a large mass of pupils were to be assessed, a bank of conversation test-types was established and made available to teachers along with the other tests on request. The teacher was expected to find or create any material required for a particular conversation, e.g. photos of people, a menu, a tourist brochure or whatever, though material kept centrally might be borrowed.

A sample of taped conversation tests had to be submitted to the Assessment Monitoring Group, who would check the assessments from time to time and offer advice and feedback to the teachers concerned. Over the years it was hoped that a certain teacher expertise would be built up, both in the handling of the tests, and in the internalisation of appropriate criteria established for the assessment of pupil performance. It is to this latter point that we now turn.
6.3.6 Criteria for the assessment of pupil performance

In the GLAFLL assessment system, which could not rely on norm-referencing techniques of pre-testing to determine the approximate level of difficulty of items and tests, it was important that some principles of grading underlying the setting of receptive tasks were established, in order to ensure as far as possible that the difficulty level of tests set at a particular Stage from year to year was roughly equivalent. Such a requirement was a condition of criterion-referencing, if judgements about pupil Level of performance were to be made in a non-arbitrary manner. There were, however, no absolute criteria to guide the setting of receptive tests. The determination of cut-off points between one Level of performance and another, on the basis of marks obtained by pupils for correct units of information extracted from the texts provided, had, to some extent at least, to depend on studying the actual test performances. It seemed highly arbitrary to determine in advance that 70% of the total marks was a Level 2 performance, while 69% was a Level 1, when in fact there was no sure way of guaranteeing that 70% on one year's test was exactly equivalent to 70% on the preceding year's test. Indeed the whole issue as to what was to determine a Level of performance on a receptive test seemed impossible to resolve in any clear way. It had nevertheless to be attempted.

The following criteria were suggested by Clark (1984) as guidelines to determining the level of difficulty on receptive tasks:

- Is the text-type familiar to the pupil?
- Is the subject matter within the experience of the candidate or not?
- How abstract or hypothetical is the subject matter?
- How complex are the ideas or arguments presented?
- How complex is the language (keys to this lie, among many other things, in amount of subordination, amount of modification, use of clearly unknown terms or idioms?)
- How difficult is it to guess the meaning of obviously difficult items from the context?
- How complex is the overall structure of the passage in terms of the sequencing and emphasising of the various themes or points treated? Is the information to be gleaned helpfully structured or is it difficult to unravel?

- Is the passage in a standard version of the language or in a special register or dialect or full of idiom or jargon?

- Is the spoken text full of redundancy to assist comprehension?

NB. Length of text is unlikely to help much as a criterion of difficulty. Short texts may often be more difficult than longer ones which allow pupils to build up a context within which to guess meanings intelligently.

- How much support is given to the candidate in the questions (use of words from the passage to direct the focus of attention of the candidate to the area being questioned, etc)?

- Are the questions set BEFORE the listening/reading is done, so that the locating of relevant information is made easier, or do they come AFTER?

- Does the question involve the understanding of a single item (word or sentence) or does it entail an understanding of longer stretches of text?

- Does the question involve the 'plain sense' of a part of the text, or does it involve the reader making a judgement on the basis of interpreting the whole (eg differentiating between main points and subsidiary ones, or inferring the author's attitude)?

- Does the question involve an understanding of the gist alone, or of more complex detail?

- Is the response to be in the form of a tick, a single word or sentence, or does it entail argument and/or exemplification?

- Does the task involve one single operation or does it involve several, involving expression in some form?

- What sort of time constraints are placed on pupils?

- Are dictionaries available?

- In listening tests how good is the sound and how clear the speech? In reading tests how clear is the print?

- Are there helpful, non-linguistic clues (drawings, diagrams, background sounds, etc)?
Various combinations of these features seem to lead to more or less complexity.

It was interesting to note that in the RSA's Examinations in the Communicative Use of English (Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board) the principle of authenticity of material had been held to, so that candidates at all levels were presented with the same material, and it was therefore the tasks posed for each level that varied in difficulty. This policy was adopted where it appeared relevant in the GLAFLL Stage Tests (see Appendix 2).

Lack of time to analyse test results, in order to determine cut-off points between Levels of performance, has meant that these were after all determined on the relatively arbitrary concept that a particular number of marks would represent the transition point between, for example, a Level 2 and a Level 3 performance.

The assessment of written performance in letters was done on the basis that any information that had been asked for in the rubric, or in the stimulus letter, had to be conveyed intelligibly in order for the pupil to be awarded a pass at any level. At Stage 2 intelligibility on set tasks would guarantee a Level 2. When this was combined with a reasonable level of accuracy and of interest-value, a Level 3 would be awarded. A Level 1 would be given where on one or two tasks intelligibility was in question. If a great deal of what had been written was of doubtful intelligibility, then Level 0 would have to be given.

While teachers had found it relatively easy to come to terms with the notion of successful task-completion in speech, despite formal error, they found it more difficult to accept that this was possible in writing. Indeed, some teachers proposed that writing be removed from the assessment programme altogether, on the grounds that it was both too difficult and an unnecessary skill for the majority of pupils to wish to master. The majority of teachers, however, did not take this view, and held to the principle that one of the main purposes of the Stage Tests was to ensure a healthy teaching/learning
process in the classroom. For this, writing was viewed as an essential ingredient since:

- pupils wanted to write (Clark 1979a);
- it was a mnemonic device to aid recall, which most if not all pupils insisted on having fairly early in their course;
- it was a tried and trusted method of getting pupils to test their hypotheses as to forms and functions;
- it was a better medium through which to practice extended text-creation than speech;
- it provided necessary teacher and pupil comfort in moments of stress.

In brief, writing seen as communication at a distance, as a means of recording personal information, and at later stages as a study skill, was seen to be an essential weapon in the FL armoury of literate pupils whose future communicative needs could not be totally predicted.

Teachers were helped to come to terms with written error by being exposed to the error-ridden pen-pal correspondence from native-speakers, which had been stimulated in GLAFLL classes. In this respect it was also interesting to note that the Ministère de l'Education Nationale (1978) had felt obliged to issue a list of "tolérances grammaticales ou orthographiques", given the existence of so many written errors in the writing of French school-children.

Interesting, too, were the findings of a study by Piazza (1980), who had asked French students to assess the severity of certain frequent anglophone spoken and written errors in French in terms of their incomprehensibility and irritation. The conclusion drawn from this was that:

"Errors were more readily tolerated, that is were both more comprehensible and less irritating, in written than in spoken language samples ..." All error types are more comprehensible when presented in written rather than spoken form." (Piazza 1980)
Over the years GLAFLL teachers have come to accept that writing, at the sort of developmental levels we were concerned with at Stages 1, 2 and 3, should not be marked negatively in terms of the amount of errors made, but should be assessed positively in terms of intelligibility first and then of other qualities later. On this basis it has been shown that many more children can achieve a worthwhile piece of simple correspondence than was earlier believed. What is now required is a linguistic study of the interlanguage and communication strategies used in the mass of pupil letters collected by the project, in order to derive information of use to teachers in their teaching and assessment. This has not yet been possible.

One of the aspects of the project that has caused considerable debate has been the establishment of criteria for the assessment of language 'on the wing' in conversation tests.

Initially, the conversation tests tended to be based on cue-cards for each pupil, on which would be written the context, the task and the discrete functions and notions the pupil was required to carry out, eg:

"The examiner is a grocer in a shop. You come in and wish to buy something which you can eat and drink right away. The teacher will give you some foreign currency. You must do the following:
- Attract the grocer's attention.
- Ask for something particular to eat.
- Ask for something particular to drink.
- Say how much of each you want.
- Answer any questions you are asked.
- Pay the correct amount and get change if necessary.
- Take leave." (GLAFLL Conversation Test - First Version)

Where tasks to be completed were spelt out in advance, like this, there was every reason for assessing each utterance individually, and awarding, for example, 0 for each unintelligible attempt, 1 for each intelligible attempt with poor pronunciation or grammatical error, and 2 for each intelligible and reasonably accurate attempt. It
was soon realised that such heavily cued tests distorted the essential interactive and negotiative nature of conversation, since they tended to produce two parallel and sometimes unconnected monologues. The pupil's head would be buried in the cue card. In order to avoid this, tasks were created in which the rubric could be sufficiently explicit as to what had to be done, yet leave the pupil free to negotiate with the interlocutor as to how best to proceed (see Conversation Tasks given in Appendix 2). With these tasks it was more difficult to attempt any discrete quantitative judgements on each utterance, and it seemed more sensible to work towards the description of criteria permitting an overall qualitative judgement to be made. It was suggested that the pupil's performance be judged globally in two stages by asking two questions:

1. Has the candidate completed the task set? (U/C) If so, some positive Level of performance would be in order. If not, the pupil would have to be given a 0 Level of performance. In order to determine exactly which Level was to be awarded a further question was asked:

2. How well has the candidate performed? (LOP)

This system was referred to as U/Cing and LOPing, where U/C stood for understood and communicated, and LOP for Level of performance. In order to help teachers to conceptualise what had to be done, a simple diagram was produced by Wheeldon as follows:
Pupil fails to u/c because he didn't understand task.

Pupil u/cs completes task.

Performance limited to completing task, sometimes with difficulty. Few communicative or linguistic qualities.

Fairly confident at phrase level. Can express own real meaning appropriately if occasionally inaccurately on a simple task. Has fair range of vocab. and structure. Uses language appropriately.

Pupil still unable to u/c.

Help given.

Teacher gives test.

FAIL
The conversation tests indicated the Levels of performance (LOPs) that were available on that particular test (see Conversation Tests at Appendix 2). This permitted the teachers to select those that were marked with higher LOPs for higher achieving pupils.

It was pointed out, however, that the level of complexity of a conversation task had more to do with interlocutor talk than with the task itself. Where the interlocutor was able to put the candidate at ease and to adopt helpful caretaker strategies, then a task might be rendered relatively easy.

The advice given to teachers conducting pupil-teacher tests was to ensure task-understanding before starting, to act as calmly and helpfully as possible during the test, and above all to raise and lower the level of their talk to discover the limits of the pupil's comprehension and negotiating ability, without inviting disaster (GLAFLL Document 28: Appendix 1). Where it was possible and felt to be useful, the teacher was to inject a level of unpredictability and invite the pupil to react. Those pupils who merited the highest available Level of performance on a particular task were expected to be able to handle this as well as carrying out the task specified.

For further assistance in the search for criteria on which to base judgements about Levels of performance, the project looked to a number of other schemes for guidance. The FSI's criteria (Wilds 1975) of accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, seemed heavily weighted towards linguistic competence. Canale and Swain's (1980) components of communicative competence seemed to offer a possibility. The question remained, however, as to how much weight to place on each component, and how to compare pupils who adopted various compensating strategies successfully to achieve their ends, with pupils who did not need to fall back on so many. Gradually progress was made towards the position where the following were judged to be workable criteria on which to base global judgements:
"- intelligibility of candidate's utterances (how well was the information structured for the interlocutor's understanding);
- candidate's ability to understand interlocutor (who ought to have raised and lowered his/her level of talk to suit the candidate);
- candidate's ability to create coherent discourse, take appropriate turns in conversation, etc;
- quality of language resource displayed (accuracy, range, appropriacy to context);
- ability to go beyond monosyllabic utterances when required;
- fluency (speed and comfort of decoding and encoding);
- strategic competence (ability to cope with difficulty and avoid embarrassing silences)."

(Clark 1984)

One of the most awkward problems to resolve was to determine what was meant by a sympathetic native-speaker. Each native-speaker would have a different experience of interacting with foreigners. What one native-speaker might find intelligible, another might not. It was likely that tolerance of social inappropriacy was variable among native-speakers too. What one might find offensive, the other, through experience with foreigners, might have grown relatively accustomed to. It was felt, nevertheless, that there were useful generalisations to be discovered about what native-speakers were likely to understand and not to find irritating. That native-speakers were likely to judge learner performance rather differently to the way teachers did, was clearly shown in research undertaken by Hughes and Lascaratou (1982). In their experiment 32 errors made by Greek learners of English were judged in terms of seriousness, and marked by three separate groups of judges - ten native-speakers of English who were teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), ten native-speakers of English who were non-teachers, and ten Greek teachers of English. Inevitably, the Greek teachers of English deducted significantly more marks over the whole range than either of the two native-speaker groups. At one end of the spectrum, the Greek teachers considered basic rule-infringements as the most serious errors and made the heaviest deductions of marks for these,
while at the other end the native-speaker non-teachers considered as serious only those errors that gave rise to problems in intelligibility. The native-speaker teachers of EFL fell in between the two positions, torn between their concerns as native-speakers with message-understanding, and their concerns as teachers with the niceties of the language.

Given that the Stage Tests were supposed to be proficiency tests of real-life language use, it seemed sensible to adopt the native-speaker viewpoint and penalise unintelligibility more than any other fault.

Through INSET, at which teachers were invited to mark video and taped examples of various pupil conversations, criteria were tested and teachers helped to internalise them. In addition to this, the GLAFLL development officer offered her services as an extra assessor on conversation tests to schools anxious to compare their standards with hers. It was discovered by the Assessment Monitoring Group that schools who had often judged too low or too high in an early batch of pupils, were able in later batches to come closer to the norm, as they became more experienced in using the criteria.

One further set of findings was found interesting - those of Brown and Yule (1981 and 1982), who were developing criteria to judge spoken competence among mother-tongue pupils on a variety of different tasks. Each task was broken down into information units and pupils were awarded a point for each unit of information successfully conveyed.

"By focusing the teacher's attention in a structured way on one important aspect of speaking (namely the amount of information provided clearly by a speaker) we can give credit to the performance
of some of the most competent Foundation speakers*, whereas impressionistic assessment (covering such categories as range of vocabulary, clarity, fluency, confidence etc) would favour the less detailed but more articulate performances which are typical of Credit speakers*." (Brown and Yule 1981)

It is perhaps interesting to note that the adoption of criteria based on the informational structure of a task, such as is proposed by Brown and Yule, blurs the distinction in assessment between integrative and discrete-point tests. This was noted by Davies who wrote:

"The attempt to make the scoring procedures of integrative tests more rigorous may turn what starts to be an integrative test into a discrete point one." (Davies 1978)

Brown and Yule's criteria seem to apply better to speaking tests than to conversation tests, since in their tests the 'hearer' was a silent interlocutor who was merely asked to register ability or inability to comprehend by non-verbal means. In the sort of task-types envisaged for the GLAFL tests it is an interaction as a whole that is created. It is difficult to predetermine any informational structure in advance, or indeed to disentangle the various informational contributions made by each interlocutor. For the moment we retain the sort of criteria outlined for GLAFL conversation tests that were indicated above, relying on the teacher's/assessor's ability to produce a well-focused global impression mark.

In assessment, as elsewhere in the project, much remains to be done.

I turn now in the last section of this chapter to an attempt to evaluate the project.

*Foundation pupils are those categorised as low achievers in a subject; Credit pupils are those categorised as high achievers.
6.4 Informal interim evaluation of the GLAFLL project

6.4.1 Introduction

Time and staffing have always been extremely limited. It was therefore decided to ask for an outside evaluation of GLAFLL rather than to attempt this ourselves. A formal request was therefore made in 1981/82 and again in subsequent years to the Scottish Education Department for assistance. Unfortunately, this has not yet been granted. This interim evaluation is therefore an extremely informal one based on observation and on pupil and teacher reactions, some obtained from ongoing INSET discussions and class visits, and others from periodic questionnaires.

Given the deliberate flexibility offered to each school as to what use to make of the principles, approach and strategies suggested in the GLAFLL documents, and as to how best to employ the syllabus and assessment guidelines, stage tests, materials etc, any sort of evaluation was going to be faced with the problem of making sense of the great variety of practices and effects to which GLAFLL might be said to have contributed in individual schools. With hindsight one might say that the only way of coming to terms with the disparity would have been to ask each school to keep its own record of data relating to the progress of its own version of the project, which could then have been used to create a picture of how it had developed and of what achievements, problems, constraints and reactions there had been. This was not done, however, in any systematic way, and it must be admitted that the sort of ad hoc informal classroom evaluation which teachers were encouraged to carry out for themselves was not adequately co-ordinated into centrally available information, other than through the normal interaction that took place between teachers at meetings and in working groups.

An attempt is made nevertheless, to illuminate some of the achievements, problems and reactions.
6.4.2 The take-up rate

The major target of increasing the regional take-up rate of pupils opting to continue their study of a FL beyond the 2 year compulsory period has been achieved. In 1976/77 the average take-up rate of pupils in all Lothian schools was 35%. In the two main languages taught in S1 and S2 in 1982/83 it was as follows:

40% for French
46% for German

and in 1983/84 it was:

41% for French
40% for German


This overall increase has been achieved in Scotland against the background of two particular factors, both of which were prejudicial to the prestige of Modern Languages in the eyes of Head Teachers and Guidance staff responsible for advising pupils on subject choice in S3.

The first negative factor was the decision of Universities to drop the entrance requirement that students should have an O Grade in a Modern Language. This meant that academic pupils could now safely opt out of Modern Languages at the end of S2.

The second negative factor was the decision of the Munn Committee (1977) to exclude Modern Languages from the 'Core' of subjects to be studied in S3 and S4. Modern Languages was to be relegated to the 'Optional' column where it had to compete against a massive number of other subjects such as Latin, a second science, a second social studies subject, a technical subject, Home Economics, Business Studies, a second art subject, additional Physical Education etc.
Given the above it can reasonably be claimed that the increase in take-up rate represents an extremely positive achievement.

Although no regional figure covering all schools can be given, surveys conducted by individual schools have indicated that many more pupils in S2 would wish now to continue with the study of a FL in S3, but that many are in fact prevented from doing so by clashes of interests on the available course option sheets, or by pressures from the school or the home to choose a more obviously vocationally relevant subject. There is little doubt that these pressures are getting steadily greater, as unemployment rates rise, and as schools who have not already done so move to the Government's recommended timetabling arrangements. (Scottish Education Department 1982 and 1983).

Whereas in 1976/77, 72% of those who opted to continue into S3 were girls and only 28% were boys, in 1982/83 the figures were as follows:

- Girls continuing: 66%
- Boys continuing: 34%

and in 1983/84 the figures were:

- Girls continuing: 63%
- Boys continuing: 37%

It would seem therefore that most of the increase in the actual take-up in S3 is occurring where one might least expect it, but where it is particularly welcome, ie among the boys.

The picture in individual schools remains extremely patchy however. In 1982/83 in German the most successful GLAPLL school obtained a take-up rate of 81%, and in French the best obtained was 72%. In 1983/84 the equivalents in the best schools for each language were French 82% and German 64%. Against this must be set the lowest take-up rates in 1983/84 of 10% in one school for French, and 6% in another for German. Both of these latter schools however serve very deprived catchment areas, where there is still little or no perception of the value or the possibility of success in school FLL.
It must also be added that these two schools have just had newly appointed Principal Teachers of Modern Languages, and that they are only now beginning to adopt some of the GLAFLL proposals. It has to be admitted, however, that while there has been a general improvement in the overall regional take-up rate among schools serving less privileged areas, it is still clear that there is a much greater likelihood of drop-out among children from less favoured homes, whether their schools have adopted GLAFLL or not.

It seems likely that it will take many more years of proven success in FLL among such pupils before any real change in the total social motivational pattern towards the subject can be expected to occur. That a start has been made is clear from the much greater interest shown by parents in the progress of their children, since the introduction of Regional Records of Achievement.

Another picture that emerges from a study of individual school patterns of take-up over the years is that very little is ever achieved very quickly. Contrary to the apparent overnight success of the York and Leeds GOML schemes described in Buckby et al. (1981), the Lothian picture is one of rather slow but gradual improvement over the years in a number of schools, whose staff have devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to bringing this about. A department would only seem able to increase take-up rates, as it gradually builds up a reputation as a unit with a sense of purpose and with caring teachers who provide challenging but interesting work that is within the pupils' grasp.

While the Records of Achievement have been a motivating factor, as tangible proof of success, they cannot be said to have had an instantaneous effect, all on their own, divorced from the total atmosphere of departmental commitment. It is this latter, rather than Records of Achievement, that has gradually made a department with a low prestige in a school into one with a good reputation which attracts pupils.

Second FLL has continued to wither away, despite GLAFLL.
Given the new timetabling arrangements and the enforcement of regulations concerning minimum permissible class sizes, it is practically certain that second FLL will disappear altogether in a few years time, unless special arrangements are made. Whereas in 1976/77 approximately 6% of the school population studied a second FL in S2, in 1983/84 this went down to 3%.

It is too early for any comments to be made as to whether GLAFLL may have played any part in arresting the massive decline in the numbers of those choosing to study a FL in S5/S6. It seems unlikely that any progress can be made in the upper school, until the nature of the examination system changes, and until some more practically orientated FLL courses or modules can be introduced. Both of these are now likely to occur. The more practical modules will become available in 1985/86, and the Higher Grade examination is due to be reformed for 1988.

We now turn to report findings from various surveys of pupil opinion on various aspects of the GLAFLL approach. Some of these were devised centrally, others were conducted by individual schools.

It is intended to let the comments speak largely for themselves.

6.4.3. Pupil reactions and attitudes

In 1980 a survey of the opinions of 234 pupils who had recently completed a Stage 1 or 2 Test was canvassed. The results were extremely positive and revealed the following:

- 91% said that they had enjoyed their work in the FL class that year
- 79% said that they had liked doing the tests
- 95% thought that their Progress Cards had helped them to learn better

Pupils said that they had particularly liked the pupil to pupil conversation test.
In 1981 a survey of opinion among 384 pupils in S3/S3 was made. 197 of these were from "GLAFLL" classes and 187 from "non-GLAFLL" classes. The pupils were asked to express what they felt about their FLL in an entirely open and honest manner. They were told that what they wrote was to be anonymous and would not be consulted by their class teacher.

In the non-GLAFLL classes on 52% of the pupils said that they liked learning a FL, whereas in the GLAFLL classes 81% did.

What follows is a sample of GLAFLL pupil comments taken from a variety of surveys over the years in a variety of schools.

6.4.3.1 Comments relating to school FLL in general

"This year we got a lot more things to do in French and I really look forward to coming to classes".

"I think in the last couple of years it's been getting better. We have started working more with our friends and have been working more orally than written work".

"This year the work is more varied. One day we get speaking, the next written work, the next we read a bit. I have enjoyed this year's work tremendously. Also we have quizzes and last week we got to design a cafe".

"Last year it was really boring but our teacher now gives us exciting work which gives us pleasure and excitement to do".

"I like German as I can write to my pen-pal in Germany, and when she writes back I am able to read some of it. It is nice being able to read and understand a foreign language".

"I like knowing that I can help some French person who was over in Scotland and was lost".

"I like it because when you go home and talk to your mum and dad in Italian and they are completely lost and you can show them up".

6.4.3.2 Comments relating to paired and group work

"We're allowed to work in pairs which means you enjoy it more, and also if you do not know a word, you could ask your partner and vice-versa. This saves asking the teacher non-stop".
"I enjoy the projects where you work in groups on a topic".
"I feel rather shy talking French to the teacher but when I talk to my friends I really enjoy it".
"I don't like having long conversations with the teacher, but I like making up conversations and I prefer to do it with my class-mates".

6.4.3.3 Comments relating to the use of Progress Cards

"All the progress cards helped me so when I took the test I could do most of it".
"It helps us to revise our German".
"The progress cards gives you an idea what standard you are at".
"Progress cards help alot as I enjoy working through them with my friends. They explain what they want you to say and you don't have to do they questions all at once. It's nice not to be pushed on too far by the teacher".
"I use them on my mum at home".

6.4.3.4 Comments relating to the emphasis on conversational work

"In the second year it's been better because we done more speaking".
"Last summer I spent a day in France with my parents. I could hardly speak a word of French. So in actual fact one whole year of French was wasted. This year however, we have been learning to speak French instead of writing it. In my opinion I have learnt more in half of second year than I could ever have learnt writing boring exercises".
"Sometimes my friends and I argue about which class can speak better French, an O Grade class which gets mostly writing and learning verbs, or our GIAPLL class which gets mostly speaking and communicating with the teacher in French. I think we're better".
"The best thing I've done in French was where you and someone else worked out what you would say in a certain situation".
"In our class it (French) is taught in a way which makes you have to think what you mean".
"I like the way we are allowed now to say what we would like to, rather than be told what to swot up".
6.4.3.5 Comments on the Language Resource booklet

"I think this is a good thing, because the things I learn are split up into different sections, ie family, school, hotels etc, which is a good help when revising".

"Usually if we write something down in our jotters I go home and write it into my 'This is what I know' book".

6.4.3.6 Comments on the tests and the Record of Achievement awards

"The GLAFLLL tests where the best thing in the whole of the German course".

"In the second year of French it got better because we had something to work for".

"I was amazed, because I had past by a large amount of marks and I am not bright. I like French now. I am going to take it in third year if I can".

"The certificate you get is very helpful because it involves speaking among your friends in French and that encourages you to learn it".

"I think it was a really good idea about having a test with all the parts of French teaching in it for the certificate".

"When you leave school you have a certificate to show to your employer".

"I worried alot about my GLAFLLL and when I had it I realised it wasn’t anything to worry about".

"You feel proud at the end because it says you are able to speak French".

6.4.3.7 Comments made about teachers and the interactions and atmosphere they created

"If you make a mistake in our class you don’t get embarrassed".

"I like it because we all get on great".

"Our teacher sometimes gets very happy with us and I really like to see her very happy".

"I like the teacher because she gets on with it, tells us what to do and we can get on. She doesn’t talk all the time. She explains everything very good and has a lot of patience".

"Our teacher has reasonable classroom rules, not very hard to obey. She gives us a chance if we forget our books".
"Our teacher doesn't stand for any nonsense, that's what I like about her".

"She gives us time to do the work and she's always willing to help you and likes to see you try again".

"If you don't understand you can always go up to the teacher and ask what it means".

"Some teachers don't tell you things. The last teacher I had gave us work sheets and we didn't understand a thing, but now we have a teacher that explains things, fully explain things".

6.4.3.8 Comments on taking responsibility and comments reflecting awareness

"Learning on your own has some advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages are that you don't get so much forced on you that you can't understand. Some disadvantages is that you might not learn anything if you are to do it on your own".

"I found that it was up to me to discover what I needed to know and up to me to settle down and work along with the help of a teacher ... I am getting more used to it and it is helping to build up my confidence ... At the beginning I did not like this way of learning because it was so different to how I had been taught before ... The system was hard to understand at first and I found I was not working as well as I should. This was partly because I did not feel I was learning anything because I couldn't see a set of marks laid down ... Now I realise that learning German this way does help".

"As a lot of work is done individually it is up to you to get yourself organised. I like to do a bit of reading and writing and then some group work with friends and the teacher. I try to do various things during the time ... This is a good way of working if it is a double period which is a long time to spend doing German".

"In the class I am in it is sometimes up to me to teach beginners some basics, and I like doing this, because it is good revision and helps me to remember things".

"The group was divided as to whether the best way to learn was with the whole class or individually, so as a compromise we decided that it would be good if the teacher set us things to do and we worked towards them".

"This year I will set about learning by improving my letter writing. Instead of wasting school time I will write the letters at home. By doing this I will have more school time for speaking".
"I found that by reading a lot last year I could get (German) word order right without thinking. To me reading is very important."

"We all agreed that the best way to learn a foreign language is to go and stay in the country concerned. But since this is not really possible the next best way is to create the atmosphere of a foreign country in the classroom. The teacher should speak as much as possible in the language but make it clear what is meant by using actions etc".

6.4.3.9 Critical comments

Inevitably not everything was perfect in these GLAFLL classes. Some pupils reacted against the continual use of Progress Cards as testing instruments.

"I don't like the checklists. Its just tests, tests, tests".

Some pupils were particularly perceptive about the limitations of the discrete learning of phrases for particular functions out of context. This at the time, was a normal feature of progress cards in many schools.

"I hate how you learn phrases without being taught actual words in the sentence. If you were told all the words in the sentences then you could expand your vocabulary and phrases by yourself".

"I do not like the progress cards and I do not think they help much. We revise and learn all the answers before we are tested and its easy then, but after a couple of weeks we begin to forget it all".

One or two pupils expressed the desire for more formal grammar instruction.

"Through GLAFLL, mistakes happen a lot and are not always detected. People are expected to learn the rules as they go along. I don't like this. I would prefer if the teacher could discuss more with the whole class about cases, articles etc".
The most common cause for dissatisfaction was when work seemed too difficult or when the teacher spoke too fast in the FL.

"The teacher talks too quickly in French when talking to her class, as we sometimes can't think what the translation is right away".

"When you have a double period it gets boring and you lose concentration then you can't understand what she's saying".

"I think there should be more help from people that are having difficulty like having simpler progress cards and simpler tests".

A few pupils continued to find FLL boring and irrelevant, or trivial and sissy.

"I hate French. It's boring".

"I think we should not get as much as we do get as it is not very important to learn foreign languages".

"I find it quite childish to be drawing pictures. I think Eclair is babyish and boring".

"I think French is sissy".

A very few expressed xenophobic attitudes:

"I hate all French and the French football teams and I support Rangers. They are the best team in the land".

"Who came after GB and bomb her. The German pig and we have to take German".

"I hate singing Bye-ti songs".

6.4.4 Pupil motivation

One particular school recently charted the motivational pattern of pupils through the second year of the school - usually the year when many lose motivation and opt out. All the S2 pupils had been inherited from another school in which the teaching had been very traditional, whereas in the school that they now found themselves the approach used was a communicative one. In the first questionnaire, given after 2 or 3 weeks of the first term pupils were asked to react to the teacher's insistence on the use of the FL for all classroom interaction.
It was clear that for pupils who had had a year in another school in which English had been used for this, this had come as something of a shock. Although not all the comments were negative, many were like the following:

"The teacher says all the words in German. That means she explains something in German. Therefore we cannot understand what on earth she is going on about".

"We go to school like that and when we sit exams we fail them, because we have not been told what the words mean, and whose fault is that?"

"I think that she should speak in English and teach us German on the blackboard, the same way they do in the other school".

A second questionnaire was given to the same pupils in November (after about 10 to 12 weeks). On the question of their confidence to cope with the exclusive use of the FL for classroom interaction a remarkable change had taken place:

5 said that the found no problem
63 said that it was occasionally hard but that they could cope
20 said that it was still a big problem for them
8 said they disliked the subject, so it didn't matter anyway

In addition to this in the second questionnaire 76% of the pupils said that they intended to opt to continue into S3.

By March (24 - 26 weeks of the second year course):

12% felt they were making good progress
67% felt they were doing alright
12% felt they were not making as fast progress as they'd like to
4% felt they were not getting anywhere
5% didn't care because they didn't like the subject

It is clear that despite the initial reservations the overall picture of motivation in this year group improved steadily as the pupils began to cope with the demands made on them, and began to feel a sense of progress.
This was in marked contrast to the normal picture of declining motivation among S2 pupils.

The picture of improving motivation, greater confidence and of higher take-up rates in S3 is one reported by many schools. The following is a typical example from a school in a deprived area:

"In preparing for a Stage One test, pupils became much more aware of what they could actually do in German, expressed in terms of communication. For example, when asked to give present tense endings or noun genders, most pupils were at best less than confident; being asked questions like; 'How do you say/ask/do ... in German?' evoked a much wider response, particularly among pupils of average ability who were able to show that they were capable of performing some functions in German. Working towards the test has allowed teaching to crystallise around the uses to which various bits of language can be put. Motivation began to rise at a time when it can normally be expected to fall to a low point. Those pupils who received Records of Achievement were delighted with this statement of their prowess. At an SII parents' evening following the distribution of the 'certificates', several parents remarked how pleased they and their children were to have received tangible recognition of work done."

"In terms of 'take-up' (number of pupils continuing beyond the compulsory stage), there has been a significant improvement since the introduction of the GLAFLL scheme. Nearly 60% of the SII group in session 79 - 80 will be continuing with either SCE or CSE courses from June 1980, when the new session begins. This is a three-fold improvement over the situation a year ago."

Other teachers have commented over the years as follows:

"We have almost completely eradicated the 2nd year syndrome of declining motivation."

"Apart from actually enjoying teaching the GLAFLL class much more than the 0 Grade one it was in fact easier. Even the poorest pupils appeared to be interested a lot of the time. I was not aware of the "I hate French" feeling that one usually gets from a lot of 2nd year children ... Some of the less able pupils now appeared in S3. One pupil has already asked when he'll be able to do the next Stage Tests."
"It seems to have given the pupils more motivation - made the subject much more useful in the pupils' eyes. It is clearer to them what they are supposed to be aiming at!"

"What pleases me more than anything else is the fearlessness with which pupils now approach oral tests and the way one bad result in one test no longer discourages."

"What is most encouraging is that those who normally say 'Your French isnae fur me' has become a smaller number."

"We experienced increased numbers of pupils carrying on with a foreign language in S3 and this, in most cases, despite an unfavourable course choice."

"The children seem far more involved in the language. They like the language a lot more. And it is just not such a boring thing any more. They really do seem to enjoy the language."

(A GLAPLL teacher interviewed and quoted in Mitchell - forthcoming)

"In its first flush of enthusiasm the department had oversold the personal progress card ... The journey from classroom to staffroom became an obstacle course dotted with bright-eyed pupils intent on forcing pink, blue or yellow progress booklets on our attention."

"The greatest benefit of self-directed learning has been totally unexpected - the pupils enjoy it immensely. They love working at their own pace and recording their own progress. Pair and group-work is undertaken with great enthusiasm. The final seal of approval, and the guarantee of the scheme's survival, came recently when the Headmaster said he had noticed a disturbing trend in his Modern Language Department - the children were having too much fun."

"I was surrounded by evidence of pupils' increased enjoyment in learning a language. Other teachers would remark on how they would quite spontaneously talk in German or French in other classes or read their German or French booklet when they were supposed to be doing Maths or History! Parents would remark on the fact that their daughter or son was constantly 'chuntering' away in the foreign language at home."

The Council of Europe team who visited some 20 GLAPLL classes in 1981 noted among other things: "the spontaneity of the pupils, and their boldness and zest for self-expression in the foreign language."

(Bergentoft 1983)
6.4.5 Conclusions from pupil comments

From pupil comments it seems clear that many teachers have made considerable progress towards awakening motivation by giving pupils a sense of purpose and of success. Although large numbers of pupils continue to drop their study of a FL at the end of S2, it seems probable that the majority no longer do so with feelings of failure and frustration. They would appear to have drawn general educational, social and practical FLL benefits from the exercise. Their comments indicate that on the whole:

- they enjoy FLL
- they like the wide range of learning experiences provided
- they have felt a sense of purpose
- they enjoy working at their own level
- they eventually appreciate being given a sense of responsibility and are able to work on their own
- they enjoy paired and group work
- they appreciate a disciplined but friendly atmosphere
- they are beginning to show some awareness as to what FLL is about
- they are deriving a sense of success (which often surprises them)

6.4.6 Pupil Standards

No comparisons involving control and experimental groups have been made. What follows is therefore speculative and based on teacher opinion.

Teachers have said:

"Whereas in the past I had pupils in my classes who could "do grammar" and were therefore successful in my subject, and pupils who could not "do grammar" and were therefore not successful, I now have pupils, the vast majority of whom can communicate successfully but with greater or lesser degrees of linguistic accuracy."

"I feel my less able GLAPLL pupils have a much greater appreciation of French 'as she is spoke' than do their counterparts in certificate classes, but whether this will have any lasting impact after they leave school is highly suspect."
"The ability of 1st years to communicate on school trips to France and Germany took me by surprise. I derived enormous pleasure from seeing 12 year olds running all over a strange town, accosting total strangers in French or German, completely confident that they would be understood. And they were never wrong, (although they didn't always understand what came back!)"

"I presented my GLAFLL S2 pupils with the same oral situation as my O Grade class. Both sets of pupils produced good conversations, yet the GLAFLL pupils were far more confident and eager to try out their new concoctions of French which might or might not work. Moreover they tended to think things out in terms of what they really wanted to say ... The O Grade pupils were still obsessed with producing highly accurate French. They thought in English and then tried to translate their ideas into French which led to difficulties."

"I now have a good third year O Grade class comprising traditionally taught pupils and "GLAFLL-ised" pupils. It's amazing how the latter shine, even those I've never seen before. They seem to have so much more confidence ...

"As our first real GLAFLL pupils moved up the school into S3 and 4 it was obvious to me that they were proficient in communicative language skills, in all areas, far in excess of anything I had ever encountered with similar classes before. They spoke confidently in the foreign language, communicated well and effectively in numerous, sometimes quite tricky situations, they coped with 'O' grade listening passages at the beginning of S3, they read for pleasure difficult passages in authentic German (from teenage magazines etc), understood and listened for pleasure to quite difficult pop songs, and wrote lively, communicative letters in sophisticated, advanced German with evident command of advanced vocabulary and sentence constructions, although their German was in most cases full of minor errors."

6.4.7 Teacher comments and reactions

6.4.7.1 Reasons for taking up GLAFLL

Teachers have taken up GLAFLL for a variety of reasons:

- to improve pupil motivation with the carrot of a Record of Achievement award
- to improve motivation by creating a sense of purpose and activity in the classroom
- to counterbalance the text-book's formal influence
- to provide pupils with a more practical ability to communicate than in the traditional course
- to cope better with the wide ability range and the less able in particular

"I saw GLAFLL as an opportunity of getting some paper qualifications for well-intentioned pupils who would never achieve an O Grade pass but had learnt some French. I hoped it would provide an incentive for those pupils who intended to give up after 2 years."

"We decided to try it because we were dissatisfied with the existing coursebook which comprises second-instance statements and rarely if ever offers first/second person language.

"We now actually feel we are teaching useful things to the junior pupils. That is, if they drop French or German even after one year, or after two years, which they can do in this school, then we feel that they have got this core of knowledge which will actually serve them well if they ever go abroad."

(GLAFLL teacher interviewed and quoted in Mitchell - forthcoming)

"What first attracted me to GLAFLL was its emphasis on communication. The communicative approach seemed then (and still does) to offer our pupils something more worthwhile, something they can readily see a use for."

"I think basically, GLAFLL has something to offer every child in S1 and S2. Even if they weren't going to be going on with the FL in third year, they still could achieve something at the end of second year. I think that's really what appealed to us, that these children who had studied French or German for two years were going to get somewhere at the end of it. And that every child, theoretically, should achieve."

(GLAFLL teacher interviewed and quoted in Mitchell - forthcoming)

"We decided to try it because we were dissatisfied with the way things were going. As usual the less able were achieving little, but with GLAFLL they could do something."

"It seemed to offer a solution to the basic problems for less-able pupils, which stem from their lack of self-confidence and frequent non-achievement, coupled with the belief that they will not easily succeed."

"Pupils can see what they are doing and they are told why they are doing it; they also seem to sense that for once French is giving them the chance to do something they can do. Achievable aims is the name of the game."

Given the wide disparity of reasons for joining the GLAFLL project it was not surprising to find that different aspects of the project appealed to different teachers.
If any general comment can be made, it is that teachers who were unwilling or unable to experiment with teaching methods, and who merely used the Records of Achievement as a carrot, would not seem to have achieved much in the way of improved motivation or communicative standards.

6.4.7.2 The co-operative nature of the work

"The classroom has traditionally been too much of a closed shop and too many teachers have been a slave to a particular course book. The in-service meetings and group work have helped me to have a much broader view of things."

"Working with others has been a positive experience, and the amount of work achieved has been more than ever I would have expected."

"The GLAFLL in-service policy has meant that teachers can opt in to RSGML sub-groups to a greater or lesser degree. Everyone can benefit from the co-operative work produced. Nobody can justifiably feel left out."

6.4.7.3 Constraints

"Our greatest problem is trying to fit the oral tests in. It takes an inordinate amount of time during which the teacher is not able to supervise or monitor the work of others."

"My main headache has been lack of materials."

"I can't really say I'll use GLAFLL until there are some ready-made materials to hand."

"It is my firm belief that the activities ... would have been more effective if I had had smaller classes. I was working most of the time with classes of 25 and above. 20 is a far more practical number for a GLAFLL class. All the materials I developed were devised during my 200 minutes preparation and correction time and in my own free time. How much more effective might these materials have been had I had double that time at my disposal? To organise a classroom and one's own teaching along GLAFLL lines is very demanding in terms of preparation time. I know my classes were often not prepared as well as they might have been, if I had had more time."

"It's pointless trying to arrange assessment to suit pupils and then being able to give high marks, when the school immediately translates them into norm-referenced grades."

"GLAFLL is always going to be pushed aside by teachers in order to prepare pupils for the exams."
6.4.7.4 Use of the FL for classroom interaction

"We found that although we started out with good intentions, our perseverance was lacking. It just took too much energy to stick to the FL and we began to give in. Now we've adopted a policy where we use the FL for everything we can, but we give in when complex things have to be explained like grammar."

"The problem is sometimes anxiety about making mistakes in the language ... the time factor too, it's a lot easier to explain what you want in English."

"I had always used the foreign language for classroom management, but encouraged by the Isobel McGregor video, inter alia, I started to believe that I might use it all the time. So I persevered for a year with all my 1st years and my more willing 2nd years in a huge act of faith and really tried to speak German and French all the time. I allowed the let out, "Kann ich Englisch sprechen?" for emergencies and on Friday afternoons, but in my heart of hearts, I often wondered whether it was really worth it, whether it wasn't all a ghastly mistake. Then, lo and behold, my patience was rewarded and they started to speak. "Ist die Hausaufgabe für morgen?" asked one bespectacled 2nd year boy. 'How on earth does he know that? think I, 'I've never taught him that' - and then it dawned on me - a whole year of me saying "Die Hausaufgabe ist für morgen", was coming back - with interest! I'm still not a "purist" in this respect; I don't believe it's natural to pretend, as I have seen some teachers do, that you don't understand English, and I also think that you lose a great deal in terms of your relationship with your pupils if you don't listen to their stories and allow them to express their anxieties in their mother tongue. So we compromise - I speak German and French most of the time and they speak a mixture back to me, but the emphasis is on communication!"

6.4.7.5 Attitude to error

"I must confess that I find it difficult to accept very limited, loosely-strung bits of pidgin French as being valid, and then insisting on a very high degree of accuracy from my certificate classes. Am I becoming a split personality?"

"I think what the bottom sets need most is confidence and so I don't correct their grammar when they're doing communicative work."
6.4.7.6 Group and Pair Work

"I am very wary of children of low intelligence becoming disorderly in paired work."

"Group work has made for a much more efficient classroom and has relieved the monotony of chalk and talk."

"I've always kept my system of pairs very flexible, varying it as the need arose, but each pupil always had a 'definite' partner for her speaking test, in the interests of stability and familiarity. Gradually the pupils themselves worked with my system; better pupils would, of their own accord, go and help out if they saw a friend struggling. Indeed, they often taught the material better than me because they understood their friend's difficulties more clearly than I did (although they tended to be less tolerant of error than I might have been!). In some classes I even had a system of 'monitors' who would help out with the profile tests. In this way the pupils themselves became an additional 'resource' in the classroom."

"The group and paired activities greatly increased the motivation of most of my pupils and also contributed to the increased social harmony of my classroom, perhaps even increased the social skills of some of my pupils. Certainly the Remedial teachers used to remark on how motivated and hard working certain pupils were in their Modern Languages classroom compared with elsewhere in the school."

"The pupils like working together and if you can stand the noise it's clearly a good thing. I sometimes wonder, though, how much they are learning in all the hubbub."

6.4.7.7 Pupil responsibility

"I question whether pupils know when they're ready to take tests. If you have some sitting, others 'sat', and some not ready, it makes administration impossible."

"School administration does not allow for pupil responsibility."

"I found it most encouraging to witness S3 pupils (reared on GLAFLL) who, after finishing a piece of work, would quite happily (and of their own accord!) browse through the reading box I made."
"Children would bring out a progress card which they had failed to complete for some reason, absence perhaps, and seek to remedy this. Often they would not even ask me but enlist the help of a neighbour instead."

"I gradually began to evolve a less "teacher-centred" approach to my teaching. I started to explain the aims and objectives of a given course to my pupils, to describe what I hoped they would achieve and to involve them in some real discussion about their own learning. Gradually they began to take more responsibility for their own learning and inevitably, to express volubly some of their reservations."

"GLAFLL has changed my attitude to the classroom. I try now to create an atmosphere where pupils tell me what they want to know. It has made teaching and learning a kind of joint enterprise."

6.4.7.8 Teacher Awareness

Teachers themselves over the years have commented as follows:

"When the first whisper of communicative techniques drifted across Lothian Region to X, our department was confident that the term referred to a methodological approach we had employed for years. Closer examination, however, brought us to the reluctant conclusion that whatever else we had been doing in our classrooms it was certainly not communicating . . ."

"It seems to us to be of relatively minor importance what course-book, if any, is used to accompany the scheme. What is important is the way we use the course-book or materials which we have. That is to say we extract from our materials whatever we feel to be of value in helping our pupils towards attaining their stated objectives (and this in relation to the GLAFLL syllabus) rather than following the course-book rigidly. Looking at material from a GLAFLL viewpoint may result in an exploitation which had never been considered before."

"GLAFLL makes teachers think about what they do and why and how they do it. It is from this change in teacher attitude that the most important results have come."

"I stopped teaching in a haphazard way, on a "hand to mouth" basis and started to formulate broad aims and objectives for myself and my pupils. I started to try and teach "thematically", always with an overall plan in mind concerning what I expected my pupils to achieve, how I wanted them to achieve, and how well I wanted them to achieve it. Instead of teaching 'the Imperfect' on 'a one-off' basis because they 'needed to know it' I started to try and put it in a wider context."
"One of the problems with GLAFLL is that I've never quite managed to catch up with it. Just as I thought I'd begun to master the concepts some new aspect opened up. Demotivating? I'm not sure. Perhaps initially. Then you realise new areas for development are always going to be opening up."

6.4.8 Conclusions

Teacher morale would appear to have improved considerably over the last few years. Although no survey of teacher opinion as to the feasibility and value of FLL for the whole ability range has been conducted in Lothian schools recently, the impression is that there is now more acceptance of the proposition that worthwhile objectives can be achieved by all pupils who strive.

Teachers in the region have inevitably varied in the extent to which they have involved themselves in the project and in the choice of strategies and instruments they have selected from the total approach. There are at present therefore as many stages and levels of teacher awareness as there are of pupil language learning. The generalisations that follow should therefore be seen as indications of what has seemed to happen in a number of schools rather than as anything more substantial.

A first stage which had to be reached before teachers seemed prepared to reconsider their approach and develop new strategies was an awareness of something being wrong. This was more easily achieved in schools where there were large numbers of low-achieving pupils from less privileged homes, whose lack of success in FLL had led to demotivation and discipline problems. It was therefore often, but not always, in schools such as these that GLAFLL most easily took root. The examination system, with its heavy accent on accuracy and its disregard for communicative activity, successfully masked the extremely low standards of communicative performance actually achieved by O Grade pupils. This prevented some teachers in the more academic schools from taking part in the GLAFLL project, which appeared to them to be out of tune with current examination requirements. A number of these teachers were in any case less than sure that they wanted to encourage a higher opting-in rate in S3. They tended on the whole to be satisfied with the existing system that encouraged the gradual emergence of pupils who could cope with
a form-focused academic approach in S1 and S2, so that by S3 all non-0 Grade pupils had been eliminated from their care. Other teachers from the more academic schools, like their colleagues in less privileged schools, were dissatisfied with current arrangements, and with the elitist label that was frequently hung upon the Modern Language department in the new comprehensive framework. They were keen to try to come to terms with a new approach which seemed to offer something to pupils of all levels of ability.

The first stage in renewal seemed to be marked by the determination to bring about visible oral activity in the classroom. It tended to be characterised by a sudden rejection of form-focused drills and exercises and of written work in favour of oral work of a pseudo-communicative nature. Particular techniques favoured were teacher to whole-class question and answer work, and preparation of role-plays related to a particular situation or event, and the subsequent regurgitation of these role-plays in pairs, all working at the same time on the same dialogue.

With the advent of the functional/notional syllabus specification in the first version of the GLAFLL Syllabus Guidelines (Lothian Regional Study Group 1978/79), and the encouragement to be explicit about lesson objectives in progress cards, teachers began to equate communicative ability with the ability to produce a series of pre-packaged exponents for each of the many functional/notional units expressed on the progress cards. They also began to equate conversational ability with the capacity to create dialogues in pairs on the basis of cue cards, on which a series of interconnected "adjacency pairs" of functions had been predetermined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil A</th>
<th>Pupil B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greet the client</td>
<td>Greet the shopkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask the client what he/she wants</td>
<td>Ask for a melon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask whether he/she wants a big one or a small one</td>
<td>Say you want a big one etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This interpretation of what was meant by a communicative approach brought pair work to the classroom. The results, however, were often less than they might have been, since the apparent communicative ability of the pupils was dependent upon the use of a few routines and patterns rather than upon any generative capacity (cf H M I 1983).

During this phase, teachers also began to come to terms with the use of authentic material. Here, however, the tendency at the beginning was to reject anything other than functional written material produced by native-speakers for tourist situations. This limited the sort of reading that could be tackled by pupils in the early stages of their learning to signs, notices, menus, adverts and other forms of tourist-related material in which the skills of extended reading and of discourse-processing were simply not exercised.

With the advent of the notion of the information or opinion-gap suddenly a whole new series of techniques became available, involving mixed-skill tasks. These brought reading, listening and writing into the communicative framework for the first time. Authentic or semi-authentic reading and listening material was now incorporated into a variety of multi-skill communicative activities.

It was also at this time that games, simulations, projects and drama techniques were introduced. Teachers found this phase of methodological innovation particularly rewarding. Group work and individualised work were added to class work and to paired work. Pupil responsibility ceased to be a rhetorical aspiration and became a limited reality.

In the early part of this phase, however, there remained a tendency for teachers to neglect acquisition - promoting activity in favour of more and more fluency work dependent upon minimal amounts of input. There was also a tendency to downgrade the role of feedback and of deliberate learning. The pupil's interlanguage, therefore, was seldom as well developed as it might have been. This was lost sight of by teachers in the understandable sense of achievement gained from the fact that the pupils appeared to be much more involved, more fluent and more confident within the limits of their interlanguage, than they had ever been before.
Meanwhile, through all of these phases, teachers have tried to come to terms with the use of the FL as medium of classroom management and instruction. It has been shown that if this practice is not started in SI it is exceedingly difficult to adopt later. Teachers vary in the extent to which they now use the FL in class, with a distinct trend, however, towards an increase in use for a variety of purposes.

There would also appear to have been a marked increase throughout the various phases of GLAFLL in the development of pen-pal correspondence, and school links and exchanges.

The picture that emerges is one of a gradual increase in teacher awareness and in skills relating to the achievement of communication in the classroom through an ever-widening array of resources, tasks, activities and interaction patterns. It is clear, however, that there are still several areas of weakness.

Teachers have as yet, quite understandably, been more concerned to raise the levels of motivation and of pupil involvement in overt communicative activity than to investigate ways of promoting better language learning per se. Thus the achievement of a sense of "busyness" in the classroom has been seen as sufficient, with little questioning as to whether the experiences provided have led to increased learning. "Busyness" does not guarantee learning any more than oral activity guarantees communication. There has thus been a considerable gap between the project rhetoric as represented in the various documents and the actual classroom achievements.

One teacher sums up the feelings of many at present:

"I don't really know yet how to ensure both use and learning through classroom communication."

Few teachers have managed yet to break through school traditions and administrative constraints towards the development of meaningful negotiation and of pupil responsibility, though a number of teachers have recently begun to do so as a result of the self-access and group-access resources and equipment now becoming available.
Much therefore remains to be done.

It is to be hoped that the framework and style of C R adopted for GLAFLL will permit the project to continue, so that:

a) the gap between the rhetoric of intention and the reality of classroom practice can be further narrowed
and b) the GLAFLL approach itself can continue to be improved in the light of further teacher experience.
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