INSET AT A DISTANCE IN SIERRA LEONE:
DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A COURSE

by

Nemata Omolaura Kaikumba

D7 2566187

A thesis submitted to the University of Surrey in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
August, 1986
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to
Joe, Mamei and Yabai
for the love, understanding
and support they gave me
which I can only now begin to return
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

At the outset of this thesis, the aim was to address needs expressed by secondary teachers of English in Sierra Leone for a system of support to facilitate their teaching. After a review of the literature, it seemed that this could be achieved through the construction of an in-service training and education of teachers (INSET) at a distance course. The thesis accordingly describes the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the course. This aspect of this thesis is referred to as research theme I.

A feature of the course was the use of course tutors and members belonging to the same schools, who interacted with each other daily while sharing the same staffrooms. Consequently, one of the traditionally identified problems of distance learning, namely the isolation factor, was overcome.

With regard to research theme I, the thesis reveals the advantages of such a DL/INSET course over more conventional forms of training. Many of the findings (both advantageous and disadvantageous) generally concur with those found by other researchers. Findings specific to the Sierra Leonean situation relate particularly to her socio-economic problems. It is argued that researchers should never underestimate the tremendous impact of societal context on the smooth implementation of a course of this nature.

The thesis argues for the non-traditional paradigm for evaluating the course. The flexible nature of this paradigm led to the development of a special feature of this work, namely an audio cassette mode of evaluating at a distance. This consists of sending out blank cassette tapes to respondents who speak their views in an open ended and spontaneous fashion on to the tape in their own time and in a location of their own choosing. The development of this instrument and its
comparison with conventional methods of evaluating at a distance constitutes research theme II of this thesis.

For research theme II, the thesis reveals that the tape method of evaluating at a distance is viable. It can yield data that can be equated to those elicited through other means, but it can also in certain circumstances produce richer data. Other potential advantages to researcher and respondents alike are discussed.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
During the past decade, there have been several attempts by both scholars and educational policy makers to explain the rapid changes taking place in educational institutions in Africa, and in particular to identify solutions for the multifarious problems that quite often beset such institutions. According to Elton and Manwaring (1981):

"The problems which these institutions are facing in consequence are manifold, including in particular those related to the pressure of large numbers, the language used in instruction and textbooks, a great diversity in the ability and background of students, maintenance of academic standards, academic freedom and relevance to the society which they are serving."

(Elton and Manwaring, 1981)

This great diversity between the product of formal education and the need to maintain academic standards, academic freedom and relevance to a society's human, national and economic needs is a continuing problem in Sierra Leone (West Africa) as in many other post-colonial African countries.

One of the persistent obstacles to the improvement of the quality of education in many of these countries is the inadequate provision of teachers in schools in general. In Sierra Leone, the problem differs considerably as one moves from the primary to the secondary school level. At the primary level, the problem is mainly that of a high number of unqualified teachers particularly in rural areas. At the secondary level, while the percentage of qualified teachers is much higher, there are poor retention rates and an abysmal lack of continuous in-service training especially in certain key subjects.

This present study, which attempts to explore an unconventional scheme for the in-service training of teachers, went through various development stages:-
Chapter 2 portrays the educational background of teachers as an essentially deprived context in which teacher pre-service and in-service training facilities were inadequate. The chapter goes on to argue the need to address the problem of 'quality' in the output in secondary education.

This background in turn provided the rationale (ch.3) for reviewing needs expressed by teachers, in this case teachers of English, in relation to their teaching tasks. It also argues that the attempts made by previous researchers to address the problem were unsuccessful in terms of improving teacher education since teachers at that time still expressed the need for a system of support to aid them in their general teaching and specifically to facilitate their existing 1974 National Syllabus for English at secondary level. The chapter puts forward the suggestion that such a system of support could be achieved through an administratively convenient means, like in-service education and training (INSET).

Accordingly, it was necessary to review the literature on existing support systems like INSET courses in Britain and in some developing countries including Sierra Leone (ch.4) to identify administratively convenient means for addressing problems of teachers of English. This chapter includes a look at current moves towards alternative strategies that are being explored for improving INSET. The chapter also argues that the existing pre and in-service training activities in Sierra Leone were inadequate, and that INSET activities were underutilised. In view of the inherent problems in the existing provisions for teacher education, it seemed advisable for Sierra Leone to explore alternative and cost-effective forms of training.

One way in which the problem of teachers of English in Sierra Leone could be addressed seemed to be by INSET at a distance. Chapter 5 reviews the literature on INSET at a distance generally and in developing
countries including some in Africa in particular, and suggests that it would be appropriate to explore the potential for INSET in the Sierra Leonean context.

This suggestion led to the presentation of research theme I which explores the design, development and evaluation of an INSET at a distance course for lower secondary teachers of English in Sierra Leone and, further, the actual development and evaluation of the course. The chapter argues that since the research aims to evaluate by addressing, understanding and gaining insights into the problems in the form of a course development and evaluation, the non-traditional paradigm and specifically, the illuminative evaluation approach would be, in these circumstances, the appropriate methodology to use since it leads to broader and more eclectic perspectives (ch.6).

The different stages in the construction of the course are then described (ch.7) including its aims, content and structure.

Chapter 8 describes problems encountered when an attempt was made to pilot the course using the illuminative evaluation approach and reports on the emergence of the second research theme - a special feature of this work - the development and use of the tape method of collecting evaluation data at a distance for the first stage of an illuminative evaluation study.

The pilot study and its findings are discussed in chapter 9 and research questions for the two research themes are formulated.

Following this, the fieldwork was set up for the main study with the target population in Sierra Leone (ch.10). Its chronological development is portrayed and interpreted in terms of methods and techniques and the data elicited through the various instruments used are presented in chapter 11.
Chapter 12 addresses the research questions for research theme I to the point where further questions were raised for investigation in the final stage of the study.

Chapter 13 describes the final stage of the study and addresses the outstanding issues on the research themes of the thesis.

Lastly, chapter 14 summarises the outcomes of the research. It also puts forward my personal reflections on those findings that proved particularly stimulating to me, and it highlights issues that I feel would benefit from the attention of future researchers.

Thus having identified a specific problem, this thesis describes how it was approached and investigated. It also describes how mechanisms were set up to go some way towards addressing the problem. Their relative success is monitored and the way forward is postulated.
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2.2 The Immediate Post-Colonial Era
   2.2.1 Expansion of education and teacher availability in the immediate post-colonial period
   2.2.2 The use of expatriate teachers
2.3 The Resulting Problem Of Quality In Secondary Education
2.4 Relevance For This Work: The Need To Address The Problem Of Quality In Secondary Education
2.0 INTRODUCTION

Teachers in Sierra Leone, as elsewhere, need to be trained. Unfortunately however, the training which is available is not entirely adequate. This chapter surveys the historical background to teacher training in Sierra Leone, and, in consequence, argues not only for the need to address the problem of quality in secondary education by providing greater support for teacher training but also that administratively convenient means should be found to do this.

2.1 Historical Background: The Colonial Era

Sierra Leone was the first British Colony. She became 'the experiment' in the application of European enlightenment in Anglophone West Africa (Fyfe, 1962). Western education was introduced towards the end of the eighteenth century with the first official school established in 1792 (Sumner, 1963, p.5). Christian missions played a very important role in the earliest educational activities in the country. Missionary zeal was indeed the driving force behind the expansion and development of education in Sierra Leone, especially in the nineteenth century. Most of the early schools were established by Christian missions.

The poor quality of teachers (most of them being untrained) was one of the major problems that faced the early schools. An adult was accepted as a teacher so long as his moral standards were acceptable to the proprietors of the school. In order to solve the problem of shortage of trained and qualified teachers, some of the early schools experimented with the 'MONITORIAL SYSTEM'. This was a system in which the bright and more able pupils in the upper classes were utilized to teach the lower classes. It is
generally felt that the monitorial system did not work very well. The problem of poor quality teachers continued to be a major setback in the development of the educational system. In fact, the Rowan Wellington Commission of 1825 concluded that there were too few capable teachers in the system. For example, for an enrolment of 2,111 pupils in 22 schools, there were a paltry 6 schoolmasters, 4 native assistants and 5 schoolmistresses. While the number of teachers was definitely inadequate, the incompetence of some assistant teachers was a real cause for concern. Some were said to be quite unfit to become teachers. Under the circumstances, it was impossible to expect much progress in the schools (Sumner, 1963, p.33).

Fourah Bay College was opened in 1827 to train teachers for the country. Despite the liberal education provided at Fourah Bay College, the problem of teacher shortage continued throughout the nineteenth century. The Madden Commission of 1841 again reported on the lack of competent teachers and the bad effects of the monitorial system. The commission emphasised that the urgency of expanding teacher training facilities in order to improve the quality of teachers was most essential. It also recommended that uniform rewards and punishments should be introduced. The inspector of schools should notice and correct the faults of teachers and submit a memorandum on their progress (Sumner, 1963, p.54).

With the introduction of secondary education in 1845, which started with the opening of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Grammar School, the need for trained and qualified teachers became very urgent. The criticism of the quality of teachers was a recurrent note in prepared reports. For example, the Rowden report of 1909 criticised the poor quality of teaching in all the schools. In response to this, some effort was made to improve the general attainment and performance of teachers. Between 1909 and 1913 open lectures were given and vacation courses were run for the benefit of existing teachers. It was realised that only a well-equipped and well-staffed teacher
training college would fully answer the need for an adequate supply of competent teachers (Sumner, 1963, p.162).

In 1922, the Education Committee submitted the following scheme for the training of teachers:

- The government and the denominational authorities were to nominate qualified students and undertake to employ successful candidates on completion of their training.
- The students were to enter into a bond with the government undertaking to teach for at least 5 years.
- Definite rates of salaries were to be paid to teachers.
- The government was to pay annual grants to qualified teachers (Sumner, 1963, p.162).

Despite all attempts to improve the quality of teachers, salaries were still too low to attract the right quality of teachers to the schools. Missions were not able to provide the stipulated salaries and there was no commitment that the salaries stated in the ordinance of 1927 should be paid by proprietors of schools. Prospects for teachers were still rather precarious (Sumner, 1963, p.202). The problem of inadequately trained and insufficient teachers continued up to the 1960s.

Table 2.1
Secondary Education. Schools, Enrolment and Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1960-61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Schools</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>3041</td>
<td>5247</td>
<td>7512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Sumner, D.L. Education in Sierra Leone, Freetown, Government of Sierra Leone, 1963.
Table 2.1 shows that there was an increase in secondary school enrolment as well as in the number of schools. This indicates the need for increased teacher training. Those teachers who were recruited merely had their school certificates and no professional qualifications as such. As the table indicates, the number of qualified teachers did not increase in proportion to the increased enrolment. It increased from 163 in 1950 to 415 in the 1960/61 academic year. Besides, most of the teachers were untrained school certificate graduates. The problem of shortage of trained qualified teachers continued up to 1961 when Sierra Leone gained her independence. This leads to the immediate post-colonial period.

2.2 The Immediate Post-Colonial Era

The 1960s saw many African countries making serious attempts to expand and improve their educational systems. The focus was to be at the primary and secondary education levels. In May, 1961 many African leaders, including Ministers of Education, met at Addis Ababa to discuss expansion in their educational sectors. The meeting, which included a representative from Sierra Leone, enthusiastically sketched a programme of vast educational expansion in their respective countries. They set two expansionist goals for their countries. These were:

a. to achieve universal, compulsory and free primary education by 1980;
b. to provide secondary education to 30 per cent of the children who complete primary school by 1980 (Newman Smart, 1976, p.64).

Following the Addis Ababa conference which coincided with the year of Sierra Leone's independence, Sierra Leone rather hastily planned a number of programmes designed to expand and improve her educational system. The rapid expansion of education was regarded as an important key to modernisation. At the beginning, this expansion was seen as the only means of providing the trained manpower needed by the country to replace the foreign experts leaving the country in droves after independence, for the expanding modern sector of
the economy. To this end, parents and all concerned, in a spirit of euphoria clamoured for educational expansion. According to Newman-Smart (1976, p.42),

"The levels of education are interrelated: expansion at the bottom increases enrolment at the next level, unless this is arbitrarily prevented. Parents who achieved primary education set secondary schooling as the minimum qualification for their own children, and those with secondary education are anxious that their children graduate from college. Education has a self-sustaining dynamism which does not easily observe the laws of diminishing returns." (Newman Smart, 1976, p.42)

The next section will elaborate on this expansion and its attendant problems.

2.2.1 Expansion of education and teacher availability in the immediate post-colonial period

The vast and hurried programmes for development mounted in Sierra Leone during the immediate post-colonial period led to a phenomenal expansion of education at all levels. For example, the number of primary school enrolments more than doubled from 81,881 in 1960 to 166,107 in 1970. (Sierra Leone Education Review, 1976). Secondary enrolment for the same period increased from 7,097 in 1960 to 33,318 pupils in 1970. The university, then only Fourah Bay College (F.B.C.) had only 300 students, many of whom were not Sierra Leoneans.

The rapid expansion of the Sierra Leone education system was accompanied by an increasing need for trained or qualified teachers. Many of the teachers who had to be recruited during this period had only their school certificates. The Government was thus faced with a three-pronged problem:

i. the need to increase enrolment

ii. the need to improve the quality of secondary education

iii. the need to improve teacher training facilities

'The achievement of both faced problems' (Farrant, 1982).

Given these problems, the Government then came to the conclusion that if expansion of secondary education continued at this pace without a determined effort to solve especially the staffing problem, it would lead to a dilution of standards.
This situation was not unique to Sierra Leone as large numbers of untrained teachers have had to be recruited in a similar situation in other parts of Africa, South America and the Caribbean (Wali and Lovegrove, 1978; Young, Perraton, Jenkins and Dodds, 1980; Murray, 1979). Although teacher training colleges are viable in developing countries, there can be no doubt that they have failed to supply teachers in the numbers needed (see for example Husen, 1979; Hawkridge, Kinyanjui, Nkinyangi and Orviel, 1979).

This deplorable situation motivated the Sierra Leone Government to ask UNESCO in 1964 for the service of a consultant whose task would be to prepare a development programme on education. This programme was to provide a realistic basis of a policy to guide the Sierra Leone Government to achieve universal primary education in 1980. Sleight (1964) who was appointed reports that:

"The Government of Sierra Leone has affirmed as an immediate priority the development of a sound basic primary system leading as soon as possible to universal fee-free education at the first level. The maintenance of sound professional standards demands the provision of trained teachers and adequate supplies, while an expanding system imposes a strain on available resources which so often amounts to a dilution in quality and a dissipation of funds. The basic problem is to reconcile these competing and often conflicting claims."  (Sleight, 1964)

The report also made recommendations relating to the improvement of the already deplorable staffing situation in secondary schools in the country since this situation resulted in a high turnover of teachers in all schools. Many good schools had difficulty in filling teaching vacancies. Sleight (1964) indicated that the turnover rate of teachers was at least 30 percent. He reported that there was a dearth of qualified Sierra Leoneans. In fact, out of the total number of 670 teachers required, there were only 170 teachers who were graduates. Out of the 170 graduates, only about 100 were permanent teachers. Therefore a substantial number of secondary school teachers were temporary teachers. In the light of this urgent and desperate situation, Sleight made several suggestions. Among these were:-
i. that no more secondary schools should be established until existing schools are fully developed and adequately staffed;

ii. the first priority in the secondary school development programme is the training of Sierra Leone teachers of whom, at least, half should be graduates.

Sleight also emphasised the fact that good education requires continuity in teaching staffs; and while localisation does not ensure continuity in staffing, it probably provides a necessary condition for it. This would allow for firm foundations to be built and a relatively high standard of performance achieved at the secondary level.

In the 1960s, the permanence in the teaching staff was desirable and necessary. Unfortunately, this was undermined by an exodus of graduate teachers into the civil service and other more attractive and lucrative professions. It is obvious that the attainment of independence in 1961 created opportunities for the absorption of educated personnel into the higher echelons of the civil service. Still other graduates went into law and medicine. This was how secondary schools lost their best teachers to the Government bodies at a time when such teachers could have contributed immeasurably to the development of secondary education. Sierra Leone had no choice but to depend on expatriate teachers.

2.2.2 The use of expatriate teachers

In 1964, Sierra Leone depended on the services of expatriate teachers drawn mainly from the Peace Corps or Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). These served for periods ranging from 1 to 3 years. Other expatriates were employed on a contract basis. Such expatriate teachers were all at least academically qualified, but most of them lacked professional qualifications. However, they demonstrated commitment and dedication and this enabled them to provide expert tuition for secondary school pupils who became qualified for the Secondary Teacher Training Colleges and the University.
The Peace Corps and the Voluntary Service Overseas teachers were the first to arrive in Sierra Leone after independence in 1961. They were sent by the American and British governments respectively. The Canadian University Service teachers began their work much later in the 1970s. The Indians, Pakistanis and Ceylonese joined the teaching service in the 1960s not as volunteers but as contract teachers. In the 1967/68 academic year, 20 per cent of all teachers in secondary schools were volunteers and 28 per cent were contract teachers. Since secondary education had been in existence in Sierra Leone for over 120 years, it was surprising that in the 1967/68 academic year, qualified Sierra Leoneans only constituted 30 per cent of the total teaching force. It is reasonable to assume that one reason for the slow development of secondary education could be due to the resistance of missionary influence by those in the Northern part of Sierra Leone where they first went. This led to a concentration of educational activities in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Wyse (1956) underscored this point when he stated that in Sierra Leone, although organised education on a large scale developed earlier than in the other territories, it did not expand into the Protectorate to any great extent, so there was little increase in the number of pupils. Since opportunities for secondary education were greater in Freetown than in the rest of the country where the majority lived, it was obvious that the number of those who had access to higher education in Freetown was higher than in the provinces.

This is why when expansion in secondary education was accelerated after independence the need for qualified teachers was much more apparent and urgent in the provinces. Therefore, most of the expatriate teachers were sent to the areas of greatest need in the provinces. The schools in Freetown recruited teachers for the arts subjects, and relied heavily on expatriate teachers for the teaching of Science and Maths. Schools in the provinces relied on expatriate teachers for all disciplines. Many new schools
were opened up in the provinces as the secondary schools in the 1960s were too few for those eligible to attend school. Those expatriate teachers who laboured hard and demonstrated competence in the exercise of their duties were compensated by their appointments as Headmasters or Headmistresses.

Freetown, with a population of 127,699 inhabitants, offered 6,727 secondary school places in 1964, whilst the rest of the country with the overwhelming majority population of 2,055,320 people, provided only 5,719 secondary school places. This great disparity in secondary school provision was a product of the historical development of education in Sierra Leone. There was no deliberate move to make disproportionate allocation of secondary school places. It was this which necessitated the use of expatriate teachers and helped to lay the foundations of an expanding secondary education in Sierra Leone.

Out of the total number of 892 secondary school teachers in Sierra Leone in the 1967/68 academic year, 207 were Volunteers. By 1970 there were only 95 Volunteers. This was partly due to the positive impact the colleges had started to have in the supply of teachers for secondary schools. In spite of the apparent drop in the number of Volunteers, the number of expatriate teachers on the whole was still quite large at this time. Precise figures exist for the years 1968/69 (see tables 2.2 and 2.3).
Table 2.2

Secondary School Teachers, 1968/69 (Non-Sierra Leoneans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th></th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate qualified</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate unqualified</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-graduate qualified</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-graduate unqualified</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Report on the Supply of Secondary Level Teachers in English Speaking Africa, 1968/69

Table 2.3

Secondary School Teachers 1968/69 (Sierra Leoneans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th></th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate qualified</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate unqualified</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-graduate qualified</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-graduate unqualified</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Report on the Supply of Secondary School Teachers in English Speaking Africa, 1968/69

A comparison of tables 2.2 and 2.3 reveals that during the 1968/69 academic year, non-Sierra Leonean teachers constituted 43 per cent of the total teaching force in the country.
In the 1960s the trend was that the colleges had a substantial increase in the number of entrants. Figures are available for the 1973/74 academic year. They show that there was not only a marked increase in the number of graduate teachers, but also a more equitable spread of qualified Sierra Leonean teachers throughout the country as is portrayed in tables 2.4a-2.4e.

Table 2.4a

Secondary School Teachers (1973/74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Area</th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Nationalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4b

Secondary School Teachers (1973/74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern Province</th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Nationalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.4c
**Secondary School Teachers (1973/74)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Province</th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Nationalities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.4d
**Secondary School Teachers (1973/74)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastern Province</th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Nationalities</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4e  
Secondary School Teachers (1973/74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Country</th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>1317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Total</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>1824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There was a drop in the percentage of non-Sierra Leonean teachers in the 1973/74 academic year. If we are to compare it with that of the 1968/69 academic year, non-Sierra Leonean teachers constituted 42.93 per cent of the teaching force, while in 1973/74 they constituted 28.18 per cent of the total teaching force. Despite the fact that there was a drop in the percentage of non-Sierra Leonean teachers, there was a minimal increase in the actual number of non-Sierra Leonean teachers. There were 516 in the 1968/69 academic year and 517 in the 1973/74 academic year. A comparison of these figures shows that although a rapidly increasing number of qualified Sierra Leoneans were entering the teacher training colleges, they were not providing enough teachers to reduce the recruitment of unqualified teachers. There were 421 non-graduate unqualified teachers out of a total number of 1834. The reason for this was that the rate of production of teachers in the colleges was far less than the requirements of the schools. The other reason was the inadequate intake of students into the colleges. Also some of the qualified teachers
continued to leave the profession. In such a situation, the non-Sierra Leonean teachers played a crucial role in ensuring stability in the teaching force, which was essential for sustained growth.

Although over 90 per cent of all non-Sierra Leonean teachers were either graduates or professionally qualified, a substantial number of Sierra Leonean teachers in secondary schools were neither graduates nor were they professionally qualified. In the 1973/74 academic year, Sierra Leonean teachers constituted over 90 per cent of the teachers who were neither graduates nor professionally qualified in the secondary schools in the country.

The figures for 1976/77 (Table 2.2) show an increase of over 45 per cent of the 1973/74 figures of the graduate teachers that were professionally qualified. There was also a slight increase in the number of unqualified non-graduate teachers in comparison with the 1973/74 figures. On the whole, there was a substantial increase in the number of teachers in the period 1973/74 to 1976/77: over 500 teachers were recruited into the service. The figures for the 1976/77 academic year also indicate a slight reduction in the number of expatriate teachers.

Table 2.5

Secondary School Teachers in Sierra Leone 1976/77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Qualified</th>
<th>Non-Graduate Unqualified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sierra Leoneans</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>2361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these facts go to show that there was a continued need for more qualified Sierra Leonean teachers in secondary schools. The lack of qualified teachers was considered to have adverse effects on the quality of secondary school graduates.

2.3 The Resulting Problem Of Quality In Secondary Education

A comparison of the earlier tables (Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4a-2.4e) show that secondary education was still expanding in Sierra Leone by 1983 at the outset of this work. However the recruitment of unqualified teachers continues. If quality is to be maintained, in all secondary schools in the country, the problem of unqualified teachers will need to be addressed.

The following table gives the numbers for the 1982/83 academic year:

Table 2.5
Secondary School Teachers 1982/83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Area/Province</th>
<th>No of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>Unqualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Province</td>
<td>43(4)</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Province</td>
<td>46(6)</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Province</td>
<td>49(3)</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Area</td>
<td>34(1)</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Country</td>
<td>172(14)</td>
<td>2377</td>
<td>1282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The figures shown in brackets refer to the number of schools from which statistics had not yet been received when this table was being printed.)

From Report of the Ministry of Education, 1982-83 (copied from unprinted report)
The above figures show that the number of secondary school teachers had increased to well over 3,600, that is, by over 50 per cent from 1976/77 to 1983/83 academic year. Since other areas of the economy were not creating many employment opportunities by 1983, an increasing number of graduates entered the teaching profession. This might make for the enhancement of quality in secondary schools.

However, by 1983 there was still room for improvement in the quality of staff at the secondary level. According to the 1982/83 figures cited above, about 36% of teachers in secondary schools are unqualified with the following distribution in the different provinces:

- Northern Province: 40%
- Southern Province: 33%
- Eastern Province: 38%
- Western Area: 30%

J.S. Farrant (1982) commented on the fact that although the need for quality has always been an important part of the expansion policy in the secondary schools in Sierra Leone, the limited educational resources at the disposal of government did not make for quantity to be improved simultaneously with quality.

"usually more meant worse and better meant fewer. Nevertheless many countries made significant strides to achieve both." (Farrant, 1982)

Sierra Leone's attempt to solve her problem of quality can be seen in one of the recommendations of the 1964-70 development plan (Sleight, 1964). It was stated that education at secondary level should be planned to provide the required intake at the training college and university level by the award of scholarships and other administrative practices. Government accepted this recommendation and it led to an increase in the supply of qualified teachers for recruitment into secondary schools. An adequate supply of graduate teachers was encouraged by the award of a sufficient number of scholarships and an expansion of teacher training programmes for the secondary level. Because of the scholarships offered, a number of graduates who would otherwise have
entered other professions opted for teaching. The policy of tying scholarship awards for university education to teaching made a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching staff in secondary schools.

The other recommendation that yielded dividends was:

"that graduate studies for prospective teachers be planned with regard to the subject requirement of secondary school staffing." (Sleight, 1964-70 development programme for education)

This ensured that students who had been given scholarship awards in order to enter the teaching profession studied subjects which were offered at the secondary level. This enabled government to provide schools in areas of need.

From the foregoing, one can conclude that Sleight's (1964) recommendations helped to establish a sound basis for the improvement of quality in secondary education in Sierra Leone. Unfortunately the rate of expansion of secondary education did not augur well for the maintenance of quality. In fact the poor performance of secondary school pupils was highlighted in the report of the technical planning committee on education:-

"The essential problem in secondary education was and still is high dropout and low standards among those who complete the whole programme of 5 years."

Since there was an inadequate number of qualified teachers in secondary schools, many secondary schools did not have the expertise that makes for quality. Since the public demand for secondary education was high, any move to control intake and expansion would be very unpopular, although it would probably enhance quality. Consequently, the government had to look for alternative methods of enhancing the quality of the teaching force.
2.4 Relevance For This Work: The Need to Address The Problem of Quality In Secondary Education

The previous sections show that when faced with the difficult choice between reducing the level of school enrolment, on the one hand, and employing untrained teachers, on the other hand, the government of Sierra Leone like other governments in similar situations was reluctantly inclined towards the view that,

"poor education is better than no education"  
(Curle, 1973)

and had therefore recruited unqualified staff to teach in their schools. The need for improving quality in secondary education through the improvement of teachers thus developed and the government of Sierra Leone had to look for administratively convenient means to address the problem.

Since this study focuses attention on the provision of support for teachers of English in secondary schools specifically, subsequent chapters will highlight the need to support teacher training in English
3.0 INTRODUCTION

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

A number of African countries who use English as a second language face problems of providing adequate support facilities for their teachers of English, and Sierra Leone is no exception. This chapter documents personal experience, experience of colleagues in the system and experience in other developing countries which show that there is a need for teachers to be continually trained and upgraded. It goes on to argue that attempts made by previous researchers to ameliorate the situation did not yield many fruitful results as teachers, for example, still express the need for a "system of support" to aid them in putting into effective use the existing National Syllabus at secondary level and help them teach effectively.

3.1 The Need As It Developed

The work described in this thesis had its origin in the need my colleagues and I perceived for a system of support to help us put our existing national syllabus at secondary level into effective use.

- teach effectively

This chapter discusses the need as it developed by concentrating on the following areas:-

- Personal experience and experience of other colleagues;
- The ineffective implementation of the existing national syllabus;
- The problem posed by the quality of teacher training;
- Findings from previous researchers in Sierra Leone.
3.1.1 Personal experience and experience of colleagues

In 1976, I began teaching English in a secondary school in Freetown. In fact, this was not a typical Sierra Leonean secondary school because it was one that was not only renowned and long established but had more facilities than other schools.

My teaching had to be done with only a national syllabus written in 1974 and set textbooks written for other countries and therefore not based on the theory outlined in the syllabus. Throughout the teaching period, I began to become very dissatisfied with my experience. In order to see whether this was merely a personal experience or whether it was shared by other teachers, I discussed the problem with teachers from my school and other schools and found that they described similar experiences.

The reasons for our dissatisfaction were based on the following:-

(i) The Syllabus. The syllabus was not very explicit and the theory presented in it was merely in outline form and did not include details of the teaching situation. It merely outlined technical skills appropriate to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone.

There was no section on methodology which should analyse the procedures to be followed.

There were yearly targets stipulated but these were so general that it was difficult for a new teacher to arrange them into schemes of work. This need seemed important as the skills we aim at fostering do not exist in the abstract. It was felt that skills should be presented in a living relationship with a specific teaching situation.
The syllabus did not enable teachers to identify and discuss the process of relating theory to practice in a teaching situation which would enable them to acquire the skills necessary to deal with individual situations. Neither did it guide teachers to teach in such a way that certain aptitudes like their pupils' thinking processes, structures for learning, quality of thought, analyses, syntheses, etc would be developed.

In short, the teacher could not synthesize and realise everything that is stated in the syllabus which would enable him to relate the stated theoretical stance to the requirements of classroom practice. The syllabus was thus considered inadequate for the needs of teachers.

(ii) The set textbooks. The set textbooks that were available did not seem to offer a satisfactory programme at any level. None of them was entirely consistent in approach and each of them required extensive supplementary materials. In fact, none of them was written with the syllabus or the Sierra Leone teaching situation in mind. Most of the cultural content was very British or Nigerian - even in books written specifically for the West African audience. For example, a textbook which attempts to present systematically all the basic structures of English wastes time on structures which do not cause problems in the particular linguistic environment of the particular schools in Sierra Leone.

There was hardly any attempt made in such textbooks to focus attention on the many children who were either bilingual or multilingual. Nor was attention paid to interference from their first or second languages which usually lead them to produce habitually incorrect English. None of the local languages were taught in schools as they were not in the written form and some textbook writers
did not take this into consideration. This was important, as even though English was the official language and medium of instruction in the educational system, it was not used very much outside the schools except in the written mode.

3.1.2 Ineffective implementation of the National Syllabus

As has been stated before, it was because I was teaching in a very well renowned school that I was fortunate enough to have the use of the national syllabus even though it proved to be an ineffective guide. I was surprised to learn from some colleagues elsewhere that they did not even have a copy of the syllabus. It appeared that the syllabus was not available in all schools. Attempts had been made to implement it by distributing it to all secondary schools in the country and organising workshops for giving teachers guidance as to how the syllabus should be used. However, the English section of the Curriculum Revision Unit of the Institute of Education had closed between 1978 and 1982 when the foreign donors concluded their mission which meant that there was no official at the Unit to continue the much needed monitoring of the use to which the syllabus was being put.

It appeared that heads of departments who were in fact only available in a few well organised schools left, due to the normal high staff turnover, leaving the syllabus unnoticed in schools. Incidentally, in countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, the working party who produced the national syllabus for English in Sierra Leone in 1974 had recommended that there was a need to produce a handbook of suggestions that would give teachers concrete, practical guidelines to facilitate the use of the syllabus. Even though the then curriculum adviser in English went as far as to make a case for the production of the handbook, his successor did not produce it. One wonders whether the production of a handbook in Sierra Leone would have helped since there were no staff to monitor its use.
Although the situation in Sierra Leone had changed by 1983 at the outset of this work, the need for a system of support that was recognised and expressed at the time still existed.

3.1.3 The problem posed by the poor quality of teacher training provisions

The origin of the need can also be attributed to the poor quality of training teachers in Sierra Leone receive. The history and development of teacher training has already been described (see ch.2). This section analyses the nature of the training teachers receive in English in the existing teacher training courses in an attempt to highlight the fact that the training is also inadequate.

a. The Milton Margai Teachers' College (MMTC) which trains teachers specifically to teach in the lower forms of secondary schools has an integrated course in English - the learning of English being done concurrently with pedagogy or methods of teaching. The language component of the course is comprehensive and consists of speech training and oral comprehension, the intensive study of short unseen texts, the study of such skills as writing using different registers and the study of the English structure. For students studying to become teachers of English at the lower levels of secondary schools (Forms I-III), this is probably adequate, as the course includes the teaching of all the aspects of language - the oral work being supplemented by practice in a language laboratory.

The problem is that the real education of a teacher of English goes far beyond the confines and public facade of a syllabus. It includes the quality of mind of the student, the quality and range of the teaching staff, the starting off foundation in English of the student, his cultural breadth, the availability of books in the humanities and other humane disciplines.

The education of these students is therefore not good enough. Firstly, they come from a school system particularly inadequate in the use
of English. These students are the "rump" remaining after the "better" and the "best" have been absorbed by the sixth forms and the university. It is asking too much to expect that within the limited time of three years, with a limited staff, and the burden of other subjects which they have to study for examinations, they would be proficient enough in English to be good models for the children they teach.

This ties in with the main theme of this chapter - the need to provide support for the training of secondary school teachers of English. It is important that in a second language situation such as Sierra Leone, good language habits are the supporting pillars and the rigid framework for the building of a sound knowledge and appreciation of the English language. The English course is demanding. The literature component, for example, lists fourteen books in the varying literary sources for the preliminary "skirmish" and a formidable number of twenty-nine books for intensive study as well as the writing of a dissertation of about seven thousand words in length. On paper, it is almost equivalent in scope to the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone degree course in English. This gives cause for anxiety. Little wonder that students are not even introduced to the national syllabus at secondary level which they are supposed to learn how to "survive" within their secondary school classrooms. With the deplorable situation revealed by an analysis of English competence among even university students, one wonders whether the course at MMTC is not a mere window dressing!

b. The University. The University of Sierra Leone is made up of two constituent colleges - Fourah Bay College and Njala University College. Fourah Bay College - formerly a sister college of Durham University - is venerable, over a hundred years old and based on the Oxbridge pattern in which the emphasis is to train liberal and cultured leaders. Njala is pragmatic, based on the philosophy of the American Land Grant College, agriculture-oriented.

One therefore must expect that even in a subject like English, there
must be differences in emphasis. The Fourah Bay College (FBC) English syllabuses for both General and Honours degrees follow the British university pattern, with two minor exceptions. Naturally, it puts some emphasis on English Language, African and Commonwealth Literature. (It must be noted that there is now a big move by English experts towards 'MOTHER TONGUE' English in faculties of education. This might soon influence the FBC tradition.) Also, since the purely academic departments of Fourah Bay College try to educate students and not train them for a specific profession, the syllabus does not take into consideration the special needs of the future teacher of English.

A graduate in English who wants to teach is expected to enrol after his course in the Diploma in Education department and do a one-year postgraduate course in education, including methods of teaching, and there the problem arises. The Diploma course, structured very much like the British postgraduate course in Education, consists of teaching practice, studying the basic disciplines of education, writing a demanding dissertation, and studying methods of teaching two school subjects - all this in one year. The course therefore is a hectic race from place to place without stopping at one point to take in all the scene! Because of this, English suffers. The student has only one term to put in the study of methods and other things before he is plunged into teaching practice. Given the complexity of English in a second language situation, and the problems of teaching English in such a situation, the only conclusion one can draw is that the student cannot be adequately prepared for his work. The course is like an "aperitif" and it is expected that, the student, during his year of teaching, should himself help with the "main course".

The story of the other university - Njala University College - is simply and briefly told. Being a pragmatic college, based on the American
3.1.4 The need expressed in findings of previous researchers in Sierra Leone

This section focusses attention on the fact that previous attempts have been made by two researchers in Sierra Leone to look into the progress of curriculum development in English as well as the continued usefulness of the existing 1974 syllabus of English at secondary level, and to identify the problems inherent in the teaching of English. These researchers submitted findings that throw some light on the problem. However, I am dissatisfied with the manner in which these researches were carried out. This is not because I feel that they did not prove to be a panacea for the teaching problems identified but because of the manner in which they were carried out. Nevertheless, this section gives a summary of their findings, describes the methodologies employed, and tries to indicate reasons for their dissatisfaction.

Pratt (1977), for example, carried out a research into the progress of curriculum revision in English and did a content analysis of the 1974 syllabus for English in an attempt to see how effective it was for teachers. Hers was a sort of 'armchair research' done away from the real situation based on intuitive knowledge. For example, she had a lot of
personal experience, teaching English in a developing secondary school up country between 1970-1975 and had been involved in revising and implementing the syllabus. not only as a teacher but also as a member of the team that conducted in-service courses in the Southern Province on implementing the syllabus. She was also a member of the curriculum sub-committee and chairman of the Southern Province branch of the only recognised English teaching association in the country - the Sierra Leone Association for Teachers of English as a Second Language (SLATE) in the 1974/75 academic year. This does show that she was very much aware of what was happening in the English teaching scene. She tried to do a comprehensive study of the English teaching syllabus in the light of the teaching situation in 1977 and succeeded in identifying some ways in which the English teaching situation can be improved. She puts forward the following suggestions in the final part of her dissertation:

To improve situations there is a need to effect the following:-

- "A change in language policy in education introducing the major languages in the schools and the possibility of teaching English through krio*;

- More in-service education facility for training unqualified teachers on the job; the establishment of an inspectorate of specialist English teachers and the organisation of departments of English in the schools

- The production of a detailed handbook to guide teachers in using the syllabus; the production and supply of materials necessary for using the syllabus".

Her study took into account the fact that curriculum development and syllabus construction cannot be perfect and advised constant evaluation and development as needs change and more is found out in the disciplines which impinge on language teaching.

*Krio is the language spoken by many people who attend school in Sierra Leone. It is so widely spoken that it is sometimes regarded as the lingua franca of the country.
All the issues highlighted in her findings appear valid to me as someone familiar with the English teaching situation in Sierra Leone. However, in spite of her knowledge and experience of the English teaching scene which enabled her to come up with such valid findings, it is important to re-state that hers was a sort of 'armchair' research, based on her intuitive knowledge, and done miles away from the real Sierra Leone situation. She did it at the London Institute of Education for a Master's degree. She thus did the work from a purely theoretical point of view as she did not have the opportunity of personally speaking to people - teachers and educators - in Sierra Leone.

This does not in any way belittle her findings. It throws a particular light on the problem at hand. This is especially so because her findings echoed the views of the syllabus working committee in that Pratt, like them, suggested that there was a need for a handbook to supplement the syllabus.

In 1982, I carried out a similar study (Kaikumba, 1982) and made the following suggestions:—

- to facilitate the use of the syllabus for teachers, it should be supplemented by a handbook which would be a practical guide that will enable teachers to carry out their teaching effectively. This handbook should centre on the section of the syllabus - organising the learning of English. This is because this section of the syllabus would be better dealt with in a separate book which will provide concrete examples. The introduction to this should not just tell teachers to, for example, use the eclectic approach to teaching English, but provide examples of how this should be done. The focus should not only be on structure but on the communicative use of English. For a global course like ours, it is easier to draw up a structural syllabus. The fact that the syllabus is structural should not prevent teachers from adapting it and teach, using the communicative approach.
short articles could be written by various experienced teachers on different topics highlighted in the syllabus. Such articles should be based on practical experience with examples from real lessons which have been taught successfully. Each contributor must be ready to give a demonstration lesson on the ideas in his article at in-service courses.

since the section on the idea of language cannot be found in practically any of the textbooks recommended for use in secondary schools, it is necessary to give detailed guidance on the handling of each year's work.

Although the above points do demonstrate that I succeeded in identifying the need to provide concrete practical guidelines that should help teachers 'survive' in their classrooms, the question arises as to whether this dissertation proved to be a panacea for all the problems teachers face in their classrooms in Sierra Leone. Or was it not merely another exercise in 'hypothesis-testing' with emphasis on 'procedural ritual' that stunts the genuine problem-solving potential of a research project? (Wright, 1981). For example, reflecting on the methodology used to carry out the study, one finds out that it was mainly quantitative. The question was clarified at the beginning, the design of the study remained intact and the data was collected, as planned, in advance. The study was based on the view that the quantitative method is the only correct method. However, knowledge progresses on a continuum - from observation to experimentation to theoretical development. Questionnaires were used in the study and an attempt was made to account for variables but was that enough? Was much attempt was made to try to understand and interpret the issue under study? The results of the study were acceptable but did the study solve the teaching problems in the Sierra Leone scene?

Quantitative methods are useful in certain areas of research but they have
very strong limitations when they are used as the only tools for explaining certain social phenomena.

3.2 Experience of Other Developing Countries

The foregoing presents a bleak picture of the teaching problems Sierra Leonean teachers of English experience. The questions that arise from this are: what can be done to address such problems? How have other countries in similar situations addressed the problem?

Those countries who have experienced similar problems have recognised and dealt with them through the creation of in-service education and training (INSET) of their teachers (see chs. 4 & 5). Some countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, for example, have tried to address the problem by getting the English divisions of their curriculum development centres to produce handbooks and supplementary materials which provide teachers additional guidance that should enable them to use their syllabi. In addition, several workshops were organised during which their teachers were trained to use the materials.

Other countries like Ghana, Uganda, Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria, and Jordan have opted for the distance learning or correspondence course mode of disseminating such information to teachers. According to Brophy and Dudley (1982), this has proved popular in both developed and developing countries with problems of teacher shortage (see ch.5).

3.3 Relevance For This Work: The Need For An In-Service System Of Support For Lower Secondary School Teachers Of English

The above points explain why there is the need for the government of Sierra Leone to look for administratively convenient means to address their teacher training problems, specifically in the training of English teachers. This can be achieved through the in-service education and training of teachers (INSET) and through the development of materials which would aid them in their teaching generally and in putting into effective use their
existing national syllabus at secondary level. Such materials could provide new knowledge, supplement old, etc.

In subsequent chapters, I will try to look at INSET provisions extant and try to identify a relevant type that will be adequate for teachers of English in Sierra Leone.
CHAPTER 4

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (INSET):
A SURVEY OF EXISTING PROVISIONS AND CONCERNS
AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR SIERRA LEONE

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

The last chapter concluded that there is a need for a system of in-service support for lower secondary teachers of English as a second language in Sierra Leone. This chapter starts with a discussion of some definitions and objectives of INSET in both Britain and Sierra Leone. It then indicates some of its major criticisms and problems as well as its advantages and highlights some recommendations and guidelines that have been put forward over the years for improving it. A brief survey of the literature on the development of research in Britain and some English speaking African countries which shows a dearth in the effort to improve it is then presented.

The chapter goes on to describe INSET procedures generally in Sierra Leone and the activities in English teacher improvement in particular.

The current move towards alternative and new strategies for improving INSET, like school focussed INSET in Britain is also discussed.

The chapter ends by drawing out conclusions concerning the use of INSET in Sierra Leone and in particular, its use for training lower secondary teachers of English there and the need for a more coherent framework for INSET organisers.

4.1 Some Considerations of INSET

4.1.1 Definitions of INSET

The following definitions will serve as a basis for considering the background to and state of INSET in the 1980s:-
An example of a definition of the 1960s:

"In-service training is taken to include all those courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate for the purpose of extending his (her) professional knowledge, interest or 'skill'. Preparation for a degree, diploma or other qualification subsequent to initial training is included within this definition.

(N.F.E.R., 1960)

In the 1970s subsequent definitions of INSET emerged:

"(The term 'in-service') is now regarded as covering all those forms of training designed to help practising teachers to become more efficient in their work. In this broad sense it covers not only such long established activities as organised courses and conferences, but also all sorts of informal activities arising out of the work of teachers' panels, committees, study groups, individual studies and so on."

(Gray, 1972)

"...I use the term in-service education to mean the development of the individual which arises from the whole range of events and activities by which serving teachers can extend their personal, academic or practical education, their professional competence and their understanding of educational principles and methods."

(Stephens, 1975)

"We may regard INSET as consisting of all courses and training activities undertaken by qualified teachers, including probationers, these may range from an evening or weekend conference at a Teachers' centre to a full time Masters or Doctoral programme at a University."

(Bolam and Smith, 1976)

A new form of activity emerged in the 1980s - "school-centred" INSET. Baker (1980) defines it as:

"...that targeted on the needs of a particular school or group within the school. The actual activity may take place on site (school based) or off site and equally importantly may be internally provided by certain school staff or externally provided by an outside agency."

(Baker, 1980)

In his first report in 1973, the in-service co-ordinator of the Institute of Education in Sierra Leone uses a synopsis of definitions of INSET over the years and defines it as:

"...it may take place at any time during the potentially continuous professional life of the teacher. In-service Education may consist of carefully planned, sustained work, either as full-time or as part-time study over a lengthy period leading to a further qualification. It may equally
well be casual study, pursued irregularly, in the evenings or during vacations. In summary, in-service education includes all those courses and activities in which a serving teacher may take part for the purpose of extending his professional interest, knowledge or skill."

(Sogbandi, 1973)

The definitions show INSET as concerned with all aspects of teachers' professional development - the development of inter-personal, organisational and creative skills as well as the updating of their knowledge on the current theories of teaching and how these may be applicable and turned to practical use in their classrooms. There are striking similarities in the above definitions and the differences are negligible. However, since this work focusses attention on the majority of sub qualified and unqualified teachers in Sierra Leone, activities relating to the initial certification and upgrading of serving teachers should be implicit in my definition of INSET.

4.1.2 Objectives of INSET

The objectives of INSET appear to be essentially similar in INSET activities. Howard Bradley (1974), lists them as follows:-

"To update knowledge of own subject.
To improve own teaching methods.
To learn about recent trends in educational thought.
To enable one to take up different duties."

(Bradley, 1974)

This list shows that implicit in all INSET activities is the possibility of enhancement of career prospects. The objectives of INSET in English speaking Africa are not different as can be seen in the first documented report on INSET in Africa.

The Trevaskis Report, (1969) lists the following topics under the title 'Objectives of INSET' in the contents page of its report:
Preservice Training
Upgrading Professional Qualifications
Implementing Curriculum Change
Developing and Evaluating Curriculum Materials
Developing Professional Skills
Improving Administration and Supervision
Orienting Participants to New Responsibilities

(Trevaskis Report, 1969)

In his first report on INSET activities in Sierra Leone, Sogbandi (1973) states the following objectives of INSET for Sierra Leone which seems to be in tune with the above. He states that the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Education recognise that a well conceived and efficiently co-ordinated programme of in-service education would serve:

1. As a vital means of improving the quality and efficiency of the teaching service in Sierra Leone.

2. To hasten the process of providing primary school pupils with qualified teachers.

3. To offer courses of shorter or longer duration, during term time and vacation periods to qualified as well as unqualified teachers, either separately or in mixed groups, affording them an opportunity for re-training or re-orientation in modern trends and methodology.

4. To give a real impetus to teachers in various primary and secondary school subject disciplines in order to provide an increasingly large body of sufficiently qualified and professionally competent, enriched classroom Teachers, Headteachers, Supervisors of Schools and Inspectors of Schools. (Sogbandi, 1973)

4.1.3 INSET in Britain

A literature search was carried out to survey the trend of INSET in Britain. This was to provide a basis for a survey of research on INSET in African countries, specifically those that are former colonies of Britain.

The literature shows that INSET is a relatively recent development in Britain. In fact, very little seems to be known convincingly about it. Rudduck (1981) highlights this point when she states that:-

"Until the late 1960s remarkably little had been written on the practice and provision of in-service training."

(Rudduck, 1981)
Cane (1969) echoes this view by stating the following about a book he wrote on INSET:

"A glance at the bibliography in this book will show that little has been written on in-service training until recently. Now there is an increasing awareness that we must re-examine both the aims and the patterns of the training provided." (Cane, 1969)

Watkins, (1973) went as far as to say that:

"There is no definition of in-service training. Everybody is in favour of it but nobody has clearly indicated what they mean by it....Seldom could so many people be in favour of a development about which we all know so little." (Watkins, 1973)

It appears from the literature that in the 1960s and 1970s concern that current developments in British Education suggests that research was urgently needed to inform decisions that might be made on the development of INSET in the years to come continue to be expressed. However, relatively little energy was invested then, in taking steps to improve quality or our understanding of what it can yield. Rudduck, (1981) stresses that we do not seem to be skilful at analysing how INSET can best work - that is, its matching aims, structure, setting, resources and expectations. The following description of the development of research on INSET aims to give a flavour of the intuitive wisdom and understanding that developed in the INSET movement.

The 1972 James Report in Britain provided a stimulus for an era of changes and developments in the INSET movement and focussed attention on the following areas:-

- the content and organisation of ‗initial training courses
- the possibility of intending teachers studying alongside other students
- the role of colleges of education, polytechnics, colleges of further education and universities in the provision of INSET for teachers
and reported that:-

"A great weight of evidence submitted to this committee orally and in writing suggests that a much expanded and properly co-ordinated programme of INSET is essential for the future strength of the teaching profession."

(James Report, 1972)

This led to the following suggestions of the committee:-

- that there should be three cycles of training and that the highest priority should be given to the expansion of the third cycle, i.e. of opportunities for the continued education and training of teachers.

- that teachers might be released, with pay, for one term in seven years of service, and that this entitlement should be written into their contract. Leave of absence would only be granted, however, for attendance at 'substantial courses'.

(James Report, 1972)

The report emphasised the importance of short-term activities, even if these do not involve release from teaching. Other recommendations included the establishment of professional tutors - teachers already in schools who would, for part of their time, take responsibility for the in-service development of colleagues, including support for probationary teachers. These professional tutors would be among the first teachers to be released to attend courses in order to prepare themselves for their in-service training responsibilities.

In that same year, further recognition for INSET came from the 1972 White Paper which acknowledged its importance and supported the spirit of the James Report.

Both Reports set the stage for a steady and rapid growth of INSET activities and led to the establishment of a Government Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers (ACSTT) and later, to the establishing of a sub-committee on INSET and provided some notable discussion papers (ACSTT, 1974) aimed at exploring different patterns of demand and their implications for the organisation of an expanded in-service provision. In spite of this move to expand INSET, the expansion has not been very successful. This is partly because money
permitted for INSET expansion may, at the discretion of the education committees of local authorities, be redirected. However, it is worth noting that the notion of 'partnership' endorsed by the James Report and by the White Paper, and fundamental to the thinking of the ASCTT sub-committee on in-service, has resulted in the setting up of INSET committees in many LEAs which bring together representatives of the providing agencies and consumers.

It would appear that there was a burst of interest on INSET and this led to the creation of many and different forms. In commenting on the "new look" it developed over the years in the light of rapidly accelerating social change which demands new kinds of knowledge and expertise amongst teachers, Rudduck states that:-

"A classification of in-service education today might well disclose an equally broad and bizarre set of items. The 'short course' which for many years was the major vehicle for in-service activity is now only one of a rich array of possibilities." (Rudduck, 1981)

She however noted further that in the days when the 'short course' reigned supreme in the INSET field, a spirit of happy amateurism prevailed: the relationship between the aims of INSET and the structures used to further those aims was not an issue. The 'short course' was the conventional mode of training and the characteristic of a convention is that the assumptions that underlie it go unexamined.

She further states that now, however, the diversity of available structures for INSET activity tends to make us more sensitive to the logic of the relationship between structure and purpose - a growing respect for accountability coincides with the diminishing resources for INSET provision. We are now forced to examine what we do and we are obliged to 'defend our choices' in a situation where some options, for economic reasons, may have to be dropped. There is thus a definite need for further research on INSET. This point was
raised as far back as the James Report, and is still raised. Lord James had expressed serious concern over the absence of qualitative research strategies on INSET. He states that:-

"...what effects various kinds of past experience training actually have on teaching and the teacher; how long these effects last, what are the most appropriate kinds of education to accomplish ends which may be quite different for individuals and what effects on the schools themselves that in-service education of their staff has. One could think of many more questions to which we badly need answers..." (James Report, 1972)

Indeed this and similar concerns are central to the theme of this work. The problem of the dearth of appropriate research on INSET looms even larger in Africa where the need for a good system on INSET is even greater.

4.1.4 INSET in Africa

As in their mother country - Britain - INSET is a relatively recent development in Sierra Leone and other English speaking African countries. The first documented attempt to carry out research on INSET in English speaking Africa is the report of the survey carried out by Graham Trevaskis, under the auspices of the Afro-Anglo-American (AAA) Programme in Teacher Education. The following reasons given for the survey demonstrate that very little was known convincingly about INSET in Africa:-

- "while much was going on in that field, the efforts were scattered and unintegrated

- many things of value were happening that were little known about except in the country of their occurrence." (Trevaskis, 1969)

This first documented attempt to integrate and publicise "scattered" but "valuable" efforts that were being made in 13 different African countries had the following as its focal points:-

- to describe existing INSET activities in the countries under review

- to assess INSET teacher training in terms of its present contribution to INSET objectives
- to prepare a report on the findings of the study that would serve as a basis for the future development of INSET in the several countries. (Trevaskis, 1969)

The report presented after the survey indicates that although a pattern of problems, modes of action and a wide variety of resources is being brought to bear on improving the quality of teachers at all levels, NOWHERE is there evidence of a clearly defined policy being systematically pursued. The evidence points to the desirability and the possibility of a policy which could integrate INSET on the one hand, with the efforts being made to improve the curriculum and the quality of education. Other aspects highlighted in the report include the need to cost programmes if INSET is to become a systematic integral part of teacher education which, the report emphasises, there is every need to do. Related to the costing of programmes is the consequential increases of cost arising from the claims of teachers for enhanced salaries in recognition of their increased efficiency. The most essential aspect of this survey is the provision of a report which could at least be made use of by interested parties in formulating policies and programmes for INSET so that the teaching profession will be able to match the new and changing demands that education for development will make upon the profession.

Apart from this report, articles have been published in academic journals on individual INSET programmes in Africa, an example being The Teacher In-Service Education Programme (TISEP) in Northern Nigeria by Aleyideno and Hawes (1971). Other examples are reports and workshops on conferences organised by bodies like UNESCO. However, such reports, like 'Practical guide to in-service teacher training in Africa' (1970) merely concentrate on general guidelines and recommendations rather than provide insight into the success or effectiveness of INSET strategies.

Stanley Vivian's 'Handbook of in-service teacher training in developing countries of the Commonwealth' (1977) also includes detailed
accounts of a number of INSET strategies operating in Africa in the
early to mid-1970s but gives no information on its effectiveness.

In 1979, the Commonwealth Secretariat convened a conference in
Swaziland on INSET for member countries in Africa. In their recent
publication 'In-service education of teachers in the Commonwealth',
(1982) the section on Africa draws on submissions made at the Swaziland
conference and on the preliminary findings of the INSET African Project
- 1980-81. Greenland directed and co-ordinated an INSET Africa project
in 1980-81 which aimed at providing an up to date account of INSET at
primary school level in thirteen countries (virtually the same countries
covered by Trevaskis (1967-68). The rationale for Greenland's study
stems from the fact that the empirical data for the Trevaskis study
which is easily the most comprehensive, is based on fieldwork conducted
in 1967-68 and is therefore out-of-date. Trevaskis in fact states that:-

"...his sponsors' observations about the lack of INSET
integration and the poor dissemination of INSET descriptions
are, on the basis of any subjective appraisal, still valid.
Neither the Trevaskis nor the Commonwealth Secretariat nor
the UNESCO reports were published and distributed commercially,
so there must be doubt as to how large an audience these
documents reached. (Greenland, 1982)

Also, over the past decade, INSET has been the object of
increasing attention throughout the so-called 'developed' world.
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
commissioned a series of profiles of INSET from member countries, plus
reviews of research findings in such specialised sub-fields as INSET
evaluation, costing INSET, and school-focussed INSET (see Bolam, 1982).
The 1980 World Yearbook of Education 'The professional development of
teachers' (Hoyle and McGarry, eds. 1980) is a title that stimulates
one to treat initial training, induction and INSET as an integrated,
continuous process, in the directing of which teachers themselves are
actively involved. Also, although it is almost twenty years since most
of the countries represented in the INSET Africa Project achieved political independence, educational links between them and Britain and North America remain strong. This means that since the use of teachers' centres for INSET purposes, techniques of distance education and the involvement of headteachers in the training of their staff all have their origins outside Africa in non-African culture. There is therefore the compelling need for taking a hard look at INSET in English-speaking Africa today and to monitor the adaptation of such strategies to a variety of local contexts.

The major outcome of the INSET Africa project (although it focuses attention on only primary INSET activities) was the publication and dissemination of more detailed documentation in the form of thirteen national profiles of INSET. This alone provides information for researchers into alternative modes of INSET in Africa.

The above are issues that show that there is a lot of intuitive wisdom and understanding around about how to implement INSET. However, there are not enough guidelines that come out of research for one to have sufficient confidence in implementing any of the INSET provisions that are reported.

4.1.5 Criticisms and problems of INSET


Hughes (1968) produced an interesting analysis of the likely weaknesses of INSET provisions:-
- lack of co-ordination among providers
- lack of procedures for discovering teachers' needs
- courses being held out of school hours
- courses held at centres which involve teachers in travel
- lack of extrinsic motivation for teachers attending in-service activity (e.g., no direct relation to salary increase or promotion); poor communication channels between providers and receivers; inadequate financial assistance, so that teachers are often personally out of pocket as a result of engaging in in-service activity; inadequate holdings in local libraries to support follow-up or preparatory reading by teachers. (Hughes, 1968)

Similar views were expressed in relation to INSET activities for English teachers in the Bullock Report (1974):-

"there is a growing evidence of disenchantment with what has been described as the 'solution centred approach', where the emphasis is on promoting a supposed solution of educational problems in English Language teaching. Teachers who participated in INSET complained about the kind of course where a series of lectures was delivered to a large audience, with the short 'question time' excluding most of those present from any kind of participation. It is interesting to note that in a survey carried out by Nottingham University School of Education, only 25 per cent of the teachers preferred the idea of a 'prescribed, taught course of study'. The remainder opted for one or other of a number of alternatives which involved more active participation. From these, 36 per cent chose 'to work within a group of teachers on a problem of professional interest.'" (Bullock Report, 1974)

According to the more recent literature, the points raised by the Bullock Committee are of continued importance. More and more teachers are clamouring for change as they feel that theoretical knowledge offered to teachers must be integrated with the intuitive knowledge on which their teaching is based. Teachers feel that what they learn at INSET courses is not just for themselves but must be applied in school. There must be an emphasis on a flexible interaction between practice and theory. Reporting on a study of in-service education in one LEA, Canter (1977) remarked that:-
"an interesting aspect of teachers' conceptions of in-service education was that, in general, it seemed to be something that was done to them. In-service education seemed to be something that teachers passively received, usually from a source outside the school. Activities which could be defined as school initiated and school based were not felt to be in-service education."

(Canter, 1977)

It seemed that teachers appeared to understand in-service education as a controlling power-coercive process, one which they also tended to associate with external agencies. These external agencies tended to see their role as one of rectifying deficiencies in teachers' beliefs and practices - as they are perceived from the standpoint of the administrative system. I would prefer not to see in-service training as an instrument of social control in the bureaucratic management of teachers. It should not merely aim at 'the production of desired changes in teachers' beliefs and behaviour'. I prefer to see in-service training as 'enabling', 'fostering' or 'providing opportunities for' the professional growth or development of teachers. This, according to John Elliot (1977) has an interest in the professional emancipation of teachers, rather than an interest in the technical control of teachers' thought and conduct.

Lomax and Murphy (1980) pointed out that a number of teachers were unable to participate in INSET courses because some courses were oversubscribed, lack of support from relevant people, lack of opportunity to initiate work in school, most INSET activities take place in teachers' own time and this is the time in which they must also live the rest of their lives.

Other criticisms levied against traditional INSET are that:-

- it fails to consider the problems faced by teachers in their attempt to put into practice what they had learnt
- it is unsuitable as a tool for developing the problem solving and creative capacities of schools
- it is too 'theoretical' and 'irrelevant'
Henderson (1979) endorses the view about the irrelevance of INSET when he states that:—

"there is all too often a mismatch between the needs of the teachers (either personal or those arising out of the school context) and the content of the courses." (Henderson, 1979)

The foregoing shows that there is a need to redress the imbalance in INSET provisions if INSET was to make its desired impact.

Similar problems exist in INSET provisions in Africa as well.

As early as 1969, the Trevaskis Report highlighted the following problems of INSET at the secondary school level in Africa:—

"The problems of planning in-service courses for secondary school teachers have been less acute than those of primary teachers because of the smaller numbers. However, two problems have been quite in evidence. The first is the small number of staff able to teach the academic courses required to improve the background of secondary school participants, especially in science and mathematics. Most staff have been university lecturers or members of special centres in the Ministry who are not accustomed to the classroom situations. The second problem relates to the geographic distribution of secondary schools throughout the country. Their being fewer in number than primary schools has meant that either participants or staff must travel to centres that may not be conveniently located.

Problems of In-service Training for Secondary Teacher Training College Tutors:

Only one course was held for secondary training college tutors, therefore no valid comment can be made on the problems of courses for these participants. Perhaps this in itself is a problem - the meagre provision for the professional development of this group.

In-service Training for Secondary School Principals:

Only one course was formally offered to secondary school principals. It was held for principals newly appointed to their positions. The same comment may be made of the professional development of secondary school principals as has been made above for training college tutors.

Perhaps the greatest problem faced by inspectors has been to find time to attend courses when they themselves are so actively engaged with staffing in-service courses for other participants. The inspectorates in many of the study areas have relatively new personnel appointed to them and in others the inspectorate as a professional body of the Ministry of Education is still determining its role and its responsibilities."

(Trevaskis Report, 1969, p.107)
At a conference organised jointly by the African Curriculum Organisation (ACO) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) held in Lusaka, Zambia in 1980, the following problems were highlighted in the summary of the lead papers:-

- most African governments do not have sufficient funds to implement their national education programmes. They have a tendency of depending on foreign agencies for financial assistance. When this assistance is withdrawn, the programmes collapse.

- in most cases in-service training programme objectives are not well identified or clearly defined. It is common to find donors formulating their own objectives which often clash with the national programmes.

- lack of proper training institutions to implement the in-service training often results in ineffective training of teachers.

- students are often recruited at levels for which the institutions have no offerings, or the programmes offered are too advanced to benefit the trainees.

- some institutions have poor or no facilities for the training needs of the learners. Sometimes there are no guidelines to assess the degree of students' performance and the effectiveness of the programme itself.

- many training colleges depend on the government to initiate all in-service programmes instead of the school and the communities, with respect to their local needs.

- inadequate and ineffective communication facilities do not support in-service training programmes.

- the lack of proper coordination of the in-service training programmes and the disruptive relationships among administrators, instructors, student teachers have sometimes lowered the morale of the institutions and thus making the programmes ineffective.

In spite of the above criticisms levied against INSET, its advantages are many and efforts could be made to enhance these. The next section highlights the major advantages and puts forward some suggestions and guidelines for improving INSET.
4.1.6 Advantages of INSET: suggestions for improvement

"Although initial training can lead to educational reform, its effect is not substantial, when compared with in-service training."

"To change the school, we need to work with and through the senior members... through in-service rather than simply initial training." (Thompson, 1982)

These views expressed by Thompson (1982) were endorsed by Nelson Williams (1985) for the following reasons:-

"The knowledge acquired from INSET can be applied with immediate effect in the school situation, with numerous opportunities for practice; whilst the student teacher has a very limited time for practical work."

"Initial training lasts at most only for a few years, whilst INSET may continue throughout the professional life of the teacher." (Nelson-Williams, 1985)

Nelson-Williams' (1985) point relating to the advantages of immediacy in INSET is endorsed. This is mainly because the immediacy of INSET will not only be reflected in the application of the knowledge acquired but also in the immediacy of the impact of the knowledge applied whether positive or negative. When the results of the training the teacher receives are negative, the teacher has the advantage of immediate help. Moreover, he would have ample opportunities for practice, because INSET in school has direct relevance to his work. The results are always immediate when acquired knowledge from INSET is applied. INSET does have implications for professional renewal and continuous growth in teachers.

Over the years, suggestions continue to be made as to how INSET provisions can be improved. The following are examples of such suggestions.

As early as 1968, Townsend noted the characteristics of courses which were rated most highly by teachers:-
- they take place in the teachers' locality
- they take place within school hours
- they offer practical suggestions applicable to teachers' own circumstances
- they include displays of school work
- they allow opportunities for discussion among course members

(Townsend, 1968)

Responses to questionnaires Gray (1972), (who looked at the expectations and achievements of INSET) sent out in 1970-71 to Scottish teachers enabled him to put together the following guidelines for course organisers:

- full pre-course information should be sent to all who have enrolled. Printed handouts summarizing the content of lectures should be distributed to all students
- arrangements should be made for follow-up support for teachers who request it
- group discussion should be regarded as an integral feature of the course
- wherever possible, opportunities should be available for students to have individual discussions with lecturers.
- an opportunity should be made for students to submit a piece of work since it appears that students are willing to undertake a greater workload on in-service courses than is generally anticipated by course organizers
- theory should be presented with relevance to practice
- as far as possible, social contact between students and course organizers, and among students, should be encouraged. (Gray, 1972)

The Bullock report (1974) stresses the fact that the individual school is a highly important focal point in in-service education, and that there should be an expansion in school-based approaches. For example, with the help of one or more members of the English advisory team, an entire school staff might study how the teaching of reading could be improved. This could result in several experimental measures and an agreed policy arising from discussion among the teachers themselves. It might even lead to identifying areas in which further outside help
was needed. This is important as a staff that has played a part in deciding its own in-service education needs will be likely to receive and evaluate, collecting the ideas that are brought back, not reject them unexamined. The Bullock Report recommended more experiments of the kind initiated by one reading centre, which ran a one-month course for eight primary school heads, followed by a course of twenty half days for a member of staff from each of the eight schools. The particular difficulties in all this was recognised and the report urged the generous use of supply teachers to allow heads and teachers to attend in-service activities outside the school and to exchange visits with other schools. The points raised by the Bullock Report as early as 1974 with regard to the preference for school-based and school focussed INSET were being raised even in Africa.

At the 1980 ACO/DSE Conference, the summary of the lead papers put forward the following recommendations for INSET:-

- each respective government should provide adequate facilities to the training institutions to achieve the desired aims and objectives

- the aims and objectives be constantly revised as need arises

- the enrolment of pre-service teachers be increased so as to reduce the number of untrained teachers in the field, by expanding the existing Teacher Training Colleges

- government must provide sufficient funds for in-service teacher education in addition to assistance from foreign agencies

- for meaningful and effective in-service training, workshops/seminars be constantly held, and these should not be less than 3 weeks per term for a period of three years for certification

- salaries for certificated teachers should be constantly revised so as to boost their morale and encourage them for advanced studies. Policy decision-makers should try to avoid the noticeable brain drain into other areas

- supervisors for the untrained teachers should be re-educated in the best approaches for helping these teachers
- private study programmes be introduced to enable the untrained
teachers so that at the end of the specified period they could
write the formal college examinations as Prerequisite to
Certification

(ACO/DSE, 1980)

Recommendations put forward by Labour(1981) who carried out the
INSET Africa project for Sierra Leone include the following:-

1. Regular evening classes should be organised at all teachers'
colleges to encourage more untrained and unqualified teachers
to become certificated. At present only one out of the four
teacher training colleges organises such courses, and yet about
60% of the primary teaching force are untrained and unqualified.

2. Even though the National Development Plan 1974/75-1978/79 states
that incentives should be provided for teachers who successfully
participate in INSET activities, the logistics for awarding
such incentives have still (in 1980) not been worked out.
There is a need to provide this incentive to make teachers
motivated to attend INSET activities.

3. There is need to increase the budgetary provision for INSET
and so effect those proposed INSET activities in the National
Development Plan which have not been effected because of finance,
thus enabling a larger pool of qualified and unqualified teachers
to derive maximum benefit from INSET activities.

4. There is need for regular INSET activities especially for teachers
in rural areas and small settlement areas. If agencies operate
within a National INSET scheme, it may be possible to reach
teachers in all areas of the country.

5. Out-of-country INSET activities should continue to be organised
for those courses which are not available locally, for example,
distance teaching, special education, and school administration.
Teacher educators and in-service course trainers could also
benefit from such out-of-country INSET activity.

6. INSET activities are seldom assessed and evaluated formally.
There is need to introduce agency staff to basic rudiments of
assessment and evaluation which can be applied during INSET
activities, particularly in those cases (and this occurs often)
where a professional evaluator is not available.

7. There is need to provide agencies with adequate resources (personnel,
materials/equipment and finance) so that with the teachers they
can plan, effect, assess and follow-up INSET activities more
effectively.

8. Teaching techniques used at INSET activities need to be diversified
to include traditional and more modern techniques such as radio,
television, etc.

9. INSET activities

(Labour, 1981)
4.2 INSET: The Provision in Sierra Leone

4.2.1 General provision

The previous sections show that INSET is gaining grounds as an administratively convenient means by which governments in Britain and Africa can meet their teacher improvement requirements for their educational systems and that the search for better forms of INSET continues.

Before 1970, some INSET activities were provided by the University, the British Council and the Ministry of Education. Since such provisions seemed haphazard, the government, in its White Paper on education in 1970 specifically assigned that function to the Institute of Education, which was created as an arm of the University of Sierra Leone in 1968. The Institute was charged with the responsibility for the development of teacher education on a broad spectrum. It was to monitor the progress of students at the colleges, to determine the relevance of the courses offered and the trend of the examinations and to improve on-the-job performance of serving teachers. These various assignments were to be serviced by the in-service co-ordination and curriculum revision units (C.R.U.) of the Institute. The latter (the C.R.U. was an adjunct creation, based on the advice of the World Bank which was providing upgraded school buildings for eleven selected secondary schools in Sierra Leone. The rationale for their advice was that if money was to be spent on physical structures, the quality of work that goes on in those structures must also be upgraded. Hence the original designation of the unit-Curriculum Revision Unit (which is now the National Curriculum Development Centre). The Unit was therefore set up to revise the curriculum in the selected areas of maths, English, science and social studies of existing secondary schools, since such subjects had been based on the conventional grammar school type. The C.R.U. was set up with the British Council providing two experts in science and English with nuffield and English as a second language experiences respectively.
The Sierra Leone National Development Plan 1974/75-1978/79 makes specific reference to INSET activities in its chapter on Education.

It states that:-

"The Institute of Education will continue to work out and supervise the implementation of annual national programmes for in-service training of both primary and secondary school teachers. These programmes will cater to qualified teachers who may wish to obtain higher qualifications, learn about new approaches to teaching of their individual subjects or become more conversant with modern techniques of school administration, as well as unqualified teachers, who make up about 60% of the Primary school teaching force.

As far as qualified teachers are concerned, learning should not end when a certificate is obtained. Teachers need to be kept abreast of current developments and should participate in training courses at least once every five years.

The in-service training programmes should include not only actual teachers but also inspectors of schools and tutors in teacher colleges. A triple-exchange of work, lasting in each case a few weeks or months, between tutors, inspectors of schools and senior teachers would also be fruitful.

As regards the unqualified teachers, in-service training may take the form of a crash programme. However, such a programme would have to be carefully planned in order to avoid the pitfalls experienced in implementing such programmes in the past. It would be safer to expand regular evening teacher college classes and in various ways encourage more teachers to attend such classes. A related possibility which the Ministry is considering is to grant working teachers study leave with full pay at a teacher college, provided they have five years teaching experience after completion of at least Form IV." (Sierra Leone Dev. Plan 1974/75-1978/79)

However, some of the proposed INSET programmes contained in the Plan have not been effected mainly because of insufficient finance.

The plan makes provision for equal priority to be given to pre-service and in-service activities. In fact, it is stated in the National Development Plan that:-

"the policy objectives are to increase the quantity and improve the quality of teachers, both through pre-service and in-service training. These are objectives of highest priority within the five years' educational programme." (Sierra Leone Dev. Plan, 1974/75-1978/79)

In keeping with the stipulations regarding in-service education, both the senior inspector of schools in each province and officials of educational agencies as well as subject associations which organise
in-service courses for their members, make in-service proposals for the ensuing academic year to the (full-time) organiser and co-ordinator of in-service in the Institute of Education. The proposals are first examined by the standing committee of the Advisory Council on Teacher Education (ACTE), and these proposals which can be accepted according to the terms laid down by the Institute are in turn recommended to ACTE, which is the ultimate body empowered to approve or veto in-service courses.

The in-service Education Division then plan a schedule of in-service courses for the academic year. The Institute provides both the cost and overall professional and administrative supervision of in-service courses, in full co-operation with inspectors of schools and officials of educational organisations or agencies. In consultation with the Institute, inspectors of schools and officials of educational agencies recruit lecturers for in-service courses and determine the venue for courses.

Attention has been focussed on INSET in Sierra Leone because about 60% of primary and 35% of secondary school teachers are untrained. The Ministry provides funds and personnel. Teachers should be, and are usually encouraged to identify areas of needs, as well as to organise and run in-service courses themselves. The National Development Plan 1974/75-1978/79 states that incentives should be provided for teachers who successfully participate in in-service courses. But, at the moment, no accreditation is given for such attendance. The Ministry plans to award accreditation for successful attendance at in-service courses, but the logistics for awarding such accreditation have still to be worked out.

There is at present an imbalance between expenditure on pre-service training and expenditure on in-service training. The Ministry considers this imbalance in favour of pre-service training to be satisfactory.
because of priority considerations in the large number of untrained teachers. In my view, more emphasis should be placed on INSET with a bid to upgrade the high percentage of unqualified teachers currently employed in our schools.

At present, INSET activities usually take place in teachers' own time, during school holidays and at weekends. It very rarely takes place during school time. This has been a convention rather than a policy. Since there is no policy statement referring to out-of-country INSET activity, at all levels teachers are encouraged to go abroad for courses which are not available in Sierra Leone. Also, since the Ministry's policy is to train tutors who run INSET activities, INSET courses are planned for teacher educators of pre-service and in-service programmes. This is very necessary because, as Thompson (1982) puts it:-

"To change the school we need to work with and through the senior members...through in-service rather than simply initial training." (Thompson, 1982)

Officials at the Ministry of Education state that, apart from the large number of untrained teachers particularly at the primary level, there is an on-going need to retrain practising teachers as new curriculum and methods are introduced. In view of the projections examined, they also feel that the role of INSET will assume greater importance. As the primary school enrolment increases, it is likely that a greater proportion of untrained and unqualified teachers will be recruited to the teaching force, because of the rather low output from the Teacher Training Colleges. For example, through the period 1973/74-1977/78, the average output of qualified teachers was 171; with this output, the colleges can only satisfy a small proportion of the needs. It follows therefore that the gap will need to be bridged through in-service teacher training.
4.2.2 Provision for English teacher education

When the curriculum revision unit (CRU) was established in 1972, the curriculum adviser made in-service education an important aspect of his programme. The unit tried to involve teacher educators in the INSET enterprise by giving their representatives membership of the curriculum sub-committees and inviting them to participate in INSET courses and workshops. It was hoped that this involvement of teacher trainers will result in guiding their teachers-in-training how to operate the new curriculum which involved the use of the 1974 syllabus.

The CRU started conducting INSET courses when the syllabus was still in the draft stage. These were short weekend and long vacation courses held at various centres all over the country. In such courses, the use of the syllabus was usually explained to teachers and discussion and demonstration lessons were based on it. The short courses were particularly useful because they were more practical in that they included demonstration lessons by ordinary teachers with ordinary pupils. It was hoped that teachers would share experiences which they could put into practice on their return to their different schools.

The period of intensive collaboration between the CRU English Division and the serving teachers unfortunately had a lapse of four years, 1978-82, when the post was vacant. However, the INSET activities could be categorised thus:-

a. Long advanced training courses generally of 10 days to two weeks duration were essentially to give additional training to key teachers of English, these being heads of English departments or lecturers of Teacher Training Colleges. The work involved was both theoretical and practical.
b. English for special needs. Week long workshops for special needs were also held. These were normally conducted solely by Sierra Leoneans. Such courses were generally practical and they included courses like English for commercial teachers, English for the set textbooks of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) syllabus, the teaching of reading in the vernacular as a prelude to teaching reading in English, etc.

c. Weekend courses were generally those specific to the explanation of the syllabus demands. Day-by-day issues were raised on keeping records, making schemes of work and lesson notes. The growth and pattern of English were always stressed then.

One can easily assume that all the INSET courses organised by the CRU in an attempt to implement the 1974 syllabus and also to cater for the special needs of teachers were successful. The question that arises from this though is whether teachers are able to put the ideas they learn from these courses into practice in their schools. It is usually difficult for teachers to do so. This has been attributed mainly to the unco-operative attitude of some teachers and their heads of schools and lack of requisite materials. Sometimes, also, teachers simply cannot be bothered, partly because secondary schools are hardly visited by inspectors and partly because, unlike primary teachers, secondary teachers are complacent. After their initial training and qualification, they tend to feel that they have had it all and do not need anything more, except where they have opportunities of going abroad.

Some secondary school teachers who are unqualified fail to attend because courses are held at weekends and during vacations when teachers want to rest. Furthermore, since participation in these courses hardly carries any financial benefit or professional recognition by the Ministry, teachers who decide not to attend have nothing to lose. They
would still be eligible for the normal increment.

It is in the light of the above facts that the former curriculum co-ordinator, Lucan (1979) of the Institute of Education summed up the curriculum revision process as:-

"...one of imbalance, incoherence and insufficient co-ordination between various disciplines, and lack of articulation between various levels of the education system itself. Efforts at curriculum development are not based on any model for curriculum change. They are unco-ordinated and they lack a sense of direction...."

(Lucan, 1979)

This picture of imbalance, incoherence and insufficient co-ordination in the English curriculum revision scene needs to be remedied if English is to continue to assume the role it plays in the country. English, we must remember, is the life blood of the whole curriculum in Sierra Leone, being the official language and medium of instruction in the schools.

From the above account, it is evident that curriculum revision in English has not achieved the desired goal. However, it is difficult to determine the extent of its success because of the lack of a coherent system of evaluation which should be an inherent part of curriculum development. At the 1974 National Curriculum Conference in Sierra Leone, the proposal was put forward for an 'overall approach' to curriculum development. This sounds plausible but so far it seems difficult to put it into operation. Towards this end, we are prepared to explore alternative/new strategies for INSET in Sierra Leone.

4.3 New Strategies for INSET

In commenting on new strategies for INSET developed over the years, Nelson-Williams (1984) states that:-

"...modern technology is being used by some countries to provide INSET. The utilization of advanced technology in INSET is restricted mainly to the developed world. Many of the developing countries use radio for INSET because it does not require much expense. India was able to use TV to train science teachers during an in-service course in 1975 through a loan of an American satellite without which it would have been difficult."

(Nelson-Williams, 1984)
Unfortunately, although Nelson-Williams' points are valid, it is only the rich countries in the world that can afford to use communication satellites. A developing country like Sierra Leone cannot afford it. Many countries do not adopt a single approach to INSET. Their approach is influenced by their peculiar circumstances in terms of financial resources, physical characteristics, social and educational changes. As has been stated earlier in this chapter, Sierra Leone can afford to use and uses only one method - the traditional course-related approach.

An example of a new approach which seems to be gaining grounds fairly quickly is the school focussed approach, advocated for instance by Hoyle (1973). He stated that:-

"A number of recent developments have undermined the almost universal concept of in-service training as essentially attendance at courses." (Hoyle, 1973)

Here, he is referring to the traditional INSET activities which require teachers to undergo training for a specific period of time and return on completion of their courses. In the past, this was the essential feature of all INSET activities. Now, this perspective has changed in Britain and several other developed nations. It is in the light of growing dissatisfaction expressed with the traditional INSET model, that Hoyle (1973) advocated a 'reconceptualisation' of in-service training. In fact this was what led to the discussion paper produced by the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers (ACSTT) in which emphasis was laid on a school-focussed approach to INSET.

The school-focussed approach gained momentum in England after the publication of the Green Paper on INSET in 1977. This programme has also been adopted by a number of institutions across the United States. Edefelt (1983, p.1), states that the Eastern Michigan University plays a prominent role in advancing school-focussed INSET with its staff development and school improvement programme. He states further that:-
"...it is based on the premise that classroom teachers can best address their needs and identify their priorities and plan a program to meet their needs and priorities at the building level." (Edefelt, 1983, p.1)

In a programme of this nature, university personnel work with teachers collaboratively in all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of their own staff development activities. Local education officers also participate in the programme. The University personnel provide guidance, direction and consultancy throughout the programme. The approach forces teachers to look at educational problems from detached, objective and pragmatic standpoints so as to find solutions to them, whilst at the same time broadening their understanding of the school's social system. The success of this experiment means that school-focussed INSET, if properly structured, could be very beneficial both to teachers and to the institution. The school-focussed model seems to be devoid of the problems inherent in the traditional model. In fact, the school-focussed model is considered to be cheaper. Hoyle (1973) stated four ways in which the effectiveness of school focussed INSET could be enhanced:

a. schools should have their own staff development programmes
b. that the working group should be the target for training as in the management sciences
c. that INSET should be linked to innovations in school
d. that schools should make use of consultancy services provided by external agencies, such as Teachers' Centres, inspectors and so on. (Hoyle, 1973)

4.4 Relevance Of The New Strategies For Sierra Leone

The inherent problems in the existing models of INSET make it advisable for Sierra Leone to explore some other form of INSET. Only a proper balance between the traditional model and other alternative forms could ensure maximum effectiveness in INSET provisions in Sierra Leone. The present imbalance of INSET provisions should be redressed
if INSET should make a more meaningful impact on teachers of English, teachers of other subjects and secondary education generally.

Perhaps the reason why other forms of INSET, like school-focused INSET, has not yet been implemented in Sierra Leone is because few agencies are involved in organizing INSET. In a situation where there are many providers as in Britain, for example, competition stimulates greater ingenuity and variety in the programmes offered.

The other sad fact is that Sierra Leone experiences another problem in that even the few courses that are organised for secondary teachers are not fully utilised. This fact, mentioned earlier, was also clearly stated by the last Honourable Minister of Education in Sierra Leone, Ndomahma, (1982) at the opening ceremony of an INSET course organised by the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. He states that:

"Opportunities to participate in the development process such as this training programme are not always recognised by teachers, and even when recognised are not always used." (Ndomahina, 1982)

The tendency for secondary school teachers not to be as responsive to INSET as primary teachers are has been stated before. If there was an enforced policy relating to INSET as obtains in the United Kingdom, an awareness in teachers that participation in such programmes attests to their professionalism would have been created. The lack of an agreed code of ethics by which teachers' professional practices, work and conduct could be assessed does not help the situation. The non-existence of appropriate incentives and motivation could be another factor contributing to their unresponsiveness. Unless something is done to alert secondary teachers to the importance of INSET, much will not be achieved in that field.

In the light of the above, the next chapter will discuss an alternative mode of INSET for Sierra Leone. - INSET at a distance.
The pros and cons for INSET, as well as the different attempts that have been made especially in the Third World countries, will be portrayed in an attempt to see what lessons Sierra Leone can learn from these and how best Sierra Leone can venture into this field.
CHAPTER 5
TEACHER EDUCATION AT A DISTANCE

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5.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 concluded that the inherent problems in the existing provisions of INSET in Sierra Leone make it advisable for her to explore alternative forms of INSET. In trying to explore some alternative and cost effective forms of INSET, this chapter focuses attention on INSET at a distance which has been tried by both developed and developing countries.

It starts by defining distance learning, and discusses its purposes in teacher education. Then, in trying to see why developing countries have resorted to the use of the distance learning approach in general, an argument is put forward for the comparative ineffectiveness of conventional education and an attempt is made to describe how distance learning may be organised in such countries, particularly for teacher education.

The advantages and disadvantages for using distance learning for INSET in developing countries are then discussed and the chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of using distance learning for INSET in Sierra Leone. (The literature often does not tend to distinguish between distance learning and distance teaching. Accordingly, I too will use the term synonymously in this chapter although my emphasis is on learning rather than teaching.)

5.1 Distance Learning and Teacher Education

5.1.1 What is distance learning?

Since distance learning systems are many and varied, I will regard it as a variable within teaching learning systems, which show greater or lesser degrees of distance in teacher-student interaction,
A widely quoted definition of distance learning is given by Holmberg (1977). He defined it as:

"the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which nevertheless benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation."

(Holmberg, 1977)

"The basic tenet of distance learning is that education should be taken to where people are rather than expecting them to come where education is."

(Farnes, 1976)

This means that workers can even learn while they earn. Instead of providing educational opportunities in large urban institutions at fixed times, educational materials are delivered to learners who are able to study anywhere and in their own time.

"These materials are designed for individualised study and may consist of self-instructional texts, programmed learning, reading materials, leaflets, educational games, television and radio broadcasts, audio-visual materials, experimental kits, self-assessment exercises and so on."

(ACACE, 1983)

In addition to self-assessment, a learner may complete assignments that are marked and commented on by tutors. Distance learning may also be supported by face-to-face tutorials, self-help groups and counselling.

"Distance learning is regarded as broadly equivalent to non-contiguous classroom learning where teaching and learning occur separately, in contrast to contiguous classroom learning where teaching and learning occur simultaneously. In contiguous learning, communication between learner and teacher is personal and face-to-face. In non-contiguous learning, there may be face-to-face communication for limited periods of time, but learners and teachers mostly communicate through written, mechanical or electronic means."

(ACACE, 1983)
In distance learning, as the term is used in this thesis, students spend the greater part of their study time working on materials without the presence of either teachers or fellow students. These materials have most probably been prepared by teachers whom they do not know personally. Their study location is their own home and any use of institutional resources (human or material) is supplementary to rather than the central feature of their studies.

5.1.2 Purposes of distance learning in teacher education

Distance learning programmes in teacher education are to be found in many different forms and for different purposes. Some countries have used it to increase teachers' academic knowledge only. For example, the Kenyan Junior Certificate Programme, which began in 1967, provides secondary education for teachers who have only primary school education (Kinyanjui, 1974). Also, the general secondary courses, set up in 1965 by the Malawi Correspondence College, provided secondary education for many uncertificated primary school teachers (Ewing, 1966). Where teachers have already achieved a satisfactory level of academic attainment, distance learning has been used to provide professional knowledge and training. Graduates in Australia may obtain postgraduate teaching certificates through the correspondence courses of one of a number of universities (Ewing, 1966; Smith, 1978). The University of the West Indies provided correspondence courses on teaching methods for teachers on various Caribbean islands (Ewing, 1966). In Kenya, a programme was set up in 1969 for the in-service training and up-grading of primary school teachers who had no professional qualifications (Kinyanjui, 1974).

In other distance learning programmes, BOTH ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE ARE SUPPLIED, EITHER AS PART OF AN INITIAL TRAINING SCHEME OR AS AN AID TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING OF A NEW SUBJECT OR TOPIC AREA.
This is the way modern mathematics was introduced into schools in Mauritius (Kinyanjui, 1974) and science into basic schools in Chile (Martin, 1980). Teacher-training courses that provide ALL THE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING NEEDED TO OBTAIN CERTIFICATION have also been developed using distance teaching techniques. The earliest and better known of this type is the UNRWA/UNESCO Institute of Education Project for Palestinian teachers which has been in the Arab refugee camps in Lebanon, Gaza, Jordan and Syria since 1964 (Kinyanjui, 1974; Lyle, 1967 and Nashif, 1982). The Francistown Teacher-Training Project trained over 80 per cent of the unqualified primary school teachers in Botswana (Kinyanjui, 1974; Kabwasa and Kaunda, 1973).

5.2 Distance Learning In Developing Countries

5.2.1 The ineffectiveness of conventional education

"Developing countries around the world face common critical educational problems: shortages of schools, trained teachers and administrators as well as irrelevant or non-existent textbooks and instructional materials."

(Searle et. al., 1976, XIII)

Those developing countries which have largely depended upon the conventional education system for the achievement of these goals have found out that the returns have not been commensurate with the expenditure (Ansere, 1982, p.53). For example, authorities such as Coombs (1968), Jolly (1969) and A'Aeth (1975), have described this situation as an education crisis or an educational dilemma. Others, like Illich (1977) and Reimer (1972), in exasperation have advocated the abolition of the formal school system. All have agreed that the formal education system alone could not possibly solve the problem and that some other system of education should be employed in addition.

At a colloquium at the Fernuniversitat in December 1981, both Ansere of Ghana and Standa of Kenya said that generally many African countries need to use distance education in all stages of course development and
management. They suggested that the countries themselves will have to improve their infrastructure, which so far prevents rural areas from being properly serviced.

Ansere in fact reported that the formal educational system has proved deficient in meeting the needs of many new nations in Africa. He offers a thorough analysis of education in Ghana with emphasis on the discrimination inherent in the traditional system, which acts as a 'sorting machine' preventing a large proportion of the population from obtaining appropriate levels of education. Ansere (1982) argues that:

"It has failed to provide universal primary education for the children of compulsory school-going age; it has failed to absorb all the persons who qualify for second and third cycle education; its nature and structure have helped to drive away some of the people who were admitted into the schools, and it has failed to train sufficient numbers of the country's work force." (Ansere, 1982)

This is true for Sierra Leone and many other developing countries. In fact the situation in Europe is not much better. Bonani (1982) points out that only one quarter of Italian youths are studying regularly at the age of sixteen and that in Italy also, the traditional system is not functioning well.

Gitau (1982) reports even more disturbing statistics from Kenya. He states that the output from the primary education system in Kenya is about 300,000 school leavers a year with only 100,000 absorbed by all government secondary schools, self-help schools, private schools and village polytechnics and all employment sectors. There is thus an annual addition of 200,000 youths to the swollen ranks of the unemployed. The cumulative growth of unemployed primary school leavers since 1963 stands at over 1.5 million.

Husen (1976), Hawkridge, Kinyanjui, Nkinyangi and Orviel (1979) feel that there can be no doubt that teacher training colleges have
failed to supply trained teachers in the numbers needed (Brophy and Dudley, 1982). Peters (1982) takes a less aggressive position in describing the foundation of the Fernuniversitat in West Germany. He however makes it clear that one primary reason for establishing a university dedicated solely to distance education is that the traditional system inherently provides insufficient access to education.

5.2.2 Implications for developing countries

Although many claims have been made for the usefulness of distance learning, there are many 'lessons' that developing countries who are planning to use it must learn.

Barker (1977) puts forward the view that developing countries must "think through to their real needs" before attempting to set up such a system. He illustrates this fact by expressing the view that although the most eager visitors to the Open University in Milton Keynes are from developing countries, it has very little to offer them. He argues that the Open University is a successful answer to a UK need - higher education for intelligent adults who have for one reason or another slipped through the net of formal higher education. They want a degree because they thirst for knowledge or the salary increases which may accompany a degree qualification.

Barker (1977) aptly contrasts the situation with that in developing countries when he states the following:-

"When the taxi driver tells you in broken English that he has a degree in Political Science, when the hotel room 'boy' tells you that he has six 'O' Levels and earns less than £10 per month, when even a meagre government job can attract 700 replies (many of them from graduates) you realize that the last thing that is needed is yet more disillusioned graduates."

(Barker, 1977)

The success of the Open University form of distance learning has attracted wide interest, particularly from many developing countries.
Such countries fail to note that when a country wants to transform itself rapidly from an agrarian-based into an industrialised economy, it must create a cadre of trained specialists from within its own people and not rely on western so-called experts. As Barker puts it:-

"There is no time to build all the schools and colleges that are needed. Nor is there time to train the teachers. Money can buy instant buildings, but good teachers take twenty years to grow."

(Barker, 1977)

He argues that an approach which has evolved to meet UK needs cannot be successfully adapted to meet developing countries' needs. He illustrates this point in the following table:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Situation</th>
<th>Typical Developing Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short distances, easy travel</td>
<td>Long distances, difficult travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient postal services</td>
<td>Inefficient postal services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneous population</td>
<td>Wide social and cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common language</td>
<td>Varied languages, and dialects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High general education</td>
<td>Low general education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High literacy level, book oriented</td>
<td>Low literacy level, not book oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many good teachers</td>
<td>Few good teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established printing and publishing resources</td>
<td>Limited printing and publishing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophisticated radio/TV production</td>
<td>Limited radio/TV production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple radio/TV transmission</td>
<td>Single radio/TV transmission channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio/TV in every household</td>
<td>Radio/TV in few households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All households with electricity</td>
<td>Few households with electricity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Barker, 1977)

Developing countries, which are still reeling from often well-meaning attempts to transfer western solutions, like the 'chalk and talk' method to solve Eastern problems, will be doomed the same way if they start without a realistic diagnosis of needs and resources. Barker (1977) analyses four major areas of difference - subject area and target audience, study location, learning method and the media - and suggests a need for a package approach which would feature adaptable course content, alternative technology, non-academic subject emphasis and non-home based study. (He proposes a solution which involves a combination of self and group study and a missionary teacher acting as travelling salesman and tutor and the successful feedback link with the centres.)
Even experts from developing countries themselves have warned against such pitfalls. For example, Ansere (1982) warns that it is important for poor countries to start a programme on a modest scale. He refers to the Ghana correspondence course as one of the "least sophisticated applications of educational technology in the world" since the printed correspondence lesson forms the only medium of instruction. He argues that even with their small scale of operation, they were finding it difficult. They certainly would have found it harder if the programme had been bigger in terms of the range of courses offered, the media used, the resources committed, and the number of students involved. He also felt that it was probably fortunate that they did not obtain foreign aid in the initial organisation of the programme. If they had had foreign assistance, the programme might have been organised on a scale too large to manage. Externally aided projects may be successful at the beginning, but when external support ends, the programme almost invariably turns into a white elephant for the host country.

Barker emphasised that it was good that Ghana decided to start their programme on a modest scale as they could have found it more difficult to grapple with the knotty problems that arose. Moreover, it allowed them time to reflect and experiment. He identified the following problems the Ghana correspondence programme encountered. He stated that six years after they designed all seven courses, the economy of the country started weakening and foreign resources became very difficult to obtain. Consequently, they could not import the necessary textbooks. The prices of the few books that could be obtained locally were so high that students could not afford them. In 1975, they were forced to abandon the courses based on the textbooks and in their place, write what they called 'self-contained courses'. This was at a time when they had thousands of students in their system, which meant
that they had to produce the new courses quickly. When they tried to write the new courses, they were unable to complete them because of printing hold-ups due to machines which could not work and the unavailability of paper and printing materials. Added to this, they suffered from delays in the mailing system. This led to almost complete abandonment of the courses.

Kuhanga (1981), talking about the Tanzanian case, suggests that some important factors should be taken into account when one is about to start such a programme. One should ensure that there must be a strong political will behind it. Unless the leaders understand and accept the concept, the purpose for which the concept is to be used, and the ultimate results of the application, any efforts to put into practice such innovations may be futile. This is very true as Kinyanjui (1974) makes the same point for the Kenya case when he said:-

"The Kenya case study has demonstrated amongst other things the need for a definitive commitment from the government in an educational venture such as the one described here."

(Kinyanjui, 1974)

Kinyanjui (1974) stressed the fact that the success of their programme was due to close consultation and co-operation between many different bodies - the Ministries of Education, Information and Broadcasting and the Institute of Adult Studies of the University of Nairobi.

With regard to technical assistance, Kuhanga (1979), feels that initially some technical assistance will be needed to help developing countries to develop distance learning, especially for high-level training. But in some countries, for example Tanzania, the basic expertise is already available. It only needs orientation into the techniques and technicalities of the operation.

Another point Kuhanga (1981) stresses is that an adequate infrastructure of communication - media, road and air networks, postal services, etc. is necessary if one is to implement an effective distance teaching programme. Kuhanga believes that there are very few developing
countries which can boast of having adequate communication facilities. They may all have radio and television, but the coverage is small and the reception poor. They all have postal services, but their operation schedules are undependable and irregular. However, with determined efforts, they could be improved, but we should not wait until we have a perfect communication system before we initiate this kind of programme.

It is important that the right kind of educational infrastructure must be created within a wide geographical base and not be concentrated in the cities.

5.2.3 The use of distance learning in teacher education

The programmes for teacher education have employed a variety of distance teaching approaches. Some such as the schemes in Burma, Dahomey and West Indies (Ministry of Education, Burma, 1979; Kabwasa and Kaunda, 1973; Ewing, 1966) have relied upon written correspondence materials alone. Others use written correspondence materials linked with media. The National Teachers' Institute in Kaduna, Nigeria uses written materials and audio cassettes (Wali and Lovegrove, 1978). The Television University of China, as its name implies, uses television, broadcasts and correspondence materials (McCormick, 1979).

There is yet another approach, which, like that in Burma, Dahomey and the West Indies, does not use media at all. It merely relies upon supplementing the correspondence materials with face-to-face tutorial sessions. Approaches like this can be found in Jamaica (Murray, 1979) and Zambia (Kabwasa and Kaunda, 1973). From 1968 to 1979, it was used for the Projecto de Perfeccionamiento en Servicio (PPS) by the Ministry of Education in Chile (Martin, 1980). However, each of these approaches is not as common as the one in which all three means of communication, namely correspondence, media and face-to-face meeting, are employed. This three-way approach is popular with 'open' university schemes.
It has also been used specifically for teacher education in Kenya, Ivory Coast, Algeria, Botswana, Guyuna, Uganda, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Swaziland (Young, et. al., 1980; Brophy and Dalgety, 1980; Kabwasa and Kaunda, 1973; Kinyanjui, 1974).

The above examples help to illustrate the variety of distance learning schemes extant. "There is such a variety that it is difficult to establish the relative merits of each." (Brophy and Dudley, 1982). This view expressed by these authors motivated them to classify distance teaching (learning) patterns, both past and present, used for teacher education. Their classification is in the form of a grid or matrix, in which each teacher-education programme is classified according to its main purposes and its method of communication with participants:

*Table A classification of distance-teaching projects for teacher education*

MATERIAL REDACTED AT REQUEST OF UNIVERSITY
Brophy and Dudley (1982) are of the opinion that all sixteen different distance teaching (learning) patterns identified by this matrix have been used in teacher education. The programme in the table includes distance teaching schemes intended for a wider audience, but in which teachers are known to make up 30 per cent or more of the student body. They also feel that the classification shows a number of trends in distance teaching (learning), viz:-

1. Most complete programmes (column 4) have been designed for primary school teachers and few projects rely solely on written correspondence materials (row a).

2a. The University of Brazzaville programme (cell 1a) suffered a high drop-out rate of students.

b. The programmes of the Institute Pedagogique National in Dahomey (cell 4a) encountered administrative problems.

c. The Malaysian teacher education project (cell 2a) was judged by the Ministry of Education to be unsatisfactory and was terminated.

3. Other projects, which were of the correspondence type alone, have been modified:-

i. the Ministry of Education in Burma (originally cell 4a) now includes the use of audio cassettes (so becomes a 4b project).

ii. the Diploma in Education in the South Pacific, initially a 3a cell, has become a 3b project.

iii. the Centre National D'Enseignement Generalise (CNEG) programme in Algeria (cell 4a) now includes both media and face-to-face sessions (cell 4d).

Brophy and Dudley (1982) observe further that in each case, the modifications led to the programmes being reclassified lower in the table rather than across - the purposes remained constant (the columns) but the means to achieve them (the rows) changed. They concluded that:-

"in spite of (or perhaps because of) the economic depression that has hindered development in many Third-World countries over the past decade, distance teaching is likely to play an increasingly important role in teacher education in developing countries for the foreseeable future."

(Brophy and Dudley, 1982)

They reported that over sixty such projects have been developed to date and suggest that for anyone wishing to develop a new project or modify an existing one, it is important that they should be
able to analyse critically previous programmes and where possible learn from this experience. It is their hope that their matrix will assist such analyses.

5.3 INSET At A Distance In Developing Countries

5.3.1. Advantages

In addition to the advantages normally inherent in distance learning generally, there are some quite specific advantages for INSET, particularly in developing countries. Amongst these are that the distance learning method allows teachers to remain in post and earn while they learn in their own pace and time. Brophy and Dudley (1982) make a very important case for this when they postulate that:

"For college-based training, teachers have to be removed from their Schools; this exacerbates the already critical problem of teacher shortage; and stand-ins, when available, are even less qualified than those they are replacing. With a distance teaching method of training, teachers remain at their posts and replacements are not needed."

(Brophy and Dudley, 1982, p.157)

From the student teachers' point of view, Brophy and Dudley (1982) feel that it is a major advantage of distance teaching that they can become qualified without having to interrupt their earnings. Many adults, they state, especially those who are married, need to remain in their own town or village and it is important that they are not obliged to take up residence in, or near to a college in order to be trained. Distance teaching methods allow trainees a considerable degree of autonomy in developing their study habits and in setting the pace of their study. Both features are particularly advantageous in developing countries, for many of the male teachers also farm and a large proportion of the female teachers have young children.

They also feel that since it is egalitarian rather than elitist in nature, it will be expedient for most countries. Large numbers of teachers can be trained at any one time, and the programme brought to
teachers where they live, there need be no discrimination against those living in remote and rural areas.

In Guyana, for instance, through distance teaching, qualified science teachers become available in regions that previously had been dependant upon either unqualified or expatriate teachers (Brophy and Dalgety, 1980). Curle (1973) suggested that creating alternative routes to advanced education will also help break down the elitism which has arisen in many new countries from the limited number of places available in universities and colleges.

Training teachers 'in situ' helps to overcome problems encountered when trainees from rural areas are brought to towns or cities for college-based training. Often these rural students have difficulty in settling into their courses and many of those who do settle do not want to return to their own areas after qualifying. Just such a problem has occurred in the USSR. Of those graduating from teacher-training institutes in 1979, 38 per cent refused to take up posts as teachers, particularly when these were in village schools (Binyon, 1980).

Teachers living in rural areas, Brophy and Dudley (1982) stress, seldom have access to libraries, and distance teaching offers the further advantage that the structured correspondence units supplied to trainees will in themselves be a valuable source of reference materials, both for their training and for their teaching. Unlike college-trained teachers, they do not have to return books when their training programme is completed.

Ansere (1982) underscores the above views when he states that other merits of distance education include flexibility in enabling the person to learn at his own pace, place and time. The fact that people can study anywhere augurs well for rural development. This is an important point in favour of establishing distance learning in
developing countries. One of the reasons why middle school leavers desert the rural areas for the urban areas is the lack of educational facilities in the former. Other reasons advanced by Ansere are:-

"If the middle school leavers resident in the rural areas can obtain education through correspondence study, they may stay in the rural areas and help develop the areas. Perhaps of more significance is the fact that under distance education, the learner develops a sense of maturity. This is made possible by the discipline he had to impose upon himself in order to succeed in learning and his ability to choose between competing claims on his time and energy."

(Ansere, 1982)

Another claim made for distance learning is that it provides a wider access to education - education for all - at a very small cost. It is ideal for in-service programmes. The fact that an in-service programme exists, with its correspondence materials and perhaps its radio and television programmes being distributed throughout the country, has brought benefits to education systems in general and, in some cases, to society itself. Kabwasa and Kaunda (1973) report that the radio programmes broadcast for the 8335 students of a Kenyan distance-teaching project were listened to by half a million adults, and Moss (1979) estimated that 46 per cent of all university tutors in England had used Open University materials in their conventional university programmes.

Ansere also argues that the most important advantage of distance education is the provision of wider access to education and the savings in time and money it offers.

Distance learning makes it possible for education to be expanded without building extra schools or colleges which are expensive to set up and difficult to staff. There can also be delays in completing college buildings so that it may take five years or more before the first trainees are available for teaching (Brophy and Dalgety, 1980). Distance-teaching programmes require minimal new staff and the teachers
are immediately available to schools (though initially they are untrained).

This fact has also been pointed out by Hanson (1969). In his report on staffing requirements for education in Africa, he noted that the problems of staffing teachers' colleges seemed to be even more critical than those for secondary schools. Distance-teaching programmes have the advantage that they can pay specialists employed in universities and colleges to prepare course materials. Similarly, while it is difficult for overseas specialists to participate for the two or three years of a college programme, it is comparatively easy to obtain their participation for short periods of time at summer institutes and vacation workshops, and these can be incorporated into distance-teaching schemes.

Distance teaching has also proved attractive to ministries of education for financial reasons. The costs of making and distributing printed lessons or broadcasts do not rise with the number of students so it may be possible to achieve economies of scale. With care, for example, distance-teaching programmes can be made to rely upon existing buildings, equipment and manpower and can be very economic. According to Lyle (1967), the UNRWA (UN Relief Work Agency)/UNESCO Institute of Education programme trained Palestinian teachers by correspondence between 1964 and 1966 at a cost of 341 US dollars per student year, while similar college-based training cost 820 US dollars per student year. Kaunda (1973) found that correspondence courses run by the University of Zambia trained teachers for half the cost of full-time college-trained teachers. It is clear that training teachers by distance-teaching methods is less expensive than training them through college-based programmes.
In spite of the above, Perraton (1982) puts forward the view that the evidence on costs is mixed. There are circumstances in which distance teaching will prove cheaper than the alternative. He summarises the evidence on projects where comparable information is available and where comparisons with the cost or orthodox teaching are possible in the table on the following page.

The possible saving of foreign resources is one other reason why African governments could become interested in local distance education courses. Ansere (1981) said that as much as $37,000 was spent by the state in helping Ghanaian citizens procure course materials from overseas' correspondence institutions:-

"It has been proved beyond doubt that non-formal education costs much less than formal education. This has been attested to in the studies of Coombs (1968), Ahmed (1975) and Jolly (1969) for non-formal education generally and Rumble (1976), Kaye (1973), Laidlaw and Layard (1974), and Wagner (1977) for distance education in particular." (Ansere, 1981)

The relatively large proportion of capital or fixed costs to total costs encourage distance education institutions to want to increase student numbers, for the greater the number of students, the lower will be the average cost per student.

In the same vein, Kyhanga (1981) states that it would appear as if it is better for developing countries to finance such projects within their borders than to send students overseas for training, as it is no longer cheap to train individuals abroad.
MATERIAL REDACTED AT REQUEST OF UNIVERSITY
In the words of Perraton (1984), this discussion can be summarised as follows:-

1. Distance teaching makes it possible for a few teachers to teach a larger number of students.

2. It makes it possible for education to be expanded without building extra schools or colleges.

3. It makes it possible for students to learn while they continue to work. Teachers to not need to be removed from their schools in order to study and qualify.

4. Distance teaching can achieve economy of scale. Once teaching materials have been produced and the system established, the cost of enrolling additional students is relatively low. (Perraton, 1984)

5.3.2 Disadvantages

The disadvantages of using distance learning for INSET are similar to those of using distance learning in general. Perraton (1984) states that it can be cold, remote and didactic - everything that we associate with the word 'distant' as it applies to human relations. Where teaching is based on a printed text, it is all too easy for the students' activity to degenerate into rote learning and an excessive reliance on the printed work. Distance learning has also too often been marked by high drop-out rates, themselves a measure of student dissatisfaction with learning and the difficulty of studying by oneself stresses that it is more difficult to build a dialogue into distance learning and stimulate the individual responses and judgements by students which mark a good classroom or a good seminar.

Another view, expressed by Gitau (1982), is that a major obstacle to gaining support for distance learning in Kenya is the widespread view among Kenyans that a traditional education is the only legitimate one. Anderson (1982) relates a similar problem in Brazil where Brazilians from all classes are sceptical about the legitimacy of distance education.
Singh, Datt and Gupta (1982) echo each other when they state that although the traditional universities in India were given the opportunity to develop distance learning, they have not done an adequate job - partly because of financial problems but also because of lack of effort. Singh (1982) further claims that their attitude that distance education is second class education and distance educators second class educators has not helped at all.

In the 1983 report of the advisory council for adult and continuing education, the following contentions were put forward as typical of the criticisms that have been levied against the distance learning system over the years:

1. Distance learners miss the verbal and non-verbal cues transmitted by teachers and which are essential to accurate assimilation and understanding of new knowledge and skills.

2. Distance learners miss the stimulus and the periodic reinforcement of enthusiasm derived from direct contact with teachers and other students.

3. The rigid, prescriptive and sequenced nature of distance teaching materials does not allow learners to develop any critical independence.

4. Distance learners are disadvantaged because they have no access to the resources and facilities open to classroom based students - libraries, laboratories and quiet work rooms. (ACACE, 1983)

5.4 Implications For INSET In Sierra Leone

This review of literature on distance learning in general and distance learning for INSET extant has provided a contextual background of what has been achieved both conceptually and practically in the field.

The literature portrays distance learning as "neither inherently superior nor inherently inferior to other forms of education provided that it balances that which is mass produced and centralised against a minimum of discussion and dialogue" (Perraton, 1984). This presupposes that before deciding whether it is suitable for an educational
task, we should consider the infrastructure and the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors in a country. For example, the existing travelling, postal and media facilities in a country should be taken into consideration when deciding on the form a DL/INSET course should take.

The latest recorded statistics of qualified and unqualified teachers show that in 1982/83, about 36 per cent of the teachers in secondary schools in Sierra Leone are unqualified and teachers have clamoured for support. The existing INSET courses, albeit traditional, are few and far between and have failed to solve the problems of teachers. The advantages gained in developing countries like Ghana, Kenya, Brazil, India, Botswana who have tried INSET at a distance seem to outweigh the disadvantages.

In the light of the above, my own predilection is that one way to address the problems of teachers in Sierra Leone is through the development and implementation of an INSET at a distance course on a small scale considering her inadequate socio-economic situation.
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6.0 INTRODUCTION

In his attempt to outline the major educational challenges confronting Sierra Leone as a developing country in the decade of the eighties, Wright (1981) states the following:

"Most of the educational research done in Sierra Leone is motivated by the requirements for a Masters or Doctorate degree. While it is useful that such research does take place, there is now considerable doubt as to whether this is the best way of building an appropriate research capacity. Invariably the concern in a doctoral research is not so much with pragmatic aspects of problem-solving or policy formation, etc., but with proper standards of design, correct use of analytical techniques, and excellence in reporting."

(Wright, 1981a, p.29)

Wright substantiates this by referring to a public lecture in which Beeby (1966) stressed the point that the number of PhDs in a country is not necessarily a reliable indicator of its research capacity. Beeby (1966) further stated that the reason why all the PhDs in a country cannot solve their educational problems is that:

"they were busy running around, looking for hypotheses to test, because everyone knows that the way to get a PhD is to find yourself a good hypothesis, test it, and show that it is more or less true or false, but establish at the same time that further work is required to make a more definite pronouncement."  (Beeby, 1966)

Wright pointed out that although Beeby was being deliberately cynical, he had a point in that too much procedural ritual (as in doctoral research work) is likely to stunt the genuine problem-solving potential of a research project. It is of course vital that the researcher should possess a fair range of research tools and be reasonably versatile in their use, but it must be remembered that such tools are to be used as and when appropriate in the research process.
The literature on educational research shows that there has been a polarisation between dichotomous research 'paradigms' or 'problematique' - each based on its own distinct set of assumptions. In this chapter, I shall briefly discuss the main features of the traditional - ie the experimental, scientific or reductionist approach and the non-traditional - ie the artistic, naturalistic or holistic approaches as far as they are relevant to my research. More particularly, this chapter will:

- state my research theme
- state the nature of my research problem
- state the two contrasting paradigms in educational research
- match my research theme with research methodology by:
  1) stating my choice of paradigm
  2) outlining the characteristics of illuminative evaluation approach that guided me in my choice of methods
- discuss ideal methods for collecting data within the non-traditional paradigm.

6.1 The Research Theme

The theme of this research is an exploration into the design, development and evaluation of an INSET at a distance course for the in-service education and training of teachers of English language in lower secondary schools in Sierra Leone, and the actual development and evaluation of the course.

6.1.1 The nature of the research problem

This research aims to address the problem of secondary teachers of English in lower forms in Sierra Leone who need a system of 'support' for surviving in their classrooms. The work starts with the designing and development of a distance learning course in line with current ideas on distance learning (see ch.5).

The first aspect of the investigation consists of evaluating the specially designed pilot distance learning course for formative purposes in an attempt to improve it by identifying its strengths and weaknesses.

The second aspect of the investigation evaluates the potential of
the distance learning approach in the in-service training of the
Sierra Leone teachers who have been brought up in the traditional
approach to learning in the light of other INSET provisions like
seminars, workshops, group discussions and lectures.

6.2 Two Contrasting Paradigms For Educational Research

There is a growing realisation that although the traditional
or scientific paradigm is immensely successful in the physical sciences,
it is inappropriate for dealing with the complexities of how humans
relate together and with their social or educational settings (see for
example, Stake, 1967; Cronbach, 1975; Hamilton, 1977; Elton and
Laurillard, 1979). In the paper by Elton and Laurillard (1979) which
I will use to explain the two paradigms, they say:

"it involves the analyses of complicated situations into
component parts, followed by the controlled variation of
single variables leading to a better understanding of each
separate part, and finally the reassembly of the parts into
the original whole."

(Elton and Laurillard, 1979)

Such an approach is inappropriate to teachers who operate in an
exceedingly complex situation and whose perspective is essentially
holistic. In fact, Parlett (1972) satirically describes the approach
as 'A paradigm for plants not people'.

Elton and Laurillard suggest that one way to overcome this
problem is by using an alternative research approach which attempts to
convince through reasoned argument - "language rather than mathematics".
It is difficult, if not impossible, to define this newer, non-traditional
paradigm. According to Elton and Laurillard:-

1. "The approach is interpretative and not explanatory and
communicates through language rather than mathematics.
In this connection it has indeed been noted more generally
by Leach (1970) that the structure of language may make
language a more suitable medium for communicating in the
human sciences than mathematics. The rejection of mathematics
as a language does not, however, imply its rejection as a tool,
as was indicated in our discussion of the treatment of relations
in the introduction.
2. The investigations are conducted in real or close to real situations.

3. The research designs are such as to encourage unexpected findings.  
   (Elton and Laurillard, 1979)

   Wright underscores their argument in favour of the non-traditional approach by stating that:-

   "What this alternative approach does stress is a concern with the practice of education in all its intricate complexities, and taking into account all the diverse factors which influence participant actors as they engage in the practice; as well as the general milieu within which the whole process is acted out."
   (Wright, 1981b, p.213)

   Also, Elton and Laurillard point out that:-

   "In the new methodology we may also use correlational analysis or we may use more qualitative approaches in order to explore the possible existence of relationships; the important question, however, to be answered is whether the relationships are meaningful, not simply whether they exist. Thus statistical information or statistical methods are not rejected by the new methodology, but their role is different."
   (Elton and Laurillard, 1979, p.90)

   This means that researchers whose aims are 'description' and who study 'particular cases' as holistically as possible may use 'questionnaires' and 'tests' at any point of their research, where appropriate.

   Rist (1977) was in fact one of the many advocates of the need for a complementary relationship between paradigms. The very title of his article - "On the relations among educational paradigms: from disdain to detente" (Rist, 1977) (underlining my own) - is an indication of his strength of feeling that no one approach has a hegemony in educational research. One can at best only attempt to clarify the issue. He observed that:-

   "We only cripple ourselves by a continued fixation about what is 'good' about one or 'bad' about another ... issues of methodology are issues of strategy not of morals."
   (Rist, 1977)

   Guba (1978) identifies and lengthily discusses as many as fourteen differences between the contrasting paradigms of current educational research. Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 portray three attempts
at simple distinctions between them. These are far from an effort to produce a definition of the paradigms as it is difficult, if not impossible, to define them. They merely summarise some differences between the paradigms which have been variously labelled.

Table 6.1 dwells on the separate aims of the two paradigms. Table 6.2 portrays the dichotomies represented by comparative discussions of varying research strategies. Table 6.3 identifies various commonly used labels for the paradigms.

Table 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Traditional&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Non-Traditional&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study and explanation of manifest behaviour</td>
<td>Discovery and understanding of personal meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for 'laws' governing human behaviour, deterministic</td>
<td>Illumination of intersubjective construction of reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim for objective truth</td>
<td>Claim for relative truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction on basis of statistical generalisability</td>
<td>General held to be inherent in particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated patterns, trends and central tendencies in phenomena</td>
<td>Reliance on informed judgement of reader to assess generalisation to other known contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes, results and products</td>
<td>Relationships and distinctions between cases. The unique and acceptable subject of research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural science paradigms</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement and testing instruments to collect data</td>
<td>Arts paradigms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment of researcher</td>
<td>Researcher as own instrument in collection of evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Atkins, 1985)</td>
<td>Involvement/participation of researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Atkins' headings were "Quantitative Focus on"; "Qualitative Focus on". They are rephrased in line with the terminology of this section.)
Table 6.2  
**Strategies for Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Non-Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard vs</td>
<td>Soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers vs</td>
<td>Describers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists vs</td>
<td>Critics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rigor vs</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Rist, 1977) (re-naming, my own)

Table 6.3  
**Commonly Used Labels for the Paradigms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Non-Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>Artistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductionist</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomothetic</td>
<td>Idiographic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Pope and Gilbert, 1982)  
(Re-naming my own. Pope and Gilbert use Paradigm 1 and Paradigm 2.)

6.3 **Matching Research Methodology With Research Theme: Choice Of Paradigm**

My own research orientation was originally rather traditional (see ch.3). The nature of my present research dictates a shift in orientation from the traditional to the non-traditional paradigm. This is because my research aims to evaluate by addressing, understanding and gaining insights into the problems of teachers by providing a 'support system' - a DL/INSET course - which should hopefully enable them to 'survive' in their classrooms.

In the light of the nature of my problem stated above, it was easy to rule out the traditional paradigm described by Elton and Laurillard (1979) in section 6.2 of this chapter. Furthermore, since
my study demands that I document and interpret an innovation as well as monitor its effect on its users from an objective and outside perspective, non-traditional research paradigm which they suggest (see section 6.2) seems best suited for obtaining information on my innovation. As I have mentioned earlier, the traditional paradigm works best in the sciences where variables can be identified, separated, manipulated and measured. Parlett (1981) refers to this as:-

"the tendency to 'strip contexts' in order to construct for research purposes a 'neater', scaled down laboratory type environment."

(Parlett, 1981, p.166)

I realised that if I used the traditional paradigm, I would be ignoring all but a small number of relationships between selected elements of the system. This is especially so because my study deals with a slice of educational reality in the far-away developing country of Sierra Leone which is fraught with many complex problems. In fact Parlett (1981) highlights this in his paper "Appropriate Research in Education" delivered to a workshop/seminar on educational research in Sierra Leone, in October 1981:-

"In West Africa, to consider a school problem in isolation of the economic conditions of the country, the stage of development, the dearth of facilities, the expectations of teachers and parents, the effects of an examination system largely unchanged since colonial times would be manifestly absurd."

(Parlett, 1981, p.166)

Since it is true that the existing problems in the Sierra Leone scene are many and complex, I thought that any attempt to implement an innovation in a grossly over-simplified manner, i.e. using the traditional approach, is likely to be spurious and dependent upon the original definition and choice of variables that characterise traditional research.

I therefore decided that for an evaluation of my innovation, it was important to select methods that would enable me to carry out the study in some part of the classroom environment for which it was
designed - eight secondary schools in Sierra Leone - while schooling and the social interactions that are a part of it are taking place. The non-traditional approach seemed best suited for this.

In the absence of many non-traditional type studies in Sierra Leone I was guided by the rationale for using the non-traditional paradigm in Sierra Leone given by Wright (1981), the director of the Centre for Research into Education of Secondary Teachers (CREST) in Sierra Leone. (CREST is the research and development arm of the Milton Margai Teachers' College - a college which prepares teachers for lower secondary schools in Sierra Leone. Their aim is to structure the College's own academic development and also play a more dynamic and constructive role in educational development nationwide.)

Wright (1981) made it clear that the immediate research concerns of CREST relate to concrete problems calling for practical solutions, and not to theory construction per se. They are essentially concerned with in-depth understanding of a particular slice of educational reality such as difficulties involved in teaching a particular subject in selected schools. This means that such an understanding cannot be derived from pre-conceived hypotheses and conceptual categories into which one attempts to fit educational reality. Since such educational reality should be arrived at by eliciting and orchestrating perceptions of that reality from the participant actors themselves, 'understanding' is seen as the basis for pragmatic action rather than for general explanations and theory construction. He points out that this kind of research requires a non-traditional approach. He gives the following reasons for rejecting the traditional approach. These can be synonymous with my reasons:-
i. "...the fact that most (if not all) the acknowledged educational research in Sierra Leone to date has been in the quantitative (traditional) mould makes it opportune for a body like CREST to branch out in new directions and redress the imbalance in the national research capabilities.

ii. Quantitative (traditional) educational research requires highly trained specialists to be done effectively and meaningfully. The capacity to carry out such research within CREST is limited to a few members with modest skills and experience in that direction. The development of a hard-core of CREST researchers in this tradition is a long term and expensive process. In the meantime, the real life problems of improving the quality of secondary education (with which CREST is concerned) should not, and need not, await the conventional training of educational researchers for CREST.

iii. The qualitative approach to educational research (non-traditional) appears amenable to the skills and experience of most CREST members, as leading teacher educators.

iv. Unlike the quantitative approach, qualitative educational research lends itself to meaningful participation by administrators and teachers, who ultimately effect improvements in the practice of education.

v. There is the conviction that the qualitative approach offers a valid alternative which, if properly handled would yield appropriate meaningful and useful results without necessarily discarding the advantages of the traditional quantitative approach.

(Wright, 1981, pp.216-217)

Having outlined this brilliant rationale given by Wright, it is important that I stress that I do not view non-traditional research as a simpler, easier and mediocre form as opposed to traditional research but it does offer a novel dimension to educational research in Sierra Leone. Moreover, it does not signify a complete abandonment of traditional quantitative research. Its usefulness, relevance, appropriateness would be tapped as and when circumstances demand it.

The views of Elton and Laurillard (1979); Parlett (1972); Wright (1981) all helped reinforce my view that using methods in the non-traditional paradigm to evaluate my course would enable me to find out how my course would operate and how the various existing school situations will influence me. They would help me decipher what its users will perceive as its advantages and disadvantages and
how it will affect their intellectual tasks and academic experiences. They would also help me to interpret the outcomes.

6.4 A Rationale For Using Illuminative Evaluation

Parlett's (1974) description of illuminative evaluation as aiding innovatory programmes in the following quotation relates particularly well to the last section and confirmed my choice of the illuminative evaluation approach:-

"The aims of illuminative evaluation are to study an innovatory programme; how it operates; how it is influenced by the various school situations in which it is applied; what those directly concerned regard as its advantages and disadvantages; and how students' intellectual tasks and academic experience are most affected. It aims to discover and it is like to be participating in the scheme, whether as teacher or pupil, and, in addition, to discern and discuss the innovation's most significant features, recurring concomitants, and critical processes."

(Parlett, 1974, p.15)

The non-traditional paradigm has clear parallels with the illuminative evaluation approach which can be expressed more simply than Guba's (1978) fourteen characteristics. Parlett's (1981) approach was welcomed in Sierra Leone when he gave a paper at a conference, in which he identifies characteristics of this approach which seem relevant to developing countries in general and to my research in particular. The above mentioned facts and the fact that, according to Ruddock (1981) it was the most cited reference in its field during the 1970s, have all motivated me to 'stick' closely to Parlett's orientation.

An example of a parallel between Parlett's approach and my research theme can be clearly seen in the following analogy between 'the method' and 'a theatre':-
"The theatre provides an analogy: to know whether a play 'works' one has to look not only at the manuscript but also at the performance; that is, at the interpretation of the play by the director and actors. It is this that is registered by the audience and appraised by the critics. Similarly, it is not an instructional system as such but its translation and enactment by teachers and students, that is of concern to the evaluator and other interested parties. There is no play that is 'director-proof'. Equally, there is no innovation that is 'teacher-proof' or 'student-proof'. If this is acknowledged, it becomes imperative to study an innovation through the medium of its performance and to adopt a research style and methodology that is appropriate.

This involves the investigator leaving his office and computer print-out to spend substantial periods in the field. The crucial figures in the working of an innovation - learners and teachers - become the chief preoccupation. The evaluator concentrates on 'process' within the learning milieu, rather than on 'outcomes' derived from a specification of the instructional system. Observation linked with discussion and background inquiry, enable him to develop an informed account of the innovation in operation."

(Parlett and Hamilton, 1972)

By replacing certain words in this analogy with certain words in the description of my research, it can be seen that the illuminative evaluation approach fits my research aim perfectly:-

For "manuscript", read, the learning materials

For "performance", read, using the learning materials by members

For "appraisal by critics", read, field-testing and interpreting the materials by tutors and members

The above analogy demonstrates that there is no way in which the teachers and their tutors would have shown whether my innovation or DL/INSET course "works" if they had merely looked at the "materials". The trying out of the materials in its natural setting (like the play in a theatre) was necessary. So it is not only the DL/INSET course that is of concern here but the "translation" and "enactment" by my tutors and members was of primary concern. As there is no play that is "director-proof", so there is no innovation like a DL/INSET course that can be "tutor and member-proof".
6.4.1 Characteristics of illuminative evaluation

In the words of Sengova (1982), "illuminative evaluation is not conceived of as a standard methodological package, but a general research strategy, aiming to be both adaptable and eclectic." This feature in fact is one of the aspects that make it very useful to my present study. The idea here is that the methods and techniques used should be decided by the problem to be studied and not vice versa. Therefore different techniques are combined to throw light on a common problem, which indeed makes it possible for the problem to be viewed from different angles, and also to cross check findings. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) highlight four fundamental characteristics of the illuminative evaluation which will now be discussed.

(i) The evaluator is responsive.

This means that the evaluator accepts the data that the situation presents rather than seeking out data of his own choosing. For this to be so, the evaluator needs to suspend early judgement about the innovation and be guided by what he discovers. In other words, by proceeding responsively, the evaluator will succeed in gearing the research closely to the concerns of the interested parties. The evaluator must therefore immerse himself in the field occupied with the "process" within the learning milieu rather than on mere "outcomes" of the instructional system.

By thus immersing himself in the field, we will not only be able to find out about their problems, needs, questions and concerns, he will also be able to construct an appropriate "interpretive framework" in order to enable those concerned to capture the essentials of the new system. This means that those concerned – like policy decision makers, educational innovators, the Ministry and Institute of Education personnel and all who have to give their blessings to it will be able to know how successful or good the innovation is. This will help them determine whether they are to expand, drop or replace it.
In Parlett's (1981) words, the aim is:-

"to produce an intelligent, informative account of such matters as the philosophy of the programme, identified difficulties and accepted accomplishments, pedagogical beliefs built into it; changes in strategy forced by circumstances; unintended as well as intended consequences, frustrations and experiences of staff; new problems likely to be arising soon; its use of resources and the needs for other resources most frequently expressed; and other aspects of the system or the practices conducted within the system that decision makers are likely not to have thought about or to have really considered before." (Parlett, 1981, p.170)

(ii) The Research is Holistic.

The second point is that the approach is holistic. This means that there is no attempt to use a reductionist approach - down to each micro variable or dimension but the attempt to discern patterns and configurations from the data that contain some experienced or practical meaning in a real life setting. For example, instead of breaking up the study of the DL/INSET course into a list of component variables such as finding out members' attitude to independent learning or their reaction to the tutorial system - and then present statistical details of the percentage who liked or did not like the system, the emphasis was quite different.

The aim of this research was to discover whether teachers would develop new learning habits, how the new or different approach to learning or INSET constrains or liberates their energies. The emphasis, in other words, was on seeing learning in a wider context and viewing its variety as different adaptations on central themes that run through the system, rather than as neat subdivisions of a technical type process that is treated in isolation. The idea, as Parlett puts it, is not:-
"to consider teaching as a "theme" or even as a separate behaviour or school activity, but rather to place it within its social, ideological, resource-related circumstances. In short, the approach is towards holism or seeing the total configuration and how it operates in a real life setting." (Parlett, 1981, p.171)

In my study, I would attempt to present a summary of the overall model that represents the reality that has been systematically examined as accurately as possible.

(iii) The design is heuristic.

The design is not laid out in advance with all the questions decided at that point. Rather, the course of the research develops as it goes along with the researcher taking a 'first look' and with the information gained from this first look, beginning to devise the next stage: the research strategy evolves. The researcher progressively focusses moving from a state of being less knowledgeable about the problem to one of being more knowledgeable through a series of intermediate steps. According to Parlett:-

"Obviously, no study of this kind can have a route prescribed at the outset - the design must necessarily go through progressive delineation - a focus upon key items and salient points, on major rather than minor issues, with successive interpretations and re-interpretations as understanding improves."

(Parlett, 1981, p.172)

This does not mean there is no design. Rather, the design is being constantly updated in the light of information gathered at the stage the investigation has reached. Such a flexible process of designing the study makes it responsive to the emerging patterns of understanding. Since human judgement is required at each stage of the process, the researcher's judgement is acknowledged here. Ideally such decisions should be made in collaboration with others, discussing the researchers' reasons for making particular choices and spelling out the arguments for and against particular concentrations of the enquiry.
The approach is methodologically eclectic.

This means that in order to carry out a study of a system at work like the DL/INSET course, researchers have to have at their disposal a whole range of techniques of enquiry - a 'tool bag' of different data gathering techniques. As Parlett (1981) puts it:-

"Thinking of techniques as tools in the carpenter's workshop underlines the premium placed on sensitivity to the nature of the task: in order to carry out a particular shaping of the wood, certain tools are required and others could be used if the ideal tool was not at hand. Some are altogether inappropriate and could not be used. Again, the emphasis is on choosing what is appropriate."

(Parlett, 1981, p.175)

The notion here is that the methods and techniques (tools) used should be decided by the problem to be studied and not vice versa.

Parlett elucidates this notion of a variety of techniques further by stating that the researcher may use interviews that may be more or less formal in type, structured or less structured, decisions concerning this being based on previous knowledge and the state of the investigation.

Sometimes, at the beginning of a study, enquiries may need to range widely over a large area of discussion. Later on, as the broad range of opinions has been discerned, interviews may be geared towards teasing out a particular thematic interpretation, with questions more closely worked out in advance and structured into a more formal rubric.

Or the researcher may decide not to elicit teachers' views directly, asking them what they think whether verbally or in written form but rather to attend discussions held by teachers in other places and to record and main themes addressed. The advantages and disadvantages, according to Parlett, are many. What teachers say to each other in private may be very different from what they would say on paper or in a more formal interview setting. The researcher's own judgement is heavily called on to decide what the relative advantages
and disadvantages are for the particular data gathering exercise in question. There may even by the need to build up some cross checking mechanism, using another investigator observing independently, for instance, to help make these judgements.

In choosing a particular technique or approach to acquire information, the researcher needs to be sensitive to what is obtainable by that technique, its suitability, its cost, its likelihood of giving useful information, its limitations and the public relations implications of using it. The educational researcher will thus be using methods to complement one another thereby allowing data to be cross checked and accounts to be authenticated. Such an orientation to research fits the philosophical basis of a non-traditional research paradigm. Certain methods and sequences within the illuminative evaluation paradigm are considered ideal to help a researcher keep to these design features. These will now be discussed.

6.4.2 Conducting an illuminative evaluation: methods and sequencing

The methodological strategies and sequencing offered by the illuminative evaluation approach involve:-

"Observations, interviews with participants (students, instructors, administrators and others), questionnaires and analysis of documents and background information are all combined to help 'illuminate' problems, issues and significant programme features."

(Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p.10)

'Since, as has been stated before, this approach aims to be both adaptable and eclectic, i.e. that methods and techniques should be decided by the problem to be studied and not vice versa, the different techniques highlighted in the above quotation are usually combined to throw light on a common problem. Thus the initial approach to the research setting advocated by this model is similar to what the ethnographer follows:-
"At the outset, the researcher is concerned to familiarise himself thoroughly with the day to day reality of the setting or settings he is studying. In this he is similar to social anthropologists or to natural historians. Like them he makes no attempt to manipulate, control or eliminate situational variables, but taken as given the complex scene he encounters his chief task is to unravel it; isolate its significant features; delineate cycles of cause and effect; and comprehend relationships between beliefs and practices and between organisational patterns and responses of individuals." (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p.17)

A very central feature and the 'ideal' first step of an illuminative evaluation is observation. This helps the evaluator to familiarise himself thoroughly with the day to day reality of the setting or settings he is studying and thus enables him to identify what is important or appropriate to investigate further. It is through continuous observation, both structured and unstructured, that the investigator builds up a continuous record of ongoing events, transactions and informal remarks. At the same time he seeks to organise this data at source, adding interpretive comments on both manifest and latent features of the situation.

Without verbal interaction during the first step of an illuminative evaluation, it is difficult to 'find out why', explore or probe the personal views of the individuals in the study. Hence interview is 'ideal' during the second stage of an illuminative evaluation.

Interviews enable the evaluator to focus on the more illuminating elements that arise from an observation, for example. This, in turn, enables the researcher to gain 'insights' into what individuals really think which, as a result, leads to the production of a reasoned argument and better understanding.

Although interviews are excellent for obtaining meaningful information, they are a very poor method for obtaining numerical data. If, for example, one needs to know the number of people who feel a particular way about a course, a questionnaire or letter would be a faster and more efficient way of finding out. Other methods like
feedback sheets, personal diaries, descriptive analyses, etc. as are dictated by circumstances can be used at various stages of the study to get a clearer picture of the problem.

In fact, three characteristic stages are identified:

1. investigators observe;
2. inquire further;
3. and then seek to explain.  
   (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p.17)

These stages overlap and interrelate functionally:

"The transition from stage to stage, as the investigation unfolds, occurs as problem areas become progressively clarified and redefined. The course of the study cannot be charted in advance. Beginning with an extensive data base, the researchers systematically reduce the breadth of their enquiry to give more concentrated attention to the emerging issues. This 'progressive focussing' permits unique and unpredicted phenomena to be given due weight. It reduces the problem of data overload and prevents the accumulation of a mass of unanalysed material."

   (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p.18)

As is explained in greater detail in chapter 10, the procedure in using this model in the present study would be to employ the major strategies for collecting data highlighted by the authors and discussed above to 'progressively focus' on the problem by using various other methods as and when deemed appropriate. The major strategies to be used would be interviews, questionnaires, documentary and other background information. Then various methods and techniques would be used to help illuminate various aspects of the problem. These methods would include unstructured observation, semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, descriptive analyses, personal diaries, feedback sheets, etc. This would be because at different stages of the research, there were manifestly different relevant considerations which demanded 'sensible choices' to be made with regard to methods that are adaptive to the circumstances of each stage of the study.
Using more than one method of enquiry would enable me to develop an informed account of the innovation in operation and build up a series of 'strips' of information. This is what Denzin (1978) terms 'within methods' and 'between methods' triangulation:--

"Triangulation forces the observer to combine multiple data sources, research methods, and theoretical schemes in the inspection and analysis of behavioural specimens. It forces him to situationally check the validity of his casual propositions....
It directs the observer to compare his subject's theories or behaviour with his emerging theoretical scheme..."
(Denzin, 1978, p.177)

If a proposition is confirmed by two or more methods, the uncertainty of its interpretation will be greatly reduced. Parlett (1981) underscores this by stating that such research with flexible strategies:--

"is far more 'appropriate' for the circumstances, school settings, problems and policy issues of developing countries than are conventional forms of research study that have become methodologically super-specialized and computer-dependent, and whose data and outcomes do not reflect the usual ways in which people think or know their working reality. The approach proposed instead is more naturalistic, more accessible, more flexible and responsive to the individual requirements of each problem area or proposed study, and can be carried out to acceptable standards by responsible professionals who use their wit, commonsense, and human sensitivity, without their having to penetrate an arcane literature and body of technical knowledge to an advanced graduate level."
(Parlett, 1981, p.180)

The manner in which this methodology was ultimately employed is described in chapter 10. ...
### 7.i

**CHAPTER 7**

**CONSTRUCTING A DISTANCE LEARNING INSET (DL/INSET) COURSE TO SUPPORT THE TRAINING OF LOWER SECONDARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN SIERRA LEONE**

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7.0 INTRODUCTION

In describing experiences and experiments in helping to develop a training programme for academic staff at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Elton and Manwaring (1979) state that universities in developing countries:-

"...have to work out their own solutions which may be new, or at least new under the circumstances in which they are applied, and they can never adopt solutions which have been found valid elsewhere without at least adapting them to their circumstances. Put another way, what they have to be able to do is to apply "a rational problem-solving" approach to education, a way of thinking sceptically and systematically about learning and teaching, which is how Rowntree (1974) defined educational technology.

(Elton and Manwaring, 1979)
(underlinings my own)

Although Elton and Manwaring were referring to universities, this "rational problem-solving approach" can be adequately applied to solving the problems of schools and teachers elsewhere. This chapter describes an attempt to use a rational problem solving approach in the construction of a distance learning INSET course for secondary teachers of English as a second language in Sierra Leone. Attempts at adapting solutions which have been found elsewhere by applying a rational problem-solving approach to the needs of the country's educational system are considered. The different stages in the construction process are described, and the aims, content and structure of the course are described.
7.1 The Bases For The Design Of The Distance Learning/INSET Course

The bases of the distance learning INSET course stem from the following:-

i. ideas derived from the literature on distance learning courses generally

ii. experience gained from participating in two courses organised by the University of Surrey

iii. ideas derived from existing courses on the teaching of English as a foreign/second language

The following subsections describe these in detail.

7.1.1 Ideas derived from the literature on distance learning courses generally. I - print versus audio-visual

A literature survey on distance learning courses generally (see ch.5) shows that over sixty countries in the world, including Africa, have developed courses which range from the use of correspondence materials alone, to the use of the three-way approach in which all three means of communication - namely correspondence, media and face-to-face meeting are used.

In deciding on the communication for the course to be constructed for Sierra Leone, I gave heed to the warning by Brophy and Dudley (1982) that:-

"For anyone wishing to develop a new project or modify an existing one it is important, therefore, that they should be able to analyse critically previous programmes and where possible learn from this experience."

(Brophy and Dudley, 1982)

In an effort to learn from the experience of others, I took a look at various reports on programmes in developed and developing countries, paying particular attention to those developed in developing countries like Sierra Leone. I also looked at examples of individualised and distance learning packages, in particular, the Diploma in the Practice of Higher Education (DPHE) of the University of Surrey, the Diploma in Educational Technology of the Dundee College of Education.
and the Diploma in Educational Technology of the Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow, the Eaton Hall International courses for the teaching of English as a Foreign/Second Language, the R.S.A. Diploma distance training programme at International House, London, for teachers of English as a foreign/second language - all in Britain.

I also looked at the reports on the UNRWA/UNESCO Institute of Education (Lyle, 1967) programme in Jordan. The African courses include the Ghanaian Correspondence Programme for secondary pupils (Ansere, 1982), the Tanzanian course (Kuhanga, 1981), the Kenyan correspondence course (Kinyanjui, 1974), the Zambian correspondence course (Kaunda, 1973), the Nigerian Open University (Ojo, 1984), the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre (Murphy, 1981), the Botswana Extension College (Perraton, 1977).

I tried to see the relevance of these programmes in the light of the dwindling economic situation in Sierra Leone, the INSET needs of teachers, and the existing resources, facilities and funds in the country. I was particularly struck by Ansere's rationale (which has already been highlighted in ch.5 but which will be restated here since it seems fundamental to this section) for the Ghanaian correspondence course being one of the least sophisticated applications of education technology in the world. He stated that even though it was organised on a small scale without foreign aid, and using only print, six years after they completed all 7 courses the economy of their country started weakening and foreign resources became difficult to obtain. Consequently they could not import the necessary textbooks. The prices of the few books that could be obtained locally were so high that students could not afford them. In 1975, they were forced to abandon the courses based on textbooks and in their place write what they called "self-contained" courses. This was at a time when they had thousands of students in their system which meant that however quickly they tried to write the new courses they were unable to complete them because of
printing hold-ups. Their machines had become too old to work. When the machines became operative, paper and other printing materials vanished from the local market. They were then inundated with a spate of uncomplimentary letters from students and became increasingly incapable of doing anything about the situation. Ansere (1982) emphasises that:

"This brings to the fore the importance of poor countries starting programmes on a modest scale. Even with our small scale of operation, we are finding it difficult. We certainly would have found it harder if the programme had been bigger in terms of the range of courses offered, the media used, the resources committed and the number of students. It was probably fortunate that we (they) did not obtain foreign aid in the initial organisation of the programme. (We sought but failed to obtain assistance from the Ford, Rockefeller and Dag Hammarskjold Foundations, as well as the University of Wisconsin.) If we had had foreign assistance the programme would have been organised on a scale too large to manage in the face of the difficulties enumerated above. Externally aided projects may be successful at the beginning, but when external support ends the programme almost invariably turns into a white elephant for the host country."

(Ansere, 1982)

These ideas were fundamental in helping me plan my course cheaply and make it as 'self-contained' as possible relying on local labour to a large extent and using ONLY PRINT and local administration.

In the light of the above considerations, I decided to produce a distance learning INSET course for lower secondary school teachers of English as cheaply as possible. I decided that my course would be organised on a small scale using only print.

7.1.2 Experience gained from participating in two courses run by the University of Surrey

I was myself able to experience distance learning and individualised learning first hand when I participated in two courses I had access to in 1983. The first one was the Diploma in Higher Education (DPHE) course run by the University of Surrey and taught
at a distance through carefully prepared materials. The second one was the face-to-face sessions on individualised learning in the Staff Development in Higher Education (SDHE) course as run by and at the University of Surrey.

The nature of these courses will now be described since the experiences and knowledge gained from them helped to provide the fundamental format of the course I decided to construct. My description of the DPHE course is, in addition, based on an article written by Elton, Wray and Oliver (1986), the course director, evaluator and administrator respectively.

(a) The DPHE

The course aims to give university lecturers appropriate skills, attitudes, etc to enable them to improve their job performances within their own establishments, including the professional development of colleagues. The course is taught at a distance through specially prepared materials.

These consist of several self-contained modules each consisting of a number of units presented in two volumes - a study guide specially written for the purpose together with relevant materials from the published literature which are published in a separate 'book of extracts' for each study guide.

Each study guide contains reading material with references to the extracts in appropriate places and this is interspersed with activities to be carried out by members. These activities are designed to reinforce learning.

There are also assignments in each unit which constitute the main means by which members relate the course to their own condition and experience. Since there are no formal examinations in the course (the main aim of the course being to make it particular for each member), the accumulation of assignments and the project form the only basis for
assessment in the course. The assignments are sent by members (at the completion of each unit) to the course administrator based at the University of Surrey who in turn gives these out to tutors to mark. The marked assignments are returned to the administrator who then sends these with the tutors' detailed evaluation comments as well as the new modulus to the members.

The course provides for each unit a set of 'questions to bear in mind' which serve to alert members to issues which they ought to think about when reading the unit. The course organisers rejected the idea of objectives since their main philosophy is to encourage the relevant use of knowledge as opposed to its mere assimilation. For the same reason, self-assessment questions which assure members that they have assimilated what has been presented to them is discontinued in the newer units of the course.

There is considerable flexibility with regard to completion of the modules. Members are encouraged to work at their own pace and in their own time. Members are given suggested deadlines for each assignment with the possibility of renegotiation if the deadlines cannot be met. These deadlines are approximately three months per module and six to twelve months for the project leading to a range of completion times for the Diploma from just over one year to about three years.

Almost all the course materials are in print even though several modules have illustrations. Apart from an introductory audiotape and a filmstrip in support of three of the modules, there is a very restricted use of non-print material. This was mainly due to cost. Another reason is because academics are more conversant with reading than listening to tapes.

I liked the structure of this course so much that I decided to model my course on it so that almost all its features are included apart
from 'points to bear in mind': their deadlines, project, introductory audio-tape and filmstrip. I thought that if I found the experiences gained from this course so appealing, my teachers in Sierra Leone may have similar experiences if they were to have access to a similar course. For example, while studying the materials, I was able to develop a considerable autonomy in my study habits and in dictating and setting the pace of my work. I was even so very highly motivated to complete the assignments and read the suggested extracts at my age.

It would definitely have been more difficult for me to acquire all the relevant information for the assignments in the course if I had had to go and search for reference materials in the library. I particularly felt that this idea of a book of extracts would be very ideal for teachers from developing countries like mine, especially those who live in rural areas and seldom have access to libraries.

All in all, I felt that structured learning units supplied to teachers will in themselves be a valuable source of reference materials both for their training and their teaching, as, unlike traditional INSET courses, they would have all the materials intact even when the course is completed. Also, because of the nature of the course, students from remote areas may still receive in-service training. For a country like Sierra Leone with a vast underdeveloped hinterland, this is a major benefit. Often, when teachers are brought from the rural areas for training, they do not only experience great difficulty in settling into student life-style of a large institution but even those who manage to settle are often reluctant to return to interior schools after completing their training.

In short, if I found the course so motivating and useful, I thought that my teachers would feel the same way about a course constructed on similar lines for them.
(b) The SDHE

I was able to gain valuable knowledge and experience in writing structured learning units when I participated in the face-to-face session on individualised learning of the SDHE course also run by the University of Surrey. This course aims at giving members the knowledge to develop appropriate skills and attitudes which will enable them to counsel and assist academic staff and their institutions in matters of teaching and learning, and to mount training activities in this area. The course is taught by a variety of face-to-face, self-instructional and group learning methods and includes a number of practical workshops. This ensures that course members actually experience the teaching and learning methods which they may wish to use when conducting their development programmes.

The sessions on individualised learning aim to introduce members to the ideas and practices of individualised learning and to develop in members the ability to write self-instructional materials. This course was largely self-instructional and was based on parts of Module G, one of the optional modules of the Diploma in the Practice of Higher Education entitled 'Individualised Learning'. I found the lucidity and clarity of the materials so engaging that I was able to study all of them in detail.

The main assignment of the course involved the writing of a structured learning unit, a lecture on improving the first draft, comments on the improved first draft by the course staff and a comparison of the improved first draft with the course staff's comments. I found these sessions very stimulating - to the extent that I decided to write and improve the first draft of Module A of my course during the course as my assignment. Since, as has been mentioned earlier, I had decided to model my course on the DPHE format and Module G is one of its optional modules, I had no problem with regard to structuring my first draft.
Although I had decided that the ideas gained from these courses would be very fundamental in dictating the nature of my course, nevertheless I thought it essential to look at other distance learning materials, as well as other reports on distance learning courses to see if there was need for further modifications, enrichment or reinforcement on the DPHE format I had settled for.

Out of all the materials and reports I looked at, two were particularly helpful in reinforcing my view that a course of this nature might work for English teachers in Sierra Leone. These will be discussed in the next section.

7.1.3 Ideas derived from the literature on distance learning courses II - for teachers of English as a Foreign/Second Language

The literature revealed that distance learning courses have been actually organised specifically for teachers of English as a Foreign/Second Language in Britain and elsewhere and that they have worked! Out of the various courses I read about, two of them proved to be particularly useful in not only reinforcing my decision to use the DPHE course model but also new ideas that helped to enrich my course.

These were:-

1. The teacher training course for TEF/SL at a distance at Eaton Hall International.
2. The RSA diploma distance training programme at International House in London.

Many of the ideas discussed in these articles are in practice used in other distance learning courses including the DPHE course. It will therefore suffice to quote the salient aspects of their courses which either confirmed my choice or enriched my course.

(a) The Teacher Training course for TEF/SL at a distance at Eaton Hall International

Most of the features included in this course which helped to reinforce my selection of the DPHE model can be summarised in the
following quotation, where Winn-Smith (1984), in laying emphasis on the isolation factor in distance learning and stresses that:-

"In preparing distance training materials it is important to remember three fundamental aspects: first, the materials should be as completely self-contained as possible. This can help to soften the isolation which trainees may feel, especially when they may be working in situations where library and other subject facilities are not available. Two, the materials should be presented in a logical manner, in bite-sized chunks followed by informal self-assessment activities enabling the trainee to monitor its understanding and progress. Third, content and assessment activities should contribute to engaging and sustaining trainee's interest and level of work effort."
(Winn-Smith, 1984)

The points he raised, which were not so obvious in the DPHE course, can be seen in the following:-

"In media production, careful consideration needs to be given to print type faces, colour coding for quick and efficient identification using different colour paper for different topic areas and colour sub-division into modules, keys, worksheets, etc. ....... Any illustrations should be clear, simple and free of unnecessary details that may confuse the learner and diagrams must be accurate and relevant."
(Winn-Smith, 1984)

His point about the need to make the materials self-contained appealed to me as it confirmed my decision to make my course self-contained. This feature is inherent in the DPHE course. Also, it is a point that had been raised by Ansere (1982) who stated that they decided to make their materials self-contained when, because of lack of foreign exchange, they could no longer import the textbooks that their earlier courses had been based on.

I decided that I would desist from asking my members to go and search for reference materials in the library and include a book of the relevant extracts. This would be particularly useful to my members who would be working in a situation where library and other support facilities are not easy to come by.
I also thought that his point about interspersing the activities and self-assessment tests in the materials was valid. This is not only because activities are used in the DPHE materials but also because presenting the materials in 'bite-sized chunks' would definitely enable my members to monitor its progress and understanding. More importantly, I did not want my materials to read just like any other English textbook.

The feature about the use of coloured paper was attractive and I decided that I would use it to motivate my teachers further.

All in all, I decided to use all the above ideas because I thought they would all contribute to engaging and sustaining my members' interest and level of work effort. Furthermore, this way, the module would provide a substitute for eyeball-to-eyeball presentation and the isolation factor which is so common in distance learning courses could be warded off.

(b) The RSA Diploma distance training programme at International House, London

Three of the most attractive elements in this course for me were not employed by the DPHE course. However, I felt they would enrich my course if I included them. According to Lowe (1983):

(i) We run an orientation course in the summer in London which includes, among other things, some assessed teaching practice and a good deal of discussion about issues in their attempt to replicate, as far as possible, the circumstances of a face-to-face course.

(ii) We take on senior members of staff in those centres where course participants would be working, to act as supervisors for the year. Since the job of such tutors was to observe the teaching of participants both formally and informally during the year, to run regular seminars, and to give the trainees tutorial support, we made sure that the local
supervisors would and could do the job. It is obvious that the quality of the course would only be in some respects as good as the local supervisor in any given centre as he or she would be the day to day link for the course participant between any unresolved queries and the course itself. We expressed the fact that such a task demanded teacher training experience and quality in the local supervisors.

(iii) We provide a handbook for course participants as well as a local supervisors' handbook. These handbooks are a guide to the running of the correspondence course. They include advice on how to get the most out of the materials and on how to become more skilled at:

- for course participants, assessing their own teaching
- for local supervisors, assessing course participants under their supervision.

General information on the nature of the materials, study strategies, seminars and tutorials, sources of useful literature, etc. are included in both handbooks.

I decided to include these features in the RSA diploma course although they were not included in the DPHE course as they seemed very useful. For example, I thought that the idea of an orientation course for members was appropriate. However, since my course was a pilot course for research I would not be able to organise an orientation course on the scale they do. I decided that I would at least hold a one day orientation course for my members during which they would be oriented to the course and establish some familiarity with their tutors and the tutorial system.

With regard to the use of local tutors, I thought that I would ask experienced heads of departments or senior teachers with at least ten years teaching experience from the same schools as the
members to supervise my not so experienced members who will be
trying to benefit from the course. This would cut down on the expense
of administering the course.

The idea of the handbooks seemed much better than the
introductory module used by the DPHE. This is mainly because, unlike
the DPHE course, I had decided to use local supervisors who need as
much briefing as my course members.

7.2 The Structure Of The Course

The proposed structure of the course can be discussed in
terms of its:-

i. administrative structure

ii. the structure of the course materials

(see diagram overleaf)
7.2.1 Administrative structure

The weak economy of the country, coupled with the fact that foreign donors had to be ruled out, meant that an administrative structure that should be cheap had to be employed. So I decided to:-

- co-ordinate and administer the course myself
- use school based tutors who would give me feedback on members' progress by marking their assignments, observing them teach and providing tutorial and motivational support
- use only print materials

The materials would be stored with the tutors who would then be responsible for giving them out to members as and when they requested them. Assignments would be returned to tutors when members completed them.

7.2.2 The structure of the course materials

The course would be structured according to current ideas on designing distance learning materials, both in Africa (e.g. Ansere, 1982; Kinyanjui, 1974) and more generally (e.g. Perraton, 1973; Idle, 1975; Elton and Manwaring, 1979; Kaye, 1981; Winn-Smith, 1984) and the ideas derived from the DPHE (see 7.1.1). In keeping with the idea of presenting the materials to members in a logical manner, in 'bite-sized chunks' followed by informal assessment activities enabling the trainee to monitor its understanding and progress (Winn-Smith, 1984), the course would be presented in three compulsory self-contained modules. Since the nature of the course requires self-instruction to a greater extent, it would be necessary to include a number of special features which textbooks that students normally use in a classroom situation in conjunction with face-to-face lectures do not have. The special features of the course would therefore include the following:-
For tutors
- a handbook for tutors
- plenary sessions between tutors and course administrators

For members
- a handbook for members
- three modules sometimes divided into study guide units interspersed with activities and assignments
- a book of extracts
- feedback sheets for each unit
- orientation course

In addition it seemed appropriate to refer to the:

(1) experienced teachers who would be supervising the not-so-experienced teachers as 'tutors'
(2) the not-so-experienced teachers who would be the 'students' of the course as 'members'
(3) I would be co-ordinating and administering the course as 'course co-ordinator'

This would be in keeping with the educational ideology that education is a co-operative venture between 'teachers' and 'students' (who are 'colleagues' in this course) - and not one where teachers consider themselves as authorities and are considered as such by their students whose task it is to emulate them.

In order to alert teachers to the idea of learning within a non-traditional medium and its possible benefits, on the cover page of each booklet, the following quotation by A.M. Tantawi would be printed:-

"With traditional methods we have only managed to educate half the world."

The handbook for tutors would give the aims of the course, define the role of the tutors and provide general information on how their observation and supervision sessions are to be run. This would be printed on bright yellow paper to make it attractive to the tutors.
I would convene **plenary sessions** from time to time to discuss members' progress and problems with tutors. This should provide a forum for exchange of ideas between the course administrator and course tutors. It should also enhance further skills development in the areas of teacher observation, feedback and supervision.

The **handbook for members** would give similar information from the viewpoint of members and also provide helpful hints on study strategies for learning at a distance. This would also be printed on a bright yellow paper to make it attractive to members - though this would not be in exactly the same manner as the Dundee or Eaton Hall materials where I got the idea from.

Each **module** would contain the text of the course.

The **text** of each module would contain the subject content of the unit, together with instructions and suggestions as to how to use it in order to accomplish the objectives of the module. The text would sometimes consist of several sections, each with a topic heading.

If a specific subject area of the course is deemed too big to be dealt with in a 'bite sized chunk' in one module, the module would be divided up and presented in study guide units. A study guide unit would be a 'self contained unit of work' which together with or without other study guide units would make a module. For example, since the topic 'preparation of lessons' seemed too big an area to be dealt with in one module, it would be divided into smaller topics, which would form three study guide units as follows:-

- **Module B, unit 1:** The National Syllabus for English at secondary level and preparation of schemes of work based on sub topics from it
- **Module B, unit 2:** Preparation of lesson plans
- **Module B, Unit 3:** Putting lesson plans into practice.

The overview for each module would be stated at the beginning of the module. Since the topic discussed in Module A was not too big, Module A would be presented in a module by itself.
Each module would begin with an overview which would outline the general aim of its specific study guide units. Although none of the materials I looked at had an overview, I thought that it would provide an overall picture of each module's aims.

Each study guide unit would be designed to take between fifteen and twenty hours of study time. It would address a theme within the overall topic and attempt to guide members through their learning and towards a detailed reading of the extracts where appropriate. These would begin with a section on introduction which would outline the aims of each specific unit.

After this, the objectives of the unit would be stated. These would attempt to state what the member is expected to achieve by the end of the unit. It was hoped that members would browse through these again at the completion of each unit to see whether they had achieved them.

In addition, each study guide unit would orient members towards carrying out activities which would be designed to enable members to criticise or apply and reinforce the ideas presented in the text.

The unit would also orient members towards doing assignments. Since there would be no formal examination, there would be regular assignments to complete, which would be used for assessment of members' progress. These would sometimes be essay type, built on the experience gained from reading the extracts and carrying out the activities. This would hopefully enable members to link the theory presented in the materials with practice. Members would have to hand in these assignments to their tutors who would in turn mark them and include extensive assessment comments which should help members. Tutors, who would thus have been able to obtain some knowledge and understanding as to how members reacted to the course, could hold discussion sessions with members if the need arose. This kind of tutorial contact would help members relate the course to their previous experiences.
The book of extracts would contain extracts reproduced from the relevant published literature on the teaching of various aspects of English as a second language. Ideally extracts for each study guide should have been printed in separate booklets using the same coloured paper for each study guide so that each module would be presented in two volumes. However, to cut down on cost, this idea would have to be abandoned and all the extracts and study guides be printed in one booklet using plain white paper, which was cheaper.

Feedback sheets - short questionnaires for members - would be included in each unit of the course. These would be for members to state their reactions to the study materials. Such feedback would seem essential for future improvement and revision of the course.

A one-day orientation course would be held on the first day of the course for members and tutors to establish some rapport (although members would be selected by tutors from the same schools).

All these components would be carefully organised to provide a 'whole' course that should provide approximately six to eight weeks work for members. A considerable amount of learning could also take place through the less obvious channels like feedback from tutors, discussions between and among members, members' self-appraisal of their lessons, etc.

7.3 The Content Of The Course Materials

The discussion of the content of the course materials will be under the following headings:-

1. Derivation of the course aims
2. Derivation of content
3. The contents
7.3.1 The derivation of the course aims

Before designing any set of materials for a course, it is important to clarify one's aims as they might well affect the content and approach of the course. Aims are an essential ingredient at the planning stages of a course.

I tried to clarify the aims of my course in the light of needs expressed by teachers and other personnel in the Sierra Leone education system for a system of support, (specifically support materials) to supplement their existing 1974 National Syllabus. These needs, documented in chapter three, would enable me to identify and separate the various components that needed to be included in the course. Some of the aims of the course would therefore be based on the objectives spelt out for learning English in secondary schools in the syllabus. These are behavioural objectives which are related not just to language learning or clear cut linguistic objectives as advocated by Perren (1971) but which are related to general educational objectives. The disadvantage is that such objectives are so difficult to evaluate objectively.

One probable reason why the committee who created the syllabus decided to include objectives may be because these cannot be avoided in language teaching. As Roe (1974) points out, objectives in language teaching can be divided into three:-

i. those capable of objective measurement
ii. those which can only be measured subjectively
iii. those not capable of formal measurement

The conclusion arrived at for my course is that since not every objective can be measured objectively, my objectives would be analysed in terms of how they are related to the general objectives of the country.

These considerations made me formulate the following aims which would be incorporated into my course. As is stated in the tutors' and members' handbooks, the aims of the course were to introduce a wide range of practical principles and approaches which would:-
- give members an increased awareness of the content and processes involved in their teaching
- give members a clearer understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in their teaching
- give members an increased sense of independence in teaching and in their ability to modify teaching materials
- provide an opportunity for members to develop critical awareness through self-appraisal of their teaching

These aims formed the basis for selection and structuring of the content of the course.

7.3.2 The derivation of content

The content of the course would be derived from areas of the 1974 National Syllabus that were considered inexplicit and for which teachers expressed a need for supplementary materials (see ch.3). The emphasis would be to help teachers teach these areas using the communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language recommended by the syllabus. Essentially, this approach, which originated from the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s, recommends an approach to the teaching of English as a second language which stresses the importance of learning through using the language. This, experts like Revel (1979), Littlewood (1984), Widdowson (1978), Brumfit (1970), thought would give learners frequent opportunities to interact with each other and with the teacher in natural situations.

The three modules would therefore be based on the needs of teachers who have demonstrated a need for a section on methodology in their syllabus. The modules would contain synthesis of the relevant inexplicit areas of the 1974 syllabus. Practical hints on day-to-day classroom methods would be given. This would hopefully facilitate the teaching assignments of the average teacher.
7.3.3 The detailed contents

It therefore seemed sensible to organise the detailed contents of the course as follows:-

Module A: Background

This module of unit 1 deals with an approach to the teaching of English as a second or third language in Sierra Leone. It provides important background information on:-

1. The language situation in the country
2. Why English is taught in Sierra Leone
3. The current teaching/learning process in schools

This unit has been written with the belief that members need to be aware of some of the problems faced by a multilingual society which is trying to train its people more effectively to cope with, and operate in the modern world. (This awareness will enable them to be better equipped to tackle such problems.)

Module B: Preparation of Lessons

The 3 units in this module attempt to give guidance on how to try to solve the problems highlighted in Module A. They include practical suggestions as to the different plans that are needed for members to be successful in all their lessons.

Unit I deals with the National Syllabus in English. Its evolution and role in the preparation of schemes of work is discussed. Detailed guidance on how to prepare schemes of work from its sub-topics is also given.

Unit II deals with preparation of lesson plans based on sub-topics from the scheme of work. Important points to consider during the initial planning stage as well as detailed information on what a lesson plan should include are also given.

Unit III discusses the steps members should take when putting their lesson plans into practice.
Module C: Teaching language and the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing

The four units in this module attempt to focus attention on how to teach the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Detailed suggestions as to how these skills can be presented are given.

Unit I deals with the teaching of language skills and grammar. Members are given guidance as to how to adapt their structure based course book and teach using the principles of communicative approach.

Unit II stresses the importance of teaching listening and speaking skills in a systematic manner to students. It also guides members as to how to teach pronunciation.

Unit III suggests different methods of teaching reading for various purposes to students.

Unit IV sets out a writing programme which should train students to write sentences which express meaning effectively. Emphasis is laid on paragraph development and composition writing.

Each unit is designed to show relationships between theoretical issues and practical teaching. Most units require teachers to:

1. read the study guide
2. read specific extracts
3. do exercises designed to:
   i. guide thoughts
   ii. try out relevant practical activities in their own classrooms

7.4 The Process Of Constructing The Course

Figure 7.1 overleaf portrays what would be the several stages in the process of constructing the distance learning/INSET course materials up to the time when they would be taken to Sierra Leone for an initial workshop with the tutors of the course.
Review I

Review of various literature handbooks and syllabi

Authoring of modules by me

Materials sent out for comments to expert on distance learning - for structure

Review II

Materials sent out for comments to expert on TEF/SL for content

Revision I

Piloting in Britain at a distance

Revision I by me

Workshop in Sierra Leone with 8 tutors for amendment and final revision of course materials

Materials ready for field trials
On the basis of the work described in earlier chapters of this thesis, the materials were written by me. After each unit was written, it was first sent to an expert on distance learning in my department at Surrey for comments in terms of its structure. He went through the materials and suggested pertinent changes. A second review of the course was carried out by an expert on the teaching of English as a foreign/second language from the London Institute of Education, who commented on the materials in terms of the subject matter. Since he has wide experience in this field, he was able to make some very useful suggestions on the subject matter of the materials. These will not be documented in this thesis.

After these stages, the course was revised by me and typed.

It seemed sensible to improve the course further first by piloting it with a sample of the typical users (see ch.9); then by discussion and redesigning by tutors (see ch.10). Chapter 10 describes the setting of the fieldwork in Sierra Leone.
8.0 INTRODUCTION

8.1 Constraints for Piloting the Course Using Conventional Methods Within the Non-traditional Paradigm

8.2 The Development of a Novel Instrument for Use Within These Constraints

8.3 Relationship to the Non-traditional Paradigm

8.3.1 Use in early stage within the non-traditional paradigm

8.3.2 Use at any stage within the illuminative evaluation paradigm

8.4 A Second Research Theme
8.0 INTRODUCTION

(The work described in this chapter and in chapters 9, 10 and 11 is a novel feature in this thesis. It is published in Kaikumba and Cryer (1986), Evaluating at a distance in the non-traditional paradigm. A novel instrument, open learning, Autumn (forthcoming) - see Appendix 8.1.)

When an attempt was made to pilot the course, using the illuminative approach, various difficulties were encountered. This chapter reports on these difficulties and describes a novel instrument which was developed in the hope that it would elicit a similar type of data to that of the ideal first stages of an illuminative evaluation approach.

The development of this instrument is a unique feature of the work described in this thesis. This chapter will argue for how unique it is. Its development, relationship to the illuminative evaluation approach and its use as an early and later stage of the approach is discussed. A second theme of the thesis emerges.

8.1 Constraints For Piloting The Course Using Conventional Methods
Within The Non-traditional Paradigm

Since the evaluation of the course requires the non-traditional paradigm, for piloting the materials, it would have been ideal for me to:-

i. select representatives of the target population in Sierra Leone for whom the course was developed

ii. travel to Sierra Leone - which is a very large distance away from UK which is my study base, to a considerable number of students. I would have had to stay long enough with each student to observe how they were relating to the course and the study environment and I would then have to probe the reasons for their views through discussion.

This appeared to be a mammoth task, fraught with difficulties since funds were not available for travelling to Sierra Leone. Although
suitable representatives of the target population were currently in the UK, there were not even funds for travelling these short distances.

The outlay of time, money, nervous energy and inconvenience seemed enormous. So the problem of how to carry out this stage of the study in the light of the above mentioned constraints thus developed.

8.2 The Development Of A Novel Instrument For Use Within These Constraints

In the light of the above mentioned constraints it was important to find a way of piloting the course as it was still necessary to do so. At this early stage, the purpose was in no way to 'measure' effectiveness but rather to reveal and understand the various complexities of its potential in operation, in order to make suitable modifications before the formal implementation in Sierra Leone.

I hit on a novel solution which I thought might, to some extent, elicit a similar type of data to that of the 'ideal' first stage of an illuminative evaluation approach (see ch.6). Each member of the pilot study sample would be sent a package consisting of a copy of the course materials, a blank cassette tape and a covering letter. The letter would request each individual to work through the materials and to speak in English - which for several was their second language - whatever reactions, comments, suggestions, questions, etc that they thought appropriate on to the tape. Because of the unreliability of the postal service between the UK and Sierra Leone, the package would be sent to the seven representatives of the target population living in various areas in the UK. They would be telephoned in advance to ask for their agreement to participate, and then, once the package had arrived, they would be telephoned again in case of queries.

Although I could not hope that the data would be as rich as if I had been there observing them and interacting with them, I hypothesised that the use of the instrument would fit within the non-traditional
paradigm, specifically the first stages of an illuminative approach. This anticipated relationship will be spelt out clearly in the next section.

8.3 Relationship To The Non-traditional Paradigm
8.3.1 Use in early stage within the non-traditional paradigm

The newer non-traditional paradigm, in particular the illuminative evaluation approach, seems more appropriate for describing and understanding complexities. It is difficult, if not impossible, to define and it includes approaches which have been variously labelled as 'naturalistic', 'holistic' and 'descriptive' (see ch.6).

I hoped that the new instrument would fit into this approach (see section 6.4.1) in that:-

1. As an evaluator, I would be responsive. This means that I would be accepting the data that the situation presents rather than seeking out data of my own choosing. I thought that if respondents could speak on to the tape, unconstrained in the privacy and relaxation of their own homes, or wherever they chose, letting their minds wander freely as they spoke, they might report observations about their experiences and expectations, rather as I might have done, if I had been there observing and interacting with them myself. In other words, the respondents would be the observers, observing for me and they would effectively be interviewing themselves. In this respect, I would be responsive.

2. As an evaluator, I would find the approach naturalistic. All aspects of the milieu would be taken into account - the setting in which the respondents found themselves. These would be, hopefully, aspects they would volunteer as important out of their own experiences and expectations and which I could not probe by conventional distance
methods because I would not have been able to identify them in advance. Again, the respondents would themselves be the observers. They might be noting different aspects from me but there would be no reason to suppose that these would be inferior to mine except in as far as I might be a more experienced evaluator.

3. The design would be heuristic in that it would not be laid out in advance. The next stage would proceed by progressive focussing as I became more familiar with the prospective use of the course as a result of listening to the tapes.

4. As an evaluator, the report would be interpretive in that I would go on to use any of a range of research techniques as might seem appropriate in the light of the analyses of the tape responses and as dictated by circumstances, ie the design would not be laid out in advance.

The use of cassette tapes would have considerable advantages over questionnaires - the normal, conventional method of evaluating at a distance. In order to obtain anywhere near the same amount of unsolicited data, the questionnaires would need to contain so many free response questions as to become unwieldy. Also, the respondents would inevitably find such questions too time-consuming to answer adequately in the written format. Furthermore, in order to communicate in writing without ambiguity, the structuring, grammar, syntax and punctuation would all need to be of a high standard. This would be nowhere as necessary in the spoken format because tone, expression and emotion carry additional meaning.

8.3.2 Use at any stage within the illuminative evaluation paradigm

The first aim of using the novel instrument would be to acquire information to enable me to improve the materials and mode of operation of the course during the first and pilot study stage of the evaluation
- to make it as suitable as possible for implementation with the target population in Sierra Leone.

As a second aim, I wondered whether it might be possible to continue my evaluation beyond the pilot stage - to fit its use within the naturalistic stage of an illuminative evaluation (see 4 above). That is, whether it would examine phenomena in their natural setting without bringing them under artificial conditions and be used as one of a range of techniques as dictated by circumstances for the purpose of the investigation. This consideration is underscored by Parlett (1986) who emphasises the importance of making sensible choices in each unique research situation in the following communication:

"... there is nothing sacrosanct about illuminative evaluation methodology. Situations are all unique and the important thing is that sensible choices are made which are adaptive to the circumstances of each unique case. Illuminative evaluation methodology has principles (design principles, etc.) rather than set techniques. Training in this approach teaches you (as it were) to be a cook, not to prepare a fixed menu."

(Parlett, 26th February, 1986, Personal Communication)

Furthermore, as a third aim, I wondered if it would be possible to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the instrument compared to the more conventional methods of evaluating at a distance using letters or questionnaires as well as in the light of methods that would be employed during the fieldwork phase in Sierra Leone.

8.4 A Second Research Theme

Section 6.1 of chapter 6 documented the research theme as it appeared in connection with the distance learning INSET course for lower secondary school teachers of English as a second language in Sierra Leone. As a result of the constraints described in this chapter, a second research theme manifested itself, namely the development and evaluation of a novel instrument.
The instrument will be evaluated on as a generator of ideas:-

- compared with standard methods of evaluating at a distance like questionnaires, interviews, etc. that were used in the main study

- as a generator of data compared with responses obtained in the earlier fieldwork and cross check findings on the course and make generalisations about the problem under study in research theme I.
9.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 describes the construction of an INSET at a distance course for lower secondary teachers of English in Sierra Leone and points out that it seemed sensible to improve the course further by first piloting it with a sample of the typical users. The design and development of a novel instrument which seemed necessary to circumvent constraints encountered when efforts were being made to pilot the course has been adequately documented in chapter 8, sections 8.1 and 8.2.

This chapter will state the purpose of the pilot study, describe the sample and explain how the instrument was used to elicit feedback from them. It will go on to describe the process of analysing the feedback. The mode and nature of the feedback received from each case study respondent will be presented. Since some of the issues raised in their feedback will have implications for further work on the two research themes, such implications will be highlighted and discussed and research questions would be formulated from them which would guide further work on the two research themes of this thesis.

9.1 The Purpose Of The Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out with the twin purposes of:-

1. finding out the strengths and weaknesses of the course so that improvements could be made (see emerging research theme 1, ch.6, section 6.1)

2. testing the viability of the method of eliciting evaluation data at a distance by means of audio tape recordings to see whether the findings will throw up issues to investigate further (see emerging research theme 11, chapter 8, section 8.4).
9.2 Profile Of Sample

This section presents some background information on the seven people who participated in the pilot study. They were of both sexes with varied background and experiences.

At the time of writing, their characteristics were as follows:-

A was the principal of a renowned secondary school in Sierra Leone, currently on study leave in the UK. As a colleague in my first university, we are on friendly terms. He is a confident and altruistic person who is not afraid to point out faults in people. He has considerable experience in the teaching of English in Sierra Leone. He is in his late thirties and English is his second language.

B was the assistant Principal Teacher Education Officer in the Ministry of Education in Sierra Leone, currently in the UK on study leave. He is quiet and unassuming, but very confident in the views he expresses. He is on friendly terms with me, being a colleague at work. He is in his late forties and English is his third language.

C was a former teacher of English in a top girls' secondary school in Sierra Leone. She is energetic and determined and is a committed teacher with about seven years' teaching experience. She is in her mid thirties and English is her second language.

D was a new teacher in a secondary school up country in Sierra Leone, currently on study leave in the UK. She is in her late twenties, with only one year's relevant teaching experience. English is her third language and I have never met her before although I have held telephone conversations with her.

E was once my student and is now in her late twenties. She went on to become a secondary school teacher in Sierra Leone. She is now teaching in a primary school for low ability pupils in East London. English is her third language.
was a former secondary school teacher of English in an up
country school in Sierra Leone. He is a Briton, aged over 60, who
is now teaching English in North London. He has about twenty years
relevant teaching experience. I have only met him briefly - once at
an English literature conference in London. Although I have held
several telephone conversations with him, I do not know him very well.
English is his first language.

G is very experienced in English curriculum development work in
various countries including Sierra Leone, where he was an adviser to
the Institute of Education's English Curriculum Revision Unit. He
spearheaded the production of the 1974 National Syllabus for secondary
schools in Sierra Leone. He is a Briton who is now retired and over
sixty years old. I have only met him briefly at an English literature
conference in London so I do not know him very well, although I have
held telephone conversations with him.

The above profiles show that all seven members of the sample are
all familiar with the educational set up in the country and have a good
knowledge of the problems English teachers face there. They were
therefore in appropriate positions to comment on the relevance of the
course to the needs of English teachers. A and G have also held
administrative positions which put them in direct charge of teachers'
problems. D and F have had the additional experience of teaching in
up country schools where teachers' needs are even greater.

The profile of the sample also indicates that there would be
similarities and differences between and among them. For example,
unlike the Britons, especially F who had actually taught in a secondary
school in Sierra Leone, none of the Sierra Leoneans have had any teaching
experience in Britain, except for E who is briefly teaching in London.
However, the variety of their backgrounds and experiences would enable
them to provide some interesting and useful feedback that would dictate
possible alterations and improvements in the course before and during the fieldwork phase.

9.3 Using The Novel Instrument

It is appropriate to recapitulate chapter 8, section 8.2 where I described the development of a novel instrument within constrains I encountered when I tried to pilot the course using conventional techniques. To circumvent the problem of the target audience of the course being in Sierra Leone, I used the instrument I described in chapter 8 with the only representatives of the sample who fortunately happened to be in Britain. This is mainly because Nathenson and Henderson (1980) state that formative evaluation may be collected from:-

"experts and/or students (singly or in groups of various sizes) not necessarily typical of the target population by the developer or evaluator or developer and evaluator together."

(Nathenson and Henderson, 1980)

I had no funds to travel to Sierra Leone to meet the target audience personally, something which appeared essential for illuminative evaluation (see ch.6). There were not even enough funds or time for visits within the UK. The use of the novel instrument seemed the only way out.

In order to orientate each member of the pilot study sample in Britain to the procedure I envisaged, I phoned each member first and discussed the nature of the task I was trying to get them involved in. Then I mailed a package consisting of:-

- the course materials they were to comment on
- a blank audio cassette tape on which they were to record their structured and free responses
- an explanatory letter (see appendix 9.1) in which I indicated those aspects of the course they were to comment on under two general headings:
  - the content and general format of the course
  - the distance learning approach to INSET
I also gave details of the specific aspects they should comment on like the subject matter and its validity with regard to the National Syllabus at secondary level, the overview, objectives, activities and assignments. I also pointed out in the letter that they could add comments on any other part of the materials they felt I should focus attention on and promised to ring them.

After a few days when I felt they would have received the package, I phoned them again and discussed the nature of the task with them. During that conversation, I emphasised that they could give their feedback by writing their views down if they wished.

In the next sections I will describe the process of analysing the feedback received after which the mode and details of their feedback will be presented.

9.4 The Process Of Analysing The Feedback

Having transcribed a few of the tapes verbatim, I found that it was not necessary to do so for all of them. So, I sat in the relaxation and privacy of my study, played the tapes and made notes of what seemed appropriate. The process was pleasant and the data was enriched by the tone and emotions of the respondents that came across in the spoken word which I would not have got through standard methods of evaluating at a distance - like questionnaires or feedback sheets.

9.5 Case Studies: The Mode And Details Of Their Feedback

All seven members of the sample responded - five by the tape method and two by writing. The mode and details of their responses will now be outlined.
The Case of A

a. Mode: Feedback using tape

A responded by tape-recording his views on two units of the materials. His tape was about 35 minutes long and his tone was confident and he sounded very committed to the whole idea of the course. There were no gaps or paddings in the recording, except on one or two occasions when he stammered. This was one of his personal characteristics, irrespective of the mode of communication. In fact, at the end of the recording, he commented voluntarily that he found this an ideal way to give feedback as he was short of time. This was particularly encouraging because his stammering did not seem to have turned him against a method which involved responding verbally. He did not return the materials as he was hoping he would find time to comment on the rest. He did not address the checklist. To quote his exact words, he said:-

"As you know, I am a very busy man. I have only been able to help you a little because I did not have to write my views down. Next time, please send the materials little by little. If you had expected me to write my views down point by point, I may not have been able to do anything."

Although A did not comment on all the materials, he made some useful suggestions on those he commented on as well as on their mode of use.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

A gave feedback on various aspects of the course. These were based on the following:-

- a suggestion for involving teachers more in the course
- a presentation detail
- a suggestion for improving the clarity of instructions
- a suggestion for removing specific superfluity
- a general comment
1. In commenting on the overview of module A, he suggested that I should try to involve teachers more in the course by, for example, asking them to state their own peculiar problems they encounter when teaching English and also to state the methods they have adopted to solve them. This, he suggests, could come as one of the assignments.

2. He criticised numbers 2 and 3 of the overview on the basis that they did not correspond with what I have stated in the contents of that unit, except superficially. He suggested that I should delete these and include them in the broad objectives of the whole distance learning programme.

3. He pointed out the need to give very clear instructions when asking teachers to carry out activities. He identified Activity 1 of module A and said that the instructions were unclear which made it very ambiguous. He emphasised the need for teachers to be given clear instructions for the exercise not to lose its essence.

4. He suggested that I should delete the exercise on 'why we teach English in Sierra Leone', as it provides the answer to the third assignment at the end of module A, p.15.

5. His fifth suggestion was that I use radio in my course if transmission covers the target areas of the country.

6. In his sixth comment, he warned that I should take 'costs' into consideration when constructing the course.

7. He ended the tape by commenting that I should have sent the materials for comment unit by unit as he was put off by over 200 pages of material to comment on all at once especially because he had his own academic work to do.
The Case of B

a. Mode: Feedback using Tape

B responded by tape. He sent a covering letter with the tape and materials in which he commended the whole idea of the distance learning course and asked that we work closely together when we return home. His tape was the longest, about 45 minutes. He sounded quite confident about the views he expressed. It was clear and straightforward with no padding or gaps. It consisted mainly of queries, suggestions and statements of where his ideology as an English educator differed from that inherent in the course, and it did not address itself to the checklist. He did not ask any questions as to why I gave him the option to respond by tape. He seemed to regard it as a normal exercise. I therefore assumed that he chose to use that method merely because I asked him to as he seemed to have commented on those aspects of the materials that seemed important to him as he read along.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

B's feedback was very detailed. As a former teacher of English with over 10 years teaching experience, and as a current student on the teaching of English as a second language, he tended to lay more emphasis on linguistic details. He also asked some general questions on the whole idea of distance learning for INSET.

1. He asked what I mean by 'new' teachers in module A.

2. He queried activity 1 in module A on the basis of what purpose I want it to serve. He asked whether it is a diagnostic test or simply a test of teachers' knowledge of the language situation in Sierra Leone.

3. He asked what advice I mean to give teachers in module A about reviewing their teaching strategies. He seems to feel that I merely identified their problems.
4. He suggested that instead of the term 'local' English, I should use the term 'Sierra Leone English' (non-native) - according to Strevens (1977).

5. He said that he thought the eclectic method is a more appropriate approach to language teaching in Sierra Leone. The structure of the language, he argues, could be taught but emphasis should also be laid on its use - communication.

6. He sounded very shocked that I went into lengths to define the syllabus and explain how teachers could make schemes of work from it. He said that since the syllabus was already in the schools, there was no need to give a detailed explanation about it. A syllabus is not always explicit, in some cases, it may be implicit and is only understood in materials (textbooks).

7. In commenting on the fact that I stressed the importance of lesson note making, he expressed the view that I should only encourage secondary school teachers to make lesson notes so that they do not think I want to reduce them to primary school teachers where lesson notes are compulsory.

8. He also argued that since teachers are not literate in any of the local languages in the written or even reading form, I should not ask that they compare the phonology of English with the phonology of any local language.

9. He suggested that I use Sierra Leonean names and places instead of those I had used in my substitution tables to give the students in the Sierra Leone context they need.
10. In commenting on module C, unit 3, he objected to the text for the reading passage on the basis that it seemed too long. If the text is too long and boring, students can avoid reading it and do guess work to answer the objective questions to save time.

11. He objected to my use of substitution tables in the writing unit. He said that he considers it one of the most meaningless drills usually done by teachers. He suggested that I should make useful suggestions to encourage students to construct sentences using the same structure or pattern by supplementing nouns, verbs, etc. so as to make the exercise more lively, meaningful and communicative.

12. He also asked what the purpose of the course is.

13. He wanted to know what I feel its quality is in relation to previous INSET courses in Sierra Leone.

14. He also asked whether I feel it will be regarded as of equal standing with other teacher training programmes in educational institutions in the country.

15. He wanted to know whether incentives such as finance or certificates will be provided at the end of the course.

16. He asked whether the rigid, prescriptive and sequenced nature of distance learning materials will allow learners to develop any critical independence.

17. He wondered whether learners will have access to the resources and facilities open to classroom based students - i.e. laboratories, libraries and quiet work rooms.
18. He wanted to know what the essential elements of distance learning are.

19. He asked what the possible centre of the course would be.

20. He asked how teachers who are to take part in the course will be selected.

The Case of C

a. Mode: Feedback using Tape

C recorded her response on tape. This was quite surprising as during my first telephone conversation with her, she had given the impression that she was not sure whether the purpose of giving her the option to respond by tape was to test her ability to speak in her second language - English. She had even asked whether it was necessary to write her views down before speaking it. However, once she had completed the feedback, she volunteered that it had been an interesting exercise for her. She said that even though she had to quote page numbers, she found the tape method easier and quicker than having to write would have been. Furthermore, she felt it was easier to draw valuable generalised conclusions by letting them emerge as she talked, rather than having to think them through in advance.

Her tape was about thirty minutes long. She sounded very confident on the tape and seemed to have given a thorough feedback on the course, even though she did not address the checklist. There were no paddings worthy of note. She tended to pause frequently when she had to dictate page numbers.

C seemed to have enjoyed the exercise as she volunteered the following comments on it:

"even though I had to dictate page numbers, I found this an easier way to comment on your course."
b. Details of Feedback on the Course

C commented on all the units as well as on some aspects of the two handbooks. Her comments were on presentational and linguistic details.

1. In commenting on the handbooks, she asked that since the tutor's handbook will not be given to members, I should explain my use of the term 'members' also in the members' handbook.

2. She also felt that the contents of the handbook were well thought out. To quote her:-

"One thing teachers participating in this course will tend to do is to lack motivation. You have done a marvellous job in encouraging them."

3. For Module A, she put in an additional line to complete my thought on one page. This, she did not voice on the tape.

4. In Module B, unit 1, she indicated that there were a couple of lines missing on page 3.

5. She also pointed out that where I mentioned slow learners, I could possibly have a section which deals with this group of students - possibly I could write a unit in which I could mention ways and means of dealing with them - nothing detailed.

6. She thought Module B, unit 2 was well structured. She asked whether I feel practising teachers will understand my use of the term 'role-play'.

7. She also commented that my lesson plan looked jumbled and needs some tidying up and straightening out. For example, where I suggested that teaching aids could be 'a real envelope and stamp', she said, she does not feel that the material really supports the lesson aim. She felt that I should give very good and concrete examples like asking teachers to do a simple letter setting out the structures they wish to highlight.
and have this typed and photocopied for distribution. Teachers could even ask pupils to do replies to this letter. This, she feels will be a more realistic task.

8. For Module B, unit 3, she objected to my suggestion that teachers should give meanings of words to pupils when correcting exercised together in class. She suggested that it will help if they guess meanings of words from the context. This could be a basis on which they could cope in later years because if they give the wrong meanings now and they are corrected, it would help them to remember better.

9. She disagreed with my suggestion that teachers should devote two minutes to speech work at the beginning of every lesson. She suggested five minutes instead.

10. She objected to my use of a letter as an example of a reading passage for teachers. A prose passage would have been a better choice.

11. She expressed the view that my section on teaching writing - where I pointed out that there is a need for discussing topics in detail - mentioning the kind of vocabulary relevant before students are assigned the task of writing - was very good. She found it very relevant to the needs of Sierra Leonean teachers who usually just dish out topics and expect students to come up with something brilliant.

The Case of D

a. Mode: Feedback using Tape

D responded using the tape. She was very enthusiastic about participating in the pilot study and even worked through the assignments and activities that could be done outside a classroom situation. In addition, she made a fifteen minutes tape. Short as the tape recording was, she sounded very confident and there were no gaps or paddings.
She did not raise any issue with regard to the option of responding by
tape. The points she made were general suggestions and criticisms;
her tape did not address itself to the checklist.

She seemed to ignore the checklist. It appeared as if she spent
more... time trying to fulfil one of my requests in the letter i.e.: to
attempt the activities and assignments as this might indicate areas of
potential difficulties. There were no gaps or paddings in her recorded
views. She did not even make any comments on the idea of voicing her
views on the tape. She seemed to have merely acted according to the
request I made in the letter in that regard.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

D gave general comments on the course as a whole. She made only
one comment on the lesson notes section. Her comments are as follows:-

1. She said she found it difficult to comment on most of what is
stated in the extracts because she felt they were relevant. She
attributed this to the fact that she had only recently graduated
from college and most of the concepts discussed in the extracts are
still fresh in her mind.

2. She also asked whether I will be choosing my sample from teachers
in the capital, Freetown alone or whether the sample will be nationwide.
The reason for raising the question, according to her, is because she
thinks the materials would be particularly of help to provincial teachers.
She had taught for one year at the secondary school at the junction of
Njala University College up country, and confesses that she was not
very impressed with the way some teachers carried out the job. To quote
her, she said:-

"Most of the teaching methods employed were antiquated and
a lot of the teachers never bothered to improvise in
situations where there were no books or aids. A lot of
the teachers relied heavily on their prescribed texts,
most of which are not really designed to meet our pupils' need in Sierra Leone. The concepts in such books are foreign to the pupils and sometimes even to some teachers."

3. She also said that she noticed that in my model lesson plan, I did not mention 'previous knowledge'. Why?

4. She asked that I send her extra copies of the materials she was returning, especially those with notes and exercise at the end that she had completed.

The Case of E
a. Mode: Feedback using Tape

She responded using the tape. Her response was rather passive and accepting. She did not even mention any typographical errors that others identified although that was not the main point of the exercise. Hers was the shortest tape; it was only 5 minutes. She mentioned that she had recorded it solely because she had been asked to do so. The feedback was not very considered. She merely commented on one part of the course which she even misunderstood. Her feedback did not correspond closely to any of the points I raised in my letter. In fact, I got the impression that she did not even read through all the materials as she did not demonstrate much confidence in her response, although her views were expressed clearly without any hesitations or paddings. She seemed to have accepted all the points in relation to the course in a rather uncritical and unquestioning manner.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

Her feedback on the course was mainly on module A, activity 1. She found the instructions for activity 1 'unclear' and so misinterpreted them. She took the true and false statements as all true statements and countered all the points I made in that activity.
That was the only observation she made on all the materials. She commented on all the statements as if she thought they were all true statements and I found that very useful. It even confirmed A's (see case study A) observations that the instructions for that activity were not clear. Her negative reaction to those statements which in fact were supposed to be false confirmed my opinion that they were truly false statements. So in a way, her feedback helped me.

The Case of F

a. Mode: Feedback by Writing

F responded by writing comments on to the materials. He did not use the tape. Later, on the telephone, he said that he preferred his mode of response for documenting the nature and position of detailed corrections and comments. He did not address the checklist although he made some general comments on the course as a whole.

He raised the point that I should have sent my materials during a different period as he hardly does much academic work during the Christmas and New Year season. Moreover, he had end of term exam papers to mark.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

F commented on the two handbooks and module A. These were mainly on the structure of sentences. He also made some general comments on the course as a whole. His comments were as follows:-

1. On the handbook for members, he objected to the structure of the following sentence:-

"These will be drawn from the literature on language teaching, focussed on the specific theme that is being dealt with in the module."

He stated that this could be a possible source of confusion as teachers...
might not grasp what is meant by 'literature' and 'language' as they are used here.

He also stated that he is not sure what I mean by phrases like 'tutor-assessed', 'theoretical standpoints' and 'focussed on the specific theme'. He stated that such expressions might confuse teachers. He pointed out that it is not that he is anti-jargon, but that it is important that we speak to colleagues in active language with the minimum of 'fuzzy' bits.

2. In the section on 'motivation', where I tried to coax teachers to commit themselves to the course, he stated that if he was a member he would feel slightly uncomfortable by the mixture of 'exhortation, subtle arm twisting and repeated suggestions that he should avoid disappointing the course originator'.

3. In commenting on the handbook for tutors, he stated that he found the instructions to tutors throughout the handbook much clearer than the language in the members' handbook. He also stated that he had not included any marginal annotations and in general, he found the guidelines relevant.

4. He stated further that he cannot help reflecting on how the strength (or weakness) of any such handbook will depend entirely on the extent to which the tutors are convinced, as I seem to be, of the value of the course's components. He wrote that he keeps wondering who these tutors are; how committed they are already to some after form of INSET training. Furthermore, how likely are they to fit in with my requirements for the project.

5. He also asked whether the tutors will themselves be able to assimilate (and 'make their own') most of those extracts from the literature on language teaching. How much theoretical study/reading
do these tutors (practitioners in the field) normally do in the
course of a three-month term? He further states that:-

"Most teachers of English I remember in Sierra Leone
(and I am speaking of those fully qualified graduate
teachers - some indeed with UK Diplomas!) did not seem
to do any real reading at all. However, I am sure
things have changed appreciably over the past decade."

6. His sixth point was whether I myself feel committed to all
the detailed instructions, activities and extracts included in the
materials. He asked how much of these is intended as the sort of
'necessary filling' for academic consumption at Surrey - but which
in the field I may discard or short-circuit?

7. He had one major comment to make on module A. This was on
the section dealing with the Teaching/Learning Process in Sierra Leone
schools. He stated the following:-

"I feel this passage (and the preceding questions) should
be revised and developed with the help of your tutors
on the spot in Sierra Leone. I thought that the campaign
against snow, daffodils, mulberry bushes etc. was well and
truly over! One needs to explore the textbooks for more
subtle indications of colonialist inheritance.

From the other viewpoint, Sierra Leone pupils: have every
right to read about snow (and maybe even dandelions) just
as my London pupils of Irish, English, Italian and West
Indian backgrounds have every right to experience the
harmattan and the palmtrees at second or third:hand. It
all depends on how such things are presented."

He raised a number of general questions on the course. These are:-

8. Is the three months course within the context of other induction
support?

9. Are the course members all in their first year of teaching?

10. What assumptions are made about your teachers' experience of
pre-service training?
11. If the course is open to all teachers of English, how will the course members of this project be selected; for example (a) at random - thereby being representative of the mass of English teachers who need INSET training? (b) For convenience, from (say) the western area - thereby being typical of teachers from reasonably well established schools' departments of English? (c) Self-selection - mainly the faithful course-attenders?

The Case of G

a. Mode: Feedback by writing

G responded by writing on the materials. He did not say why he chose not to use the tape. He did not address all the points in the checklist as he merely seemed to comment on what struck him as being important.

I assumed that he decided to use the tape method because that was the method he was accustomed to. Or perhaps he did not possess a tape recorder and since he is retired, he would not have easy access to one.

G complained that my materials arrived at a time when he was much occupied with other activities including the complications of Christmas and the New Year season.

b. Details of Feedback on the Course

He stated the following points in his covering letter:-

1. He said that it was unfortunate that my materials arrived at a time when he was much occupied with other activities. He had been through them - some close reading, some skimming and added his suggestions in red. His main comments, he stated, were on the table of contents page.
2. He also stated that in a way, he felt it was a mistake for him to be involved in this project, partly because he is too close to it and partly because he is now too remote from the situation it concerns. He stated further:

"As I made clear to you earlier on, I am sceptical about the feasibility of the project you have in mind in the context of Sierra Leone as I know it. There are really two parts to your project, firstly the production of materials for a handbook to accompany the 1974 syllabus, and our idea at the time was that this should be compiled by a team of experienced Sierra Leonean educators. Secondly, the problem of disseminating and putting into practice the handbook material by distance learning methods. Perhaps the first stage should have been fully worked out before the second was attempted."

3. He also stressed that for distance learning, he supposes that matters of motivation and communication need to be of a very high order, and assured of continuity. He concluded by saying that they have to respect my right to my own ideas, and leave the rest to me and those whose professional job it is to supervise and assess my work.

In the general comments section, he raised the following issues:

4. There is a need for at least a brief history of events leading to the present project.

5. There should be an outline of the project so that its scope is clear and its eventual benefit clearly stated.

6. When, how, and by whom is this project validated?

7. Are the units in the form you plan to distribute them for your fieldwork or will they be retyped? They are difficult to handle at present.

8. How do the contents of the project relate to standard teacher-training courses?
9. After so many disillusionments and setbacks in Sierra Leone in recent years, what likelihood is there that ordinary teachers will be prepared to collaborate in the project, let alone the type of distance training contemplated on a wider scale?

10. What teachers are to act as tutors? How will they be selected and what guarantees will there be of their effectiveness?

11. For what categories of teachers is the course designed - untrained? trained?

9.6 Implications Of The Feedback For Research Theme I

An analysis of the feedback on the course shows that much of the findings on the course were general. Most of the respondents commented on issues related to the course content and general organisational aspects of the course. It seemed as if they merely commented on 'aspects' they considered important. This may be because of the facility of the method used to elicit the feedback - evaluation at a distance through tapes. The assumptions made after their feedback was analysed demonstrated that respondents felt that certain aspects of the course were not clear and that some sections needed restructuring.

Among the issues identified were presentational details, ambiguities, obscure words, jargon, validity of the tasks set - that is - whether or not they felt these tasks were useful or whether the requirements of the tasks were appropriate, errors in the materials such as corrections to page references, where there is an inappropriate balance and clarity in the activities or assignments and the content of the materials in the overview and specific units; typographical errors, linguistic details and the structure and the lay-out of the materials. Some aspects which they considered elaborate or irrelevant
were also identified. Apart from these specific comments, they all made some general comments on the course as a whole. One member attempted to do the assignments and some of the activities. She did not raise any issues on them. This helped to reassure me that they were viable as she would not have been able to complete them otherwise.

Because the issues raised were so varied, I decided to examine the data further to look for key words and phrases in wide application which would lead to general issues raised by the respondents. Three main strands emerged which seem to merit further investigation:-

i. issues relating to the quality of participants (i.e. tutors and members) who are to help in trying out the course.

ii. issues related to the clarity of the course

iii. issues related to the administration of the course.

These issues will now be discussed in detail.

i. Issues related to the quality of the participants who are to help in trying out the materials

The feedback revealed four issues which can be seen to result from the quality of participants (tutors and members) who are to collaborate in trying out the materials during the fieldwork phase. The first is the quality of participants who should be selected to act as tutors for the course (see feedback F3 and G10). Since the tutors were to play the role of teacher trainers, concern was expressed for careful thought in selecting them. They should be knowledgeable, experienced and committed to the course as one guarantee of the success of the course will depend on the tutors' effectiveness and ability to guide teachers and monitor the use to which the materials are being put. This demands that the tutors should be quite familiar with the aims, objectives and content of the course's components. They should be properly briefed by the researcher and instructions for the operation
of the materials should be completely unambiguous to them.

Similar views were expressed with regard to the quality of participants who should be selected to act as members of the course and whose problems and concerns the course aims to solve. I must be very clear about what group of teachers the course is being created for (Feedback G11). Since the course aims at solving the problems of new as well as lower secondary English teachers, those who are to try out the materials must be selected from that group.

Another view expressed was that teachers from up country schools should be involved in the course (Feedback B & D) - since these are usually 'starved' of many of the resources and other exciting aspects of the profession that teachers from the capital merely take for granted. In effect, it is mainly because of this constant deprivation that they undergo that my respondents seem to even feel that they are in need of more help. The fact that this suggestion comes from not only D who has had the experience of teaching up country but also B who is very conversant with the problems of teachers from both up country schools as well as schools in big towns, makes it even more valid.

Another point that seemed relevant was the suggestion that thought should be given to participants' previous exposure to INSET courses. Since their full application of a course of this nature will depend to a great extent on the nature of the courses they have been exposed to, it is important that this is considered when the course is being created. Teachers may very well compare this course with other INSET courses they have attended. If this course is not of equal standing with those they are familiar with, they may not be motivated to continue it. I should do all in my power to sustain their interest in it. This is in fact why I endorse the other view that the success of the course is dependent on how far it is related to teachers' own problems and concerns.
It is obvious that if teachers feel their classroom problems will be solved or addressed in the materials, they will be motivated to read them. These points will be borne in mind when participants are being selected for the main study.

ii. Issues related to course materials

Issues relating to the nature of the course materials have been more varied than those concerning the choice of tutors and members for the course. The issues raised range from those on linguistic details, such as: (i) the importance of selecting appropriate passages for the teaching of reading; (ii) the fact that teachers cannot compare the phonology of English with that of the local languages without a simple knowledge of phonology - to the use of terms like 'role-play' and 'local English' which might not be so explicit to Sierra Leonean teachers. Respondents felt that the materials need to be both explicit and unambiguous in content and presentation.

This need for clarity in the materials was stressed by at least four of the respondents. They recommended that active language must be used so that teachers would not be baffled. This is especially important because of the very nature of distance learning which takes place in the absence of a teacher and learners do not have the same opportunity to ask for clarification or explanation of the course materials from a teacher in the way those in conventional teaching situations normally do.

Moreover, one should bear in mind that many teachers in Sierra Leone are mediocre (see ch. 4 & 5) and are most often struggling to 'survive' in their classrooms. The likelihood of their giving up the course if the materials are not clear is greater.

F in fact identified phrases like 'tutor-assessed', 'focussed on the specific theme', 'the literature on language teaching' that he considered difficult and suggested that simpler and more straightforward
expressions should be used. His point that:-

"It is not that I am anti-jargon but it is important that we speak to colleagues in active language with the minimum of fuzzy bits."

was very relevant.

It is in the same vein that A and E suggested that the clarity of instructions for activities must be enhanced so as not to render the activities useless (see feedback A3 and E1).

Another pertinent suggestion was that the materials should be less rigid or prescriptive. Teachers must be allowed a lot of flexibility in what they do.

These are all points that deserve further investigation in the fieldwork phase.

iii. Issues related to the administration of the course

Two issues were raised in relation to the administration of the course. These are:-

(a) the need to consider initial costs (see ch.5)

(b) the need to provide financial and other incentives for participants (see ch.7).

(c) the need to consider the isolation factor in distance learning.

(a) Initial Costs: The need for careful costing of the project was highlighted by some of the respondents. This is very important as although distance learning may seem attractive because it ensures educational expansion without the need for new buildings, yet the initial costs of setting it up can be quite high. The running costs are different from those incurred by an ordinary college. So that even if it is only 'print' that is to be used, it is necessary for planners to cost the project carefully at the outset. This need for costing is even more important when the course is being produced for a developing country like Sierra Leone which is suffering from foreign exchange crisis. The possible obstacles like lack of printing materials
or if radio is used, constant lack of electricity and even spare parts - added to the bureaucracy involved in getting the course off the ground can be quite upsetting (see examples cited in ch.5 for the Ghana case).

(b) **Financial and other incentives:** Another issue which has been raised in this category is the need for financial and other incentives to be provided for tutors and members (see findings C10 and F6). This is very important as there is a more pressing need for motivating teachers in a developing country like Sierra Leone to do extra work. This means that there is need for other induction support for distance learners. Teachers in Sierra Leone are usually teaching under protest for the most part - in fact this is true for teachers almost everywhere in the world. As Hugh-Hawes (1978) puts it:-

"Teachers for the most part are under-educated, under-trained and under-paid. Possibly most important of all, they are under-valued. Isolated and frequently ill-housed, they are under pressure from many sources. Their morale is low and in many countries (it) is not improving."

(Hugh Hawes, 1978)

This is why I endorse the view of respondent G, who, based on his awareness of the attitude of Sierra Leonean teachers, raised the following issue:-

"After so many disillusionments and setbacks in Sierra Leone in recent years, what likelihood is there that ordinary teachers will be prepared to collaborate in the project, let alone the type of distance training contemplated on a wider scale?"

A lot of effort must be made to win participants to the aims and objectives of the course.

(c) **The isolation factor:** At least one member raised the issue of isolation which results from the distance factor in the interaction between the student and tutors. G stresses that for distance learning matters of motivation and communication need to be of a very high order, and assured of continuity. This is a very important point which
I thought would be overcome by the design of the course which included school based tutors who are to tutor members from the schools they all teach in. . . It is hoped that the school-based tutors and the staffroom enthusiasm in each school will enable members of this course as well as other teachers in each school to benefit from the course.

These three points will be investigated further in the main study with the target population in Sierra Leone.

9.6.1 Emerging research questions on Theme I

The results of the feedback received on the course, coupled with views delineated from the literature on evaluation of distance learning courses, suggested several question areas on which to focus. These are:

- questions relating to participants' familiarity with INSET approaches (see section 9.6(i))
- questions relating to the design and implementation of the course (see section 9.6(i))
- questions relating to the relevance and clarity of the course (see section 9.6(ii))
- questions relating to the distance factor in distance learning courses (see section 9.6(iii))
- other insights and issues that may emerge while research questions are being addressed

More specifically, the following:

1. To what extent should Sierra Leonean teacher educators have a 'say' in the design and implementation of a course of this nature and how important is this?
2. To what extent are participants already familiar with INSET approaches and how necessary is this?
3. To what extent is the content of the course clear and relevant to the needs of Sierra Leonean teachers?
4. To what extent will 'distance' be a factor in members' full appreciation of the course?
5. What other interesting insights and issues may emerge while addressing these research questions for research theme I? An attempt will be made to see the extent to which these research questions will be answered (see chapter 12).

9.7 Implications Of The Feedback For Research Theme II

The analysis of the data received by respondents who used tape indicate that since respondents were not specifically asked to comment on the method of giving their feedback by tape to avoid confusion of their responses, the findings for this part of the study could only be made by linking respondents' background and personal characteristics to their mode of response.

The tapes received from the five Sierra Leonean respondents were listened to several times to decipher respondents' mood, hesitations in their voices, paddings, tone, confidence, etc. In short, an attempt was made to get a feel for the nature and quality of their responses to see whether such responses could be equated to responses I would otherwise have got if I had been able to be present, observing, interviewing and interacting with them myself. In other words, the respondents were put in a position in which they had to act as observers, observing for me and they were effectively interviewing themselves. In this respect, I thought I accepted data that the situation presented rather than of their or my own choosing.

I also tried to link what I know of these respondents with whom I am acquainted, with their mode of response and identified and discussed some of their general characteristics which may have influenced their mode of response.

The findings reveal that there are similarities and differences between and among respondents both in their choice of mode of response as well as in the quality of their responses. Some of the issues I was
able to identify are not unique to those experienced by other researchers who create distance learning courses. What is perhaps unique is the quality of the feedback that this method motivated respondents to produce. Since they were giving their feedback at a distance, they were neither constrained by the presence of an interviewer or observer nor were they constrained by a rigid list of questions on a questionnaire. The five Sierra Leoneans who chose to respond by tape enjoyed the freedom of doing so in an uninhibited manner by tape in the comfort and privacy of their homes or wherever they decided to do the recording. The two Britons who chose to respond by writing seemed to have a lot in common. The mode of each of their responses may have been influenced by various factors. Since such factors may have implications for the main study on this method after the field trials, they will be identified and discussed. These factors are:-

- cultural differences
- age differences
- the urge to respond to what interested them
- their enthusiasm for the potential usefulness of the course
- their personal characteristics
- other general characteristics

Although these factors have implications for further work, unfortunately, I would not have the opportunity to follow them up in the further stage of this work. I will now discuss them at length to see what conclusions can be reached for each one.

Cultural differences

Out of the seven respondents, all of the five Sierra Leoneans gave their feedback by tape while the two Britons gave theirs by writing their comments down. Since the two groups of respondents are from different backgrounds and cultures, they have different experiences on which to base their comments. This would seem to imply that their cultural backgrounds and experiences influenced their choice of mode of response. For example, unlike the Sierra Leoneans, the two Britons
have even worked as expatriates in different countries, including Sierra Leone. Also, it was in fact only the two of them who objected to the fact that the materials were sent towards the Christmas season which is traditionally a period of relaxation and pleasure for them. This does not belie the fact that Sierra Leoneans do not hold Christmas as a 'down tools' holiday when they are in Sierra Leone. They did not complain because they may probably be in England for a specific purpose.

For all five Sierra Leoneans to choose to respond by tape is not just coincidence by virtue of the numbers involved, nor the generation to which they belong or even the wide range of their ages. Their experiences are also different. For example, there is the fact that the oral mode has remained the dominant mode of communication for the majority of Africans, including Sierra Leoneans, even after the advent of writing within their communities. Since the oral mode continues to be the preferred mode for cultural dissemination, it is not surprising that the Sierra Leoneans would avail themselves of any opportunity to communicate orally through tape. Added to this may be the fact that people from developing countries like Sierra Leone are more often intrigued by what seems 'novel' or 'advanced' techniques of addressing research problems. They are more often willing to try out any new device, unlike those from developed and more advanced countries.

There is also the slight possibility that since young Sierra Leoneans have been trained in the traditional manner of obeying orders from someone they regard as superior, this may have been the reason why respondents D and E decided to respond by tape even though they had very little to say. D, being a new recruit to the teaching profession, having taught for only one year, may see me as an authority figure in the teaching profession. E, being my ex-student, may merely decide to do as she is told by her former teacher.

In the light of the above, my assumption that their cultural backgrounds and experiences may have influenced their choice of mode of
response did not seem too far fetched. I hope this will have implications for further work by other workers in the field.

Age differences

Age could be another factor in their choice of mode of response. The data revealed that the two Britons who belong to the older generation - the over sixties - responded by writing on the materials whilst the Sierra Leoneans who span between 26 and 40 years of age decided to give their feedback by tape. This seems to imply that people from the older generation may find it much easier to give their feedback by writing because that is what they are accustomed to. However, as more responsible people in higher offices, they may not even find the time to experiment with new ideas, whereas those from the younger generation may have time to try out new ideas. I was able to confirm my assertion about those who belong to the older generation when someone who feels he belongs to that ilk said:

"I happen to be old enough to be of the generation who find it much easier to make comments on paper than on tape. Those from the younger generation prefer tape and this is a shift in generation. This is the first time that I have evidence of a change in communication through technological change. Lots of people say the new generation is more visual because of all the TV they watch. I haven't seen any real evidence to that. But certainly the use of tapes as opposed to writing which is also linked with the use of a telephone was again something my generation was much less happy with.

(Elton, Personal Communication, 4th Oct, 1985)

So one can assert that younger people may prefer to respond by tape. This however means that it will be necessary to explore the views of the younger generation in Britain to confirm the assumption further, since the fact that all five Sierra Leoneans were from a younger generation cannot and does not speak for Britons from that age group.

The same applies to people from the older generation. It will be necessary to explore the views of Sierra Leoneans from the older generation to ascertain their preferred mode of response. This deserves further work.
The urge to respond to what interested them

One factor which seemed to be common to all respondents is that they all tended to comment on merely what interests them. There may be a number of reasons for this.

It might be due to the bulky nature of the materials they had to read through (one member actually pointed out that I should have sent the materials unit by unit). Or possibly, by the time they finished reading through the materials, they had forgotten about the 'pointers' I indicated in my letter that went with the materials. Alternatively, they might have thought that those pointers I gave were not important to them or that they could make no useful comments on them. It is even likely that they commented on what they felt I ought to know.

I therefore read the letter again to see whether there were any faults with my wording. Since the letter was clear and straightforward, I began to assume that it was probably because the method of evaluation at a distance allowed them the freedom to comment on aspects they thought I needed to know. Unlike other evaluation techniques like questionnaires and feedback sheets - where directed probing and forced answering to precise questions is usually considered necessary for eliciting any information which researchers felt had meaning to it - this method provided me with very useful and meaningful information that I did not even think of asking about in my original plan. So that although I was constrained in that I could not afford the time and money to go and observe or interview respondents to elicit their opinions about my materials, yet I got information about so many aspects of the course that I never would have thought of asking about.

This method seemed to be one that gave respondents the freedom to talk and not to plan their feedback systematically. At no time in our education were we taught how to organise our ideas for tape recording. That in itself would seem attractive to those who consider writing a burden.'
There is however a contradiction here in the sense that although the two Britons also seemed to enjoy the freedom to comment on what they considered worthy of note, they did so by writing their views down. This again may be because of their disposition which stems from the age group they belong to. This does not in any way disprove the fact that the evaluation at a distance method produces richer data. There is concrete evidence of commonality in the quality of their feedback. Even when I sent questionnaires to all of them in an attempt to force them to respond to what I asked for, only B, who is quiet, passive and unassuming, returned his. The feedback he gave did not provide me with any new information. He seemed to have completed it merely to please a colleague.

So I may be right to assert that the method-evaluation at a distance through tape produces a different kind of data. This assertion deserves further work.

Their enthusiasm for the potential usefulness of the course

It is also possible for one to conclude that those who demonstrate a lot of enthusiasm in the course may feel so committed that they may want to demonstrate further enthusiasm and commitment by doing as they are told by the researcher. This might be the case for all four respondents who demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to the course. A for example is the extroverted and altruistic type, who, in spite of his pressure of academic work, tried to respond by tape. B in fact asked in a covering letter that he sent with the materials, that we work closely together when we return home. C has been a source of encouragement since the inception of the project so I was not even surprised when she phoned me up to find out whether it was a 'must' that she respond by tape or whether I was merely trying to test her ability to speak English. She definitely showed genuine interest in the project and wanted to do all
in her power to see its success. D seemed to be the most enthusiastic of the lot although I have never met her before, but the fact that she completed the activities and assignments while she had her own studies to do made me assume that she seemed very dedicated to the project. She also gave me the impression that since she is a new teacher, she is anxious to grasp any new information on the profession that comes her way. However, I feel that the overriding point in her case was the calm and confident manner in which she said:-

"Mrs. Kaikumba, I hope you will be using teachers from up country schools. Most of the teaching methods employed in these are antiquated and a lot of teachers never bothered to improvise..."

This obviously indicates that she felt there was a need for materials of this nature.

These points really demonstrate how committed, enthusiastic, dedicated and genuine these four respondents appeared to be but does it follow that it is their enthusiasm for the course alone that prompted them to respond by tape? A and B are the 'bold ones' who will definitely want to experiment with anything new. C, D and E are rather the passive, unassuming and somehow introverted types. This inherent contradiction in their characteristics needs to be explored further before one can adequately link the enthusiasm they demonstrated in the project with their decision to respond by tape. This could be investigated further.

Other general characteristics

Since there are so many other characteristics of the respondents which might have influenced their decision to respond either by tape or writing, these will be briefly discussed in this section in the light of the confidence they each demonstrated in their responses. These characteristics include - acquaintance with researcher, knowledge of subject matter, number of years teaching experience, length of tape,
those who may feel distant from the project. All or some of these may have influenced them in one way or the other. I will therefore discuss each respondent's feedback in the light of the above characteristics.

A is usually confident and outspoken. He took part in student politics in his university days and is now an active principal of a boys' school. His first degree is in English which also means that he may have responded as an authority in the subject matter of the feedback. His acquaintance with me may not have influenced his mode of response since he is the usually outspoken type who will not yield to any form of external pressure or influence. Although he was only able to comment on two units of the materials, yet his comments were quite detailed and useful. He cannot feel too distant from the project since he is still actively engaged in teaching and educational administration. So one may be right to conclude that his confidence played a great part in his decision to respond by tape.

Certain factors in respondent B's personal characteristics seem to conflict with those of respondent A's, although he also responded by tape and demonstrated confidence in his response. He is the passive and quiet type who may have been influenced by his acquaintance with me to respond by tape. However, he has many years of teaching experience which might have added to his confidence in responding by tape. He cannot feel distant from the project since he is still involved in English education as a student on study leave. He sounded quite 'au fait' with the subject matter of the evaluation and this might have influenced the confident manner in which he responded at length by tape.

Respondent C is not so close to the project now as she is at present involved in office administration. As a teacher, she was the confident type who took part in many school activities. She is also quite bold, active and energetic and has demonstrated keen interest in the project since its inception. I cannot say that her familiarity
with me influenced her decision to respond by tape as she did show some reluctance at first. Her seven years of teaching experience is reflected in the knowledge of the subject matter she demonstrated in her feedback. She sounded quite confident in the views she expressed and most of them proved very useful.

Respondent D sounded very confident in what she was saying although she has only one year of teaching experience. She is not acquainted with me so that had nothing to do with her response by tape. She is still close to this project as she is still a teacher, though now a student on study leave who even wanted some of the assignments she completed returned to her.

Although her feedback by tape was short, the fact that she was able to complete the assignments show that she is quite familiar with the subject matter of the evaluation. The confident response she gave did not seem to have been influenced by other factors.

Respondent E was a former student of mine and she demonstrated some fear in her response rather than confidence. She failed to realise that the instructions in the activity she completed were not clear but the intelligent responses she gave demonstrated her familiarity with the subject matter. The fact that she still teaches English, although in a different country from the one in which she had acquired 3 years teaching experience, may have influenced her response but that was not reflected in her feedback. The impression she gave was that she had not read the materials thoroughly or that she was scared to criticise her ex-teacher. She was the only member who did not demonstrate much confidence in her response.

Respondents F and G were quite confident in their responses although they gave theirs by writing on the materials. They responded as authorities in the subject matter of the feedback. Although G said he felt distant from the project that was not reflected in his response
as all the points he raised seemed relevant. Their many years of
teaching experience may have influenced their decision to respond by
writing as they may be from the old school who have been more accustomed
to writing reports throughout their lives.

As expatriates who have worked in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, they
expressed some scepticism about Sierra Leonean teachers' ability and
cooperation in taking part in a project of this nature. This was
very good as the other five respondents did not seem to express such
fears.

Neither of them is acquainted with me.

The data collected does reveal some understanding of the new
method. However it also gave rise to several research questions which
need to be investigated further. These will be presented in the next
section.

9.7.3 Emerging research questions on research theme II

As in section 9.6, there are again certain question-areas on
which to focus with respect to the method of evaluation at a distance
through tape. These are:-

- questions relating to the method
- questions relating to the personal characteristics of
  the sample population
- questions relating to social characteristics of
  the sample population

More specifically the following research questions emerge:-

- To what extent does the novel instrument - evaluation at
  a distance through audio cassette tapes - lead to rich
data and to data of a kind different from that obtained
by other conventional methods of collecting data at a
distance used in this study and generally?

- How are responses influenced by the age and self confidence
  of respondents, by their enthusiasm for the subject and
  their knowledge of the researcher?
- What is the effect of cultural factors and especially that of respondents coming from developed or developing countries?

These research questions should ideally form the basis for further research on the second research theme. However, because of lack of opportunity with my sample and constraints of time, most of these questions cannot be investigated in this research although it is possible that light may be shed on them as the research progresses.

The next section puts forward a rationale for eliminating further research on them. Then, in the following section another rationale is presented for the research question that will be investigated further in the second research theme in this thesis.

9.8 Rationale For Eliminating Further Research On Other Research Questions - Areas in Research Theme II

1. "What is the effect of cultural factors and especially that of respondents coming from developed or developing countries on their mode of response?"

This question arose because the sample consisted of people from two different cultures - two were Britons and five were Sierra Leoneans. One possible reason that can be advanced for this is since the two Britons responded by writing on the materials while the five Sierra Leoneans responded by tape, their mode of response may have been determined by their cultural backgrounds.

To carry out research on these questions, there will be the need to involve people from a wider sample, consisting of Sierra Leoneans and people from other developing countries as well as Britons and people from other developed countries.

Also, it is important that this phase of my study should aim at confirming, refuting or illuminating findings from my fieldwork in Sierra Leone. The fact that the twenty-eight participants who took part in the fieldwork and who are also the only ones familiar with the course, come from only one country - Sierra Leone - rules out the possibility of investigating these questions further.
The second question:

"How are responses influenced by the age and self-confidence of respondents, by their enthusiasm for the subject and their knowledge of the researcher?"

arose because two members who responded by writing were over sixty years of age. Since they were the only two Britons in the course, the reasons advanced for the cultural factor in the preceding questions hold true for them. The investigation of a question of this nature will demand the involvement of Sierra Leoneans from that generation as well as a sample of Britons from the younger generation. Neither of these sets of people are knowledgeable about the course.

Participants in the fieldwork may bear some or all of these characteristics. I am definitely familiar with some as some of them were ex-students or colleagues in the profession. Also, it will not be too difficult to identify confident and enthusiastic participants. This study will however not focus attention on these issues. Ideas from the emerging data might shed light on these questions. These will be addressed as and when they emerge.

Rationale for the question to be investigated further

One issue that I had the opportunity to investigate further is research question 8 (see section 9.7.1):

"To what extent does the novel instrument - evaluation at a distance through tape - lead to rich data and to data of a kind different from that obtained by other conventional methods of collecting data at a distance used in this study and generally?"

Although respondents failed to respond to issues highlighted in the checklist I sent with the materials, they did highlight useful issues I may never have thought of asking about. They seemed satisfied with the response they had given.

What is responsible for this? I am tempted to conclude that they seemed to enjoy the freedom to talk in the privacy of their homes or
wherever, without interference from me, without inhibition, thought of time, gaps or paddings that the novel instrument afforded them. So it is important to investigate this question further to see whether respondents were mainly attracted to the fact that they did not need to organise their responses into well constructed sentences or paragraphs as they would normally do if they were writing their views down on paper. "Writing" is a 'considered' activity while "speaking" is 'spontaneous': apart from being taught how to prepare and deliver 'formal' speeches, at no time in our education system were we taught how to structure our sentences for expressing our views on tape or for holding a conversation with someone. We are taught formal "register" but we acquire "spontaneous" speech as we grow up. This is not to say that we do not think while we speak. In fact we do a lot of that. It is just that we hardly do any planning for speech. Our thoughts sometimes become clearer as we speak. Were these what motivated respondents to respond by tape? What other reasons can one advance for respondents' made of response?

Also, almost all the members who took part in my main study complained about the boring nature of the multiplicity of feedback devices used to elicit information from them. One member expressed a preference for the diary. How would such members react to giving feedback through tape? Will the use of this instrument yield a different type of data from them? Will they also respond by tape? The answer to this question will be discussed in chapter 13.
10.0 INTRODUCTION

10.1 Aims of the Fieldwork for Research Theme I

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10.2.1 Interpretation of the scheme

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10.7.5 Interviews

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10.0 INTRODUCTION

Section 9.6.1 put forward some research questions relating to research theme I that needed to be tested further. This chapter describes how the fieldwork was set up.

It starts by stating the aims of the fieldwork. Then, a figure that portrays the chronological development of the different aspects of the fieldwork in terms of methods and techniques is presented and interpreted. The chapter goes on to argue for the selection of the sample involved in this phase of the work. After this, rationales, procedures and in some cases purposes for the different activities, some of which merely aimed at orienting members to the tasks they were to be involved in will be discussed.

Various research tools were employed in the main study on research theme I for collecting data that should illuminate the various facets of the study. The aims of these tools are also discussed.

10.1 Aims Of The Fieldwork For Research Theme I

The aims of the fieldwork to address research questions 1-5 of section 9.6.1 involved:

- evaluating specially designed pilot distance learning modules in an attempt to determine their strengths and weaknesses for formative purposes and to assess their utility for the in-service training of lower secondary English teachers in Sierra Leone schools.

- investigating the potential of the distance learning approach in the in-service training of secondary teachers in the light of other INSET methods such as workshops, lectures, seminars, group discussions, etc.

These aims were addressed in terms of my research questions and also in an attempt to investigate, refine and consolidate earlier findings from my pilot study.

Although the research centres upon issues which have partly emanated from the findings from the pilot study, the research questions
are not inflexible. They merely serve as a framework within which the study is to develop. Question 5 makes allowances for unexpected issues to emerge in as naturalistic a manner as possible (see ch.6) because of the reflective nature of my enquiry. In other words, what I would see from time to time would alter my approach in the on-going process of the research.

10.2 Scheme of the Chronological Development of the Fieldwork

10.2.1 Interpretation of the scheme

The main features of the research during the fieldwork phase are portrayed chronologically in fig.10.1. I had made a preliminary selection of the sample schools (not shown in 10.1) in 1984 while I was in England preparing the materials (see section 10.3.1). I firmed up on the selection and subsequently sent letters to principals of the eight schools requesting access to conduct the research (see Appendix 10.1 for copy of letter). These letters were directed through the Institute of Education in Sierra Leone, since as a member of staff at the Institute, I was allowed to use my previous office and the premises as the location for my research. Unfortunately, the letters were not distributed before my arrival in Sierra Leone in mid-February. Consequently, the selection was only finalised during personal visits to the schools (see 10.4.1) between the 18th and 25th February (called the observation period in fig.10.1). This enabled me to 'kill two birds with one stone' since I was also able to carry out the observation during those visits. Details of the sample and the observations are given in sections 10.3 and 10.4 respectively.

As figure 10.1 also shows, several activities were carried out next (25th Feb - 1st March) in an attempt to orient participants to the import of the course. These included a workshop with tutors which took place between the 25th and 28th February, and an orientation course for members in which tutors also played an active part on the 1st March. The rationale and procedures for each of these events are
Fig 0.1 Scheme of chronological development of the fieldwork for research theme I in Sierra Leone - 18th February-31st May 1985

18 Feb 85 N.K. Selects schools

School 1 School 2 School 3 School 4 School 5 School 6 School 7 School 8

Research

Technique

Observation

N.K. selects tutors

Tutor 1 Tutor 2 Tutor 3 Tutor 4 Tutor 5 Tutor 6 Tutor 7 Tutor 8

Feb 85

N.K. conducts workshop with tutors

Day I

Opening ceremony and work on materials

Day II

Work on materials

Day III

Work on materials and tutors select members

Day IV

Work on materials

N.K. holds final evaluation session with tutors and members

Mar 85

Trying-out phase of DL/INSET materials

Mar

S.B. visits school and interviews tutors and members

Apr

First plenary with tutors

Second plenary with tutors

Apr

N.K. holds final evaluation session with tutors and members

Apr

S.B. school based discussion between tutors and members

May

S.B. = school based discussion between tutors and members
discussed in sections 10.5 and 10.6 respectively.

The different methods used to elicit feedback on the course during the actual trying out phase of the course are portrayed next in figure 10.1 - 4th March - 26th April.

Throughout the duration of the phase, feedback was elicited from both tutors and members through various methods like interviews, feedback sheets, questionnaires, etc. Also, two plenary sessions were held on the 18th March and 17th April to enable me to discuss members' progress and reactions to the course and to devise strategies for dealing with problems members encounter.

A final evaluation session was held on the 26th April. During this session, members and tutors discussed their views on the course as a whole. It was also on this date that members were asked to complete the end-of-course questionnaire. This sought information on the distance learning approach to learning in the light of traditional or conventional learning approaches members were already familiar with.

Since some members demonstrated some inhibitions or reservations about publicly expressing their views during this evaluation session, I provided further opportunities for taped school-based discussion sessions between tutors and their members. These were held at different times - based on the decisions of each tutor in each sample school, after the 26th April. The aims of these methods are discussed in section 10.7.

The data elicited through all these activities and methods are presented in chapter 11. Insights and findings that help to answer the research questions are discussed in chapter 12 where those issues that require further work are also highlighted.
10.3 The Sample

10.3.1 Sample schools

The initial concern of the fieldwork was to identify the target population for research theme I. In deciding on the number of schools to be selected from the fieldwork, eight seemed sufficiently large to gather an adequate amount of data while not being too large to require too great an outlay of time and effort. Seven of the schools were from the urban area and one was from the rural area (see second line of fig. 10.2). These were selected out of approximately one hundred and sixty schools in the country (see appendix 10.2).

Accessibility and proximity to my place of work with a view to reducing transportation costs in stringent economic conditions were the two criteria influencing my choice of schools. The severe foreign exchange situation which had led to inflation and economic crisis in Sierra Leone had tended to restrict researchers to the capital city where transportation is more accessible. However, since an issue of the fieldwork is to test the suitability of the course to Sierra Leonean school teachers in general, it was necessary to include at least one rural school in the sample. Inclusion of urban and rural schools would allow for comparison and generalisations about the sample. Also one teacher in the pilot sample expressed the expectation that rural schools with more limited facilities would be included since they are more likely to need and appreciate distance learning materials.

In the light of the above, seven schools were selected from Freetown, the capital of the country — although one of these could be considered rural as it is located on the outskirts of Freetown near the army barracks — since it is a military school. The eighth school is in a university town up country, one hundred and twenty seven miles away, in a road system that was considered accessible.
Fig. 10.2
Four out of the eight schools were long established and renowned schools. They are identified by name with permission:
The Annie Walsh Memorial School (AWMS), The St. Joseph's Secondary School (SJSS), The Freetown Secondary School for Girls (FSSG) and The St. Edwards Secondary School (SESS). The other four were fairly new schools which had not at that time established an academic reputation. They are The Juba Services Secondary School (JSSS), The Government Model Secondary School (GMSS), The Government Rokel Secondary School (GRSS) and The Njala University Secondary School (NUSS) located up country.

The selection did not form a uniform cross-section of teachers of English in Sierra Leone. However, the teachers selected represent a cross section of teachers in Sierra Leone because they included trained and untrained teachers. It should be noted that teachers from the fairly new schools are not as highly qualified as those from the old established schools.

10.3.2 Sample population

Figure 10.2 shows that there were twenty-eight teachers involved in the project. Eight were experienced teachers who acted as 'tutors'. The other twenty were lower secondary teachers of English. These acted as 'students' who used and commented on the materials. They were referred to as 'members' since it was considered inappropriate to refer to colleagues as 'students' of the course.

10.3.3 Tutors and tutors' roles

The eight tutors were selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience. This was necessary because they were to act as teacher trainers directing and monitoring the practical component of the course and feeding it back to me. All the tutors selected had at least ten
years teaching experience. In fact two of them were heads of the department of English in their respective schools.

Since their role was considered important, both the instructions given in the workshop and the advanced written instructions provided in the handbook for tutors served to inform and develop in them a sense of commitment to the project. I tried to get them to be committed to the course and made them even feel so involved that they could see themselves as part of the innovation team. One way of doing this seemed to be to give them the power to amend and re-design the materials during an initial workshop session (see section 10.5) before they were given out to the teachers. Many experts have commented on the importance of involving the client group in such a project. According to one report:-

"If the client group is involved in planning and preparing the material, it will ensure that the material is in line with their felt needs and be more meaningful for them. Further, it will make them interested in the programme and feel responsible for it. It will also improve the material, because their contributions are likely to make it related to the conditions under which they work.

(Report on Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, 1980)

As long established and current practitioners in the field, they were in a position to restructure the materials to suit the needs of their teachers. Their detailed role, as spelt out in the handbook for tutors involved:-

1. Giving course texts to teachers to study
2. Ensuring that activities are carried out
3. Recording the scores and time taken to complete each activity
4. Giving immediate feedback on these activities to the members.
5. Marking course assignments
6. Observing some members' lessons informally while they are taking the course
7. Giving occasional tutorials for advice and motivation related to the content of the course
8. Forwarding completed activity sheets to me
9. Encouraging members to continue with the course
10. Giving advice on the priorities and perspectives related to the course; clarifying jargon and even encouraging teachers to depart from the perceived 'gospel' of the course when necessary
11. Giving moral support and creating a co-operative atmosphere among the course participants
12. Encouraging peer observation among the members
13. Recording members' difficulties with materials to feed back to me

Tutors were asked to select members from their schools to take part in the project. This was to be done on the third day of the workshop when they were also to hand out handbooks for members.

10.3.4 Members and members' roles

There were twenty project members. These were selected by the tutors from each of their respective schools. Members were selected on the basis of those the tutors felt needed a course of this nature and they handed out the handbook for members to them as soon as they selected them. Four of the more experienced tutors, including two who were also heads of their subject departments, agreed to tutor three members each. The other four tutors agreed to tutor two members each.

The members' basic role was to study the materials and complete tasks which were designed to guide their thoughts and to measure the practicality and relevance of the activities provided in the distance learning materials.

They were given a handbook which contained directions for evaluating both the materials and the distance learning method of learning. Members were asked to complete the activities at leisure and at home or wherever they chose. Although a rough timetable was given to them to serve as a guide for completion of each unit, they were allowed some flexibility in completing the units in their own time and pace. More
specifically, their role was:-

(i) to read the study guide and refer to the specific reading extracts in the 'book of extracts' as and when they were directed to do so in the study guide

(ii) to complete activity sheets, exercises and assignments, some of which were designed to assess their comprehension of the materials and submit to their tutors who might assess them or choose a suitable time for discussion

(iii) to complete feedback sheets at the end of each unit, which sought their views on the effectiveness and relevance of various aspects of the course

(iv) to try out some practical activities in their classrooms

(v) to try to work with a partner to ward off the isolation factor inherent in distance learning and help maintain their motivation and to record their progress with their partners on progress charts

(vi) to write their views on the course as a whole or on their day to day experiences which may help or hinder the progress of their work in a personal diary that was given to them

At any of these stages, members were free to contact their personal tutors for help and guidance if necessary.

10.4 The Observation

The scheme which portrays the chronological development of the fieldwork (see section 10.2) indicates that classroom observations were carried out at the same time that the selection of sample was being finalised. This means that for a portrayal of the 'true' chronological development of the fieldwork, I should have discussed the observation either before or immediately after the discussion of the sample. However, since observation was one of the research tools, it will be discussed in section 10.7 - where other research tools employed in the study are discussed. I will, however, discuss how access was gained into the schools next.
10.4.1 Negotiating access for the observation

My request to have the Institute select schools in advance of my arrival was not honoured. Consequently, on arrival, I personally took request letters to each school. The request with accompanying materials to the rural school was sent by a bearer since it was not convenient for me to reach them easily and it was essential that the schools be contacted early - given the limited time available to me.

The principals in five of the schools acceded and gave permission for me to observe the teachers at work. The other three principals who were from the old established schools had reservations since they felt the project would interfere with the regular programme in their schools. They eventually agreed to accommodate me where possible.

Each principal discussed the selection of tutors with me before deciding on who to select as I had made it clear that I would prefer the head of the English department or a senior teacher who had had at least ten years teaching experience.

Once the tutors were selected I met with each of them and handed over the tutors' handbook, informed them about the proposed workshop that was to take place the following week and went to some classrooms to observe.

10.5 The Workshop (see fig.10.1)

10.5.1 Rationale and purposes

Regarding the rationale for the workshop, I had written the materials for the use of Sierra Leonean teachers of English on the basis of my experience and understanding of the teaching of English in one secondary school in Sierra Leone, about three years ago. The whole idea of asking eight key experienced teachers who were to become tutors of the course to attend a workshop at the onset of the fieldwork phase was
to update the knowledge and assumptions I expressed in the distance learning materials about the teaching situation in Sierra Leone on the basis of the up-to-date knowledge and experiences of my tutors who were current practitioners in the field in a collaborative research fashion.

This phase was also considered necessary because it is only experienced Sierra Leonean teachers, who have been and are practitioners in the field, that will know the system well enough to know how best to help or guide their no-so-experienced counterparts. Moreso, the possibility of refreshing their knowledge cannot be ruled out.

Hawes (1978) underscores this in the following:-

"... in most cases, materials are best designed by teams rather than individuals (though final editing must be left to one person). It is important that teams contain a large proportion of teachers who will actually have to use the materials either in schools or colleges ... so the enthusiast must be exploited but at the same time, controlled probably through a panel structure which allows the sceptics a full share both in the pre-planning and in the criticism of material produced by the enthusiasts...."

(Hawes, 1978)

In the light of the above quotation, I saw myself as the 'enthusiast' who needed to work in close consultation with a panel so that a balance can be achieved between my views and those of my tutors to ensure a successful and relevant project.

In short, the main rationale behind the workshop was to ensure that my tutors react to the materials and collaborate with me in effecting modifications they deemed necessary before giving the materials out to the members who will have to field-test them.

The purposes of the workshop were:-

- tutors would be exposed to the materials
- tutors would critically appraise the materials
- tutors would adapt or amend materials as necessary in the light of their teachers' existing needs
- tutors would understand and map out their roles as catalysts in the project
10.5.2 Procedures

At the beginning of the first session of the workshop, that is day 1 (see appendix 10.3 for timetable of workshop) the tutors and I decided on a 'modus operandi'. Two tutors, out of the nine of us, were asked to take extensive notes as the sessions progressed. In addition, all the sessions were tape-recorded and one of the tutors was put in charge of the tape recorder.

The approach adopted was that each unit was read aloud and participants were free to comment on aspects that were important to them. This approach seemed appropriate because members had expressed a preference for group rather than individual critique of the materials. Also, one tutor was put in charge of leading the discussion on each unit. They were each asked to submit to me short written rationales for changes made in those units they were in charge of by the end of the project.

Some essential modifications were made by tutors which aided the updating and revision of the course before it was handed out to members for the trying out phase. These are discussed in chapter 11. The insights gained from this exercise and their relevance to my research questions will be discussed in chapter 12.

10.6 The Orientation Course

10.6.1 Rationale and purposes

Regarding the rationale for the orientation course, the decision to set one whole day aside on the last day of the workshop for an orientation course (see fig.10.2) emanated from the need to orient the twenty members who are to actually put the materials into use - to the whole concept of the course. The tutors and I agreed that this was necessary for the smooth beginning of the course. The programme for the orientation course is laid out in Appendix 10.4.
The purposes of the orientation course were:--

- introducing (a) the concept of distance learning to members
- study skills for learning at a distance
- helping members to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses/limitations as a starting point for the course
- helping members and tutors to interact
- enabling members to insert the necessary corrections in the materials as amended by tutors in their own copies of the materials

10.6.2 Procedures

The orientation course was characterised by various activities. With the help of tutors, the aims of the course were explained to members. Two short talks were given by two tutors on the roles of members and tutors. The fact that the tutors were willing and felt able to explain the nature of their roles as well as members' roles show that they had not only understood the aims of the course but they had also developed much commitment to the course and felt a part of the innovation. None of them was hesitant to help with orienting members to the course. The contents of the two speeches by the two tutors are in appendices 10.5 and 10.6 and these also show that they had assimilated the whole concept of the course.

The handbooks (see appendix 10.7 for copy of handbook for members) which had been distributed to members on the day they were selected by their tutors, were also discussed and members were given the opportunity to ask for clarification where necessary. Members seemed to have assimilated the ideas in the handbook. However, this discussion reassured me further and those who may not have been motivated to read it would become aware of the details.

Those units which contained what I termed 'before reading' activities were completed. These were activities which sought to find out how knowledgeable members were on certain topics in the materials before
they were given the opportunity to read the text on those topics. The tutors and I considered it important to ensure that members completed the 'before reading' sections before the materials were handed out to them to ensure that the activities achieve their aims.

A tentative timetable of completion dates for each unit, which had been drawn up by the tutors and I during the workshop, was handed out to members. The idea of setting deadlines was to prevent members from growing too complacent and to motivate them to work through the course materials fast since this was a pilot project and I had a set date for return to my study location. Both the tutors and I felt that the fact that we had given them the impression that they could work at their own pace and in their own time might make probably some of them procrastinate in completing the tasks. In a way, these deadlines were supposed to guide them albeit we decided to be flexible if they did not meet them. This would seem to mean that members could not enjoy the flexibility that other distance learners enjoy.

Another activity which occupied part of the day was the dictation to members of changes and modifications that were made on those copies of the materials tutors and I worked with. Such changes and modifications needed to be made on the other copies of the materials members were to use. This was a very useful activity as tutors and I did not find time to insert the changes on the other copies of the materials during the workshop. In order to facilitate this potentially tedious exercise, two other tutors were put in charge of dictating the changes while members did the insertions. This proved to be a rather efficient way of ensuring that all the copies of the materials were corrected consistently.

I gave members a talk on study skills for learning at a distance (see appendix 10.8). This was because there were indications that members needed some assistance in organising their time to enable them to cope with with new form of learning. During the course of the talk, they were asked to construct a timetable (see appendix 10.9) depicting how they spend their leisure hours
currently. This exercise revealed that members rarely give serious consideration to planning their 'after school' hours. (It was great fun making these 'timetables!') It at least alerted them to the importance of giving conscious thought to how each hour of their day should be spent. This, I thought, would help them to spend their leisure hours meaningfully in future. In short, this exercise helped to raise their awareness of the importance of planning their day.

Personal diaries on which members were to record their day-to-day experiences throughout the duration of the course were handed out to them with instructions on how to use them. They were told to write down their positive or negative views about the course while they were doing it. I considered this a good method of collecting data as members would not be inhibited by the presence of an interviewer or other colleagues when writing their views down. It seemed to provide them an opportunity of recording their personal development and growth during the course. These were to be returned at the end of the course.

A questionnaire which sought information on members' background and previous experience, if any, on INSET was given out to them and tutors helped me to monitor members as they filled them in. The aims and reasons for using this objective and non-traditional tool will be spelt out in section 10.7.2 since it was one of the research tools used in the study.

10.7 The Research Tools And Their Aims

A variety of research 'tools' were employed in collecting data for the main study on research theme I. This is in keeping with my methodological stance with regard to triangulation (see ch.6). I have used both quantitative and qualitative research tools in keeping with Parlett's views that:

"the study will evolve using a combination of different techniques." (Parlett, 1972)
This section will describe the aims of those tools that were considered useful for this particular research in an attempt to give an insight into why particular tools were picked out from the 'tool bag' at my disposal. Furthermore, as I stated in chapter 6, I had to make a sensible choice of 'tools' that are adaptive to the circumstances of each stage of the study - progressive focusing - see ch.6.

10.7.1 Observation

Since the first step for any new set of work for researchers like me who work within a non-traditional paradigm is an open-ended phase which usually involves observation, the first research tool I picked out of the tool bag was 'observation'.

As a first step to addressing my research questions, I carried out classroom observations to discover teachers' general teaching styles. It was hoped that this would eventually provide a basis for deciding on what precisely to investigate further in this research through other methods like interviews. I believed that there was a need to first observe them at work and form preliminary opinions about their attitudes to work and their existing teaching styles before they begin work on the materials. Then after they begin work on the materials, they can be interviewed about their experiences with the materials.

If I carried out the fieldwork in this order, I would gain better insights into how they feel, think and respond to the course. I felt the need to go into the classroom to see for myself the methods of instruction in use, the frequency of their use, their organisation, introduction and processing.

The other purpose of the observation was more specific to my course. It stemmed from the need to validate the model of teaching English I had formulated three years ago when I was teaching English in a secondary school in Sierra Leone. I had described this model based on my 'old' knowledge of the teaching situation in Sierra Leone on p.14 in module A of the
materials (see appendix 11.1). Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that:-

"Observation allows the researcher to build to tacit knowledge, both his own and that of members of the group." (Guba and Lincoln, 1981)

The nature of my enquiry involved building on knowledge I had about the teaching situation in Sierra Leone. It seemed that open ended observation with little or no structure would enable me to explain and interpret what I saw in the classrooms in the light of the information on classroom interaction in Sierra Leone that I already had. It would have been almost impossible for me to acquire such information if I had decided to use traditional interaction analysis like Flanders' interaction analysis. Hamilton and Delamont's (1974) view on observation helped to dissuade me from venturing in that mode. According to them:-

"Most interaction analysis systems ignore the context in which the data is collected... are usually concerned with only overt observable behaviour." (Hamilton and Delamont, 1974)

After observing each lesson, the open-ended and unstructured nature of the observation technique would give me the opportunity of discussing most of what I observed with the teacher whose class I was observing. In this way, I would be able to cross check assumptions I had recorded.

I also wanted to establish some degree of rapport with the teachers and gain acceptance as their colleague rather than as an intruder or inspector. In this way I would be likely to get honest responses from them when I came to interview them.

Procedures: I observed the teachers as they interacted with each other in the staff room and held informal discussions with them. My main interest however was in observing them teaching.

The method used was to sit at the back of the class and follow the lesson, sharing textbooks with students sitting next to me. I took
ongoing notes of the processes as well as the teachers' conduct. (I did not use a structured observation guide since this was not appropriate for my purposes.)

The questions cited for this phase of the study were based on points I had raised in module A. I wanted to cross check these points. Since the observation carried out on the first day did not yield any useful information beyond a mere confirmation of the views contained in my critique in module A, I contemplated discontinuing the observation. However, I was impressed with Dearden's (1979) experience of the influence of the 'insider perspective' on the development of his research. The following describes his experience:

"First, simply being aware of the problem kept me on guard. Second, throughout the first term, I invited five fellow research students into the lab for approximately ten minutes then go away and write down their general impressions...One of the consequences of these 'outsider' reports was to sensitise me to the lack of interaction between groups of students, a phenomenon I had not noticed, though it stood out to four of the five observers." (Dearden, 1979)

Dearden's second strategy seemed to me a very effective means of cross-checking one's data. However, since only one week had been allocated to observation, I felt I would not have enough time to try out his strategy. So I modified my original strategy instead and included a discussion of the lesson with the class teacher at the end of each lesson. For example, at the end of each lesson I sat in, I would hold a short, informal discussion with the teacher in charge based on the notes I had taken in class. I would say, for example:

"Miss F, I noticed that you were using substitution drills all the time. Do you do this always or have you merely used this method today?"

"Miss B, you seem to lay a lot of emphasis on external exams in your school. Why is this so?"
"Miss S, Oh yes, I noted that you were busy trying to encourage your students to analyse the structure of the language in your grammar lesson this morning. Do you do this all the time?"

"Miss J, so you do all your teaching in English. Yes, you use the direct method and do not use or refer to your pupils' local languages."

It was sometimes difficult to develop a discussion since teachers tended to answer in monosyllables. My probes of such limited responses tended to produce 'little more' but they helped to confirm most of the assumptions I made in Module A. I tried very hard not to ask the questions as if I was expressing admiration or condemnation for the methods of teaching they were employing. I was able to confirm all the points I had stated in module A by using this method.

10.7.2 Orientating questionnaire

As the title of this section implies, the reason why this questionnaire was administered at the start of the fieldwork on orientation day was to orient me to much needed background information on my sample. I felt the need to get concrete, factual information about the background of the members of my sample at the outset of the course. Since this kind of information can only be more conveniently got through this objective method of data collection, I am inclined to agree with Posner and Hoagland's (1981) view that:

"the questionnaire helps to describe the tip of the iceberg" (Posner and Hoagland, 1981)

I needed at this stage to merely get an idea of the education and educational experiences each member of my sample has had before and since becoming an English teacher. I also needed information on the methods of learning they were accustomed to, their qualifications, etc. This was to see whether the data would yield any information which would eventually illuminate the data that I would be collecting regarding my research questions.
The fact that this questionnaire had to be analysed before I proceeded with other methods like interviews justifies the need I felt to get a feel for my sample population before I ventured into the field through the quickest means possible!

10.7.3 Feedback sheets

Members were asked to complete these at the end of each unit. The purpose of this was to get their perceptions on the relevance, clarity and effectiveness of different 'aspects' of the course materials which characterise each individual learning unit with the hope that such perceptions would assist future revisions of the materials.

Each feedback sheet (see appendix 11.3) asked various questions on each of the 'aspects' of the course like 'overview' 'study guide', etc. which were considered 'new' for my members who essentially belong to the traditional school of teaching and learning by face-to-face methods like the lecture method.

10.7.4 End-of-course questionnaire

This was completed by members on final evaluation day - 26th April (see section 11.2). The main thrust of the questionnaire was to encourage members to reflect on the experience of the DL/INSET course they had just followed and express their views about it in the light of previous experiences of other kinds of INSET activities or 'other forms of learning' for those members who may not have attended an INSET course before. It was also an attempt to give members another opportunity of identifying problems and issues found in the course. Some of the questions asked that members specifically comment on the DL/INSET course in the light of the learning methods they experienced during their college days.

This approach was deemed necessary in my non-traditional research because I wanted to be able to use triangulation (see ch.6) and to approach
my findings from a different number of directions to enable me to cross-check findings elicited through interviews and other methods.

In fact some of the questionnaire items were similar to those questions they had answered before either through interviews or other methods picked from the 'tool bag'. This was necessary as the whole idea was to try and ensure that the problem at hand is 'illuminated' through various techniques and methods and by viewing the problem from different angles.

The questionnaire was open-ended. This allowed me to get an insight into members' perceptions. In addition, it gave members an opportunity to express their views with greater anonymity and without restrictions.

Another reason for using this questionnaire was because it was different in 'purpose' from the first one. Since I wanted to be in a position to compare the type of data emerging from a questionnaire - the conventional method of evaluating at a distance (see ch.13) - and the type of data emerging from evaluating at a distance through audio cassette tape-recording, I needed to have a firm idea of the various uses of a questionnaire so that I would be in a better position to assess its utility in terms of the 'quality' of data it yields.

10.7.5 Interviews

The findings from the observation, workshop and first questionnaire provided a general framework on which the interviews were based - progressive focussing - (see ch.6) and offered relevant background information on my members' current teaching styles, their experience of independent learning, and their in-service training experiences, if any. This means that one important factor in my approach is that data collection and analyses were sometimes undertaken concurrently during the different phases of the study. Prior analyses informed me of important areas to
focus on during subsequent phases of the study.

Since I was very keen on getting my members' perception of the DL/INSET course as a whole, I considered semi-structured interviews to be the most appropriate tool - as this would enable me to probe illuminating and insightful comments expressed by members further and ask for clarification where points were unclear. It would also give my members ample freedom to express themselves fully. Thus, during each interview, many of the questions asked were based largely on my members' response to earlier questions.

As has been highlighted in chapter 6, the nature of my research dictates that I use methods which would NOT lead to a neglect of the:-

"interpretative and reflective character of human action or - in other words - it only makes (would only make) visible those elements which are quantifiable."

(Terhart, 1982)

This view is endorsed by Posner and Hoagland (1981) in the following:-

"the shape of the submerged portion of the iceberg must be described with more probing techniques."

(Posner and Hoagland, 1981)

The interview technique became useful for me only after I had analysed the first and orienting questionnaire which had helped to describe the tip of the iceberg (see section 10.7.2).

Both tutors and members were interviewed at regular intervals throughout the duration of the course. These sought information on tutors and members' general perceptions on the course as a whole, i.e. materials and methods.

Each interview lasted between 35 and 45 minutes. They were all semi-structured to allow me to get as free and open a response as possible. All interviews were tape-recorded. All of them were transcribed verbatim - some by an experienced Sierra Leonean secretary who is familiar with the Sierra Leonean speech pattern and the others by myself.
10.7.6 Other methods

These included personal diaries, progress charts, evaluation workshop, school based discussions between tutors and members, personal discussion with both tutors and members, two plenary sessions with tutors which were used in the study in an attempt to get a total picture of the situation. These instruments would allow me to pay heed to emerging and unexpected issues and to respond to them.
## FINDINGS FROM THE MAIN STUDY ON RESEARCH THEME I

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11.0 INTRODUCTION

A multiplicity of methods (for triangulation, see ch.6) was used to monitor the distance learning course during the fieldwork. The investigation was essentially semi-structured. It is rather difficult to present the analysis of this type of data because of its very nature. To circumvent this difficulty, an attempt will be made to discuss the data in the chronological order of the research tools used to elicit it and described in chapter 10. Accordingly, the findings from the different research tools will be presented in this chapter as follows:-

(i) observation
(ii) workshop
(iii) orientation course
(iv) interviews and other methods

In the final sections of the work, an attempt will be made to draw together all the findings from these different methods in a discussion which will also try to highlight issues that require further work. Then a rationale will be put forward for investigating these issues further in the next phase of the work. (I must point out that the relevance of all these findings to the research questions will be discussed in chapter 13 because they require investigation.)

11.1 Findings From The Observation

The observation and subsequent discussions with teachers observed provided me with confirmation of the model or critique of the current methods of teaching English in Sierra Leone schools - outlined on p.14 of module A (see appendix 11.1). Since this was the major thrust of the observation I felt reasonably satisfied with my findings.
Although I went into these classrooms mainly in a bid to validate the aforementioned model, I came out with another set of information which I did not know before and which did not take anything away from my validation of the model. Such findings (which will be referred to as incidental findings ... relate to research question 5 - other issues) provided useful insights into classroom processes as well as teachers' attitudes to teaching English. Among these 'incidental' findings were:-

1. Only about three of the sample schools were using the textbook - Modern Method English - as their main text. The DL/INSET materials rested on the assumption that all schools used this textbook, hence they were written around it.

2. I noticed that the number of pupils in each classroom, especially in those of the newer schools, were over 50. These very high numbers made it almost impossible for teachers to give pupils any individual attention. Also some of the pupils were inattentive. In a discussion with some of the teachers at the end of their lessons, they expressed the view that they could not give their pupils as many assignments as they would like to because that would involve a heavy working load. In fact, one of the teachers made the following comment:-

"If the Ministry can increase the pupil:teacher ratio, which now stands at 50:1 in most schools, by training more teachers, a class of 50 pupils can then be easily divided into two and given to two separate teachers to handle. This will make work easier for us."

3. Other aspects I noticed were the lack of teaching aids for teachers. This is not just 'teaching aids' like language charts, pictures, laboratories, audio cassettes or radios and tape recorders. In some classes, teachers did not even have any chalk!

4. The other point that was evident was the fact that about four pupils had to share one textbook among them. There were even some pupils
without textbooks and I found out in subsequent discussions with teachers that the prescribed texts are either not available or, if they were, their prices were so prohibitive that many pupils found it impossible to buy them. This seemed to interfere with the smooth progress of the lesson.

11.2 Findings From The Workshop

The findings from the workshop revealed that it is rarely possible to ensure that after piloting course materials, they will be free from inaccuracies and ambiguities.

Even though seven members of my pilot study group in Britain who are quite 'au fait' with the English teaching situation in Sierra Leone had given feedback on the course materials (see section 9.5) and identified typographical errors, errors in numbering of pages, activities and assignments, grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, etc., my tutors identified similar mistakes. This kind of feedback was very useful as it demonstrated that there is a need for continuous on-going feedback in any distance learning course at every stage of the course's development.

However, one possible explanation for this seeming obsession with 'trivia' that both the members of my pilot study group and my tutors demonstrated by so lengthily and commonly highlighting spelling mistakes, page numbers, etc. might be because it is just possible that those were easy points to raise. Since members were aware that I needed feedback, it is just possible that they might pick on trivial things that are so easy to see.

Another possible reason might be that members are insecure about their positions and will prefer to give, for example, feedback they consider 'safe' like identifying spelling mistakes rather than expressing their views on some other controversial or intricate aspects of the materials. By doing this, they will feel that they are
contributing and they are neither being dangerous nor compromising themselves or really giving their opinions which might just not be right.

Also, spelling errors have traditionally been emphasised in teaching and teachers in Sierra Leone tend to see correction of errors as an essential part of their teaching. It might also be a safe area for comment since it does not reveal any personal or professional limitations as comments on content and strategy would indicate.

Of course, the above points are highly likely but will be impossible to validate. So it is a point to investigate further by other workers in the field.

Initially, the tutors were confining their comments to the aforementioned kinds of comments - spelling mistakes, etc. Despite this, by asking them probing questions and by myself initiating and giving them examples of the kinds of comments I would like them to make, we were able to arrive at some other kinds of comments. Their comments revealed that there were some assumptions about the teaching of English in Sierra Leone on which I based my construction of the course which had to be changed or modified. Although these modifications did not alter the main thrust of the text in the light of the main points I was trying to make, points like these had to be updated for the sake of accuracy. The following illustrate my point and I have grouped them under the following headings:-

a. Arrangement of materials 
b. My misconception of the textbook in wide use 
c. Conformity of style and content with stated aims 
d. Use of assignments 
e. Teaching activities

These will now be discussed.

(a) Arrangement of materials:

Strategies for remedying deficiencies in the teaching situation must be stated immediately after such deficiencies are identified in the text.
Tutors argued that if these suggestions are stated immediately, members will learn better. They unanimously felt that if the suggestions came in later modules or units (as I said I had done) members would either lose the information or get confused.

I considered this a very useful suggestion as it supported one of my existing findings (see ch.9). One member of my pilot study group had raised the point before. So that although I explained to the tutors that my original aim was to diagnose the teaching problems in module A and suggest remedies in later modules, we all came to an agreement that hints for remedying such problems should be included in module A. Then, some time was spent discussing and working out some of these suggestions for inclusion in the module.

(b) Misconception about the textbook in wide usage:

One major misconception which was corrected was the expectation that the textbook - Modern Method English - was commonly used in all schools in Sierra Leone since the Ministry of Education had instituted that regulation.

It was observed that only a few schools use that textbook. Consequently we had to delete the term 'single' from the phrase used in my materials - "single most widely used textbook". A statement to the effect that members from schools which use other textbooks could quote examples from those books when they want to try out activities in their classes was inserted in the materials.

As I had written the materials while I was in Surrey, I was in no position to know whether schools adhered to the Ministry's regulations or not. The fact that my tutors are more knowledgeable and more 'au fait' with the current teaching situation puts them in a position to comment intelligently on the real situation. This brings to the fore the
importance stressed by one of the members of the pilot study group of
giving Sierra Leonean educators a say in the creating of the materials.
So this finding thus supported an earlier finding. However, it is one
of the points that will be investigated further.

(c) Conformity of style and content with stated aims:

Conformities of style and content with stated aims are noticed.
For example, it was pointed out that the scheme of work in module B
was not written in conformity with the stated objective of the unit.
The specimen scheme in module B was supposed to enable teachers to learn
how to make schemes of work from their national syllabi at secondary
level but it was based on the textbook - Modern Method English - rather
than the syllabus.

This was a new finding. I was surprised that others did not notice
this at the pilot stage. This supports the need expressed earlier for
continuous feedback in any distance learning course.

(d) Use of assignments:

Changes were made to the assignments at the end of each unit.
There was a consensus of opinion that this would create problems for
teachers as they were too many and time consuming. It was also considered
that this would alienate members from the course. Some of them were
either deleted or changed. For example, instead of asking members to
'state' or 'discuss' points, they were asked to 'list' points. All
tutors were of the opinion that the words 'state' and 'discuss' connote
lengthy answers whereas 'list' suggests shorter answers which members
may prefer to do.

Here again the tutors demonstrated that they know their teachers
better and can tell what assignments they could manage. This also
supports the need to have Sierra Leonean educators in a course of this
nature.
(e) Teaching Activities:

Tutors generally felt that there was the need to include more suggestions for teaching activities and teaching practice - not necessarily whole lessons - even parts of lessons would be better than asking members who are already overburdened by their heavy school timetables to write out lengthy essays.

A few of such activities were designed for the three units in module C.

This finding is a new one and supports the view that distance learning materials can best be produced by a team rather than an individual. It was a very useful suggestion and the fascinating part of it is that it did not take us very long to write out the activities. It also goes to show that many heads are often better than one in writing a distance learning course!

11.3 Findings From The Orientation Course

Since the orientation course was organised mainly to orient teachers to the dictates of the course, there were no findings worthy of note apart from the findings from the questionnaire administered at this course. It does, however, demonstrate the active participation of tutors and members alike in the course. The role played by especially the tutors shows that there is a lot to gain by involving Sierra Leonean teacher educators in a course.

11.3.1 Findings from the orientation course - the questionnaire

The findings from the questionnaire (see appendix 11.2) indicated that the majority of the members obtained their educational experience within the last five years. None of them qualified more than fifteen years ago. This is not a surprising revelation because tutors were asked to select members who they considered needed a course of this
nature as the course was designed primarily for those who have not had much teaching experience.

Although a section of the questionnaire requested information on members who have the Teachers' Certificate (TC), none of them had it. This is no surprise as the teachers' certificate is awarded to those who teach in primary schools. Most of the members indicated that they had the Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC) which is the qualification required for teachers of lower forms of secondary schools.

Nine of the members had the Bachelor of Arts degree with the Diploma of Education (BA, Dip.Ed). This means that these members opted for the professional teaching qualification after gaining their first and general degree.

When asked to state the number of hours outside school hours spent on studying during their teacher training days, 3 members indicated that they spent five or more hours studying outside college hours. This question aimed at finding out the extent of the experience of independent study members had had. The findings show that most of them were not accustomed to independent study during their leisure hours.

The other question which related to their experience with self-instruction yielded a similar result. Only three members indicated such experience. This means that the distance learning approach would be new to most members since the majority of them indicated that they had only experienced formal lectures. A few gave the impression that they had participated in workshops and role-play sessions. Less than fifteen per cent of them had experienced the use of audio-visual materials, programmed texts, practical demonstrations, language laboratory work or project work. The inference from this is that almost all the members belong to the traditional school of the chalk and talk method of teaching and learning and the lecture method.

As far as in-service education and training is concerned, members indicated that they had had little or no experience of it during their
teaching careers. This may be due to the paucity of INSET courses offered in the country.

Members were asked to state their preference for different learning methods. The indication was that members preferred lectures, group discussions and workshops in that order, with a handful expressing a preference for seminars.

Most members did not respond to the question relating to whether they were satisfied with the range of INSET methods they have been using at the INSET course. This may imply that most of them have not had any previous exposure to INSET. The two who responded expressed dissatisfaction with the methods they had experienced. The only member who gave a reason for her dissatisfaction said that:-

"there wasn't enough time devoted to the course"

When asked about how much time members devote to independent study for preparation of lesson notes and improving their knowledge of teaching skills, about 40% of them stated that they spent between five and ten hours per week. This shows that members do not devote a lot of time to enhancing their knowledge. One reason for this may be due to lethargy. However, in spite of the lack of motivation to do independent study expressed, most members stated that they do try to look for other resources to use in their teaching. Seventy per cent of them indicated that they try to use audio-visual aids, referenced texts and supplementary materials.

There was an indication that many members were not familiar with INSET courses as a resource for improving their teaching, but eighteen of them agreed that they felt the need for INSET courses in the following areas:-

i. developing teaching skills
ii. developing teaching aids
Only a few of them indicated that they used the library as a resource for improving their teaching, although they did not feel that the libraries contained up-to-date professional journals.

Members in general did not know about the existence of other INSET methods. In fact, only three of them indicated that they have read about INSET at a distance in open university articles or journals. For the majority of them, this course was the first opportunity they have had of learning about it. This goes to show that many members have a rather limited knowledge of current events in the teaching of English generally.

11.4 Findings From End-of-unit Feedback Sheets

The findings from end of unit feedback sheets (see appendix 11.3) revealed that the frequency of respondents' responses decreased as one goes through their responses on the various 'aspects' - overview, objectives, activities, assignments, study guide and general - that characterise each learning unit from module A to C4. This could be attributed to the fact that they just could not be bothered to respond to some of the issues. They had indicated to their tutors that they found the filling in of the feedback sheets a rather tedious exercise. Although I categorically insisted that their tutors should point out to them that each feedback sheet sought information that may differ from unit to unit, they still seemed to find this a boring exercise. Similar points were raised to me during interviews. As I present their feedback in this section, I will identify those 'aspects' in 'those units' as and when they occur.

I will discuss their responses to each 'aspect' by first stating each 'aspect' and then discussing the nature of the feedback received.

Overview: Most of the respondents agreed that including an overview at the beginning of each module helped them to understand the aims of
the module. The reason most of them gave was that it helped them to understand the aims of the module.

The response to the question on the clarity of any part of the overview showed that the frequencies of respondents' responses decreased. This affirms my assumption about the tedium the feedback sheets created.

However, those who responded indicated that the overview was clear enough except for two who complained about the overview for module C. They identified the following as being unclear:

- the first statement in module C
- the language study aspect of module C

Module C seemed to have too many new ideas introduced at once, so their response is not surprising. Since their reaction to this aspect was further confirmed during interviews with them, this module needs to be revised accordingly.

Sixteen out of the twenty respondents felt that each module should have an overview at the beginning of the text. Their main reason for this being that it prepares them for what they are about to learn in the module. Respondent 5 indicated that this was for her, the main difference between her college textbooks and the study guides as the former do not usually have advanced organisers like overviews.

Objectives: Generally, respondents seemed to be satisfied with the objectives. Almost all of them indicated that they did not ignore the objectives. In fact, the situation was such that some even read through them more than once and studied each one carefully. A good number of them indicated that they tried to analyse the meanings. The following quotes were typical:

"I considered them and reflected on whether they had been carried out efficiently at the end of the unit."

"I tried to see how best they were achieved at the end of each unit."

"I was not put off by the objectives, in fact they made me want to get into the subject matter of the units."
On average, respondents seemed to spend about eight minutes on each of the objectives in the unit. It was only a small number of respondents that indicated that they had some problems or difficulty in understanding some of the objectives. One of these respondents indicated that she had problems with the objectives for module C, unit 1. A few complained about the objectives of module B, unit 1. This was partly due to the fact that in that unit, respondents were asked to write out a detailed scheme of work they were not accustomed to writing.

All but one of the respondents felt that the objectives helped them to understand the text. The reasons given for this ranged from:

"Having the objectives at the back of my mind made the text easier to follow."

"the objectives motivated me to read further."

"they helped me to decide whether I should read the unit."

"they whetted my appetite to read on."

The one respondent who gave a negative feedback in this regard stated that the third objective of module A was not so helpful. This is a bit surprising especially because all the other members seemed to understand it. However, this merits further investigation by future workers in this field.

Activities: The activities in module A seemed to be the most popular set of activities for respondents. This is not surprising because they were specifically constructed in a manner that would get members interested in the rest of the materials. They were mainly 'before reading' and 'after reading' objective type activities which did not require any extended form of writing.

In the case of module B1, it was clear that respondents did not like the activity that required that they write out a detailed scheme of work which they were not accustomed to writing.

The activities in module C1 posed a lot of difficulty for respondents as members found the text of this unit difficult. This means
that modules B1 and C1 require substantial revision.

Respondents generally seemed to indicate that although some of the activities were difficult, they could have been completed if they had more time to do them. Some of their comments were:-

"I did not understand the activity"
"I don't think there is a need for such a detailed scheme of work"
"There were too many new and difficult concepts in module C1 and this prevented me from doing the activity"
"This idea of the 'communicative approach to teaching English' is new to me"
"The language of module C1 is too technical for me"

Also some major errors were found in the text. The errors identified were quite correct and these were errors made by me. It is however significant to note that even though the materials had gone through several revisions, there were still errors in the text. Since previous revisions did not identify these, it is important that the materials be revised again.

All the respondents, except two, felt that the activities would help members to assess their understanding of the materials covered in the text. One of the two who gave a reason for his negative response stated that:-

"the activities did not prove anything except ask us to restate what we have learnt in the unit"

In a way this was a positive response for me since that was the aim of the activities. Those who felt the activities were helpful made comments like:-

"the activities helped to assess us because members really need to know whether they have understood the materials in the text"

"the activities help us to stop and reflect on what we have learnt. This is what makes this course different from lectures for me."

The general comments on the activities can be summarised in the words of one of the respondents:-
"If members are able to do the activities, then it shows that they have understood what they have read."

Assignments: A little over half of the respondents responded to the questions relating to the assignments. This demonstrates either their lack of interest in the assignments or their general nonchalant attitude which they progressively demonstrated with regard to the feedback device. Also, it may be due to the fact that all the assignments that required essay-type answers proved unpopular. Other reasons advanced for their lack of interest are:-

"the wording was unclear"
"I couldn't find the answers to these"
"I didn't understand what you wanted me to do"

One respondent had something significantly different to say:-

"Nothing substantial is wrong with the assignments. I just couldn't find enough time to complete them."

This clearly indicates that the assignments were either too many or the deadlines for completion and submission were too tight for respondents. This means that the assignments should be revised.

A few of the respondents pointed out that there was no need for some of the assignments in units which had many activities. In great contrast to this view is that expressed by a handful who feel that:-

"the assignments are helpful as they help to test knowledge of the materials. This course is so very different from other INSET courses which do not provide such opportunities"

In general, those who favoured the idea of assignments felt that they were helpful but too many, whilst those who disliked the idea of assignments felt that in addition to there being so many, they were structured in a way that demanded too much of their time.

Study Guides: Most respondents seemed to feel that the study guides gave them a clear idea of how the course is structured. Only a few respondents gave negative responses to this question.

The most useful study guides identified by respondents were modules A, B3, C3 and C4. Reasons advanced for their choice are the following:-
"Module A helped me to realise how important it is to understand the reasons why we teach English in our schools and the linguistic spread of pupils in the classes we teach"

"Module B3 alerted me to easier ways of setting about my teaching activities"

"Module C3 provided a better way of approaching the teaching of reading for me"

"Module C4 made me realise how important it is to teach students how to organise their sentences in coherent paragraphs"

Respondents failed to identify areas in the study guide which were not needed. In the light of some of the adverse comments they had made about study guides B2 and C1, I wonder whether it is again because of the tedious nature of the feedback device. However, it is just possible that although they found these difficult, they still felt they were important or that their difficulties could have been overcome if they had had sufficient time to do them.

None of them suggested any information which they felt were missing in the study guides. This may be due to the fact that respondents did not think over the question carefully or that they just decided to accept what was presented to them as being adequate for their teaching needs.

Since there had been the suggestion at the pilot study stage of the materials that a unit on remedial English teaching should be written for members, I was surprised that a similar suggestion did not come from the teachers themselves.

The overall picture that emerged from the nature of the responses to this aspect is that since this was the second to last question in each feedback sheet, respondents felt tired by the time they got to it. There is thus a definite need to investigate respondents' views on the tedious nature of this particular feedback device.
General: Most of the respondents seemed to have spent a considerable number of hours on module C, unit 1. This is mainly because many of the ideas in this particular unit were new to members and the technical terms used were many for them. Also, many teachers tend to find the linguistic aspect of teaching English quite difficult. There is also the possibility that since I am more familiar with the teaching of literature, I did not do enough justice to this aspect of the course. More work needs to be done on this particular unit with expert help and advice.

The only modules that members did not seem to have any difficulty with were modules A, C3 and C4. One reason why they found module A so easy could be because I intentionally tried to make the course easy at the beginning by including easier activities and assignments to get teachers motivated. As the course progressed, the modules became progressively difficult. However, since they did not complain about the last two modules - modules C3 and C4, it could be due to the clarity of the materials. Because of my literature background, giving guidelines on how to teach reading and writing skills was not as difficult for me as giving guidelines on how to teach language, listening or speaking skills.

In general the overall picture portrayed by respondents is that of a situation in which they felt that the modules were very relevant and interesting but too detailed and time-consuming.

11.5 Findings From End-of-course Questionnaires

Eighteen members filled in this questionnaire on final evaluation day. The results of question 1 (see appendix 11.4) indicate that almost half of the members encountered problems with issues that needed to be clarified and with responding to questions. Most respondents did not seem to have any problems with expressing their views and raising issues.
Half of the respondents felt the need to exchange ideas. This response may be due to the distance factor between tutors and members and between members and partners which is inherent in many distance learning courses.

With reference to question 2, many respondents indicated that they employed a variety of techniques to solve problems they encountered in the course. Some stated that they tried to read further in various libraries, others discussed with English lecturers, others guessed, some read the materials over and over again and others said they discussed with their tutors and partners. It must be noted that respondents who discussed with their tutors and partners indicated that they found those discussions useful although they were few and far between. There is an implication for instituting a better system since tutors and partners are not easily available for discussions. One respondent pointed out that she found discussions with her partner most useful when they both encountered similar problems.

Thirteen of those who responded to question 3 felt that the distance learning method did not motivate them to study. Three felt that it did and the other two did not respond. The net effect is that it might have motivated them to study. The response to question 3 indicated that three of the respondents who have had previous INSET experience and therefore decided to respond, felt that this method required greater discipline. Only one respondent did not feel so.

Most respondents to question 5 seemed to find the materials interesting and relevant. A minority - only two - felt that it was not stimulating but did not specify reasons.

Apart from one respondent who responded to question 6, all seemed to have encountered difficulties in meeting deadlines.

In response to question 7 it was generally felt that the tutorial system was effective. The five respondents who found it ineffective
did not state any reasons. However, it can be inferred that it was probably because they did not get instant opportunities to discuss with their tutors.

Twelve respondents to question 8 gave the impression that they did not have enough opportunities to practise the methods outlined in the module in their classrooms. This has implications for further investigation over an extended period of time to see whether an extension of the deadlines for completion would enable members to have such opportunities.

It is evident from the responses to question 9 that a majority of members felt that more time was taken by the distance learning method.

Apart from one respondent who stated the following:-
"due to constraint of time, this activity was not tried out", there was majority agreement on the issue raised in question 10.

The unanimous advantage highlighted by respondents to question 11 can be summarised in the words of one respondent:-
"It helps you to study on your own, at your own pace and you feel more relaxed because you are not in a classroom. You are never afraid of going wrong or failing an exam"

Here again, for question 12, the unanimous view expressed was that the method did not provide enough opportunities for interaction with teachers of other schools. They would have liked to meet other teachers and exchange ideas. A few of them stated that they had enjoyed the experiences they had on the orientation course and evaluation workshop session - especially the latter where they did things together with other teachers.

One respondent stated outright that she preferred seminars and workshops which did not require homework and which had more opportunities for open discussions.

There is a slight balance here in favour of the efficiency of
the distance learning method in the responses to question 12. Those who did not respond may not have had the experience or did not find it an efficient method.

Thirteen respondents to question 14 stated that the distance learning method has encouraged them to read further in their subject area. Only two did not find it so.

Responses to question 15 varied as is indicated in the appendix. Group discussions seem to be the most attractive of all the methods identified.

Only a few respondents answered question 16. The immediate reason for this lack of interest was not evident from the responses though. However, the two most popular views expressed were those of 'new experience', 'working on your own' and the fact that 'one works at one's own pace'. To summarise, one respondent stated that:-

"Since I am on my own, I am able to concentrate and absorb more too."

The frequency distribution in question 17 indicates that respondents' responses varied greatly over the issue. Most of them felt that it was neither easy nor difficult.

Thirteen respondents to question 18 responded in the affirmative and three gave negative responses.

With regard to question 19, a majority of the members said they were able to do a self-appraisal of their teaching. This may be because of the built-in self-evaluation devices that the assignments reflect. Many of the assignments demanded that the course member teach a lesson and write a critique of it afterwards.

Most respondents to question 19 felt that they had enhanced their teaching skills. Only four gave a negative response to this question.
Only one of the respondents to question 21 felt that the organisation and layout of the materials was not clear enough to attract his attention.

For question 22 eleven respondents felt that the language was clear enough. This is reinforced by responses through other feedback devices which indicate that some respondents did not find some modules clear. In fact some inconsistencies and typographical errors were highlighted.

11.6 Findings From Interviews And Other Methods (see appendices 11.5 and 11.6 for sample interview transcripts)

Since the interviews provided the most substantive piece of information on the course as a whole, the most appropriate method of presenting the findings would seem to be to discuss the feedback from the interviews, and, where appropriate, highlight where different points have been illuminated or reinforced by the other methods used in the study or those issues which require further work. After tying in all the bits and pieces that triangulate, any additional information will be discussed.

Also, since two groups of people gave feedback on the course - tutors and members - and this is the first time both have experienced a course of this nature, some of the feedback they gave were similar, some were different. This may be because they were experiencing the course at different levels. It might well be due to the variations in their ability, interest, etc. These will be investigated in this section.

However, to avoid unnecessary repetition, I will:-

- outline and discuss issues identified by both groups - i.e. those issues that were similar to tutors and members
- outline and discuss issues raised by tutors only
- outline and discuss issues raised by members only
- summarise and discuss all findings, highlighting those issues that merit further investigation
11.6.1 Common issues identified by both tutors and members

The common issues identified by both tutors and members can be categorised under the following headings:-

1. Issues relating to the socio-economic problems in the country during the period in which the course was going on
2. Issues relating to the provision of incentives like post-course qualification and finance for members
3. Issues relating to the 'timing' of the course
4. Issues relating to the paucity of INSET courses in the country
5. Issues relating to the perceived usefulness of a course of this nature

Issues relating to the socio-economic problems in the country

A number of quotations from both tutors and members indicated that the course suffered from socio-economic constraints, e.g.:-

(a) "I must not exonerate myself as a tutor. I found myself wanting in discharging my responsibilities at times. The perennial national problems of lack of transportation, late payment of salaries, petrol shortage and frequent blackouts rendered me incapable of giving of my best. Nonetheless, with the interest and degree of commitment with which I started the project, I tried my utmost to survive" Interview

(b) "The late payment of salary usually left me feeling frustrated and less inclined to work. There is a lack of incentive and motivation to work in the teaching profession is nil. Even when I feel like...em ... going to the library to get some books, the lack of transportation due to the current petrol shortage militates against this. Also I find it very difficult to read by candlelight so I could not do any work at night when there were blackouts" Interview

(c) "...the prices of goods, especially that of food, is most alarming. How can one work on an empty stomach?" Interview

(d) "National disturbances like 'go-slow' - 'sit-down-strike' all contributed to my inability to complete the course" Personal Diary

These factors affected all the participants in my main study during the fieldwork phase between February and May. In December 1985, the government of the country was changed and the new head of state is making drastic changes and recent reports show that conditions are improving under what is referred to as the 'New Order' in Sierra Leone.
There is hardly any blackout now and efforts have been made to pay teachers' salaries and on time.

It will therefore be interesting to find out from participants whether the recent changes have had any effects on their teaching and the milieu in the event of future repetition of the course. Since it is only recently that the changes have taken place, members could be asked to reflect on the way they felt about the course when they were pursuing it.

**Issues relating to the provision of incentives, such as post-course qualification and finance for participants**

The general view was that since the course was so demanding in terms of extra time, participants would have been more motivated to participate if they knew they were working for a degree, diploma or financial remuneration.

According to one of the tutors:-

"Teachers who participate in such courses should be amply rewarded. I would not have had so much trouble with members if they knew they were working towards a degree"  

*Interview*

One member wrote the following in his diary on 27th March, 1986:-

"We should be paid for this work, Mrs. Kaikumba, as we had to expend a lot of extra energy on it - especially because times are so hard. I am doing this today on an empty stomach."  

*Personal Diary*

All participants were given some money at the end of the course. This was not however spelt out to them at the beginning as it would probably have influenced their participation. I wanted to ensure that there were no external factors motivating them to do the course. So in fact the money was a surprise for all of them at the end of the course. It will be interesting to investigate further whether their attitudes to the course might have been different if they knew about the money in advance. Other distance learning courses extant do not seem to have this need for providing incentives because members
of those courses invariably have to pay tuition fees.

Issues relating to the 'timing' of the course

It was the unanimous opinion of tutors and members that a course of this nature should have been organised during the vacation or during the first term when there are not so many school activities. I found out that many schools were busy with exams, Thanksgiving and Prizegiving ceremonies, etc. during the second term. One member said:-

"I found it difficult to do justice to such a worthwhile course because I had to help in organising our Thanksgiving and Prizegiving ceremonies. I even had to help with the school play."

Interview

Another member said:-

"I had to compile exam results, get averages together, comments for the girls' results...report cards, mark sheets and things like that. I most often go home feeling quite exhausted. I don't usually feel like picking up the modules when I was tired"

Interview

This point requires further investigation in the next stage of this thesis, especially because participants have had the opportunity of referring to the course during their long vacation from July to September and throughout the first term of the new school year. Or one could even try to find out whether they have been anxious to look at the course materials again at all.

Issues relating to the paucity of INSET courses

The majority of the participants - especially the tutors - expressed the need for more INSET courses in the country. They felt that they gained a good deal from this course as it refreshed their memory.

One tutor had this to say in the interview:-

"In my ten years of teaching, I have only attended one reading workshop that lasted for three days. I was so happy about it that I asked my principal to allow me to organise one for our school which I did. I wish all English teachers could attend such courses frequently"
One member said:-

"This is the first time I am hearing about INSET. Other teachers have spoken about courses. I wished I could attend. This one is nice and good for me" Interview

Issues relating to the perceived usefulness of a course of this nature

In one tutor's report, her final paragraph read:-

"In conclusion, I would add that distance learning has several factors in its favour. The Institute and Ministry of Education would have less financial burdens thrust on them, should this method be tried out as an alternative to INSET courses. Principals of schools would no longer have to release teachers to attend courses. The individual participant would continue to widen his knowledge and improve his teaching skills. He would have the face to face contact with his tutor and persevere to earn a certificate. As a pioneer of the distance learning idea, I believe it has a place in furthering education in Sierra Leone" Report by Tutor

This quotation sums up the views expressed by many tutors and members. There was only one member who said that he preferred courses which took him out of the school environment every day as he is assured of a good midday meal. Although this was said in jest, when I probed a few other teachers, some felt the same as this course only took members out of school on the first and last day while tutors had to come to the Institute eight times throughout. The general view however was that the course was useful. In fact, some members like those who had merely had the Higher Teachers' Certificate qualification and one who was only trained as a commercial teacher decided to copy out many of the useful ideas as they had the impression that the materials would be collected from them at the end of the course since it was a pilot project.

11.6.2 Issues identified by tutors only

Tutors identified the following:-

- issues relating to the opportunity this course affords members in that they can each air their views about their teaching problems;
- issues relating to the demanding nature of the job of tutoring;
- issues relating to the lack of a consistent method of assessing members' assignments;
- issues relating to the 'title' of the course, since it does not include advice on 'how to teach literature';
- issues relating to the progressive 'loss of interest' /motivation demonstrated by members.

Issues relating to the opportunity this course affords members to air their views about their teaching problems

One tutor expressed the view that as she marked members' assignments she was struck by the fact that the activities and assignments in the course seem to give them lots of opportunities to evaluate their teaching and motivate them to discuss issues. She said to me at an interview:-

"I think if we can do this kind of thing, you know particularly in our country where funds are limited instead of organising workshops, seminars, etc....where in point of fact, we get the teachers to go but quite a number of them do not participate fully or significantly....Some of them are rather shy in exposing their ideas....you know, airing their views, etc. ...but with this kind of course, you find out that when the members are to criticise their teaching, they do so willingly ...at home ...because they are there by themselves working. They air their views and I have been able to find this out from the work that I have been marking. They have been able to say what they really want to say which they don't do in normal workshops and seminars because some of them are not able to talk. They are not articulate enough or also probably they are shy; but when they are by themselves they can express ideas, they come out with a lot of things. You'll find that out yourself when you see the papers they have prepared - their essays." Interview

When I probed her further, she said:-

"I think it is a useful course. I have been to a few seminars, and workshops...you know...I have even been in charge of a group and all that...and you find out that in certain discussions, you cannot just get the teachers to talk however hard you try." Interview

I found the tutor's point very revealing as this is something I had never thought of before. She was a most dedicated tutor who marked the assignments her members handed in and discussed their mistakes with them. Since some of the assignments demanded that
members describe activities they had carried out, they are given enough opportunities to do an evaluation of their own teaching. I thought that if I was creating a course of this nature, this was an important point to bear in mind. It is true that some members are not articulate enough or could be shy to air their views in public.

**Issues relating to the demanding nature of the job of tutoring**

Tutors complained that the job of tutoring was very demanding and that they should be adequately remunerated for it.

They said that even though they had read through the materials during the workshop, they found that they had to re-read them each time their members came up with problems. One tutor felt that it was very necessary for him to have a set of materials all to himself for quick reference. The fact that he had to use his only set with his member anytime she had problems slowed the work down.

Generally, they said they liked the role of a tutor as they also learnt a lot of new ideas. However, they needed more time to do it more efficiently. One said:

"I found out that sometimes I had to keep putting my members off as I didn't have time to discuss with them. I had my school work to do too. In fact I should not have agreed to tutor three members as the course is too demanding of my time."  

They also suggested that in future courses, members should be asked to do a minimum of written work especially if the time allowed is short. This is also because they had to spend hours marking essays when they had their own school work to mark.

**Issues relating to the lack of a consistent method of assessing members' assignments**

Although the tutors and I had decided that we will all work out a marking scheme for activities and assignments, we did not have
enough: time to do this. This created some difficulties for tutors as they each had to decide on their individual marking schemes. One tutor said:-

"...we the tutors did not provide a uniform marking scheme which we would have used in assessing members' work. This resulted in a kind of inconsistent pattern of marking and rewarding" Interview

Although I did mention to them at the beginning of the workshop that it was necessary for us to work out a marking scheme, we all tended to forget this aspect because we were so involved in reading through the materials. It would definitely have made the job of tutoring easier.

Issue related to the 'title' of the course

Two tutors pointed out that since the course did not include hints on how to teach literature, it should be entitled 'Distance learning course for teachers of English language in Sierra Leone' and not merely '....for teachers of English'. One said at the initial plenary session:-

"...an examination of the modules reveals that there is no course content on the skills to be used in teaching literature. I believe that when we talk of teaching English, we refer to both the language and literature. So your labelling is faulty" Plenary Session

This was a point that did not show up in any of the earlier revisions of the course so I will bear it in mind for any future work on the materials since this is outside the scope of this thesis.

Issues related to the progressive loss of interest demonstrated by members

During the second plenary session with tutors on the 17th April, 1985 tutors expressed the view that members seem to be losing interest in the course gradually. This they attributed to the nature of the materials they were reading during that period. They felt that the materials apart from modules A, B3, C3 and C4 got increasingly difficult for members.
Other factors responsible for this might be the demanding nature of the assignments. When I pointed out to them that they had helped to restructure most of the assignments, they said that they were still too many. One tutor said:-

"We should not have asked them to write any full length essays at all. They found those kinds of assignments demanding and we find them difficult to mark too. We should have merely concentrated on objective-type questions."

Interview

Another said:-
"Teachers' morale is low. There are too many problems in the country to attend to. Teachers suffer most and can barely manage to concentrate on their school work. We must watch that."

Interview

This view was expressed over and over again by members so it is a point to get more details on during the next stage of this study.

11.6.3 Issues highlighted by members only

Many issues were highlighted by members. These ranged from issues relating to the interest and enthusiasm demonstrated by members - to the lack of clarity of the course materials to the personal problems members encountered. This does not mean that members did not identify positive aspects of the course. In fact the positive aspects identified outweigh the negative ones. Since their responses were so many and varied, their main areas of concern will be discussed under the following headings:-

1. Concern related to members' study techniques and learning difficulties

2. Concern related to members' interaction with their tutors

3. Concern related to members' professional development

4. Concern related to course materials

5. Concern related to members' personal problems
Concern related to members' study techniques and learning difficulties

Several members expressed concern over difficulties they were experiencing while studying the materials. This factor is very important as in traditional settings, such problems can be easily detected by lecturers even if students do not voice them. They also have the opportunity of discussing such problems with other students who may or may not be experiencing similar problems. Such contact is very important. In fact, this was why I suggested that tutors should ensure that each member works with a partner.

In spite of this, many members expressed concern about difficult concepts, heavy workload, difficulty in organising their time to meet specific deadlines, difficulties in completing the many assignments, especially those that required essay writing. The following quotes elicited through various means - which will be stated at the end of each quotation - portray members' views:

"To be honest, I met the deadline for the first module...bang on time - module A...for the first thing, you all will rush to do it and I did it quite on time. The second module had three units...there was not enough time given to do it so I did not meet the deadline." 

Interview

One member made a different remark about deadlines. She said:

"The deadlines set put some pressure on me to do the work. For lectures I tend to put it aside...and wait...I had to force myself to do the modules so I will not be left behind...I...I had to discipline myself." 

Interview

One member reported a very revealing experience over a two and a half week period in her diary:

"All set to work on module Cl. Spent a lot of time reading it without making any progress whatsoever." 

Personal Diary

"Did not attempt any of the work on module Cl because I planned to consult my partner. Cl is rather technical and complicated. Language is not a favourite of mine, but even without this pet hate, I would have found the unit very difficult. I felt very reluctant to continue" 

Personal Diary
"Couldn't do much on module C1 due to the fact that I was waiting to consult my tutor. Tutor didn't have a copy of the materials so I had to lend her my own copy so I had to wait..."

"After discussions with my partner and tutor and of course the fact that I was behind schedule, I decided to complete units 1 and 2 of module C. The extracts too were difficult. I couldn't do the assignments though...."

I found the views recorded in this member's diary very frank, revealing and refreshing - hence I have extracted four of them that demonstrate that if distance learning materials are difficult members can be very easily put off. This member lost motivation over a two and a half week period. Since they seemed to feel that the modules should be dealt with in order, she did not even conceive of doing the next unit during the period she was waiting to discuss her problems with her tutor or her partner. These views are significant for the course.

Three points emerge from this:-

i. Even though members were in the same schools with their tutors and partners it was not always so easy to interact with them. Tutors and partners were also very preoccupied with their own work.

ii. Support system is important in distance learning courses (i.e. in terms of help from tutors and partners)

iii. Similar views have been expressed in interviews with other members. Member 10, for example, had this to say:-

"Modules A and B were OK and clear....but module C1 had too many 'new words' for me. My partner whose husband had explained the communicative approach to her explained it to me. I didn't do the assignments because I did not want you to think that I understood the module. I even wrote this in my diary."

Members generally felt that Ron White's ideas on teaching listening and speaking skills were very useful but impracticable for them. Those ideas that required the use of tape recorders could only
be useful in schools which possess tapes and also generators since there are frequent cuts in electricity supply which will frustrate any teacher.

It is interesting to note that the tutors did not highlight this point during the workshop. This is possibly because we did not read the extracts in sessions as we did for the study guides.

Concern related to members' interaction with their tutors

Members complained about the problems they had with consulting their tutors when there was a need. It was not always easy to get their tutors' attention as tutors were also busy. Added to this is the fact that not all tutors had a set of materials. Some schools only had materials for members. So that when difficulties arose, tutors had to take members' copies home to work out the problem first before discussing these with members.

This is a problem that I had not anticipated. It would have been ideal to give each participant a set of materials. The materials were expensive to print and transport and I had prepared a limited number.

Concern related to members' professional development

In trying to relate the course to their professional development, many members compared this course to their college courses and some concluded that it does help them a great deal in their professional development. One member said the following in an interview:

"The course refreshed my memory. I mean - leaving college, you tend to forget about what you were taught. When it comes to you in materials organised like this, you tend to use the ideas on the spot while teaching and you think it is really worth it."  

Interview

"Module C1 had me reading some of my textbooks I had abandoned some time back ... I had to go and refer to some ... to answer some of the assignments."  

Interview
Another member gave the impression that distance learning motivates her to read further and improve herself. This was confirmed by other members in their personal diaries.

One member said in the interview that it was as if she was learning to teach all over again. In this course, she found the information she got from the materials immediately relevant:

"During college days, we learn these things for examination purposes...we sort of do a crash course...Here we learn at our own pace and we try things out...we don't have to be afraid of going wrong somewhere...so we tend to take in more...we have the chance to try out what we learn at once."

Interview

Concern related to course materials

Many members commented about the way in which the materials were organised. They liked the structure. Some said that as they read through the materials, they felt as if someone was talking to them or giving them instructions to follow. It was easy for them as they did not read like textbook material. One member said:

"Most of the books I used during the diploma course were bulky, some of them were a bit boring and there were so many of them. I don't like reading too many extra materials really. But the materials for this course, I find easier...you know...they are easy to carry around...you can even lie down and relax with them. It is quite easy and I always have my pencil with me...For my Dip.Ed course, I had to really sit down and do formal work...you know...sit at the table write down notes and things like that."

Interview

Other members identified areas of confusion, lack of clarity and errors in the materials which resulted in some inconsistencies. In commenting on the organisation of one of the study guides, one member wrote the following in her diary:

"In module Cl for example, the organisation of the study guide is a bit confusing. There is activity III on p.14 while activity II is on p.23."

Personal Diary

Most members did not like module B, unit 2, which dealt with the preparation of schemes of work from the national syllabus. Many
complained that the model scheme in the unit was too detailed for them... Some said they could not do the assignment which demanded that they write one out. One member did not think it was necessary at all:-

"Well this idea of writing em...a scheme of work...I wonder whether it will be...em...suitable for the teacher. You know...having been on the job for some time...whether you need em... a scheme to base your lesson notes on. The scheme I learnt to write was not so detailed."

When I probed members further to find out whether, in spite of the difficult aspects of the course, they found learning by distance learning helpful, they seemed to feel that they could assimilate more information through this course where the ideas were expressed clearly and available in print:-

"...I learn more. Yes, I can read the modules over and over again. I know they are there...I like the way they are organised. In the French workshop I attended, the handouts did not contain all the information we were given. I lost out on some I can remember only a few now..."

Concern related to members' personal problems

After the first module was completed by all of them on time, problems began to set in which affected members. So that from the second module onwards, their pace became slower and more and more time was being spent on each succeeding unit. In spite of this, at the end of the course, all the members except three managed to complete the course. These three members were each asked by their tutors to write rationales for their inability to complete the course. These were submitted to me. One of them:-

"I have had so many problems recently...I had to spend a lot of time looking out for a house to rent...my landlady gave me notice...she said I fail to pay my rent on time...I told her that they don't pay our salaries on time...she wouldn't listen...this took up a lot of my time."
Another member said:-

"There were a series of problems...to begin with, the numerous domestic problems such as cleaning up, laundering, cooking, going shopping and to the market and taking care of my family caused a lot of difficulty. The one which caused the most setback was my knowledge of being pregnant a week after the beginning of the course. Needless to explain the difficulties and strains involved when one is pregnant and at the same time is faced with such a task..."     

Interview

Another member stated that:-

"...the area in which I live is a rather noisy one. There are kids playing loud games outside...

...when I had to do extra reading in the library, the library was a distance away from my home... petrol shortage led to lack of transportation for me."

Personal Diary

...added to all this, my father fell ill and I had to spend hours with him at the hospital"

Another member said:-

"...yet for all my manifest enthusiasm in the course, the fact of inadequacy of time has militated against my efforts to complete the course. As the course progressed with more activities and assignments, I found it almost impossible to reconcile the program with my school work...

...with increasing pressure to give students extra lessons after school for their GCE exams, I was left with little time to complete the course..."

Interview

Since such problems do not exist all the time, it will be interesting to investigate them further to find out how members will react to the course under problem-free conditions. Although it is also possible that they might have encountered other problems, at least, they have had a more extended period of time to read and assimilate ideas in the materials.

The next chapter will discuss the findings elicited through these various methods in the light of the research questions for this phase of the work and highlights points that require further work.
CHAPTER 12

ADDRESSING RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON RESEARCH THEME I

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12.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the research questions for the main study on research theme I, raised in section 9.6. It is opportune to reiterate that I concentrated on the following question areas throughout the fieldwork phase:—

1. questions relating to participants' familiarity with INSET approaches
2. questions relating to the design and implementation of the course
3. questions relating to the relevance and clarity of the course
4. questions relating to the distance factor in distance learning courses
5. questions relating to other insights and issues that may emerge while research questions are being addressed

The chapter concludes by arguing that the findings presented in chapter 11 coupled with views expressed in the previous chapter enabled the research questions to be addressed to the extent that further questions on other aspects of the findings were raised which require further work.

12.1 Addressing Research Question 1

It is worth re-stating research question 1:—

To what extent were participants familiar with INSET approaches?

This question was considered a necessary prerequisite for exploring alternative INSET approaches (which this thesis deals with) since their familiarity and background would have an impact on how they react to any new form of INSET. The findings reveal the following:—

12.1.1 Participants' background: the need to address the problem of quality in secondary education through INSET

The starting point of my argument is that the educational background that teachers in Sierra Leone hail from is an essentially deprived one (see ch.2), since about thirty-six per cent of secondary
school teachers are unqualified and untrained which resulted in poor quality of education. The need to address the problem of quality in secondary education and for providing greater support for teachers was therefore expressed. Such support could be in the form of some kind of training which could be obtained through an administratively convenient means (see ch.3) - specifically through an INSET system of support for teachers of English.

12.1.2 Participants' background: unfamiliarity with INSET and INSET at a distance

The INSET activities that seemed to exist in Sierra Leone were few and far between (see ch.4) so it was advisable to explore some other form of INSET to ensure maximum effectiveness in INSET provisions and INSET at a distance seemed appropriate (see ch.5).

It is obvious from the above that many Sierra Leonean teachers were not very familiar with INSET approaches at the beginning of this study. This fact is reinforced by findings elicited through the first questionnaire (see section 11.3.1). Also, even the few teachers who indicated that they attended INSET courses before have only experienced the traditional INSET course which lasts from one day to one week. The findings from this questionnaire also showed that teachers have never had the experience of learning by themselves or even by INSET at a distance. Only a handful stated that they have even heard of it before. This shows that one of the problems participants were faced with was that this is the first time that they were being put in a situation that demanded that they studied on their own and think for themselves. Although the distance learning course attempts to lay everything down clearly for them, they are expected to think for themselves and are not just being 'spoon-fed' like in the traditional system where they usually have the opportunity to refer
back to their teachers or lecturers every five minutes or so. This background of familiarity or rather unfamiliarity with INSET and with DL/INSET in particular raises another supplementary point which relates to this research question but will be discussed in the following section.

12.1.3 Members' expressed preference for DL/INSET materials

Even though some members were more familiar with a traditional system of learning, in the findings from the end-of-course questionnaire (see section 11.5) they seemed to express a preference for DL/INSET in the light of their school, college and few INSET learning experiences - especially their lecture notes. One member even indicated that she sometimes found it difficult to read and understand notes from lectures whereas as she read through the DL/INSET course materials, it was as if someone was 'chatting' to her about how to teach English. She said she felt relaxed and she could even read them in bed since they were not as bulky as some of her college textbooks. Only one member expressed the opposite view but did not specify reasons. This will be investigated in the final stage of this study. One reason for the member who expressed preference may be that she felt that the DL/INSET course materials provided her with a more 'complete' set of related notes. Or maybe, she is too lazy to go and read further on topics in lectures and fill in the blanks in her lecture notes. The 'novelty' value of the idea of the DL/INSET cannot be ruled out. It is further possible that the ease this member seemed to enjoy in this new course did motivate her initially and allowed for more long term enthusiasm to develop as it is generally agreed that the most difficult stage in any piece of work is 'getting into it'.

Since other members did not specify reasons for their preference, it would be interesting to elicit further views from them in the final phase of this thesis. After all, in spite of the seeming tedium that
the college course posed for this member, she managed to go through it. Was it then the first person technique employed in the materials that attracted this member? A question relating to this issue will be investigated further in the final stage of this work.

It can be seen that research question 1 which relates to participants' familiarity and background had an impact on their relation to the DL/INSET course. This question was therefore addressed in the finding that:-
- participants were not familiar with different INSET approaches
- this finding helped me to acquire some understanding of the kind of course that will be relevant to them
- it also helped me to appreciate their reaction to this new course to a certain extent
- since participants come from a purely traditional system of learning in which they are almost spoon-fed by their lectures, they may have difficulties with this new course

The last point has in fact been identified by other researchers in the field (see for example, Zubir, 1983, who concluded that Malaysian students' attitude to individualised learning was affected by the traditional system they hailed from).

12.2 Addressing Research Question 2 Of The Main Study For Research Theme I

Research question 2 related to the design and implementation of the course. The findings reveal that since a distance learning course is not designed in a vacuum but for a particular clientele, it is meaningful to involve part, or if possible the whole of that clientele in its design and implementation. This is partly because they then feel committed to it and also partly because they have 'local' knowledge and are in a position to tell whether the course meets their needs. The findings also reveal the following:-

12.2.1 The involvement of experienced Sierra Leonean teacher educators in the design phase

The involvement of Sierra Leonean teacher educators
- 'tutors' in the workshop (discussed more fully in section 11.2) proved
fruitful. It enabled me to identify tutors' perceptions of the course with regard to not only its relevance and clarity but also those aspects that they considered irrelevant or useful to Sierra Leonean teachers' needs - specifically in improving their teaching as well as their pupils' knowledge of English. The workshop gave the requisite direction to the research with regard to the construction of the course. Furthermore, it demonstrated tutors' commitment to the course since they felt so involved in it that they agreed to become a part of the innovation by giving two talks to members on orientation day (see section 10.6.2). In fact tutors expressed their appreciation for being given the opportunity to take part in this kind of activity. They did enjoy the experience and seemed to gain a lot from it. The fact that they seemed to feel a part of the whole innovation and were satisfied that they helped build the sensitivities and needs of Sierra Leonean teachers of English into the course led to the conclusion that it was 'legitimate' to have given them a say at this stage of the development of the course.

12.2.2 The involvement of up-country teachers in the implementation of the course

Another important finding that relates to this question is that there is not likely to be a uniform clientele and uniform circumstances in the implementation of a DL/INSET course like this throughout the whole country. In order to see if this works or if it can stand on its own, I needed to include up-country teachers in the sample. In fact at least two of the members of the pilot study group (see ch.9) had alerted me to this issue. There are likely to be (and indeed there were) different problems and different issues in different areas of the country. One of the advantages of a distance learning course is that because the course is structured so that the materials are in one place, there is not necessarily a need for access to libraries or any of the resources that are only associated with big towns. Nor is there the
need for teachers to experience domestic problems involving movement from their families and their locality. Such issues proved to be very important for up country teachers. Up country teachers expressed a sincere appreciation for their involvement in the course. They expressed the view that they had benefitted greatly and that they would try to ensure that other teachers in their area derive some benefit too.

12.2.3 The need to consider initial costs in the design and implementation of the course

Another point relevant to this question (discussed more fully in ch.5) is that raised by Ansere (1981). His point relates to the need to consider 'initial costs' carefully when designing and implementing a distance learning course for poor countries without foreign aid. Even though his points were borne in mind when designing the course, I realised that it was really only when I actually set up the course that I was able to tell how much administration and groundwork was needed. In this particular case, the location of the fieldwork for the implementation of the course and my study location were too remote and travel between them was so expensive and infrequent and communication was sometimes such a problem that these difficulties were exacerbated. I found that anyone setting up a course like this should never underestimate the problems involved with the initial groundwork and finance needed - however small the course is. This finding comes from my personal experience. It is also reinforced by personal communication with people (for example Winn-Smith, 1984 and Lowe, 1983) who have designed and implemented courses for English teachers in developed countries. Furthermore, these comments are also readily found in the literature on distance learning.
12.2.4 Timing: the timing and time constraints on the course

This research question is also addressed in the finding that however carefully a course is designed, further issues will become obvious during the initial implementation phases. For example, a majority of the members expressed a preference for learning by distance learning if the time is extended. One reason may be that this course may have been run at the wrong time for members since they had other more pressing commitments. It may also be that they always have other commitments. The possibility that they are not willing to spend extra time doing something that they may not be rewarded for cannot be ruled out either. (They were given a small financial remuneration at the end of the course but they had no fore-knowledge of it.) The above shows that more careful thought should be given to the length of time such a course should last. Although an effort was made during the orientation course to help members organise their time, that did not make any allowance for their prior commitments. It is therefore worthwhile to investigate distance learning over an extended period of time during the final stage of this research.

12.2.5 Timing: the period of the school year considered appropriate for implementation

Most members and tutors complained that the course was being run during the second term of the school year when they were preoccupied with organising Prizegiving and Thanksgiving ceremonies, school sports, school exams, 'go-slow', 'sit-down strikes', etc. It would be worth finding out whether different results would have been obtained if the course was run during a different period of the school year and which specific periods members would consider appropriate since members did not come up with suggestions as to specific times. It will also be worth finding out in the final stage of the work to what extent members thought such events affected the smooth running of the course.
12.2.6 Some aspects of the course materials: members' expressed aversion to essay-writing

A majority of the members were averse to the idea of writing essays. They did not seem to mind doing the objective-type questions in some of the units. Objective questions test knowledge, whereas essays test ability to analyse, synthesise or be creative in using the information they acquire. It will be important to find out whether members did not want to give the work a lot of thought. Did they not want to analyse issues they came across? Did they not want to demonstrate some creativity in their work or is it that they did not have the time to do it? My personal knowledge of members coupled with comments from both tutors and members inclines me to conclude that members may have been merely unenthusiastic in that they may not have wanted to spend a lot of time on work they are not getting a diploma or other rewards for. The fact that some of them wrote some satisfactory, well-thought-out and intelligent essays in spite of their disapproval means that this is a point to be investigated further.

Or I can probe them further on the kind of assessment methods they deem fit since it is also important to have a mechanism for ensuring that they read the materials. Did they feel that the objective-type questions will suffice? This issue would be investigated further in the final stage of the this study.

12.2.7 Aspects of the course materials: assignments

The majority of members also indicated that the course motivated them to study more especially because they needed to read the materials before they submitted their assignments which had to be submitted on specific dates. Does this mean that the assignments motivated members to read the materials? This is a very crucial point as there is a divided view point here.

Many members were not happy about having to do assignments - although
many of them did them all. Were the assignments a source of external pressure that motivated members to read through the materials? Or did they merely want to please their tutors who were more often asking them for their work? All these points need to be investigated further in the final stage of this work.

Although the eight issues discussed in this section do address research question 2, some aspects need to be investigated further and will be investigated in the final stage of the work.

12.3 **Addressing Research Question 3**

Research question 3 probed issues relating to the relevance and clarity of the distance learning course. This is an important question in the sense that there is a great deal of literature on psychology and educational research which argues that if the content of any piece of work is clear, relevant and meaningful for students, they may be motivated to learn more effectively. This is a principle which ought to be adhered to in the design of a course. Experts in the field like Perraton (1977); Elton et al (1986) and Lowe (1983) have stated unequivocally that motivation is one of the biggest problems in distance learning. Other findings reveal the following:-

12.3.1 **Clarity of course materials: content**

Previous research (see ch.5) shows that as distance learning takes place out of the classroom, i.e. it is essentially a self-learning process, it must be so clear that it should easily be able to exist in a 'desert island'. This means that even more attention should be paid to clear and unambiguous statements since the teacher is not going to be able to be there to clear up any problems learners may encounter. This point was even raised by some members of the pilot study group (see ch.9) who suggest that 'active' language should be used in a course of this nature.
My knowledge and experience of the needs of Sierra Leonean teachers guided me initially in putting together some materials that I considered relevant for them. However, the fact that I had been away from the actual teaching learning situation in the classroom for some time (as my job had been such that I did not do any actual teaching just before I left the country) made me consider it extremely important to involve actual teachers as tutors in the design and implementation of the course as these were people who could advise me most directly on the relevance of the course. For example, the tutors who took part in the workshop (discussed more fully in 11.2) had the opportunity of commenting on the relevance of the content of the course materials and of indicating those content areas which they thought needed modifications.

Also, the members who actually tried out the materials gave very detailed comments on various 'aspects' through the end-of-unit feedback sheets (see section 11.4). They even identified typographical errors and mistakes in the emphasis I had put on how to teach summary writing, for example, since the GCE syllabus had been revised in my absence from Sierra Leone. This shows that the relevance and clarity of the course needs to be continually updated.

12.3.2 Clarity of course materials: structure

Members did express a liking for the structure of the course through the end-of-course questionnaire (discussed more fully in section 11.5). This, in turn, is reinforced by information elicited using triangulation (see section 11.6) - interviews and other methods. Members did complain though that some aspects of the materials confused them. One member indicated one example which I realised was due to typographical errors. It will be important to get other members to identify others as this will help a great deal towards the improvement and further revisions of the course. Courses of this nature will always
need continuous revision and updating.

It must be emphasised that clarity is not only important in the way the ideas are expressed but also in the way the whole course is organised. A majority of members indicated that they were attracted to the organisation and structure of the materials - especially the overview, objectives and 'book of extracts'. They generally felt that when they read these, they at once knew what they were going to read about in a particular unit which is not the case when they have to read their college textbooks. Since a majority of members' positive views were reinforced through other methods of enquiry in the study, I can conclude that the overview and objectives were useful to members so there is no need to investigate this further, as it seems as if the criterion of clarity of organisation had been satisfactorily met. However, since clarity is a central feature in any distance learning course, it is worth cross-checking the information in the final stage of this work.

12.3.3 Clarity of course materials: the model scheme of work

A majority of members did not see the need to write such a detailed scheme of work as the model scheme in the materials. Is this because some members feel they know it all and there is no need to plan their work before teaching? This is a point that will be further investigated in the final phase of this work, as issues about clarity also relate to the clarity of thought which learners bring to the course. It was surprising to me though that many members did not see the need to write a scheme of work in spite of the fact that many schools do have schemes of work. This is probably because the scheme in the course seemed too detailed for them.
12.4 Addressing Research Question 4 Of The Main Study On Research Theme I

This question probes concerns relating to the interaction at a distance - in other words concerns arising directly from the distance learning system. The findings reveal the following:

12.4.1 The distance factor: problems and partial solutions

Although an effort was made to minimise this factor by instituting school based tutors and a partnership system between members of the same schools, the findings reveal some issues which can be seen to result from this distance factor even though it was minimised to a great extent. As has been highlighted in the literature on distance learning courses, while it is true that such courses must be designed to operate in isolation of the teacher, in practice, they seem to operate more effectively if there are well articulated 'support systems' attached to them. Therefore, in setting up any such course, attention must always be paid to the sort of support which is available locally and even generally for participants.

12.4.2 The distance factor: members' need for prompt feedback

One issue that came up related to the need for prompt feedback from their tutors for assignments completed. This issue has been found by many other distance learning course organisers (Lowe, 1982; Elton et al, 1986). Members expressed the view that such feedback gave them information about their performance in the light of what the course expects from them. They also reassure them about their own particular worries and the advice and guidance derived help them in their professional development. The tutor in one school in particular failed to mark and discuss members' assignments with them on time. Did this slow down the pace of the course? How can this be averted? This issue will be investigated further in the final stage of this work.
12.4.3 The distance factor: interaction between tutors and members

Members again complained about the distance factor in the interaction between them and their tutors. Some of them even expressed the view that the distance learning approach can achieve its desired aim if the tutors would devote more time to discussing their problems with them. Considerable thought was given to the potential isolation of members when the course was being designed. Indeed the institution of a tutorial system with tutors in the same schools as members was an attempt to overcome this. It is rather surprising that members raised this issue as the course tried to ensure such support.

As previously mentioned, one contributing factor may be that members came from a system in which they are accustomed to being 'spoon-fed' by their teachers. They are the products of a learning environment which is teacher-centred and pupils are not taught to read and acquire information on their own or to be responsible for their own learning. The discovery method which stimulates thinking is 'foreign' to them. As soon as they encounter problems, their first impulse is to run to their tutors for help. Very few would try to solve such problems themselves first. The distance learning system has the potential for helping members develop some responsibility towards their own learning. How can I help members develop such independence from their tutors so that they can begin to regard them as mere 'facilitators' who are supposed to give directions and clarifications only where necessary? How can the course enable members to learn to use their own initiatives and become more creative and less dependent on their tutors? These are very important questions that merit further investigation, so they will be investigated in the final stage of this work.
12.4.4 The distance factor: interaction between members and partners

Some members said they enjoyed working with their partners, although they sometimes seemed to need their tutors' help more. One possible reason for this is that although they seemed to feel less embarrassed and more relaxed with their partners who are their peers, they feel that their tutors had more knowledge and experience about the course. This is especially so because they were made to see their tutors as members of the innovation team from orientation day. It is not surprising then that tutors seemed to possess so much authority in their view.

One would have thought that the 'contact' with another member of the same course in the same school would create the much needed 'contact' that exists in traditional systems where students are able to observe fellow students experiencing similar difficulties with work and discuss strategies they each adopt to solve them. This 'contact' did not seem to be sufficient for members. It will be interesting to elicit from members the nature of support they needed from their partners on the one hand, and from their tutors, on the other hand, and also the reason for the heavy dependence on tutors they demonstrated. It may well be that they merely ran to their tutors for clarification of points. This is why there is a need for investigating this further in the final stage of this study.

12.4.5 Members' reaction to the inclusion of a book of extracts

Members said that they felt happy that the course included a 'book of extracts' and that it facilitated learning for them. Some felt that lecturers would normally recommend readings - some of which are not even available in their libraries. One member reported that she never attempted to look for such recommended readings. Because of my indexicality with members, i.e. shared background and
beliefs, it seemed easy to infer from the above that members are generally nonchalant and do not normally want to do extra work and there is the danger that the materials would 'spoon-feed' them. However, since one member had indicated that she did go to a library, it would be interesting to find out whether other members felt the need to use a library in addition to the extracts in the book of extracts which proved to be so useful to the majority.

12.5 Addressing Research Question 5

The findings also shed light on research question 5 which deals with other issues that emerged during the fieldwork. These are issues that had not been considered in the initial design of the evaluation. They developed spontaneously during the course of the evaluation. This is always likely to occur in a study where the research methodology adopted consists of a variety of 'tools' and is essentially eclectic in nature.

Among such issues identified were some which could be remedied because they depended on changes on the course. Others are issues which could not be remedied since they would require changes over time and as such, I have no control over them. The issues in this section can be grouped under four headings:-

i. socio-economic conditions
ii. local environment of school
iii. reaction from one individual
iv. matters relating to the course

12.5.1 Issues relating to socio-economic conditions

Owing to the fact that issues relating to the socio-economic conditions occurred most frequently and were expressed most vociferously, it seems appropriate that these should be considered first. It must be noted though that these are examples of issues that could not be remedied in this course since they require changes in the socio-economic/political system which I have no control over, they are still issues
which have a bearing on members' reactions to the course and their ability to fulfil the course's objectives, so they must be discussed in the study.

The socio-economic issues can be typified by the fact that all tutors and members complained about the low morale of teachers in the country generally throughout the duration of the course. This they attributed to the adverse socio-economic conditions extant in the country at the time. Some of their complaints bordered on the fact that salaries were not paid, etc. (see section 11.6).

In December, 1985, about eight months after my fieldwork in Sierra Leone, there was a change of government and reports indicated that the new government seemed to be performing 'miracles' which were leading to a fall in the prices of essential commodities like food, etc. and that teachers were beginning to receive regular salaries again. It would be interesting to find out from members at the final stage of the work how they felt such a course would run under the current 'rosy' conditions, bearing in mind though that the changes are very recent and so it will be too much to assume that all teachers' problems would have been completely solved.

I also considered it necessary, in the final stage of this study, to ask members to reflect on the course and express their views as to how other teachers would react to it in this respect if it were to be run during this period. For example, would teachers have new complaints or will they receive the course differently? In other words, how would other teachers receive the course?

The socio-economic problems can be further illustrated in microcosm in the finding in which one member indicated that she encountered such difficulties like transportation when she needed to go to a library to look up new (and for her) some difficult concepts in module Cl. Does this mean that such difficulties prevented members from going to a library when they came across difficult concepts or from widening
their horizons? It is important to find out in the final stage of this study whether such difficulties prevented some members from using libraries who might otherwise have used them.

Another member indicated that although she also encountered difficult concepts in module Cl, she did not need to go to a library as her husband who is an English expert helped her out and she in turn helped her partner out.

In the light of the self-sufficient nature of the course, it would seem as if there was some factor that whetted members' appetites to unravel even difficult concepts rather than merely ignoring them. Was this inherent in the materials or the method? Since members come from a traditional system of learning that does not train students to read textbooks on their own, but to be heavily dependent on their lecturers and their notes, it is necessary to find out what it was exactly that motivated them to try and go to a library and read outside their 'book of extracts' in spite of the background of petrol shortage and its resulting transportation difficulties.

One of the reactions which seem to occur frequently involves the question of motivation. This is a problem which arises very frequently in distance learning courses and indeed in learning courses of any description. There is a possibility of remedying such problems to a very large extent as some of these factors can be eased for learners. This issue of motivation again is relevant to the socio-economic context.

Some members indicated that they would have done more justice to a course of this nature if they knew they were working towards a degree, reward or incentive of some sort. Although some financial remuneration was given to members at the end of the course, I did not consider it wise to tell them about it at the onset of the course because it might
have influenced their performance in the course. This was deemed necessary in a distance learning course like this, since it is essentially a 'pilot' course.

There could be other incentives but what is important is that there is an incentive and that the teachers regard it as one. It could even be in the form of a qualification, a diploma or some form of 'prestige' for them. This finding is particular to my course because other distance learning courses extant are mostly run on a commercial basis and participants in fact have to pay fees for which they get a certificate or diploma at the end.

The teachers in Sierra Leone come from a deprived background and most often they would prefer to engage in other activities that would give them money, which they always need because of their low salaries, instead of doing a course like mine. If they are busy with activities like these, they would want to do something extra like participating in this course only if they feel they would derive some benefit from it and not merely for the love of it. They would hardly regard an improvement in their teaching as a 'good enough' benefit. They will want a qualification which would help them in their careers and lead to an increase in salary or an incentive which would help them like a financial incentive. Since it was only a handful of them who raised this issue, it is necessary to find out from them in the final stage of this study how far this is true for all members.

12.5.2 Issues relating to local environment of schools

Two issues emanated from the local environment of the school. Such issues relate to the micro level in the administrative problems within the environment of 'particular schools' which can influence how the course can be implemented. There is a greater possibility of identifying 'remedies' for such issues. This implies that attempts should be made to find ways in which this environment can be facilitated for members.
For example, issues related to the conflict between the constraints of a distance learning course and the need to put into practice the 'message of the course' were raised. Members seemed to indicate in the end of course questionnaire that they did not have enough opportunities to practise the methods they learnt in the course in their classrooms. One possible reason that can be advanced for this is that the materials did not provide enough activities that involved practical teaching for members. Since it seems unlikely that the provision of more activities will not help since members lack opportunities to put them into practice, it is important to enquire further from members how they feel this aspect of the course could be addressed.

Also, since some members argued that some of the teaching assignments in the modules clashed with their existing timetables it would be worth finding out from all members whether prior arrangements should have been made with their heads of departments or heads of schools about adapting members' timetables or about giving members extra time to do the course. The ideal situation of course would be to have given schools a lot more warning about the demands of the course so that they could adapt their timetable to suit the demands of the course. Or even a component of the course could have been slotted into their school timetables at the beginning of the school year when heads and teachers are planning their yearly schemes of work. These are all alternative ways of circumventing the problem created by lack of enough opportunities for members to practise the methods they have learnt in their classrooms. So an attempt will be made to find out from teachers their views on the matter or whether they had the requisite support from their parent institutions (schools) or not in the next stage of this study.

Another small but important point that shed light on this question was the revelation to me during observation sessions
(see section 11.1) that some schools used textbooks that were different from the one the materials were based on. This did not however seem to have affected the relevance of the materials since teachers could substitute their specified textbooks in their individual schools where my materials call for the use of a textbook: so there is no need to investigate it further.

12.5.3 Reactions from one individual: issue relating to the development of high level intellectual skills in the teachers

One positive reaction seems to have emanated from one individual - in fact one of the tutors. She highlighted the fact that as she marked members' work, she was struck by the fact that activities and assignments provided an opportunity for members to write down their views and so air them in private without other people present when doing so, in answering questions set in the assignments. According to her, many Sierra Leoneans are either shy or sometimes not articulate enough to want to discuss problems they encounter in their teaching or even ask questions during workshops, seminars or in class where the pressure of classmates or lecturers inhibit them. In this case members were able to develop high level intellectual skills which enabled them to be even creative. All in all, this approach seems less embarrassing for members as members seemed to feel free to express their problems honestly and without inhibition. Since it was only one of the tutors who raised this issue, it is an issue which must be taken into account and cross-checked with members in the final stage of this study.

12.5.4 Issues relating to the course

Other issues that shed light on this question are matters which relate directly to the course. These are issues which seem to recur in other distance learning courses and so seem to be a perennial problem.
However, it is important to continuously highlight such issues so that other distance learning course organisers would minimise them as far as is humanly possible and try to help people to come to terms with them.

One such issue relates to many tutors' complaint about the demanding nature of their roles as tutors, especially since some of them were also heads of their departments. The questions that arise from this are: who then should be selected to act as tutors? How can such tutors be helped to organise their time so that they can devote more time to the job of tutoring? Or is it that the tutors had a misconception about the demands of their roles? To what extent was their role as mere 'facilitators' defined for them? One lesson to be learnt from this is that more time should be devoted to training tutors for their roles. Perhaps there is the need for a longer period of training for tutors since most of the time they had during the 4-day workshop was used for amending the materials. This, including the issue that relates to the training and follow-up training sessions for tutors could be investigated by other workers in the field.

A further range of issues can be related to my methods of collecting feedback data for improving the course. Indeed, many members complained about the boring nature of the multiplicity of feedback devices employed in the study. One member had indicated that she enjoyed using the diary as she could write in it frankly and freely and it was always at her disposal. The progress charts and feedback sheets, in contrast, seemed like unnecessary duplication. It will be interesting to find out whether other members would prefer to have voiced their views on the course as a whole on tape in the privacy of their own homes, and when they felt like it rather than filling in progress charts and feedback sheets at the end of each unit, two detailed questionnaires, personal diaries every day, enduring rigorous interview sessions, doing
activities and assignments, etc. Would they have preferred to talk things out on tape since many of them said they usually went home feeling quite exhausted after a hard day's work at school?

A simple question could be constructed on these lines for members to react to by recording their views on tape.

Individual motivation seems to remain a dominant problem in distance learning courses everywhere. At the initial stages of this course, for example, the distance learning approach seemed to be interesting to members since it was 'new' to them. One member in fact indicated that she did the first module quickly. This is possibly because she was anxious to get to the root of it. Another possible reason for members' initial interest might be due to their anxiety to ensure that their particular school kept to the deadlines so they would not be looked down upon. This was a suspicion I had at the beginning of the course which now seems unsubstantiated since some members could not complete the course anyway. The only other possible reason that comes to mind is related to the predominant attitudes of people from developing countries who are not usually hostile to new ideas. They are usually so anxious to improve themselves that they hardly think of questioning new ideas initially unlike their western counterparts who may resist them outright.

It would be interesting to investigate further whether it was merely the 'newness' of the course that generated so much enthusiasm in members or whether there were other reasons for this.

12.6 Summary of Issues to Investigate Further

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the issues that emerged so far that required further work and could be investigated further in the final stage of this study are:-
For research question 1

- The DL/INSET course compared with the traditional courses participants are familiar with

For research question 2

- The provision of incentives for members of the course
- The time constraints on the course
- The period of the school year that would be appropriate for running a course of this nature
- The nature of the assignments appropriate for the course
- Members' motivation to complete modules
- Members' motivation to complete assignments

For research question 3

- The clarity of the materials
- The structure of the course
- Writing schemes of work

For research question 4

- The system of support, re. tutors
- The system of support re partners
- The distance factor
- The use to which 'the book of extracts' was put

For research question 5

- The socio-economic problems
- The socio-economic problems in microcosm - lack of transportation to go and do library work
- The need to create opportunities for practical work
- The demanding nature of the multiplicity of feedback devices
- The opportunity members had to air their views in private by writing
12.7 Rationale For The Final Stage Of Work On Research Theme I

It was possible to investigate the points that required further work listed in section 12.6 because, at the end of the fieldwork phase on research theme I in Sierra Leone, tutors and members were encouraged to continue using the materials. This meant that members would have hopefully had the opportunity of using the materials for an eight-month period under different conditions:-

- in their own time and pace without pressure from me
- during the third and first terms of the school year when there were no distractions like school prizegiving and thanksgiving ceremonies
- under possibly improved socio-economic conditions like less blackouts! salaries now paid on time? improvement in the 'no-transportation' and 'no-petrol' situation, etc.

In the light of these different conditions, it seemed necessary to investigate members' current views on the course, with particular reference to the issues identified as requiring further work in section 12.6. I hoped that this would enable me to achieve the following:-

- illuminate existing findings
- consolidate existing findings
- identify those findings that are generalisable

Also I thought I would then be in a better position to draw firmer conclusions about the viability of the course and about what areas of the course might need to be reviewed at a later stage.

Furthermore, by asking members to look at things again, I hoped to achieve some degree of objectivity. This was because in analysing the data I received during the fieldwork phase, I constructed my own way of understanding it. Working as I did within the non-traditional paradigm, I was inevitably somewhat subjective, i.e. I must have made certain interpretations because of my own personality, background training and experience.
So members were again asked to respond to a checklist based on their feedback which is summarised in section 12.6. The next chapter will describe how this further study was implemented and present the findings.
13.i

CHAPTER 13

ADDRESSING OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON
RESEARCH THEMES I AND II

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13.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the final phase of the fieldwork and the conclusions reached for the two research themes of this thesis:

Research theme I concerns:

- an exploration into the design, development and evaluation of a distance learning course for the in-service education and training of teachers of English language in lower secondary schools in Sierra Leone.

Research theme II concerns:

- the use and evaluation of the tape mode of response particularly as a generator of data compared with standard methods of collecting evaluation data at a distance using questionnaires and feedback sheets used in this study and generally.

The chapter starts by describing why and how the fieldwork was implemented and goes on to discuss problems encountered in this particular data gathering exercise using tape.

Then the findings of both research themes are presented and interpreted in the light of their research themes and suggestions for further work are made.

The chapter ends with further outlook on the course.

13.1 Implementing the Fieldwork for the Final Phase - Research Themes I and II

There were various points which arose out of the findings of the research theme summarised in section 12.6 that required further investigation. Section 12.7 states the rationale for investigating them further.

Bearing in mind the great distance between the location of my sample population - Sierra Leone - and my study base - England - the logistics of the exercise seemed to share similar problems of complication as they had before. (I had encountered similar problems relating to distance during the pilot study stage for research theme I - see ch.9 - and I had used a different method, the tool,
which led to research theme II.) The feedback I had received on the pilot study at a distance through tape led me to believe that it was a useful and reliable method of getting evaluation feedback at a distance. Therefore, I decided to employ this method to carry out further work on research theme I. This introduced a number of other complications because in this phase of the work, not only was I trying to carry out further work on research theme I, I was simultaneously checking further the effectiveness of the means by which I was doing it, i.e. the tape method - research theme II. In effect, I tried to kill 'two birds with one stone' by combining the requirements for addressing research theme II with those for addressing research theme I.

In other words, two parallel issues were introduced:-

(For research theme I):
- further investigation of issues elicited using different methods. This is identified in section 12.7 (the experience from my pilot study gave me the confidence needed to do this using tape).

(For research theme II):
- the investigation of the usefulness of the tape mode of response as compared with other methods of evaluating at a distance

13.1.1 The purpose of the fieldwork

To enable me to implement the final phase of the research, the requirements for addressing research theme I were combined with those of research theme II as follows.

A package consisting of a letter (see appendix 13.1), a check list (see appendix 13.2) and a blank cassette were sent through an 'ambassador' - one of the tutors in Sierra Leone - to 18 of the members in Freetown who took part in the fieldwork for research theme I. They were asked to reflect on the materials, in the light of some of the issues they raised during the fieldwork which were listed in the check list and to speak their reactions directly on to the tape with the following options:-
- to respond anonymously

or

- by identifying themselves at a comfortable and convenient time

It was hoped that this study would enable me to:-

(For research theme I)

- compare the responses with those obtained in the earlier fieldwork

(For research theme I)

- cross check findings on the course and make generalisations about the problem under study in research theme I

(For research theme II)

- compare the tape mode of response as a generator of data with standard methods of collecting evaluation data at a distance using questionnaires and feedback sheets used in this study and generally

Before dealing with these matters I will give an account of some logistic difficulties encountered in this final data gathering.

13.2 Problems Encountered by the Ambassador in Gathering Data

There were many and severe problems in gathering data for this phase of the study. Most seemed to be peculiar to Sierra Leone as a developing country because of its socio-economic problems. The problems can be summarised in the words voiced on tape in a very stressed, tense and thoroughly exhausted tone by the ambassador charged with the responsibility of implementing this phase of the study. He said:-

"First of all, I did not receive the tapes and checklist you sent on time because they were seized by customs officers at the airport. After your institute intervened, I received them with four tapes missing. I had to buy another four. This seemed to take ages as tapes are expensive and hard to come by because of restrictions imposed on imported goods. I found some which proved too expensive, so I had to wait till I received the advance payment for the job from your brother. After this, I had to start hunting for the envelope which contained the checklists you sent for members. I realised that these had been handed over to another gentleman by the same name as me by mistake. Since it appeared that I would not be able to retrieve them, I decided to photocopy mine. There again, I encountered problems as there were
frequent blackouts. Eventually, I got some copies typed which I then took to some of the schools. It will interest you to know that I retrieved the copies you sent on the fourth week after my initial visits to some of the schools."

The tape went on as he continued to narrate more problems. Some of them were problems tutors and I encountered when trying to get members to complete their modules. He said that each time he went to schools to request their taped responses, members came up with problems relating to their inability to complete the assignment because of blackouts or school commitments. He decided to buy batteries and take them to some members. There again it took him a long time to find batteries in the shops because they were being hoarded. Also, since there were frequent blackouts, they had become an expensive commodity as they were in great demand. So that it was only the thirteen members that he provided batteries for that managed to take part in this part of the study. Even there, only five tapes were returned as the other eight teachers told him that they had decided to record their views and translate them so that they could keep the tapes. To quote his exact words on his tape:--

"You can imagine how I felt when eight members gave me what they said were transcripts of their responses. They told me that they wanted to keep the tapes. Nothing I did could persuade them to give me the tapes. So I reported the matter to officials at your institute who said they will contact the teachers and their principals when schools reopen...since schools had closed by then...I do not even believe that they recorded their views but all I can do now is to submit what I have collected so far to the institute. A few other teachers asked me to call at their homes for their feedback but since you sounded as if you needed the work so urgently in your last letter, I cannot wait till I collect them."

These problems did not come to me as a complete surprise though, as the system of communication in Sierra Leone, like many developing countries, is quite poor. Also, because of the poor state of the economy and low salaries, customs officers tend to be unnecessarily difficult when they want tips. It might be that since there is so much
smuggling of foreign goods going on in the country because of the
dearth of foreign exchange, the officers might have suspected that,
the tapes being new, they were being smuggled for trade purposes. In spite
of the fact that a letter written by one of my supervisors stipulating
that the cassettes were for research purposes accompanied the package
(see appendix 13.3).

Also, it is not surprising that he seemed to cast some doubt
as to whether members really recorded their views before transcribing
them. I am myself very sceptical about this because if they were
'true transcripts' then I would expect the form to be very similar to
what was on the five tapes. In fact there was quite a radical difference
between the responses as is discussed more fully in section 13.4.
Those responses that came on paper were much more closely linked to the
checklist. Those on tape were much freer and respondents did not feel
bound to cover all the points highlighted in the checklist. So there
are qualitative differences between both sets of responses and I would
not expect to find such differences if the written responses had been
transcribed. I would expect that kind of difference if the written
responses were in fact simply written in response to the checklist and
the tapes had never been made. The taped responses in fact bear
some similarities to those taped responses I had received during the
earlier study on the tapes (see ch.9). Because of this qualitative
difference, I have decided for the purposes of the following discussion
to treat the responses on paper which members told the ambassador were
their 'transcripts' as written responses. This means that, effectively,
thirteen out of the twenty members of the sample gave feedback on
the course—five by tape and eight in writing.

I have related the problems my ambassador encountered at great
length to give the reader a flavour of the Sierra Leonean socio-economic
context. In setting up or in trying to implement a research project
of this nature, one too often forgets that such problems exist and
may affect the nature of the project.
13.3 Addressing Outstanding Issues On Research Theme I

There is a great variation in the thirteen responses. I have distinguished the mode of their responses in table 13.1 by putting T for taped responses and W for written responses. Even though respondents varied in the emphasis placed on each question in the checklist, when the nineteen questions are re-examined and grouped together under thematic headings, it can be seen that the respondents in fact addressed all the range of issues that are covered in the nineteen questions. This provides some kind of independent corroboration which shows that the original choice of nineteen questions referred to issues which had common importance and relevance for all respondents.

It was necessary to identify those issues (which have been dealt with in 12.6 only to the point where they raised further questions) which I put on the checklist. Looking at the variation of their responses, it would seem to be repetitious to work through each of their responses individually. In searching for recurrent themes and issues, the following points emerged:-

i. Some of the themes and issues that have been raised in those responses obtained in the earlier fieldwork for research theme I are again raised and either confirmed, clarified, negated or still remain unclear.

ii. Some issues that have been mentioned before by a majority of the respondents but needed to be clarified are now only raised by single respondents.

iii. Two new issues which were absent from the previous feedback emerged.

Accordingly the responses will be discussed under the following categories:-

- recurring issues
- issues of seemingly decreasing importance
- new issues raised
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Respondents compared to traditional teaching

- Provision of incentives for participants implementing the course
- Timing of course - tight deadlines
- Period of school year that would be considered appropriate
- Nature of assignments considered appropriate - essays or objectives
- Motivation to complete modules
- Motivation to complete assignments
- Library work
- Clarity of materials
- Structure of course
- Book of extracts
- Writing scheme of work
- System of support tutors
- System of support for partners
- Distance factor
- Use to which book of extracts was put
- Socio-economic problems
- Need to create opportunities for practical work
- Demanding nature of multiplicity of feedback devices
- Opportunity mem-
- views in privacy and in writing
- Issues relating to varying length of each unit
- Issues relating to teaching in groups having observing each other, the tutors observing...
13.3.1 Recurring issues

The recurring issues fall into the following:-

i. issues relating to learning at a distance in the light of the traditional courses participants were familiar with (research question 1)

ii. issues relating to the provision of incentives for members (research question 2)

iii. issues relating to the timing of the course - tight deadlines (research question 2)

iv. issues relating to the 'exact' period of the school year which is considered appropriate for implementing the course (research question 2)

v. issues relating to the clarity of the materials (research question 3)

vi. issues relating to the tutorial and partnership contact (research question 4)

vii. issues relating to the socio-economic conditions in the country (research question 5)

viii. issues relating to transportation difficulties encountered in trying to do library work (research question 5)

ix. issues relating to their inability to carry out some of the activities that required practical classroom work in the light of their existing teaching timetables (research question 5)

x. issues relating to the demanding nature of the feedback devices (research question 5)

xi. issues relating to the opportunity the course afforded members to air their views in private by writing (research question 5)

In my attempt to briefly illustrate these points using quotations from their responses, there was a striking point about the 'new' quotations, i.e. their similarity to quotes made earlier in the fieldwork using other methods, especially interviews (see section 11.6). However, in spite of their similarity to earlier quotations, some of their responses to these issues helped to clarify and/or confirm questions from the earlier feedback. One was negated and a few still remain unclear. In the following discussion, these points will be highlighted as and when they occur.
1. Issues relating to learning at a distance in the light of the traditional courses participants were familiar with:

Many members were in agreement in expressing a liking for learning at a distance because of the practical aspects connected with the course and because they felt that the work could be spread out and done at their pace. Some, however, restated their earlier view that the deadlines set made it evident that this was a 'crash' course and that they sometimes felt guilty when they could not meet deadlines. According to one member:

"I wish there were no deadlines but I doubt whether I would have felt like doing any of the written assignments..." Tape

Another member indicated outright that she preferred the distance learning course because of her family commitments. She added:

"...I only wish I could have been able to do it at my own pace as I was only able to do recently. It is very relaxing." Tape

One member confirmed an earlier point by restating the following:

"I prefer the distance learning course because I found my college course boring and demanding - especially because I was always nervous during exam time... Although my tutor observed me teach, I knew he was not going to fail me so there was no need for concern." Written

On the other hand, one member who had consistently expressed a preference for her college course, corroborated her earlier evidence by restating her view in the following manner:

"I prefer my college course. I love it better as I told you before. It depends on the individual." Written

Thus, issues which had surfaced in previous discussions relating to learning at a distance compared with traditional courses documented in section 11.6, were repeated and confirmed earlier views.

2. Issues relating to the provision of incentives for members:

Many members continued to express the need for a reward in the form of a degree or diploma. Their views can be seen in the following:

"I wish there were no deadlines but I doubt whether I would have felt like doing any of the written assignments..." Tape

Another member indicated outright that she preferred the distance learning course because of her family commitments. She added:

"...I only wish I could have been able to do it at my own pace as I was only able to do recently. It is very relaxing." Tape

One member confirmed an earlier point by restating the following:

"I prefer the distance learning course because I found my college course boring and demanding - especially because I was always nervous during exam time... Although my tutor observed me teach, I knew he was not going to fail me so there was no need for concern." Written

On the other hand, one member who had consistently expressed a preference for her college course, corroborated her earlier evidence by restating her view in the following manner:

"I prefer my college course. I love it better as I told you before. It depends on the individual." Written
"The teachers will be more interested if motivated by a reward of some sort. You, for instance, are working towards a reward, i.e. you will be getting your degree. If we have a goal, a certificate, award, money, etc. our interest will be greater."

"We would have been more motivated if we were working towards a degree or money. As it were, although I knew I was improving my knowledge, I couldn't help but feel that it was an added burden."

The above views corroborate earlier evidence which makes it obvious that this is an important factor for members even though they do not seem to be in agreement in suggesting the kind of reward they would consider appropriate. This however clearly indicates that in implementing such a course, provisions must be made for incentives for members from the onset of the implementation phase. Future workers in the field should probe this further as it seems a central feature to successful implementation.

iii. Issues relating to the timing of the course - tight deadlines:

Responses to these issues can be characterised by the following quotations:-

"I have told you before that the time should be extended. I seem to have understood some of the units better only when I read them at the end of the course. It is a good course but we need more time to do it well."

"The time factor was definitely the greatest problem that we were all faced with. I stayed up late so many times at night just to try and complete each module and meet the deadlines set but that was always almost impossible. Personally, I feel that a period of at least six months might have yielded better results."

This quotation echoed earlier views (see 11.6) and clarifies the issue further by the suggestion of 'six months' for the duration of the course. Since this was a pilot course and I had to meet deadlines myself, it is obvious that I seemed to have concentrated on meeting my own deadlines for travel, etc. to the exclusion of consideration of deadlines for members which now seem so important. The clarification of this issue alerts me to the importance of providing enough time for members when implementing such a course.
iv. Issues relating to the 'exact' period of the school year considered appropriate for implementing the course:

Although I had asked questions relating to this issue during interviews with members, none of them had come up with suggestions of 'exact' periods of the school year during which this course could have been effectively run. It was quite revealing to me when they now made suggestions as to the 'exact' times. This prompted me to assume that the fact that they have been able to reflect on the course after their experience coupled with their familiarity with school demands helped them in making suggestions which can be characterised by the following quotation of one of their responses:

"I experienced problems with the timing of the course because we had our school functions to plan for. This affected our work because we, the teachers, were busy with extra duties, added to which the girls were not available for some of the exercises found in the modules. I can suggest possible periods but these should be dependent on the individual teacher and her commitments. - during the long vacation and possibly the first month of the new term will be a period of three months - or towards the end of the third term when those teachers in charge of senior forms will be less busy while their pupils are away having public exams and this could in fact be extended to cover the long vacation period."

The confirmation and further clarification of this issue has alerted me to the need to make prior arrangements with schools to ensure that members will have enough time to carry out the work. This question of time is central to distance learning courses for INSET as other INSET course organisers have come up with similar findings (e.g. Perraton, 1984; Elton, 1985).

v. Issues relating to the clarity of the materials:

Such issues seem to have run through the course from as early as the pilot study phase (see ch. 9, 10, 11 and 12). The fact that even those members who responded by tape (and apparently commented on only those aspects they considered important) commented again on it illustrates its importance further. Two quotations from their responses
one by tape and the other by writing will be used to portray their responses:

"Some areas did not seem clear for me because they were confusing and some seemed to be difficult for me too. How can you expect me to do the course at a distance as you say, if it is not clear."

Tape

"Some more work should be done to make the course very clear for me. I found many mistakes. Sometimes you say activity 1 is on p.14 when it is not there. Even some of the extracts were not arranged properly. This took up some of my time..."

Written

Such views clearly confirm the need to go through the materials again either with tutors or with some teachers and ensure that they are clear enough to stand alone.

The question that arises from this is how best should distance learning courses for INSET be prepared to ensure one hundred percent clarity? How far should the teachers themselves be involved in the writing process? Perhaps future workers in the field could address these questions, although this is hardly an issue in distance learning course design. It has been extensively discussed by Perrattton (1984), Elton (1985).

vi. Issues relating to the tutorial and partnership system:

Those members who discussed this issue gave the impression that they liked working with their tutors and partners although it was sometimes difficult to discuss with their tutors and partners when they found it necessary. The following two quotations are examples of their responses:

"I felt the need to interact with my tutor whenever I came across a statement or an idea which I disagreed with... for example...the writing of such a detailed scheme of work. It was not always possible to do this though....and I sometimes panicked for time."

Written

"The instructions would need to be very clear for me to be able to work without the help of my partner or tutor."

Tape
These views merely confirm earlier evidence. It is therefore important for future workers in the field to probe this issue further in an attempt to come up with better suggestions of an improved tutorial system. I would particularly like to see an improved tutorial system because I was of the opinion that instituting school-based tutors and partners would be a panacea for all members' isolation problems.

vii. Issues relating to the socio-economic situation in the country:

The response to this issue was characterised by the following quotations from two of the respondents:-

"The situation, far from being improved has in fact deteriorated. We still experience power cuts, high cost of living and problems with transportation. If you were to extend the course to other teachers, most of them will express these same feelings and so you might encounter the same problems with them. However, this may depend on the individual and her other commitments..."

Tape

"Unfortunately, the situation has not eased as you were informed. We had a brief honeymoon period around December, 1985 when the new government took over but that did not last. So if you were to extend the course again, you might end up with similar results..."

Written

These quotations help to clarify and in fact negate an issue that was raised in the earlier feedback (see 12.6). It is worth mentioning that respondents spent a long time on the tape discussing this issue. This must surely imply that researchers should study the socio-economic situation in a country thoroughly before they embark on implementing a course of this nature. Even though I knew the Sierra Leone situation so well, I did not anticipate such problems and in such magnitude!

Also, these views conflict with the statement I made in a question in the checklist which assumed that the new government had brought improved conditions for teachers. It would seem as if they merely had 'a brief period of honeymoon' after which conditions deteriorated. again, so my assumption was found to be faulty.
viii. Issue relating to transportation difficulties encountered in attempting to do library work:

Some members indicated that they felt the need to go to a library sometimes to look up difficult concepts but encountered transportation difficulties. This feedback confirms the point that generally members felt the need to go to a library only when they were trying to unravel difficult concepts in module Cl. Their responses can be characterised by the following quotation:-

"The book of extracts was sufficient for me but the extracts for module Cl posed some difficulties just as the module itself. There were too many new ideas introduced and they all seemed to be introduced at once. Even my partner did not know these words. So we tried to go to a library but were frustrated by the thought of transportation." Tape

The revelation in this finding is important because in the earlier feedback, it was only one member who indicated that she had felt the need to go to a library. The fact that other members have now confirmed this issue means that the materials, especially module Cl, was not clear enough for members, since the thought of transportation would not have arisen if the materials were clear enough. This indicates that module Cl and the course, generally, must be re-written so clearly that it should be able to be self-sufficient for members. This is an issue which also relates to the socio-economic factor already mentioned.

ix. Issues relating to their inability to carry out some of the activities that required traditional classroom work in the light of their existing teaching timetables:

This issue was raised by some of the respondents who seemed to feel that their school timetables should have been adjusted to make allowances for those activities that needed to be carried out in the classroom. They expressed the view that it was important that they practised what they had learnt in the course. According to one member:
"I did not have enough opportunities to practise many of the methods suggested in the materials in my classroom. I think you should have made prior arrangements so that the course could fit in with the timetable and the textbook used by our school. It was quite a crash course and there was need for some of the materials to be printed for pupils to be able to participate. Where this was absent one could not try it out. For example, in the teaching of continuous writing, I felt the need for that passage to have been copied out for pupils."  

Since this point was raised by so many members earlier (see section 12.6) it is obviously paramount in their minds and attention should be paid to prior organisation with school heads by course organisers. This is an important lesson that I have learnt from implementing this course and it will be put into good use when I decide to implement the course again. This issue also relates to the timing constraints.

x. Issues relating to the demanding nature of the feedback devices:

This issue seemed to have caused concern for members as not one of them gave a positive view in this regard. They however complained most about the fact that they had to complete feedback sheets at the end of each unit. They reiterated their earlier points (see section 12.6) that this was boring as the questions were the same for each unit. One member said:-

"It seemed that after reading the text and writing out the assignments, part of the lesson was to fill in feedback sheets and my personal diary. I did not mind writing in my diary as much as I minded filling in those boring sheets. Why should we have had those added tasks. The sheets did not teach me anything."  

Looking at the feedback sheets again, I do feel they could have been structured otherwise. Indeed, at least two respondents even mentioned how much more they appreciated the tape method of feedback compared with the feedback sheets. This method (i.e. feedback sheets) generally seemed little liked and consistently completed. Other conventional methods of feedback (e.g. interviews, personal diaries, etc.) do not however receive such a negative response. This means that
other methods of giving feedback that respondents did not complain so much about might be more appropriate to use in future implementation phases in that they would probably engender a fuller response.

xi. Issues relating to the opportunity the course afforded members to air their views in private by writing:

This issue had been raised by one of the tutors during interview sessions. (see sections 11.6 and 12.6). This is the first time members were given the opportunity to react to this point and they all seemed to agree with it. In fact two of them said:-

"I am usually a very shy person. I would not have been bold enough to discuss some of the points I wrote down in my essays if I was attending a workshop. The comments I made in my diary were also helpful." 

"In actual fact I found it easy to state my teaching problems on paper for the simple reason that I have attended a seminar only once - when I was in form 5. I did not say anything even though there were things I wanted to say. I felt shy to expose myself in the crowd."

This can be said to be a particularly positive finding in the course so far. Its confirmation by members speaks well for the course.

13.3.2 Issues of seemingly decreasing importance:

The issues that seemed very important to a majority of respondents in the earlier feedback (which in fact made me request confirmation) but now seemed of decreasing importance to respondents since only single respondents now refer to them are:-

- issues relating to the nature of the assignments considered appropriate - essays or objectives (research question 2)
- issues relating to what motivated members to do assignments (research question 2)
- issues relating to what motivated members to complete modules (research question 2)
- issues relating to the structure of the course which included a book of extracts (research questions 3 and 4)
It is interesting to reflect on the types of issues that respondents now seem to discard. They seem to relate to the more practical aspects of the course - which were at the forefront of their minds while they were experiencing the course but which have since faded. Since the references the single respondents made to such issues do not add or take anything away from earlier responses, there is no need to repeat these singular responses here as their earlier views on these issues are already documented in sections 11.4-6.

However, since it is important to note evidence that corroborates with earlier evidence, it is important to assign a reason for the fact that the majority who raised these issues earlier do not do so again. It is possible that because they have said them once, that is enough or it is also possible that they no longer consider such points relevant. The fact that all of those who responded by tape did not raise such issues again lead to the conclusion that the method of giving feedback allowed them the freedom to comment on only those issues they considered important. However, since these are important issues, it will be necessary for future researchers to probe them further.

13.3.3 New issues raised

The new issues raised fall into the following categories:

i. issues relating to the varying length of each unit

ii. issues relating to teaching practice in groups with members observing each other rather than tutors doing observations

It is interesting to reflect again on the nature of the above responses. These seem to be 'holistic' issues in that now they are stepping back and reflecting on what would have improved their ability to handle the whole course. They tend to be giving an overview of or re-examining the situation by, for example, debating as to the
lack of opportunities for teaching practice within the group with members criticising each other, rather than having tutors observe them. They intimate that this would probably have motivated them to appreciate the course better. Also, it is only now for example that they are commenting on the 'length' of units. They have also had the opportunity of experiencing almost another school year after the course. So in effect, they have gone through a rethinking process. A detailed examination of their responses follows:-

i. Issues relating to the varying length of the units:

Members had the opportunity of raising this issue under the question 'other issues'. They expressed concern that units C3 and C4 were too long, especially because they came at the end of the course. They seemed to feel that by the time they got to these units, their enthusiasm for the course had begun to wane. The only saving grace seemed to be the fact that they did not find those units difficult or technical. One of them said:--

"Module C4 hit me quite unprepared. I never realised that it would be so long. We must be given longer deadlines for longer units..."

Since this is an important issue, I will bear it in mind for future implementation of the course.

ii. Issues relating to teaching practice in groups:

Members felt that they should have been given the opportunity to carry out teaching assignments in the presence of other members. This they felt would have helped them determine whether they were carrying them out in the required manner as members would have felt more relaxed teaching in the presence of fellow members than in the presence of tutors. Their views can be characterised by:-
"I did not feel quite comfortable when I had to teach in front of my tutor. It reminded me of teaching practice days when I used to be quite panicky. I did not panic this time but I would have been more relaxed if I was teaching in front of other members engaged in the struggle! It would have been more profitable for me."

13.4 Addressing Outstanding Issues Of Research Theme II

As is mentioned in section 13.3, only five out of the thirteen members who responded to this aspect of the study returned their taped responses. For this particular research theme, their responses were analysed by listening to the tapes several times to compare the nature of the data elicited using traditional methods like interviews and other methods in the earlier fieldwork and determine how much light has been shed on the following research question:

a comparison of the tape mode of response as a generator of data with standard methods of collecting evaluation data at a distance using questionnaires and feedback sheets as used in this study and generally.

This part of the study also afforded the opportunity to see whether the same 'stimulus', i.e. the checklist, produced similar or different responses depending on whether it is taped or written. It enabled me to see whether or how the method of response influences the content of responses.

The findings will now be discussed and interpreted in the light of the above and issues which remain unclear will be highlighted for further work by other workers in the field.

13.4.1 Logistic problems

The first finding relates to the logistic problems the tape method created. This has already been discussed in section 13.2. Whether or not this will be generally true depends on the social context of the situation.
13.4.2 Taped responses vs written responses: nature

The second finding is that the taped responses seemed radically different from the written responses since they provide a much more free response to the extent of ignoring the supplied checklist. As I listened to the tapes after reading the written responses, it did not seem as if the two sets of respondents were even commenting on the same checklist since the tape respondents completely ignored the checklist. They seemed to have merely commented at length on only those issues they considered important. This assertion can be supported by the fact that their taped responses include issues which they had commented on in the earlier feedback as well as issues those who responded by writing also commented on at length. Such issues include the socio-economic factors, the need for incentives for members and their aversion to the multiplicity of feedback devices employed during the fieldwork for research theme I.

Since the issue relating to the socio-economic factor was the first question in the checklist, the possibility that that might have motivated all respondents to dwell at length on it cannot be ruled out. However, the fact that it is an issue that has run through the work so far indicates that it is of paramount importance to all respondents.

Furthermore, people seem to be generally more relaxed and colloquial when they are speaking as speaking is effortless, unlike writing which needs structuring. This is in fact why playwrights encounter innumerable problems when they try to write dialogues.

The fact that the Sierra Leonean respondents hail from an oral culture cannot be ruled out as the ease they demonstrated in their oral feedback can be partly attributed to it.
13.4.3 Taped responses vs written responses: meaning

The third finding is that the tape mode enables one to infer extra information from the tone of the spoken voice which seems to carry more meaning. Tones of stress, anger, sometimes agitation and even some passion could be detected in the voices of tape-respondents which are absent in the written responses for obvious reasons. Their tone of voice helped me to decipher and conclude that those issues were 'burning' issues for them. This then implies that the mode of their response seemed to have influenced the content and manner of their responses.

13.4.4 The manner of their responses - attitudes, emotions and value judgements

This ties in with the fourth finding where respondents stated outright that the tape mode lead them to air their views in a way they would not do in writing. This could actually be seen in the manner of their responses. In a few cases, respondents felt free to make comments like:-

"I hope you will pay us for this job as we are broke."

"Are you not tired of asking for feedback? We are hungry. The money you gave us the last time is finished."

"You do not seem to understand what is bothering us at the moment. We can't think well on an empty stomach."

Such comments support the view that respondents aired their views in a way they would not do in writing because the mode of response influenced the tone, manner and content of their responses. Moreso, these kinds of casual comments also imply that respondents did not structure their responses as conscientiously as they would have done for writing. It is also possible that their knowledge and familiarity with me may have influenced the way they saw the situation as well as the sorts of things they deemed fit to speak to me about. They seemed
to have been able to express themselves in a more relaxed, free and uninhibited manner on the tape. This is unlikely to have happened if they were recording their views for a total stranger to the Sierra Leone situation or if they had had to structure their responses for writing.

In any sort of communication, people make conscious or unconscious choices about the information which they impart. They make an assessment of the situation and of the sort of information which would be appropriate for the particular audience. In this circumstance, my audience knew me well so they were making assessments about the sorts of information which I should be getting in terms of that knowledge and in terms of what social scientists refer to as indexicality. Therefore they were able to go beyond the sort of 'polite response' which another researcher might have elicited to a different sort of 'imparting of information' which could perhaps be characterised as some sort of 'second order' or 'second level' of information. This is because they knew that I understood the circumstances and that I was familiar with the situation, etc. They therefore decided that there was no need to give me details of certain issues or to even respond in a formal manner as is evident in some of their comments on the socio-economic factor:-

"But Mrs. K, how can you be asking such a question when you were here last year 'dregging' with us?" Tape

('dregging' in local parlance 'krio' means (inverted commas; mine) 'suffering'. It comes from the English word dragging)

"The 'new order' you refer to in your first question is now so disorderly - you can't believe me. Tape

(The 'new order' was the local slangy terminology used to describe the new government that took over in December, 1985, since the new head of state was the former Brigadier of the armed forces. It is now not a military government though)
It is obvious that terms like 'dregging' and 'the new order' were only used by respondents because they realised that they were speaking their views to someone they knew so well and someone they realised would have no trouble in coming to terms with what they were saying.

This kind of relaxation, ease, uninhibition and freedom in that they demonstrated lends more credibility and validity to their responses than even the responses of those who went to the trouble to address each question in the checklist by writing. The tape mode seemed to have offered them a certain amount of freedom which made them not feel hesitant to come up with a truthful picture of the stark reality of things!

This shows that the tape mode allows individuals to progress to that level of discussion which allows them to make judgements about what sort or level of information they should impart which questionnaires or feedback sheets with their characteristically less flexible structures would not have afforded respondents. Even with the most open-ended questionnaire, the level of information one can at best hope to get is somehow predetermined by the structuring of the questions on the sheet. So it would appear that if one allows people to take upon themselves the onus of deciding on the sort of information they deem appropriate to impart to the inquirer - which the tape method allows them - one is allowing oneself the possibility of getting 'higher order' insights. So that in effect, the tape method, like 'observation' in Guba and Lincoln's (1981) terms, seemed to maximise my ability to grasp motives, beliefs, customs, interests, unconscious behaviours, concerns, etc. of the respondents. It allowed me to see:-
"...the world as his (my) subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon, in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, on-going environment; ...it provides the inquirer (me) with access to the emotional reactions of the group introspectively - that is, in a real sense it permits the observer (me) to use himself (myself) as a data source; and... allows ... (me) to build on tacit knowledge, both his (my) own and that of members of the group." (Guba and Lincoln, 1981) (within brackets, my own)

I must point out that 'seeing the world as my subjects see it' had to be tempered by my own vision of the world, which, in turn would have been affected by my own life experience. This brings me to the point relating to how I eventually grappled with the issue of objectivity.

13.4.5 Subjectivity vs objectivity

The fifth point is that the very subjectivity of the responses the tape mode allowed made me and would make other researchers more aware of where their subjectivity lies. It is an acknowledged fact that in any research, it is never possible to achieve complete 'objectivity'. In any situation, there are different factors which influence how far one is able to remove oneself from subjectivity towards some sort of interpretation and understanding of what is going on. In these particular cases, the following issues had an influence on my understanding and interpretation: -

- my knowledge of the respondents
- my thorough immersion in the Sierra Leone socio-economic situation
- the fact that I could even visualise some of the respondents as I listened to the tapes and even remember the last time I saw those I am friendly with

This is a continuous problem that many researchers face. How much does one feel they have become or they are so integrated within a group to feel a part of the group and to understand the group? In trying to
make such judgements, how far do researchers lose their ability to stand back and see the whole situation? In other words, at which point can they lose sight of the 'wood' for example and see only the 'trees'. Although the 'wood' is something else, they cannot just talk about it without the 'trees' as it would then be meaningless. In my case, I found it sometimes difficult to keep thinking of the 'wood' only because of my immersion in the situation. So I tried to play a dangerous balancing act or 'walk a tightrope' in my attempt to step backwards and see how far my shared knowledge and experience with respondents - i.e. my indexicality - influenced my interpretation of their responses. This is because as I listened to the tapes, it gradually became obvious from my initial reactions that if I was not careful and conscious of this fact, it would influence it.

For example, when I realised that each one of the respondents went on and on about the socio-economic problems and their lack of food and money, my first impulse was to laugh it off and say, "this is very typical of Sierra Leoneans, they would grumble and complain about everything because they are not hardworking enough". It was only when I tried to distance myself from what they were saying that I was able to come to terms with the fact that some of what they were saying must be important for them. I then realised that I did not go into the field as a passive recorder of objective data", (Agar, 1980). In fact I will use a quotation from him to illustrate further the predicament I found myself in when I made an attempt to interpret 'taped responses' from people I knew so well and who also knew me so well:-

"Whether it is your personality, your rules of social interaction, your cultural bias towards significant topics, your professional training, or something else, you do not go into the field as a passive recorder of objective data. During fieldwork, you are surrounded by a multitude of noises and activities. As you choose what to attend to and how to interpret it, mental doors slam shut on the alternatives. While some of your choices may be consciously made, others are forced by the weight of the personal and professional background that you bring to the field."

(Agar, 1980)
From the above quotation, it is easy to see that my rules of social interaction with respondents coupled with my cultural bias towards the topic almost certainly affected my interpretations of their responses. However, as in most researches, the most that can be done in a situation like this and what I did in my case, was to try and come to an interpretation that would be both transferable and repeatable to a total stranger.

13.4.6 Variety in content of data

The sixth finding is that using just this one instrument, I have been able to come up with a variety of findings that can be equated to those findings elicited earlier through the ten or more methods employed in collecting data for the fieldwork for research theme I. (see section 10.2). This could be argued to be a confirmatory method, because after all, I had been alerted to these issues before through the more traditional methods. However, I do not believe this to be the case because of the very nature of the way people responded on tape. Instead of working through the checklist question-by-question, all five of them responded in a seemingly more random fashion to only those issues which were paramount in their minds. They even dealt with other issues more briefly. Although they did not approach my questions in exactly the same order in which I had laid them out, by the end of their taped response, they had in fact addressed the major issues that I was interested in. Because of this, the tape method could be seen as confirmatory.

On the other hand, the fact that the tape method enabled their responses to be much more guided by them while the written responses were guided by my questions could be argued to rule out the confirmatory aspect of the method. In fact, the picture that emerges from their attitude to the questions in the checklist is that they see it as my way of looking at the problem at hand. They are different individuals
who may not necessarily see things as I see them. So the tape respondents could be said to have rejected my structuring although in fact they ended up discussing the main themes embedded in the checklist.

This is hardly surprising because in formulating my checklist, I had thought of those areas which needed clarification and asked that they focus on them. In essence, this was to avail me of the opportunity to discuss views between and among respondents. In a way, therefore, I was asking them to look at the problem in my way of looking at it.

This kind of response that the tape method elicits could however be dangerous if respondents fail to discuss issues that it is felt must be discussed. In this particular feedback, I was fortunate in that even though they responded eclectically, they still addressed all the issues I had wished addressed. The taped responses could even be said to have replaced a sensitive unstructured face to face interview in which the interviewer says as little as possible and allows the interviewee to guide the discussion, but it does not replace anything that is structured such as a questionnaire.

As has been stated before, the method influences the content of the response and if I were to replicate this study on a larger scale, I might divide the sample into two halves and ask one half to respond by tape and the other by writing to see the nature of the outcome.

Since the tape method seems to have worked so effectively, one could continue to evaluate the course, for example every six months, by sending tapes to members periodically. Research within a non-traditional paradigm is essentially a 'longitudinal' and not a 'one-off' process. In studies like this, we continue to gain insights and information on the problem as evaluation of any form is an on-going process which requires a continuous contact between the evaluator and her sample population.
13.4.7 Qualitative vs quantitative data

The seventh finding is that the tape method has some similarities with the existing, more conventional, methods of evaluating at a distance such as questionnaires and feedback sheets but also produces a different kind of data.

i. Numerical data:
Questionnaires are most suitable for collecting detailed, numerical kinds of data for which the tape method is not suited. For example, the first questionnaire I administered to my members on orientation day (see section 11.3) afforded me the only suitable means by which I could conveniently collect the kind of detailed numerical, background information I needed from my sample before I started interviewing them. In that respect, the questionnaire method proved useful for giving me a much needed numerical type (quantitative) as opposed to a descriptive type (qualitative) data. I could not even begin to contemplate how I might have analysed the data quickly as I needed to do so before interviewing members.

ii. Access:
The questionnaire method is also useful for large numbers and cases where researchers have a limited access to their sample population - limited either in terms of their time or the geographical location of members of their sample. The tape method has indeed proved suitable in this regard as it did not only prove useful in terms of collecting data from members of my pilot study who lived in different distant areas in Britain, it has also allowed me to reach members in a far away country like Sierra Leone.

iii. Convenience of use:
One of the most quoted or mentioned advantages of a questionnaire is that it has been regarded as a convenient method by many respondents in that respondents can choose to answer at a time convenient to them.
This can also be true for the tape method which is also sent to respondents with the option to respond at a convenient time and in a comfortable place. However, this aspect has many drawbacks and it was one of the aspects that the 'ambassador' put in charge of the tape response highlighted. Since teachers had the freedom to respond at a time they considered convenient, we had to wait patiently until they were ready to submit the tapes. In fact he had to send constant reminders to them as one normally does when hunting for questionnaire responses. So that what respondents might regard as a convenient method may not be so convenient for the researcher! The literature even shows that for large scale questionnaires, the average response rate is thirty percent (for example Moser and Kalton, 1971). The same seems to be true for the tape mode.

iv. Respondents' attitudes to questionnaires:

On the other hand, respondents and some researchers alike sometimes demonstrate a negative attitude to questionnaires. They say a questionnaire is boring to fill in, some say it restricts them since they have to stick closely to the requirements of specific questions in a questionnaire. It has been considered irritating to others. 'Closed' questionnaires tend to prevent respondents from expressing their views because of 'cut-off' points. In open-ended interviews for example, the interviewee can express himself as freely as he would do in a tape response. Also questions can be adapted to respondents' personality and experience in both a tape response and an open-ended interview.

In some other cases, respondents have found questionnaire items meaningless and irrelevant. This is hardly surprising as a questionnaire is neutral and is supposed to apply to all and the questioner/researcher is not usually aware of all the variables that lead to respondents'
responses. So that indeed even though there is an abundance of literature on questionnaire design, the perfect questionnaire cannot be said to exist. These views can be summarised in the words of one researcher who is negative to the use of questionnaires:-

"My decision to opt for studies based upon observation and interviews rather than, say through questionnaires and diaries was not difficult. Again, it was derived from experience: I knew from previous work as a library consultant for a large publishing company that I had difficulty in adhering to structured 'closed' questionnaires; I found them restrictive and frustrating in their cut-off points. But my own diffidence as questionnaire-giver was not the only reason for rejecting this method: I was convinced that in my area of research, questionnaire respondents would not - however hard they might try - give as much information as might be elicited through interviews and observation......
....similarly, diaries would only yield conscious actions and would always be viewed with the suspicion that they were written with the researcher in mind."

(Stannett, 1985)

The above quotation shows that when researchers are deciding on their methodology it would seem to be important to take into account their own particular abilities and personalities. What for example one researcher is comfortable with might not necessarily be so comfortable for another and since this is bound to affect the sort of data they are able to elicit, they should select methods that suit them best.

All in all, the above facts go to show that the taped method in no way replaces the questionnaire method as they each produce 'different' kinds of evidence. The tape method seems to be much more guided by respondents while the questionnaire method is dictated by the researcher.

From the foregoing discussion, it appears that the outstanding findings on the tape method are:-

- it can cause logistic problems in poor countries
oral responses, which the tape mode offers, as distinct from written responses, seem to facilitate a freer method of response to the extent of ignoring the supplied checklist, since people are generally more colloquial and relaxed when they are talking - hence the difficulty playwrights encounter when trying to write good dialogues.

- spoken response enables one to infer extra information from tone of voice, e.g. emotion, even passion.
- respondents tend to feel more able to air their views in the tape response than they would do in written responses.
- the very subjectivity of their oral responses makes researchers more aware of where their own subjectivity lies.
- using the tape method seems to allow the elicitation of a variety of findings that can be equated to those findings elicited earlier from a battery of more traditional methods.
- the tape mode bears some similarities to the existing conventional methods of evaluating at a distance like questionnaires and feedback sheets.

These findings show that although I recognise that I am evaluating the very instrument I was using to collect data - the tape method - this has not been a drawback as I have been able to address the two parallel issues highlighted in section 13.1.

I hope that other researchers might be able to evaluate the tape mode more fully using a larger sample on a variety of occasions.

13.5 Concluding Remarks

The findings relating to research theme I show that distance learning is viable in Sierra Leone, albeit there is a need to overcome certain difficulties. It is worth pointing out that many of the findings concerning both INSET and distance learning replicate results found elsewhere by other researchers. It is therefore important not to exaggerate the effect of the special conditions of Sierra Leone. At the same time these conditions may well have increased some of the less favourable results above what would normally be expected.

There are many positive findings in relation to research theme II although there is need for further refinement and development of the instrument.
CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

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14.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the development of the work and allows me the luxury of personally reflecting on what seems stimulating in the achievements of the work so far and what could be done in future by other researchers.

The summary of the work presented in this chapter and in this thesis is published in Kaikumba and Cryer (1986) INSET at a distance for Teachers of English in Sierra Leone, IDEAS, Institute of Education, Sierra Leone, September, 1986 (see appendix 14.1).

14.1 The Development Of The Work

In October, 1983, at the outset of this work, my aim was to produce a handbook that would provide concrete practical guidelines for teachers of English in Sierra Leone who had expressed a need for a 'system of support' to facilitate their teaching tasks. However, after a review of the literature on support systems and prolonged personal discussions with many experts on distance learning, coupled with my personal experience of the distance learning approach, I came to the conclusion that not only can the construction of a DL/INSET course be equated with the production of a handbook, but its structure might well appeal to Sierra Leonean teachers of English. The fact that Sierra Leone is a developing country which is so convinced of the virtues of the conventional system of education made me rather hesitant. However, Hanson's view stimulated me. This was:-

"What Africa needs today is unconventional minds capable of finding unconventional answers to problems certain to stagger any but the most imaginative..."  

(Hanson, 1965)

It led me to venture into the unconventional - learning at a distance - without at that stage being fully aware of where it was leading me!
The first research theme of the study thus emerged as:-
"the design, development, implementation and evaluation
of an INSET at a distance course."

(A second research theme emerged during one of the developmental
stages of the thesis. The point at which it emerged will be indicated
in the subsequent discussion of the stages.)

In order to place the study in context, the need to address the
inadequate teacher training provisions and the ensuing problems of
quality in secondary education were discussed (see ch.2). The need
for the course was then outlined (see ch.3).

After a review of the literature on INSET approaches and INSET
at a distance (see ch.4 & 5), it was suggested that teachers' needs
could be met through materials on a small scale using print.

The non-traditional paradigm (see ch.6) was considered appropriate
for addressing these sorts of problems as it was hoped that it would
lead to broader and more eclectic perspectives than the traditional
quantitative paradigm.

The design of the course was then described (see ch.7). Problems
encountered when an attempt was made to pilot the course using the
illuminative evaluation approach were described (see ch.8) and the
second research theme which emerged as a new feature of the work was
highlighted. It is:-

"the development and use of the tape method of collecting
evaluation data at a distance."

The pilot study and its findings were discussed in chapter 9 and
the implementation and evaluation of the course were next described
(see ch.10 and 11). Since the main focus of the evaluation was on
collecting the perceptions of both tutors and members through many
feedback devices, conclusions about the effectiveness of the course
were made in chapter 12 where the research questions on research theme I
were addressed to the point where further questions were raised for-
investigation in the final phase of the study.

Chapter 13 described the final phase of the study and addressed the outstanding issues on research themes I and II.

14.2 Personal Reflections On Research Theme I

In reflecting on what has been achieved so far in the course, the findings show that enough data has been accumulated for me to conclude that the course could be run satisfactorily in Sierra Leone even though a number of issues may need to be addressed in future revisions of the course. Some of the findings corroborate existing findings by DL/INSET course organisers extant. Others gave pointers to areas of the course that needed to be modified. These will be highlighted in the next section in the hope that future researchers may take them up.

There are however certain aspects of the work which proved particularly stimulating. These are now discussed under the following categories:-

- social context: the need for careful pre-course planning
- the development of high level intellectual skills in members
- towards bridging the distance gap between learners and materials: the use of school based tutors
- the continuing need for INSET
- comparing the performances of conventionally trained teachers with those trained at a distance
- note on the methodology of the course

14.2.1 Social context: the need for careful pre-course planning

This research alerted me to the importance of considering the socio-economic situation in any country very carefully before a course of this nature is developed and implemented. The tremendous impact of 'context' - i.e. how the course fitted in to the rest of participants' lives and they to it - must be at the forefront of researchers' minds when developing such a course. This point has been raised by previous researchers before (see ch.5) and the finding in this thesis more than
confirms its importance.

Since such courses do not and cannot occur in isolation, they should be seen and planned in their societal contexts. Therefore, a great deal of pre-course planning is necessary before such a course can be effectively implemented. The local environment of each particular school + teachers' timetables, their particular social contexts, etc. must be considered from the outset. This would alert course organisers to these difficulties which largely relate to the socio-economic conditions of a particular country's social status and a particular school's local environment from the outset. It is obvious that there is likely to be some common and some different problems in different countries. This is in fact why it is very important to engage in full pre-course planning as this would minimise such problems to a large extent.

For example, even though I am very familiar with the Sierra Leone socio-economic set up, I did not realise that members would have demanded incentives in the almost unanimous manner in which they did though I had realised that because of the situation they would need some sort of honorarium (which I in fact gave them at the end but which I did not consider wise to tell them of in advance of the implementation of the course). This kind of demand may or may not be unique to the Sierra Leone situation. Unless researchers spend a long time studying the social context, facts like the above would not be unravelled.

So one of the strongest points this study has alerted me to is the fact that educational packages cannot be abstracted from their social contexts! In fact, one of the strongest messages in educational research is that for learning to take place, it must be seen to be meaningful and relevant to learners and this finding is surely but another aspect of this axiom.
14.2.2 The development of high level intellectual skills in members

One other outcome of this research that has proved personally stimulating for me is the fact that members enjoyed the opportunity the course gave them to air their views by writing and in private. This was a fascinating point as it was not an anticipated outcome of the study. Teachers stressed that in their traditional learning experiences, the tendency for them to stifle their views in their minds because of shyness, etc. had prevented them from expressing them in seminars and workshops. They enjoyed the fact that this course which demands that they write them down gave them the opportunity to discuss their problems without any inhibition.

To me, giving members the opportunity to air their views enables them to practise developing them and hence allows them to think more deeply about issues than they might otherwise have done. Accordingly, they are trained to become more creative and are in a position to develop a constructive attitude to solving their problems. This might make it possible to develop high level intellectual skills which is essential for the personal growth of teachers, which in turn, would enable them to improve their teaching skills.

14.2.3 Towards bridging the 'distance' between learners and course materials: the use of school-based tutors

Another particularly fascinating aspect of the course for me seemed to be the fact that the institution of course tutors and members belonging to the same school who shared the same staffrooms helped to overcome one of the traditionally identified problems of distance learning, specifically the isolation of learners. It helped to reassure members whose enthusiasm may have waned because of isolation. It also proved to be a very cost effective means of providing much needed tutorial help. It would seem that the staffroom where members and tutors may have
discussed the course became a sort of classroom for the course members. The fact that tutors are au fait with the local conditions of the teaching situation, the local environment of their schools as well as the social context is a big bonus for the use of local school-based tutors. They were in a position to interpret the course materials in the light of the needs of their particular schools, the external exams, etc. Tutors were also in a position to observe members teach which was one good way of monitoring members' changes in their teaching. In a situation in which course assignments have to be sent abroad to tutors who are thousands of miles away and whose only means of communicating with members is through extensive 'written' evaluation or assessment comments, the communication between tutors and members would hardly be as efficient as those who share the same school staffroom. Tutors in such courses have been known to even exchange pictures with course members to enhance the face to face contact. Nothing like this can replace the real face to face contact members of my course experienced with tutors and with each other. The virtue of peer support can never be overestimated!

Even though this aspect of the course proved fascinating, I realised that such support could only be effective if it had been organised effectively in advance. During the pre-course planning stage, such support needs to be organised and designed to suit the local environment of each particular school.

Also, I have been alerted to the need to provide extensive training sessions for tutors as the mere description of their role in a handbook did not seem to be enough. They should not only be trained in the methods of tutoring but be also guided as to how assignments should be assessed.
14.2.4 The continuing need for INSET

Another personal reaction to the study stems from the fact that I was able to realise that one of the existing attitudes to education seems to be that teachers should be trained once and left to develop by themselves further. This should not be the case. In fact, the need for a continuing programme of in-service training to raise the qualification of teachers and to update their knowledge and skills cannot be overemphasised. Education connotes growth, particularly so for teachers and other educational personnel, so teacher training should be a continuous and on-going process. This means that after producing teachers with initial training during their pre-service days - i.e. the tools needed for their initial teaching tasks, we must allow them the opportunity to hone, discuss and re-examine such tools as time goes on so that they will become a part of them for life long education.

This demands a change in our attitudes - i.e. our attitudes to the requisite needs and support in teacher education. For example, if we find out that the conventional education system is not working, we should not hesitate to venture into the unconventional!

14.2.5 Comparing the performance of conventionally trained teachers with those trained at a distance

Another reaction is that although the DL/INSET course seems to work well and the evaluation period for this course was limited, there may be the need to follow teachers through their learning at a distance and compare their classroom performances with those of conventionally trained teachers to convince others that it is not just a second best alternative in the attempt to find unconventional answers to unconventional problems. In fact, from over 60 projects using distance teaching methods to train teachers (Brophy and Dudley, 1980) we have little more than circumstantial and anecdotal evidence with which we can assess them (Jenkins, 1980).
Research of this nature was carried out by Brophy and Dudley (1978) in which they compared the performance of 'graduates' from the 1976 Emergency Science Programme in Guyana with that of college-trained science teachers 'graduating' the same year and a number of difficulties that still needed to be overcome in distance teaching were identified. It would be interesting to replicate this study for Sierra Leonean teachers of English who participated in this course. This is something I might be able to do in the not too distant future.

14.2.6 Note on the flexibility of the non-traditional paradigm

I was personally thrilled with the fact that the flexible nature of the non-traditional paradigm, specifically illuminative evaluation, afforded me the opportunity of doing things in this research which were not in my original design. As has been adequately documented in chs. 6 and 8, one of the four characteristics of the illuminative evaluation approach is that the design is heuristic, i.e. it is not laid out in advance but proceeds by progressively focussing as the evaluator becomes more familiar with the situation.

For example, as is documented and interpreted in chapter 10, when I found that members were shy to air their views during the 'discussion session' on the final evaluation workshop session phase of the course, I decided on the spur of the moment to hand out audio-cassette tapes to tutors and ask that they convene school-based discussion sessions with the members they were in charge of in their schools and that the sessions should be taped. As I had anticipated, it turned out that members felt more relaxed and uninhibited to express their genuine views about the course in their small groups and so gave more detailed feedback than they had given before.
A major benefit gained from this flexible methodology is the opportunity it afforded me to develop, use and investigate the audio-cassette tape method of evaluating at a distance which I had contemplated would not only address problems I encountered with distance, time and lack of finance to travel, etc. but also provide useful data and possibly become one of the tools that researchers would consider using. This will be elaborated on in section 14:4, since it was the second research theme of the thesis. The emphasis in this second theme is the fact that there would not have been the possibility for me to develop contingent research plans if I was working in the traditional quantitative paradigm.

14.3 Outlook for the Future on Research Theme I

In consequence of the findings from the evaluation of the course so far, at the time of writing - July, 1986 - I plan to devote more time later to revising the course and to writing a new unit on the teaching of literature. Then the course, with the approval of the Institute of Education in Sierra Leone who have expressed satisfaction with its performance so far, will be implemented fully in secondary schools in Sierra Leone.

There are a few related areas which have not been explored fully in this research. It will be helpful for future researchers to develop them. These are:-

(A) How to address difficulties relating to:-

- the socio-economic situation in the country and prevent them from interfering with the effective implementation of the course

- the local environment of the schools and exploring the possibilities of establishing a closer contact with heads of schools to ensure prior inclusion of the DL/INSET component in teachers' schemes of work at the outset of the school year
- the need for extensive training sessions for school based tutors so that their roles are more clearly defined.

(B) How to create:-

- micro-teaching sessions among members to ensure that they avail themselves the opportunity of criticising each others' teaching approaches
- writing teams for materials preparation which could include experienced and inexperienced teachers in the field who are knowledgeable about the teaching problems teachers face
- a system of incentives that would prove to be acceptable to members
- a system for monitoring and comparing performances of teachers learning at a distance with those of conventionally trained teachers

14.4 Personal Reflections on Research Theme II

This new feature of the work - the tape method of evaluating at a distance - has proved to be a very interesting feature. I was able to establish the fact that it is a very economical mode of collecting data on a wide variety of issues and from a varying number of people who were inaccessible because of distance or for other reasons as their circumstances dictated. There are several aspects of the method that particularly appealed to me. These will be discussed under the following:-

- the seeming 'novel' aspect which has led to a surge of interest within my department and the agreement by Open University to publish it
- the opportunity the tape mode afforded for revisiting the sample in Sierra Leone without incurring a lot of expense
- the uninhibited nature of the responses
- other positive aspects
14.4.1 The interest created in the tape method

The tape method of evaluating at a distance is a novel feature of the thesis. Although a survey of the literature indicates that recent attempts have been made to evaluate at a distance through recording: answers on the telephone, nothing has been written on this particular method I devised. However, it immediately generated interest within my department after I discussed it in a seminar and one research student used it when he encountered similar difficulties to mine. I hope that the method may generate wider interest now that an article on it has been accepted for publication (see appendix 8.1).

14.4.2 The opportunity the tape mode afforded for revisiting the sample in Sierra Leone without incurring a lot of expense

The fact that the tape method gave me the opportunity of revisiting my sample on location in Sierra Leone from whom earlier feedback was cross-checked without incurring as much expense as I had incurred in the earlier fieldwork is of particular importance to me. This is especially so because there were no marked differences in the quality of the data elicited in both phases of the research; the tape method was found to produce a different kind of data from that produced by the other conventional methods but they were both data that shed useful light on various aspects of the course.

14.4.3 The uninhibited nature of the mode of response

Since respondents have the freedom to choose the place and time they deem fit for the exercise, the instrument does not inhibit them when they are making their responses in any way. It would seem to be that in the absence of the researcher, respondents are more likely to give 'honest' responses.
Also even though the data was being collected at a distance which made it impossible for me to comment on respondents' visual reactions, the tones of their voices carried much more meaning; and speaking seemed to be effortless for them. The tape method seemed to provide spontaneous responses which could prove an ideal methodological tool for researchers.

14.4.4 Other positive aspects of the method that appealed to me

Some positive aspects of the mode of response appealed to me:-

- I found that I could relax on my bed and listen to the tapes when doing the analysis. There really seemed no need for a verbatim transcript. My familiarity with some of the respondents helped me to decipher the messages they were trying to put across quite easily.

- Also, 'cut-off' points which stifle respondents when they are completing questionnaire items are non-existent in the tape mode. Respondents instead tended to enjoy the freedom to respond in an open ended and unstructured manner. One important point that relates to this that I am excited about is the fact that this method would appeal to respondents because they do not have to structure their thoughts or order their points for expressing their views as they would have had to do if they were responding by writing. This made them give honest, free and spontaneous responses which proved useful.

14.5 Questions for Future Research on Theme II

Finally, some questions were raised in section 9.7.1 that arose from the findings of the pilot study which employed the tape method and which I could not address in this study. These could be addressed by future researchers. They are questions relating to:-
- the probability that age differences may have influenced respondents in their choice of mode of response
- the extent to which respondents' self-confidence, enthusiasm for the subject and knowledge of the researcher may have influenced their choice of mode of response
- the effect of cultural factors on respondents coming from developed or developing countries on their choice of mode of response

Another related area which emanated from the fieldwork on research theme II which could be explored further is the possibility of using just this one instrument in certain circumstances to collect data for which a battery of conventional methods are always needed.
This study has alerted me to the fact that time spent doing any research of this nature is essentially a time spent learning how to do research.
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MATERIAL REDACTED AT REQUEST OF UNIVERSITY
PILOT DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE FOR THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE

MODULE C
Teaching Language Skills and the four Skills (Study Guide)

Unit 3: Teaching Reading

With traditional methods we have only managed to educate half the world".

A. M. Tantawi

JEMATA O. KAIKUMBA
985
The purpose of this unit is to help Form I teachers teach students Reading for various purposes. A summary of the main suggestions for teaching Reading in Form I. A syllabus for English at Secondary level will be given and guidance will be offered to teachers as to how they can use these suggestions to teach their textbook Modern Method English.

Objectives

At the end of this unit, teachers should be able to:

1. State what the 1974 syllabus recommends for the teaching of Reading skills.
2. Understand what is involved in reading.
3. Understand the importance of teaching Reading skills to students.
4. Understand the different ways of imparting Reading skills to students.
5. Know how to treat the 'Look it up' section of their textbook - Modern Method English.

EXTRACT:


C3(b) The method of teaching Reading suggested by Ron White.

C3(c) Some different ways of Reading suggested in the Teachers' Guide to Modern Method English.

C3(d) What is Reading? How should it be taught?
INTRODUCTION

The syllabus for English at Secondary level recommends that in Form 1:

"A decisive beginning should be made on individual silent reading, stimulated by carefully graded questions to encourage comprehension".

Every effort has to be made to organize materials and schemes for extensive private reading. A system of recording individual achievements should be devised.

As part of the reading programme, the Dictionary should be introduced: it needs simple but systematic explanation, and pupils should acquire facility and confidence in its use."

Furthermore, the syllabus suggests that one or two passages for reading should be dealt with weekly - although the length, linguistic content and varieties of such passages are not specified.

The suggestion that students are to read at least six tests privately is a good suggestion since most pupils only get exposure to the language through reading. Pupils are to be encouraged to use public Libraries since reading materials are scarce and in fact many pupils do not have the motivation to read on their own. The texts recommended in the syllabus are taken from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Some of these are difficult for the years suggested. However, since it is not so easy to get the exact linguistic content in a language programme except one writes specific texts, students will have to try and strike a balance
between the easy and difficult linguistic content. The important point teachers should make at this stage is that reading a wide variety of books will help students build up a reading habit and improve their language.

NOW LET US MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE READING AND LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE WAYS OF TEACHING IT.

**Activity 1**

Write down the four most important things you feel teachers should know about teaching Reading.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

NOW READ THE FOLLOWING TEXT. AFTER READING THE TEXT, YOU ARE FREE TO CHANGE YOUR MINDS ABOUT ANY OF YOUR ANSWERS.

**C.3.2 WHAT IS READING?**

Reading is one of the most basic and most important skills to be learned in school. A lot of emphasis should be put on this since many students enter Secondary Schools without having had much, if any, experience of reading more than a few sentences at a time. The ability to
understand the written word at this stage far exceeds the ability to use the language, either in speech, or writing.

We read to gain information, experience and stimulation. It is also a basic way to acquire vocabulary.

There are two separate stages involved in reading. There is the initial stage of decoding, that is, recognizing the relationship between print on the page and the sounds of the language. This is the first step in learning to read. This stage is dealt with in the Primary Schools.

The second stage is that of comprehension. It is possible to read aloud a piece of writing in a foreign language without understanding a word of it. Comprehension involves more than simply decoding. It involves recognizing the significance of the message, understanding the intentions of the writer and going beyond what is written to guess at hidden, unstated or implied meanings.

By the time students enter Secondary Schools, they are engaged in the second stage of reading which is comprehension. Once the students in Form 1 have gone beyond the first stage of decoding printed messages, they will be reading to understand the message itself. Understanding messages depends on a number of things - on knowledge of the world, our reasons or purposes for reading and our attitudes and beliefs. The purpose could be a general one like reading a novel for pleasure or escape; it could be very specific like looking up a telephone directory for somebody's number. The purpose will usually determine the appropriate type of reading and the relevant skills to be used.
The teacher's job is to help relate reasons for reading something and to help organize the students' thinking so that what they read fits into an existing mental framework.

There are many different ways in which a teacher can teach students how to read. These methods can be used at various times depending on the type of class, the nature of the reading passage and the amount of time available.

C3.3 HOW DO WE TEACH READING

Faced with a prose passage like the one in unit 6 of your textbook Modern Method English, for example, how will you proceed to teach it. We all know that the traditional way of treating a passage like this is to ask the class to read it and then answer the questions at the end. Will you do that? Will you just "Sallu, turn to page 93 and start reading"! or will you ask the students to read the passage silently to themselves first while you circulate round the class, helping individual students on occasion and checking that the reading task is being tackled adequately by all.

If you merely ask a student to read aloud you will be creating undesirable problems for yourself. This is because students are usually very poor at reading aloud: mistakes and hesitations provide a bad model for the other students to listen to. As for the unfortunate victim who is forced to read aloud, he will merely mouth meaningless language because of lack of rehearsal time to understand what he has to read aloud. The other students will become bored and you, the teacher, will
soon get irritated.

Some teachers will object to this view on the basis that reading aloud is good for pronunciation practice. If you want to do pronunciation work, it is spoken, not written material, that is needed. If oral fluency is the aim, then reading aloud will at best achieve "reading aloud" fluency, which is quite a different skill. Reading is normally a silent and individual activity since any writer's expectation would be that the text read, not heard.

The task of teaching reading is not an easy one. For example, your students will be reading silently which means that you are to a certain extent excluded. The teacher pupil interaction of oral activity will be lacking. Nevertheless, you can help your students in many ways as I will indicate in this unit. (For all practical purposes, teaching reading is teaching reading comprehension.)

Start by asking the class what they already know about the subject matter of the Reading passage which, in this case, "Letter Writing". Volunteering such information can become quite an interesting exercise and students may dispute certain points. (I must point out here that the material in Unit 6 which we are using as an example of a reading text is suitable for teaching reading comprehension. This presents a problem in turning materials to your purposes and also presents the opportunity supplementary materials.)
1. "What are letters?"
2. "Why do people write them?"

Ask them questions like "Who do you write letters to?" Have you ever had a 'surprise' letter? Now, tell us about the best letter you've ever had.
Who from? What did it say? You can list the points on the board as they give you their answers. Having stimulated class interest, you can try to write new words on the blackboard and try to explain them. A lot of confusion can start at this point if your explanations are long and wordy. Select only key items, that is, words which are essential to the understanding of the text. Then write a few general questions on the board. The questions should be so constructed that they should provide the main list of the passage.

Now, ask the students to read the passage silently to themselves and to look for answers to the questions on the blackboard. Make sure that while the students are reading, you are going round the class helping individual students who may have problems.

I will now refer you to the suggested method of teaching the Reading and Comprehension section taken from
1. The teachers' Guide to your text Modern Method English and
2. Ron White's views on how to teach Reading in his handbook.

PLEASE READ EXTRACTS (2(a) and (2(b)) NOW.

Activity II
i. Read through extracts (2(a) and (2(b)) again and note down any differences in the views expressed.

ii. List the different steps suggested in each article in two columns.

iii. Do you disagree with any of the suggestions given?

iv. If yes, why?
You will notice that your teachers' Guide suggests the traditional method of asking students to answer the questions set on the text when they finish reading. Why should we inflict post-text comprehension questions on our students when we do not inflict them on ourselves? We should remember that we are teaching reading and not testing it. Therefore the questions should serve as a means of helping students to improve their reading ability. We should not assume that they already have the ability to deal unaided with the text. This is why I will strongly recommend that you ask students to read through the set questions at the end of the passage as well before they start reading. They will then have a challenge and a purpose for reading. Questions set at the end of a passage, when read at the end of the reading process, by their very position in the text cannot help the learners during the initial reading.

In discussing the questions, (which in itself can be interesting), it is necessary to go round the class hearing several students' answers to each question, before saying whether they are correct. You can even ask further comprehension questions either orally or handouts for students to work on in pairs or in groups. If they are working in groups, make sure you bring them back into a single group to decide on the correct answers.

In order to check vocabulary, try giving the students the meaning and asking for the word. For example, you can say "Which word in the passage means "not easy". The answer you will need is "difficult".

If the passage has really aroused the students' interest, a discussion will follow on quite naturally.
The next section of your Teachers' Guide deals with 4 different ways of reading.

PLEASE READ EXTRACT (3(c) NOW

Activity III

i. Write down which one of the ways of reading described in the article that you have used before.

ii. Why have you found it necessary to read in that way?

I will now add a discussion of intensive and extensive to the types of reading you have just finished reading about.

Intensive reading (Student Reading)

Students reading intensively look at every word, take notice of punctuation, sentences and paragraphs, understand the grammar and so on. Intensive reading often becomes an exercise in recognizing the rules of the English language in action. Beginners and low intermediate groups tend to read intensively.

Most textbook reading has, until recently, been intensive. The reading of written instructions, recipes, application forms and so on is necessarily intensive.
Extensive reading

The aim here is to get on with the story, to read for gist, not detail, and to read much more quickly.

Extensive reading should give good students some of the pleasure they have when reading novels in their own language (if they read novels.) It should submerge them in the foreign language. It is important to find good reading material which interests the students and makes them want to read on.

Extensive reading is highly motivating! Once students have become used to it, they enjoy it because:

- it is an individual activity, which frees the student from the restrictions of classwork.
- students read at their own pace.
- they can choose what they read.

At later levels, students should be encouraged to read magazines and newspapers. For earlier levels, these can be adapted or rewritten to suit the level of the students.

C.3.4. ONE WAY OF TEACHING THE READING PASSAGE IN UNIT 6 OF MODERN METHOD ENGLISH

Now I will try to bring together some of the aspects of teaching reading discussed in this unit by illustrating how I would treat the reading
passage in unit 6. This is not meant to be definitive since there are various other ways of exploiting a reading text. Such treatment may not be suitable for all texts. The text is on "Letter Writing" and I reproduce it below.

SECTION 1

LETTER WRITING

Kwadjo Mensah is a pupil at the Abuakwa State College at Kibi in Ghana. Every Sunday he writes a letter home to his parents. They live in Swedru, about sixty miles from Kibi. Every Friday or Saturday he receives their reply.

15 Sometimes Kwadjo receives letters from other relatives. One day, for example, he had a registered letter from his Aunt Esi, who lives in Takoradi. The envelope was addressed like this:

When he opened the envelope, Kwadjo found inside a short letter and a postal order for ten cedis. This was his aunt's letter.

P.O. Box 8579
Takoradi
10 January 1983
passage in unit 6. This is not meant to be definitive since there are various other ways of exploiting a reading text. Such treatment may not be suitable for all texts. The text is on "Letter Writing" and I reproduce it below.

SECTION 1

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Kwadjo Mensah is a pupil at the Abuakwa State College at Kibi in Ghana. Every Sunday he writes a letter home to his parents. They live in Swedru, about sixty miles from Kibi. Every Friday or Saturday he receives their reply.

5 Sometimes Kwadjo receives letters from other relatives. One day, for example he had a registered letter from his Aunt Esi, who lives in Takoradi. The envelope was addressed like this:

When he opened the envelope, Kwadjo found inside a short letter and a postal order for ten cedis. This was his aunt's letter.
Mr dear Kwadjo

I heard from your mother last week and she gave me your address. I was glad to know that you had settled down well in your new school. I expect you'll find all the new work difficult to begin with, but if you work hard I'm sure you'll do well. You're a very lucky boy, having the chance to learn chemistry and other subjects as well as French. I expect all this new work keeps you very busy. Do you have lots of preparation to do in the evenings?

I hope your first term has gone well. Perhaps you can come and see us during your next holidays? I am sure you will enjoy seeing the big ships in Takoradi harbour. I'll write and tell her that we should like you to come and stay with us.

Your Uncle Kwame says that one of the teachers at your school, Mr Boateng, was at the University with him ten years ago. Please give Mr Boateng his best wishes.

We're all well here. Your cousins Kwesi, Akosua, and Ama all send you their love. Kwesi is looking forward to seeing you again, so that you can have another wrestling contest. He hopes to win this time.

With love and best wishes from all of us,
Yours affectionately

Aunt Esi

Kwadjo was delighted when he read this letter. The same evening he sat down and wrote his reply.

Dear Aunt Esi,

Thank you very much for your letter and for the postal order for ten cedis. This was a lovely surprise. I'm not going to spend this money just now. I'm saving up to buy a good dictionary.

Our teacher says that the best dictionary for us to buy is 'The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English', published by the Oxford University Press. So far, out of my weekly pocket money, I've saved C2.70, but the dictionary costs C13.50. So now I need only another eighty pesewas, and I'm going to try to save this before the end of term. As soon as I have the money, I'm going to buy the dictionary.
I'm very happy in my new school, thank you. The work is hard, but it's very interesting, because it's all new. In the primary school last year we did the same old lessons over and over again. Here we learn something new every day. I don't think I'll be top of the class in this school, thought. There are lots of clever boys and girls from many different primary schools here, and in any case I'm not much good at French.

My favourite subject here is English. We have a very good English teacher. He makes the lessons very interesting. He's always joking, and the class like him. He was trained in England, and I think he can speak English almost like an Englishman. As well as his special training in England, he got his degree at Legon. Learning good English helps me in all the other subjects, because in this school we have to read lots of books. I counted up my textbooks the other day, and I have eighteen! And I haven't got all I need yet. Then two or three times a week we get more books from the library. It's not a bit like the primary school, where we had one little book for each subject to last the whole year, and in some subjects didn't even have one.

The school day is long. We get up at 6.30 a.m. and have breakfast at 7.15. Assembly and lessons last 8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a break of half an hour from 11 to 11.30. At 2.15 we have lunch. Three times a week we have games between 4 and 5.30. I play inside-right in the first-form football team. Last week we played the junior team from the Black Star College, Koforidua, and beat them 3-2, but I didn't score.

I'd love to come and stay with you and Uncle Kwame for part of the Easter holidays. Will you write and ask my mother first please? That will make it easier for me to get permission.

I asked one of the third-form boys about Mr Boateng, but he says he left last term. He got a job in the Diplomatic Service, and is now at the Ghana Embassy in Bonn, West Germany. I wonder how he is getting on there, as he can't speak German.

I'm keeping very well. Please give Uncle Kwame my love, and also Kwesi and the girls. Tell Kwesi I could beat him at wrestling any time he likes, with one hand tied behind my back. Thank you once more for the postal order. Now I've got to finish my homework.

Yours affectionately
Kwadjo
When Kwadjo had written this letter, he checked it over to make sure that there were no spelling mistakes and that all his sentences were good English. Then he put it in an envelope and addressed it like this:

Mrs K. Ankrah
P.O. Box 8579
TAKORADI

The next day he went to the Post office, bought a stamp, and posted his letter.

Questions

1 Explain the meanings of these words and expressions as they are used in the letters: settled (line 15), surprise (line 43), pocket money (line 47), good at French (line 58), favourite (line 59).

2 Complete the following sentences and questions about the story:

a) Aunt Esi has written because __________
   A Kwadjo wrote to her.
   B she wanted to send Kwadjo a present.
   C her husband knew Mr Boateng.
   D Kwadjo's mother asked her to.

b) Kwadjo has been at his new school for ________
   A a few months.
   B one week.
   C a few days.
   D since last week.

c) Kwadjo liked English best. It was his__________ subject
   A well-liked
   B best
   C favourite
   D worst

d) Kwadjo had to ____________ to buy his dictionary.
   A spend
   B Keep money
   C Save up
   D beg

e) When is Kwadjo going to his Aunt Esi's?
   A This Christmas, definitely
   B This Easter, definitely
   C He may go at Easter
   D Maybe this Christmas

f) 'I am keeping very well' means ____________
   A I am saving money.
   B I am continuing to do quite well at school.
   C I am in good health.
   D I am behaving well.
g) Who is Mrs K. Ankrah?
A Kwadjo
B his Aunt Esi
C someone else
D his mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indicates to the class that they are going to read about a boy called Kwadjo Mensah. Ask them; what they know about Letter-Writing. ii. What letters are and why people write them.</td>
<td>Respond with a few details about letter writing.</td>
<td>This is anticipation work. A few details are sufficient for this preliminary work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher writes the following words and expressions on the b/b.1 Registered letter 2 affectionately 3 postal order, 4 settled down well, 5 delighted, reply 6 preparation, harbour 7 ten years ago, 8 wrestling contest. Tr. Asks the students to think about them. He also writes the following questions a. Which school does Kwadjo attend? b. What does he do on Sundays? c. What did Kwadjo receive from Aunt Esi one day? d. What did he find in it? e. Did Aunt Esi mention it in her letter?</td>
<td>Find the key phrases</td>
<td>Highlighting key phrases as a help to identifying main ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE</td>
<td>TEACHER</td>
<td>STUDENT</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher now ask the class to read extracts slowly up to line 35 to themselves and to look for answers to the questions on the b/b</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension practice</td>
<td>To confirm or revise students' understanding of the first of these four paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discuss with students the meanings of the words and expressions on the b/b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice in identifying the layout of letters to provide change of activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discusses their answers to the questions on the b/b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Discusses layout of letter and Aunt Esi's stamp and envelope.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teacher asks class to draw an envelope and address it to their friends. Circulates round the class to check on performance</td>
<td>Draw the envelope by by looking at the model envelope in their text books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher asks class members to write a letter to their new school using the layout in Aunt Esi's letter. Teacher ask them to think of the letter being divided into paragraphs?</td>
<td>Write a letter to their sister or brother using the outline.</td>
<td>Initial written follow-up. Further work is provided by asking students to write a letter based on the model letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE</td>
<td>TEACHER</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What each paragraph is about. Tells them to compare the first and second letters and reflect on the ways in which they are similar and/or different.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity IV

Does this outline about teacher-student interaction in a reading class depart from what has been suggested in the course texts and the extracts you have read? If so, please write the perceived differences down. (For this activity you will need to read the course texts and extracts more intensively).

C.3.5. LOOK IT UP

How to treat the 'look it up' section of your textbook - Modern Method English

The questions and exercise in this section aim to develop two important skills in the students, according to the Teachers' Guide. These are:

1. Skill in referencing: i.e. locating precise pieces of information within a long passage or book; and

2. Skim and scan reading. Skim reading means skipping through something very fast, to get a rough idea of what it is about and to see whether we want to read it carefully or not. Scan reading is like skimming, but it is usually used to see if a particular thing is there. It is a fast style of reading.

Teachers should encourage students to work on these sections in pairs; they can work on their own, but pair-work will usually be more beneficial here.
Students can make notes of their answers on rough paper. There is no need for full, formal written answers. These answers should be corrected in the whole class and special problems should be pointed out.

Question 2 - the re-ordering part of this "Look it up" exercise can be done either informally on rough paper, or formally, as a sort of guided composition, in the students' exercise books.

In the next unit, I will try to give you some hints on how to teach the language study sections.

C.3.6. Assignment I

Did all your ideas about what a teacher should know about the teaching of Reading Comprehension agree with the points made in this unit? Write down the ones that did not.

Assignment II

a. Pick any reading text. Invent three pre-reading questions about the general aspects or reading text you have chosen. For example:-
   i. Is this a story?
   ii. Is it fact or fiction?
   iii. What is it about

Teach the text using the method suggested on pp. 11 and 12. Set a time limit at the end which you can ask them questions on the text. Record how many students got the answers right. Now do a critical appraisal of the lesson and write down your views.
Were the questions easy or difficult in the light of the responses you received?
What does this tell you about your question? For example, were they complicated, too easy or difficult? Were they ambiguous? Add further information as necessary.

b. Write down how you taught the text suggested in assignment two under the headings used on pp. 11 and 12. (Do not forget to state the title of the text and chapter).

Assignment III

Prepare two good exercise to teach word-recognition to pupils of Form 1.

Assignment IV

Based on 2 or 3 short sequential sentences, frame multiple-choice questions to test sentence comprehension. (one exercise).

Assignment V

Write briefly about the methods you generally employ to develop reading comprehension in your pupils. Try out some of the suggestions in this unit and state how far you have been able to implement them in your classes.
Assignment VI

What according to your observation, as a teacher of secondary schools, are the most common reading defects of pupils of that level? Write about it and also about the kind of remedial programmes in reading you have conducted. If you have not yet conducted any, plan out a scheme for correcting some persistent reading faults, you may have noticed in your pupils.

Assignment VII

PLEASE READ EXTRACT (3(d) NOW

You will notice that Ann Halammah-Thomas tries to give her views on what Reading and how it should be taught. Now do the following:-

i. Make a list of all the points she raises in this article that have NOT been discussed in this unit.

ii. Make another list of all the points she raises which have been mentioned in this article. (This means that you should read her article as well as the text very intensively).
EVALUATING AT A DISTANCE IN THE NON-TRADITIONAL PARADIGM
A NOVEL INSTRUMENT

Nemata Kaikumba and Patricia Crver

Department of Educational Studies, University of Surrey

Introduction

Distance learning courses, like other types of education, need to be evaluated. Sometimes the aim of the evaluation is to judge effectiveness and sometimes it is to reveal and understand the various complexities of how the course is operating, as a first step to improving it. Working at a distance presents little problem for evaluators with the first aim because the use of questionnaires is entirely appropriate and there is no lack of advice on how to design and administer them (see for example Oppenheim 1978).

Evaluators with the second aim face a problem. There is a growing realisation that although the traditional (or 'scientific') paradigm is immensely successful in the physical sciences, it is inappropriate for dealing with the complexities of how humans relate together and with their social or educational settings (see for example Stake 1967, Cronbach 1975, Hamilton 1977, Elton and Laurillard 1979). It consists of reducing complex phenomena, by inspection, to a series of variables, holding most of them constant and manipulating the rest against each other. The final outcome is the sum of the relationships found. Parlett (1972) satirically describes the approach as 'A paradigm for plants not people'.

1
The newer 'non-traditional' paradigm is more appropriate for describing and understanding complexities. It is difficult, if not impossible, to define and it includes approaches which are variously labelled as 'naturalistic', 'holistic' and 'descriptive'. Guba (1978) identifies and discusses as many as fourteen differences between the paradigms. However, as the non-traditional paradigm has clear parallels with the 'illuminative evaluation' of Parlett and Hamilton (1972) which, according to Ruddock (1981) was the most cited reference in its field during the 1970s, we will limit ourselves to its four fundamental characteristics. Parlett (1984) describes these as:

1) the evaluator is responsive, ie he pays special attention to the requirements, interests, questions and needs of his audience/clients, rather than seeking out data of his own choosing.

2) the approach is naturalistic, ie it examines phenomena in their natural setting without bringing them under artificial conditions for the purpose of the investigation.

3) the design is heuristic, ie it is not laid out in advance but proceeds by progressively focussing as the evaluator becomes more familiar with the situation.

4) the report or write-up is interpretive, ie. it is presented so as to heighten awareness and promote a fresh appreciation of whatever is being evaluated.
The first phase of such an evaluation is open-ended and contains an 'immersion period' (Parlett 1984) in which an evaluator listens and observes. Such a phase can seldom be seriously entertained for evaluating a distance learning course because of the enormous outlay of the evaluator's travel time, travel costs and inconvenience.

This article reports the use of an instrument which circumvents such problems by evaluating a distance learning course cheaply and effectively within the non-traditional paradigm. The instrument does not appear to have been previously noted in the literature.

The development of the instrument
In 1983 an in-service distance learning course was developed by one of us (NK) to support the classroom teaching of teachers of English as a second language in Sierra Leone. It was designed in response to expressed needs (Kaikumba 1982), bearing in mind current thinking on distance learning, both in Africa (eg Ansere 1982) and more generally (eg Ferraton 1973, Idle 1975, Kaye 1981).

The course needed to be piloted. At this early stage, the purpose was not to 'measure' its effectiveness, but to reveal and understand the potential complexities of its operation, in order to make suitable modifications before formal implementation in Sierra Leone. The non-traditional paradigm seemed appropriate for the purpose, but the open-ended phase was too costly.

We hit on a solution which we hypothesised might elicit similar data. Each member of the sample was sent a package
consisting of a copy of the course materials, a blank audio cassette tape and a covering letter. The letter requested the individual to work through the course materials and to speak whatever reactions, comments, suggestions, questions etc that they thought appropriate onto the tape. Although we could not hope that the data would be as rich as if we had been there observing them and interacting with them, our hope was that:

With reference to (1) above:

If respondents could speak onto the tape, unconstrained in the privacy and relaxation of their own homes, letting their minds wander freely as they spoke, they might report observations about their experiences and expectations, rather as we might have done, if we had been able to be present, observing them and interacting with them ourselves. In other words, the respondents would be the observers, observing for us, and they would effectively be interviewing themselves. In this respect, we would be responsive in that we would be accepting data that the potential course-members would present, rather than data of our own choosing.

With reference to (2) above:

The approach would be naturalistic to the extent that respondents would be responding from within their own environmen
The design would be heuristic in that it would not be laid out in advance. The next stage would proceed by progressive focussing as we became more familiar with the prospective use of the course as a result of listening to the tapes.

With reference to (4) above:

The report/write-up would be interpretive in that we would take from the tapes whatever data would enable us to improve the course.

For the initial, open-ended phase of an illuminative evaluation, this use of cassette tape would have considerable advantages over the standard method of evaluating at a distance—questionnaires. Questionnaires would need to contain so many free-response questions as to be unwieldy, because unambiguous written communication requires high quality structuring, grammar, syntax and punctuation. The spoken format of the cassette tapes would be less exacting because tone, expression and emotion carry additional meaning.

Although the main aim of the evaluation was to acquire information to improve the course, we also wanted to test the instrument. Accordingly, we included a checklist in the package, which we asked respondents to address or ignore as they chose. If they chose the latter, this would support our contentions in relation to (1) and (2) above.

Because of the unreliability of the postal service between the UK and Sierra Leone, we sent the package to seven
representatives of the target population who were currently in
the UK (A, B, C, D, E, F and G). They were telephoned in advance to
ask for their agreement to participate, and then, once the
package had arrived, they were telephoned again in case of
queries.

The process of analysis
For our interpretative purpose (see (4) above) it was not
necessary to transcribe the returned tapes, verbatim. It was
enough to sit in the relaxation and privacy of one's own home,
play them through and make notes of what seemed appropriate.
The process was pleasant and relaxing, and was made easier by
the emotions that came across in the spoken word.

The nature of the emerging data
Five out of the seven respondents, responded on tape.

With reference to (1) above: a particularly noteworthy finding
was that no-one addressed the checklist. In consequence, the
instrument had made us responsive in that we were accepting
data that was presented to us by a sample respondents who were
similar to those to whom the course was addressed.

With reference to (2) above: the data was rich and useful.
It ranged over the course materials and the whole mode of
operation of the course in a way that we, at a distance, away
from the natural setting, could never have foreseen.
Accordingly it could be regarded as naturalistic.

With reference to (3) above: we did not proceed to another
stage of piloting, because the data was adequate for our
purpose. However, since we were free to do so, if the need had arisen, the design was heuristic because it was not laid out in advance.

With reference to (4) above; the evaluation was interpretative because we could interpret the data usefully and adequately for our purpose.

Respondent's reactions: discussion and implications

Two of the seven respondents (F and G) chose to respond in writing rather than by tape. Surprisingly these two were the only native speakers of English. So this reaction might rather have been expected from the speakers of English as a second or third language. There were, however, three other characteristics that F and G had in common. One was their more advanced age - and it may be that older people are more resistant to new ideas. Another was that they did not share the Sierra Leonean culture, which is oral rather than written and which is particularly open to innovative ideas from developed countries. If this is a contributing reason, the instrument may be better received in developing countries than in developed ones. Lastly, (apart from E who gave a short tape) F and G were not well acquainted with NK. It may be that relaxed, free response onto a tape requires a relationship of friendship and trust between the respondent and the evaluator.

E's tape-response was the shortest (about five minutes), whereas the other tapes lasted between 15 and 45 minutes. There could be several reasons. We wondered whether, since she was once NK's student, she might merely have done what she was asked to do, while being embarrassed at showing up any
possible inadequacies. If so, it would suggest that the instrument may work best with people who are confident in themselves and their subject, which was the case for the other tape-respondents. The suggestion is supported by the behaviour of C who was at first rather shy about using the instrument in case it showed up any lack of fluency in her English. Once she had been reassured, she became very positive.

With the exception of E, the manner and tone of all the responses was spontaneous; without inhibition; willing; enthusiastic; without any apparent concern of time; and fluent. Although this could be because the respondents were all committed to improving the course, and it could stem from the Sierra Leonean culture, it could also be inherent in the instrument. A and C volunteered some reasons why. They said that this was a quick and easy way to respond compared with writing and that previously unforeseen conclusions emerged naturally as they talked.

It is interesting to speculate further on the appeal of the instrument to respondents. Speaking is effortless compared with writing; it is quicker; spelling is irrelevant; grammar and syntax are much less constraining; there is no need to organise thoughts as coherently because tone, expression and emotion carry meaning. Furthermore, speaking in the privacy and relaxation of one’s own home, one’s thoughts can wander freely and be creative.

Concluding remarks
This first use of the instrument proved satisfactory and sufficiently encouraging for us to hope that other evaluators
might also find it useful for the initial, open-ended phase of an evaluation in the non-traditional paradigm. It is our hope that they may use and develop it as an instrument of enquiry.

Acknowledgements
We are grateful to the following for furthering our thinking by commenting on an early draft of this article: Lewis Elton, Fenny Lloyd, Maureen Pope, Joan Smith.

REFERENCES

Ansere, J. K. 1982. The Inevitability of Distance Education in Africa. In Learning at a distance, a world perspective, International Council for Correspondence Education.


Dear

Following our telephone conversation last week, I enclose a blank cassette tape and a copy of sample modules of the distance learning course.

I would very much appreciate any comments, suggestions, questions, etc. that you feel appropriate. I give a list of pointers below as an indication of the sort of response I am hoping for, but please do not feel constrained by it. Please feel free to omit parts, extend others or introduce ideas of your own. Your response will prove useful as guidelines for revising and refining the materials which I will greatly appreciate.

As I mentioned in our conversation, the 1974 Syllabus for English at Secondary level in Sierra Leone was not fully implemented. The recommendation that a handbook should be written to go with it was never met. Since teachers still find it very difficult to teach with only the aid of the syllabus, I am exploring the possibility of developing a distance learning course to provide inservice training for teachers of English in Sierra Leone.

There are two areas which I would particularly like you to comment, namely - the relevance of the content of the materials to the needs of Sierra Leone teachers and the idea of distance learning as a method of Inservice training.

The following are "pointers" to specific "aspects" of the material in relation to those two areas that I hope you will be able to comment on:

A. The content and general format of the course
   i. Subject matter and its validity with regard to the National Syllabus for English at Secondary level.
   ii. The overview
   iii. The objectives
   iv. The activities
   v. The assignments
   vi. The general format of the study guide
   vii. The tutors' and teachers' handbooks

To what extent are the above clear and/or important?

Head of Institute and Professor of Science Education: L.R.B. Elton, D.Sc., F.Inst.P., F.I.M.A., F.R.S.A.
B. Distance Learning as a method of Inservice training

i What inservice training methods you are used to?

ii What you feel about learning at a distance?

iii What you feel about lack of face-to-face contact?

iv What you feel about being able to self-pace your work?

v Whether distance learning helps you to learn better?

vi Whether distance learning encourages you to read further?

vii What you feel about the time taken to study by distance learning as compared to learning by in-service training sessions?

viii Given the choice to attend inservice training sessions and to study by distance learning, which method would you prefer, and why?

Please add comments on any other aspects you feel I should pay attention to.

Perhaps, one way of testing the materials is to attempt the activities and assignments yourself. This might indicate areas of potential difficulties for users of the material. It would be most helpful if you can spare the time.

I hope this letter is clear, but if not or if the material needs elaboration, I shall ring you in a few days time so that we can sort things out before complete the tape. You can however write down your comments if you wish.

Anticipating your kind co-operation,

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
Nemata O Kaikumba
Dear Principal,

The need continues to be expressed for more In-service training courses for teachers in general, and for teachers of English in particular. I became interested in exploring better and cheaper means of In-service training since I became Curriculum Development Officer in 1982.

I am now studying In-service training by distance learning methods at the University of Surrey, in England, which provisions already exist in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Canada, England and Lesotho. Reports indicate that the quantity and quality of teachers in those countries have been increased through such means.

In the coming months, I would like to spend some time in Sierra Leone and in your school, trying out some distance learning materials which I have recently developed, in an attempt to improve on them, as well as to see whether teachers will gain something from using them. Trying out materials on those representatives of the population for whom they are intended often helps to increase the value of the materials. This was why I decided to travel home for the trying-out phase.

I would like to ask you to allow M ................................ to take part in the project since (s)he has such wide experience in the teaching of English. Furthermore, I hope (s)he will be kind enough to select 2 or 3 teachers from your school whom (s)he will tutor with regard to the use of the materials. I can assure you that it will not take much of your teachers' time.

There will be a one-week workshop at the Institute of Education from the 27th February to 1st March and it will be necessary for the teachers whom M ................................ selects as participants to meet with all of us on the 1st March for a one-day session, during which the whole project will be discussed.

I do realise that this is a very busy time for you, but hope you will help me by allowing your teachers to take part in this attempt to solve some of our most immediate problems in the teaching of English, this all important subject. If you agree, please sign the form at the end of the letter, and return it to me in care of the Institute of Education in Freetown as soon as possible in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Yours sincerely,

Nemata O Kaikumba
APPENDIX 10.2 Map of Sierra Leone depicting location of sample schools
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
(University of Sierra Leone)
Curriculum Revision Unit (English)

Aim of the 4 day workshop is to introduce to key teachers of English in Secondary level Institutions, a proposal to explore the possibility of using Distance Learning as a future Inservice Training technique.

Participants - 9 key teachers of English drawn from Secondary schools in Freetown.

Objectives:
1. Teachers will be exposed to the materials developed in Distance Learning
2. will critically appraise the materials
3. will adapt or amend the materials as necessary in the light of existing/future conditions in the Sierra Leone schools
4. will understand and map out their particular roles as catalysts in the "Project".

Duration - 5 days workshop to be conducted in 2 phases.

Organization - Phase I - an introduction to the materials, an appraisal of the materials, amendments and adaptation of the materials.

Understanding of the role of Tutor in this project of experimentation with the concept of Distance Learning.

Phase II - a role-play situation between tutors and members.

Conducting a mini session on the process of Distance Learning.

Ordinary Teachers' reactions to be noted and used to further adapt/amend materials.

Suggested schedule for meetings with Tutors:

Monday February 25, 1985
9.00 a.m. - Arrival of participants
9.30 a.m. - Welcome and introductions
9.45 a.m. - Overview of CBU English activities to date
10.00 a.m. - Purpose of the Project
- The Concept of Distance Learning INSET
- The general organisation of the current project
- Explanation of roles of participants.

11.00 - 11.30 - Coffee break
11.30 - 12.30 - Discussion and questions on the project and Distance Learning as a concept of INSET.

12.30 - 1.30 - The Guides introduced and examined
- layout
- content matter
- appropriateness
- coverage.

1.30 - 2.30 - Lunch break.
2.30 - 4.00 - The Module A introduced and examined
4.30 - Recommendations and suggestions.

Expected outcomes

At the end of Day I (Monday February 25) key teachers will be expected to produce a document in which

1. The "tutors" role in the project exercise
2. Suggestions for modification/adaptation of the Guides and Module A
3. A proposal for students/teachers evaluation instruments for the materials produced (Module A) will be clearly spelled out
4. A work scheme for the next three days.

The schedule for the following days will take the pattern approved by the meeting.

Suggested leaders of discussion for Day I
Timetable of Workshop

Duration Four days + 1 day for orientation course

Timetable Monday, February 25, 1985

9.00 a.m. Arrival of participants (tutors)
9.30 a.m. Welcome and introductions
9.45 a.m. A brief history of events leading to the project
10a.m.-11.00a.m. Purpose of the project
- the concept of distance learning for in-service training
- the general organisation of the current project
- explanation of the roles of tutors
11.00-11.30 a.m. Coffee break

11.30-12.30 i Discussion and questions on the project and distance
learning as a viable method of INSET activities
ii A proposal for teachers' evaluation instruments
for the materials
iii A work scheme for the next 3 days

12.30-1.30 p.m. The handbooks introduced and examined in the light
of the following aspects:-
- layout
- content
- appropriateness
- coverage
1.30-2.30 p.m. Lunch break

2.30-4.00 p.m. Module A introduced and examined in detail
4.30- Recommendations and suggestions

Tuesday, February 26, 1985

9.00 Arrival of tutors
9.30-11.00 Module B, unit 1 examined
11.00-11.30 Coffee break
11.30-1.30 Module B, unit 2
1.30-2.30 Lunch break
2.30-5.00 Module B, unit 3
Wednesday, February 27, 1985

9.00 Arrival of tutors
9.30-11.00 Module C, unit 1    examined
11.00-11.30 Coffee break
11.30-1.30 Module C, unit 2    "
1.30-2.30 Lunch break
2.30-5.00 Module C, unit 3    "

Thursday, February 28, 1985

9.00 Arrival of tutors
9.30-11.00 Module C, unit 4    "
11.00-11.30 Coffee break
11.30-1.30 Module C, unit 4    "
1.30-2.30 Lunch break
2.30-6.00 Planning session for orientation day
APPENDIX 10.4 Programme for orientation course

PROGRAMME

1. Welcome 9.15 - 9.30

2. Introduction:
   1. To the project
   2. To distance learning
   3. To study skills for learning at a distance 9.30 - 10.00

3. Introduction of tutors and their role 10.00 - 10.05

4. Introduction of members and their role 10.05 - 10.10

5. Coffee break 10.10 - 10.30

6. Corrections of materials 10.30 - 12.30
   lunch break

7. Interaction between tutors and members 1.45 - 3.00

8. Questionnaire administration 3.00 - 3.15

9. Final session
   Diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of teachers 3.15 - 4.00

10. Vote of thanks
APPENDIX 10.5 Talk on role of tutors given by one tutor

**The role of the Tutor**

The project has brought together a number of people, having different roles. I will now attempt to define the role of the tutor.

Distance Learning is another method of In-service Training. One distinct feature of this method is the absence of other individuals with whom you interact. The tutor in this project is meant to play this role - The tutor supplies 'the face' and will give 'on the spot' assistance. The tutor is meant to 'bridge the gap' between lecturer and member.

The members of the team have some work to do, and they would need materials. It is the tutor's task to hand out texts, ensure activities are carried out, observe lessons, mark assignments etc. This as you can imagine, is no mean task.

'Work' is a word that scares many people. But this in a way, is 'extra' work, demanding time and determination to accomplish the work started - and this is where the tutor comes in. He/she must provide morale - Encourage members to keep going, be cheerful, be self-motivated and keep right on till the end of the road! A tutor's shoulder must always be available.

One advantage of a course like this, is that we are introduced to new ideas and concepts. How are we, or any one else, to know how much we have assimilated? The usual way is by setting assignments. The tutor's other role is to assess the work of the members of a team by marking written work, observing them in the classroom and having fruitful discussions afterwards. There will be no exams at the end; but the attempt to assess work by the tutor, is to ensure that you gain from the course.

Finally, the tutor has to relate with the originator of the course. Our role is to present her with valuable feedback and ensure that she gains valuable information as a result of the participation of you the members.

In conclusion, I would like to plead with you to give us maximum cooperation. We are not the external examiners for the Institute of Education. We are colleagues working together to test out the suitability of adopting such a programme for Sierra Leone and the success or failure of the project, depends to a large extent, on your cooperation. We assure you that we as tutors, are willing to give of our best.
THE ROLE OF MEMBERS.

APPENDIX 10.6 Talk on role of members given by one tutor

Following in the traditional pattern of a person's wife, my role here this morning in one of exhortation to members.

I want to exhort you members to be totally involved in this project. You need to enter into a consummate relationship with the course— in other words, be married to the course for better for worse, for richer for poorer, with continuous power supply or with constant power failure. I assure you that if you are totally committed to it you will use candle-light to do your assignments and hand them to your tutors at the specified time they should be submitted.

There is bound to be discouragement but you can ward it off by self-encouragement. Exhort yourself by telling yourself that you are now married to the course, and that you want it to succeed. Tell yourself that it is a worthwhile project, and since you have committed yourself to it and embarked on it you will not leave it midstream. Convince yourself that it is not the beginning that matters, but the continuing of the thing to its fructification. Psychologically you will have personal satisfaction when you make your contribution and come to the end of the course.

You have a good amount of reading to do but before boredom sets in the monotony is broken by intermittent activity items. These items you may find may aid your teaching. By using them you may evolve your own teaching techniques which will help you individually and all of us collectively in the teaching of English, and our feedback to Mrs. Kai-Kumba will determine how other modules will be developed.

Your tutors are your friends so please feel free to talk to them about your problems. Do not confront them with your problems—we are not involved in an English teaching warfare. We must try to work on friendly basis all the time.

Please do not be alarmed by the presence of Mrs. Kai-Kumba or your tutor in your class when teaching. Neither Mrs. Kai-Kumba nor your tutor will go to your class to criticize you or monitor your teaching.

Their presence there will be to see you teach, and if need be offer suggestions. You will also be at liberty to air your feelings about how you have performed. Everything however will be done in an amicable and cordial manner. Please feel free to talk to them after the lesson.

It would be of immense value to you if you can develop this habit of evaluating yourself—criticize yourself kindly and praise yourself judiciously. In fact this principle should apply to tutors as well, for after all tutors are only being used as "primus inter pares:" Please make sure you adhere to the rules of keeping the special diary you are provided with. They are an essential part of the whole course. You will notice that you are to do six things in the diary. I will add a seventh
Let your diary reflect your personality as a teacher of English—the "real you" with all your idiosyncrasies.

Mrs. Kai-Kumba the brain behind the course is negotiating some kind of remuneration; so you will be given a reasonable honorarium but do not look upon this as the "be-all and end-all" of the exercise. The honorarium will be just to thank you for your zeal, hardwork and tremendous effort in this worthwhile venture.

Tutors as well as members would like to see this course take off and succeed, so let us all work together as a group and strive to make it a resounding success.
PILOT DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE FOR THE N-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE

MEMBERS HANDBOOK

"With traditional methods we have only managed to educate one in a thousand of the world".

A. M. Tantawi

EMATA O. KAIKUMBA

INSET
Dear Member

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this project.

This handbook is a guide to the Distance Learning course. It includes advice on how to use the materials. It also outlines the methods that will be used to impart the information to you and to also enable you to acquire new ideas, approaches and unfamiliar perspectives. It is also hoped that by the end of the course, you will be in a better position to question your own assumptions in all you do.

You will be given information on the methods that will be used to assess your written and practical work during the course. You should therefore refer to this handbook constantly throughout the course.

I do hope you will enjoy participating in this project. By participating, you will be making an active contribution to the development of the materials and approaches for subsequent national use. Above all, it will contribute to your development as a teacher.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours faithfully

NEMATA O KAIKUMBA
1.1 Aims of the Distance Learning course

In starting this project, my aims are to introduce you to a wide range of practical principles and approaches that will help you to use your national syllabus and your set textbook for teaching English. The materials in the course aims to:

1. help you develop an increased awareness in the content and processes involved in your teaching.
2. give you a clearer understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.
3. give you an increased sense of independence in teaching and in your ability to adapt teaching materials.
4. provide an opportunity for you to develop critical awareness through self-appraisal of your own teaching.

This course is for you teachers. In effect, you will be the students of the course. However, since we are all colleagues, it is inappropriate for me to refer to you as "students". So the term "members" will be used since you are all, in fact, members of the same course.

1.2 The Structure of the Course

The distance learning course is comprised of 3 modules, a book of specific reading extracts, a handbook for tutors and a handbook for members. There are a varying number of units within each module.
Each unit comprises a study guide and some activities and assignments for the members to try out. The meaning of these terms are as follows:

**MODULE**
This is a specific subject area within the course e.g. 'Preparation of lessons'. Each module will consist of units.

**UNIT**
This is a self-contained unit of work (which together with other units make up a module). e.g. 'planning schemes of work' - which addresses a theme within the overall topic.

**STUDY GUIDES**
This guides the members through the course.

**ACTIVITIES**
These activities for members consolidate the material in the study guide. They require them to apply and criticise the ideas that have been presented. Some of these will be self-assessed. Certain activities should be carried out on the activity sheet provided.

**EXTRACTS**
These will be drawn from articles on language teaching focussed on the specific theme that is being dealt with in the module. The study guided extracts. It will include explanations of the material when necessary. So the study guide should be read in parallel with the extracts.

**ASSIGNMENTS**
There are also assignments at the end of each unit which will be assessed by the tutor. There will be no formal examination.
1.3 DETAILED CONTENTS

MODULE A

Background

This module of 1 unit deals with an approach to the teaching of English as a second or third Language in Sierra Leone. It provides important background information on:-

1. The language situation in the Country.
2. Why English is taught in Sierra Leone.
3. The current teaching/learning process in schools.

This unit has been written with the belief that members need to be aware of some of the problems faced by a multilingual society which is trying to train its people more effectively to cope with, and operate in the modern world. (This awareness will enable them to be better equipped to tackle such problems.)

MODULE B

Preparation of Lessons

The 3 units of this module attempt to give guidance on how to try to solve the problems highlighted in Module A. They include practical suggestions as to the different plans that are needed for members to be successful in all their lessons.
MODULE B

Preparation of Lessons

The 3 units in this module attempt to give guidance on how to try to solve the problems highlighted in Module A. They include practical suggestions as to the different plans that are needed for members to be successful in all their lessons.

Unit I deals with the national syllabus in English. Its evolution and role in the preparation of schemes of work is discussed. Detailed guidance on how to prepare schemes work from its sub-topics is also given.

Unit II deals with preparation of lesson plans based on sub-topics from the scheme of work. Important points to consider during the initial planning stage as well as detailed information on what a lesson plan should include are also given.

Unit III discusses the steps members should take when putting their lesson plans into practice.

MODULE C

Teaching Language skills and the four skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

The 4 units in this module attempt to focus attention on how to teach the four skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Detailed
suggestions as to how these skills can be presented are given.

**Unit I** Deals with the teaching of Language skills and Grammar. Members are given guidance as to how to adapt their structure based course book and teach using the principles of communicative approach.

**Unit II** This unit stresses the importance of teaching Listening and Speaking skills in a systematic manner to students. It also guides members as to how to teach pronunciation.

**Unit III** Suggest different methods of teaching Reading for various purposes to students.

**Unit IV** This unit sets out a Writing programme which should train students to write sentences which express meaning effectively. Emphasis is laid on paragraph development and composition writing.

1.4 **Notes on the Materials**

Each unit is designed to show relationships between theoretical issues and practical teaching. Most units require you to:-

1. read the study guide.
2. read specific extracts.
3. do exercise designed to
   1. guide thoughts
   2. try out relevant practical activities in your own classroom.
1.5 The content of the materials

The idea of the materials in the study guide and extracts is to enable you to move from the familiar to the less familiar from what you do know already to new ideas, approaches and perspectives. This will encourage you to question your own assumptions and take account of all relevant considerations in everything that you do.

It should provide a coherent framework within which to set your knowledge, skills, awareness and your experience.

1.6 Theory

Some of the theory of English teaching discussed in the materials might not be clear to you. Don't worry if things don't seem immediately clear. The course is carefully designed to start from small beginnings. The concepts are introduced in a logical manner. Relationships between various elements of the overall picture will be highlighted as the course develops by means of consolidation exercises.

1.7 New terms

Where specific definitions of terms are not given, please look them up in dictionaries like, *A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (1980) by David Crystal, published by Andre Deutsch. Try to find out the contextual meanings of each new term.
1.8 **Confidence**

It is important that you use the course to reassess what you do or think as a teacher, not necessarily to reaffirm it or reject it. There will be many things you do already which fit into the perspectives you acquire, and which are therefore perfectly acceptable, other procedures may need altering or adapting in the light of theoretical standpoints; and others may need to be completely abandoned. In other words, have confidence in your critical judgement.

1.9 **Study Strategies**

Start each unit by reading the introduction. This gives you a general idea of what the unit contains. Then read the objectives. They are a list of what you are expected to achieve in the unit. They serve as a framework for, or a pointer to the reading you should do, or the experiment you need to try out in the classroom. They are also a very important guide to the aims of the unit. You should look at them before reading the unit to see what it is all about. You may find out that you cannot understand them all. Don't worry they will become clearer as you progress. Make sure you also read them after completing the unit to see whether you have achieved them. Then skim through the unit quickly. Pay attention to the activities and assignments. Read through carefully again bearing the set tasks in mind. Try to do the activities when you get to them as the materials you will have read will be fresh in your mind. Make notes as you read through. These will prove useful when you are doing the assignments at the end. Try to do every activity and
assignment in each unit. Also, make sure you read the extracts in parallel with the study guide. If you don't do this, you will miss out on very important information.

One thing you might try to do is to look at the title of each unit and try to write down quickly everything you know or think about the subject. Do the same for each section where it seems appropriate.

1.10 Motivation

Since you are more familiar with the traditional form of inservice workshops where there are always discussion and "other voices" you may find it difficult to maintain commitment. This could be due to a drop in confidence, confusion, too much work, not enough stimulation, lack of personal support from others and a host of other factors.

You can ward off any motivational decline by talking yourself through the crisis. Remind yourself that you have promised to help with this project. Also, you may acquire some new information from the materials.

If you feel bored, try to identify what exactly is the reason. Write this down or discuss it with your tutor as it will help me in improving the materials for potential users.

All learning is self-learning and it is achieved from self-motivation. Success on this course depends on your commitment to your own
professional development, to language learning and teaching and, incidentally, on your commitment to help in this project.

Your problems may be different from those of others teachers on the course. You may feel frightened because of the amount of work, the pressure of this work on your normal teaching load, your inability to understand some of the materials in the course or you may have difficulty in writing notes and essays. Please do all you can to try and identify the problem then ask yourself: "What steps can I take to reduce the problems?" Decide whether to discuss the issue with a colleague or to approach your tutor - who will always be willing to answer your questions.

1.11 Self-appraisal of teaching

There are some assignments in some units which specifically try to involve you in some kind of practical applications of the issues raised. This will involve some kind of planning and some kind of personal appraisal of the relative success of your experiments. Apart from these, it would be beneficial for your practical applications of points you have come across. Try them out, if they don't work, make a note of them. This will help me improve the materials and help you develop your teaching ability.

Do not reject ideas simply because they look too complex or irrelevant to your situation. Talk them through with colleagues or your tutor and this will help you to see how to adapt them to suit you.
In distance learning, it is important for you to try and develop the ability to be critical about your teaching - to be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses is essential to your own awareness as a teacher.

Just as learners need feedback from assessment, so you, as a teacher will find self-appraisal an intrinsically useful activity. You should start to adopt such an approach very early on in the course.

1.12 Feedback sheets

Each unit will have a 'feedback' sheet which is a short questionnaire for you to tell me about your reaction to the study materials. This is important as it will enable me to improve the material. The more feedback you give me the more I will be able to improve the materials for future use.

1.13 Personal diary

At the first meeting, you will be given a personal diary.

Please write down in the diary details of all the learning experiences you have during the time you are doing the course. They should include all or any of the following:-

1. Experiences when carrying out teaching practice assignments.
2. Discussions with colleagues/tutors/heads of department which have helped you to learn more.
3. Difficulty with any aspect of the units.

4. Reading - give details of any extra reading you deem necessary.

5. Writing essays, answering questions and doing the activities.

6. Any other experiences from which you gained or did not gain new knowledge, skills or attitudes.

Please date each entry and enter such comments in the diary everyday or night.

I shall try to visit you at least once a week to see how you are getting along. If you have any urgent enquiries to make and your tutor is not available, please feel free to contact me by phone, or if possible, in person at the Institute.

I do hope you will enjoy working through the materials.

Thank you very much for your help.

GOOD LUCK!

N. O KAIKUMBA
I want to take this opportunity of welcoming you very warmly to the Institute of Education and to the distance learning project. I will now try to give you

1. a brief account of what led to this project
2. a general idea of the concept of learning at a distance
3. some guidance on how to study at a distance.

Before I say anything more, I must publicly express my deep appreciation for the amount of time the tutors spent correcting the materials throughout this week. They have demonstrated a lot of patience, tolerance, maturity and a keen interest in their profession. Thank you very much and I do hope the teachers you have selected will copy your example.

This course has been constructed to exploit the possibility of the English Division to In-service train a large number of teachers at a distance. It is based on our National Syllabus for Secondary Level which has not been fully implemented.

My original intention was to write a handbook to supplement the syllabus as recommended by the syllabus working party in 1974 and suggestions emanating from researches conducted by both Mrs. P.A.C. Pratt in 1977 and myself in 1982. The syllabus, as it stands, does not provide the kind of concrete practical guidelines that our teachers need.

An attempt has therefore been made to provide some guidance as to how teachers can use the syllabus to draw up schemes of work, lesson plans and to teach the different aspects of the syllabus.
...ers may find it strange that I am suggesting that in-
vice training of teachers which is supposed to have a very long interaction element can be effectively carried out at a distance which learning at a distance simply means that teachers will study a course at their own pace in the comfort solation of their own home or wherever they choose. They l not be "talked at" by a lecturer or a seminar leader (to correspondence courses etc.). Countries like Kenya, Nigeria, na, Lesotho, Botswana, Canada, England and America have ined thousands of teachers successfully by distance learning hods. It has proved to be a **successful method** of in-service ining. This is because:-

1. teachers will not need to be released from their jobs or from their homes to attend in-service training courses.
2. teachers will be able to organise their course work load to suit their teaching and personal commitments.
3. teachers can study in their own time which will be a welcome idea to Sierra Leonean teachers who are already overburdened by large classes and a full time-table.
4. study pace, method and content is varied in distance learning which means that teachers can study at a pace more closely related to their personal or natural styles or needs.
5. teachers will develop a greater autonomy in learning which can also be seen as a pre-requisite to orienting their students for independent research work.
6. self-evaluative techniques, identification and resolution of departmental problems can be readily addressed.

7. The quality of instruction can be raised by making the best use of specialist, experienced teachers through their preparation of materials which can be designed in self-contained modules. In this way, less experience teachers will gain from the expertise of "old" experienced teachers.

8. Large numbers of teachers can be reached through this scheme: This is particularly important in a country like Sierra Leone which has only one teacher training college for training lower secondary teachers and two university colleges which train upper secondary teachers.

In this pilot scheme, all the administration will be co-ordinated by me and the practical component of the course and assessment of written work will be carried out by your tutors. They will not only observe you teach but will also run regular tutorial sessions and give you all the motivational support you may need. You will be obliged to execute a number of formally-assessed practical teaching assignments. More importantly, you will be encouraged to carry out several self-appraisal and peer-appraisal tasks each designed to apply given principles and to adopt a spirit of mutual co-operation in the interests of all-round teacher development in the school.

When teachers sit in on each other's classes, they learn an enormous amount about themselves.

A great deal of responsibility is put on your tutors who will best be able to keep a perspective on all matters and to support you whether it
is the materials, the administration or your motivation that is bothering you.

The materials have gone through one phase of evaluation by your tutors. They have amended some sections that they feel are inappropriate to our learning situation in Sierra Leone and have retained some. Do not feel constrained to accept everything. The whole purpose of inviting you to participate in this project is to get more feedback that will enable us to improve on the materials further. This means, that you can still question some of the assumptions in the materials and make further suggestions.

Also, many of you have never been exposed to distance learning methods. I will be visiting you from time to time to find out your views with regard to this method. If you have attended INSET courses before - by this I mean the traditional INSET courses like workshops, seminars lectures and group discussions, I would like to know whether you prefer those to this new kind of training. It is essential that we find out your preferences so that we do not just assume that because Distance Learning methods have worked elsewhere, it will work in Sierra Leone.

A great deal of effort will be made to guide you. Now, I will try to give you some hints as to how to study at a distance,
As an independent student, I realise of course that you have all the problems of other students plus a few extra. And there is a good chance that you have not studied recently. Some of you may have looked through the members handbook and decided that much of the course is rather daunting. I shall now make an attempt to help dispel any fears about this course of study which you may now have. The chances are that you are efficient, well-organised and may need to treat this talk as more than a series of suggestions for adapting your own teaching and learning strategies or plan. On the other hand there may well be one or two of you who will welcome some of the suggestions. So please bear with me for the next few minutes.

Learning efficiently isn't a gift we are born with, it is a skill which one can be taught to develop. Of course no student is going to reach his/her peak learning power at the end of this short talk. But one should have a clear appreciation of the ingredients of successful learning; one should know what techniques to practise and what to avoid. Almost certainly, you have more commitments than a full time student at university or college. You probably have a full teaching commitment, a family to look after, or to consider, as well as other responsibilities. It is of course someone just like you who needs to study really efficiently, and one of the aims of this talk is to help you to make good use of the time you have so that when you are studying you are also learning.

Throughout the distance learning course, you will find frequent suggestions for work to be done. It is important that you do this work at some stage of the course even if not after the first reading. One way of working through any module
it for e.g. Module A An Approach to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone schools or Module C, Unit 3 Teaching Reading - is to set aside sufficient time to read right through the module. Ignore all the work suggestions in the sections you don't understand at first reading. Then leave the module or unit alone for at least a day, then come back and work through the section you didn't understand slowly.

Successful students invariably have well-designed plans and time tables; they may not have them written down but almost certainly they have a plan in their heads. A plan is an overall view of the course based on the information given in the members' handbook. To assist you in your own planning regarding the home study programme a time schedule is in your file.

Let's take module A for example. There is only one unit in this module - Background to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone. It is important for you to understand why we teach English in Sierra Leone and some of the problems involved in teaching it. I suggest that no more than 4 or 5 hours or 2 days will be necessary to cover this module. Your tutors will discuss the finer details with you with regard to the number of hours you should spend on the other units.

Quite honestly, I think you will need to find approximately 10 hours each week for study. That, by the way, I would consider to be the minimum.

Naturally, some people would cover the same amount of work in a much shorter time, but nevertheless, a great deal of study time has to be found.
Our first objective then is to consider how best we can organise our personal time-table in relation to the overall considerations of the course. Time-tables really are great aids to efficiency.

Firstly they enable you to analyse the use you are making of your time. They help you to determine whether it is the most effective scheme and also whether the hours allocated to study are the best ones. A time table takes a load off your mind just as listing down pressing commitments enables you to concentrate on the one task in hand, so timetabling the days or weeks through term ensures that all the decisions have been taken in advance. Without a time table, you will have to make a hundred decisions each week as you try to fit everything in. The very making of the decisions will tax your energy and leave you less ready for study.

The timetable should not simply be a study timetable; it should be a complete summary of your way of life which ensures that your study fits conveniently with the rest of your life. In drawing up a timetable, the starting point is deciding on the number of hours you can devote to study. To guage this, first have a look at your life as it is at the present. Now please complete these sheets so you can have an idea of what you do now during every one hour. Now that you have completed the table, please look for signs of inefficiency or wasted time. Are there for example, any odd hours being used to no particular purposes? Could the essential activities be rearranged to put the odd bits of time together so that you can form a useable one or two hours study period? Your weekly timetable should be fairly
specific as to what is to be studied and when. By allocating the work over a week, you are setting yourself a goal. Providing that the goal is realistic, you will derive peace of mind and satisfaction in reaching it at the end of the week.

For all of us, there are two limiting factors on the amount of time we should devote to study. The first is that periods of less than half an hour is of little use. Any study activity involves a warming-up period during which your efficiency is low. All you can hope to do with these short periods is to use them for odd activities such as sorting notes or checking book lists and tables of contents.

If at all possible, you should try to make your study periods at least an hour. Remember that essays take longer to write than you think. You will need 2-3 hours study sessions for this purpose. For note-taking, reading, exercises, trial question papers, worksheet completion and so on, periods of an hour will be more useful.

The second limiting factor is the maximum number of hours you can expect to put in one day. Experiments show that you can't expect to study efficiently for more than 3 hours without a substantial break, nor can you expect to work for more than 8 hours in one day. Full time students should aim at around 45-50 hours of study a week - including lectures, seminars and so on. This is approximately, the total number of weekly hours of study students at university are expected to devote to study. Home-study students (i.e. those doing correspondence, self-instruction or distance learning courses) can't possibly hope to aim at this level and for them 12-14 hours per week is likely to be the upper limit. The total number
of hours should be spent as evenly as possible over 5 or 6 days of the week. You will learn more if you are working for one hour a day - six days a week than if you are working six hours each day of the week. This regular study habit will reinforce what was learnt the previous day before it is forgotten.

Not only should study be evenly spaced through one week, it should also be evenly spaced throughout the course which will last for about 4 or 5 weeks. Massive cram sessions are not effective and long hours only lead to inefficiency. Ideally, study hours should come early in the day when attention and concentration are at their peak. The highest output is usually attained in the second hour of study in the morning. For most distance learning students, evenings provide the only opportunity for study, though, of course Saturday or Sunday morning time is usually possible with careful planning. The most difficult part of your work should be reserved for your best study times. If despite this, you are still reluctant to get down to a particularly difficult piece of study, start one of your prime sessions with a short but easy job. Switch to the more difficult task immediately after this warming up exercise. Each study session should start with a revision of the previous day's study provided they follow one from another. This reinforces the previous day's work and acts as a warming up session. Ones efficiency and concentration tends to flow after an hour's study but they are easily revived after a short break. For maximum effect, the break should be very definite - going to a different room, taking a short
walk, talking to someone, having a cup of coffee - 5 to 10 minutes is sufficient to restore you to full efficiency. Relaxation should be an important part of your timetable. Without adequate sleep, recreation and relaxation, your mind will not function efficiently. You should therefore make a definite point of including recreation and relaxation in your time table. Sleep should also be timetabled in so that you don't neglect its vital contribution to health. The distance learning student with a full time job needs to pay particular attention to these points since even 12 hours study per week is a considerable extra strain on ones energies.

As far as possible, you should regard both course commitment and timetable as commands to be obeyed as a top priority. Only with very good reasons should you depart from the plan or timetable. But the plan itself must have some flexibility. Everyone's schedules go wrong from time to time. With a workable timetable, you can probably get back on schedule. With a less workable timetable the lack of flexibility will mean you must scrap it and devise a new one. A timetable which you can't keep to is worse than no timetable at all.

The choice of a room to study can be just as critical as the choice of when to study. We are greatly influenced by our surrounding and the careful choice of surroundings can encourage a good attitude to study. The first priority is that the room in which you study should be away from other distractions. Items such as T.V. or a radio waiting to be turned on, newspapers lying around to be read, all distract you. The best way to avoid these is to reserve a special room for studying or to use a bedroom as a
study bedroom, since bedrooms are rarely used in study hours and contain few distractions. On the whole, libraries are not suitable places for study. There are many strange people to watch, there is constant movement, and except in a few modern libraries, services such as floors and desks are usually of a noisy variety. A study room should be carefully planned for its very specific functions. It needs to be warm and well ventilated. If it is too hot or too cold, your mind will be distracted by the heat or cold of your body. You will also need adequate light, day or artificial on your working surface. Even if you can't devote a whole room to study, you should try and keep a corner somewhere where all your study materials are together. This saves no end of time which can easily be wasted in searching for notes index references, books, worksheets cassettes etc. Provided you have the space you should include a bookcase and a display board near your desk. A display board will prove invaluable for charts, timetable diagrams and notes. It helps to keep more material in front of you without cluttering up your desk. You'll need a bookcase not only to keep your books in but to keep them together and near your work place. I know that most of what I've just said is pure and adulterated common sense but I offer no apology for I know only too well from personal experience how very important the organisation of one's time is and how careful planning can prove so very helpful.

Good Luck! Happy Studing

Nemata O. Kaikumba
APPENDIX 10.9 A copy of a timetable
Pilot distance learning course for the In-service training teachers of English in Sierra Leone.

Study Skills worksheet

Fill up the blank table of your week's activities as they exist now, accounting for each half hour.

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APPENDIX 10.10 Thank-you letter to principals of schools

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
(University of Sierra Leone)

Private Mail Bag,
Tower Hill,
Freetown, Sierra Leone.

4th March, 1985

Dear Principal,

Thank you very sincerely for releasing M. to attend the one-week workshop to help refine and try out our pilot distance learning materials for the in-service training of teachers of English.

He/she demonstrated such enthusiasm over the project and worked from 9a.m. - 5p.m. each day at the Institute and even took some work home. Do extend the sincere appreciation of the entire Institute to him/her for showing keen interest in the professional improvement of teachers.

All the teachers he/she chose attended the one-day orientation course on Friday. Thank you very much for making this possible at such short notice.

I will be grateful if you would allow me to visit them from time to time to monitor the use to which the materials are being put. I do hope this will be alright with you.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

Nemata O. Kaikumba (Mrs)

cc. Director
C.D.O. English
Tutors
PILOT DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE FOR THE N-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE

MODULE A

(Study Guide)

Background to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone

"With traditional methods we have only managed to educate half the world".

A. M. Tantawi

EMATA O. KAIKUMBA

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DISTANCE LEARNING FOR INSERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN SIERRA LEONE

MODULE A

(STUDY GUIDE)

MODULE A Background to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone

N.O. KAIKUMBA
1985
OVERVIEW - MODULE A

English Language teachers need to understand the problems involved in teaching English within their contexts.

This module will discuss:-

i. An approach to the teaching of English as a Second Language in Sierra Leone Secondary Schools.
An approach to the teaching of English in Sierra Leone Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this unit is to identify for teachers of English in Sierra Leone Secondary Schools some of the problems faced by a multilingual society which is trying to train its people for roles in the modern world. An attempt will be made in subsequent modules to indicate ways in which these problems may be met.

OBJECTIVES: At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. describe the current language situation in the country.
2. state why English is taught in Sierra Leone schools.
3. describe current methods employed in teaching and learning English in schools.
Activity 1

Think about the Language situation in Sierra Leone by reading the following true or false statements. Then complete the "BEFORE READING PASSAGE" activity sheet provided.

1. Thirty languages are spoken in Sierra Leone.
2. One of these languages is used for official communication.
3. Students are taught in English from the first day they start school.
4. Students go to school with a fair knowledge of the English Language.
5. English is the first language for Teachers in Sierra Leone.
6. Since Krio is the lingua franca in Sierra Leone, many students speak it as well as their own mother tongue.
7. Sierra Leone is a multilingual society.
8. It is necessary to prevent pupils from speaking Krio in school to minimise interference with their learning of English.
9. Krio is standard throughout Sierra Leone.
10. 'Local' English in Sierra Leone is the same English that is spoken in America.
11. Since students start learning English in their Nursery and Primary schools, they are able to write well in English by the age of 11 or 12.
12. Students can switch comfortably from speaking Krio to speaking English.
13. The native language structures that children acquire in childhood enable them to learn new languages.

Now, please hand your activity sheet to your tutor. Read the following text on the Language situation in Sierra Leone.
THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE

According to the 1963 census figures, seventeen languages are widely spoken in Sierra Leone. None of these languages can be used for official communication as none of them have been developed sufficiently to become an accepted medium for wider social, commercial and international use, or to foster national communicative interaction.

From the early stages of primary education, pupils are taught in English* and not in their mother tongue. Children go to school armed with their mother tongue acquired through interaction with family and friends and with which they have had experience. This language is a part of their experience with the world of actions and things. On entering school, however, they are faced with the problem of dealing with this same experience in an entirely different way. The learners and teachers in Sierra Leone therefore have to cope with the double task of mastering its meaning. They have to learn new words that relate to the subject they are learning which means assimilating the language of school which is completely different from the vocabulary of their indigenous languages.

The majority of students in Secondary Schools in Sierra Leone speak one or other of the tribal languages as a first language. This tribal language is used for purpose of intimate oral communication especially between speakers of the same tribal affiliation.

* There are many "Englishes" spoken in the world - American English being a major one. In Sierra Leone, because of history, the basic model is British English.
There are cases in which some students speak their mother tongue as well as Krio which they acquire before or while learning English. (Krio is the lingua franca of Sierra Leone. It contains words from many West African languages as well as from several European languages, including English).

Students who have to learn and speak English from a mere knowledge of Krio, which has features of English, still have great difficulties in learning the language. The situation is more difficult for students who come to school equipped with knowledge of only their tribal languages. Teachers must be aware of this and be assisted to face and overcome these difficulties.

Thus, it is best for one to consider Sierra Leone as a multi-lingual society in which many students are bi-lingual or tri-lingual. This is also what in previous years, led to the wholesale ban on Krio from school campuses. But this is an inappropriate attitude, as Krio can be used in learning English. By comparing Krio and English in English lessons, pupils will become aware of the differences and similarities between both languages and they will "translate" much more intelligently from Krio to English. For example the teacher can say in Krio "Gee me me sus" which translated to English is "Give me my shoes". This is a polite form of request among Krio speakers in Sierra Leone, which it is not in England. Another example might be the fact that for Sierra Leoneans, every beverage is referred to as "tea". When a Sierra Leonean says "or day cam drink tea" he does not differentiate between tea, coffee, cocoa or hot chocolate as an English speaker may do.
Again, Krio is not standard throughout Sierra Leone, a situation that is generally the case with widely spoken languages, since it differs from area to area. Student's speech can at various points be placed along a language continuum with Sierra Leone - Krio at one end and standard English at the other.

Generally Nursery and Primary education offers children the first real contact with systematised instruction in 'local' English. ('Local' English means the Sierra Leonean version of English. This is not received pronunciation which is the accepted convenient general form for international purposes. The local version of English is acceptable and should be of greater use to students in Sierra Leone).

The expectation is that by the time they reach Secondary School at eleven years of age, Sierra Leonean children ought to be able to read and write in the English Language. It is even assumed that students understand a wide range of sentence structures which they may be able to produce orally or in writing. This is not true, for even those who have acquired knowledge of a wide range of sentence structures do so without much confidence.

It seems, therefore, that at this early stage, we as teachers may assume that this ability to read and reproduce written forms indicates a considerable grasp of the language. But this is not generally so.
Very few students can be truly described as bilingual. They cannot switch comfortably from one language to the other. There may be three reasons for this:

1. English and Krio are closely connected in some ways and differences are hard to recognise and learn.

2. People tend to see themselves as bilingual. The situation has become either "English or Krio", instead of "English and Krio". The key to the situation may be that we teach students not only English but also to know when to use it.

3. Moreover, their competences in the two languages relate to different things in these two languages. It is this native language structure - so much a part of his or her thought processes which is a students first obstacle to learning a new language. This makes switching from Krio to English usually difficult.

Those who mark Selective Entrance Examination papers (the exams which qualify students to enter Secondary schools) complain of their students' poor performance and expression in these exams. The students at this stage tend to translate verbatim from the local languages for the English equivalent. For example, they would write "cam wit me" for "come with me". This is not a spelling mistake but what comes naturally to them at this stage of Language Learning.

NOW, PLEASE COMPLETE THE 'AFTER READING PASSAGE' ACTIVITY SHEET. SUBMIT THIS TO YOUR TUTOR.
A1.2 The Language Situation in Your Class

It is important for teachers to have a fair knowledge of the language situation in their class when they start teaching. The following activity will help you in doing so. Why not try it out.

Activity II

The following questionnaire aims to collect maximum basic information on the language situation or the different languages spoken by pupils in your class. It has been designed with the aim of getting a broad, overall picture of the number of languages used by pupils in your class, the number of speakers of each language and the proportions of the pupils reading and writing the language concerned.

Teachers, please complete the following questionnaire for all the pupils in your class. Record each pupil's answers in the grid provided. In the notes section, please add background notes on what pupils read in the languages, for example, religious literature, dialect, etc.

**QUESTION I.**
Do you speak Krio at home. (YES or NO)

Do you speak some other language at home which is not Krio? Give the name (s) of that (those) languages - (up to 4)

**QUESTION II**
Can you read that (those) language (s)? Please write YES or NO.

**QUESTION III**
Can you write that (those) language (s)? Please write YES or NO.
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<th>Notes on what Students read, dialect etc.</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY III

On the basis of this activity that you have just carried out with your class, give a brief outline of the language situation in your class. The outline should include information on the range of languages spoken, number of speakers in each language group, number of students who can read or write in the language (or languages) as well as information of what students read in the languages.

ACTIVITY IV

Consider whether you know why English is taught in Sierra Leone by completing the following:

1. People in Sierra Leone learn English because:

   1.

   2.

   3.

   4.

NOW PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND SEE WHETHER YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT ANY OF YOUR ANSWERS.
A.2. WHY WE TEACH ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE

We teach English in Sierra Leone schools because Sierra Leone, like most African Countries formerly under British rule, inherited an educational system which was based on the British type of education. The English language became and still is the accepted official national language. The organised development of language skills is undertaken in schools and colleges. Instruction in all subjects is through the medium of English and all textbooks are written in English. Fluency in the "service-subject" - English Language - will undoubtedly enable students to perform better in all other subjects. Indeed the consequences of this - the use of English for subjects across the curriculum should not be overlooked by the language teacher.

Contact with other African or European countries requires that Sierra Leoneans speak a language that is used internationally. Furthermore, since there is no common mother tongue, for purposes of official communication, or for education and written correspondence in Sierra Leone, we use the medium of English.

ACTIVITY V

READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND INSERT (T) TRUE OR (F) FALSE IN THE BOXES PROVIDED IN THE "BEFORE READING PASSAGE" - ACTIVITY SHEET

12
1. All course books in use in Sierra Leone are written with the needs of the children in mind.

2. Teachers' schemes of work follow the language needs of the children.

3. Set textbooks are to be found in every school and with every pupil.

4. There are a lot of teaching aids like tape recorders, radios and videos in many schools.

5. Pupils learn more quickly if they are taught through the direct method.

6. It is more important to emphasise written work than oral drills.

7. The first aim of a good teacher is to help students pass external exams.

NOW READ THE FOLLOWING
From observation, and as I stated earlier, it seems that most Secondary School teachers assume that students are able to read and reproduce written forms, which would indicate that they have a considerable grasp of the English Language. However this is not true.

There is sometimes very little difference in content or material between teaching English in England and teaching English in Sierra Leone. For example, formerly Sierra Leonean children had to read only texts about "snow", "daffodils" and "dandelions" which they are unfamiliar with. The course books were not written with the needs of the Sierra Leone child in mind. For example, while in Primary School in Sierra Leone, I learnt the poem:

"O dandelion, yellow as gold
what do you do all day?
I stay all day
Till the children come to play
and blow my hair away".

It was only when I went to the United States for post-graduate studies that I realised that the 'dandelion' is a wild flower and the hair that is blown away is the furry white part of the flower which the children enjoy blowing in the wind....This situation is gradually changing since many African countries achieved independence.

Schemes of work tend to follow a course book rather than the language needs of the children. No course books in use in Sierra Leone or anywhere else for that matter are ideal in all respects. The contents of a particular textbook do not reflect all that an English teacher needs for the development of the necessary competencies that the learner
requires. So the teachers who take refuge in textbooks fail, whatever the quality of that textbook, and particularly where the textbook is weak.

Additionally in some schools, pupils do not even have access to the textbooks. There is a lack of reading material for the schools to use. Teaching aids are rarely used in English lessons as it is only a few selected schools in the urban areas that possess tape recorders and wall charts. The situation makes great demands upon the resourcefulness of the teacher who has to create materials to make up for what is lacking.

Teachers of English in Sierra Leone therefore have to use their limited resources and adapt them to suit their needs when teaching. They can use their natural surroundings - flora and fauna - and use the English Language as a tool to express and describe what is around them. In this way, language will become a living thing. It will be used as a tool for discovering things. It will cease to be taught in an abstract manner.

In most schools in Sierra Leone today, much of the teaching is done through the Direct Method. This means that the teacher uses the foreign language only in teaching without reference to the native language. Teachers tend to immerse the students in the foreign language. Although useful, the Direct Method must be used sensitively so as not to confuse those students who find it very difficult to function in terms of this approach. Moreover, teachers who are not very experienced in using the Direct method cannot get very far with it. Teaching methods used range from eclectic methods (selecting such methods as pleases them) to
traditional methods. There is nothing wrong with teaching Grammar,
traditionally for example. But teachers must be careful not to
concentrate on merely analysing the structure of the language rather than
teaching it. They should remember that when people actually speak the
language, they do not stop to think of Grammar first.
So that Grammar must be taught in such a way that people are able to say
what they mean. We must stop giving undue emphasis to only language
analysis.

There is also too much emphasis on written work for reinforcing
structures rather than oral drills. Not only is this skill part of the
whole experience of learning a language, it is also considered primary by
linguists. It is true that we tend to read and write English more often
in Sierra Leone. But we must also learn how to speak it!

As soon as the Sierra Leone child reaches form four or five, the external
examinations syllabus dominate the content of what is taught. Since the
teachers have to focus attention on these exams, there is the tendency to
try and teach the exam syllabus. But this should not be done to the
exclusion of teaching language skills generally.

Teachers if these comments on some practices current in English Language
teaching are well-founded, and I think they are, then our teaching plans
ought to be reviewed. It would be a tragedy if we taught children how to
read and write English, according to limited objectives - (like
concentrating too exclusively on grammar drills or the exam syllabus) -
and then found out that they had nothing to speak and write about that
was worth communicating!
Current theory and practice among experts in the Teaching of English as a Second Language emphasise the COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH. According to a characteristic consideration of real language use,

In the process of communication, every speaker adjusts the way he speaks (or writes) according to the situation he is in, the purpose which motivates him, and the relationship between himself and the person he is addressing. Certain ways of talking are appropriate for communicating with intimates, other ways for communicating with non-intimates; certain ways of putting things will be understood to convey politeness, others to convey impatience or rudeness or anger. In fact, all our vast array of language use can be classified into many different categories related to the situation and purpose of communication. For a foreign learner, it might sometimes be more important to achieve this kind of communicative competence than to achieve a formal linguistic correctness.

Subsequent modules will be informed in large part upon this type of approach.

NOW PLEASE FILL IN THE "AFTER READING PASSAGE" ACTIVITY SHEET.

Activity VI

READ THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND ANSWER 'YES' OR 'NO' BESIDE EACH QUESTION

1. In my school, instruction in all subjects is through the medium of English.
2. Pupils in my school need to learn English in order to write job application letters.

3. Pupils in my school can all read and spell well.

4. I make my scheme of work by following the course book which is

(If this question is relevant, please insert the title of the course book in the space provided).

5. It is better to use course books when teaching English in Sierra Leone.

6. Every pupil owns a copy of the set course book in my school.

7. There are sufficient teaching aids in my schools.

8. I only use the English language when teaching.

9. I never translate from my pupils' local languages when teaching them.

10. I make sure that my students know the definitions of nouns, verbs, and all the different parts of speech by heart.

11. I always give my students examples of these parts of speech.

12. I think it is more important to give students sufficient practice in writing rather than in speaking.

13. I like presenting oral practice to my students.

NOW DO THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY BASED ON THIS EXERCISE
ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write an account of the current way in which you teach English in the light of what you have read in this unit. Submit this to your tutor.

2. Draw a Language map depicting the Language situation in Sierra Leone.

3. Have you ever tried to reflect on the reasons why English and not Krio or any other Language is taught in Sierra Leone Schools? If so write these down. If not, explain (with reasons) which Language you think should be taught and why.

4. State some problems you have encountered when teaching. Discuss the methods you have adopted to solve them.
For each statement please record true (T) or false (F) in the boxes provided.

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<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 11.2 Orientating questionnaire

General orientating questionnaire to find out general background of teachers before they take part in the Distance Learning course for the In-service training of teachers of English as a second Language.

Whilst you are teaching, you will be issued with a set of distance-learning materials which should help with certain aspects of your teaching practice. With your help, the use of these materials will be monitored and evaluated throughout the time you are using them in an attempt to find out their effectiveness.

Your tutor will give you a handbook and explain to you how to make the best use of these materials. She will also provide you with individual advice and help as you work through the materials.

Before you start to use these learning materials, it would be useful to gain some information about you as an individual, including some details of your own experiences and opinions concerning teaching and learning in general and on In-service training courses in particular. It would therefore be helpful if you could answer the following questions.

Your name is not required in the questionnaire because there is no need to link general background with specific teaching experiences.

Thank you very much.

Nemata O. Kaikumba.

February 1985.
YOUR EDUCATION BEFORE BECOMING AN ENGLISH TEACHER

1. When were you first trained?

2. Please give details of which forms of teacher training you have had?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Subjects Passed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.T.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.A. (Dip.Ed.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify and include subjects taken etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. During your last year at college:
   (a) On average, how many hours of private study time were you given within school hours? __ ___-hours per day ___________________
   (b) Please describe the nature of private study
       ______________________________________
       ______________________________________
   (c) On average how many hours study did you do outside school hours? __________-hours per day

4. (a) Throughout your education, were you taught any courses through self-instruction? Yes □ No □
   (b) If your answer is yes, please give details of the type of self-instruction.
       ______________________________________
       ______________________________________

5. During your last two years of school or college, please indicate how much experience you had in each of the following teaching methods. (Please tick appropriate column)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Group discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE SINCE BECOMING AN ENGLISH TEACHER

6.a. Since starting your present teaching assignments, please state how much learning you have had in each of the following in-service methods by ticking the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-service Provisions</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
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<td>Workshops</td>
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<td>Group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
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</table>

b. Please rank in order of preference the following methods of learning at INSET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-service Provisions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
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<td>Workshops</td>
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<td>Group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
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</table>
5. 

(5)c. Are you satisfied with the range of methods you have been using at In-service courses. Yes No

d. If your answer is no, please explain why.

______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________

7. On average, how many hours of your own time do you spend per week on independent study for preparation and improving your teaching.

No. of hours

7. (a) Do you look out for other resources for improving your teaching? Yes No

(b) If your answer is yes, what kinds of resources do you look for?

______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________

8. Do you feel there is a need for In-service training courses? Yes No

9. If yes, please state in which areas (e.g. developing teaching aids, teaching skills etc.) you see a need.

______________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
10. If no, could you elaborate more?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. Do you consult any of the following for information with regard to improving your teaching?

(i) a library

[ ] Yes [ ] No

(ii) professional journals

[ ] Yes [ ] No

12. Are there other methods of In-service training you would like to see added to the present available methods? Please list the methods.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. Have you ever heard of In-service training at a distance?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

14. If your answer is yes, please explain how you heard about it.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Feedback sheet for teachers after they have completed each unit of the distance learning course.

Name (Optional):

School:

Date:

These questions are designed to find out your opinions on aspects of the course in general. They will also provide you with an opportunity to offer your opinions on how you think the course could be improved. If you cannot express yourself fully in the space provided for a particular question, please continue your answer overleaf. If a question does not apply to you, for example, a question on a unit you have not completed, simply put N/A.

This questionnaire will be treated as confidential.

Finally, please appreciate that the improvement of teaching is important to yourself, and that you can help to achieve this. Please, submit this feedback sheet to your tutor as and when you complete each unit.

Thank you very much for your help

Nemata O. Kaikumba

April 1985.
Overview

1. (a) One of the reasons for including an Overview at the beginning of the units is to help members understand the Objectives of the text. Have you found the Overviews in the text helpful in this respect? Yes No

(b) Please explain your answer.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

2. Is there any part of the Overview which is not clear to you? Please specify.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

3. (a) Do you think every unit should have an Overview at the beginning of the text? Yes No

(b) Please explain your answer.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
1. What did you do with the objectives of the text?  Yes  No
   i) Did you ignore them?
   ii) Read them more than once?
   iii) Read them rather quickly?
   iv) Study each one carefully?
   v) Other (Please specify below)

2. Approximately how long did you spend on the objectives?  ____ mins.

3. Did the objectives
   Yes  No
   i) make you want to get into the subject matter;
   ii) put you off;
   iii) Other, please specify

4. (a) Did you have any difficulty in understanding any of the objectives?  Yes  No

5. (a) One of the reasons for including a list of objectives at the beginning of a text is to tell members in advance what they are expected to learn in the text. Have you found the objectives in this text helpful in this respect?  Yes  No
   (b) Please explain your answer.

          _______________________________________________________
          _______________________________________________________
          _______________________________________________________
          _______________________________________________________
          _______________________________________________________
          _______________________________________________________
Module:  
Unit:  
Activity:

1. (a) Did you answer all the questions in the activity section?  
       Yes  No

(b) If no, please say which questions you did not answer and why.

   Question No.  Why

   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________

2. (a) Did you understand what each question was asking you to do?  
       Yes  No

(b) If not, which questions were not clear?  Question No.

   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________

3. (a) Do you think the activities will help members to assess their understanding of the material covered in the text?  
       Yes  No

(b) Please explain your answer in the space below and overleaf if necessary.

   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________
   _________________________________

4. In addition, if you have any other comments regarding the activities, please use the space overleaf.
Module:  
Unit:  Assignment

1. (a) Did you understand what the assignments were asking members to do? Yes No

(b) If not, which assignment did you find difficult to understand? Assignment No.

(c) What was unclear about these assignments?

2. (a) Will members find doing the assignment helpful in monitoring their progress? Yes No

(b) Please explain your answer.

3. (a) Do you think there should be an assignment in every unit? Yes No

(b) Please explain your answer.

4. ANY OTHER COMMENTS? (Please continue overleaf if necessary)
Module: Jnit: Study Guide

1. (a) Has the Study Guide given you a clear idea about how the text is structured?  

   Yes  No

2. Which parts of the Guide did you find
   (i) Most useful

   (ii) not needed?

3. (a) Was there any information missing from the Guide which you consider should have been included?  

   Yes  No
   (b) Please elaborate.

4. Which parts, if any, of the Guide did you find redundant?

5. ANY COMMENTS? (Please continue overleaf)
GENERAL

(a) How many hours did you spend on this module

(b) Please grade the module as a whole on each of the following scales by circling one of the numbers from 1 to 5.

totally irrelevant 1 2 3 4 5 extremely relevant
very boring 1 2 3 4 5 very interesting
too superficial 1 2 3 4 5 too detailed
very easy 1 2 3 4 5 very difficult
badly explained 1 2 3 4 5 clearly explained
too few activities 1 2 3 4 5 too many activities
too brief 1 2 3 4 5 too long

(c) Please list any section which took an excessively long time.

( ) Write down any use of words, ideas, etc. that were not explained clearly enough. (Please give page or section where they occur.)

(e) Did you do any follow up work on the Module (Such as additional reading, trying something out in practice, discussions with colleagues etc.)? Please give details.

(f) ANY OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

THANK YOU PLEASE submit this FORM to your tutor.
DISTANCE LEARNING FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING

General Questionnaire on the distance learning method

In this questionnaire, I am trying to compare the distance learning method you have recently experienced with other In-service training methods like workshops, seminars, lectures and group discussions you are familiar with. The information will be held in confidence, and will be used as a basis for making improvements on the course.

Please fill in the questionnaire as thoughtfully and accurately as you can.

Thank you very much for your help.

N.O. Kaikumba,
University of Surrey,
Guildford, May, 1985
England.
1. As distance learning does not provide face to fact contact with peers and lecturers did you encounter problems with:

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<td>Response to questions</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Clarification of issues</td>
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<td>Expressing views</td>
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<td>Raising issues</td>
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<td>Exchanging ideas</td>
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2. What methods did you employ to cope with those problems you encountered?

_________________________________________________________________
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_________________________________________________________________

3. Did you find that the distance learning method increased your motivation to study?

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4. Did you find that the distance learning method required self-discipline to a greater or lesser extent than other INSET provisions like seminars, workshops etc.?

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5. Were the materials:-

   i. interesting? Yes  No

   |                        | 15 | - |

   ii. stimulating? Yes  No

   |                        | 15 | 2 |

   iii. relevant? Yes  No

   |                        | 13 | - |
6. Did you find difficulty in meeting module deadlines?  
   Yes  No  
   16  1

7. Do you consider the tutorial system employed in the distance learning method effective?  
   Yes  No  
   11  5

8. Have you had enough opportunity to practise the methods discussed in the modules in your classroom?  
   Yes  No  
   4  12

9. Compared with other INSET provisions you have attended, does the distance learning method require more or less of your time?  
   more 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  less  
   2 2 1 - - - -

10. Did you find working with a partner a worthwhile activity?  
    Yes  No  
    13  1

11. What do you consider to be the advantages of a distance learning course?  

12. What do you consider to be the disadvantages of a distance learning course?
13. Did you find the distance learning method a more or less efficient method of learning than other provisions like seminars and workshops etc? 

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14. Has the distance learning method encouraged you to read further in your subject area? Yes No

13 2

15. Given the choice, which of the following methods of study do you prefer (please rank in order of preference)?

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<td>Distance learning</td>
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16. How do you perceive the impact of distance learning method compared to other in-service training methods?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

17. Have you found that the distance learning method helped to make the learning process easier or more difficult for you?

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18. Did you find that the relationship between the materials provided and their use in practice was clearly established in the distance learning approach? Yes No

13 3
19. Were you able to do a self appraisal of your teaching?  
Yes 13  No 5

20. Have you been able to enhance your teaching skills through the distance learning method?  
Yes 11  No 4

21. Was the organisation and lay-out of the materials clear enough to attract your attention?  
Yes 15  No 1

22. Was the language clear enough?  
Yes 11  No 5

Thank you very much for your help.

N.O. Kaikumba.
Good afternoon Mrs. L.

Mrs. L. Good afternoon Mrs. Kaikumba

Mrs. K. I would like to have a little chat with you about the course that you have been monitoring. As a tutor, what do you see yourself engaged in and what is your general view of the course so far?

Mrs. L. Well, I think em as far as my role is concerned I have been trying to do as much as I possibly can to help members in the school to do their assignments on time. They in turn have been meeting and talking with me. They have been expressing their own views and you could see from the assignments I have marked what they were able to do. The course, as far as I can judge, is a worthwhile one and one to which I have committed myself.

So I think it is very useful and one that people in developing countries will benefit from.

Mrs. K. Mrs. L., what do you think about your role as a tutor?

Mrs. L. It is a reasonably tasking job but I think that it is one that we can really do reasonably well. And em, I want to do it because I have become interested in this course; in fact some three weeks ago, I remember that at the onset I told you that this distance learning course is something like a correspondence course. Now I come to realise that a correspondence course is different. Here am I - an experienced teacher - I have taught in the primary school, I have about 19 years teaching experience in a primary school before I went to college. I have taught in England and America, etc. I went to Fourah Bay College, got my degree and I am now teaching in a secondary school where am I now a senior teacher. Here am I embarking on this type of course helping as a tutor, helping members of my school and monitoring the work of 3 teachers in doing the course that you have launched out. Em and I look at their work from time to time. They submit their work to me and I look at it and we discuss it. I think that if we can do this kind of thing, you know, particularly in our own country where funds are limited instead of organising em
workshops, seminars etc. where in point of fact we get the teachers to go but quite a number of them do not participate fully or significantly it will be good. Teachers are rather shy in exposing their ideas, you known, airing their views in seminars, but with this kind of course you find out that when the members are to write down things, they do it more willingly because they are there. They air their views and I found that out in the work that has been handed over to me. They have been able to say what they really want t- say which they don't do in normal workshops and seminars because some of them are shy to talk in public. Probably they are not articulate enough; but by themselves, I mean, but when they are writing by themselves and they have the right attitude they come out with a lot of things. You'll find that out yourself when you see the assignments they have done. So I think it is a useful course. I have been to a few em seminars, workshops, you know, and I have been around here, I have been in charge of a group and all that and you find out that in certain discussions you cannot just forget the teachers talking however hard you may probe them.

Mrs. K. What do you think is responsible for that?
Mrs. L. Well as I said earlier they are shy and some of them are just inarticulate.
Mrs. K. Do you think they are not confident in themselves?
Mrs. L. They are not confident enough to be able to voice out their opinions.
Mrs. K. This is a very interesting contribution because I have never thought of it. So you feel that because in this course the activities are compulsory, they enable teachers to express their views and this has actually motivated all of them to say something?
Mrs. L. Yes, it has actually motivated them and there is a particular teacher in my school here, I mean she is very shy, because even when I talk to her I cannot get answers, but when she writes she airs her views and then from what I read I start talking to her again. You see, I think it's really a worthwhile thing to have this type of course, because when you get their work back you are able to find out a lot about what they think of certain issues.
Mrs. K. Would you not have found these out in the normal workshop sessions?

Mrs. L. You would not find out in the normal workshop because I have participated in quite a number of workshops and some teachers don't say a word.

Mrs. K. Why? I mean apart from the fact that they are shy, do they all have the opportunity of talking?

Mrs. L. They do not because it's a limited course. Some of them last for only three days, the longest is about a week. So there is not enough time.

Mrs. K. You say teachers do not have the opportunity of expressing their views in seminars. What other reasons are responsible for this?

Mrs. L. The problem is the time factor. Some of these seminars and workshops that are conducted in Sierra Leone and probably in other parts of the world are of limited scope. You find out that there are only two or that they are held for two or three days or at most a week, and most of the teachers or a significant number of the teachers who attend these courses, are not able to talk because they do not have the time. Probably about one in a group or something like that will be able to speak on an important topic and therefore they are not able to participate in a significant way, to air their views, to say what they want to say and express within the period allocated to the course. So I think that this distance learning thing is of significance because they are with their books or with the materials they are given and they have to write about how they feel about a particular course and they are able within their home or wherever they are to write and express their views without anybody interfering.

Mrs. K. Yes Mrs. L. It is all well and good to say that they are motivated to express their views. What are their overall reactions to the course, assignments, etc.?

Mrs. L. Well to some extent they do say that they do not have enough time...but whatever you want to do in this world, you have to make up your mind and if you have made up your mind and you embark on something, you want to see fruition and when once they have made up their minds and you have a committed tutor - a committed tutor encouraging them when they feel
tired or they lose interest, they will carry on with the work.

Mrs. K. And so far you have not had any problems with your teachers failing to do their assignments?

Mrs. L. Well I haven't. In point of fact, they have been highly motivated and they have become really interested in the whole project. They seem to find it interesting and have become very highly motivated. Even when at times they don't have electricity, they have constant power failures, etc. etc. they do their work. In fact one of them was telling me this morning that em she was not able to complete her work sheets for the Module C, because she had power failure the whole night. She said she even woke up at 3 O'clock in the morning to do the things she had promised to give in to me today but there was still no light and she said that she will submit it next Monday and I will come and collect it. We are closing school today. But you want to see how highly motivated she is. She is going to do it and bring it and leave it in school for me to collect. So that goes without saying.

Mrs. K. Can you tell me why you think the teachers are so motivated to continue with the course? What do you think is responsible for their motivation?

Mrs. L. Well to some extent the rapport you established with them in that initial orientation course and they like the materials. I have been here with them, I have been talking to them and also I think really apart from those two main factors, I think they are also interested in finding out what the whole course is about. There is interest, the blatant interest, the courseway, what this course is all about and what they are going to derive from it etc. So I think there is this in built motivation, there is something like a kine of in built something - charisma or what - I don't know - call it what you may. There is this thing, they want to find out what the course is all about and see if they can benefit from it and also what I have been able to do since I have become a tutor.

Mrs. K. But the, do you have other views?

Mrs. L. From conversations I have had with them, it seems to me that they are finding it quite interesting. An in fact one of them, one of the teachers here, the youngest of the lot,
said that she feels that she will benefit highly from this course because she is discovering new things she did not know before.

Mrs. K. Have you had the opportunity of looking at the course yourself?

Mrs. L. Yes. In fact I was going to say that it has refreshed me. In a way it is a refresher course in the home. Within the quietness of your home etc. you are having a kind of refresher course because reading the modules myself has helped me considerably.

Mrs. K. Do you think it will help you also to construct a unit on how to teach letter writing for example?

Mrs. L. I probably may be able to do it. You know, I have to spend time on it but em, I think I will be able to do it.

Mrs. K. Do you think it is necessary to construct units like these for other aspects of teaching English?

Mrs. L. Yes, I think so. I think they are of immense value to the teaching of English in this country.

Mrs. K. Mrs. L., you also have a lot of marking to do. Has that conflicted with your own work?

Mrs. L. It has been a demanding exercise. But as I said, you know, you do something if you are interested in it and I have found myself marking my members' sheets and assignments voluntarily and sometimes I have to leave my housework and some other things, and I regret to say this, but I think I have to do it, that I have in fact not embarked on the markings for the school yet whilst I am marking your own piece of work.

Mrs. K. What do you think is responsible for your motivation? You seem to be very committed to the course. What do you think is responsible for your own commitment to the course?

Mrs. L. Well em the interest. I am interested. I think the main thing is the interest that I have and also, I hope you don't think I am flattering you, but I think the relationship that you have established, the rapport that you have established, em is also one of the factors that, you know, has helped me to commit myself so much to it, and I think really it's going to be a worthwhile venture.

Mrs. K. You did say that the teachers complained about the amount of assignments that they have to do. Why do you think that they have managed to do them in spite of the fact that they say it is tasking?
Mrs. L. Again I must say that they have found it interesting. They really have found it interesting. One of the members also this morning was talking to me about the extract in the reading module and she was saying that she read an extract and she read another one and she was trying to find out, I mean, there was a question asked in one of the activities section and she has not been able to arrive at an answer. She said she has re-read them and she wants to discuss them with you. She may be discussing with you this morning. But then I told her that had she brought her modules to school we could have read them together. So she said O.K. But I told her that even so, in spite of the fact that she has not brought them and we are closing today, after discussing with you she will get your own views about it, but also she should read them again and see what decision she arrives at.

Mrs. K. Let us leave it at that for the moment. Thank you very much Mrs. L. I will talk to you again as the course progresses.
Mrs. K. Good morning Miss D.
Miss D. Good morning Mrs. K.
Mrs. K. I know you've been involved in this course for the past two weeks. I would like to have an idea of your initial reactions so far.

Miss D. Well so far I feel it is a rewarding course but fortunately it came on at a time when we were having exams and so it was rather rushed. But all the same we do find time to give attention to the work. The first module dealt with the language situation of teaching English in West Africa, in Sierra Leone in particular. And when I related the module to my own experience in college and my own learning experience in college it seemed to coincide - and it was all right you know, it sort of refreshed my memory about what I have done before.

Mrs. K. How do you feel about the course content?
Miss D. It is definitely not a waste of time. It refreshes me so I think it was helpful in a way because, I mean, leaving college you tend to lose a wider aspect of the syllabus but then when it comes home to you, you are thankful for that. So it's really worth it.

Mrs. K. Do you think it will be helpful to other teachers?
Miss D. Definitely so. Especially those who have not been open to a wider situation like I have been; I am sure it will be.

Mrs. K. Were you able to meet the deadlines set for the completion of each module?
Miss D. I met the deadline for the first module - Module A - but it was only one unit, you know, and since it was the first one I was anxious to do it. You know I did that quite on time. The second module overlapped because there were three units in that module but I finished only two on time but I did not finish the 3rd module on time.

Mrs. K. Why is this so?
Miss D. Well as I said earlier on because of the exams. Exams time in a school is a hectic period; plus the exams coming on, there was the normal school work. We had report cards to give up on time, we had also to complete our scheme of work for the period before the exams, we had to set exam questions,
Mrs. K. Does it mean that you were expecting to do the work during your school time?

Miss D. Oh not actually. I had not planned to do the work during school times. I have my relaxation hours at home and that was the time I intended doing it, and to be honest by the time you get home you are tired and on top of all of that you have work you have taken home from school to cope with really.

Mrs. K. I see. Then it is fascinating and very satisfying to see that in spite of all of that you were able to complete Module B. I am very interested now in finding out why, in spite of all the pressure of work, you were able to complete it. Did you feel that you had to do it? If so, why?

Miss D. Well some people might say because I know Mrs. K. personally it was an obligation, that was out of it. You get into it and you are interested and you know this module had me reading up some of my textbook which I had abandoned some time back - I had to go and refer to some, to work up and you know, relate to some of the questions that have been asked of me. So I think it was personally a feeling of wanting to do it and personal interest in the modules.

Mrs. K. I see. Does it then mean that when you started Module A, you developed some interest in the course? Did it motivate you to continue to do the other modules?

Miss D. Module A did for me something I found very difficult in College. I did not appreciate this language, English language in the African situation - setting and everything, but after a while it comes back to something, it's so explicitly explained, you know, and it is quite clear, simple and everything and you know I was interested. It seemed so like an easy work over because it was so clearly expressed.

Mrs. K. But did any of the ideas in that module or in the other module that you've done conflict with what you learnt at college?
Miss D. No. To be honest I don't think so. Well not really. It seemed to add to what I had already learnt. There were no conflicting ideas.

Mrs. K. Can you identify anything new that you learnt?

Miss D. If not new, something very interesting. During one of the activities with my class to find out their range of languages, I found out that most of the girls were hesitant to say they could speak their own native language.

Mrs. K. Was that the activity in Module A?

Miss D. That was the activity in Module A where we had to find out the different languages students speak. I found it very interesting. All said they spoke English and Krio. When I asked about other languages like Limba, Mende or whatever, the rest of the class started giggling if one person said she could talk Mende or Temne or Susu.

Mrs. K. Why, why, why the giggling?

Miss D. I don't know why but it was most interesting. We had to cry down some of the girls, because they were very silly.

Mrs. K. Really? Does it mean that the girls were refusing to be honest about the languages they speak?

Miss D. Exactly so. Because I told them afterwards that they should be proud of being able to speak their own native language. It was only then that one or two came up boldly and said they can talk some Limba, I can talk some Temne.

Mrs. K. I see. But then when they came up honestly and said they can talk Limba, Temne, Mende or Foulah, how did the other girls react?

Miss D. They sniggered. They laughed, but later on when I talked to them - I seemed to be on the side you know, of favouring those who speak their own language, everybody wanted to speak their own language. Some of the girls stood up - some of those who could and some who could not.

Mrs. K. Do you mean that the girls are ashamed to own up to the languages that they speak?

Miss D. Well that was the opinion I got in a nut shell.

Mrs. K. Well what do you think is responsible for that?

Miss D. Society and the social pressures are really what are responsible for this, backed of course by the Colonial heritage. English being the language of the Colonialists they tended to push it on us and my personal experience at
home myself, if you talk Krio and say bra-braid instead of bread, my father will say what is 'braid'? and it is our language.

Mrs. K. Well does it mean that your father wants you to speak English at home?

Miss D. Yes.

Mrs. K. Did you speak English at home as a child?

Miss D. Most of the time we have to try to do that.

Mrs. K. Why? Why do you think your parents wanted you to speak English at home when in fact your mother tongue was Krio?

Miss D. They thought it would help us in school because that was the language of instruction at school and I agree with them to a certain point but I don't think they should have forced us to speak English all the time.

Mrs. K. Do you teach through English all the time?

Miss D. We sometimes use Krio although it is not accepted. When we are teaching, once in a while we have to come right down to it and tell them a hypocrite is a person who means 'cut ya, put ya', when we tell them that they tend to understand more clearly.

Mrs. K. I see. So you use Krio while you are teaching?

Miss D. While teaching, although it is not accepted. Yes I do.

Mrs. K. Since it is not accepted why do you use it?

Miss D. It would help. Definitely it would help.

Mrs. K. Will you say that your parents tended to look down on your local language as such?

Miss D. If I say look down I will be wrong because if they speak I don't think they look down on it; I think it is for their children, for the school. Just to help their kids along they wanted us to speak English. But right now we can talk Krio whenever we wish.

Mrs. K. I see. Is it because they feel you have achieved the knowledge of the language?

Miss D. Yes.

Mrs. K. Have you ever tried to find out the different languages pupils in your class speak?

Miss D. To put it down as you had done it in your module I never thought about it. I just thought you had done it before that was why you put it down in your module. But to give a date on it I have never done it before although I find it very interesting now.
Mrs. K. I see. Do you think there is the need for this with other classes that you teach?...other classes apart from the classes you are doing this exercise with?

Miss D. Only if the problem stands out too much and em we can cope. But if it recurs every time, I think I will have to ask them - tell them that this is one of your languages, so do not feel bad about it.

Mrs. K. I think a suggestion in the unit that at the beginning of the year when a teacher starts to teach a class it will be useful for the teacher to have a fair knowledge of the linguistic spread in the class. Do you think, say for example, next if you have a new class you will do such an exercise with them?

Miss D. I think I will do it.

Mrs. K. Do you think it will be useful?

Miss D. I think that would help me when I find out, find a girl making far too many mistakes in pronunciation in pronouncing a particular word; then I find out if it's a new word then I'll be able to know how to help her.

Mrs. K. But don't you think if you know the linguistic spread beforehand it will help you focus attention on those different children, when you are preparing your lesson notes?

Miss D. Even if you do not. Some girls are very competent in their language, you know.

Mrs. K. Some of the problems do not show up.

Miss D. Don't show up that much.

Mrs. K. What are your views about Module B and the other units?

Miss D. After reading Module B in Unit 1 the first thing I had to turn to that aroused my interest is the syllabus. I first came to know about the syllabus in 1983.

Mrs. K. Does this mean that during your teacher training course you did not learn about the 1974 syllabus in English?

Miss D. Well it was mentioned along the line during our course but I actually came into, actually had a copy in my hand in 1983 when you, you know, I attended a workshop - a reading workshop, and you gave each participant one. I looked through it and then in 1984 when school reopened I tried to use some of the - I tried to work my syllabus, my scheme of work along the lines of the syllabus but after that to be honest
after a year I couldn't have tried. But the minute I read
Unit 1 of Module B, I turned to the em syllabus which you
had given us along with the modules.

Mrs. K. Did you feel motivated to use it?
Miss D. You had to look through it again to just refresh your
memory again and see that it was going along with what
the module was saying.

Mrs. K. When you first saw it in 1983, you said you came back and
you looked at it. Did you make a detailed scheme from it?
Did you use it constantly?
Miss D. Not constantly. What I did with the syllabus, our own set
textbooks in English - secondary English project, I looked
through my textbook and when I looked at the syllabus, I
tried to pick out what the syllabus had and I tried to fit
it in into my own set textbook.

Mrs. K. Did you find it easy to understand the syllabus?
Miss D. The syllabus was not easy to understand.

Mrs. K. Did you try to find out whether there was a copy of the
syllabus in your school?
Miss D. When I came with the syllabus here with me in school, I gave
in fact you gave me 3 copies and I gave one copy to the head
of my department and she said 'Oh! that's good, I don't think
we have one around, we'll use it'. And then after that you
know, I don't think we gave any you know, detailed thought
to it.

Mrs. K. What is your reaction now after Module B? Do you think it
has motivated you to use the syllabus?
Miss D. The fact that I had to look at it again as you know, in a
way, again, you have given me a syllabus like you did in 83,
and I would try, it's interesting and it is good, it's well
laid out and I would try to make use of it again this
academic year if it's not yet revised.

Mrs. K. What was your reaction to Units 2 and 3 in Module B?
Miss D. The activities were all right but when it came to actual
writing up the scheme of work I found it very tiresome.

Mrs. K. Are you trying to tell me that you never wrote a scheme of
work in your school before?
Miss D. What happened for our scheme of work we have a record book
and we list them by topic what we were going to cover for
the syllabus, but to have a detailed scheme like we had in
the module, it was something new.
Mrs. K. But did you think it was a useful activity?

Miss D. It was useful if you could find time to do the scheme of work. Yes it can, because it is a little bit time consuming to give it, to make it start a book, it's good enough for you to follow up. You have to give time to it.

Mrs. K. I see. And you did not find enough time during that period?

Miss D. As I said earlier on there was not enough time.

Mrs. K. But do you think in your teaching career you will make use of that idea?

Miss D. Yes. Yes, obviously I will try to even if mine was a little bit down than what we have in the module I will try to.

Mrs. K. I see. Well did you find it easy to follow up some of the ideas suggested?

Miss D. This particular scheme of work seems, I don't know, I shouldn't hesitate, but it seems rather confusing. I wrote that in my diary, it seems rather confusing.

Mrs. K. You found it very difficult to continue the exercise?

Miss D. Yes, that particular one.

Mrs. K. It means that you had to spend a longer time on that one?

Miss D. Yes, and I am sure it's not well done because I didn't spend enough time as I know I ought to have done.

Mrs. K. Do you think teachers in future will use that model for their schemes of work?

Miss D. Obviously that em scheme of work in Module B of Unit 2 is structured for teachers. It's something you ought to do. Something you must do. Something you must be able to follow up, but for me now there was not time. I did it 0, but not as well as I would have liked. And I know I am capable of doing it.

Mrs. K. What about Module B Unit 3?

Miss D. Unit 3 - let's see - I just think about how I teach in the class. Sometimes you know you don't really need a lesson since a topic is done over and over again. You know where they would find difficulty, you know where it's an easy work over, you know when you have class participation, you know when you need to talk to the girls. So all that comes out in a lesson and when I was doing my teaching course lesson notes was one of the most - of the very important aspects of the course. You had to do it.
Mrs. K. How do you normally plan your lessons?
Miss D. When I am teaching what I do I would look into my diary, and my notes, I have my own personal notebook, say I am going to do say passive or relative clause, sometimes even I do forget, so I jot down facts and I will always refer to them. I told them examples of tenses I am going to use but not in a detailed orderly form.

Mrs. K. I see. So you don't think there is need for that?
Miss D. I don't think there is need for that now.

Mrs. K. I see. Do you think there is need for a detailed lesson plan?
Miss D. For every single lesson? If you can find the time it will be very good for one to do it. But for me my own - the little escape, it's an escape really, when you don't have time you have to find a way out. I think mine is very good, it works well with me.

Mrs. K. Do you usually have a plan in mind before you go into the class?
Miss D. You'll be left high and dry if you walk into a class with a group of girls without anything planned beforehand. I can tell you some of them are bright.

Mrs. K. Very good. Miss D., you sound as if the course has been smooth sailing for you and you find it very interesting. I'm sure, I wonder whether there are any parts you want to complain about. Any aspect?
Miss D. It has not been smooth or easy going all along. One aspect I want to complain about is the questionnaires or feedback sheets - they are rather detailed and sometimes they tend to irritate you, you know.

Mrs. K. Why? Why irritate?
Miss D. Something you've done in an activity, something you've read through and then you would see one question, how did you find it all, do this, do that like you didn't understand what you were doing beforehand. And I think there is only need for one questionnaire for each module and not feedback sheets and I think they are rather too far fetched.

Mrs. K. But I am sure you will agree that each feedback sheet asks questions about each unit and the units are different. Do you see that it is a useful activity?
Miss D. Well yes, because you want feedback.
Mrs. K. Yes.
Miss D. From each unit.
Mrs. K. What do you think about the deadline set for completing each unit?

Miss D. It overlapped. To be honest with you - Module A was the only one I had finished bang on time. Module B which was the one booklet it overlapped. Like the last unit 3 of Module B. I did not have enough time. Unit 2 of Module B with that scheme of work I spent so much time on it I would leave it and come back to Unit 3.

Mrs. K. If you had, suppose you had a longer time to do it would you complain about the feedback sheet of the scheme of work for example?

Miss D. No. I wouldn't. You know I wouldn't if there was time enough; but again there wasn't time for me. You know, teachers were all busy.

Mrs. K. Did the course conflict with what you were doing in your classroom or did it fit in well with your day to day class? Do you think that is accepted?

Miss D. Sometimes...because, for example, what I wrote up for my lesson notes was used in the past week. And I think I have planned to do it when school reopens but I've fitted it into my syllabus now, into my you know, my scheme of work now and I'll do the lesson when school reopens.
Dear Member,

Thank you very much again for the commitment you demonstrated to my distance learning INSET Course last year. I do hope your tutors have been urging you to continue to refer to the materials as we agreed.

Now that some time (eight months) has passed and you have had the opportunity to digest some of the information and problems, I would like to raise with you some more issues - in fact, I would like you to react to some perspectives that came out of feedback you gave on the course.

Since I am not able to come to Sierra Leone and talk to you about these issues personally, I am sending you a blank cassette tape through Mr Syl Johnson. Since I wish you to express your opinions freely and honestly about the course, I would like you to speak your reactions to the perspectives directly to the tape in the privacy of your home or wherever you find convenient.

I hope that you will state your name, but if you feel that this would constrain your response, then please omit your name. I can assure you that your views will remain anonymous and of course confidential.

I hope this will make you feel that you can respond as freely as possible.

I do feel that the six weeks you spent doing the course were very "concentrated" and "hectic". I think it might be important for you to think again a little, in a little bit more relaxed fashion about some of what you thought then - now that you have had time to read through the materials at your own pace and assimilate the ideas.

The attached checklist gives the issues I have highlighted. If there are other issues which you feel are important, please feel free to include them.

All recorded tapes should reach Mr Syl Johnson latest, 20 MARCH 1986.

Thank you very much for your usual co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Nemata O. Kaikumba

ENCS:
Please react to the following issues by speaking your reactions directly to the tape.

1. Most of you complained that the socio-economic problems in the country during the fieldwork phase created difficulties for you in doing justice to the course. Now that recent reports say that the new government is doing some "magic" in improving the situation, I would like you to reflect on the course and tell me how important these difficulties were for you and how, for example, you think other teachers would react to it if I were to extend the course to them now that the situation appears to be better.

2. Please react to the following comment which characterises one of the comments made by your tutors and yourselves:

"Teachers who participate in such courses will be more motivated to give of their best if they know in advance that they are working for a degree or reward of some sort."

3. The majority of you felt that the time for the course should be extended as the deadlines set were tight. Was this important for you? Why did you think so? Do you have a suggestion for how long such a course should last? How do you feel I can improve matters in this regard?

4. Many of you also complained that the second term during which the course was being run was fraught with many problems like "go-slow", "sit-down strikes" and the organisation of many of your school functions. How true was this for you? How far did this affect your work? If I was to repeat the course for other teachers, what period of the year do you think will be more suitable?

5. Many members also indicated that they did not have enough opportunities to practise the methods suggested in the course in their classrooms. Was this true for you? Please comment on this and suggest how the situation could be improved. For example, do you think I should have made prior arrangements with your Head of Department about timetabling the course to fit in with your existing timetable?

6. Many of you indicated that you finished Module A bang on time while the others were not finished on time. Was this true for you? Why do you think this was so? Can you make some suggestions as to what changes I should make in the course that will enable other teachers to complete other modules on time?
7. Many members said they did not have enough interaction with their tutors. Was this true for you? What kind of help did you need from your tutor? Did you receive prompt feedback from your tutor? If so, what did this do for you? If not, did you lose out on anything?

8. Some of you indicated that you enjoyed working with your partner but you seemed to need your tutor's help more. How true was this for you? Can you give me any examples eg the kind of help your tutor could give which your partner could not give you? Please make some suggestions as to how I can improve the course so that you won't be so dependent on your tutor?

9. The following quote identifies another issue:

Please continue the statement below in the light of what you feel.

Some of the materials were disorganised. In one module, there is activity III on p.14 while activity II was on p.23. Other aspects of the course that created confusion for me were..............

10. Many members seemed to feel that they needed to read the materials to enable them to submit their assignments and that this was enough to motivate them to read. Was this true for you? Since some of you did not like doing the assignments, what motivated you to read the materials? Do you think you would have read the materials if there were no assignments to submit? Why?

11. One of your tutors highlighted the fact that as she marked your assignments, she was struck by the opportunity you had to express your views about your teaching problems in writing. How do you feel about this? Or would you have preferred to express your problems in a seminar?

12. The majority of you did not seem to enjoy writing essays. Why? What other means could I have used to test your creative ability? Or do you think there is no need to test your ability to analyse and synthesise ideas? Please suggest methods I should use to test other teachers.

13. Many of you seemed to like the idea of a "book of extracts". How true was this for you? If it was, why did you like it? If not, why not? Did you feel you needed to do more reading outside your book of extracts for any particular unit(s). If so for which units and what?

14. Members indicated that the distance learning materials motivated them to learn more than traditional lecture notes would have done. How far was this true for you? Why?

15. A number of responses were characterised by the following quotation:

"Well.... this idea of writing such a detailed scheme of work... I wonder whether it is suitable for a teacher who has been on the job for some time....."

Please react to this issue by reflecting

- whether this issue was important to you
- why you feel so
- how best you feel teachers can be helped in planning their lessons.
16. Some members also expressed a preference for distance learning materials in the light of their college course. Was this true for you? How can you compare the two? What did you gain from the distance learning approach that your college course did not offer you?

17. One member indicated that she encountered transportation difficulties when she had to go to a library to look up difficult concepts. Did you feel the need to go to a library? If so, for what units? How did you get on?

18. Many of you complained about the boring nature of the multiplicity of feedback devices employed in the course. How important was this for you? Can you tell me which of these devices you liked most and which you did not like? How do you feel about recording your reactions directly to this tape, for example, compared to the other feedback devices used in the course? Please make some suggestions as to which feedback device I should use if I was running the course for other teachers.

19. Are there any other issues which you wish to discuss?

Thank you very much for your help. Please return the tape to Mr Syl Johnson.

Nemata O. Kaikumba
University of Surrey
February, 1986.
Department of Educational Studies  
(Block AA)  
From Professor Lewis Elton  

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN  

Mrs Nemeta Kaikumba is a postgraduate research student in this department. The audio cassettes which accompany this letter are solely for the purpose of her research and are being conveyed to the Institute of Education, Tower Hill, Freetown.

6 February 1986  
L R B Elton
IN-SERVICE TRAINING AT A DISTANCE
FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SIERRA LEONE

Nemata Kalkumba and Patricia Cryer
Department of Educational Studies
University of Surrey

ABSTRACT
This article reports on an innovative course to provide in-service training at a distance for teachers of English in lower forms of secondary schools in Sierra Leone. The article outlines the need for the course and goes on to describe its design, implementation and evaluation. The article ends with some conclusions about the effectiveness of the course and plans for its future operation.

INTRODUCTION
Teachers of English in secondary schools of Sierra Leone tend to have insufficient training for teaching their subject according to the 1974 national syllabus. This article reports on an innovative scheme to support them by means of an in-service course, taught at a distance. The article discusses the need for the course and describes how it was designed and implemented in order to meet that need. The article goes on to describe the development and evaluation of the course. It concludes with plans for the future.

THE NEED FOR THE COURSE
There were three areas which contributed to perceiving a need to support the teaching of English at lower secondary level in Sierra Leone:

1. The experience of one of us (Nemata Kalkumba) when teaching English in a renowned secondary school in Sierra Leone led her to question the adequacy of the 'support system' that existed for teachers within the school. In discussion, teachers from other schools expressed similar views.

2. The existing 1974 national syllabus was acknowledged not to be detailed enough. The working party who produced it had suggested that a handbook should be written to supplement it (Moody 1974), but this was never written.
3. Two previous studies of the usefulness of the syllabus concluded that there was a need to facilitate its use for teachers. At the very least this would be a handbook of concrete guidelines (Pratt 1977 and Kaikumba 1982).

The problem is not unique to Sierra Leone. It has been recognised and dealt with in other developing countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia where the curriculum development divisions have provided handbooks which give additional guidance to enable teachers to use their national syllabi.

Other countries have opted for the distance learning mode of disseminating such information to teachers. According to Brophy and Dudley (1983), this has proved popular in both developed and developing countries with problems of teacher shortage. Brophy and Dudley report - on the basis of Brophy and Dudley (1967), Lyle (1967), Kaunda (1973), Binyon (1980) - that

"In order to overcome severe shortages of trained teachers, many developing countries have used the distance teaching approach as a supplement to conventional college-based training. Over sixty distance teaching programmes have been launched and this approach has been used for upgrading teachers in more than forty countries. Indeed it has many advantages in teacher education: it is economic and can cost much less than equivalent college-based programmes; the trainees remain at their posts while being trained and do not need replacements; the tendency for college-aimed teachers to work in urban rather than rural areas is off-set. From the teachers' point of view, training in situ means that they can become qualified without interrupting their earnings and without having to leave home - a significant benefit in developing countries where many teachers also farm smallholdings."
Accordingly, Nemata Kaikumba decided to supplement the information contained in the Sierra Leone syllabus by constructing a distance learning course for in-service training of teachers. It was felt that this would be particularly suitable for Sierra Leonean teachers who are already overburdened by heavy teaching timetables and have no access to recommended books.

During 1984 the course was developed and piloted in Britain (where Nemata Kaikumba, currently on study leave, was working with Patricia Cryer). The course was field-tested in Sierra Leone in 1985.

THE DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURSE

Innovations in African countries are often supported by grants from developed countries. All too often the result is that the innovation collapses once the external funding comes to an end. If the same was not to happen to this course, it had to be as cheap as possible to run and to rely on local labour. Accordingly the course materials were produced entirely in the print format, and administrative and tutorial help were provided by those experienced teachers already in the schools.

There is a precedence for this approach. Countries like Burma, Dahomey and the West Indies have successfully relied upon only print materials (Ministry of Education, Burma 1979, Kabwasa and Kaunda 1973, Ewing 1966). Even institutions in a developed country like Britain - the Eaton Hall International (Winn-Smith 1984) and the International House London (Lowe 1983) - have established courses for teachers of English as a second/foreign language using print materials and local supervisors - albeit supplemented by audio-cassettes.

Although more sophisticated distance-learning courses for teacher education do exist, they tend to be externally funded. In Kenya, Ivory Coast, Algeria, Botswana, Guyana, Uganda, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Swaziland, three way approaches are employed, namely correspondence, media and face-to-face meeting (Young et al 1980, Brophy and Dalgety 1980, Kabwasa and Kaunda 1973, Kinyanjui 1974). There is, however, still some doubt as to whether the additional expense of these courses is reflected in their usefulness.
The course materials were written by Nemata Kaikumba according to current ideas on designing distance learning materials, both in Africa (eg Ansere 1982, Kinyanjui (1974) and more generally (eg Perraton 1973, Idle 1975, Elton and Manwaring (1981), Kaye (1981). The materials comprise:

For tutors:

A handbook for tutors

For course members (teachers):

- A handbook for members
- A book of extracts
- Study Guide for Module A: An approach to the teaching of English as a second language in Sierra Leone
- Study Guide for Module B: Preparation of lessons

Unit 1 The National Syllabus
Unit 2 Preparation of lesson plans based on sub-topics from the scheme of work
Unit 3 Putting lesson plans into practice

- Study Guide for Module C: Teaching language and the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing

Unit 1 Teaching Language
Unit 2 Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills
Unit 3 Teaching Reading Skills
Unit 4 Teaching Writing Skills

The handbook for tutors gives the aims of the course, defines the role of the tutors and provides general information on how the course is to be administered. The handbook for members gives similar information from the viewpoint of the members and also provides helpful hints on learning at a distance.

The book of extracts reproduces extracts from the published literature on the teaching of various aspects of English.
A module consists of several units which are designed to take between 15 and 20 hours of study time. They guide the teachers through their learning by providing information, by referring to the extracts where appropriate and by giving activities every few pages for the teachers to carry out to reinforce and apply their learning. There is an essay-type assignment in each unit, built on the activities, for the teachers to hand to their tutors for marking and comment. Assignments are designed to help the teachers to relate the course to their previous experiences.

The content of the course was derived from areas of the 1974 national syllabus that were considered inexplicit. The emphasis was on helping teachers to teach these areas using the communicative approach to teaching recommended by experts like Krashen S.D. & Terrell T.D. (1983). Essentially this is an approach to the teaching of English as a foreign/second language which stresses the importance of learning through using the language and which give the learners frequent opportunities to interact with each other and with their teacher in natural situations.

Since the course was developed in Britain, we felt it necessary to pilot it with people who were very familiar with the Sierra Leonean situation. The course was therefore piloted at a distance (Kaikumba and Cryer 1986). It was then accordingly revised and taken to Sierra Leone where the course materials were refined during a workshop session with the eight experienced teachers who were to act as tutors in the field testing.

THE COURSE IN OPERATION

The course was first implemented in Sierra Leone between February and June 1985. Eight Sierra Leonean secondary schools were represented, ranging from the renowned and well established to the newer schools. Twenty teachers made up the course members, and in addition there were the eight experienced teachers acting as tutors.

THE EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

The evaluation of the course began during its first run in Sierra Leone in 1985, and is still in progress. Its purpose is twofold:

1. to monitor the course so that it can be continually improved
2. to assess its usefulness, particularly through:
   - examining teachers' reactions to and experiences of the course as a programme of learning, to
discover whether they would develop new learning habits, and how the new or different approach to learning or in-service training constrains or liberates their energies.

- assessing the impact of the course on the lives of the teachers who are so overburdened with heavy teaching timetables.

- documenting the views of the school-based tutors in the light of the demands the course makes on them.

The main focus of the evaluation was on collecting the perceptions of both tutors and teachers through end-of-unit feedback sheets; questionnaires; interviews; personal diaries; progress charts.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the evaluation of the course is still in operation, enough data has already accumulated to allow plans to be made on its future.

There has been considerable positive feedback. There can be little doubt that the teachers felt that the course helped them to improve their teaching, particularly since no attempt had been made during their teacher training days to familiarise them either with the 1974 syllabus or with the communicative approach to the teaching of English. In particular, Module A raised their consciousness of the reasons why English is taught at all in Sierra Leonean schools, and Units 3 and 4 of Module C gave them clear guidelines on how to tackle the teaching of reading and writing.

Also the teachers seemed to enjoy the course because it set them thinking. The following are some examples of what they said:

"This course has helped me to decide on what approach to take when teaching reading".

"I have never before considered the fact that the importance of being aware of your pupils' first language will help me find better ways of solving their problems".

"I now try to reassess my teaching after each lesson. It helps me to see mistakes I make".
"The course is an eye-opener - it has forced me to think before I teach".

Although such feedback was sufficiently encouraging to merit the course continuing, there were aspects that suggested the need for changes. For example, although the teachers were generally content with the tutorial system, there were complaints about tutors not being available to give out materials as and when required; and that tutors did not discuss assignments. The tutors' reactions were that these tasks were too time-consuming. One said:

"To be able to do justice to my role as tutor, my teaching timetable should have been reduced".

In consequence of these and other findings from the evaluation so far, it is planned to devote a whole year to revising the course and to writing a new unit on the teaching of literature. The course will then be implemented fully in schools in Sierra Leone. This is with the approval of the Institute of Education, whose officials have expressed complete satisfaction with the performance of the course so far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Professor Lewis Elton and Mr Peter Hill for their valuable comments on drafts of the course materials. We are also grateful to members of the pilot study group whose comments enabled us to improve the course materials prior to use. Finally, we are grateful to the tutors and teachers in Sierra Leone, without whose help the course could never have run.

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