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ADULT LEARNER RESPONSES TO SEMI-AUTONOMY IN INTENSIVE ELT: A SYSTEMATIC REPLICATION CASE STUDY

A THESIS IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

R. A. HAMILTON-TURLEY

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY

TRINITY COLLEGE

DUBLIN UNIVERSITY

1999

SUMMARY

The emerging field of classroom learner autonomy is defined by interest in complementing or replacing institutional group tuition, or 'other-directed learning' (ODL), with 'self-directed learning' (SDL). The enquiry addresses some of the conceptual, ethical, and practical questions implied by that interest, and reports the experimental introduction of SDL in an adult institution for English language teaching (ELT). It evaluates definitions of 'autonomy', proposes the concept of auto-responsible learning (ARL), and categorises ODL and SDL as dependent or independent on decision-making and action-taking criteria. It suggests for further research an SDL scale and grid, and appends a substantial corpus of class diary learner-English at nominal intermediate level from the first two experimental courses, with paracounselling notes included for the third course.

Employing quantitative triangulation within a postpositivist replication case study paradigm, the enquiry investigated responses to classroom ODL or SDL on intensive ELT courses, for which the researcher acted as teacher/co-ordinator for the 15 months' empirical period (814 contact-hours). Participants were daily exposed for four contiguous hours to both levels of the manipulated independent variable, learning mode, in the following mean ratios of ODL to SDL: Group A — 59:41; Group B — 53:47; Group C — 69:31. Questionnaire responses as well as semantic content analysis of some 1700 class diary submissions enabled a detailed integrated report and findings on Courses A and B ($N_A = 12$, $N_B = 13$), supported by ample documentation and by quotations cross-referenced to appended diary extracts.

The question of interest was whether unprepared students, habituated to teaching, would accept SDL alongside ODL in a highly conservative classroom context. The enquiry measured responses both in absolute and in relative terms, to discover if there was, in fact, a preference for either learning mode and whether, taking into account the imprecision of instruments as well as general disposition, any pair of responses was close enough for preferences for ODL and SDL to be regarded as equivalent or not. What was being measured was attitude, difficult to define, let alone capture adequately, and subject to vagaries of mood as well as temperament and it was therefore thought appropriate to consider the data as categorical for statistical analyses. For quantification purposes, preference was operationalised in both absolute and relative terms as ratings derived from a tally of 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' remarks for ODL and SDL categories in participants' diary submissions, triangulated by piloted questionnaire ratings for selected ODL and SDL components for Courses A and B only. The quasi-experimental design gauged responses to the independent variable 'learning mode' at the two levels of ODL and SDL and enabled tentatively generalisable findings.

The diary data of Courses A, B, and C provided qualitative evidence of over-all equivalent responses to the categorised elements of both levels of the learning mode. Quantitatively, both diary and questionnaire ratings were tested for absolute preference, the binomial null hypothesis being equal preference. For the diary data the null hypothesis was retained at > 0.20 significance level for all three courses; for the questionnaire data (available only for Courses A and B) it was rejected in favour of ODL at significance level < 0.007. To test relative preference, both sets of ratings were dichotomised as equivalent or nonequivalent, without regard to which learning mode was favoured, the null hypothesis being that the sample proportion of equivalent ratings was consistent with chance expectations. The binomial test results offered over-all support for the

alternative hypothesis that the proportion of equivalent ratings was likely to be higher in the population. In real-world terms it was possible to conclude that semi-autonomy programmes were viable and ethical even in minimally prepared and resourced language classrooms accustomed only to teaching.

Chapter 1 introduces and offers a general perspective on the topic. Chapter 2 outlines the reasons for learner autonomy, exemplifies its realisation as self-directed learning, briefly follows its evolution from the 1960s to the present day, and considers the changing roles of teachers and learners. Chapter 3 looks at understandings of autonomy, elaborates definitions of relevance to the enquiry, and discusses the current tendency to see autonomy in terms of interdependence rather than total independence. Chapter 4 introduces concerns of the research which are elaborated in Chapters 5 and 6, very briefly summarises the qualitative findings from the preliminary project which began the enquiry, and deals with the question of integrating other-direction and self-direction in semi-autonomy programmes. Chapter 5 offers the rationale and outline of the research methodology, and Chapter 6 details the data reduction procedures. Chapter 7 gives statistical analyses of and findings from the quantified data. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by reviewing the results, suggesting practical implications, and offering suggestions for further research. The Appendices of Volume I contain the narrative reports for Courses A and B, together with those questionnaire text responses which were collected. Volume II includes the appendicised selections from the learners' diaries for all three courses, which together constitute a corpus of intermediate-level written English from speakers of German, French, Spanish, and Japanese.

It is possible to conclude that acknowledging classroom learner preference for ODL does not exclude the introduction of SDL, and that mediated independent-dependent learning (MIDL) is able to offer a majority of unprepared students ethical, effective, and acceptable opportunities for classroom self-direction. With due caution in respect to non-random sampling, small sample sizes, and data reduction procedures, it is also tentatively concluded that the quantitative results offer viable support to qualitative findings which are considered substantively generalisable. In sum, the study offers backing for a self-directed learning component in the many similar ELT classrooms with comparable student intakes and virtually identical international examination programmes, and provides replicated empirical support for fostering greater learner responsibility within other highly conservative teacher-controlled settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The enabling institution for this work was The Language Centre of Ireland, a major ELT establishment which provides courses in English Language to a worldwide clientele, conducts teacher-training, and acts in an advisory capacity to government agencies and to other centres of further and higher education in Ireland and overseas. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to Mary Towers and Thomas Doyle, proprietors and executive directors, without whose permission and support the empirical elements could not have been undertaken, and without whose very generous and substantial funding the research might not have been completed.

Very special thanks are owed to Professor David Little, Director of the Centre for Language and Communication Studies in Trinity College, Dublin University, for his patient supervision of a protracted work. Appreciation is especially extended for his taking time, despite many other administrative and academic demands, even on lengthy drafts (including Greek and Roman philosophy, and current sociopolitical world-views). So many interesting tributaries were explored that guidance might easily have become highly directive, but the privilege of supervision by a world authority has been greatly enhanced by the freedom given to make the undertaking a more ultimately rewarding self-directed learning experience.

The singular influence of Professor Henri Holec's germinal study for the Council of Europe, *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*, (1979) is gratefully recognised. An initial close critical analysis of this work helped to shape the enquiry, as did the encouraging example of the very substantial contributions to the field of his associates at the CRAPEL, Université Nancy 2.

Grateful acknowledgement is also made of the influence of Professor Leslie Dickinson, whose published conceptual insights informed much of the subsequent thinking on the topic of self-direction.

The opportunity is here taken to express admiration for three writers whose contributions have been powerful if indirect: Professor Steiner of Cambridge University, whose academic prose style can scarcely be emulated; Professor Brumfit of Southampton University, whose clarity of thought and expression on pedagogical issues is peerless; and Michael Swan (titles and affiliations unknown), whose referenced article should be required reading for language practitioners and applied linguists of every persuasion.

The personal and professional support of Hilary Collins, associate co-ordinator of the preliminary project, was inestimable, and is here warmly, if inadequately, acknowledged.

The rigorous checking and challenging of Dr Susana Bayó Belenguer, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Trinity College, Dublin University, enabled the content analysis tallies to be meticulously amended and confirmed and she is warmly and personally thanked for generously undertaking this very tedious and time-consuming task.

Sincere appreciation is extended to Margaret McAliskey of the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, and Trinity College, Dublin University, not merely for checking and confirming the accuracy and appropriacy of the statistical procedures on behalf of the department but for so very nicely conveying her approval.

Very grateful appreciation is extended to those who sent requested information or materials at their own expense in time and money (academic titles are included where known):

Prof John D. Baley, Cerritos Community College District, Norwalk, California (Substantial materials on Mathematics Tutor Training and report on the Learning Centre).

Dr G.T. Betts, Autonomous Learning Publications and Specialists (Book: The Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted and Talented).

Angela Crean, The British Council.

Pia Christensen, The University of British Columbia.

Claire Fahy, National Council for Educational Technology, Coventry (Book: Adult Learning by Choice – Results of the CET Learning Links Project; and the Learning Guide).

Dan Ferris, Eurocentres UK (Two works for the Council of Europe by Eurocentres staff).

Drs Jan W. Jonkers, Universiteit van Amsterdam (Conference Proceedings: interactive audio, interactive video, and open learning).

Drs Bettelou Los, Universiteit van Amsterdam (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

Alicia Magee, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

Donna L. McGinty, The University of Georgia.

Prof Helen H. Mills, The University of Georgia (Four articles; book: Georgia's Plan: Expanding the Role of the University of Georgia in Lifelong Learning – A Final Report to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation).

Prof H. Moulden, CRAPEL, Université Nancy 2 (an update on research).

Hans Oosthoek, Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht.

Prof P. Riley, CRAPEL, Université Nancy 2 (an update on research).

Dr Rudolph Schuemer, Zentrales Institut für Fernstudienforschung, Hagen (Papers by Michael Moore, by Helmut Lehner, and by Monika Weingartz).

Dr Cecilia Thavenius, Lunds Universitet (comments on a draft note on her work; a copy of her book Learner Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning).

Mia Victori, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Questionnaire: Assumptions About Language Learning).

Prof Dr D. Wolff, Bergische Universität, Gesamthochschule Wuppertal (publication text of paper presented at Dublin University).

More is due than can be said to all my teachers, especially to those of my childhood, whose kindness, encouragement, and correction in other-direction laid the foundations for a lifelong love of self-directed learning, and to my beloved mother for a lifelong love, the spur to attempts to be the kind of person she was.

Finally, but fundamentally, the warmest appreciation and gratitude is extended to the students who participated in the experimental courses, who gave their trust, for all that we shared together.

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AR	auto-responsibility (the person answers to no-one else for the outcomes of decisions and actions)
ARL	auto-responsible learning (the learner answers to no-one else for the outcomes of learning decisions and actions)
consultation	learner-initiated interview with the teacher/co-ordinator (compare counselling and paracounselling)
counselling	teacher/co-ordinator-initiated interview with a learner (compare consultation and paracounselling)
CR	co-ordinator (of semi-autonomy programmes)
dependent learning	learning event decisions are typically not made by the learner (contrasted with independent learning)
DODL	dependent other-directed learning *mode* (learning event decisions are made and actions determined on behalf of the learner)
DSDL	dependent self-directed learning *mode* (learning event decisions are made on behalf of the learner but their implementation is learner-determined)
freework	in-class or out-class learning *task(s)* initiated by the learner (compare setwork)
IC/I-C/in-class	in class; in class-time; in the institution; etc.
independent learning	learning event decisions are typically made by the learner (contrasted with dependent learning)
IODL	independent other-directed learning *mode* (learning event decisions are made by the learner but the implementation is closely supervised or monitored)
IASDL Scale/Grid	independent and self-directed learning scale/grid
ISDL	independent self-directed learning *mode* (learning event decisions are made by the learner and their implementation is learner-determined)
MIDL	mediated independent-dependent learning (a particular model of semi-autonomy)
OC/O-C/out-class	out of class; out of class-time; out of the institution; etc.
pairgroup	a pair or group of students working co-operatively or collaboratively
paracounselling	frequent informal encouragement, guidance, advice, etc. of the kind routinely undertaken by teachers (not amounting to consultation or counselling)
SDLE	self-directed learning event
setwork	in-class or out-class learning *task(s)* initiated by the teacher/co-ordinator (compare freework)

To my wife Patricia,

my children Myles, Lucy, Simon, Ingrid, and Hereward,

and grandchildren Adam, Aran, Grace, Kim, Robert, Rosa, Seán, and Simon

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over several decades a growing awareness of the part played by self-direction in the development of 'effective learners' (Dickinson, 1992), 'competent learners' (Holec, 1996), 'successful learners' (Ridley, 1997), has led to increasing support for learner autonomy (a term traceable at least as far back as M.G. Moore, 1972), and the present enquiry examines the diary and questionnaire responses of three separate groups of adult learners to semi-autonomy programmes in the researcher's classroom specialisation, the small-group private sector of English Language Teaching (ELT).[1] The question asked was not so much whether learner autonomy was an educational *aliquod quo nihil maius* but rather whether, adopting a semi-autonomy ethos, a self-directed learning mode could add a further dimension to Finocchiaro's (1982) conclusion that the most important motivational factor in classroom language learning was the teacher's enthusiasm, dedication, and love of the profession. Whatever the moral, social, psychological, or other reasons for advocating autonomous or self-directed language learning, a sufficient justification for exploring it in classroom contexts was the possibility that it might offer the learner a supported space in which to test out assumptions drawn from first language instruction which, as Gremmo (1981) reported, can influence second language learning, and in which the necessary subliminal, implicit, and incidental learning discussed by Schmidt (1990) can grow out of increasing learner awareness.[2] Ridley has more recently highlighted the importance of providing classroom opportunities for noticing:

> The non-reflective learner who one day starts to notice things about the target language, to analyse the language, and to reflect on how it might be used, could be described as autonomous on that particular day. It is up to us teachers to promote those circumstances in which the days of learners' noticing are likely to become more frequent. (Ridley, 1997, p.82)

Here she might be said to offer support for the notion of autonomy as the learner's mental set, as a perception therefore both naturally and potentially embedded in classroom discourse, and thus integral to whatever mode of learning is adopted. It seemed reasonable to suppose that if teaching could trigger such autonomous

---

[1]The field has increasingly adopted this descriptor since 1997, although 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' (TEFL) and 'Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages' (TESOL) are still current, as are 'Teaching English as a Second Language' (TESL), and 'Teaching English as an Additional Language' (TEAL).

[2]Cook claims that "the child learning a first language is acquiring the appropriate values for the [universal grammar] parameters in that language. The second language learner's task is to acquire a new set of values for the parameters, either from scratch or by resetting the L1 values, with most research suggesting the latter (Cook, 1988a)" (1989, p.29).

awareness in naïve learners then the appropriate circumstances for its heightening and consolidation consisted in self-direction.[3]

But this starting point of interest in autonomy was coupled with reservations about its viability in a thoroughly traditional-teaching environment. There was a certain scepticism, too, at a tendency for support to supplant critique, an unease encouraged by the judgement of Dewey on educational changes he himself had played no small part in, by the fact that his view was matured not only in the light of criticisms of his approach, but also of empirical evidence against unreflective innovation:

> It is not too much to say that an educational philosophy which professes to be based on the idea of freedom may become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which is reacted against. For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles. (Dewey, 1938/1974, p.22)

While few are likely to object to the putative contribution of learner autonomy to the goal of developing "autonomous and responsible individuals, capable of making their own choices in life" (Kurtz, 1980, p.4), the position was taken that only empirical enquiry could rebut the identification of learner autonomy with "some forms of political doctrine" which, as Kurtz and Wilson pointed out in 1973, "sacrifice individuals on the altar of Utopian promises" (p.3).[4] Although self-direction had been justified in other settings, sometimes as a solution to large student intakes and too few teachers, or as a way to meet many disparate 'language for special purposes' needs, it had not been thoroughly reported from the 'average' classrooms of relatively short-term intensive ELT in the target-language country, where teachers undoubtedly helped by drawing attention to less intuitive aspects of a topic, or, as Samuel Butler put it: "Wort will in time ferment of itself, but will ferment much more quickly if a little yeast be added to it".[5] Stake aptly remarks that such teaching is "not just lecturing, not just delivering information ... [but] the arrangement of opportunities for learners to follow a natural human inclination to become educated" (1995, p.92). But along with opportunities for learning went the risk that what was not taught was not sought, and the very fact that the traditional classroom was capable of providing a stimulating relational environment for language learning, with important consciousness-raising, practice and feedback opportunities, could mask the need for other-directed learning (ODL) to mediate between dependent and independent learning. No evidence was persuasive for the present context, and it was determined to empirically test self-directed learning (SDL), to confront the educators' case for learner autonomy with the perceptions of the learners themselves.[6] Those perceptions

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[3]For discussions of explicit grammar teaching and consciousness raising see, for example, Adamson, 1998; Borg, 1999; Cross, 1995; De Graffe, 1997; DeKeyser, 1994; Dirven, 1990; R. Ellis, 1984; Fotos, 1994, 1998; Krashen & Seliger, 1975; Lightbown & Spada, 1989; Lightbown, Spada, & Wallace, 1980; M.H. Long, 1983; Mitchell & Redmond, 1993; Pica, 1983; Rivers, 1988, 1989; Singleton, 1992; Spada, 1997; Williams, 1995. For a distinction between 'second' and 'foreign' language teaching see Håkansson, 1992. For tasks that promote 'noticing' see Thornbury, 1997. And for emancipatory 'consciousness raising' see Hart, 1990.

[4]To guard against misjudgement the enquiry commenced with a private 40,000 word phrase-by-phrase critique of Holec's (1979) work for the Council of Europe: *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*.

[5]*The Way of All Flesh.*

[6]Currently there is no consensus on terminology but as far as possible 'learner autonomy' will refer to concepts of disposition, attitude, and so on, and 'self-directed learning' will imply their manifestation as a relatively independent mode of learning.

were to be recorded in the present qualitative narrative of **Appendices A** and **B**, in the questionnaire remarks of **Appendix C**, and in the cross-referred diary extracts of **Appendix D**.

The foundational literature revealed that interest in the subject was as varied as the titles accorded to it, which ranged from 'independent study' (Hatch & Richards, 1965), through 'autonomous learning' (Holec, 1979), 'self-instruction' (e.g. Dickinson, 1987; Johnson & Johnson, 1985; Perrott, 1977; Rowntree, 1986), 'self-study', 'teach yourself', and 'solo language learning' (F.R. Jones, 1994) to 'self-directed learning' (Dickinson, 1976; Holec, 1985a). Some authors had shown how SDL could cope with large numbers of students with diverse needs, and some advocated converting teachers into self-access guides.[7] A few convinced deschoolers questioned the institutional formalisation of learning altogether (e.g. Holt, 1969; Gotz, 1971; Freire, 1972; Illich, 1976; and Postman & Weingartner, 1981).[8] Others might agree that "writers such as Foucault have exposed the police officer, the social worker, the therapist, the guard behind the caring smile of the school teacher" (Sarup, 1983, p.110), and see learner autonomy as a waystage in the revolutionary strategy Sarup called for: "Teachers are acting as police agents through the exercise of more or less open coercion, or as ideological agents for the transmission of dominant norms and values" (p.112). Without going so far as to see adolescent learner autonomy in terms of independence from adult authority, as in the Anfang Movement of 1912 in Vienna and Berlin (Utley, 1979), it was possible to concede that traditional educational norms might create "a sense of schooling as structured imposition" (Corrigan, 1987, p.23) and it was possible to discern an educational dimension to a political caveat: "While socialism promises liberation from the domination of capital, it also implies a reduction of *individual* autonomy, because in a socialist society the labour process is controlled *collectively* by the workers" (Sarup, 1983, p.120). Or even to have less concern with distinguishing 'domination' from 'collective control' than with fostering individual learner independence in simple pedagogical terms, as another means to enhancing learning for whatever purposes the learners themselves decide. Opposed to those who saw the world in pristine power-struggle terms, or shared Foucault's well-known tendency "to fall back into a negative view of power as a unidirectionally imposed monolithic force" (McNay, 1994, p.3), were those who take a New Philosopher stance that "in a sense we are all oppressors, and we are all oppressed" (Sarup, 1983, p.158).[9] Ideologies aside, these latter might, despite positive experiences as learner and teacher, concede that traditional classrooms may diminish students' awareness of responsibility for their own learning, especially where, as in ELT, time-scales tend to be short and students invest heavily in their belief that teaching provides the fastest, if not the only, way to learn. Second-language acquisition (SLA) studies in applied linguistics had tended to undermine absolute

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[7]The Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL) at Université Nancy 2 has for many years been involved in defining, recruiting, and training self-directed learning counsellors (advisors, tutors, etc.) and the Universities of Hull, Nottingham, Trent, and Ulster are engaged in on-going research and co-operative ventures in the 'emerging profession' of language advising.

[8]For perspectives on "the intoxicating days of free schools and de-schooling in the early 1970s" (Livingstone, 1987, p.vii) and more general Western marxist/ feminist viewpoints on critical pedagogy see the Series Introduction to the same volume, where Giroux and Freire refer to "the diversity of oppression that characterized schooling" (p.xiii).

[9]McNay here refers to a tendency in Foucault; elsewhere she quotes him as saying something similar to Sarup: "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault, in McNay, 1994, p.90).

confidence in the role of traditional teaching in the promotion of deeper learning and there was doubt too about identifying the classroom solely as a place where all pull together under the direction of the teacher, where individual needs were necessarily subordinated to group norms. It was possible that self-direction rather than other-direction could provide a better means by which Tolman's latent learning (Gagné, 1975, p.11, p.19, passim) was enabled and unconscious processes of language learning energised.[10]

Not only had Holec (1979) suggested cogent reasons why SDL should not be delayed until mastery of the subject, but technological advances were threatening (or promising, depending on the point of view) to make the lecture-hall and classroom an expensive and perhaps redundant luxury, to displace teachers as dispensers and interpreters of knowledge, as lecturers had ceased to be readers of scarce core texts, a perception reinforced by Gremmo's observation that "more recently, learner autonomy has met with renewed interest as the educational sector is witnessing an enormous and rapid development in the field of new technologies" (Gremmo, 1998, p.144). The 'self-managed learning' ethos at the Roffey Park management centre in West Sussex (Menniss, in Timmer, 1996, p.24) may be where the future begins: D.G. Little (1996a) predicts that "when communication is freely available via voice and image, it will be possible for 'classrooms' to be made up of network terminals separated from one another by large distances" (p.217) and Esch (1996) talks of "slowly moving towards wall-to-wall multimedia, multilingual environments" (p.35).[11] Even before the full impact of global technology, Gremmo and Abé were among those who pointed out that the teacher was only one of many resources available to the language learner:

> The teacher's role changes from knowing everything and explaining everything to showing where the information can be found and how to obtain it: he is no longer the sole linguistic model; he is a *guide* to different types of discourse. In a sense, his role is teaching people how to use a dictionary. (Gremmo & Abé, 1985, p.238)

And long before hand-held computers, CDs, email, and the internet, Blackham had claimed that one was lucky, in any institution, to learn "to discern alternatives, to make comparisons, to form standards, to decide and to choose, to grasp the practical interdependence of idea and action ... even to learn how to think and how to argue and how to listen" (Blackham, 1968/1976, p.185), a situation which learner autonomy promised to address.

But along with these awarenesses went doubts about whether promoting self-direction in the present context was possible, ethical, or advantageous to the learner. In the private sector, many cautions ensured that the realisation of learner autonomy as self-direction was more likely to be honoured in the breach, not least being learner expectations of value-for-money, an attitude not confined to ELT (see, for example, Walford, 1986, p.65 on the British Public Schools). Substantial investments were involved: in addition to the expenses of travelling, accommodation, and living, students would pay hundreds of pounds a month in fees, and an enabling institution could not afford to alienate a clientele willing to meet these costs precisely in expectation of being taught. Those students not sponsored by companies or parents might give up a part or all of their annual holiday to take language lessons in the target-language environment, and in the UK and Ireland small-group classes in ELT could have a life-span of only one to a few weeks or else be continuously depleted and

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[10]Gagné is a good source for behaviourist and alternative views of learning to the mid-1970s.

[11]With the exception of initialled references to D.J. Little in Chapters 3 and 5, all references to 'Little' are to D.G. Little, and the initials 'D.G.' are omitted from this point forward.

renewed by student departures and arrivals. Alternatively, where classes were spread over several months the usual format was examination preparation, which reinforces student expectations of teaching: "Many teachers who have experimented with strategies to increase learner independence are sanguine about the difficulties and the ultimate challenge of marrying experimental approaches with the pressure to deliver curricula linked to national exams." (B. Hill, 1994, p.214). Other factors intervene, among them not only student habituation to formal teaching but also the possible mismatch between teacher-awareness of personal autonomy and student deference to authority, especially where the home culture values an obedient or consensual norm.[12] Gremmo and Carton, remarking on relationships in hierarchical societies, noted that for their students from Latin America

> a teacher is someone who knows everything and who shows he knows it by imposing it on his pupils. The pupil has to adapt to the teacher's demands and bow to his decisions and to his will. This made it difficult for them to understand the concept of autonomy and even more difficult for them to accept it in practice. (Gremmo & Carton, 1985, p.355)

Research into SDL in the present milieu was an altogether risky venture for everyone concerned, for the institution in commercial terms, for the researcher in reputation, and above all for the learners whose futures could be jeopardised by an irremediable error of judgement. Holec had, nonetheless, put a good case for the attempt:

> As Louis Porcher has emphasized ... autonomy has to be won, by learners, teachers and institutions working together and, like any new conquest, it is full of ambushes and pitfalls, internal and external: not to be careful would be foolhardy, but not to participate would be cowardly. (Holec, 1985b, p.190)

And, fortunately, the need to be keenly client-focused in private ELT helps to encourage an ethos which, if not always learner-centred, is always learner-sensitive, and no institution would survive that prompted the remark that formal education "can be one of the most effective methods for squashing curiosity or channelling it in artificial and unnecessary directions" (Marshall & Rowland, 1983, p.xiii), or that permitted opposition between "the living joy of self-directed learning and the deadening nightmare of a highly traditional class" (Rogers, 1969/1983, p.114). In entire contrast, quickening learner autonomy in the present context would not so much be liberating the learners from teaching as offering them another mode they might come to value as highly:

> Autonomous learning is the kind of learning for which we are fitted by nature, and the task for formal education is to find ways of shaping the content and process of learning so that it takes maximum advantage of our natural capacities. This is especially so in the case of language learning because language, unlike most other curriculum subjects, is naturally acquired developmentally and experientially. (Little, 1994, p.441)

In promoting an autonomous spirit among the learners, and more particularly in creating conditions for self-direction in a thoroughly traditional other-directed setting, the undertaking needed to take on board something of Dykstra and Nunes' "higher professionalization" in which "observation, evaluation, guiding,

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[12] It was beyond the present scope to measure the participants' prior attitudes or preconceptions, for which purpose Horwitz (1985) proposed suitable instruments: the Foreign Language Attitude Survey (FLAS) of De Garcia, Reynolds, & Savignon, and her own Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI).

and planning become more important for the teacher than lecturing, cueing, testing, correcting, and clerking" (1975, p.285). It needed, in addition, an act of faith which Little has pinned down:

> It is not easy for teachers to change their role from purveyor of information to counsellor and manager of learning resources. It is not easy for teachers to stop talking; after all, if they stop talking they stop teaching, and if they stop teaching, their learners may stop learning. And it is not easy for teachers to let learners solve problems for themselves; for that takes time, and there is always so much ground to cover. Committing oneself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve. (Little, 1990, p.11)

Nowhere was this more true than in the present context. Although there existed a substantial literature on independent learning from the 1960s onwards, much of it emanating from the United States, a lot of it from pre-adult environments (Love & Honig, 1973), and most of it from non-language learning contexts, and while accessible empirical research had been conducted with secondary and tertiary level students (e.g. Dam, 1989; Little & Grant, 1986), perhaps the closest model for research with heterogeneous adult learners was that of the long-term corpus of work carried out under Professor Holec's direction (and more latterly under the direction of Professor Gremmo) at the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL), Université Nancy 2.[13] But even this model differed from the present context in important ways. Unlike those institutions where options range from total teaching to full self-direction, the enabling institution had no specialised facilities or resources for self-direction and no precedents for its introduction, and Little, Singleton, and Silvius (1984, p.238) had found signs of resistance to self-direction even amongst university students accustomed to working without supervision.

But there were also positive indications: the environment was fully understood, and institutional approval in principle was obtainable in light of the would-be researcher's professional experience.[14] Several other factors were advantageous: the learners were studying a single subject, normal teacher-student contact was four contiguous hours daily, and life in the target-language community would provide spontaneous and fully realistic input and practice, substantially reducing the need for authentic and self-access materials. In ethical terms, the institution ran equivalent-level classes simultaneously, allowing participants to transfer out of the experiment, and the research programme could be closed down at any time: "The decision to participate in these activities and the willingness to take on the challenges of autonomy – this is an area that is not within our purview. This is the learners' prerogative and their first act of autonomy" (Wenden, 1988, p.650).

In setting up the enquiry an immediate priority was to meet the commercial and ethical requirements of the enabling institution, and a preliminary project having tentatively indicated that some form of semi-autonomy programme might be viable, preparations were made to test the waters with a course combining

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[13]The CRAPEL was founded in 1962. One of four loosely related linguistic research centres, it emphasises autonomy and self-access. A description is provided by Riley (1974), and a series of *Mélanges* provides regular updates.

[14]Qualitative enquiry rightly demands disclosure of the researcher's relevant credentials. Experience: one year prep school Latin and French, one year UK and two years overseas ELT, a further ten years of Cambridge and Pitman examination classes, contributions to teacher training courses. Qualifications: initially, a professional licentiate diploma in teaching English as a second language, a post-graduate diploma in applied linguistics and language teaching; concurrently with the empirical elements, a professional post-graduate diploma in teaching English language to adults; post-empirically, a post-graduate diploma in statistics.

ODL and SDL which would serve as a pilot scheme if it failed and enable extension to a full-scale research project if the indications were favourable. Several ODL practices could be adapted to take better heed of Holec's warning about intruding on the learner's own SDL (1985b, p.175) and if guidance was both overtly available and covertly withdrawn it was thought possible to avoid the dilemma pointed out by Abercrombie (1960), of how to tell students what to look for without telling them what to see. It was also anticipated that examination classes at intermediate level would help offset the heterogeneity difficulties caused by continuous open-enrolment, would contain learners able to communicate their responses in intelligible English, and would endure long enough to provide sufficient meaningful data. Although, in research terms, random sampling was impossible and random allocation of students to experimental groups was both administratively and ethically problematical, a case study would readily generalise to the many thousands of similar classroom contexts worldwide. In the event, the three experimental courses, for convenience called mediated independent-dependent learning (MIDL), lived up to expectations and what follows is the qualitative and quantitative report of the research endeavour built upon them.

The recognition that some findings could not usefully be separated from the narrative that provided them posed problems for the literature review. Where much positivist research and all synchronic enquiry might relate discrete packaged findings to a select body of 'current' writings, extended diachronic research is faced with the need to deal with the literature that informs the study, what might be called foundational literature, as well as the ongoing literature that emerges during the course of what may be (and with qualitative methods, usually is) a prolonged enquiry. This study therefore chooses to put some foundational literature into the introductory chapters and to introduce other relevant citations at suitable points in the appendicised qualitative narratives (for example, some references to the language laboratory, to diary data, and so on). This format recognises the need to comply with convention, not least since the study lays some claim to experimental norms, but also takes account of the awareness articulated by Lincoln and Guba:

> If there are themes in the literature that should be dealt with in the case, should they not be inserted somewhere? And if the literature is to be critiqued via the case, should not the case writer know in what sense, so as to be sure to include materials that would make such a critique possible? In conventional inquiry this consideration poses no problem, but in naturalistic inquiry, in which theory and hypotheses (if any) are expected to be grounded in the case, a preoccupation with existing literature may introduce an unwanted bias. On the other hand, ignorance of the literature may lead the writer to make inclusion-exclusion decisions in ways that make later comparison of case to literature impossible. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.369)

While not confining itself to grounding theory in the study, the enquiry is less concerned with clinically testing an *a priori* hypothesis than with reporting findings from a relatively novel experimental set-up and can thus allow itself some of the leeway accorded to case studies of real-world settings.

The enquiry is a systematic replication case study with quasi-experimental features. Data reduction by content analysis of qualitative data elicited from learners' diaries enabled quantitative comparison with questionnaire data. Although subsequent statistical analyses took account of the small sample sizes and the fact that neither random sampling nor allocation were feasible, the highly representative nature of the setting allowed the findings to be generalised according to post-positivist and case study criteria. Although flexible response to learner needs might demand 100% of either other-direction or self-direction for short periods it was felt that for true integration of SDL with ODL neither mode should fall below an average of 20%. The

mean ratios of time (classroom contact-hours) allocated to self-directed learning for each stage of all three courses are given in **Table 1:1**, (and **Appendix E**), where it can be seen that Group A averaged 41%; Group B averaged 47%, and Group C averaged 31%, all above the desired semi-autonomy minimum of 20% SDL.

If it is accepted that among the functions of research is the problematisation and dis/confirmation of the 'obvious' then it has been appropriate to put formally to the test the intuition that classroom learners prefer to be taught. Additionally, the degree to which average unprepared learners will respond positively to opportunities for self-direction cannot be 'known' without empirical verification. And perhaps even more important than the quantified results are the richly detailed explorations in the learners' own words of what it is like to take part in exploratory programmes in an adult language classroom of the late 20th century.

How the research was conducted was determined by many factors, principal among them being concern for the present and future welfare of the participants and the need to take a responsible attitude to the reputation of the enabling institution. In the sense that it was always doubtful whether or not all the components of the investigation could be successfully combined to a fruitful conclusion, there was some affinity with the observation of Dane that "sometimes the object of exploratory research is the research process itself" (1990, p.5). Fortunately, the days are over when only one method was sanctioned, and enquiry is now the richer and more informative for combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, an approach which finds encouragement in Brockett and Hiemstra: "We believe that there can be no single 'best' way to study self-direction, and that a key for future research development will be the ability to look at research problems in innovative ways" (1991/1993, p.221). A possible model for such ways, of particular interest to attitudinal studies, may be seen in the suggestion of Krippner and Winkler:

> Chaos methodology shifts emphasis from relationships of cause and effect to more interactive, multivariant approaches that stress the importance of defining patterns, form, self-organization, and adaptive qualities of complex processes. ... If we are to entertain the notion that any disciplined scientific enquiry is yet another narrative that can provide useful information for our understanding of the world, chaotic systems analysis is an avenue that is likely to provide new and valuable ways of conceptualizing consciousness. (Krippner & Winkler, 1996, p.162)

It might be legitimately objected that without random sampling the results are not statistically generalisable, and this criticism must be taken on board: validly testing hypotheses according to statistical norms means meeting the assumptions of those norms, and in this respect the enquiry, like all quasi-experiments, falls short of laboratory conditions.

Nonetheless, as will be amplified in Chapter 5, several authorities allow that a combination of qualitative and quantitative findings drawn from a representative setting may be cautiously extended to the larger world they are taken from. D.S. Moore and McCabe put the practical case for most research, a case which is of particular relevance to classroom settings:

> Experimenters ... usually do not actually select experimental units from the entire population that they want information about. Yet most experiments do aim to make inferences about a population beyond the units actually involved in the experiment. We tacitly assume that the experimental units are representative of this wider population. An experimenter who compares the performance on a dexterity test of college students before and after they take a stimulant, for example, will argue that results for college students extend to a wider population of adults. Even though a population did not enter into the mechanics of the experimental design, the experiment aims to make inferences about a population just as sampling does. In some

Table 1:1. *Courses A, B, C, Summary of Proportions of In-Class Self Directed Learning to Total Contact Hours*

Course & Stage	Dates	DSDL(i) hours[a]	DSDL(ii) hours[a]	ISDL hours[b]	SDL total	Contact total	SDL proportion of Contact hours
A.I	8 Sep - 10 Oct	18	3	1	22	100	.22
A.II	13 Oct - 31 Oct	4	21	4	29	56	.52
A.III	3 Nov - 15 Dec	22		42	64	124	.52
sum		44	24	47	115	280	
mean SDL		15	8	16	38	93	.41
B.I	19 Jan - 20 Feb	17.5		33	50.5	100	.51
B.II	23 Feb - 13 Mar	11.5		24	35.5	60	.59
B.III	16 Mar - 15 May	23.5		44	67.5	134	.50
B.IV	18 May - 5/12 Jun	7.5		7	14.5	60	.24
sum		60		108	168	354	
mean SDL		15		27	42	89	.47
C.I	11 Jan - 29 Jan	10		7	17	60	.28
C.II	1 Feb - 11 Mar	21		18	39	120	.33
sum		31		25	56	180	
mean SDL		16		13	28	90	.31
total		135	24	180	339	814	
mean over-all SDL		.17	.03	.22	.42		.42

Note. 'Hours' are decimal academic periods of 50 minutes. Out-class SDL is not included. Means are rounded.
[a]Dependent Self-Directed Learning (i): Pairgroups, Support/Work Teams; (ii): Setwork Laboratory, Video Project.
[b]Independent Self-Directed Learning: Freewok Laboratory, Freework Class Library.

> experiments, the population exists only in our minds ....
>
> It is common in experiments to seek information about a "What if?" population that cannot be randomly sampled because its units do not all exist in actual fact. (D.S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.266)

It may therefore be claimed, with some substance, that very much more important elements than strict orthodoxy must inform enquiry in real world (as opposed to laboratory) settings, and what some of those elements are has been well expressed. Eisenhart and Howe cite Goetz and LeCompte:

> They [Goetz and LeCompte] add to their list of attributes of a good study: completeness (does the report of the study contain all the elements considered necessary for a research report of this kind?), appropriateness (are the approach and design used effective and suitable for the research questions posed?), clarity (is it easy and straightforward to figure out what the study is about and why it is approached and designed in the way it is?), comprehensiveness (is the scope of the study large enough to address convincingly the questions posed?), credibility (are the conduct and results of the study believable?), and significance (does the study make an important contribution?). (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p.648)

In terms of generalisability, the location of the study in ELT, internationally the largest domain in language learning, places it within a field whose influence extends far beyond its own confines, and makes it arguably the most fruitful in which to ask the questions posed herein. The answers provided in this study go further, of course, than responding just to the primary research question: they embrace issues of 'why autonomy?'; they explicate and reconcile social autonomy with learner autonomy; they show how first steps can be taken in virtually any traditional language classroom, using only what is to hand, not to break the often necessary lock-step patterns of group instruction or to downplay the contribution of communicative approaches to our present understandings, but in their integration with redefined 'independence' and 'self direction' to make both of them more meaningful and personally relevant to classroom learners. Above all, perhaps, the answers offer convincing evidence, across three groups, that while ODL may be preferred to SDL where the facilities for the latter are minimal, such preference is not sufficient to bar self-direction even from the most conservative of traditional milieus. The most convincing support for that conclusion comes not so much from quantified data as from the mouths of the learners themselves, and from the fact that even those who felt least comfortable with the ethos were prepared in all three groups to remain with the experimental programmes. If the study had shown nothing else at all, it would have been worthwhile. Eisenhart and Howe later add the following remarks to their criteria:

> External value constraints concern whether the research is valuable for informing and improving educational practice – the 'so what?' question. Research might be well designed and conducted in a *technical* sense, but that alone is an insufficient criterion of worth. Valid studies must be worthwhile....
>
> Admittedly, judgments of the worth of research projects can be very difficult to make. They have the potential to be exceedingly biased, as anyone who has served on a human subjects committee can attest. ... Clearly, even if others might be puzzled about the study's worth, educational researchers themselves should be able to communicate what value their research has (if only potentially) for educational practice. (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p.660)

These are important issues, and although it is hoped that the design and conduct of the present study will be sufficiently exposed to establish its worth, the warning about exceedingly biased judgements is heeded, as is

their further remark: "Valid research studies *qua* arguments, then, should explicitly address, in language that is generally accessible to the community of interested parties, the importance of the research and its (potential) usefulness" (p.661). In recognition of that advice it can be said that the study, while explicitly addressing the question of learner preference for ODL or SDL (an under-represented precursor to the whole topic), offers solutions to practitioners who might otherwise see learner autonomy only in the realm of polemic, as a worthwhile idea perhaps, but not practicable in their domain. This domain is of central importance to all educationists who look beyond the traditional classroom to its alternatives, whether their concern is with sociopolitical issues, or the improvement of pedagogy, or the technological advances that may sweep away much that has hitherto informed both concerns.

In regard to the participants' responses, it is necessary to keep in mind that diachronic data from diaries and synchronic data from questionnaires are unlikely to form a perfect match, not only because concurrent awareness and retrospective recollection differ but because each asks different questions of the responder and each is the product of a different perception. Where diaries reveal an ongoing and emerging relationship to the experiences they relate, with no set format and no precluded topics, the questionnaires ask each learner not only to reflect upon specific aspects of the experience but to rate them on an arbitrary scale of excellence. The diaries allow for elaboration of the 'why' with concomitant risk that the 'what' is obscured; the questionnaires, whose purpose is the 'what', leave little room to understand the 'why'. If each is complementary to the other it must therefore be in a wider sense than that of mere triangulation, in a sense rather of background and of foreground than of shade and highlight. If each dealt only with the tangible, the observable, the matter-of-fact, they would necessarily provide differing accounts, but where what is elicited is as ephemeral as attitude, further interpreted through the medium of inference on the one hand and interrogation on the other, what emerges must be not so much holographic aspects of the same thing as related aspects of different things. It may therefore be wondered if the attempt to reconcile them is worthwhile, and the answer must lie in the nature of qualitative enquiry, in its capacity to look behind the eyes of the responder, and in its willingness to see there not any simple and straightforward positivism but the tangled confusion of the human being.

But what of contradictory evidence? Again, the answer lies in the nature of the enquiry. If it has set out to define some absolutist truth, then it will be lost in its own inspection, but if it has been honest to itself and merely sought to add another facet to the sum of all enquiry then it may claim to have achieved its end if anything constructive is known as a result of it. Conclusions it may have, but it will not be conclusive, not unless it is assured that its perfect instrument has perfectly measured the perfectly measurable. And, in the present case, both diaries and questionnaires are crude instruments for the approximate measurement of ongoing and reflective opinion, and their evidence as well as the conclusions drawn from it are therefore honestly tentative at best, which seems entirely appropriate to the purposes of the enquiry. Aronson and associates make a pertinent remark:

> It is a sobering experience to go through any issue of a social psychology journal from cover to cover, listing alternative explanations for each experiment. It is a rare article that does not suggest at least one interpretation which differs from the one proposed by the author. It is even more sobering to try to redesign the experiment in a manner that is free of alternative interpretations. (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1976/1990, p.50).

A further reservation exists about the size of each group (N = 12, N = 13, N =16) in relation to the power of the statistical tests. Unquestionably the samples were too small to benefit from asymptotic theory but, in any case, as the researcher was unwilling to assume that the data were at interval level, the issue was resolved by selecting the most appropriate non-parametric tests, by deriving exact P-values and by making use of Monte Carlo permutation procedures to derive exact confidence intervals.

Over a period of some 15 months the experimental MIDL courses were conducted with the three independent groups of participants, each following the same programme of study in the same location, with the researcher acting as sole teacher/ co-ordinator. Participants were encouraged to keep 'daily diaries', monitored to ensure ethical criteria were being met, and these, together with course questionnaires administered to groups A and B provided data for subsequent qualitative and quantitative analyses. The courses were conducted serially, each group departing before the arrival of the next, and no between-groups contact was known to have occurred. The immediate research context was a single classroom in a large typical private sector English-language teaching institution in the centre of Dublin, Ireland. In addition to the ten classrooms of the principal building, considerable seasonal expansion into annexes and hired premises allowed participants to be offered alternatives to the experimental courses. The environment was thought to match other institutions lacking special provision for SDL: facilities included the usual classroom cassette-players, video, and television, and a modern 16-booth language laboratory which was stocked with teacher-controlled and self-access cassettes and texts (inventory at **Appendix F**) routinely supplemented by teacher-made materials, and which provided a comparatively quiet room for SDL (Mueller, McCavana, Ramsden, & Shelly, 1987). There were video tapes, including both tutorial and authentic materials, that is, not produced for language-learning purposes (see Abé, Carton, Cembalo, & Régent, 1985, for pedagogical uses, and Gallien, 1998, for a recent review). No video editing resources were available, and no video sound was recorded separately for use in the language laboratory (see Riley & Zoppis, 1985, p.295, for the suggestion). A specially prepared 'class library' comprising a number of text-books and written exercise materials was introduced to the experimental classroom and housed in a large shelved unit (inventory at **Appendix G**).

Over-all, the appendicised narratives of classroom events from both a teacher's and the learners' perspectives, as well as the in-depth qualitative and quantitative exploration of learner attitudes to self-direction, offer a uniquely detailed picture of an intensive language learning classroom in the late 20th century, and empirical evidence both for and against the intuitions of teachers and applied linguists. The introductory chapters attempt to combine an overview of the field of learner autonomy and to present brief perspectives on the more current perceptions of self-directed learning. That these are rapidly evolving is made clear in Sinclair's very recent and insightful review of several contemporary publications in ELT:

> Some important themes have emerged from these collections. First, the profession has been made to think more clearly about the political, philosophical, and macro-social aspects of autonomy. However, the concept of autonomy as having socially transformative potential needs to be tempered by a clear and pragmatic understanding of the various factors constraining the teachers and learners in different contexts....
>
> Second, there is a growing focus on the importance of social and collaborative learning for the development of learner autonomy, demonstrating the influence of Vygotskyan theories of learning....
>
> Another theme which occurs regularly is the dismissal by some writers of 'learner training'

> or 'learning to learn' as a reductive and inferior approach to developing autonomy. (Sinclair, 1999, p.317)

Some of these issues are represented in the following chapters as a general background to the immediate concerns of the present enquiry. The terms 'autonomous learning/learner' and 'self-directed learning/learner' will be used as equivalent unless differentiation is required by the context.

Where not otherwise stated, emphasis shown in quotations by italics or underlining is in the original text. One typewriter convention has been amended to take account of current word-processor constraints: where page numbers within the text may fall at the end of a line, putting a space between the 'p.' and the number (as in p. 123) may allow the 'p.' to remain on one line while the number itself moves to the next. Substituting a non-breaking hyphen for the full-stop (as in p-123) is remote from the current convention and in the absence of a non-breaking full-stop for internet addresses the preferred alternative has been to omit the space (as in p.123) throughout the thesis. Formatting otherwise strictly conforms to American Psychological Association conventions, including the optional omission from the thesis reference list of works cited within quotations from other authors.[15]

Although the enquiry considers participant responses to both ODL and SDL and while, strictly speaking, an equal review of both might be justified, the former is the setting for the latter and it seems more appropriate to respect both brevity and the given audience by greater focus on the mode that is in question. In consequence only a necessary minimum of reference will be made to the familiar norms of other-directed classroom methodology, whose realisations in the empirical period are thoroughly exemplified in the narrative accounts of **Appendices A**, **B**, and **C**, essential qualitative components of the study.

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[15]The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th Edition, 1994, p.98) notes that "citations embedded within the original material" should not be omitted, but adds that they "need not be included in the list of references". Inevitably the present work came upon errors and omissions in authors' reference lists and, rather than include some and omit (or try to hunt down) the others, the sensible APA option was adopted for consistency and all embedded citations were deleted from the thesis reference list.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter provides a broad introductory overview of the topic of learner autonomy, briefly looking at the rationale, the realisations, and the roots of modern self-direction. An indication of current trends leads into the concluding section on the changing roles of teachers and learners.

REASONS FOR AUTONOMY

The substantial scale of support for the principles of learner autonomy is illustrated in a state-of-the-art overview by Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993) which covers the spectrum of ideas, concepts, practices, and suggestions in general adult self-direction but, perhaps because, as Riley (1997, p.144) notes, independent *language* learning "has never really caught on in the USA", the ample references they make to writers outside North America include none of the authorities that Riley (himself in the forefront) recognises in saying "I believe ... we have been extremely lucky to have had people of the calibre of Henri Holec, Edith Esch, Les Dickinson, and David Little to argue our case" (1996, p.255). It is an instance of disciplinary impermeability if, as seems to be the case without content analysis, that every concept, argument, and view cited from American writers is mirrored in the works of European authors who go unmentioned. A succinct coverage leaves out of account several authors who will be represented here (without a repetitious 'see also') and it must be assumed either that some cross-fertilisation takes place at a subliminal level or that the topic is such as to encourage different communities of scholars to come independently to much the same conclusions and to present them in much the same terms.

Little has pointed out that language learning is different from learning other subjects because it "also happens spontaneously and implicitly, as a result of entirely unconscious developmental processes" but that it resembles other learning in having "its own set of scientific concepts – for example, grammatical categories" (Little, 1997, p.6). Moreover, and to the nub: "The dual nature of second language learning in formal contexts explains why the development of learner autonomy has two distinct though ultimately inseparable goals: autonomy in language use and autonomy in language learning" (Little, 1997, p.6). This understanding goes some way towards explaining the research interest and the number of proponents Garrison (1992, p.140) draws attention to, and how self-directed learning has moved from being "a vaguely anarchistic, Illich-inspired threat" to being part of "the conceptual and practical mainstream" (Brookfield, 1993, p.227).

Reasons for self-direction range from the very private desire of the individual learner to the very public declarations of educators involved in the field, but a useful summary rationale is provided by Crabbe (1993), who justifies fostering classroom learner autonomy on three grounds, the ideological, the economic and the psychological. Ideologically, exercising the right to freedom of choice makes for a healthier happier

society; on economic grounds "society does not have the resources to provide the level of personal instruction needed by all its members in every area of learning. Therefore individuals must be able to provide for their own learning needs, either individually or cooperatively"; and, psychologically, we learn better when we are in charge of our own learning: "Learning is more meaningful, more permanent, more focussed on the processes and schemata of the individual when the individual is in charge. Being in charge may also increase motivation and a motivated learner is often a successful learner" (Crabbe, 1993, p.443). Crabbe distinguishes 'public domain' learning (largely teacher initiated) from 'private domain' (usually learner initiated) and illustrates the need, if learner autonomy is to be promoted, for teachers to make tasks more 'private domain' meaningful in classroom discourse.

And for many years the Council of Europe has supported self-direction with the very similar pedagogical rationale that it encourages learners to think about the learning process, to take an active and responsible share in it, and to develop their critical faculties, all with the aim of a deeper and more personal acquisition of knowledge and skills (Marbeau, 1977). From a sociopolitical perspective Trim, outlining the basic aims of the Council since 1971, included the democratisation of learning, to enable learners "so far as possible to steer and control their own progress" (Trim, 1996, p.81). In the report of Harding-Esch (1982) on the Modern Languages Project for teaching languages for special purposes at university level the conclusion reached by a group of experts (sponsored by French-language universities and the Council) was that the best approaches for meeting individual learning needs were the promotion of self-management of study, and methods that made learners responsible for their own learning. In 1986 the Council sponsored 'objectives for language learning' which stressed the promotion of individual autonomy and social responsibility while teaching languages (van Ek, 1986). A practical rationale is suggested by Narcy: "En France ... l'autonomie est souvent mise en avant comme la solution qui permettra d'enseigner les langues à toujours plus d'apprenants sans avoir à recruter de nouveaux enseignants" (1994, p.443). Garrison has provided a pedagogical rationale for learner autonomy that most proponents would probably feel comfortable with, even if the details of interpretation or ultimate goals might veer between the social and the personal:

> Self-direction is seen as a necessary process for achieving worthwhile and meaningful educational outcomes. It is associated with initiating learning goals, maintaining intention, and striving for quality outcomes. Self-direction is seen as essential if students are to achieve Dewey's (1916) ultimate educational goal of becoming continuous learners and possessing the capacity for further educational growth. (Garrison, 1997, p.31)

Little (1990), in accord with Holec, points out that "if democratic states are to develop and flourish as democracies, they must ... develop the capacity of their citizens to think and act as free and self-determining individuals" and adds that "we cannot expect children and adolescents to mature into autonomous adults if we do not give them the opportunity to behave autonomously as they learn" (p.8). In response to a question from Timmer on behalf of a Learner Independence Special Interest Group (SIG), Trim is quoted as saying:

> *If 'learner independence' is the same as learner autonomy, it is certainly one of the main planks in the Council of Europe programme.... We see autonomy – independence of judgement, choice and action combined with social responsibility and cooperation – as an objective and not to be confused with the isolation of the learner using self-study materials.* (Trim, in Timmer, 1996-1997, p.6)

Dissociating learner autonomy from 'self-study' is, of course, a political rather than a logical decision, one which Holec, for instance, does not make when he includes being 'completely self-taught' as an example of self-directed learning (Holec, 1996, p.90), and which justifies Trim following the remark by a natural question: "*Do you see it that way*?" (ibid.), which Timmer invites the reader to answer. The difficulty, of course, in agreeing unequivocally with learner autonomy in purely conceptual terms (as an objective) is that without some degree of 'self-study' as an institutional means to that end, it may remain an unrealised ideal. In whatever way Timmer might answer as an individual, on behalf of the special interest group she says: "The SIG sees itself very much as promoting learning in which learners have a choice of what to learn and how to learn and in helping teachers to be able to 'let go' but not abandon" (ibid.). Although one can see why Trim might express the reservation he does about 'isolating' and 'self-study', the attempt to avoid defining learner autonomy in these terms runs the risk of excluding much of the current work in self-access which is still struggling to avoid 'isolation' while promoting 'self-study' as an alternative to being taught. While caution is certainly needed, learner autonomy is composed of many strands, each contributing to similar ends, as Little (personal communication) has pointed out to the present writer, and alongside philosophical and sociopolitical orientations of concern to educators are pedagogical objectives of immediate relevance to the learners themselves.

Whatever the support of officials and educators, there is no long-term place for self-direction unless the learner is persuaded, a major impetus for the present study. At the personal level of the individual, motivation is a key factor in the promotion of learner autonomy and a powerful incentive is suggested by attribution theory, which provides evidence that "learners who believe that they have control over their learning—that by accepting new challenges they can increase their ability to perform learning tasks and so increase their intelligence—tend to be more successful than others" (Dickinson, 1995, p.172). It is worth noting the predictor study by Grabinger and Jonassen (1988) of 79 preservice undergraduate education students who chose to work independently rather than be teacher-directed. They found no evidence that ability (measured by grade point average and intelligence variables), sex, prior knowledge, or subject major, influenced the decision to opt for autonomy. The factors reported were a high need for achievement, an internal locus of control, and a preference for learning by direct experimentation. While these traits are certainly optimal for every self-directed learner, it must be supposed that the study of education depends less crucially on one capability than does the study of a language, the lack of proficiency in which must affect every decision made in regard to learning it, including perhaps the decision to incorporate teaching within an over-all plan to achieve the required control by a specified deadline.

It is possible to see separate motivations at work in ODL and SDL respectively in what Garrison (1997) remarks: "We need to distinguish between the process of deciding to participate (entering motivation) and the effort required to stay on task and persist (task motivation)" (p.26). Motivationally, it is more likely to be easier to join a language class than to persist in the hard work of self-direction, but labelling of this kind produces a taxonomy which, however useful, must fall far short of the matrix of interlocking factors that underlie any decision, even the apparently most simple and unthinking. Hotho and Reimann offer a reminder that "a guaranteed recipe for successful learner motivation still remains to be discovered" (1998, p.130), which is hardly surprising to anyone who considers the complex web of interrelated variables that must comprise it. More arguably, they maintain a differentiation between integrative or instrumental *orientation*,

"the reasons for learning" and *motivation*, "a composite of several factors ... the desire to achieve the goal ... motivational intensity (effort), and favourable attitudes towards the language" (ibid.).

The question of goal-setting also enters into the relationship between other-directed and self-directed learning tasks, and particularly into the distinction made herein between dependent self-directed learning, in which the teacher (co-ordinator) usually sets the goal of the learning event, and independent self-directed learning in which the learner does. Hotho and Reimann make an observation on the work of Locke and Latham:

> Interestingly, there seems to be evidence that the origin of goals is less important than one might have assumed: assigned goals and self-selected or participative goals showed less difference in terms of motivation than one might have expected, allowing, in our context, for an interesting reflection on, for example, the function of the teacher as the author of assigned goals. (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p.136)

Given that task-assignment helps to define self-direction and other-direction, this tentatively suggests not only a narrower gap between them in terms of learner motivation than intuition would suggest, but also a closer relationship between the dependent and independent forms of self-direction in the present enquiry than the researcher had anticipated. The same authors remark on performance goals which "can be linked to extrinsic motivation and to norm-referenced criteria of measurement of success ... [and] ... involve the need to demonstrate success and to compare one's own success with that of others and are thus characterised by ego involvement" (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p. 136). Negatively, however, while such goals contribute much to the impetus of any other-directed classroom, and were emphasised by the examination orientation of the classes of the enquiry, they "have also been shown as unstable and have been linked to short-term motivation, and to low levels of persistence" (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p. 137). Ushioda's work had already led her to conclude that "enjoyment, satisfaction, pleasure" were likely to be more sustainable motivators than more remote language-extrinsic goals related to such things as careers and examinations (1993, p.10), and that "the principal pedagogic implication of course is the need to provide learners with successful and positive experiences in the learning process itself and in the use of the L2" (1994, p.82).

Crucially, therefore, the introduction of self-direction also opens the door wider to mastery goals, "a product of task involvement, shaped by intrinsic interest, a desire to learn for the sake of learning, or a desire to improve in or master a new skill for the sake of self-satisfaction" (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p. 137). As long ago as 1953 McClelland and associates made the claim that "the intensity of the achievement motive is a directly proportional function of the education to independence and self-sufficiency" (in Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1985, p.79). An important task for teachers is thus to encourage the perception that being autonomous means equating success with one's own efforts and where other autonomisation programmes might focus on overt training for competence in (full) self-direction, the present experimental courses provided more modelling of independent learning (in the form of 'safe' pair and group work) and an emphasis on motivation arising out of increasing self-impelled capability in the L2.

Whatever its impetus or form, learner autonomy stands behind that "development from within" which Dewey noted had been placed in opposition to "formation from without" in the history of educational theory (1938/1974, p.17) and if, at its simplest, self-directed learning is the practical realisation of the learner's own development, that still leaves considerable room for interpretation of learner autonomy in the institutional contexts of learning. Partial self-direction (or semi-autonomy) would seem to allow for any combination with teaching, however minimal, or with counselling, however organised, even if full self-direction implies no necessary recourse to teachers, helpers, facilitators, counsellors, or other experts. At this extreme it would appear simple to equate self-direction with self-instruction and self-instruction with complete autonomy but White takes the view that "a self-instruction context for learning does not automatically equate with learner autonomy but autonomy may arise and develop within the learner as a response to the specific demands of a self-instruction context" (1995, p.209). And even at this remove there can be no real claim to total independence on the part of a learner brought up by carers in a society with access to whatever means to learning that society may offer, from tribal myths to the internet. The opposite condition, it would seem, is that of the learner subordinated to teachers, helpers, or whatever, but even here it is evident that no learner is totally dependent, always being free to take whatever he or she is capable of or to leave aside any part of instruction, help, or guidance.

Cotterall quotes Boud, 1988, as saying: "'The main characteristic of autonomy as an approach to learning is that students take some significant responsibility for their own learning over and above responding to instruction'" (in Cotterall, 1995b, p.195), although in practice what constitutes taking responsibility is variously interpreted. More stringent Rogerian versions of autonomy may follow Holec in requiring the learner to control the activities of learning, and less demanding versions may tend to take a position closer to that of Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993), for whom personal responsibility means that "individuals assume ownership for their own thoughts and actions. Personal responsibility does not necessarily mean control over personal life circumstances or environment. However, it *does* mean that a person has control over how to *respond* to a situation" (p.26). This view is relevant not only to the integration of other-direction and self-direction in classroom contexts but also to the recent re-emphasis on the interdependent status of the learner, with the individual "the 'starting point'" (p.32) from which the social dimensions of learner autonomy are explored. For pedagogical purposes, too, most concerned teachers and applied linguists subscribe to the conceptualisation captured by Little:

> The essence of learner autonomy is acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning (Holec 1981:3). This entails establishing a personal agenda for learning, taking at least some of the initiatives that shape the learning process, and developing a capacity to evaluate the extent and success of one's learning. From this definition it follows that learner autonomy entails not only learning, but learning how to learn. Understood in this way, it can be developed in any learning environment and within any organizational framework. (Little, 1994, p.431)[1]

So defined, and so understood, learner autonomy challenges the staunchest defenders of traditional classrooms where, although passive learning is a contradiction in terms, learners may expect to remain relatively inert beneficiaries of teacher activity. Plenary instruction may look to the psychological support,

[1] See also Little, 1996a, p.204.

rapport, and interactions of the lively classroom, and to the presentation of coherent information in a succinct fashion. But it can perhaps do less to cater for individual learning styles, for example, those collated by S. Jones: "holist – serialist (Pask, 1976); impulsive – reflective (Kagan et al., 1964); deep-level – surface-level processing (Marton & Säljö, 1976); cognitive complexity – simplicity (Bieri, 1961); tolerance for unrealistic experiences (Klein et al., 1962); field-dependent – field-independent (Witkin et al., 1977)" (S. Jones, 1993, p.198); or the possible combinations, in any group, of the six interrelated aspects of learning style recognised by Oxford and N.J. Anderson: "cognitive, executive, affective, social, physiological, and behavioural" (1995, p.203).[2] Remarks by S. Jones on programmed learning can be applied to much traditional teaching which has tended to see learning as "a fixed or orderly procedure" (1993, p.196), whereas making provision for self-direction recognises that learning "rather involves factors such as insight, understanding, experimenting, interacting, making connections, applying and evaluating" (ibid.), and connecting the two can encourage greater account to be taken of human traits, of "personality variables and affective or attitudinal factors" (ibid.). Even where the target language is being learnt by members of a group in their own country, different learning strategies, "specific behaviours or techniques" (Oxford & N.J. Anderson, 1995, p.203) or the 20 style dimensions the same authors (p.204) take from Ehrman and Oxford, ensure that group instruction to meet every learner's needs will remain utopian, although learners will probably continue to benefit in many ways from good instruction.

In terms which have a bearing on the whole methodology of the present enquiry, Hotho and Reimann comment:

> Ames has frequently and strongly argued in favour of fostering mastery goals and has identified classroom factors such as, for instance, task, feedback, the teacher's orientation towards autonomy or grouping, and above all the need for these "to work in concert" as crucial for achieving this aim. (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p.137)

All these factors were intrinsic to the experimental mediated independent-dependent learning (MIDL) methodology of this enquiry, whose central intent was that they should work harmoniously together, and whose creation recognised that "a multitude of motivational profiles co-exist in the classroom which suggests that variety and flexibility rather than methodological orthodoxy should inform classroom procedures" (Hotho & Reimann, 1998, p.140). These features were prominent in the experimental courses of the enquiry where, although other-directed learning (ODL) and self-directed learning (SDL) were treated as opposable modes for convenience, they tended to overlap, as they must do whenever unprepared learners are introduced to self-direction in a context with only rudimentary self-access facilities.

Where such facilities are generous, most characterisations of learner autonomy can describe the idealised self-directed learner as controlling every aspect of the process, but Riley (1998) cautions against "the tendency simply to equate 'autonomy' with 'self-access'" (p.3) and for alternative realisations Ridley (1997) has put the fundamental basic as more reassuringly accessible: "Autonomous learners are self-aware people" (p.15). Consciousness-raising is an aim of self-direction, and Dam (1994), quoting from the 'Bergen definition' of learner autonomy, which explicitly includes "an awareness of the aims and processes of

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[2]Oxford and N.J. Anderson (1995) provide an outline of some 'field-independence' and 'field-dependence/sensitivity' facets, together with summaries from research projects of many cultural characteristics with relevant and important implications for group instruction.

learning", sees "the development of learner autonomy as the development of the learner's awareness and consciousness of the process of learning" (p.505).[3] And both characterisations may be related in practice to Little's perception that establishing a personal agenda for learning has "socio-affective and cognitive implications" and "entails at once a positive attitude to learning and the development of a capacity to reflect on the content and process of learning with a view to bringing them as far as possible under conscious control" (1995, p.175). What these implications and attitudes require of the teacher, particularly, it would seem, in semi-autonomy contexts, has been succinctly put by Littlewood: "One of our tasks as language educators is to develop strategies for helping learners to make choices at ever higher levels in the domains of communication, learning, and personal life" (1996, p.431).

Roots of Autonomy

Although some 65 years ago the Dalton Plan formally proposed in the UK that "pupils study their books largely by themselves" (Dumville, 1933, p.ix), that initiative failed, and all modern realisations of learner autonomy can be traced back four decades to when liberal views were on the rise. As multimedia and self-access are principally elaborations and refinements of what was established during the 1960s and 1970s it is possible to pass quickly over the years and still have a broadly accurate outline of developments.

Gremmo and Riley (1995) comprehensively list influences on learner autonomy from that period, from minority rights movements, through alternative life-styles, to educationists like Freire, Illich, Rogers, and Holec, and linguists and philosophers of language across the sociolinguistic disciplines, as well as reactions against behaviourism from humanistic and cognitive psychology. Oddie (1987) and Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993, Introduction, p.9) between them trace influences in America from that era to authors like Bruner, Kidd, Rogers, Houle, Knowles, Long, Moore, Penland, and Tough; the last named finding learners ready to take responsibility for planning and directing their learning if given the choice. Although Snedden (1930) had emphasised the importance of 'self-education' for adults, Verner (1964, p.60) was again suggesting it as a fruitful area of research, and throughout the 1960s and 1970s there was a growing body of opinion among educationists that independent learning was an option to be taken seriously (see, for example, Merriam, 1989, on the qualitative studies of Houle, Tough, Spear & Mocker, and others).

In language learning in the UK, Sheerin (1991), in a state-of-the-art article on self-access, remarks that the mixed ability classes of the 1960s fostered an emphasis on individualisation and discovery learning (p.143). She refers to the effect on audio-lingualism of Chomsky's 1957 attack on behaviourism, points to the work of sociolinguists (in particular, Hymes, 1972) as promoting an awareness of language for communication, and highlights the influence of Corder, 1967, and the studies in interlanguage and error analysis that drew teachers' attention to individuals (p.144). At every level, from primary to tertiary, teachers and theorists were mapping out the directions that independent learning was to take, and just a few examples suffice to show the extent of the initiatives. In 1966, H.S. Davis was able to provide a bibliography of 150 books, pamphlets, and articles on 'independent study' published between 1929 and 1966, the majority from the 1960s. In 1965, in a summary by Hatch and Richards, interest in independent learning in higher education

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[3]The term 'consciousness raising' includes the 'problem-solving' approach to teaching grammar (see, for example, Chamberlain, 1998).

was evidenced by topics which included the future of 'self-directed study', and 'independent study' at Cornell. An investigation on behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Washington (Independent Study, 1967) found 8,584 students in 16 schools involved in 'independent study' programmes. By 1970 the listed publications had risen to 247 (Independent Study, 1970).

In much the same way that self-access has become an important adjunct to self-direction, so programmed and self-paced learning was not only a significant part of the move towards focus on the learner but was the forerunner of modern multimedia approaches. Contract learning, self-pacing, and individualised learning took place in what were variously called self-learning labs, auto-tutorial labs, learning resource labs, and personal adult learning labs. Of some 40 or so accessible references from the 1960s to 'programmed learning' (or instruction), which overlapped with audio-lingual and audio-visual methodologies, only one or two stand out for stressing learner independence, although all initiatives had in common the desire to treat the learner as someone with special needs. Notwithstanding that programmed learning would today be seen more as 'a teaching method', with its detailed specifications of terminal behaviour, graded sequencing of material, and reinforcement of responses (Luelsdorff, 1965) being "directed mainly at learning for autonomy rather than true autonomy in learning" (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.22), it was among the principal innovations to break lock-step instruction, to attempt to separate the learner from the teacher (if not learning from teaching), and conceptually to pave the way for much that has since been adopted as standard self-access practice (see, for example, the autonomisation procedures in a Canadian federal government school, outlined by Bertoldi, Kollar, & Ricard, 1988, and the Barcelona language school inventory in Barnett & Jordan, 1991, pp.305-306).

Programmed learning was widely adopted and researched, apparently with considerable success, in subjects such as geography (Bivens & Campbell, 1963), algebra (Hagan, 1967), psychology (Hedl, 1969) and many others. In language learning, however, Newmark (1964) concluded that the teacher still had an important role in the use of programmed materials for Spanish (seventh graders), and Valdman (1966-1967) concluded that six years' research had shown total programmed learning to have only a limited role in 'self-instruction in foreign languages', with the need for supplementation by the teacher. Programmed learning, despite being in conflict with a 'discovery ethos' (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.23), continued to be used into the 1970s (e.g. Razik, 1976), and a version of it called the Personalized System of Instruction remained in force well into the 1980s. This latter, generally referred to as the Keller Plan after its creator, stressed subject-mastery, self-paced learning, and several versions of examinations, and was widely adopted as a means of fostering independent learning in the physical sciences (Keller, 1968; Keller & Sherman, 1974; D.W. Daly & Robertson, 1978; Karp, 1983). In 1974, in a wide-ranging and insightful article on several topics in education, including the relationship of linguistics and psychology to language teaching, Strevens forecast, for the period up to the year 2000, a growing use of video-tape for self-study and a renewed interest in programmed learning. But although frequently replicated studies provided strong evidence that mastery learning was an improvement on traditional tuition (e.g. Bloom, 1984) both it and the careful grading of materials were associated with teacher-imposed rather than learner-chosen structures. The principles of programmed learning became submerged in or were merged with those of initiatives like the doctoral level Supported Self Study (1986) of the Council for Educational Technology and, with the advent of self-access

centres, newer thinking combined with newer multimedia technologies to promote a newer vision of learner independence.[4]

The title of Keller's 1968 article ('Goodbye teacher ... ') was unambiguous, and accompanied a growing awareness of the wider role of self-direction, albeit by a variety of names: independent learning Jourard, 1967; Reid & Booth, 1974; E. Green, 1976; Simpson & Nist, 1984), modular curriculum for independent study (Fuson, 1970; Brown & Lewis, 1976; McMeen, 1984), self-paced learning (Lacey, 1980), guided independent study (A.L. Jones & Kerwin, 1978), self-instructional units (Johnson & Johnson, 1971; Hogan, 1977), or packets (M. Solomon, 1977), learning activity packages (B. Davis, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 1975), independent learning packages (Johnson & Johnson, 1975), audiotutorial minicourse (Dowdeswell, 1973), self-teaching units (Logan, 1974), contract learning, and self-learning (Lehmann, 1975), (from Postlethwait and colleagues) audio-tutorial procedures (Johnson & Johnson, 1975; Dowdeswell, 1976), multi-media self instruction (Geyman & Guyton, 1978), resource-based learning (Gewirtz, 1979), self-teaching (Hills, 1976), independent study (Briscoe, 1977; self-directed learning (Griffin, 1978); self-study (Olayi, 1979; Kaye, 1982; Morley, 1984; Waldstreicher & V. Pagano, 1988), student autonomy (Boud, 1981), learning autonomy (Weinstein, 1984), autonomous learning, and learner autonomy (W.J.K. Davies, 1987). There were others: Oddi (1987, p.21) added a further list, and Wenden points out that in the cognitive literature "autonomous learning is referred to as self-regulation (or auto-control)" (1995, pp.187-188). Brookfield (1984, p.61) noted Boshier's 1983 agreement with the suggestion that 'self-education' (setting goals, locating resources, evaluating progress) should be distinguished semantically from 'self-directed learning' (change in disposition or capability, observable as behavioural change).

E. Green (1976) thought that in Britain in the mid-70s there were about 100 educational establishments in which the science departments were experimenting with independent learning (p.163). In the USA, although DeRose reported that in a high school chemistry class "very few independent study students did more than was necessary" (1976, p.103) and "they could not discipline themselves to do what they had to do" (p.106), such negative outcomes were either not being revealed or were in a very small minority, and the growth in enthusiasm may be gauged by a report for the years 1987-1988 which claimed over 300,000 independent study enrolments reported by 72 institutions, of which 54% were at college level, 33% at high school level, and 13% in noncredit programmes (Feasley, 1989). Perhaps typical of the trend was the development from the 1970s of the highly organised Mathematics Learning Centre at Cerritos Community College in California, which enabled learner independence and increased staffing within the same budgets as for normal classes (Baley, 1992). More recently Riley has pointed out that in America language learning stood in contrast to the sciences, notwithstanding that "much of the inspiration and justification in terms of educational philosophy, psychology and second language learning has in fact come from the States" (1997, p.144).

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[4]References to these developments are readily accessible and are omitted for reasons of space. W.J.K. Davies (1987) is comprehensive, and one useful article on self-access language learning (SALL) outlines the staffing and other requirements for menu-driven, supermarket, controlled-access and open-access systems (L. Miller & Rogerson-Revell, 1993). For comparison of media technologies a decade ago (Janssen & van Loon, 1991) with more recent trends see the review by Powell (1998) of computer assisted language learning (CALL) and attempts to create 'intelligent' CALL (ICALL), and for examples of how sophisticated CALL has already become, see E.O.G. Davies and Williamson (1998). One intriguing reference, in the context of learner autonomy, to "abuse of the on-line help features" occurs in V. Stevens, 1996, p.296.

Sheerin (1991) indicated the ongoing projects involving Holec, Trim, van Ek, and others for the Council of Europe (p.144), and arguably the greatest impetus in Europe to what was coming to be called 'autonomous learning' was the work carried out at the CRAPEL at Université Nancy 2 under the direction of Henri Holec (who came to prefer 'self-directed learner' for the person), himself a principal consultant to the Council. At Nancy 2 a loose conglomerate of like-minded people undertook teaching and research which was "a logical outcome" as Henner-Stanchina and Riley (1978) explained it, of "indignant articles on the present state of teaching by a small minority of educators, philosophers and psychologists" as well as "a response to those, like Illich, who inveigh against the present educational machine"; it was also "an effort to apply the 'helping relationship' defined by Rogerian Therapy ... to the language learning situation" and "the extension of the ideas already being voiced in Nancy in the late '60's by Bertrand Schwartz (Ecole des Mines) and Yves Châlon (founder of the CRAPEL)". On a practical level it was "an alternate solution" to the problem of "the acquisition of a satisfying level of proficiency in English in the short time and restricted space of an evening class" (Henner-Stanchina & Riley, 1978, pp.75-76). In the same era Strasheim (1975), in recommending the increasingly popular notion of 'lifelong learning' (a central tenet of adult autonomy) advised that the core work should be done under teacher guidance, followed by small-group or individualised activities, with one goal of the model being opportunities for 'learning-to-learn' (another concept that was to grow in popularity – see, for example, Huttunen, 1996, for an overview – although more recently argued against). The 1980s proved to be fertile for the continuing growth of versions of autonomy (see, for example contributors to Council of Europe, 1988), but although highly influential, the CRAPEL model was not alone and Oddi (1987), calling for attention to the personality characteristics, as well as the more generally researched processes of self-direction, offers a useful overview.

Hoffman remarks that "very little research effort so far has been directed towards discovering how teachers are attempting to foster learner autonomy within a specific curriculum (1999, p.127), and although it is some 30 years since Melnick (1969) suggested a cautious probing of assumptions about 'independent study', there is still, perhaps understandably, a dearth of evidence for the pedagogical value of self-directed learning, despite the interval since the caveat of Dickinson that it "must be judged by the success of learners in learning the foreign language" (1987, p.2). A decade ago H.B. Long (1989) thought it necessary to call for questions to address the fundamentals of self-directed learning that, perhaps in company with ideas of motivation, might lead from theory to knowledge and yet Menniss, talking of the self-direction facilities available at the Roffey park management centre in West Sussex, makes much the same point as the others before him:

> The question remains, however, as to whether the students at such centres are learning at a faster rate or at a higher quality than those on traditional courses at traditional institutions, or where there is a mix of approach. There is no significant body of research evidence available yet, as far as I know, to make substantial claims for a particular approach. (Menniss, in Timmer, 1996, p.24)

The caution is laudable for being rare, and for being expressed by a firm supporter of "self-managed learning". The scale of interest in autonomy and the numbers of learners, of locations, and of levels involved would make for a vast amount of research if the efficacy of self-direction were to be seriously explored,

taking particular account of the access to resources that technology affords the present-day learner, and only a relative handful of studies have made the attempt.

From the 1960s many learning environments began to combine some form of self-directed learning with traditional teaching in classroom contexts and a few studies attempted to compare the two modes. Most reports, however, while serving to indicate the strength of the movement to independent learning, were of only local relevance, and a few cases will suffice to exemplify the trend. Ellich (1966) reported a comparison, on courses in the psychological foundations of education, between three independent study groups and a conventional instruction control group. He found no significant difference in grades or test scores and reported that students judged the independent study to be more efficient. Melnick (1969) found evidence in the research literature both for and against the efficacy of self-direction compared with traditional methods of the day. At that time he said that perhaps unhesitating acceptance was not completely justified, and rightly called for more complex questions to be asked of it (in what ways, for what kinds of students, for what subjects, etc.). For undergraduate courses, Mayhew (1971) stated that results of evaluative studies indicated that independent learning did not compare favourably with results of the usual lecture-discussion techniques. Braly (1972) found no significant difference in high school chemistry achievement between traditional and independent methods and concluded that more information was needed before opting for either. Shaver (1973) reported no significant difference in the scholastic achievement of students on an independent study programme and those attending classes, but the following year the independent study group showed significantly higher academic achievement. Problematically, unless learners are as familiar with self-direction as with other-direction, it may be a case of not comparing like with like, a consideration that will be returned to.

It would be gratifying if there were more 'contrast and compare' enquiries that put autonomy concepts to the test alongside their traditional classroom alternatives (preferably in same-subject rather than matched-pairs settings) for evaluation by the learners rather than the teachers. Although it is interesting, for example, that Hong Kong learners' ranking of group work was in clear contradistinction to that of their teachers (Peacock, 1999), the field awaits follow-up studies of the 'why' as well as the 'what' of teacher versus student perceptions – enquiries to probe perhaps utility versus enjoyment, theoretical enhancement of learning versus reality of distraction and other variables, and to explore without preconception the many factors that may act to separate educators from education. There are ethical and methodological reasons why contrastive studies of entire learning modes are problematical, and although the present study goes some way towards indicating a viable approach to researching the issue, most practitioners have to rely on the putative psychological or social benefits advanced by proponents of autonomy, taking what is available in the wider literature on cognition as sufficient justification for some degree of self-direction.

Among the more relevant to the present MIDL enquiry was an experimental course at the CRAPEL in France, in English reading and in listening comprehension (Cembalo & Gremmo, 1974). In the second year 15 of the original 29 students elected to continue and met with an instructor for half the time. The authors reported that, in general, the students considered that more progress could have been made with the constant presence of an instructor. In contrast, Moulden (1979), after the first year of an experimental English language programme (with 13 students) at an engineering college in France, reported that at least half of the students who had devoted 2 hours out of 3½ per week to semi-autonomous work had found the programme

more effective and more pleasant than the traditional methods of the preceding year. The teacher's observations together with the responses to a questionnaire suggested that continued experimentation along the same lines was warranted, and further annual reports were made as the programme was changed and adapted (see also Moulden, 1985). In both programmes there are evident parallels with the present study.

TRENDS IN AUTONOMY

More recently Moulden (1993) reported that over a period of six years, some 110 "not very motivated, mixed-ability French university students of computing" had been introduced to full self-directed learning of English; between 40% and 50% of each group of 16 to 25 students consistently indicated that they felt they made as much progress, or even more when working independently. Cotterall (1995b) points to three studies which "recognize that learners often expect the teacher to function as an authority figure" (p.198), and goes on to remark that student favouring of tests and progress-reports "need not necessarily be associated with dependence on the teacher. Rather, it could reflect an understanding of the importance of monitoring progress and a recognition of the assistance a teacher can provide in that process" (ibid.). Autonomous learners, moreover, "are likely to share with the teacher a general understanding of the language learning process and a specific understanding of the role of feedback" which, in turn "would allocate the learner responsibility for seeking and using feedback from a variety of sources" (Cotterall, 1995b, p.199). This not only offers a partial response to claims that teachers wish to be seen as the exclusive fount of all knowledge, but shades into the (de)motivating influence on self-directed learning of (in)capability in the target language. While much has been made of the role of 'learning-to-learn' in the literature a lot less has been said about the effects on morale, and hence on motivation to self-direction, of a lack of *language* competence as opposed to capability in effective techniques of learning, and the important part teaching may play in making up this lack.

The study reported by J.M. Green (1993) on student attitudes to communicative and non-communicative activities combined quantitative statistical analyses and qualitative extracts from questionnaires administered to 262 university students taking English language classes in Puerto Rico. The participants were asked to rate 17 typical classroom activities for 'enjoyableness' and 'effectiveness' and the researcher found "a tendency" for both to be correlated although the results did not indicate "whether or to what extent students believed that enjoyableness contributes to effectiveness" (p.8). Ushioda, however, reporting on aspects of the ongoing Modern Languages Research Project at Trinity College, Dublin University, makes the following relevant observation:

> In social-psychological theories of SLA ... ability or aptitude is hypothesised to be independent of motivation as a variable affecting L2 development, while motivation is viewed principally as a cause rather than an effect of L2 success (Gardner 1985). Yet the self-report data from the current investigation provides several simple unequivocal statements of motivation attributed to perceptions of ability, a facility for L2 learning or successful L2 learning history.... In the words of one student: "You keep up something you're good at". (Ushioda, 1993, p.9)

As in all areas of education, there are movements in autonomy as theorists vie to establish the dominant paradigm, as practitioners and proponents try to fill in the gaps of knowledge, or as the work of specialists in one area comes to fruition in publication. This can seem like merely fashion but ultimately results in offering

a healthy variety of persuasions to any institution considering the introduction of self-direction. Today, in what Egloff and Fitzpatrick refer to as "post-communicative foreign language learning" (1997, p.228), considerable attention is being paid to the role of institutions in fostering a spirit of autonomy, while teaching is increasingly informed by principles (which might be considered precursors to self-directed learning), the most important of which these authors consider to be: learner-centred, Nunan, 1988 – content-based, Kramsch, 1993 – action-oriented, Nunan, 1989 – project-based, Legutke and Thomas, 1991 – intercultural, Byram, Zarate, and Neuner, 1997 – and reflective, Holec, Little, and Richterich, 1996. Most important, they stress that "they all converge in the vision of self-directed (a term we prefer to autonomous) learners who are aware of their strategies, apply them consciously, and deliberately widen the scope of their language activities" (p.228). Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.155) refer to "the various Eurocentres" which "all provide the same self-directed learning schemes" in a variety of languages. They go on to mention self-direction initiatives at the University of Pamplona, the Linguistics Institute of Ireland, the French Instituts Universitaires de Professionalisation, and the Australian Migrant Institute, and in several countries in South East Asia, and in Egypt and Mexico, as well as many developments in self-access centres (pp.155-156). At Cambridge University "the resource centre provides traditional multimedia materials in over 100 languages" (Esch, 1996, p.39).

Among the more important initiatives in learner independence are those involving children at primary and secondary level. In high schools in the USA (and later to spread to other countries) the Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted and Talented, already in operation in the 1970s, featured virtually every concept and component of the learner autonomy of the 1990s (Betts, 1985, p.6). In the 1980s the National Council for Educational Technology in the UK promoted 'supported self-study' using technology and small-group tutoring to foster learner autonomy at secondary level (Wright, 1990), and the Flexible Learning Project of 1989 and following years, co-ordinated by Vee Harris (involving schools in London and student teachers at Goldsmiths College) aimed to "encourage students and teachers to move away from the teacher-dominated classroom and help develop greater pupil autonomy in language learning" (Grenfell, 1994, p.8). In France, the Lycée Pilote at Poitiers was billed as the 'school of the future', combining preparation for state examinations with self-directed learning periods, learner contracts, tutorial groups and the close collaboration of the local university and industries (Langton, 1989).

Special mention must be made of Leni Dam who, principally through her work over many years in Denmark, has contributed substantially to an understanding of how learner autonomy might function in secondary school classroom practice. A 1994 article outlines the typical methodology for 21 pupils (aged 11) in their second year of English: learners elect their own groups to work on self-chosen activities for which they can request teacher-guidance; a shelf of English-language materials, including picture-dictionaries, children's magazines, newspapers, and story-books is supplemented by wall-posters containing 'ideas', 'contracts', advice, guidelines, words and expressions, or 'plans' for activities. One 'plan' reads: 'working with essays – read them aloud to the group – comments/ questions from the group – notes in your diaries – go through/correct the essays in pairs – write any corrections/suggestions for changes on a piece of paper (remember name) – note down individually in your diaries things to remember' (p.516). It is obvious that only minor changes would adapt the approach to preparing adult classes for autonomous groupwork, or for use as an entire methodology with suitably prepared adults. At first glance it might appear that an alternative

perception to Dam's wholesale autonomy is being suggested by Corney (1994), also speaking of the secondary school context: "Autonomy does not mean that students spend all, or indeed the majority of their time working on their own" (p.2), but it is obvious from Dam's article that 'working on their own' is relative in a class where the teacher is very actively involved in a variety of participatory roles, not the easiest of which is her availability as helper and simultaneous close observer of the remaining interactions for remedial advice and encouragement later. Having said what autonomy does not imply, Corney goes on to say: "It does mean that students are challenged to think for themselves *how* they are going to tackle pair and group activities" (p.2), a sentiment very much in line with the ethos of Dam.

Chambers and Sugden (1994) report their observations of a similarly-conducted (possibly the same) Leni Dam Year 6 class of 21 pupils aged 11, in their second *week* of English, saying it was "little different to what one might observe in any school in Britain" (p.49). Of Hanne Thomsen's class of 16 pupils aged 12 who had been learning English for two years they said they "worked with apparent interest and enthusiasm on their chosen tasks until the end of the lesson" (ibid.). While persuaded that autonomy might help motivation and teaching in mixed-ability classes in Britain they also make the point that conditions which might encourage an autonomous approach in Denmark include the fact that "examinations are set, marked and moderated by schools; it is possible, if not common practice, to let pupils individually choose the texts they wish to offer for the exam" (p.51).

Thavenius began an experiment in 1989 with a total of 77 pupils, 18-year-olds in three classes in a senior secondary school in Sweden. She reported (1990) that even pupils in the least motivated group liked working individually, some pupils in the unco-operative group liked working together, and that in the most highly motivated group the clear preference was for a mixture of teaching and pair/group work. She concluded that, given sufficient time, encouragement, and support, even weak learners would benefit from self-directed learning. Among others may be noted Kostelecki (1996) facilitating 'open learning' (obligatory and optional tasks) in a grammar school in Vienna, Dexter (1996) linking classroom tasks to work in a model self-access centre in Brno, and Whitehead (1996) involving learners in weekly lesson planning in a language school in London. In the learning of Irish, where traditional methods have predominated, Ó Laoire (1997) reports a promising start to ongoing work in developing learner autonomy among adolescents. This will no doubt receive a boost from the planned new curriculum for primary schools, to be phased in over a 5-year period from 1999, in which Irish will be taught by communicative task-based methods (but see Sheen, 1994, for reservations).

In 1998 a Certificate in Independent Language Learning was offered by the Centre for Individual Language Learning at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, the culmination of five years' work by the Centre, and an interesting move alongside certification in other subjects.[5] Even in the area of traditional examinations it is possible to see innovation which may have implications for learner autonomy. The final item in the list of 13 'facilitator' roles suggested by Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993) is that of serving "as a validator or evaluator of learner accomplishment both throughout and at the end of a learning experience" (p.109), a function appropriate to 'with teaching' versions of learner autonomy, and one that can usefully complement the high profile self-evaluation of some other versions. Alderson quotes Coleman, who, on

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[5]Email copy of report by Radha Ravindran, Section Head, Language and Communication Division (email: radha@tp.ac.sg). The present author is unsure how he came by the copy (unfamiliar paper and typeface).

completing a survey of some 19,000 students at 190 UK higher education institutions, said "'there are such enormous discrepancies in levels of foreign language proficiency across British universities that labels such as "first year level" or "foreign language to degree level" are meaningless'" (Coleman, in Alderson, 1998, p.198). These results prompt Alderson to support internet "language test and assessment procedures on a nation-wide basis" especially since "the demand for language certification in the EU is growing irresistibly" (p.202), and for an extension of computer-adaptive tests (which present harder or easier test items until the taker's ability level stabilises) to offer more help, online dictionaries or grammar, clues, and so on. Despite the stand of Holec (e.g. 1996) against pedagogically prepared materials in the fostering of self-direction, there seems to be no practical reason why such innovations should not prove adaptable to self-assessment within a learner autonomy ethos. Among several satellite and technological initiatives, including CD-ROM, electronic databases, video-conferencing, email, and so on, B. Hill mentions the Janus project, a European Electronic Open University Network "whose aim is to establish telematic systems ... to provide a distance teaching system that reaches out to students at home, in educational institutions or at the work place" (B. Hill, 1994, p.219), a move very much in line with the general principles of learner autonomy.

Karlsson, Kjisic, and Nordlund (1999) report on the popular Autonomous Learning Modules (ALMS) begun in 1994 at Helsinki University, where close to 200 students from a variety of departments are currently involved, and which feature counselling and voluntary support groups. Under extreme pressure from budgetary cuts the Language Centre looked to Holec and colleagues at the CRAPEL for ways "to produce more credits for fewer contact hours" (p.1), and aimed to "give the students the capacity for language learning for life" (ibid.). They indicate a general improvement in motivation, discovery of the fun and usefulness of learning, and of empowerment for life beyond the university, realisation of personal control over the learning, a growth in awareness "which also affects other domains in life" but also some variation in "the ease of *adaptation to new roles*" (p.3).[6] At the Victoria University of Wellington, Cotterall (1995a) reports on work in autonomy initiated in the late 1980s, in which a great deal of emphasis is placed on dialogue between teacher and student both for consciousness-raising in regard to the processes of language learning, and to optimise use of the self-access centre (p.226).

Despite the fact that experience has reduced the duties of self-access centre staff at Victoria University to issuing reading materials (Cotterall, 1995a, p.226) perhaps over-all the most visible expression of a learner autonomy ethos is to be found precisely in the spread of self-access language learning (SALL), particularly in higher education, a development which may be traceable to the Resources Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, sponsored by librarians and educational technologists (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.126ff). Institutionally, as early as 1977, Lickley mentioned that Oral Roberts University was equipped for 'self-instruction' with computers, closed-circuit television, and dialling facilities from learning stations to audio-visual lecture banks (p. 16). At Georgia University in the mid-1980s the Personal Adult Learning Lab was already equipped with multi-media technology and a facilitator whose role differed little from that of an adviser in a current self-access centre (Mills & DeJoy, 1988). Self-access was already actively established a decade ago at Trinity College, Dublin University, at the CRAPEL, Université Nancy 2, and at the Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge (Little et al., 1989). B. Hill reported that the self-access centre at the

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[6]Some background derives from Kjisic (1999), and the full report is in *From here to autonomy*, Helsinki University Press, 1997.

University of Oxford attracted some 15,000 students per year, of whom a census showed that about 65% "were also attending classes, with the majority of the remainder using the centre for independent learning (Dyson, 1993: 20-21)" (B. Hill, 1994, p.216). And the British Council had been very active in promoting such centres abroad (ibid.).

In 1999 a very active email discussion has been conducted under the title of 'Colloquium on SALL', with notable contributions arising from experiences in Hong Kong (Benson), New Zealand (Cotterall), Singapore (Jacobs), Thailand (Dickinson), the United Kingdom (Sturtridge), the United States (Wenden), and elsewhere.[7] In addition an online 'SALL Newsletter' (edited by Phil Benson and Bruce Morrison) keeps everyone concerned up to date with international developments.[8] In France, Alex Ding set up the self-access centre in 1993 at the National Institute of Applied Sciences (INSA) in Lyon, and has been exploring video film in the promotion of learner autonomy (Ding, n.d.). A lively debate (among members of AUTO-L, an email forum for discussion of learner autonomy issues) has, to date, failed to resolve the title of someone administering the guidance offered to learners within a self-access facility (helper, adviser, counsellor, resource manager, etc.) a matter of no small importance, as one contributor has pointed out, when job-descriptions, training, and so on are being discussed. Riley (1998), who also lists tutor, knower, consultant, mentor, facilitator, and expert (each one, as he notes, with connotational, semantic, and possibly disciplinary context constraints on its use), calls counselling "a psychology of learning in the fullest sense" (p.10). Riley, outlining the counsellor-training he is involved in at the CRAPEL, is at pains to distinguish counselling "from all other forms of discourse, above all – teaching" (1998, p.4), and Gremmo (1998) also explains and discusses "the new pedagogical role, that of counsellor (or helper, tutor, advisor)" (p.150) as opposed to that of teacher, and the considerable work being currently undertaken to define the function in pedagogical and communicative terms.

As centres technologise so access to shelved materials becomes increasingly only part of the multimedia, internet, hypermedia, email conferencing, and other facilities available to learners, and although Menniss has a vision of a 'Chomsky Park' (in Timmer, 1996, p.24) which may carry reminders of Skinner's (1948/1976) utopian 'Walden Two', the notion of integrating institutional 'self-managed learning' and post-institutional lifestyle is already under way on such projects as Hull University's MERLIN language learning programme: "a multi-media information network giving remote students access to each other and the tutor via e-mail, computer conferencing and audio-conferencing" (Timmer, 1996-1997, p.6). Kilkenny (1996) reviewed the research literature and predicted: "It is likely that the teacher will become more of a facilitator or 'knowledge broker' as learning changes from being a passive process to being an active one" (p.81). No quarrel will be found with 'passive' here if it is taken to refer to exterior rather than interior processes of learning, nor with his further point that "for those changes to take place, it will be necessary for students to become multimedia literate" (p.81). B. Hill is, again, a worthwhile reference:

> A useful definition of terms is provided by Tay (1993). He suggests that 'multimedia' is any combination of text, graphic art, sound, animation, and video that is delivered by computer. When you allow the user to control how and when these elements are delivered, it is

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[7]Available: AUTO-L@ycvax.york.cuny.edu

[8]Available: http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/HASALD/newslett.htm

> 'interactive multimedia'. When you provide a structure of linked elements through which the user can navigate, interactive multimedia becomes 'hypermedia'. (B. Hill, 1994, p.220)

Jung gave plausible reasons why interactive video "comes close to being an ideal technical configuration for the autonomous and/or self learner" (1992, p.31). B. Hill (1994) cited Ingraham and Emery, 1992, describing "a hypermedia approach to language learning which involves the utilisation of powerful microcomputers presenting broadcast quality video images combined with interactive facilities" (B. Hill, 1994, p.216), but Dillon and Gabbard, in reviewing 30 research articles, somewhat pessimistically came to the conclusion that "the value of hypermedia in pedagogy is limited. Since hypermedia is ultimately a form of information presentation, there should be no real surprise here" (1998, p.345).

The self-directed learning initiatives recorded here are only a relative few of those currently in hand, but are reasonably representative of the trends.[9] One that might encourage more conservative teachers into the self-access centre is the promotion of groupwork, part of a general move at the time of writing away from individual autonomy towards co-operative or collaborative self-direction (which featured strongly in the present study). Whatever the theoretical backing, this has two practical effects: on the one hand it may offer an easier path to autonomy for the less confident or able (although replacing a 'knower' with peer-group 'unknowers' may not necessarily make for greater security), and on the other it may actively deter the more capable, especially those who find group-work distracting or unprofitable in acquisition terms. That said, it is probable that collaborative learning will increasingly be offered as one option within an over-all institutional ethos of freely-chosen learning modes. Tandem learning is a version of such collaboration whose potential is limited only by the imagination of the users (for projects in designing and evaluating the use of email see Little & Ushioda, 1998, and Tudini & Rubino, 1998). At Phnom Penh University, the self-access centre has had to cater not only for quiet study but also for the teacher's expected presence, and noise-levels which are tolerated as part of the group collaboration that Cambodian culture encourages (J.F. Jones, 1995). Something similar may come to be more widely recognised even in the West: Little said, talking of his interactive video programmes (Autotutor II) under development at the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at Trinity College, Dublin University: "We hope to take the first steps towards fostering learner autonomy via group work in self-access" (1996b, p.12).

Menniss described the Roffey Park management centre, in West Sussex as "one gigantic autonomous learning centre, with classrooms and traditional, formal teaching being just one of the resources available" (in Timmer, 1996, p.23). Here, in 'learning sets' of four or five colleagues, the students "can take a Sussex university masters degree only through using autonomous learning methods" (ibid.). Menniss remarks that "self-managed learning" implies "taking total responsibility for one's learning and progress" with "no institution, teacher or material to blame if the end result is failure" (ibid.). It is possible to take on board the trend he foresees, without quibbling (in this context) about terminology which contrasts 'self-managed learning' with "autonomous learning" which "certainly in the ELT sector at the moment, is at best only sharing that responsibility" (ibid.). He claims that 'self-managed learning' "tries to take people beyond the acquisition of technical competencies, to open a door into their own unique world of learning and offer resources to them in order to grow in their own unique way" (ibid.).

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[9]For a fuller overview, Phil Benson in Hong Kong maintains a list of worldwide professional associations catering to the theory and practice of learner autonomy (pbenson@hkucc.hku.h).

In the less well-endowed milieu of the present enquiry and the institutions and classrooms it represents the process of autonomisation means making different and better uses of existing facilities, of combining the old and the new and, above all, of adopting a much more flexible attitude to the familiar. The starting place in these contexts is the teacher's desk, and what adaptability implies in what might be called 'with-teaching' and 'with-guidance' versions of self-directed learning is a topic touched on later.

The Roles of Teacher and Learner

Along with promptings to learner self-reliance go practical considerations: cut-backs in funding may oblige a rethink of the best allocation of diminished resources, and Cotteral (1995a, p.220) points out that a teacher may not always be available to cater to the learner's needs. This remark hints at self-direction as a faute de mieux option, but there are views which consider learning 'without being taught' at least on a par with traditional instruction, and which advocate complementing or replacing teaching with counselling and guidance in learning to learn. In between are many shades of opinion, with some recognising the merits of both other-direction and self-direction and open to either, and others more ready to dispense with what they see as authoritarian subject-specialists altogether. At the extreme of this view, Wenden (1995) observes that "some discussions of learner autonomy appear to suggest that the teacher is the main obstacle to autonomy" (p.191) and J.B. Mason (1990) identifies perspectives which call for appropriation of the learning by the learner as emanating from Carl Rogers and humanistic psychology (cf. Rogers, 1969/1983, pp.119-121, on facilitation versus teaching).

From his germinal text of 1979/1981 for the Council of Europe, Holec's insights, together with those of his associates at the CRAPEL, have provided a blueprint for institutions whose resources, staffing, and ethos permit them, and a standard against which to measure alternative perceptions, and he has been most influential in spelling out the practical consequences of defining learner autonomy along Rogerian lines:

> In other-directed learning situations, all the choices concerning the learning programme are made by a decision-maker (a teacher, a text-book writer, etc.) who is not the learner himself, with or without a variable degree of involvement of the learner in the preparation of the decisions, i.e. the specification of the options among which there is a choice....
>
> In self-directed learning situations, all the decisions concerning the learning programme are the responsibility of the learner himself, with or without a variable degree of participation in the preparation of the decisions of an agent other than the learner (typically a 'teacher') acting as a helper in response to requests for information and advice. In other words, self-directed learning situations range from those in which the learner benefits, on demand, from more or less substantial technical assistance, in quantitative and qualitative terms, to those which are completely self-taught.
>
> In conclusion, learning a language by self-directed learning, i.e. 'without being taught', is learning by taking one's own decisions with respect to the objectives to achieve, the resources and techniques to use, evaluation, and management over time of the learning programme, with or without help from an outside agent. (Holec, 1996, pp.89-90)

Later, Holec talks of "the new breed of teachers who will be involved in the provision of self-directed learning facilities" (ibid., p.93), whose responsibilities and training constitute an ongoing objective of the CRAPEL, a project consistent with his call for SDL to "be made regularly available to language learners, as an alternative or as a complement to other forms of learning" (ibid.). Teachers acting as "'resource persons'"

for the learner "'give advice, provide explanations, help find suitable materials, suggest procedures, pass on information coming from other learners'" (Holec, in McDevitt, 1997, p.36). In this role a teacher is "'no longer seen as someone to listen to, to obey ... [but] ... as someone ... who serves as an informed interlocuter [*sic*], available when needed'" (ibid.). For a Rogerian advocate, assisting the learner to 'take control' at the earliest opportunity consistent with his or her willingness and capability implies not so much a partnership between professional and protégé(e) as the reversal of a power relationship of master and apprentice, with the learner now in control of resources managed on his or her behalf.

While all proponents of autonomy stand behind the learner's acceptance of responsibility not all will have the same perception of what such acceptance implies. At one level it may mean simply recognising that learning is much more than a matter of receiving instruction, and being willing to engage actively and directly in the processes necessary to gain knowledge, and at another it may mean taking the kind of control that Holec envisages. But Holec has pointed out that between the responsibilities of absolute self-direction and total other-direction lie many possible options:

> The learner may be responsible for defining every aspect of his learning programme, or some, or none; it is quite possible to imagine different learning programmes based on completely different combinations going from complete self-direction to complete 'other-direction', or anything in between.... It becomes possible to envisage a progression towards self-direction ... [and] to undertake empirical research to determine which of the theoretically possible combinations are in fact feasible. (Holec, 1985b, p.174)

Such a conception of learner autonomy goes beyond contexts where self-access facilities enable a combination of guided self-instruction and counselling and encourages precisely the kind of research undertaken in this enquiry. It also implicitly recognises the possibility of adopting a Deweyan approach (J.B. Mason, 1990) that sees learning as a shared experience. Such a position can be maintained, regardless of philosophy, wherever prudence suggests a combinatory approach, as in the mediated independent-dependent learning programmes of this enquiry, and tends to preserve the traditional client/professional relationship by incorporating autonomisation within the aims and objectives of a course in which authority is delegated to a teacher to serve the interests of the learners. For Dewey it was not a matter of simply discarding the traditional 'external' authority of the teacher but of partnering mature judgement with the less mature experience of the learner in more frequent and more intimate contacts that together constitute a "more effective source of authority" and which lead, in this view, to "more, rather than less, guidance by others" (1938/1974, p.21). If learning, however interdependent or interactive in process, is seen as a means to the learner's own personal ends as product, then it is possible to identify with Holec's (1996) self-direction as a 'complement' rather than as an 'alternative' to teaching, to take an integrative position, to foster the growth of self-direction out of an "acquisition-rich classroom" of natural discourse, consciousness-raising cognitive activities (R. Ellis, in Ruiséal, 1995, p.14; R. Ellis, in McCarthy, 1995, p.35).

To regard instruction as no better and no worse than a textbook, a dictionary, or a multimedia package, is to move closer to seeing the teacher as a Vygotskyan figure able to promote learning by benign expertise. In practice, eclecticism tends to ensure a certain amount of conflation of the roles of teacher and helper, so that Holec's 'decision-making' tables (1996, p.89) usefully distinguish other direction from self-direction by whether the teacher or the learner makes the ultimate decisions on the learning processes, with gradations between total control by the teacher and total control by the learner. From either emphasis it is possible to see

the relevance of Dewey's insights on the liberalisation of classrooms in the 'progressive education' of his own time:

> Freedom from restriction ... is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation. (Dewey, 1938/1974, pp.63-64)

The objective of both a with-teaching and a with-guidance approach to self-directed learning is learner autonomy, and differences in the roads they take to it become of practical importance only when they affect the appropriation and allocation of learning resources and the training and recruitment of staff to manage them, and become conceptually prominent mainly in relation to styles of guidance.

In contrast to models of learner autonomy in which counselling predominates, egalitarianism in with-teaching self-direction implies no diminution of the authoritative guidance for which Grow offers a personal rationale: "If I emphasize the need for directiveness, it is because, coming from a humanistic background, I had to learn to use directive methods wholeheartedly, without apology or shame, as part of the long-term cultivation of self-direction in certain learners" (1991/1996, p.4). Widdowson, too, in a thoughtful and thought-provoking essay, distinguished between the 'interactional' and the 'transactional' roles of teachers and students and their relevance to issues of teacher authority and learner autonomy:

> In interaction, the teacher – as *professeur* – claims a superior and dominant position by virtue of a role which has been socially ascribed to him or her.... So the exercise of authority in interaction is more or less *authoritarian*.
>
> But the teacher as *enseignant(e)* exercises authority in transaction by virtue of the achieved role of expert. His or her authority is based on professional qualification.... Transactional exercise of authority, therefore, is more or less *authoritative*. (Widdowson, 1987, p.86)

> It seems to me that it is because these differences in the exercise of authority have not been properly recognised that the authoritative actions of the teacher have at times been discredited quite improperly as authoritarian impositions of power. (Widdowson, 1987, p.87)

The importance of the issues extends well beyond the highly directive yet egalitarian context and ethos of the present enquiry, but it may be considered that the roles of learner and teacher are far from rigidly determined, that in fact every teacher was once a student, and that authority is no more the exclusive prerogative of either than is learning itself. In a passage reminiscent of Little's (1996c) "language learner-user" (p.96) and "the inseparability of language learning and language use" (p.97), Allman (1994) talks of Freire's notion of "teaching and learning as two internally-related processes within each person", of his "teacher-learners and learner-teachers" and of how "teachers do not cease to be teachers but cease being the exclusive or only teacher in the learning group. They will need to relinquish authoritarianism but not authority" (p.153). Widdowson also affirms that one cannot talk about pedagogy at all unless authoritative classroom control is recognised as legitimate, and in a passage which might complement Little's reminders on interdependence, says of learner autonomy: "The learner is never really independent: it is the *kind* of dependency which changes" (Widdowson, 1987, p.87). And, too, although some, like the researcher in the facilitating institution of the present enquiry, must adapt to a particular context or ethos, insofar as the CRAPEL models allow for subject learning for the learner's own purposes they remain an influential source of inspiration, especially

since, as there is no necessary and absolute relationship between context and persuasion, it is perfectly possible for proponents of with-teaching to find themselves in a 'self-access only' environment or for a Rogerian to promote self-direction within the constraints of a traditional taught classroom.

But there are other views of the teacher's role, outside the present scope to do more than touch on. Some versions of postmodernist, criticalist, social transformationist, emancipatory, and similar positions want adult learning to serve the interests of social reform (Allman, 1994; W.T. Anderson, 1996; J. Daly, 1975; Kvale, 1996; Kwok, 1998; Merriam, 1987; Mezirow & associates, 1990; Rupert, n.d. [b]; Scheurich, 1997; and many others). Brookfield (1984; 1985; 1993) is among those who, like Garrison (1992; 1997), maintain that SDL implies formation of a new mind-set under the required guidance of a 'facilitator', and are cautious about self-directed learning of "a formal body of knowledge" (Bonham 1992, p.193, reviewing Candy's *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning*). Benson (1996) says:

> The issue of control lies at the centre of a critical approach to autonomy, operating at three inter-related levels: control of the learning process, control of resources and control of language. I use the word control in preference to responsibility because it places an emphasis on the right to autonomy. (Benson, 1996, p.31)

Benson has here underlined a concern which finds stronger expression in Brookfield: "Who controls the decisions ... is a political issue highlighting the distribution of ... power. Who has the final say in ... the range and type of decisions ... and ... the pace and mechanisms for decision making, indicates where control really resides" (Brookfield, 1993, p.233). This focus offers a major rationale for promoting self-direction even if in practice it poses problems for those "collaborative experience" (Garrison, 1997, p.23) situations where other-direction and self-direction are interwoven so that decisions on the learning are regularly and routinely passed between teacher and learner in a web of interaction and exchange that makes it difficult to identify 'control' in any principled manner.

Persuasions change with heightened awareness, but proponents of every hue would agree with what Brockett and Hiemstra point out, quoting from "the landmark *Learning To Be* report (Faure *et al.*, 1972)", that teachers' perceptions of their role must evolve: "Calling teachers 'masters' (whichever of its meanings we give the word) is more and more an abuse of terms. The teacher's duty is less and less to inculcate knowledge and more and more to encourage thinking" (Faure et al., in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991/1993, p.106). An evolving perception is informed by awareness of increasing learner independence to match his or her situation, willingness, and capability, and that involves recognition of the partnership of teaching and self-direction in semi-autonomy programmes. Once again Little has *les mots justes* on a range of related issues and rationales:

> In traditionally organized classrooms the emphasis is firmly on expository teaching ... however, learners need to be able to perform in a wide variety of discourse roles. This implies a much more flexible discourse structure ... that helps learners to develop their capacity for taking initiatives in the target language. The most direct way of creating such a discourse structure is to give the learners an equal share of responsibility for what goes on in the classroom. This entails using the same techniques of critical exploration and reflection as are used to develop learners' conscious autonomy. That is, the pursuit of conscious autonomy in the language classroom establishes learners' social autonomy; and this in turn should help to develop and strengthen the mental autonomy that is a central feature of naturalistic language acquisition. (Little, 1991a, pp.22-23)

Sharing responsibility may take many forms, and in the experimental courses of the enquiry was realised as the integration of ODL with SDL. This, as part of the general role of teaching in promoting independence, is indirectly recognised and supported by the European Council for Cultural Co-operation, one of whose objectives is that language teaching should also serve to foster both individual autonomy and social responsibility (van Ek, 1986). To that end a Council of Europe intergovernmental symposium held at Sintra, in Portugal in 1989, saw Vocationally Oriented Language Learning (VOLL) become "one of four priority sectors for the next Language Project" as "an integral part of a lifelong educational process which combines work-related skills with personal growth, cultural awareness and social skills" (Egloff & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p.227). Concentration on self-direction in a classroom context does not, therefore, preclude recognition of what Little has pointed out to the present writer: "All versions of autonomy/ self-direction assign a central role to reflective purposes. Where they differ is in the focus and ultimate goal of reflection" which, in some cases "reaches beyond the immediate context of learning" (personal communication). Enough has been said to indicate that self-directed learning is, like any other initiative in education, whatever its users want to make it. From one perspective it liberates the learner from an unwarranted dependency relationship, from another it heightens his or her awareness of the learning process, from a third it opens the way to more collaborative and socially rewarding learning. In sum, then, it is both a social and a pedagogical mode, and those learners and educators concerned with it may choose the emphasis and hence the role that suits the situation best.

With the wider impact of learner autonomy "self-directed schemes will not necessarily eliminate teaching systems: the two systems are two different ways of offering learners opportunities to learn. They are based on different assumptions and emphasise different criteria" (Gremmo, 1998, p.147). And although teaching will not disappear, its current realisation may defer to better understandings not only of how we learn but of how we are. It seems highly probable that as many more students are exposed to self-direction and as it increasingly becomes a recognised norm of teacher training, that the principles of learner autonomy will ultimately inform the whole profession. Self-access centres are likely to play an increasing part at all levels of education, perhaps with some centralisation and amalgamation, and financial rationalisation promoting the sharing of facilities, as adjuncts both to semi-autonomy settings and to the counselling ethos sponsored by the CRAPEL. This model, as it gains impetus, looks set to become the over-all ultimate direction for institutional learner autonomy to take, if only because, more than any other initiative, it places the learner at the heart and centre of the learning process. Gremmo explains that the objective of "the new pedagogical role ... of counsellor (or helper, tutor, advisor)" is "to help learners, through negotiation of common ground, to acquire sufficient knowledge to take efficient decisions as regards their own specific learning situation.... Learners should from the start have total responsibility for these decisions" (1998, p.150). Paradoxically, as more teachers re-train and become comfortable in the role of counselling there may develop a greater tolerance of directiveness, not of the tyrannical kind which it will have helped to abolish, but of the new persuasion that measures the legitimacy of teacher authority by its service to the learner (in addition to Widdowson, above, cf. also Baumrind's 1973 distinction between 'authoritarian' and 'authoritative', cited in Little, 1997, p.4). With awareness of the difference between 'informative' and 'evaluative' feedback to the learner (Dickinson, 1995, p.166) and with the bugbear of teacher domination removed, there may grow a renewed faith in the role of good instruction where it is freely sought as supplementary to, in Holec's notable phrase, "the capacity of the learner to learn without being taught"

(Holec, in Gremmo, 1998, p.144), and with that may come a renewed realisation that, semantics and roles aside, good teaching gives good counsel and counsellors may legitimately advise teaching, especially where time is short and deadlines must be met.

Both teaching and counselling involve a two-way transfer of information, the telling of two stories, and neither necessarily implies abdication of personal responsibility by either party to the exchange. If concerns about the content, direction, and manner of that transfer can be overcome in regard to teaching, then perhaps telling about a language will be seen as essentially no different from telling about materials for self-access. To call one person a 'teacher' and the other a 'counsellor' may serve, as with 'doctor' and 'nurse', to delineate them for training and duty purposes, but should not also obscure the fact that both are caring professionals whose functions often engage and overlap. In that regard, Little has a caution:

> If learner counselling, or advising, is to be developed as an effective support to learners in self-access, open and distance learning schemes, simplistic oppositions between teaching and counselling/ advising must be abandoned, and the role of the counsellor/ adviser must be theorized as just one of the roles which contribute to the construction of a language learning process (cf. the role analysis proposed by Levinson 1988, following Goffman 1981). (Little, 1997, p.12)

This perception accords with several fundamentals of semi-autonomy as well as with the proposed recognition of 'paracounseling' in classroom contexts (discussed in the next chapter), and indirectly affirms the common objective of counsellors and teachers, of applied linguists and researchers, to bring more understanding to the task of learning and thus to make it easier and more fulfilling for the learner.

But awarenesses of teaching have to change not only in accord with the internal evolution of the discipline, but more specifically and immediately alongside and in response to growing perceptions of the concepts of autonomy and the practices of self-direction, whose definitional parameters are therefore explored in the following chapter, not to any metaphysical depth but sufficiently to inform the present enquiry.

CHAPTER 3

PRECEPTS AND PRACTICES

This chapter attempts to unravel some definitional issues of relevance to the enquiry and outlines some current thinking on interdependent self-direction.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF AUTONOMY AND SELF-DIRECTION

The nature of learner autonomy and self-directed learning makes for a wide range of understandings, some of which are pursued below as a lead-in to others with direct bearing on the present enquiry. Grow (1991/1996) remarks that "Brookfield, (1986), Candy (1987), and Gerstner (1987) have devoted more than one thousand pages to analysing the meaning(s) of self-directed learning" and even when it is precisely defined "its meaning unexpectedly shifts to a new location" (p.1).[1] The phenomenon is not new: a similar ambivalence attached to the term autodidact when in England at the end of the 18th century working men banded together to provide themselves with education: "An autodidact's self-education did not exist in … schooling, nor does a definition of autodidacticism rely on an absence of schooling. Rather, autodidacticism proceeds from the conscious decision of the individual to pursue knowledge … for a variety of ends" (Worrall, 1985, p.70). And the differences are still not fully resolved since the contributors to Harding-Esch (1976) made the attempt, a lacuna which reflects a similar elusiveness in society at large (e.g. Milligan & W.W. Miller, 1992). McNay (1994) says that "Foucault redefines the concept of autonomy as a process in which the interrogation of the established limits of identity leads to an increased capacity for independent thought and behaviour" (p.145). This is one of the finer insights on personal autonomy, but there are others. Dworkin examined the meaning of autonomy in depth, and observed:

> It is used sometimes as an equivalent of liberty … sometimes as equivalent to self-rule or sovereignty, sometimes as identical with freedom of the will. It is equated with dignity, integrity, individuality, independence, responsibility, and self-knowledge. It is identified with qualities of self-assertion, with critical reflection, with freedom from obligation, with absence of external causation, with knowledge of one's own interests.... It is related to actions, to beliefs, to reasons for acting, to rules, to the will of other persons, to thoughts, and to principles. About the only features held constant from one author to another are that autonomy is a feature of persons and that it is a desirable quality to have. (Dworkin, 1988, pp.5-6)

Brockett and Hiemstra (1993) view self-direction "as a continuum … a characteristic that exists, to a greater or lesser degree, in all persons and in all learning situations" (p.11). Pedagogically, Gremmo and Riley

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[1]The original article by Grow, in *Adult Education Quarterly, 41*(3), pp. 125-149, 1991, was mislaid; the pagination given here is from the online version in the reference list.

(1995) suggest that "there are strong indications that self-directed learning is the only kind of learning there is, that the conditions referred to by terms like 'autonomy' are necessary concomitants to the psycho-social constraints on cognition inherent in the human mind" (p.161). Interest and support comes from educators and researchers who recognise the useful distinction observed by Wenden between "linguistic autonomy – a traditional goal of L2 teaching" and "pedagogic autonomy" which calls for acquisition by the learners not only of the target language but also of "the skills and knowledge necessary to learn on their own and to manage their learning" (1988, p.639).[2]

Concern with differentiating terms is not usual in the literature, and for everyday purposes the fine distinctions of research may not be needed: "'Monolithic definitions of autonomy and independence have proved elusive, and it is perhaps more productive to speak of different versions of the concepts which correspond to different perspectives and circumstances' (Benson and Voller, 1997: p. 13)" (Ding, n.d., p.4). Outside the confines of research, therefore, it may suffice to agree with Ding that "it is perhaps more prudent to describe the characteristics of autonomous learners rather than define autonomy" (ibid.), and to work with the list he provides of characteristics which are to be found with minor variations throughout the literature: working without supervision – choosing material – setting long-term and short-term objectives – prioritising objectives – deciding when and how long to work on an objective – assessing progress – evaluating learning programmes (adapted from Ding, n.d., p.4). Leaving aside the most pertinent question 'why?', such useful lists are not intended to differentiate between the ways in which learners may do these things, nor thus to distinguish a little autonomy from a lot, nor to sort out the good from the better. It seems appropriate, therefore, to attempt to refine a few distinctions which are germane to the enquiry.

Although, as Little has reminded the present author (personal communication), differences in terminology do not necessarily imply differences in perception or practice, not least among the uncertainties in the field of learner autonomy are terms which, elaborated from theoretical insights by authorities over many years, have tended to shift ground, variously loosening or firming up positions on the role of institutions in learner autonomy, autonomous learning, and self-directed learning. Most books and many articles begin with a section on terminology, including not a few associated and satellite terms like distance learning, open learning, individualised learning, and flexible learning, (Pemberton, 1996, p.2), all to a greater or lesser extent drawing on principles of learner autonomy for their practice. This section does not, therefore, intend to deal with every nuance, but rather to note the major conceptual divide between what is here called the weak and the strong versions of learner autonomy, to remark on earlier perceptions of 'autonomy' and 'self-direction' by two leading authorities, and to suggest a more practical role for the terms 'dependent' and 'independent' than is currently available.

Difficulties with terminology go back at least to the earlier work of Holec and Dickinson, two of the authorities who made serious attempts to tackle the problem, and whose efforts have since been amplified but not superseded. Note is taken of the caveat of Brockett and Hiemstra: "Not only do individuals differ in their views of self-direction in learning, but each individual's view is likely to change over time. Thus, when considering definitions it is not only necessary to understand *who* has offered a particular definition, but

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[2]Wenden attributes the phrase "pedagogical autonomy" to Riley, 1974, describing work at the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL), for many years under the leadership of Professor Holec and now headed by Professor Gremmo at Université Nancy 2.

when it was offered" (1993, p.21). The earlier Holec/Dickinson dichotomy has since been resolved, but the present discussion concerns terms whose similarities and differences continue to make it difficult, at times unnecessarily, to compare like with like at both a theoretical and a practical level, and highlights the need for stable terminology to be given a higher priority.

In contrast to Mocker and Spear (1982), who regarded the ultimate state as self-directed learning, and Dickinson, who had seen autonomous learning as the upper limit of self-directed learning (1976, p.12), and said "autonomy is one of a set of possibilities within the larger category of self-directed learning" (1978, p.7), Holec had persuasively described the autonomous learner in terms of capability of taking charge of his or her own learning at every stage, from devising a personal syllabus, through selecting materials and informants, to evaluating the outcomes, without necessarily doing so on any given occasion of learning (1979, p.3; 1985b, passim).[3] Despite Dickinson's suggestion (1976, p.16; 1978, p.10) that autonomy and SDL were not two labels for the same phenomenon, the tendency to confound them was encouraged by the fact that he saw self-direction as able to relinquish autonomy for its own ends and Holec saw autonomy able to relinquish self-direction for the same reason.[4] For Holec, SDL was an option available to the autonomous learner, while for Dickinson the superordinate term was self-directed learning, within which might be chosen autonomous or non-autonomous learning. That this was a typical problem in the terminology was confirmed by Oddi:

> Kasworm (1983), perhaps, most clearly articulates the ambiguity ... when she notes that self-directed learning is conceived as a "set of generic, finite behaviors; as a belief system reflecting and evolving from a process of self-initiated learning activity; or as an ideal state of the mature self-actualised learner". (Oddi, 1987, p.21)

Although there is currently a greater consensus on terminology (e.g. between Holec, 1979; Little, 1991b, Dickinson 1995), there is no clear differentiation between, for example, the status of the fully competent 'autonomous' learner whose circumstances permit only other-direction, and the status of the socially autonomous adult as yet incapable of self-directed learning. On the one hand, it is possible to accept Dickinson's perception:

> If I wish to become a competent carpenter, I may choose to read books ... or ... join a class in carpentry. In my view, both are examples of self-directed learning. The vital factors are the individual specification of functional aims, and the free choice of means of achieving those aims. The process of achieving learning objectives is ... a progression along a path which has frequent forks – some many-pronged. The defining characteristic of self-directed learning, in my view, is that the learner makes a free choice at each of these forks. This free choice may in fact be a choice to relinquish his/her autonomy over a particular stretch for a particular purpose. (Dickinson, 1976, p.17)[5]

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[3]The debate goes on. Dickinson has recently said "The notion of autonomy as a right does not conflict with the notion of autonomy as the capacity to take responsibility for one's own learning, nor with the view I prefer, a particular attitude to learning in which the learner wishes to take (or share) responsibility for his/her own learning." Personal communication (email to members of AUTO-L, an internet regulated forum for discussion of learner autonomy, 16th March, 1998, 12.41).

[4]But Dickinson's (1992) 'effective learner' is virtually an amalgam of these perspectives.

[5]See also Dickinson, 1978, pp.11-12.

But, on the other hand, adopting the internal consistency of Holec's terminology allows not only a distinction between autonomy and SDL as ends and means respectively, but a convenient opposition between SDL and ODL as learning modes:

> The acquisition of autonomy is a fundamental aspect of the C.R.A.P.E.L. approach: it is the objective, just as self-direction and support are the methodology.... By becoming autonomous, that is by gradually and individually acquiring the capacity to conduct his own learning programme, the learner progressively becomes his own teacher and constructs and evaluates his learning programme himself. (Holec, 1985b, p.188)

At risk of over-simplifying complex insights and while allowing for cross-over and mixed views it is possible to distinguish between the tendency to see other-direction as the antithesis of independence and the view that it is just another option open to the learner. The first tendency may take autonomy to be an independent attitude to learning which acquires the necessary capability for fulfilment principally if not exclusively in the process of self-direction. The second may take autonomy to be an independent attitude to learning which acquires the necessary capability for fulfilment by the exercise of the learner's free choice of learning mode. Dickinson's 'self-directed learning' model stressed the innate freedom of the learner, and usefully incorporated the notion of multiple choices, any of which allowed 'autonomy' (on a par with 'other-directed learning' as the free choice of the individual) to be relinquished in the interests of the individual's own intent.[6] In Holec's model other-direction was not ruled out but the learner would attain full autonomy principally by means of guided self-direction. While the issues might be semantically reconcilable, the difference in perspective exposes the question of whether other-directed learning is to be seen as friend or foe, as ally or enemy of autonomy. That question is bound up with issues of social autonomy which an enquiry into adult preferences for learning modes must, if indirectly, address, and, while it is possible to gloss over terminological differences in the interests of ongoing debate, it is necessary to arrive at some consistency for the purposes of research. Unfortunately, a compound term for social autonomy and self-direction, perhaps on the lines of *autonomous self-direction* still leaves the confusion unresolved, and does not solve the problem of disengaging *learner* and *learning* from the over-all adult autonomous control exercised by a self-directing person.

Dworkin has called autonomy "a second-order capacity of persons to reflect critically upon their first-order preferences, desires, wishes, and so forth and the capacity to accept or attempt to change these in light of higher-order preferences and values" (1988, p.20). Kenny offers a reminder that Stevick said of learner autonomy that it involved "'the making of choices ... and the exercise of initiative in attacking new material. The teacher cultivates the student's "autonomy" by deliberately building choices into situations'" (Stevick, in Kenny, 1993, p.432). The "*ability* and *willingness*" that Littlewood mentions (1996, p.428) must therefore be supplemented, in classrooms as in life, by opportunity. Building choices into situations implies providing opportunities for their implementation, and if learner autonomy is comprised of choices the learner makes

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[6]Dickinson (1987) says: "A self-directed learner ... retains responsibility for the management of his own learning. If the learner, in addition, undertakes all these management tasks himself, then he is also autonomous" (p.13). He also specifically notes that "Holec (1980:5) makes the same distinction as that made here, but reverses the terms so that for him autonomy describes an attitude and self-direction a mode of learning" (1987, p.15). More recently Dickinson (e.g., 1995, p.167) has adopted 'autonomy' as reflecting an attitude to learning rather than concern with actions.

and actions the learner takes, a difficulty lies in disentangling, or at least recognising the difference between, independent decisions made within other-directed actions and self-directed actions taken in fulfilment of someone else's decisions.

This study attempts a reconciliation by proposing the concept of auto-responsibility (AR), seen as an inalienable attribute whose fullness lies in the right to answer to no-one else for choices or their outcomes.[7] The notion bears some resemblance to the 'psychological autonomy' which Aviram (1995) usefully distinguishes from 'institutional autonomy', the latter entailing freedom within a sphere of delegated responsibility, and the former referring to "a certain structure or mode of human personality defined by certain characteristics" (p.67); Aviram stresses that "there is no logical relationship whatsoever between the two meanings" (ibid.). His claim is that someone may be highly constrained by situation or circumstance yet retain the highest degree of psychological autonomy, the latter being what is usually meant, he says, "when the ideal of autonomy or education for autonomy is raised by liberals or attacked by communitarians and feminists" (ibid). Haworth makes much the same point when talking of the 'substantive and procedural independence' of a cloistered nun in terms which could aptly be applied to the auto-responsible learner choosing the subordination of complete other-direction:

> Her substantive dependence need not be taken as a sign that she lacks personal autonomy. The question of autonomy here refers to whether the life she leads is her own. But it is her own in the relevant sense not because of what it substantively is but because of her reasons for living it. (Haworth, 1986, p.20)

But of equal importance to this line of thought is Haworth's further point, taking the example of a person whose autonomy is not diminished by following another's routine because it works: "The moment the mechanic closes his mind to the possibility that there is a better way his dependency on others becomes procedural and autonomy is to that extent lost" (p.28). Despite the difficulty of defining 'better', the ultimate defence of learner autonomy may simply be its desire to protect the learner from closing the mind to another way.

Holec's perception of learner autonomy as taking responsibility has become the most widely proffered definition in the literature, even if its interpretation varies, and it would be easy to see the autonomous learner as identical to the auto-responsible learner. That they correspond to different conceptions, despite a natural degree of overlap, is shown by what Dickinson (1993) has said:

> I interpret taking responsibility for one's own learning as meaning that the learner is involved in making the necessary decisions about his learning.... A list would include decisions about objectives, ways of reaching those objectives, materials, sources of input, activities and so on. A fully autonomous learner would make decisions about all these areas himself. He may also undertake the learning independently. (Dickinson, 1993, p.3)

This formulation makes involvement in decision-making the distinctive condition of learner autonomy, but while there are sound theoretical reasons why this is a necessary condition it is less clear that it is sufficient.

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[7]Compare Dane (1990) on self-determination: "Individuals have the right, and are assumed to have the ability, to evaluate information, weigh alternatives, and make decisions for themselves" (p.45). And Garrison, noting Smith's, 1990, observation that many situations do not allow or call for learner control, remarks that "the art of learning-to-learn is in recognizing such situations and the reasons for them" (1992, p.142).

If, as Dickinson also says, "autonomy in learning is essentially a matter of attitude to learning" (ibid), then any definition of it which requires involvement also requires a very specific institutional context of facilitation. It is clearly not enough, then, that the learner have an attitude to learning: without its concrete manifestation there can be no autonomy as so defined. And yet, just as there is need to distinguish an institution which facilitates autonomy from one which does not, so there is a need to distinguish the autonomy-minded (but not involved) learner from the autonomy-minded (and involved) learner, and it is clear that the present formulation cannot do that. This brings us back to the distinction made hitherto between autonomy as attitude and self-direction as its manifestation, a useful working dichotomy wherever it is applied. But, as already discussed, it is not a universal convention. Which brings back the need for a superordinate term along the lines of 'auto-responsibility'. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993) admit the influence of the 'client-centered therapy' of Rogers on their own perceptions, and the centrality of "his trust in their ability to assume responsibility for their own lives" (p.126) on "what we mean by the term *personal responsibility* ... [which is] ... that learners retain control over their learning processes, and are subsequently responsible for the consequences of their learning" (ibid.). In contrast to the autonomous learner, defined as involved, the auto-responsible learner might be indifferent to procedural decision-making, happy to leave choices of interim objectives, materials, and so on to others, as long as they meet his or her personally determined needs. If a mundane comparison can be made, it might be between the autonomous (or self-directed) person who insists on driving the car, and the auto-responsible person who is content to be chauffeured. That said, the auto-responsible person who never discovers the engine and never learns to drive is consigned to dependency. Auto-responsibility and autonomy are thus seen as complementary, if different, facets of the same attribute of independence. Guérin quotes Bakunin expressing a concept very akin to the 'auto-responsibility' of this thesis:

> "Freedom is the absolute right of every human being to seek no other sanction for his actions but his own conscience, to determine these actions solely by his own will, and consequently to owe his first responsibility to himself alone." (Bakunin, in Guérin, n.d., p.12)

Bakunin, of course, was speaking of ethical issues of concern to all humankind, but would no doubt have recognised the same principle applied in practice (as autonomous or self-directed learning) to the limited context of adult learners.[8] Azzopardi, who reported learning Spanish, German, and Russian to university entrance standard in 8 to 12 months each, made the point that the magnitude of the task necessitated short-cuts and recommended that the shortest cut of all was to become one's own "teacher-in-chief" (1981, p.7). That he saw this in terms very similar to those of 'auto-responsibility' was evident:

> Make use of other "teachers", whether these take the form of people, books, magnetic tapes, or anything else, but, like a true commander-in-chief, reserve the direction of the whole operation to yourself. This is the greatest short cut, because, ultimately a mature person is the best judge of what is profiting him and what is not. (Azzopardi, 1981, p.7)

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[8]The present writer was unaware of Bakunin's statement when formulating the concept of auto-responsibility but would recognise that, just as Bakunin's moral responsibility to self must presume a certain capacity of conscience (if only of the self-interested kind that wishes to retain the benefits of voluntary association), so auto-responsible learning assumes a similar minimum cognitive faculty.

But his recognition that not everyone was mature acknowledged that not everyone was capable of such 'direction', whereas auto-responsibility relates not so much to maturity of capability as to maturity of self, demanding only that the person answer to no-one else for the outcomes of decisions. Similarly it differs from 'full autonomy' or versions of 'learner in control' self-direction which forbid teaching, rather than simply discourage it. The latter does at least recognise the principle of auto-responsibility, as Henner-Stanchina and Riley made clear two decades ago: "If ... they still choose to follow a classroom course with a group and a teacher, that is their right: but at least they will have made a genuine choice, aware of the alternatives and options available" (1978, p.93).

Whether or not persons are capable of or have opportunity for self-direction (in any sphere of life) they are auto-responsible to the extent that they answer to no-one else for the outcomes of any decision they make or accept. But ultimate self-answerability is scarcely conceivable without the freedoms which support it, and clearly there is a very close relationship between making or accepting decisions and the capability and opportunity for so doing, and hence an inseparable bond between auto-responsibility and each context of the autonomous person. Increasing the opportunities for autonomy increases the opportunities for AR decisions, and enhancing capability in autonomy enhances the quality of those decisions. Thus, auto-responsibility will characterise all learners, whether or not capable of taking charge of their own learning programmes, who as autonomous persons make or accept decisions which accord with their own objectives, and nothing precludes the kind of guidance which involves "being shown what the decision involves" (Holec, 1985b, p.175). If auto-responsibility is, as an attribute of every person, the superordinate term within which all contextual autonomies (capability bound) and self-directed decisions are to be subsumed, then its manifestation in education as auto-responsible learning (ARL) is as much a characteristic of the would-be as of the fully autonomous learner, both of whom have to make key decisions at nodes, or at Dickinson's forks (1976, p.17; 1978, p.12), in the learning process.

In addition to having much in common with Dickinson's (1976; 1978) 'self-directed learning' (and with his more recent preference for the term 'autonomy') the notion acknowledges the place of capability and opportunity in its realisation, and takes for granted the use by the learner of publicly available resources, in keeping with the abstract individualism of classical liberalism: "Social and political rules and institutions are, on this view, regarded collectively as an artifice, a modifiable instrument, a means of fulfilling independently given individual objectives; the means and the end are distinct" (Stephen Lukes, in Rupert, n.d.[a], p.1). An auto-responsible learner might thus take personal control of major aspects of the learning, or prefer simply to make key decisions or choices at critical node-points in it; if, instead, such a learner elects to accept the decisions or choices of a trusted other (a teacher or not), the point is that he or she alone remains entirely responsible for and answerable to no-one else for the outcomes. Insofar as the notion of auto-responsibility allows the individual to choose subordination as a means to personal ends, it is very close to what Dworkin says of autonomy: "A person who wishes to be restricted in various ways, whether by the discipline of the monastery, regulations of the army, or even by coercion, is not, on that account alone, less autonomous" (1988, p.18). Needless to say, such a realist concept of the individual stands in some contrast to the nihilist view of Deleuze and Guattari, which Palmer explains:

> They ... deny the reality of the individual. The individual is reduced to sub-individual level called desiring machines which appear in the field of the social.... Desiring machines form a

> network called a rhizome ... [which] ... exists in the social field called the socius. The unity of the individual is an illusion. The individual is an artificial boundary set up within the social field by cultural convention. (Palmer, 1996, p.2)

While such metaphysical representations of humanity need no diagram, the relationship of the ARL model to Holec's and Dickinson's (very early, and since modified) model is conveniently illustrated in **Figure 3:1**.

Although auto-responsible learning operating under ODL conditions might imply fewer learner decisions than under full SDL, any reduction in decision quantity imposes a corresponding need for improvement in decision quality and both ODL (via modelling) and SDL (via practice) are seen as able to play a vital part in enhancing the learner's ability to make informed choices. But the auto-responsible decision to undertake a course of study might undermine auto-responsible awareness if thereafter every decision is made on the learner's behalf. In the context of social autonomy, but with relevance to an educational theme, Mendus (1992) has remarked: "People are autonomous to the extent that they choose what actions to take and what opinions to hold. Certainly someone who never exercised choice in significant matters, but simply drifted through life could not count as autonomous" (p.7). If the learner is to apply his or her social auto-responsibility to classroom contexts, these have to be rich in occasions for independence and self-direction. A genuine SDL event can not intrude on the learner's right to self-answer for the outcomes, but does not require the learner to make every decision nor to control the entire proceedings. This perception is particularly appropriate in the process of what the CRAPEL calls 'autonomisation', where a learner moves from inability to full capability in all aspects of conducting his or her own learning programme. In bringing learners out of a highly traditional taught environment it empowers the SDL components of mediating courses to draw on classroom norms for modelling and impetus and to incorporate ODL elements within SDL events, and vice-versa, without quibble. Some practices commonly perceived as other-directed (e.g. role-plays, group work, laboratory, etc.), may thus legitimately be brought within the domain of SDL by being given over incrementally to student-controlled processes and student-determined outcomes, along lines suggested many years ago as defining 'independent study': motivated by the learner's own aims, rewarded in terms of its intrinsic values, somewhat independent of the class, and using the teacher primarily as a resource (Independent Study, 1967). More recently, Littlewood (1996, pp.429-430) has provided a list of levels in learners' decision-making processes, each progressively more independent as ability increases.

But this flexibility requires that the typical roles of teacher and student be distinguished more finely than the terms 'ODL' and 'SDL' suggest or current conceptions of autonomy and self-directed learning allow for – not much has changed since Oddi remarked: "Definitions of self-directed learning in the literature are frequently confusing, overlapping in some respects and differing subtly in others" (1987, p.21). This enquiry would like to maintain ODL and SDL as usefully contrastable modes of learning, either or both of which may be the option of the autonomous learner. But while some authors prefer to use autonomy and self-direction interchangeably to refer to the actual procedures involved in independent learning, 'learning without being taught', others would tend to see autonomy as "both an attitude towards learning and a capacity for independent learning" (Dickinson, 1995, p.166) without need for the exercise of independence on any given occasion. Dickinson explains his usage in a significant formulation: "The understanding of autonomy as a capacity or attitude rather than as overt action ... is important since we want to be able to conceive of learners maintaining learning autonomy in a teacher-directed classroom setting as well as in settings such as

self-access centres" (ibid., p.167). Where more stress is placed on 'learning without being taught' the tendency is, perhaps inevitably, to be antipathetic to teaching, anxious to see the learner divorced from it as soon as possible; where focus is on autonomising the bulk of learners who are, for whatever reason, in a teaching context, teaching may equally be seen without fervour or else looked on with favour. The term 'auto-responsible' applies to either perception, but attempts to capture the important 'attitude of independence' dimension without prescribing its manifestation in any way. This formulation does no violence to Holec's model of the learner entirely freed from teaching and yet accords well with the reality of most institutional contexts, where learners tend to move between learning modes, now being taught, now being not, in a manner which makes any principled delineation of autonomy or self direction problematical if not impossible.

Just as bilinguals unconsciously or consciously move between their languages, code-switching as the occasion or the mood suggests, so learners may have binary options, mode-switching as required. In classroom contexts, at least in those which aim to promote autonomy in a learner centred environment, the mode-switching may occur so rapidly and so frequently as to constitute a new 'autonomised' mode of classroom discourse in which the process and the product become indistinguishable. Self-direction becomes less a matter of entire control by the learner as of an interchange of emphases.

Where Dickinson has highlighted choice and Holec has underlined action, it is possible to formalise these emphases by distinguishing between independent/dependent *decision-making* and self-directed/other-directed *action taking.* The need for delineation is prototypically evident in three common situations:

- A learning event is initiated by the teacher but its conduct and accomplishment are left to the student.
- A learning event is initiated by the student but substantial guidance is then sought in its conduct or accomplishment.
- A learning event is both initiated and conducted entirely by the student.

Although broad labels (e.g. the 'other-direction' and 'self-direction' of Holec, 1996) suffice for general discussion of principles, it seems essential for a clearer cumulative understanding of classroom autonomisation in practice to make a distinction between learner decision-making and learner conduct. Learning modes in this enquiry are therefore categorised as dependent or independent other-directed learning (DODL or IODL) and dependent or independent self-directed learning (DSDL or ISDL), each exemplified by typical learning events.[9] Independent learning modes are typified as those in which the supporting *decisions* concerning learning tasks are made by the learner, and are contrasted with dependent modes.[10] Self-directed learning modes are typified as those in which the *conduct* of the learning tasks is under the control of the learner, and are contrasted with other-directed modes. Independent self-directed learning (ISDL), which

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[9]An original intent to distinguish between 'learning' and formal institutional 'study' was considered unnecessary and in any case presumed a semantic divide too complex to explore within the present scope, notwithstanding the evident if co-incidental parallels between MIDL and the format described by Gage and Berliner: "In *self-directed study*, the formal course structure is preserved, and the teacher has many students, provides suggested objectives and materials, and gives tests. The major change consists of reducing the number of formal classes attended by the student" (1992, p.451). Similarly, exploring the important social/ asocial dimension of learning has been set aside.

[10]This differs from the 'independent study' of Stenhouse: "Some learning entered into through an effort of concentrated application, conducted on your own, without supervision" (1993, p.224).

implies full student control of both decisions and conduct, to the extent possible within institutional and facilities constraints, is conceptually close to the *self-directed learning* and the *autonomous learning* of other models. The distinction here made between DSDL and ISDL has close (but not identical) parallels elsewhere in regard to pairgroup work: "In Flannery's (1994) distinction ... with *cooperative* learning strategies, learners work independently on tasks, but it is still the teacher who sets the agenda ... with *collaborative* learning strategies, learners have a greater degree of choice and discretion" (Littlewood, 1999, p.76). The parallel breaks down insofar as ISDL offers the learner total rather than increased control.

These divisions, in turn, require that learning events be distinguished more finely than by traditional terms such as homework, prep, and classwork. Therefore, alongside the term 'in-class', a convenience label for 'in class; inside the class; in the classroom; in class time; within the institution' and so on, and its corresponding term 'out-class', meaning 'out of class; outside the institution; out of class-hours' and so on, two further terms have been introduced. 'Out-class setwork' consists of dependent self-directed tasks set for out of class hours, and contrasts with 'outclass freework', defined as any learning task or activity undertaken or engaged in by the student in free time at his or her entire initiative. Examples would include recreational TV, reading for pleasure, and so on, where one of the aims is expressly to improve capability in the target language. Conceptually, outclass freework is regarded as an integral component of mediated courses, making a contribution to the independent ethos at least as important as any which could be guided or encouraged within the classroom environment, and evidence, however tenuous, for an attitude of auto-responsibility on the part of the learner. Oddi has observed that while Tough excluded from SDL such things as "conversations, reading newspapers, travel, and episodes wherein acquired learning is a by-product of some other task or responsibility", many such activities were reported in the qualitative studies of other authors (Oddi, 1987, p.25). For the present enquiry the determining consideration has been the expressed desire or will to use the reported occasion either for learning purposes or to accomplish a task in the target language in ways amounting to real life practice. Another convenience term is 'pairgroup' which, as well as embracing a unit of two students (a dyad of a larger communication network), includes one made up of more than two students (a group or team). A pairgroup is therefore two or more learners engaged either voluntarily, as in ISDL mode, in 'collaborative learning' (Benson, 1997, p.55), or 'co-operatively' working together within a DSDL activity. The term 'pairgroup work' thus allows for activities which might change from being in pairs to being in groups or vice versa within a single learning event or over several consecutive events.

Dickinson (1976, note 4) had observed that neither 'teacher' nor 'instructor' were appropriate terms within SDL. 'Facilitator' (e.g. Sisco, 1984; Hiemstra, 1985) would have acknowledged the debt that the self-direction, the reduced dependency, the ethos of guidance (Perrone, 1972) and other features of the MIDL courses owed to 'open learning' concepts, but the term could also be associated with rejection of the transmission of knowledge (Barthes & Rathbone, 1971), an antipathy that ran counter to the essential characteristic of the ODL components. Therefore, although it was considered unnecessary to bother participants with changes to familiar usage, *teacher* was replaced in the research notes and reports by *co-ordinator*, a term which allowed the role of bringing together and overseeing the elements of a mediated ODL/ SDL programme, without prescribing the teaching or guidance functions within it, of maintaining and sustaining a mutuality of teacher-student interests, of recognising in a learner autonomy environment something conceptually akin to an autopoietic consensual domain of structural coupling, a "co-adaptation

without ... transfer of some ephemeral force or information across the boundaries of the engaged systems" (Whitaker, 1995b, p.3; 1995a).

The need for counselling was not expected to approach the scale at the CRAPEL, for instance, or that reported for the full self-direction programmes at Dublin University (Little & Grant, 1986; Singleton, 1990), and it was felt better to avoid the term 'counsellor', which was becoming associated with an advisory role very different from that of a teacher/ co-ordinator, although Hall (Council for Educational Technology) defined counselling simply as "any interaction between staff and clients which involves more than straight information" (1986, p.49).[11] To serve for those occasions when a student wished to discuss some matter with the co-ordinator, the term *conference*, used in individualised instruction, was expressive of partnership but with overtones of the boardroom. Something was needed to reflect the move away from the higher-lower implications of teacher-student relationships to a more egalitarian professional-client ethos. Like an architect or a doctor, the teacher was recognised as professionally more informed than the client, but it was the function of the professional to act on the instructions of the client. The term *consultation* seemed appropriate. And where, in the normal course of teacher-student interaction, there was routinely given advice, help, or guidance which fell short of formal counselling or consultation, the term *paracounselling* was adopted. The term does service in a teaching context, where the whole endeavour is 'counselling' of one sort or another, but not always as classically defined, and helps to differentiate between instruction in a particular subject, and advice on, for example, which text would meet a need.[12]

Most of these terms are illustrated in **Table 3:1**, where the typical modes, learning events, and elements of a classroom semi-autonomy environment are listed. The table makes explicit the ODL/SDL distinctions which have underpinned the MIDL methodology of this enquiry, in which opportunities for dependent and independent decisions, and other-directed and self-directed actions, have been alternated and blended so that each might mediate the other.[13]

INTERDEPENDENT SELF-DIRECTION

Conceptual differences in learner autonomy currently leave much room for tension between an emphasis on self-sufficiency and individualism and a stress on collaboration and interdependence, with consequent differences in the perceptual orientation of self-directed learning. While self-sufficiency is more likely to

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[11]See Gremmo on the intensive work currently being done on counselling "with the aim of identifying the specific pedagogical and communicative aspects of the role" (1998, p.151). The term '*animateur*', as used in Singleton (1990), is an appropriate alternative to 'facilitator' of a co-counselling group assembled for discussion and exchange on matters of mutual interest but does not cover the advisory functions of the teacher/ co-ordinator of this enquiry.

[12]Paracounselling is defined as informal counselling which is frequent, irregular, and unsystematic, and deals with personal and impersonal topics not necessarily concerned with behaviour or conduct. For the classroom teacher, paracounselling obviously has much in common with the table in Kelly of "macro-skills of language counselling" (1996, p.95), in the 'counsellor/tutor/advisor' role of self-access and some versions of self-directed learning.

[13]This table is elaborated in the final chapter where, as suggestions for further research, levels of independent and self-directed learning opportunities are considered in relation to the recording and measurement of individual and group learner autonomy in classroom contexts.

predominate in contexts where fully featured self-access is available, interdependence tends to arise out of the normal interactions of the classroom wherever semi-autonomy programmes are put in place. In independent SDL, although the means to learning may change, the learner is able to cater to his or her own needs in time-honoured fashion which needs little elaboration outside an in-depth exploration of the process which optimises a person's ability to function as a lifelong learner. Instead, this section looks briefly at the increasingly emphasised mode of interdependent (collaborative, co-operative, or group) self-direction which featured strongly in the present study. In a classroom context, especially, there is need for social interaction with teachers and peers, in a supportive web of relationships which differentiate institutional self-direction from isolated self-instruction, an issue which Little helps to put a larger perspective on:

> Learner autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning. ... The various freedoms that autonomy implies are always conditional and constrained, never absolute. As social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence, our essential condition is one of interdependence. (Little, 1990, p.7)

This is an important formulation which is finding greater emphasis in the literature.[14]

Interdependence may take the form of collaboration between the teacher and the learner, the former acting as Vygotskyan guide and mentor to the emerging target language capabilities of the learner, and that is the role of the co-ordinator in the present enquiry. In a superficially similar manner it may also consist in the facilitation of heightened awareness of social inequalities and of means to redress them; this is of consequence to the present study only insofar as language learning in self-directed mode is increasingly being linked to emancipatory concerns: "The challenge of learner autonomy" as Little has pointed out, "is essentially and inescapably political" (1995, August, p.1), just as "all education is in principle a challenge to existing social, cultural and political values. Pedagogies focussed on the development of learner autonomy are explicit about this fact, and I take that to be one of their chief virtues" (Little, 1997, p.14). A political challenge is, of course, thrown down whenever the desires of the individual come up against the need to maintain the bonds of society, that is, to defer total fulfilment in the interests of maintaining enjoyment, and maintenance is obliged to recognise the interdependent nature of independence. A third strand in the co-operative organisation of learning is that between groups of learners, with or without the help of teachers, facilitators, or advisers, a move now being advocated even in self-access centres. Interdependence is therefore capable of interpretation in several ways as earlier understandings of the individualistic orientation of autonomy are progressively being complemented by consideration of its social dimensions. Not unnaturally, different reasons for and versions of co-operation in self-direction overlap to some extent, and it is not necessary for present purposes to make much of distinguishing them.

Little has frequently pointed out that learner autonomy does not imply isolation (e.g. 1991b, p.5), that "all learning is the product of interaction" (1994, p.431) and that "learner autonomy ... develops out of the learner's dialogue with the world" (ibid.), and Trim emphasises that "the concept of learner independence is not at all that of a potentially solipsistic, socially isolated self-study methodology, but rather that of socially responsible independence of thought and action" (1997, p.15). The historical concept of the free individual is enlivened by current emphases on the social nature of personal identity, indeed of the creation of the self by

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[14]The many references to Professor D.G. Little, the supervisor of this thesis, and to Professor Henri Holec reflect the fact that they are the most quoted and cited authorities in the European literature on learner autonomy.

society, with all the relevant constraints and benefits of interdependence that such a state implies.[15] The shift towards interdependent views of learner autonomy was already becoming apparent as the 1980s moved into the 1990s and now at the end of the century has received renewed impetus as criticalist and postmodernist perceptions, which once merely challenged the status quo, are poised to become it. The former may see self-direction as another means to empowering the under-privileged while the latter might take it as part of an ongoing move from a vertical to a horizontal restructuring of global society, with changes "not so much in *what* we believe as in *how* we believe it" (W.T. Anderson, 1996, p.2). Regrettably, space constraints determine that the far more interesting *why* must defer to practical classroom issues, although the fact that education is not a value-free area ensures that, whatever its pedagogical or cognitive concerns, the topic will continue to be informed by robust emancipatory opinions.

Garrison, advancing the notion of the social construction of knowledge, claims that "paradoxically, developing a sense of self-direction may depend upon external support to increase personal control in the long term" (1992, p.144), and more recently has pointed out that "sharing control of learning activities and tasks provides opportunities for instructional support while encouraging students to assume cognitive responsibility.... It is possible that absolute learner control may reduce persistence" (1997, p.26). He emphasises the interdependent nature of how "knowledge is socially constructed" which "suggests a symbiotic relationship between external control concerns and internal responsibility issues" (1992, p.141), and goes on: "To paraphrase Candy, it could be said that we are responsible for our own learning but we must consider whether we should be in control of our own teaching" (p.142). Brookfield (1993, p.236) highlights the constructivist 'interdependence' perspectives of writers like Candy, Jarvis, Hiemstra, and others, and of feminist writers (p.240), and what Lindley says about social autonomy has some bearing on the alternative approaches taken to self-direction: "Liberal and radical can unite in seeking to increase the possibilities for the development and increase of autonomy for people. Their main disagreement is over the best means for achieving these ends" (1986, p.183).

Support for institutional control of the process of learning is found where it is believed that adult education should become a vehicle for social transformation and Benson (1997, p.56), for example, arguing that individual self-access sessions (equatable to some extent with the independent self-directed learning of this study) may risk disempowering the learners, supports the critical pedagogy advocacy of collaborative learning. Garrison, again, talking of the risk of conceptually isolating the self-directed learner from institutional support, takes a position which is notable for asserting the right of control by the educator:

> We should not assume that the ultimate goal of SDL is fully autonomous learning.... Brookfield (1988) states "If self-direction is held to mean that the learner has complete control over the choice of learning content, purposes, evaluative criteria and methods, then the educator ceases to be an educator in any meaningful sense" (p.35). (Garrison, 1992, p.140)

This view bears a passing resemblance to traditional teacher-control albeit that the purpose is social. However, important (and sometimes subtle) differences remain when Garrison's (1997, p.19) "collaborative constructivist" position, which envisages a "collaborative process between teacher and learner" (1992, p.141; similarly, 1997, p.23) is put alongside the more pedagogical orientation of what might be called Holec's

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[15]For observations on learners' self-conceptions see Ridley, 1997, pp.17-18.

'with-counselling' model of self-direction. Where the former promotes the (social consciousness raising) leadership role of the teacher, the latter sees even pedagogical leadership as redundant.

The 'negotiated syllabus' was one realisation of autonomy which received little attention in the present enquiry after an early counter-indicating experience. In its purest form, the learners conjointly come to an arrangement with the institution on what will be learnt, how, with what materials, and so on. Superficially this would appear to be a very self-directed thing to do, to carry classroom democracy to one of its logical conclusions but, as Kenny has noted, there are problems. He quotes a proponent as admitting one of them:

> As Clarke points out, few learners, even adult learners, "would have any clear awareness of what they need or want to learn, let alone how they wish to go about it" (p. 19), even if given the choice. If this is true then the prognosis for the negotiated type of syllabus is poor (Kenny, 1993, p.434).

Kenny advocates 'experiential learning' as a kind of learner autonomy exercised as a group rather than individually. The idea is that the group initiates and undertakes a project, using the target language as the medium of communication. Thein's (1994) report on 'experiential learning' in Thailand perhaps wisely included "a tightly planned schedule of activities provided by the teachers" although, in violation of a truly negotiable syllabus "they cannot have grammar lessons nor can they have a lecturing style of teaching" (p.468). And collaborative peer-support may run into scheduling difficulties (even getting two people together may be problematical) as the students' own reports in the narrative findings of the present study make clear, particularly in short-term and sporadic projects very different from the prolonged period (the gradual preparation alone taking some four weeks) that Thein describes as operating in Thailand. Kenny acknowledges the difficulty for learners in "teacher's territory" and for teachers who may see events getting out of their control, who might fear for "their pedagogic respectability" (p.438). But where this perception seems to assume that all learners want such learning, Grow (1994) reports "I turned students loose on several projects" only to experience "considerable discontent" from about one-third of the class and students who "suddenly began attacking me for not teaching them" (p.112). Learners personalities play a more prominent part in the success or otherwise of 'experiential learning' in groups, and episodic project-work can throw up problems of social interaction which inhibit rather than enhance language learning, despite "what Legutke and Thomas (p.256) have distinguished to be 'process competence,' a domain of skill different from but complementing 'communicative competence'" (Kenny, 1993, p.440).

One area of uncertainty with 'experiential learning' of this type, as with 'communicative tests' of task-based type, is the difficulty of prioritising the skills that are being learnt or tested. Even native-speakers can fail to accomplish tasks involving, for example, numbers or measurements, and it is easy to imagine that while good language learners who are also socially adept might benefit from group dynamics, and others might welcome interaction on joint projects, the more introverted, shy, or simply asocial individuals might prefer to spend the same time just quietly learning the target-language. Nation and McLaughlin made the apt point that "the good language learner in one context may not be a good language learner in another" (1986, p.42), and cite considerable research evidence on the very different information-processing strategies and techniques of novice and expert (ibid.), with important implications therefore in regard to the current capability level of any given learner in any specific skill or combination of skills. On methodological

grounds, therefore, the justification for experiential learning solely as a group activity would appear to be incomplete. Kenny, however, also proposes that

> autonomy is not just a matter of permitting choice ... or making pupils responsible for the activities they undertake, but of allowing and encouraging learners ... to begin to express who they are, what they think, and what they would like to do, in terms of work they initiate and define for themselves. This is holistic learning and it transcends the subject disciplines. (Kenny, 1993, p.440)

This is a reasonable and worthwhile objective, to be achieved in the process of autonomisation in semi-autonomy programmes (as in the ISDL of the present study) and is supported by the expansive perception of Little (1994):

> Whether it is merely incidental to the business of day-to-day living or consciously goal-directed, experiential learning ... is efficient, in the sense that we are rarely conscious of the effort that it involves; effective, in the sense that what we learn tends to stay with us at least for as long as we need it; and autonomous, in the sense that it arises as a result of the initiatives we take in interaction with our environment in order to fulfil our needs. (Little, 1994, p.434)

Little goes on to state that in learner-centredness

> the aim is to discover means of establishing a strong continuity between experiential learning and formal schooling, partly in order to increase the amount and quality of learning that takes place in formal contexts, and partly to ensure that what is learned educationally carries over into the rest of life. But because schooling is imposed on the learner from without, learner autonomy tends to occur of its own accord only in a minority of cases. It will become a dominant feature of learning in formal contexts only as the result of a deliberate and carefully reflected pedagogical strategy. (Little, 1994, p.435)

Where the independent self-directed learning (ISDL) modes of the present study were intended to promote just such experiential learning in the interests of language acquisition, Kenny (1993) sees language learning as a social means rather than as an end in itself and is promoting a curriculum for students that "validates their voices, lets them raise problems, and acts to empower them" (p.440). Inevitably, therefore, he regards it as a hazard when "language is reified into language as a subject discipline" (p.440). This attitude in other-direction parallels a similar trend to move self-directed language learning in transformative and criticalist directions.

When Menniss says that in his view 'incremental learning' or "taking the learner forward, in easy steps, from their present position" (in Timmer, 1996, p.25) is a valid concept which "needs to be complemented by 'transformational learning' ... that reflects the rapid changes we see in the world around us" (ibid.) he seems to point to a synthesis which is becoming more important to the field. He believes that the ultimate aim in adult education should be to train learners to become empowered to "assume control over the setting of educational goals and the means of evaluating their achievement" as well as to "*engage in continuous recreation of their learning environment*" (in Timmer, 1996, p.25). If "discourses must be treated as 'practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49)" (St.Clair, 1998, p.9), then the discourse of language learning, which has tended to a modernist orientation, will become increasingly affected by pluralistic social dimensions to learning. And if "language influences reality and reality influences language; they form a totality, are different and independent and have something in

common" (D.J. Little, 1992, p.241), then how we talk about self-direction and what we mean by it is at the heart of what we do about it. What we mean emerges not only from a worldview but from which of the two principal emphases we approach the topic. To mark that social and pedagogical perspectives differ in their use and interpretation of terms and their associated ethos, and to note a different emphasis between, for example, 'negotiating meanings and purposes' and 'continuous recreation of the learning environment' is not to say, therefore, that these dimensions and concerns are unrelated, or to favour one usage over another.

Much of the dependent self-directed learning of this enquiry took the form of co-operative pair and group work (some of the more formal occasions being designated as 'support team' or 'work team' learning events), where learners were to varying degrees free (depending on the event) to determine for themselves how they performed tasks set for them by the co-ordinator. And, in addition, as important as team work was considered to be as training in independent learning, its function as part of the autonomisation process embraced what Little said in regard to Leni Dam's work with young people: "She ... showed that in classrooms learner autonomy grows out of collaboration, so that acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning entails sharing responsibility for the learning of others" (Little, 1996b, p.4).

Whole-class sessions in which groups inter-cooperate, find support in Lou and her associates, who, in a meta-analysis of 3000 published articles on grouping, reported that "small teams of three to four members seem more effective than larger groups" and that "co-operative learning with outcome interdependence helps facilitate small-group learning" (1996, p.451). The support teams and work teams of the present enquiry were active in most of the roles listed in a classroom manual (*Learning in the small group*) published in 1971: open-discussion, tutorial, assigned-roles, research, task flexibility, investigative, heuristic, group talk, brainstorming, socratic-analysis, value-clarifying, and the colloquium. Some thirty years ago, Beach (1968), reporting on 54 psychology students who were randomly assigned to self-directed groups of six, said that despite some negative reactions the evidence indicated that small group interaction, combined with established values of traditional teaching techniques produced an educational experience which was total rather than merely academic. In 1974 he reported on studies at college level which all indicated no lessening of subject mastery for small independent-study groups. Bodine (1977), reported that the achievement of field independent students was the same for group and individual work, that groups composed of field dependent and field independent members achieved more than the same individuals acting alone, and that group and structured activities were preferred by all participants. He said his results suggested that small groups increase satisfaction and, for some students and some groups, increase achievement.

If, for some educationists, 'autonomy' requires a search for "how learning can be freed from the bounds of any institution" (Stanchina, in Dickinson, 1976, p.15), for others it implies maximising the opportunities for learning, in an attempt to achieve the reconciliation between knowledge and skill perceived by Little: "Learner autonomy guarantees to close the gap between language learning and language use" (1992).[16] Institutions, and the classrooms in them, are uniquely placed to offer a stimulating 'social learning' environment which accords with another observation of this authority: "Total detachment is a principal determining feature not of autonomy but of autism" (Little, 1991b, p.5). The importance of that social dimension to language learning is brought out in classroom contexts supporting what Gruber (1965) and Gage and Berliner call 'self-directed study' (closely akin to MIDL):

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[16]Verbatim note from conference paper, quoted with permission.

> Much self-directed learning takes place by word of mouth, the interaction of students with their peers and teacher, rather than by use of libraries, cassettes, and self-instruction programs. In something of a paradox, then, successful self-directed learners may be highly dependent on other people, not really independent or inner-directed. (Gage & Berliner, 1992, p.451)

A similar insight had already been expressed by Allwright, talking of student relationships: "The importance of interaction is not simply that it creates learning opportunities, it is that it constitutes learning itself" (Allwright, 1984. p.9).[17].

Doctoral candidates working under Bloom (1984) gathered substantial empirical evidence that problem-solving, mastery learning, and small group tutoring combined to produce the most significant improvements in learning for the average student. And Lacey concluded that on college Latin courses using self-paced instruction "the transition from grammar and syntax to reading comprehension seems to work best in the classroom, where students can learn more from a group effort than they could from a one-to-one meeting with an instructor" (Lacey, 1980, p.399). Ballman (1988), however, reported that while her students of Spanish preferred group work, she found no significant difference in achievement between those who worked in groups and those who worked independently.

Aronson and associates reported that, after unsuccessful desegregation efforts, teachers in Texas and California were trained to use "a cooperative educational technique known as the 'Jigsaw Classroom' ... [where] ... students are required to cooperate with one another in order to master course material" which "is divided among members of mixed-race 'jigsaw groups,' and students teach one another" (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1976/1990, p.80). The benefits included greater liking for one another, across racial and ethnic barriers, greater liking for school, enhanced self-esteem, and an increase in academic performance among ethnic minorities without loss to the majority group children. White has more recently pointed to traditional classroom settings as offering "support of fellow learners and ... interactions provided by pair work and group work which allow the learner to, among other things, develop and assess his/her performance" (1995, p.208). Kowal and Swain hypothesise "that through talk in collaborative tasks, consciousness is raised" and add "Vygotsky (1979) claims that it is through the mediation of another that consciousness is created and raised" (1994, p.75).

Jacobs, who is currently researching 'student-initiated and teacher-required' collaborative learning among Singapore students (1999, January 27), makes a divide between what learners decide on and what teachers decree, a notion broadly akin to the distinction made in this study between independent and dependent self-directed learning modes, and to Flannery's 'collaborative' versus 'cooperative' learning (Littlewoood, 1999, p.76). In a similar East Asian context Littlewood draws attention to J.F. Jones (1995), whose Cambodian students were ready to work independently in groups, and how Ho and Crookall in Hong Kong found their students enthusiastically engaged in a project "where much of the work was conducted in groups working independently of the teacher" (1999, p.72). Littlewood cites these as examples of an orientation to group-independence evident even in such hierarchically organised societies as the Japanese where, despite claims that learner autonomy is a Western 'individualistic' concept, "desires for autonomy" expressed in the students' diaries of Aoki and Smith "contradict the stereotype of the passive, teacher-dependent Japanese learner" (Littlewood, 1999, p.72).

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[17]The whole of N.C. Ellis, 1994, Chapter 13, is relevant to interaction, but beyond the present scope to explore.

Jacobs remarks that "a large body of research exists suggesting that collaboration in the classroom produces superior results on a host of variables, including achievement, thinking skills, interethnic relations, liking for school, and self-esteem (for reviews, see Bossert, 1988-1989; Cohen, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1995)" (Jacobs, 1999, January 15, p.1). Although Lamanna repeats caveats on input and fossilisation from Doughty and Pica, from Wong-Fillimore, and from Aston, she herself aptly says:

> Learners need to participate in interaction activities for many reasons and not only to get comprehensible input. They need to acquire skills in communicating in the language, of which the ability to negotiate meaning is but one .... They must acquire other skills that underlie such competencies as discourse construction, sociolinguistic appropriacy and syntactic processing. Interaction provides the learner with the means of testing out hypotheses about the language and forces him to 'get his message across'. In other words, the learner learns through getting comprehensible input but he also learns through actually speaking. Speaking therefore, more than comprehensible input, interactive or not, may be the major factor underlying language acquisition. (Lamanna, 1994, p.14)

In addition to its possible pedagogic value, collaborative or co-operative learning has also been recognised as a way to improve the socialising skills of learners, to aid bonding in classroom contexts, to help integrate disadvantaged learners into the mainstream of education, and to exemplify the interdependence which underpins independence.

The courses of this enquiry attempted both group and individual projects, in the expectation of realising at least some of the benefits to learners which Jacobs remarks on:

> Advocates of projects, such as Fried-Booth (1986), Kenny (1993), and Ribé and Vidal (1993), cite many advantages:
>
> 1. A greater connection to the world outside the classroom, as projects may better mirror real-world tasks.
> 2. Greater student ownership of learning, leading to enhanced intrinsic motivation.
> 3. Heightened learner independence.
> 4. More opportunities to practice collaborative skills.
> 5. Greater opportunities to practice thinking and information search skills.
>
> (Jacobs, 1999, January 21, p.2)

Responses to the projects of the present enquiry are presented in narrative appendices and it is enough to note that no project during the present enquiry had the advantage of the meticulous 18-stage process (14 of which stages precede any camera-work) adopted by Poór (1996) for video projects with his 8-14 year old pupils and with adults.

Where learners are working independently and entirely at their own initiative, not only is collaborative or co-operative self-direction in pairs or groups possible, but it is claimed to have led to higher grades in mathematics when adopted by ethnic minorities and to have improved multiple-choice answers in biology tests (Jacobs, 1999, January 27). It is also promoted as a challenge to designers of self-access facilities (Benson, 1997, p.55) and the term 'out-of-class academic collaboration' (OOCAC) has been coined to cover both student-initiated co-operation and institution-sponsored peer tutoring programmes (Jacobs, 1999, January 21, p.1). Collaboration may have bonding as well as pedagogical values and, to the extent that it involves some subordination of the individual to the requirements of others it may help to reinforce tolerance and consideration. With specific regard to peer-teaching, B. Hill cites Assinder, 1991, as encouraging her

students to "prepare and deliver learning tasks for each other" claiming "a high level of successful feedback ... and ... increases in motivation, participation, real communication, in-depth understanding, commitment, confidence, meaningful practice and accuracy" (B. Hill, 1994, p.214); similarly he says that the picture which emerges from peer teaching experiments by Broady and Carpenter "emphatically underlines that it proved a highly motivating and rewarding experience .... The researchers noted marked improvements in motivation, individual responsibility, confidence and fluency" (ibid.).

But notwithstanding the popularity of groupwork among teachers, student attitudes towards it are not always as favourable. Where shyness and unsociability have long been realised as factors to be taken into account, R.M. Smith (1983) pointed out a less affective caution, that "when it comes to involving professionals in planning and evaluative processes ... they may feel that time pressures ... [etc.]" make collaborative learning "not as appealing (and perhaps appropriate) for them" (p.52). Oxford and N.J. Anderson report that "no cultural groups preferred group work in Reid's (1987) large, crosscultural study of ESL college students and college students who spoke English natively" (1995, p.209), but "for Rossi-Le (1995), who replicated and expanded Reid's work ... all ethnic groups indicated a learning style preference for group learning, thus possibly reflecting a difference in age, maturity or experience" (ibid.). Harlow and Muyskens found that 1373 intermediate-level American university students of French and Spanish ranked small-group work 15th out of 19 priorities; their instructors ranked it 4th (1994, p.149). In questionnaires and interviews in six English language classrooms in the City University of Hong Kong (119 learners, 30 teachers, ranking ten activities) Peacock (1999) found that teachers placed pair and group work first, and students placed group work last (and presumably pair work, although it is not mentioned).

Several reasons might be advanced for the gap between learner and teacher perceptions, among them, on the one hand, the fact that group work has been integral to the communicative approach in language teaching (popular with teachers) which, despite revisions and adaptations, continues to influence materials producers and classroom language practice (in both senses) and, on the other, the fact that groups have a dynamic of dominance and submissiveness (Bales, 1973, p.211) in which members must compete for talking time (p.208). Add to the teacher's side of the equation an aversion to expository 'talk and chalk' and it is easy to see that a busy group offers the chance to relinquish the weight of teacher-centredness for a while, secure in the approval conferred by 'learner-centredness'. If, coupled to this, group work is accepted as an ally of learner autonomy, then it is not difficult to understand its attraction for teachers. Of course, one study needs support from other contexts (it is not hard to imagine inhibitions other than dominance and competition at work in Hong Kong), and other studies suggest its effectiveness as an aid to communication (Pica, 1994). Many more, however, indicate mixed results regarding its efficacy as a learning aid, with strengths and weaknesses highlighted by such factors as homogeneous L1 groupings, age of students, and so on (ibid., pp.61-63). Pica concludes that "these various findings point to a prominent role for group work in the language classroom" even if there is need for it "to be tempered in light of social and linguistic conditions ... and the tasks" (p.63). While few would question the demonstrable value of co-operative learning for disadvantaged learners, ethnic minorities, and others in special educational situations, substantial findings against it in the mainstream would at the least suggest the need to look even more closely at its conceptual underpinnings, and probably warrant major review of its classroom manifestations. And if it were to be more widely confirmed that teacher sponsorship of pair and group work substantially outweighs learner liking for

it, this would offer a serious challenge to one of the assumptions of current classroom practice, and to one of the central pillars of dependent self-direction within the present study.

At the least, there are indications of a need for considerably more investigation of learner attitudes to co-operative and collaborative self-direction before it can safely be assumed that it meets the needs of learners to the extent that it is advocated by educators, although its role in the integration of other-direction and self-direction (the topic of a later section) is supported by the present study, whose narrative appendices go some way towards presenting learner reflections on the issues.

To this point the remarks have attempted to indicate the wider domain of learner autonomy within which the present study is located, and the following chapter begins a narrower focus on the more specific concerns of the enquiry.

CHAPTER 4

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ENQUIRY

This chapter touches on the research concerns of the enquiry, summarises the qualitative findings of the preliminary project, and concludes with remarks on the integration of ODL and SDL in semi-autonomy programmes.

RESEARCH CONCERNS

The present case study closely associates with the description by Berg (1989/1998, following Hamel et al., 1993) of "a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures" and which is characterised by "extremely rich, detailed, and in-depth information" (p.212). It also recognises the continuum that Nunan (1992) cites from "a model developed by van Lier (1988; 1990) for characterising applied linguistic research" (p.5). According to Nunan, van Lier argues for an interventionist continuum/ parameter (formal laboratory experiments at one end and naturalistic study of a classroom in action at the other), and a selectivity parameter which "places research according to the degree to which the researcher prespecifies the phenomena to be investigated" (ibid.). Over-all, the attempt has been made to combine the best principles of both positivist and postpositivist research, on the grounds that neither alone is as strong as both together. The enquiry claims affinity with both ends of the continuum, conducting a formal quasi-experiment in a naturalistic setting, explored quantitatively and in qualitative narrative format.[1]

The enquiry was undertaken from two different, but complementary perspectives: that of pure research, with a need to know for its own sake, and that of applied research, with a kinship to the feasibility study of engineering and other disciplines, claiming the potential to apply the findings to other real-world contexts. It was prompted by the dichotomy between, on the one hand, the persuasion that self-directed learning should, if not entirely replace teaching, at least play a prominent part in language education (see Little, 1997, for a recent exposition and justification), and, on the other, the traditional view that most students do not merely expect the classroom to be a place where they are taught but do genuinely prefer other-directed to self-directed learning. The enquiry set out to explore these expectations and assumptions from the perspective not of educationists but of the learners themselves. In contrast to the eight qualitative studies reviewed by Caffarella (1988), whose key contribution was a more in-depth picture of how self-directed learners organise, conduct, and evaluate their own learning, the present enquiry took learner attitude as its starting point and looked for evidence of marked preference for classroom learning mode. Booth, in the context of university history classes, made a point of more general applicability:

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[1] "Currently, narrative analysis is burgeoning in all branches of the human sciences as a major approach to qualitative research" (Cortazzi, 1994, p.157, state of the art article).

> Active learning techniques need to be firmly predicated upon an understanding of student beliefs and requirements.... In the past decade, the investigation of student views has rightly become a central thread in the literature of research into improving teaching in higher education (though an interesting paper could itself be devoted to why so little of this seems to have reached the practising subject specialist). (Booth, 1993, pp.227-228)

The present enquiry stands solidly behind the view that, no matter the psychosocial or psychophysiological studies that underpin beliefs about learning, education uninformed by student perceptions remains uninformed.

The enquiry identifies itself, broadly enough to combine quantitative and qualitative procedures, as a quasi-experimental systematic replication postpositivist case study in the domain of applied linguistics.[2] Without pre-empting the explications of methodology that are to follow, it may be appropriate to mention one characteristic of this identification:

> There are some quasi-experimental designs that afford researchers considerable control over experimental conditions and differ from experiments only in that individual subjects are not assigned to experimental or control conditions in a truly random fashion. Thoughtful and thorough statistical analyses of data generated in these quasi-experiments can allow researchers to make *tentative* statements about cause and effect. (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1976/1990, p.161)

As these authors say, "quasi-experiments ... are more feasible research techniques when researchers move beyond the laboratory to applied or field settings in which random assignment of individuals to conditions is impossible.... Quasi-experiments are valuable research tools" (p.171). And in the present instance made all the more so by the addition to this otherwise traditional approach of the rounding-out effect of qualitative postpositivist reports.

The field of applied linguistics is one to which Brumfit (1997a) has usefully applied the working definition: "The theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (p.93), and whose data "may be linguistic, as for formal linguists" or, equally, "accounts (by participants or other observers) of linguistic practices: descriptions by ... teachers ... of their rationales for action" (p.88). Elsewhere he has remarked: "The object of study is embedded in practice, but the purpose and epistemological concerns remain the same as those for any other science: the production of better and better explanations" (1997b, p.21).[3] In terms reminiscent of Wittgenstein (Ross, 1998, p.2), Whorf or Bernstein (Halliday, 1978, p.25), Kvale centralises the role of language in such explanations: "*Language* and knowledge do not copy reality. Rather, language constitutes reality, each language constructing specific

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[2]Although the label 'scientific realism' (Scheurich, 1997, p.31) is perhaps closer than postpositivist, labels constantly change, and postpositivism as a research paradigm offers many of the qualitative design characteristics of this study (detailed in Chapter 5). The most appropriate label might have been 'non-positivist' (Riley, 1996) but, however reluctantly, many adherents of postpositivism allow quantification, and the intent is to reflect a transitional or combined mode without the polar opposition suggested by 'positivist/non-positivist'.

[3]There are many definitions of applied linguistics, some virtually identifying it with language teaching, some disavowing theory, some looking to other disciplines and others seeing it as a distinct, autonomous discipline. Brumfit (1997b) reviews alternatives which he says "are not so much incompatible with each other as successive steps on a journey towards autonomy" (p.21).

aspects of reality in its own way. The focus is on the linguistic and social construction of reality, on interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the lived world" (1996, p.21).

The central research issue was an overtly simple one: how young adult learners without experience of classroom independence would respond to the introduction of self-directed learning not only within and alongside traditional teaching but, at times, instead of it, when they had every reason to expect and, in fact, demand the traditional instruction they were paying for. The question might possibly have been addressed by randomly allocating students either to a taught control group or to a self-directed experimental group, and comparing their responses. But, ethical issues aside, the attitudes of the same group to the classroom integration of other-directed learning (ODL) and self-directed learning (SDL) were considered more viable and more reliable.[4] Yet while the enquiry offered a response to Pica's call for a "classroom-grounded perspective on research" (1994, p.50), exploring such a simple issue was to prove far from simple, not least because although 'other-direction' is conveniently equated with 'teaching', what constitutes 'self-direction' is a matter of less accord: "Learner autonomy is still a very controversial concept because people often have different perspectives on what it is or should be" (Gremmo, 1998, p.144). The MIDL programmes of this enquiry suggest, in consequence, just one possible actualisation of semi-autonomy in a traditional setting.

The research recognises the difficulty, even the impossibility, of truly neutral enquiry but defines objectivity as openness to as many persuasions as possible. However, one worldview does not attempt verifiable enquiry and is therefore, despite its sociopolitical importance, marginalised for research purposes. Brumfit, in a masterly review of the claims of "the postmodernist project" as they affect applied linguistics, talks of postmodernist playfulness "which is invoked in opposition to the puritan tradition of conventional science" (1997b, p.24). Its choice is to place itself outside the formal bounds of questioning:

> Parody, irony, punning, become stylistic weapons in opposition to clarity, directness, and the notion of one meaning at a time. Sequential thinking is replaced with the simultaneous holding of several strands of thought, even the simultaneous holding of conflicting positions. (Brumfit, 1997b, p.24)

Simultaneity is implied by all intellectual pursuit, but where discussion reduces to a game it can no longer be used to exchange coherent ideas. Brumfit goes on to comment on the notion of hegemony:

> The strong form is easy to dismiss, if only because it cannot have any application and condemns itself to uselessness by a self-defined irrelevance.... If knowledge is *merely* expression of power relations, the concept of knowledge becomes redundant, and only power is left (a view that is attractive to dictatorially inclined politicians resisted by intellectuals). ... Such extreme pessimism about human interaction is dysfunctional at best and quietist to the point of evil irresponsibility at worst.... By accepting the weaker argument that hierarchical models of science risk being self-serving, we are enabled to look for protection against the misuse of hierarchy, to benefit from a critique which in its strong form denies the possibility of benefit at all. (Brumfit, 1997b, pp.25-26)

Only a common sense awareness of many factors, among them power-relations and the human capacity for deceit and self-deception, can ensure the continuance of academic enquiry, a point that is reinforceable by a

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[4]The initials ODL and SDL are convenient alternations. Although the context disambiguates when ODL is used by Open and Distance Learning, a useful alternative, if obviously intended to be more restricted in scope, is 'teacher-directed learning' (TDL) used by Moulden (1993).

quotation in Brumfit: "As Rampton suggests, 'one does not have to believe in an autonomous voice of reason or in the transmogrifying power of supposedly context-free research procedures to be critical of inconsistency, a disregard for evidence, and ignorance about alternative accounts' (1995:249)" (Brumfit, 1997b, p.27). Within an open stance, therefore, contextual limits are seen as akin to the constraints of register in language use, where the possible may not be the appropriate. In that light, what predominates for the present occasion is research undertaken from a "relativist, naturalist, and scientific stance" (Clark, n.d., p.15) which endorses "greater freedom, equality, and tolerance of diverse viewpoints within a framework of rational pluralism which is neither dogmatic nor ethically relativistic" (Ess, n.d., p.1). Appropriately, therefore, it is cautious and ambivalent, offering in place of assured and confident conclusions about learner attitudes to combining SDL with ODL only tentative indications drawn from the perspectives and the narratives of the learners themselves.

In contrast, also, to Richard Rorty's scepticism about the relevance of scientific enquiry, of 'objective value', 'objective truth' and 'reason' in furthering commitment to "the greater struggle – for social justice" (Gross, 1998, p.8), the view is taken that unless the social construction of knowledge is underpinned by rational common sense and dispassionate enquiry it risks degenerating into a subjectivism beyond appeal. The issues are needlessly complicated whenever (which is frequently the case) legitimate practical questions of hegemony, that is, of who makes the decisions on what can be investigated, or of who approves it, or funds it, are confounded with epistemologies which question the validity or relevance of investigation in face of the inner certainty of faith, be it religious or political. Gross makes the point aptly in reply to Rorty's antipathy to any alliance of utopian politics with science:

> Yes, by some scientists, and at various times, science has offered false universals, but those have been overthrown *only by better science*. And without reaching for true, or better-approaching-true commonalities, we would have only the idiosyncrasies of tribes, including those of whatever tribe you or I happen to belong to. (Gross, 1998, p.9)

It has seemed, therefore, that something more than an idiosyncratic answer could and should be provided to the research questions asked and that, at the very least in historicist terms, the staid detached logical cause-and effect is as legitimate as the playful participatory and synchronous.[5] There is no need to see principled alternative preferences as ultimate discourses or threatening meta-narratives if one is prepared to become, rather than merely role-play, both Rorty's metaphysician and his ironist, taking care about which is appropriate to the given occasion.[6] Whether postmodernist pluralism endures or not may depend on whether indifference gives way to a genuine tolerance without which any claim to the advocacy of multiple voices must be relinquished. If anything of such a worldview informs this enquiry into learner autonomy it is within rather than despite humanist ideals akin to those expressed by Stevens and associates:

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[5]These conceptual pairings are from L. Solomon (n.d.)

[6]By 'metaphysician' he means someone who believes that truth is found or revealed (W.T. Anderson, 1996, p.175). Of irony, Rorty (1996) says: "The opposite of irony is common sense" (p.97) and "The ironist thinks of logic as ancillary to dialectic, whereas the metaphysician thinks of dialectic as a species of rhetoric, which in turn is a shoddy substitute for logic" (p.102). Perhaps the best-known attack on spurious rhetoric is the hoax by Sokal, whose absurd parody, employing only authentic quotations throughout, was published as genuine by a cultural-studies journal (reprinted, along with sober adversarial critique of works by Lacan, Kristeva, Irigaray, Latour, and others, in Sokal & Bricmont, 1997/1999).

- Dogmas, ideologies and traditions, whether religious, political or social, must be weighed and tested by each individual and not simply accepted on faith....
- Critical reason, factual evidence, and scientific methods of enquiry....
- Search for objective truth ... new knowledge and experience constantly alter our imperfect perception of it....
- Better understanding of ... the outlooks of those who differ from us....
- Reason, an open marketplace of ideas, good will, and tolerance.

(adapted from F. Stevens, Tabash, T. Hill, Sikes, & Flynn, 1997, p.1)

In a rational Apollonian spirit, therefore, the enquiry undertook to combine objective standard quantification procedures with subjective qualitative narratives, to provide what Lonkila calls an "interpretation and a fine-grained hermeneutic analysis" (in Coffey, Holbrook, & Atkinson, 1996, §7.4). Eisner put the case for this approach nearly two decades ago: "The field of education in particular needs to avoid methodological monism. Our problems need to be addressed in as many ways as will bear fruit" (1981, p.9). It was thus hoped to satisfy the claims of objectivity without distress to the subjectivity that Kvale notes: "The positivists' split of facts and values is no longer axiomatic; science is a value-constituted and value-constituting enterprise. Appeals to formal logic recede before a rehabilitated rhetoric of persuasion" (1996, p.22). And, simultaneously, to meet the virtually equivalent common sense criterion provided by the Harvard philosopher Nelson Goodman for tempering relativism. He suggests that not all representations constitute a 'fair sample' but only those which accurately reflect the principal features of the item or, as H. Gardner expresses it: "To put the matter perhaps too simply, versions of the world that strike us as being 'fair' or 'right' are those that seem to capture significant aspects of our own experience, perceptions, attitudes, and intuitions" (H. Gardner, 1996, p.181).

What follows is therefore an account which must try to accord both with sometimes conflicting epistemological principles and with the perceptions of applied linguists and practitioners whose attitudes and intuitions may have been born of very different experiences. It is informed, too, by something of what Kvale says: "Rather than equating universal laws with the objective and the individual with the subjective and relative, valid interpretations of meaning and truth are made by people who share decisions and the consequence of their decisions" (1996, p.20), but does not accept that such enquiry need be either inconsequential or adversarial, two standpoints he legitimises as postmodern: "Rather than regarding a conversation as a dialogue between partners, it is seen as a game, a confrontation between adversaries" (1996, p. 21). A more harmonious, and thus hopeful, view of dialogue is found in O'Hara:

> If I am who I am because you are who you are and we both are who we are because others are who *they* are; if we accept that when we enter into dialogue we *both* change; if it is true that we *co-create* reality, which in turn creates us – then we are called to a new kind of community. (O'Hara, 1996, p.151)

Members of such a community may be more firmly bonded on the way to shared awareness than drawn apart by consciousness of different starting points. And, even if some versions of social constructivism tend to over-simplify the complexity of input to human cognition, we share sufficient autopoietic self-creating processes with other life forms to make trial-and-error an essential component of learning. Although it is possible to overplay the analogy of 'seeing' with the eyes and 'seeing' with the mind, Kuhn does make some useful and relevant remarks about the famous duck-or-rabbit (or young-old woman) visual perception trials:

> The subject of a gestalt demonstration knows that his perception has shifted because he can make a shift back and forth repeatedly while he holds the same book or piece of paper in his hands. Aware that nothing in his environment has changed, he directs his attention increasingly not to the figure (duck or rabbit) but to the lines on the paper he is looking at. Ultimately he may even learn to see those lines without seeing either of the figures, and he may then say (what he could not legitimately have said earlier) that it is these lines that he really sees but that he sees them alternately *as* a duck and *as* a rabbit. (Kuhn, 1996, p.187)

This heightening of awareness is akin to the raising of consciousness that is one of the aims of learner autonomy. But without combining ODL with SDL the learner may see only 'the duck' or else only 'the rabbit'. While it is perhaps premature to speculate on total integration of these learning modes becoming the norm of education, another comment of Kuhn may be apt: "The period during which light was 'sometimes a wave and sometimes a particle' ... ended only with the development of wave mechanics and the realization that light was a self-consistent entity different from both waves and particles" (1996, p. 188).

Chapter 5 outlines a research methodology which, while striving for as much objectivity as possible, acknowledges another perspective:

> Sociocultural theory emerging from the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1934/1987; Vygotsky & Luria, 1993) raises issues that challenge the appropriateness of the purity metaphor in social science research. Vygotsky's developmental theory and its complex implications stress the inherent social nature of all human activity. From a neo-Vygotskyan perspective, data are social constructs developed through the relationship of researcher, research participants, research context (including its historical antecedents), and the means of data collection. (Smagorinsky, 1995, pp.191-192)

Chapter 6 explains in sufficient detail for replication and critique how the data of the enquiry were elicited, reduced, quantified, and analysed. The context of the enquiry which has been indicated in this chapter will be further elaborated as the relationships of researcher and participants emerge from the qualitative narratives of Appendices A, B, and C.

THE PRELIMINARY PROJECT

The empirical elements of the present enquiry began with a preliminary project to determine the viable limits of self-directed learning in the unprepared setting of the enabling institution. With the full backing of the Director of Studies, volunteers were drawn principally from a class of 12 students about to be divided, whose teacher became the project associate. Since time and other considerations did not permit a gradual accretion of self-direction, the path chosen was to present 'full autonomy' to an experimental group for whatever comparisons were possible with a control group. Problems were anticipated: Shaver (1969), trying a very similar experiment with 91 students (of General Earth Science) had reported that they preferred traditional classes; Bernstein (1969), reporting on a two-year Chicago Laboratory School experiment, was hesitant about 'dependent' learners; Riley and Sicre reported (1985) that when an entirely self-directed group-learning scheme was proposed to about one hundred potential participants "the reaction of our audience was lively and even hostile: about a quarter of those present either walked out or remained only to express their vociferous opposition" (p.278). However, the present decision was influenced by situations where SDL had been shown to be ultimately effective even where teaching was not offered as an option, for example at

Trinity College, Dublin (Little & Grant, 1986), or at the CRAPEL at Université Nancy 2 (Harding-Esch, 1976; Riley, 1985), or the University of Compiègne (Armanet & Obese-Jecty, 1984), and in fact all twelve potential participants agreed to take part. Ethical concerns had a higher priority than random allocation: one was advised in her own interests to join an examination class, and the remainder, after language tests, interviews, gender-balance, and stated preference were taken into account, were divided between the nominal 'control' and 'experimental' groups, the latter receiving a written briefing (**Table 4:1**).

It would have been possible to combine teaching with self-direction but at this very early exploratory stage it was more important to gauge the limits than to try to assess optimum levels of ODL and SDL. Whatever balance was chosen would have left open the question of what other balances were better, and so on, and so forth, and it was considered that the least confounded findings, and the most contrastive comparisons would emerge from 100% teaching versus 100% self-direction. Whatever was learnt from the preliminary project would inform any later undertaking, and it was vitally important at this stage that the acceptance or rejection of self-direction was coloured as little as possible by institutional factors such as the self-access facilities, the caring and sharing of a 'helper' or any other extrinsic motivational impetus. It was anticipated that this purpose would be readily understood within the constraints of its own context rather than be open to the charge that it was based on a partial understanding of autonomy. The intention was to derive intensely personal and subjective attitudinal responses to autonomy in the raw, as a possible prelude (should circumstances permit) to a more elaborated and finely-tuned version of institutional self-directed learning on lines advocated within the profession.

Arrivals and departures were a feature of the continuous open-enrolment policy of the institution and over the four-week period of the project (80 contact hours) the number of participants varied between 4 and 5 in the control group, and between 7 and 8 in the experimental group.[7] No member of either group requested transfer to the other, and none opted out of the project. The ODL control group were taught by a supplemented communicative approach methodology very much in line with the 'interactive' principles listed by Rivers (1989), which include mutual liking and respect between teacher and learners, the use of every medium and modality to aid learning, testing as an aid to learning, interactive, participatory activities, and learning inside and outside class. The SDL experimental group received no teaching, merely a list of possible SDL assignments (**Table 4:2**). The male co-ordinator and female associate alternated each day between teaching the control group for two hours and supervising the experimental group for the other two. Early teaching on one day was followed by early supervision on the next. The SDL supervisor responded only to direct requests for help, and care was taken that guidance did not revert to teaching.

In retrospect, 'learning-to-learn' extracts (for example, from R.M. Smith, 1983) might have been made available, or periods could have been set aside for guidelines on self-direction or study, even though it was thought at the time that "implementing a metacurriculum" which involves "teaching learning strategies while teaching one's own content area" (Weinstein, 1984, p.593) would defeat the purpose of the project. In any case, Gibbs had pointed out that despite many 'study habit inventories', "we do not, in general, know what the necessary study skills are, and it seems unlikely that any exist" (1981, p.60). Similarly, 'learning contracts' of the kind suggested by Knowles (1975, 1986) were not thought necessary or useful in a short-term project. Kasworm (1983) found they helped readiness for SDL, but Caffarella and Caffarella (1986),

[7]For a small-group study ($N = 4$) with diary elicited data see Simmons, 1996.

Table 4:1. *Handout Introduction to the Preliminary Project Self-Directed Learning Course*

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1. This Self-Instruction Course has been devised in accordance with the following concepts of language learning:
   (a) Adult students, accustomed to accepting responsibility for their own lives, will be trusted to accept responsibility for their own learning, with the full help and guidance of trained and experienced teachers, and according to the principles of the latest research findings in language acquisition and learning, in a 'communicative' classroom context.
   (b) Adult students will benefit most from the maximum of individual help and guidance and the minimum of formal 'instruction'.
   (c) Adult students will usually have experienced language learning in formal contexts, will have devised language learning strategies of their own, and may need more initial help than children in adapting to better ones.
   (d) The teacher will cease to be a 'substitute parent' or 'authority figure' and will assume the role of 'learning resource', available to the learner like any book or tape or computer.
   (e) The 'passive' role of the student will give way to his/her active participation in the learning process; monologue will give way to dialogue, in a spirit of mutual consideration, respect, and co-operation.
   (f) The encouragement of personal endeavours within a guided group of partners in learning will enable the adult student to make the most of his/her talents and life-experience in achieving his/her own personal language-learning goals.
2. The Course will aim to enable the individual learner to concentrate on his/her own areas of difficulty, not just for some of the time, as in a formal 'traditional' class-context, but for all of the time. It will do so by recognising two basic needs of the learner:
   (a) The need to find out how the language is organised: the grammar.
   (b) The need to put this 'passive' knowledge of the language to active practical use.
3. Instead of formal instruction-classes the individual learner will be encouraged and helped:
   (a) To find out how the language is organised beyond the knowledge he/she has already attained by studying the grammar-books and course books recommended for the course, by listening to the cassettes and doing the written and verbal exercises, by making use of the video-tapes and language laboratory facilities, and by using the teachers as 'learning resources' for feedback on his/her progress.
   (b) To put this knowledge to active and practical use by completing as many of the specially-prepared 'Learning Assignments' as possible, by speaking English at every opportunity and co-operating with fellow-students, making friends outside the school, visiting places of interest, taking part in the leisure activities available in the City, mixing with Irish people as much as possible, listening to and watching broadcast programmes, and working hard and happily to make the maximum use of this learning opportunity.
4. There will be no 'rules and regulations' on this Course, apart from the normal rules of courtesy, respect, and consideration for one another, but a few practical recommendations will help each student to gain the maximum benefit from the expert guidance offered by the teachers:
   (a) Aim to be in class by 9 a.m. every morning.
   (b) Work hard and conscientiously, either on individual learning or on the Learning Assignments until 1 p.m., and make full use of the teachers.
   (c) Always advise the teacher if you plan to be absent from the school between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. — there may be something special organised that you will need to know about.
   (d) If you have any problems at all, whether personal or otherwise, remember that the teacher is there to help you — but is not telepathic!
   (e) Above all, if you feel at any time that the Course is not meeting your own special and individual needs TELL THE TEACHER IMMEDIATELY.
5. We shall ask you to take two tape-recorded interviews. The initial one will give an indication of your spoken English at the start of the Course, and the final one will enable us to make an assessment of your progress. In addition, they will give us valuable information about your expectations and needs and allow you to tell us frankly whether the Course met your own individual requirements. All your replies will be treated as confidential and, when they have served their purpose of helping us to help you, will be retained only for statistical analysis and research purposes. What you tell us is extremely important: it is from such information, provided by the learners themselves, that scientific knowledge is advanced and improvements in education are made.

(continued ...)

6. When you have studied this 'Introduction' and are sure you completely understand it we would like you to sign the tear-off portion below and give it to the teacher.

tear or cut here .....

I have read and understood the 'Introduction to the Course' and

I agree/do not agree with the concepts, aims, and methodology of the Course and would like to/do not want to participate in it.

Full name
(in capital letters):

.....

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Table 4:2. *Preliminary Project: Suggested Self-Directed Learning Assignments*

Learning Assignments

1. Draw a map of central Dublin and mark on it: banks — post offices — places to eat — art galleries — museums — useful shops — DART stations — useful bus-stops.
2. List and price food-shopping for a week for a family of husband, wife, children ages 5, 7, 12.
3. Find out how to: cash an International Money Order — open a Current Account — open a Deposit Account — send money home.
4. Find out what services the international students' organisation offers.
5. Find out how to get back to your country if there is an airline strike or a shipping strike.
6. What exactly must you do if: your Passport is lost or stolen — you lose, or have stolen, all your money/travellers cheques — you mislay your return flight airline tickets.
7. Find out
   (a) what medical facilities are available to foreign students in this country, and what they cost
   (b) how to get medicines, and the kind you can get: on prescription — without a prescription.
8. If you wanted to visit the West of Ireland, leaving Dublin on Friday afternoon and returning late on Sunday, what travel and accommodation arrangements would you make if: — going alone — going with one male and one female friend.
9. Find out if your favourite sport can be enjoyed in Dublin, and, if so, where, and the costs.
10. Find out the typical menu and prices in places you might choose to eat in if: you just want a light snack during the day — you want to have an evening meal out.
11. List at least ten items of clothing that you have found to be cheaper than in your country; make a list of your own most important clothes sizes in the way you would do it if you were shopping in your own country and then mark each size with its corresponding size in Ireland.
12. What alcoholic drinks are: not produced in Ireland? — not obtainable in Ireland?
13. Find out
   (a) what kinds of food are most popular in Ireland
   (b) what typical Irish food products you could take home as gifts for your family.
14. Find out
   (a) how to send formal and informal invitations
   (b) how to accept, and how to decline, formal and informal invitations
   (c) what dress is appropriate for informal, and what is appropriate for formal, occasions: — for men — for women.
15. A. Prepare a short talk on your country, covering
      (a) its geography and climate
      (b) some customs and traditions
      (c) its current economic situation.
    B. Record your finished talk on video.
16. A. Prepare a questionnaire which would enable you to find out things you would really like to know about Irish people.
    B. Get at least 20 separate people to answer your questionnaire.
    C. Write a short piece, either in the form of a letter home, or in the form of a newspaper article, on what you have discovered.
17. Find out as much as you can about the current political situation in regard to the division of Ireland into two parts, the North and the South:
   (a) what is the historical background (why is there a border?)
   (b) how do some people in the Republic feel about the border?
   (c) how do some 'Unionists' in the North feel about the border?
   (d) how do some 'Nationalists' in the North feel about the border?

(continued ...)

working with 163 graduate students from six universities, reported little effect on readiness, although they had some impact on developing SDL competence. And while Guglielmino's (1977) Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale had been found to have high reliability and validity in some studies, its appropriateness for all learners was questioned by Brockett (1985), and the Oddi Continuing Learning Inventory (Oddi, 1986) was not intended for the purposes of the present study.[8] A confidential questionnaire (**Appendix H**) and a Course Questionnaire (**Appendix I**) were administered and qualitatively evaluated.

The co-ordinator's and associate's daily observations and notes, as well as rating and interview data, suggested that the range of expectations of and responses to SDL in such a small group did not augur well for a student consensus on a larger scale attempt. Most found the high concentration levels very tiring, one felt it would be more appropriate for skilled learners whose proficiency was already quite high, and one thought it demotivating if not accompanied by feedback and correction (cf. König's 1992 study, in which pupils criticised teachers who did not comprehensively correct errors; cited by Johnstone, 1993, pp.137-138). Of the 7 participants in the experimental group, 3 responded positively, 2 were negative, and 2 were mixed. Although it was accepted that full self-direction had not proved to be for all participants an adequate substitute for a traditional taught course, it was considered that in a context of very limited resources and barely minimal guidance the positive and mixed responses gave cautious support to further enquiry in the same environment. The following cautions that emerged were to have a direct bearing on the experimental programmes that followed:

- the importance of close student-teacher rapport to the quality of support in SDL;
- the advisability of high-profile teacher involvement, feedback, and correction;
- the value of prior language-competence in student acceptance of institutional SDL;
- the vulnerability of collaborative SDL to activity-type and student relationships;
- the role of the language laboratory as a self-access and independent-study facility;
- the acknowledgement that some learners might always prefer ODL;
- the need to recognise what is better taught than sought when time is limited.

The principal elements that some students seemed to value most from taught classes were stimulus, variety, student-teacher interaction, and feedback. In addition, the experience thoroughly convinced the co-ordinator and associate that institutional SDL had to retain the vital, if intangible and unquantifiable, ingredient of teacher-student rapport that they were both accustomed to (cf. Alvin White's 'Love and Trust' in Rogers, 1969/1983, p.103). The absence of rapport with the SDL group during the preliminary project was the cause of considerable stress in both co-ordinator and associate, an unanticipated finding which suggests an area for further research.

But although the project provided confirmation of Holec's caution that for some people self-directed learning "is second-best to a course with a 'real' teacher" (1985b, p.189), not all indications were adverse. It was thought possible to confront some of these problems on a full-scale programme by carefully briefing participants and by monitoring their responses very closely, and SDL was thought capable of a range of benefits from the perspectives both of teaching and of learning:

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[8]The interest in Guglielmino's SDLRS can be gauged by the fact that Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993) devoted 19 pages to studies and trials using it; Oddi's CLI received another five pages. For Field's critique of the SDLRS and lively rebuttals by Guglielmino, by Long, and by McClune see *Adult Education Quarterly, 39*(4), Summer, 1989.

- It could help to overcome some lockstep problems by allowing different activities and multiple supervision to coincide in time and place.
- It might help to balance some effects of the constant arrival of new students on courses that had already begun: undue disparity in levels, catching up difficulties, student integration problems, lesson-planning constraints, etc.
- It might abate individual calls for more conversation, reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary, and so on.
- It would allow students a supported 'personal space' in which to work at their own tasks, at their own pace, with their own materials, perhaps of particular value within highly intensive courses.
- It could encourage critical thought about the organisation of learning, about other-selected materials, and about personal, as opposed to class-norm, priorities.

These considerations were added to the cautions in preparing the full-scale semi-autonomy courses.

SEMI-AUTONOMY: INTEGRATING ODL AND SDL

Chapter 2 outlined some initiatives in self-direction, many of them large-scale and amply funded, and this section considers issues relevant to combining self-direction with other-direction in the less well-equipped classrooms represented by the present undertaking. The enquiry explores the researcher-requested diaried responses (Berg, 1989/1998, p.215; Rogers, 1969/1983, p.79, p.89; Thein, 1994, p.467) of three independent groups of adult foreign learners to experimental English-language courses in which teaching was interwoven with complementary independent work, in accord with the view that the judicious classroom blend of both best complies with Dewey's dictum on collateral learning: "The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning" (1938/1975, p.48). In addition, as Hostler (1985) had pointed out, for those initially lacking the confidence or ability to manage their own learning, autonomy may best be encouraged in the less threatening environment of traditional instruction. The question of combining modes will always arise at the interface between the old and the new, and one of the conclusions reached by Harvey (1985), in a hard-hitting article on the appropriateness of communicative approaches to the highly conservative (and very effective) traditional Chinese university language classrooms of the day, was that "what might be called 'traditional' methods and skills are not fundamentally or necessarily unworkable alongside modern EFL teaching methods. The idea that the two are mutually exclusive is absurd" (p.186). Events have more than justified Harvey's observations. The classroom methodology was thus a particular version of mediated independent-dependent learning (MIDL), definable in general terms as any classroom learner autonomy context in which ODL and SDL are fused into a coherent programme.

Not unnaturally, some of the institutional supports for self-directed learning are derived from other-directed learning and in essence amount to the learner checking the telephone directory for a number he or she could (and in some cases, should) have been told instead. On semi-autonomy programmes in particular, other-direction may affect self-direction negatively or positively, both as model for learning style and as impetus to an autonomous mind-set. Matters of cognition, of consciousness, and so on, are common to both modes, with neither having an absolute monopoly on their optimisation. Self-direction does not mean reinventing the wheel, and a great deal of carry-over is both natural and desirable in the learner's move from dependence to independence. In what follows, therefore, any explicit reference to other-direction is intended to contain implicit relevance to self-direction.

As Little points out "In formal educational contexts, genuinely successful learners have always been autonomous" (1995, p.175), and despite arguments against pair and group work, and the language laboratory, these devices could be given a more overtly independent orientation and brought within the remit of the research. Highly traditional classroom contexts already offered ample opportunities for episodic SDL, from merely checking a dictionary or book of tables to 'free periods' and hours of library reading, homework and preparation, and Corney (1994), after noting student independence when "revising, when devising their own dialogues, when the teacher was absent, or when the teacher was helping individual students" (pp. 2-3), goes on to remark on equipping students "to make better use of these opportunities" (p.3). Formally integrating episodic SDL into an 'autonomy' ethos in which the securities of ODL, the facilities and materials, the teacher and peer support, were still maintained, addressed the issue raised by Oddi: "To assume that one must be able to engage in self-instruction in order to be a self-directed learner eliminates from consideration as self-directed learners those individuals whose learning styles are not compatible with planning courses of self-instruction" (1987, p.26).

A suitably eclectic approach might therefore prefer to see indications that multimodal learning offers intangible advantages in addition to those available under any unimodal format which, the ongoing evidence suggests, is less likely to cater for the multiple intelligences (cognitive, affective, motor, and so on) that human beings employ in language learning (see, for example, Ryan's 1998 article on Irish guidance-counsellors' perspectives on multiple intelligence). It follows that self-direction fits naturally into an eclectic multimodal approach that is not merely justified but highly recommendable. Questions of learner attitudes and preferences therefore assume more than an ethical dimension, become bound up with many aspects of consciousness and learning that inform applied linguistics and should enlighten teachers.

From a pedagogical perspective it is doubtful if anyone would yet advocate the wholesale conversion of institutional environments to self-direction, to what Menniss has called "a totally distinct educational ethos that permeates everything" (in Timmer, 1996, p.23). Before students can be given no other option than to have complete rather than shared control and responsibility for their own learning, apt points made by Grow have to be borne in mind: "It is painfully clear that certain individuals can be intensely self-directed learners without being mature, wise, or even sane" (1994, p.113); "degree of learner control depends in part on the situation, and in part on learners' ability to transfer skills and metaskills" and, in addition, "learner control may also be related to subject matter: some subjects … seem to be taught effectively by the same methods to learners in all degrees of self-direction" (ibid.). Menniss is, of course, very aware of the need for flexibility: "If we had beginners or eastern Europeans accustomed to a more teacher led approach which required [a] fixed syllabus, then that would be provided" (in Timmer, 1996, p.27).

The immediate concern was with learner responses to the interweaving of classroom self-direction with other-direction for the primary enhancement of learning a subject, in the present case the English language as "a means to communicate, not a means to dominate" (Sweeney, 1997, p. 48). Actualising such autonomy in the classroom seemed worth exploring, notwithstanding a dearth of empirical evidence that learners, as opposed to educators, wanted it. It also seemed reasonable to make up that lack by allowing learners the autonomous expression of their own views. While, given the entrenchment of other-directed classroom traditions and society's investment in them, an immediate and wholesale move to self-direction seemed neither probable nor necessary, the associated researchers at the CRAPEL had shown that

institutional settings could be adapted to learner autonomy approaches by incorporating the old within a framework of the new. Although the technical limitations of the classroom were recognised, it was felt that if conceptual uncertainties could be resolved from the literature and a suitable model for combining SDL with ODL could be found or devised then partnering them in that environment might enhance both.

It is also widely recognised in the literature that full self-direction is not a suitable mode for all learners in all situations: "It is simply another act of tyranny to impose self-direction on someone who at the moment is not ready, or not prepared, or not experienced enough to make sense of the challenge" (Underhill, 1998, p.18). In semi-autonomy programmes, therefore, it is of prime concern to provide inexperienced self-directed learners with a protected environment featuring constant monitoring, the close attendance of a co-ordinator, the principled integration of ODL with SDL so that each is input to the other, and equivalent taught courses as a no-penalty option. Another fear that surfaces is expressed by Swan (1996), quoting Dickinson (1987), on how the language laboratory changed from a useful technique to a controlling factor in some methodologies, and of the similar threat "'of a particular learning mode taking over the whole of the learning programme and distorting it so that the covert aim becomes the success of self-directed learning rather than the successful learning of the target language.'" (pp.36-37). Swan himself, in a closely-reasoned argument for a 'return to basics', notes: "It is of course true that only the learner really knows exactly what he or she wants. It is, however, equally true that only the teacher knows what there is to be learnt" (p.37). Almost needless to say, this view is in sharp opposition not only to that of Holec and associates at the CRAPEL but perhaps also to the beliefs of many autonomy proponents. And it is perhaps superfluous to remark that this enquiry explores whether a middle path is possible in an environment where 'the basics' have traditionally been the only option offered.

Establishing that total SDL would not be ethical left open the question of how much would be viable with different levels. Riley and Sicre (1985) had reported that in setting up an entirely self-directed group-learning scheme at Nancy an exception was made for absolute beginners, who were to have classes "for the first year (three hours per week, fifteen members per group)" (p.277). Because it was impractical to disturb existing classes, a newly-formed group had to consist of students who enrolled in sufficient numbers at the same notional level of English to make up a commercially viable class; in addition (and unlike the majority of students) they all had to stay for a relatively prolonged period. Intermediate-level proficiency best represented the average intake of the institution, would facilitate group interaction, and would allow data gathering in intelligible English.

Although the preliminary project had counter-indicated full self-direction for the majority of 'average' learners it had also suggested that some measure of independence was viable and ethical in this environment, notwithstanding minimal self-access facilities and students' prior experiences. The indications were that if the rapport and support they were given in ODL could be extended to SDL then alternatives somewhere between complete ODL and complete SDL (Holec, 1985b, p.174) could be addressed. What evolved and was ultimately termed mediated independent-dependent learning (MIDL) was also to be very much in line with Porcher's (1990) suggestion that institutions "peuvent devenir des moments dans un cursus d'apprentissage, et celui-ci peut de son côté évoluer vers une sorte de parcours en pointillé, en alternance, où des phases solitaires succèdent à des moments institutionnels stricts" (p.22). But in advance of experience in a traditional

ELT classroom it was uncertain to what extent ODL was compatible with an SDL ethos and it was unsure to what extent, if any, Holec's remarks could be applied to the proposed context:

> Once he has acquired a satisfactory competence in learning, the learner, individually *or as a member of a group* (autonomy is not synonymous with solitude), can construct his own programme by intervening directly at the various stages, thus narrowing considerably or even closing completely the gap between what he wants to learn and what he does in fact learn. (Holec, 1985a, p.264)

And it was thought possible to introduce SDL as an extension of the private study which must accompany group tuition. A format incorporating teaching was indicated on several grounds that recognised the importance of both cognitive-conscious and affective-unconscious factors in learning. F.R. Jones has put the point aptly:

> The theoretical arguments for a mixed approach appear to be backed up by a small but growing corpus of practical research into the effects of (classroom) instruction (overview in Ellis, 1990). A recurring theme from these studies (e.g. Spada, 1986) is that approaching language *both* as medium *and* as message – i.e. interspersing metalinguistic, form-based activities and activities practising language use in realistic contexts – probably makes the best learning sense. Similarly, post-communicative classroom methodology (e.g. Swan and Walter, 1984; Soars and Soars, 1991) advocates a four-way combination of: textual input; conscious metalinguistic work; extensive, maximally realistic practice; and feedback on performance. (F.R. Jones, 1994, p.442)

If teaching and self-direction each made complementary contributions to learning, a synthesis of ODL and SDL might enable the learners to benefit from both while losing nothing of either. In the process it was also possible that, as the students gained insights into their own learning styles, the teaching might be informed by a more flexible response to the learners (see, for example, Tudor, 1997).

Flexibility was, in any case, crucially important. In addition to the sociological obstacles identified by Holec (1985b, p.189), it was possible that SDL might be accepted for one learning purpose but not for another, or rejected outright as too slow, or too inefficient, or too lacking in feedback. Materials, guidance, and so on might be seen as inadequate. Even if accepted in principle the learners might be unwilling to invest time in SDL, fully 'autonomous' individuals might not wish to direct their own learning, and the less able or confident could be demoralised by choices they felt incompetent to make. Skorupski (1992) has aptly remarked: "Lacking common sense and experience one can make a big enough mess of one's life for the gain of autonomy to be cancelled by miseries and missed opportunities" (note 6, pp.150-151). What pleased some might displease others, and there might be no other recourse than to reduce SDL time to the point where it lost its comparability with ODL, or it might become necessary after whole-class consultation to abandon SDL altogether and revert to an entirely ODL mode. Close and frequent monitoring would be needed to avoid the ultimate irony, imposed 'autonomy' (Holec, 1985b, 189). Alongside the supported autonomy of co-operative SDL there should be total student freedom for some sessions, notwithstanding that, as Skinner (1971/1988) points out: "To arrange an opportunity is not a very positive act, but it is nevertheless a form of control if it increases the likelihood that behaviour will be emitted" (p.88). Some control is implicit in any form of institutional SDL. Again, Skinner is relevant: "The teacher who merely selects the material the student is to study ... has exerted control, though it may be hard to detect" (p.88). If student wishes were to be

taken into account then the need for adequate monitoring was clear, and directness and honesty would require an even higher than usual priority. It was hoped that SDL would enhance the normal class atmosphere, where firmness had nothing to do with power and everything to do with the students' best interests, by increasing the opportunities for an easy egalitarianism which had much in common with Freire's 'culture circles': "Instead of teachers, we had coordinators, instead of lectures, dialogue, instead of pupils, participants" (Freire, in Cox, 1990, p.74).

A pedagogical rationale for taking a semi-autonomy approach, for integrating other direction with self direction rather than opting for all-out autonomy, finds support in remarks and citations by Sheerin (1991):

> It is important to remember that *good* classes (i.e. learner-centred rather than teacher-centred) still have an important social and pedagogical part to play in the eyes of most learners. Moulden (1985) reports, for example, on one small group of students who although they considered the semi-autonomous component of their learning helpful and instructive, said that the class-based component was more enjoyable and served as a useful complement to their self-access work. Maxwell-Hyslop, Shaw and Dawson (1988) also stress the complementary nature of self-directed learning and the classroom. At its best it is a symbiotic and mutually enriching relationship. (Sheerin, 1991, p.154)

An additional ethical rationale is captured by Chamberlin in a discussion of what might be called altruistic imposition: making one's own choices is intrinsically worthwhile and we have to learn by sometimes making mistakes, but most people believe that sometimes "we are justified in coercing people for their own good, and that anyone that is concerned about the welfare of others should not always stand by and watch them come to some predictable and preventable harm" (Chamberlin, 1987, pp.122-123). Thus, the integration of ODL with SDL would provide for the exercise of freedom to make mistakes, in an environment which would minimise any potentially harmful consequences.

The ultimate harm, however, would occur if, at the teacher's instigation, the learners were to lose the advantages of other-direction without gaining the benefits of self-direction, and steps had to be taken to insure against this. This meant, as a minimum, and from the outset, that the teacher's sponsorship of semi-autonomy had to be subordinated to the wishes of the learners: the integration had to meet with their approval if it was to avoid becoming an alternative pedagogic imposition. Any long-term goals had therefore to defer to the immediate need to determine learner responses to such an innovation. The issue was sufficiently important for the conduct of the enquiry to be informed by Brookfield's caution about problems significant on their own terms rather than simply "amenable to study through ... whatever happens to be the dominant methodological paradigm" (1984, p.63). And, in addition to design issues and learner welfare, the research had to meet a serious responsibility to an enabling institution whose reputation and survival in the private sector were founded on quality instruction. Discovery of client needs had to extend to client wants, to an enhanced sensitivity to the learners in which failure to meet student expectations was not an option.

Moreover, if Little's 'any learning environment' and 'within any organizational framework' (1994, p.431) are well-founded dicta for learner autonomy, if, in effect the enquiry was to be meaningful not only in ELT but to the wider world without custom-built self-access centres or the latest multimedia facilities, then semi-autonomy should make sense even where resources, precedents, and learner preparation are lacking. For real-world authenticity it required the ordinary, hard-pressed classroom context of every day. And Little's 'making sense' meant acceptance of self-direction by learners who were also offered what they expected, a

worthwhile other-directed, or taught, alternative. Asking them to prefer self-direction in such a context was hardly realistic, but to test its acceptability in principle it was only necessary to discover if their preferences for ODL and SDL were markedly different. Gross differences would be observable without need for measurement, the ultimate sanction being a student rebellion or walk-out but, given the tendency to accept a degree of personal unfulfilment in a group-learning context, it was necessary to discover their more reserved feelings, to prompt them to be more frank and more open than most learning contexts encouraged or allowed.

For this purpose the devised semi-autonomy programme was applied, with two systematic replications, in an attempt at the balanced introduction of mediated ODL and SDL in what Dickinson has called "the first stage ... the liberalisation of the classroom to allow the development of learner independence and learner responsibility" (1987, p.8), and with something of the ethos of Grow's 'staged self-directed learning' model, in which "the teacher *leads* students from their comfortable learning style toward greater self-direction" (1994, p.111). Tennant, (1992, p.165), commenting on an example in Grow's 1991 explication of SSDL, refers to teachers moving "from expert, to guide, to facilitator, and finally to participant", but the intention would always be to move among them, backwards and forwards, much in the manner of Grow's (1991/1996) virtuoso passage on 'Toscanini as a multi-modal teacher'. R.L. Davis observes:

> Recent research on the role of attention in language acquisition supports ... focus on content during the manipulation of form (see VanPatten 1993).
>
> One means to accomplish this is suggested by Nunan (1989a, 130), who recommends that tasks be situated within an "integrated language lesson." That is, ideally a task should be just one element in a chain of tasks .... The output of one activity serves as the input to another. (R.L. Davis, 1997, p.274)

Just so was the intent of integration and mediation in the present enquiry, where all classroom activities would be linked in a continuous chain, and where the output of ODL could become the input for SDL and, through monitoring of learner diaries, SDL could provide stimulus to ODL. But the end would not simply be better instruction: the learners would be helped to integrate teaching into their own self-directed learning, to see it as just one of the means to their own ends. A precedent, and encouragement, existed in work by Moulden with learners of English at the *Ecole des Mines* in Nancy. Commenting on student comparisons of traditional taught classes and his experimental semi-autonomy courses, he said:

> The idea of self-directed learning in small groups seems interesting. A method combining classwork, individual self-directed learning and small group self-directed learning might well bring about an improvement. This latter activity would increase opportunities for communication in English and should go some way towards eliminating complaints about lack of stimulation and too much discouragement in individual self-directed learning. (Moulden, 1985, p.232)

The experimental MIDL courses of the enquiry were to offer a faithful realisation of Moulden's ideas, with detailed accounts providing the rich qualitative data such research is capable of eliciting. And more recently, Lee (1998), reporting her experimental self-directed learning programme with 15 tertiary level students in Hong Kong, said it "was offered as ancillary to the main language course. In order to help students become autonomous, it would be more effective to provide learner training alongside the programme, and make it an integral part of the course" (p.287). Training for independence in the present study was to take the form of teacher-prompted but otherwise self-directed pair and group work in which completion of a wide variety of

tasks called for initiative in co-operation, where, as Ridley says "the chances are that there is a more heightened sense of purpose than in situations where learners work on their own" (1997, p.28).

The preliminary project had not suggested any pressing need for overt student preparation for SDL and it was anticipated that young adults who had recently left secondary or tertiary education would effectively 'learn-to-learn' in a process of 'autonomisation' which has parallels with what Chamberlin said of maturation:

> Children do not become rational individuals, with plans and purposes of their own at one obvious point in their lives; they do so gradually, and are able to make sensible choices in some areas before they can do so in others. (Chamberlin, 1987, p.114)

Careful briefing of potential participants could ensure that expectation-levels were not unrealistic, but it was of major concern that, however limited the resources, the SDL should compare at least adequately with the ODL. The consequences of failure might be irremediable. The criteria for success included the satisfaction of the institution and of the participants, expressed in terms of initial agreement in principle to the experimental format, ongoing agreement to continue with it, and final agreement that it had been a rewarding experience. Student responses to the methodology had to be determined and evaluated from the start and in an ongoing and principled way. Diaries seemed indicated as serving to sustain the necessary dialogue, provide essential research data, and promote an evaluative attitude on the part of the students.[9]

Institutional approval for further research having been received, planning began for a full-scale experimental course with a single group. On several grounds a higher-intermediate Cambridge First Certificate Examination (FCE) class was considered ideal for the first trial:

- Incentive motivation was likely to be higher among examination candidates than among students with less clear-cut objectives.
- The same class might contain students varying in level from virtually elementary through to lower advanced, a sufficient range for experimentation, and one for which a suitable blend of ODL and SDL was most likely to be beneficial.
- Examination candidates were thought more likely to start together, stay together, and finish together.[10]
- Unlike some students in the institution, candidates would be attending classes together for several months; after initial allocation to classes, students were usually free (subject to numbers and levels constraints) to transfer according to their perceived needs and progress.
- At a nominal intermediate level it would be possible to gather the diary data in the target language.
- Acceptable results in an internationally-recognised examination could help to validate the methodology.

Examination classes were not enrolled until the autumn and several months therefore elapsed between the preliminary project and the first MIDL course, which was to run for four hours per day, five days a week, from September to December. This course would be consciously tentative, and it was considered prudent to begin in traditional ODL mode, to introduce guided collaborative SDL gradually, and to proceed very

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[9]The format for diaries was left relatively open for Courses A and B, and more guidance on content was given on Course C. None, however, compared in any way with the highly structured diaries elicited in the study by Pavis (1989) from Sydney University first year students of French. He successfully used the diaries for monitoring as well as for self-corrected writing practice. McDonough (1994) examines the diaries of four of her teacher colleagues, gives some background to the use of diaries, and aptly concludes: "A diary can … help us document and formalize the everyday working experience that might otherwise be lost" (p.64).

[10]In the event, the expectation that the students might all start together was not fulfilled.

cautiously towards individual SDL. The early ODL would adapt communicative approach principles, using authentic and non-examination materials.

In the event, therefore, and despite the pressure on over-burdened students to attend to Snyder's, 1971, 'hidden curriculum' (Gibbs, 1981, p.54) of what not to study, likely questions, and so on, which have "nothing whatsoever to do with learning" (ibid.), the three experimental courses were to be conducted with participants in examination classes (although not all were candidates) at nominal intermediate level.[11] At the very least, the programmes were expected to give participants more opportunities for 'autonomous learning' than any conventional class, and in the words of one of Freire's participants, a chance to "stop being the shadow of other people" (Freire, in Cox, 1990, p.78). An enquiry at only one level of the target language would clearly leave many questions unanswered and allow considerable scope for further research.

And Nichol offers a reminder of one rationale for the classroom integration of other-directed and self-directed learning modes:

> Field dependent or relational styles reflect the tendency to perceive and adhere to an existing, externally imposed framework. In contrast, field independent or analytical styles are reflected in the individual's ability to develop their own internal references and restructure knowledge. (Nicholl, 1998, p.4)

But although it is clear from a summary of characteristics provided by S. Jones that field-dependent (FD) learners may tend to benefit from ODL, and field-independent (FI) from SDL, it is probable that the type of learning to be done has a bearing on which style is more catered to:

> FDs are disadvantaged in unstructured situations, whereas FIs tend to provide their own structure more readily; FDs prefer directions and feedback, whereas FIs are less dependent on feedback; FDs rely more on others for information, whereas FIs are less influenced by peers.
> ...
> Abraham (1985) showed in experiments with grammar lessons that FI subjects performed better with deductive lessons, whereas FD subjects performed better with example lessons; less rule-oriented teaching was obviously more beneficial for FD students. (S. Jones, 1993, p.199)

Some years later she throws more light on the topic, with some research evidence putting into question "whether the FI dimension actually is a true cognitive style or rather an ability" (S. Jones, 1998, p.119). However, not only have the researchers had to take 'ability' into account as a different dimension but some learners show characteristics of both FD and FI styles (p.200), as a Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) administered to *ab initio* students of German at the University of Ulster demonstrates (p.201), and, as S. Jones herself concludes, "processes of learning can be taught" (p.205) and "mobility between different learning styles is an educational goal worth aiming at" (p.206). And while "Griffiths & Sheen (1992) have given a reappraisal of the FD/I concept in L2 research, positing its lack of relevance for second-language learning" (p.200) it is not necessary to be totally sceptical to see that the FD/FI divisions themselves are necessarily broad enough to imagine topics for which an FI would prefer examples, or where feedback would obviate a low level of exposure or expertise. That said, and although it was considered beyond the scope of the present enquiry to administer specific tests such as the GEFT or Kolb's Learning Style Inventory

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[11] Approximately equivalent to standards S2-S3, Defense Language Institute, USA (Trim, 1980, appendix A); Level 4-Level 5, D.A. Wilkins (Trim, 1980, appendix B).

mentioned by S. Jones (p.205), it is possible to hypothesise that these and other styles are as much correlated with attitudes towards SDL as the classroom environment is a key factor in motivation to learn.

From among Littlewood's comprehensive suggestions for increasing students' ability and willingness to engage in self-directed work (1996, p.433) a few may be singled out as particularly applicable to the experimental courses:

- beginning with limited, structured tasks and gradually raising the level at which students need to make choices;
- creating a non-threatening atmosphere and involving them in small-group interactions;
- giving positive feedback;
- creating situations (e.g. information exchange) in which students can practise using communication strategies.

(Adapted from Littlewood, 1996, p.433).

Principles such as these were implemented in two ways: through independent self-directed learning (ISDL) and dependent self-directed learning (DSDL). One centrally important aspect of learner autonomy was addressed by the DSDL mode: the need to prepare learners to accept responsibility. As Gremmo rightly points out: "If left to their own devices, most learners will do 'what they can', reproducing their representations of what a teacher would do in their place, thus not necessarily working in ways that will favour language learning" (1998, p.149). While learner preparedness for SDL was recognised, it was felt that the strictures of examination classes inhibited a formal 'learning-to-learn' programme, a point that Little also recognises: "Time constraints ... are likely to set strict limits on direct learner training. It seems likely that a continuous process of making learners aware of strategic possibilities is a safer bet in terms of both feasibility and likely effectiveness" (1995, p.177).[12] The dependent SDL (DSDL) sessions, where the learners worked co-operatively on what were generally co-ordinator assigned tasks, offered just such a monitored introduction to the skills of self-direction, of coping, planning, organising, and effecting their own learning events. The ethos is well captured by a '10th commandment' Dam reproduces "Ask at least three others before you ask me" (Christenssen, in Dam, 1989).[13] This training function was, however, just one of the objectives of DSDL, and in retrospect it is possible that 'learning-to-learn' materials could have been made available as texts at least as interesting and language-useful to the learners as any others.

While ISDL required learners to take full responsibility for all aspects of the learning event, and DSDL involved the teacher (co-ordinator) to varying degrees; both were realisations of the 'learning-to-learn' implications outlined by Huttunen:

> Learners are expected to take their share of responsibility for their learning.... to negotiate and cooperate with each other and the teacher ... to select objectives and ways of dealing with them, and ... to evaluate their own learning. As language learners they are also expected to communicate at every opportunity inside and outside the class, and to develop their language

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[12]For contexts in which there is need and time for learning-to-learn as a separate activity, Dickinson (1992) offers many workable suggestions and G. Ellis & Sinclair (1989) produced a coursebook for ELT at lower-intermediate to intermediate level that could supplement (or perhaps replace) more routine material for listening and pairgroup purposes.

[13]From a photocopy handout.

> awareness and specific language learning strategies (Shiels, 1988; Common European Framework, 1995). (Huttunen, 1996, pp. 87-88)

Huttunen's overview of 'learning-to-learn' incorporates aims which were also realised in DSDL pairgroup activities: 'development of specific strategy areas such as self and peer evaluation, collaboration skills, compensation strategies, and reading and writing strategies; development of negotiation skills' (adapted from Huttunen, 1996, p.86). And her further specification of 'enhancement of self-esteem' (ibid.) is consistent with an ISDL ethos. While DSDL allows for teacher intervention, ISDL encourages total learner autonomy with the advantage of full access to the teacher (co-ordinator) and to the resources of the institution.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the present enquiry a constructivist rationale is evident in the more individual impetus of independent self-directed learning (ISDL) as well as in the socialised 'close community' language classroom, a "community as relationship" (St.Clair, 1998, p.8), and in the dependent self-directed learning (DSDL) pairgroup work within it. Several theories of learning are thus potentially enabled or supported by the constant ebb and flow of mediated ODL and SDL modes of learning on MIDL courses, in which other features of the instructional principles of constructivist theory elaborated by "An overview" (n.d., pp. 2-3) may be manifested: the intrinsic relevance of language learning tasks are enhanced by immediate and authentic 'survival' considerations when the target language is being learned in the TL environment; integrated self-direction encourages personal adoption of instruction which might otherwise remain outside the 'ownership' of the learner; other-direction both challenges the learner to maximise self-direction and offers feedback to reinforce the learner's reflection on his or her own learning content and process.

The principles outlined in this chapter are fully exemplified and illustrated in the narrative accounts of the experimental courses at Appendices A, B, and C, where the voices of the participants themselves are most clearly recorded and evaluated, an appropriate digression before the next chapter returns to the concerns of formal enquiry with a discussion of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 5

PARADIGMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

This chapter would like to follow Bailey (1978/1987) in distinguishing methodology from method, the former "the philosophy of the research process" (p.33) and the latter "the research technique or tool used to gather data" (p.32), or Riley (1996): a methodology is "a set of principles", while a method is "a systematic way of doing something" (p.253); but the terms are too widely interchangeable in the literature. While committed to a scientific model, the enquiry embraces the view that "since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing enquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction" (Kurtz, 1980, p.5). In addition, therefore, to whatever 'scientific method' the setting allows, it identifies with a 'postpositivist paradigm' for an approach characterised by "research in more natural settings", the collection of "more situational information", the acceptance of discovery and emic viewpoints in inquiry, and contributions to 'grounded theory' (from Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110, whose analysis is reproduced as **Table 5:1**). It is also in line with what Burgess (1984/1993) has identified: as "a dearth of relevant literature on *how* research is conducted in educational settings" (p.7). In outlining the over-all design and the methods employed to obtain and analyse the data, it is addressing the similar problems which confront "the research novice writing a PhD thesis or an experienced researcher developing research expertise or extending his or her research repertoire" (Burgess, p.9). That repertoire need not be extensive, as Wolcott (1992) points out: "In the real world of research, the most seasoned veterans probably are conversant with no more than one or two different approaches" (p.18). In consequence, perhaps, some of those problems relate to expectations of a project which arise out of the training and experience of clients, of reviewers, and of other researchers, and just as research methods cannot be justified except in terms of their own dynamic in their own field, so there may always be questions of the value of a topic and its results, which cannot be answered to universal satisfaction:

> Findings that "obviously" mean one thing to you may "obviously" mean something entirely different to a researcher with a different paradigm. It can also mean that a social phenomenon that is "obviously" important to one researcher is "obviously" unimportant and not worthy of study to another. (Wolcott, 1992, p.31)

The issue bears upon the possibility of stifling research in conforming to prior conventions of method, and perceptions of what is important may be coloured by demands to conform. As Staw observes:

> There has developed a strong norm for the presentation of results. Articles typically review existing work, propose a hypothesis to fill a knowledge gap, present data validating the hypothesis, mention a few limitations of the findings, and call for further research. This sequence has become almost a sacred ritual, with violators told to keep revising and resubmitting their manuscripts until they look like all the rest. (Staw, 1992, p.137)

Table 5:1. *Postpositivist Paradigm Analysis (Guba & Lincoln)*

Ontology: *Critical realism.*	Reality is assumed to exist but to be only imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena. The ontology is labelled as critical realism (Cook & Campbell, 1979) because of the posture of proponents that claims about reality must be subjected to the widest possible critical examination to facilitate apprehending reality as closely as possible (but never perfectly).
Epistemology: *Modified dualist/ objectivist.*	Dualism is largely abandoned as not possible to maintain, but objectivity remains a "regulatory ideal"; Special emphasis is placed on external "guardians" of objectivity such as critical traditions (Do the findings "fit" with preexisting knowledge?) and the critical community (such as editors, referees, and professional peers). Replicated findings are *probably* true (but always subject to falsification).
Methodology: *Modified experimental/ manipulative.*	Emphasis is placed on "critical multiplism" (a refurbished version of triangulation) as a way of falsifying (rather than verifying) hypotheses. The methodology aims to redress some of the [intraparadigm] problems ... [of] [*context-stripping; exclusion of meaning and purpose; disjunction of grand theories with local contexts; the etic/emic dilemma; inapplicability of general data to individual cases; exclusion of the discovery dimension in inquiry*] by: doing inquiry in more natural settings, collecting more situational information, and reintroducing discovery as an element in inquiry, and, in the social sciences particularly, soliciting emic viewpoints to assist in determining the meanings and purposes that people ascribe to their actions, as well as to contribute to "grounded theory" (Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). All these aims are accomplished largely through the increased utilization of qualitative techniques.

Note. Source: Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110. Text in square brackets is interpolated from p.106.

If this conformism were found only among hardened positivists, it might be excused as the attempted rigour of a predominant paradigm, even if the suspicion remains that it is easier for reviewers to handle the familiar. But it can create a wholly discouraging climate of self-doubt fundamentally antithetical to truly liberal enquiry and to which even outstanding alternative research may not be immune. Staw praised a piece of work by Sutton and Rafaeli who, he said, had "contributed an exemplary study in terms of both method and theory" (p.136) which had "successfully violated most of our norms" (p.138). Ironically, despite promotion to associate professors with tenure on the strength of that research, and despite receiving the award for best paper published in AMJ during 1988 for it, they said: "We both still worry that the relationship between store sales and expressed emotions is a trivial topic" (Sutton & Raffaeli, 1992, p.127). This, despite the fact that positivist research may be buttressed more by the established precedents of its methods than by any really searching look at its topics or results.

The present enquiry, despite declaring its exploratory nature and integrative methods, is similarly vulnerable to the charge that its focus on the views of the learners is too narrow. But establishing such views is, or should be, a fundamental precursor to any declaration by educationists that 'autonomous learning' accords with what learners need, to say nothing of what they want. The point of the enquiry was to discover, in a hostile context, unknown attitudes to an untried learning mode. It was expected that all educationists, not least those in tune with a learner autonomy ethos, would consider the topic of what learners themselves think to be far from trivial, and, conscious of the difficulties of such research in real-world settings, would find the means to that determination at least on a par with anything in the literature. Thus establishing the domain of the enquiry as affective/ attitudinal set bounds to what was strictly relevant, and ruled out, for example, exploration of prior learning, levels of intelligence, personality and temperament, and pedagogical efficacy.

While most of these variables could be assumed to be randomly distributed across potential groups, investigating the efficacy of SDL against ODL, a topic of very considerable importance to the introduction of self-directed learning, would have required at a minimum the random allocation of subjects to control and experimental groups in numbers which were quite beyond the resources available. The enquiry is aware that to narrow the focus to attitudinal responses is to neglect many other important and relevant questions, among them the pedagogical value of self-direction, the existential implications of responsibility for one's own learning, and serious 'critical researcher' issues of "emancipatory action", exemplified by the problem of violence in American schools:

> If we view the violence we find in classrooms not as random or isolated incidents created by aberrant individuals willfully stepping out of line in accordance with a particular form of social pathology, but as narratives of transgression and resistance, then this could indicate that the "political unconscious" lurking beneath the surface of everyday classroom life is not unrelated to issues of race, class, and gender oppression. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p.140)[1]

While 'supersedes' may be an exaggeration in the claim that "critical education science ... preserves while at the same time supersedes empirical-analytic and interpretive research traditions" (D.J. Little, 1992, p.237), particularly in light of the author's admission that its reports "tend not to be found in research journals or graduate theses and dissertations" (p.246), it is possible to sympathise with a research orientation in which

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[1]McLaren's well-known ethnographic study (1986/1993) of Portuguese immigrant youth in a Toronto Catholic school elaborates at length on this theme.

"the idea of science is broadened to include, in addition to the values of truth and efficiency, those of rightness, beauty and comprehensibility" (p.246) in the attempt not just to explore the world but to make it a better one. On another occasion, therefore, the enquiry might have taken such a 'critical theorist' stance, or the closely related 'postmodernist/ poststructuralist' position of Scheurich (1997), in the interests perhaps of "the democratic transformation of schooling" (Quantz 1992, p.498), or of the wider sociopolitical concerns evident in Brookfield's (1984; 1985) involvement with self-direction, but it is also aware that if 'preference for learning mode' is not informed by the common-sense constraints that must operate when a single researcher undertakes a complex project, it is likely to become an exploration of the history and psychology of learning, of the politics and sociology of education, and much besides that would quickly outstrip both the resources of the researcher and the imposed limits on size.

In addition, taking on board an entirely relativistic ethos can mean extending enquiry into meaninglessness. Where modernism inherited from the Enlightenment a view of "universalistic Reason as foundation of knowledge and source of progress" (Rupert, n.d.[b], p.1) and thus tends to favour a rigidly defined scientific search for knowledge, postmodernism, in contrast, would render the search futile, claiming that reality "is ambiguous, constantly changing, infinitely complex; it cannot be grasped whole, as a single, stable completely knowable object"; there are "no *intrinsic* meanings" (ibid.). Feyerabend thus puts this different case:

> The task of the scientist, however, is no longer "to search for the truth," or "to praise god," or "to systematize observations," or "to improve predictions." These are but side effects of an activity to which his attention is now mainly directed and which is "*to make the weaker case the stronger*" as the sophists said, *and thereby to sustain the notion of the whole*. (Feyerabend, 1996, p.197)

> We must invent a new conceptual system that suspends, or clashes with the most carefully established observational results, confounds the most plausible theoretical principles, and introduces perceptions that cannot form part of the existing perceptual world. (Feyerabend, 1996, p.198)

Masny (1996) asks: "Does scientific objectivity (and statistics) make the research more valid, more legitimate?" (p.9). The answer, of course, must be that no particular methodology (scientific or otherwise) can legitimise evil research (as some human and animal experimentation must be considered), but that without some attempt at objectivity and accuracy nothing worthwhile can be conveyed to our peers and colleagues. And not many who accept postmodernist perspectives would claim that, for example, medical research should incorporate local narratives of myth and irony. The point is to take account of personal involvement and interpretation in science and to recognise subjectivity where evaluation calls for the interplay of skills and experience (as in diagnosing illness, driving a car, teaching a group of mixed ability students, and so on) but opinion without evidence risks a partial view of reality.

In striving to achieve the ideal of an exemplary study professionally conceived, professionally conducted, and professionally concluded, the enquiry is also very conscious of Delamont's *caveat* in regard to her own doctoral thesis:

> It was a higher degree project, and therefore a learning exercise; an apprenticeship. I would not want any other researcher, novice or experienced, to do exactly what I did, and I would not now tackle the project in precisely the same way myself. (Delamont, 1984/1993, p.17)

There will always, of course, be other themes for research, and other ways to tackle them, particularly where, in addition to the 'apprenticeship' proviso, there are added the difficulties of reconciling the roles of researcher and participant co-ordinator. In the interests of further replication (Cummings & Earley, 1992, p.168; Berg, 1989/1998, p.7) and critique, this and the following chapter therefore spell out how it was done, and leave for the discussion in Chapter 8 the ways in which it might have been done better.

CONSTRAINTS AND SUPPORTS FOR HYPOTHESES AND FINDINGS

While aware of the many questions that surround 'autonomous learning', the study aimed to contribute to classroom methodology and educational understanding (Bennet & Desforges, 1985; Hammond, 1989; Parlett & Dearden, 1977), on one specific issue only. At its simplest, the question was whether or not 'average' adult language students in a traditional other-directed learning (ODL) classroom, in an institution whose survival meant catering to student 'value-for-money' expectations of teaching, would be prepared to spend a proportion of their time in self-directed learning (SDL). To be true to its own ethic, 'autonomous learning' ultimately depended not so much on what educationists thought of it as on how learners themselves responded to it, and much therefore rested on answering that question effectively. It was possible that, even if exposed to a judicious blend of both ODL and SDL, students would exhibit a preference for one of them sufficiently marked as to discountenance the other. If this were to be in favour of ODL it would still raise questions about the version of SDL presented to the learners. If, on the other hand, they favoured SDL, or showed no marked preference, this could cast doubt on the quality of the ODL they were exposed to, but, more seriously, would raise questions about the dominance of traditional ODL pedagogy (not all of which is, in any case, of high quality) which only further research could answer.

The enquiry therefore explored *preference for learning mode* at these two levels, and the research hypothesis was stated formally as: adult ELT students will exhibit a significant preference either for ODL or for SDL where both are systematically integrated, each mediating the other. *Preference* was operationalised in both absolute and relative terms as ratings derived from a tally of 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' remarks for ODL and SDL categories in participants' diary submissions, triangulated by questionnaire ratings for selected ODL and SDL components for Courses A and B only.[2] Much reliance was placed on the qualitative narrative findings, with ratings regarded only as very coarse indicators of preferential attitude, and s*ignificance* was therefore measured by real-world criteria as well as by statistical tests.[3] A quasi-experimental non-directional null hypothesis of no preference for learning mode was tested nonparametrically at an adequate α of 0.10. While failure to reject the null hypothesis could be a function of sample-size and test-power, and could not, in any case, be taken as conclusive support for a mediated ODL $\leftrightarrow$ SDL methodology, the fact that ODL was not dramatically preferred in this very conservative teaching environment could be regarded as of real-world significance, especially if the same results were found on

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[2]The questionnaires were administered only to Courses A and B. The diary and questionnaire rationale and procedures are detailed in the next chapter, together with the derivation of ratings.

[3]Throughout, the terms 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' are used in a methodological sense. The statistician's distinction between 'qualitative data' (categorical data at nominal or ordinal levels of measurement) and 'quantitative data' (at interval or ratio levels) is avoided by contrasting 'nominal' with 'numerical' where appropriate (the contrast is from Berg, 1989/1998, pp. 6-7).

more than one occasion. In real-world terms, and regardless of measurable preference, if participants accustomed only to other-direction voluntarily remained on a course which incorporated a substantial self-directed element, this would suggest the value of continuing to explore the integration of both. Finally, and assuming that the appropriate balances of other-direction and self-direction were in place, if the results indicated significant real-world preference for ODL, or the SDL components had to be abandoned by popular request, this would throw serious doubt on the viability of self-directed learning in similar traditional environments. At the very least it would prompt a re-examination of the relationship between educationists' espousal and learners' perceptions of classroom sponsored 'autonomous learning'.

Previous experience by learners of exclusively ODL classes could be expected to influence the outcome, notwithstanding that the effect of introducing SDL was unknown. Greater support for SDL would run counter to received wisdom and, assuming at least adequate teaching, could raise serious questions about traditional pedagogy. A markedly more favourable response to ODL might be attributable to no more than student preference for the familiar, for what they expected of the traditional classroom, but might reflect failure of the learning mode model (an inadequate version of MIDL) or student rejection of SDL or both. Such potential confounding could not be avoided, since determining optimal balances could not be achieved except by trial-and-error. It was not known whether more than one attempt would be possible, or whether worthwhile data would emerge, and the project was at all times vulnerable to being shut down for practical as well as ethical reasons. In the event, it was fortunate that the experimental methodology was sufficiently well received by the participating students that the enabling institution, whose risks in terms of reputation and financial losses cannot be over-stated, granted permission for preferences to be tested against different balances of SDL and ODL on three sequential courses (in this respect *cf.* Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p.224). Two triangulated sets and one untriangulated set of replication findings offered support for the external validity recommended by Yin (1993) for case studies of this kind, which, as Berg notes, take the present setting as representative of others: "When case studies are properly undertaken, they should not only fit the individual, group, or event studied, but generally provide understanding about similar individuals, groups, and events" (Berg, 1989/1998, p.216). And, unlike enquiry undertaken simply for greater understanding of a particular case, the present study identifies with the following outline provided by Berg:

> *Instrumental case studies* are cases examined to provide insight into some issue or to refine some theoretical explanation (Stake, 1994). In these situations, the case actually becomes of secondary importance. It will serve only a supportive role, a background against which the actual research interests will play out. Instrumental case studies often are investigated in depth, and all of its [*sic*] aspects and activities are detailed, but not simply to elaborate the case per se. Instead, the intention is to assist the researcher to better understand some external theoretical question or problem. Instrumental case studies may or may not be viewed as typical of other cases. However, the choice of a particular case for study is made because the investigator believes that his or her understanding about some other research interest will be advanced. (Berg, 1989/1998, p.216)

As already explained, typicality was assumed, and although conducting the research with three different groups of participants ran the risk of inconsistent results, it also stood to obtain the benefits noted by Aronson and associates in regard to systematic replications:

> Some aspects of the situation are deliberately varied or left uncontrolled: The conditions are not exactly the same as those of the original experiment. If such a replication is successful, we not only gain confidence in the reliability of the phenomenon but also obtain evidence that the result is not unique to the specific conditions of the original experiment. (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1976/1990, p.66)

The present enquiry thus aims to provide insight into the responses of other, similar, groups of students in comparable settings of combined ODL and SDL and, in so doing, to explore the wider topic of learner autonomy in classroom settings.

DESIGN ISSUES

This section deals with design issues which, outside the established bounds of 'hard science', and despite precedents, authorities, and journals at the highest levels of scholarship and research, still attract controversy.[4] Operating within conventions that are still evolving, and in recognition of "the shortcomings of quantitative methods for understanding educational innovation" (Miles & Huberman, in Pitman & Maxwell, 1992, p.744), the study stands alongside the research alternatives outlined by Guba and Lincoln (**Table 5:2**) as an enquiry undertaken from the postpositivist perspective which is succinctly outlined by Denzin and Lincoln:

> Postpositivists argue that reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated (Guba, 1990, p. 22). Postpositivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the discovery and verification of theories. Traditional evaluation criteria, such as internal and external validity, are stressed, as is the use of qualitative procedures that lend themselves to structured (sometimes statistical) analysis. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.5)

What is meant by 'postpositivism' is, of course, dependent on what is meant by 'positivism', and for the present purposes it is useful to take Scheurich's gloss of the latter in considering terms related to the former:

> We define 'positivism' as the traditional application of the scientific method within the social sciences ... aware ... of the debates about whether this is the appropriate label or not and agree that strictly speaking it is not .... By 'neo-realisms', we mean that range of realisms ... that has sought, similarly to postpositivism, to address the strong criticisms of the scientific method ... while maintaining the basic validity of the scientific method. By 'interpretivisms' and 'constructivisms', we agree with Schwandt (1994) that they are 'a loosely coupled family of methodological and philosophical persuasions ... that share the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (p. 118). (Scheurich, 1997, p.149)

More will be said of 'realism' later, but in looking for approximations to 'reality', postpositivist research acknowledges the place of qualitative methods in revealing the perceptible, which may not be the same as the measurable, or, as Merriam puts it, qualitative research "is focused on process more than outcomes or products" (1989, p.166). Qualitative research is categorised, among other things, as "a means to discovering

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[4] A reminder by Dr. Alan Kelly, Dublin University (personal communication) that familiarity or sympathy with qualitative research norms can not be taken for granted resulted in the present more extensive treatment of design issues than was originally intended.

Table 5:2. *Basic Beliefs (Metaphysics) of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms (Guba & Lincoln)*

Item	*Positivism*	*Postpositivism*	*Critical Theory et al.*	*Constructivism*
Ontology [What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?]	naïve realism — "real" reality but apprehendable	critical realism — "real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	historical realism — virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	relativism — local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology [What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?]	dualist/ objectivist; findings true	modified dualist/ objectivist; critical tradition/ community; findings probably true	transactional/ subjectivist; value-mediated findings	transactional/ subjectivist; created findings
Methodology [How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?]	experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	dialogic/ dialectical	hermeneutical/ dialectical

Note. Source: Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 108, 109. The table is adapted from their Table 6.1, p.109; the text within square brackets is interpolated from p.108.

general knowledge not accessible through quantitative approaches" (Deyhle, Hess, & LeCompte, 1992, p.602). From Kant, "the ultimate source of qualitative thinking" came the proposal that "human perception derives not only from the evidence of the senses but also from the mental apparatus that serves to organize the incoming sense impressions.... A Kantian perspective ... must take full cognizance of the investigator" (Hamilton, 1994, p.63). The qualitative approach is described by Lincoln and Guba as

> an alternative paradigm that, largely through historical accident, is now travelling under the name 'naturalistic.' It has other aliases as well, for example: the postpositivistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, qualitative, hermeneutic, humanistic. It has so many names because the persons who profess to practice it tend to take different views of what it implies. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.7)

To these different views may be added a pertinent remark of Eisenhart and Howe (1992): "In a field in which major problems confront us, where significant debates about educational practice rage, and where person power and money to conduct research are limited.... we think that methods sometimes must be modified, combined, and even created" (p.658). This enquiry is not just subjective, and although it nods in the direction of a structuralist search for "knowledge independent of experience" (Sarup, 1983, p.151) it concedes post-structurally that "all explanations are partial" (p.153); it is too empirical to be called phenomenological; its attempts to interpret are hermeneutic, but it also describes; it shares with all of education a humanistic concern for the welfare of learners; it is non-confrontationally postpositivist and any ethnographic features it may have are far from condescending; it employs qualitative assessment and reporting, and also attempts to quantify data for quasi-experimental evaluation. The study has many features comprehensively identified by Stake (1995, pp.47-48) as characteristics of qualitative research, and could be regarded, from one perspective, as the first in a sequential design, "in which the course of the experiment depends in some way upon the results obtained" (Wetherill & Glazebrook, 1986, p.2), and from another as a mixture experiment, in which "the response is assumed to depend only on the relative proportion of the ingredients present in the mixture and not on the amount of the mixture" (Cornell, 1990, p.13). And in the experimental integration of SDL and ODL the enquiry inevitably took on aspects of normative-empirical (or formative) research, whose goal is learning how to improve what is being studied.

In addition to the 'pure' research paradigms, 'exploratory-interpretive' and 'analytical-nomological', Nunan (1992, p.6) lists six other 'mixed forms' (some unlikely in practice) identified by Grotjahn, whose 'Paradigm 5 - exploratory - qualitative – statistical' bears some relationship to the present enquiry, where there is evidence also of something akin to Geertz's 'thick description' and, notwithstanding prior specification of hypotheses, aspects of the 'grounded theory' of Glaser and Strauss. The narrative report findings of Appendices A and B reveal an affinity with what Strauss and Corbin say:

> There is built into this style of extensive interrelated data collection and theoretical analysis an explicit mandate to strive toward *verification* of its resulting hypotheses (statements of relationships between concepts). This is done *throughout the course* of a research project, rather than assuming that verification is possible only through follow-up quantitative research. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.274)

Where (Cartesian) quantitative methods remain constant across disciplines and may be judged by process, qualitative methods are context-determined, may be inspirationally impelled, often adopt *ad hoc* processes, and are ready to be judged by product. Where quantitative methods prescribe the tool for the job, the bottom

line of qualitative research is to achieve results by whatever methods are available and considered appropriate to the context. Each occasion of research and, indeed, each feature of each occasion, demands judgement that must be justified not so much on the grounds of established precedent but on the biography and qualifications of the researcher and the credibility of the design in relation to its intended purpose. Thus, where positivist enquirers may remain relatively dispassionate and relatively anonymous, the qualitative researcher is obligated to lay everything out for inspection, himself or herself included, ideologies and all. As Janesick (1994) notes, the qualitative researcher "early on identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study" (p.212). The list of qualitative research characteristics which she identifies "is not meant to be exhaustive" but "is offered merely as a heuristic tool". The text of her remarks is here reproduced verbatim but without the numbered list format and without repetition of the phrase "Qualitative design" against each item in the original:

> Qualitative design is holistic. It looks at the larger picture, the whole picture, and begins with a search for understanding of the whole. • Looks at relationships within a system or culture. • Refers to the personal, face-to-face, and immediate. • Is focused on understanding a given social setting, not necessarily on making predictions about that setting. • Demands that the researcher stay in the setting over time. • Demands time in analysis equal to the time in the field. • Demands that the researcher develop a model of what occurred in the social setting. • Requires the researcher to become the research instrument. This means the researcher must have the ability to observe behavior and must sharpen the skills necessary for observation and face-to-face interview. • Incorporates informed consent decisions and is responsive to ethical concerns. • Incorporates room for description of the role of the researcher as well as description of the researcher's own biases and ideological preferences. • Requires ongoing analysis of the data. (Adapted from Janesick, 1994, p.212)

The enquiry also identifies with the 'equalitarian' ethic of the research paradigm known as 'naturalistic' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or 'constructivist' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and, though declining the appellation 'passionate participant' for the present researcher, recognises that a close involvement with the people and events of the study has implications for the outcomes and findings. Riley (1985, p.158, citing Fransella, 1977), refers to the considerable literature on conversational heuristics that has grown up around this involvement, and offers useful comment on the Personal Construct Theory of Kelly which focuses on "the individual, his forms of appraisal, and his construing of events" and, unsurprisingly, "seems to have exercised a great influence on such thinkers as Rogers (1972), Illich (1970) and Pirsig (1976)." Of particular relevance to the present enquiry is Riley's summary of Kelly's perspective on research:

> A direct consequence of this rejection of the physical sciences paradigm is the changed role of the *experiment* ... seen more as *une expérience* in which the scientist actively participates along with the other participants. The problem of 'alienation' or 'observer effect' has long been recognized, above all in the social sciences (Rosenthal 1963), where it has been shown time and time again that the more controlled the experiment the more trivial the results. The position of the Personal Construct Theorists is, in a nutshell, that since they cannot prevent 'observer effect' from occurring, it is far more scientific to acknowledge the fact and subject their own behaviour to the same scrutiny as that of the other participants. (Riley, 1985, pp.159-160)

The 'same scrutiny' of the observer in the present case amounts to biographical, emotional, and other disclosures as full as any revealed by the participants (but without their protected identity) in keeping with the involvement noted by Dane (1990): "The researcher becomes part of the events being observed" (p.158),

a "participant-as-observer ... known as a researcher but fully participating in the ongoing activities" (p.159). Stake (1995) refers to 'participant observation' as a technical approach of ethnographers, after observing that "qualitative researchers are noninterventionists" but also that "most of them favor a personal capture of the experience ... from their own involvement" (p.44). Erickson (1992) distinguishes between "whether one is a participant observer who visits the setting intermittently or an 'observant participant' who begins to study, as a researcher, the setting in which one is continuously present as a member" (p.211) but, in any case, the participatory role is a facet rather than a defining characteristic of the present enquiry. More generally, Denzin and Lincoln provide what they call 'an initial, generic definition':

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.... [It] involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2)

As 'multimethod' includes quantitative techniques where appropriate, Nunan (1992), in an excellent overview of research methods in language learning, offers support for the attempt to blend them: "Traditionally, writers on research traditions have made a binary distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, although more recently it has been argued ... that in practical terms, qualitative and quantitative research are in many respects indistinguishable" (p.3), and Hamilton (1994) remarks that, following "external criticism ... [and] ... internalist critiques of science" (p.66) in the 1960s and 1970s "the boundaries between qualitative and quantitative research became blurred" (p.67). And the present enquiry, in agreement with Nunan (p.5) that the distinction is real, prefers to see them as complementary rather than competing methods, a position endorsed by Eisner, one of the most respected authorities in the field:

> He [Eisner] argues that different modalities convey different types of understanding, and he sees his approach to qualitative inquiry as a complement rather than an alternative to scientific evaluation; neither is inherently superior to the other, but only more appropriate for different purposes. (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992, pp.746-747)

Eisner has long argued for an 'artistic' approach to complement the 'scientific': "The major distinction we seek is *not* between qualitative and non-qualitative forms of research since *all* empirical research must of necessity pay attention to qualities, but between what is studied in a scientific mode and what is studied artistically" (Eisner, 1981, p.5). But his argument ensures that 'artistic' is indistinguishable from the purest 'qualitative', and is couched in terms which have scarcely, if at all, been bettered:

> Scientific research may be regarded as enquiries that use formal instruments as the primary basis for data collection, that transform the data collected into numerical indices of one kind or another, and that attempt to generalise in a formal way to some universe beyond itself. (Eisner, 1981, p.5)

> Artistic forms of representation have no comparable codifications.... What one seeks is ... the creation of an evocative form whose meaning is embodied in the shape of what is expressed. (Eisner, 1981, p.6)

> How does one generalize from a nonrandomly selected single case? Generalization is possible because of the belief that the general resides in the particular.... Is Shakespeare's portrayal of

> Lady Macbeth simply about a particular Scottish noblewoman who lived in the later part of the 11th century? (Eisner, 1981, p.7)

> Methodological pluralism rather than methodological monism is the ideal to which artistic approaches to research subscribe. (Eisner, 1981, p.9)

Eisner's whole appeal is for the use of the most appropriate research methods, is an urbane call for balanced enquiry, rather than for the exclusively qualitative methods advocated by some 'transformative intellectuals' of 'critical theory *et al.*' (neo-Marxist, feminist, materialist, participatory enquiry, and others), by some 'passionate participants' of 'constructivism' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.112, p.109), and by advocates of "a form of interpretivism" which Schwandt (1994) remarks "degenerates into nihilism, where we do nothing but engage in endless parasitical deconstruction and deny the existence of social order and our very selves" (pp.131-132). Bowers (1985) had already remarked that emancipatory views could foster the type of individualism and critical thought that contributes to nihilism. In contrast, Dewey's conception is well put in Dobbert and Kurth-Schai:

> Thus, the goal of science is not the disinterested pursuit of objective truth but, instead, the pursuit of wisdom – an information-based capacity to serve humanity and the environment through observation and analysis that seeks detachment from bias and, yet, is grounded in care for communal relationships as a prior criterion (Chaloupka, 1987). (Dobbert & Kurth-Schai, 1992, p.111)

In similar vein, "members of the Frankfurter Schule .... objected to the idea of a disinterested science that gave no place to the unconscious or to ideological points of view" (Jansen & Peshkin, 1992, p.691). The same authors note that Habermas, a member of the Schule, proposed the notion of 'intersubjectivity', that truth was arrived at "through the interactions of many individual subjectivities. It is a rational, negotiated agreement among responsible individuals" (p.691).[5] But, of course, such 'agreement' is not 'truth' so much as 'a truth' only in the sense of *its own* existence and not at all in any sense of correctly perceiving any existence beyond itself. And, of course, the call for wisdom and the idea of negotiation rest on notions of subjectivity which run entirely counter to the 'teleological ethic' of disinterest, described by W. F. May in a 1980 article: "The end of academic enquiry (ethnographic research included) is the truth: the discovery and transmission of knowledge . . . . Knowledge ... does not have to be justified by virtue of its contribution to some other good" (in Deyhle et al., 1992, p.603). But what constitutes that 'knowledge' is forever elusive, and for some who may share, notwithstanding the intellectual power and attraction of existentialism and deconstruction, the social and ethical concerns of critical theory and constructivism, the challenge is to reconcile enquiry in the service of a cause with enquiry just as exploration, to recognise the purposes of both and to grant to each its just domain.

But among the problems associated with accepting both subjective and objective science, with recognising that each may have a legitimate role in it, are, on the one hand the difficulty of putting rational bounds to subjective enquiry and, on the other, the difficulty of persuading adherents of objectivity that such

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[5]Jansen and Peshkin comprehensively review and discuss subjectivity in qualitative research. The topic of subjectivity *per se* is beyond the present scope.

bounds must differ from those of 'the scientific method'. Stenhouse, talking of the Library Access and Sixth Form Studies (LASS) project which he headed in the 1980s, makes a pertinent observation:

> The biggest problem was getting people away from the notion that qualitative data had to be comparable in the sense that quantitative data do. With a background in history I am puzzled by this difficulty. If such comparability were necessary across sources, history could not exist; and I find history more rigorous than social science. (Stenhouse, 1984/1993, p.218)

D. Jenkins, (1984/1993) remarks that his team's final report on an 'eclectic' study for The Schools Cultural Studies Project in Northern Ireland was both "methodologically attacked ... [and] ... cited as exemplary practice" (p.238).[6] In another case, Ball (1993, p.88) describes an encounter he had in work for a DPhil, where his attempts "to explain the epistemological basis of ethnographic research and the conflicts between positivist and interpretative sociologies" were dismissed as "absolute drivel" in a school he was researching: "The head of science could not recognise my 'findings' as such because, as he saw it, they lacked any scientific validity. This validity, it seemed, would have had to have been established upon numerical data to be acceptable" (p.89). Or Ball could have encountered the barrier Dane (1990) observes: "Some researchers might consider the use of numerical analyses for ethnographic or participant observation research to be a sacrilege (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979)" (p.164). Such 'sacrilege' need not arise from consideration of data-type criteria, as Wexler, Martusewicz, and Kern (1987) make clear: "With the popularization of Willis's field research (Willis, 1977), 'ethnography' was defined as the appropriate research method to complement critical pedagogy" (p.232), but quantification in "Marxist ethnography" is rejected by Wexler *et al.* on the grounds that it converts research "from a potential occasion of mutually enlightening dialogue into a practice for the classification of subjects (Foucault, 1979)" (Wexler et al., p.232). This stance evidently does not allow for both enlightening dialogue and enlightening classification on the same occasion.

In contrast, Dane (1990) continues: "But the key to proper analysis of any data is to consider numerical analyses as supplements to logic, not as replacements" (p.164), and in the present enquiry those supplements are seen as an important part of the triangulation procedures which ideally accompany 'interpretive' techniques. Bailey (1978/1987) says: "The tendency to tout one method over others can prevent researchers from seeing the essential complementarity of these various methods" (p.10) and Yin echoes Brookfield's (1984) "sterility of the qualitative-quantitative debate ... which ... generates conceptual straw men and false dichotomies" (p.63), in calling the divide "an unproductive debate" (Yin, 1993, p.57). Strauss and Corbin, talking of the ever-growing pan-disciplinary use of grounded theory methods, have observed:

> Increasingly, quantitative researchers seem dissatisfied with purely quantified results and are turning toward supplementary qualitative analyses, while qualitative researchers have become less defensive about their modes of analysis and more open to working with quantitative researchers on research projects. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp.277-278)

Part of that spirit stems from unsettled attitudes to the versions of reality revealed by 'the scientific method' of positivism. While objectivism is appreciated, many investigators feel uncomfortable with an "almost fanatical logical purity" (Scheurich, 1997, p.30) and have chosen instead either what Scheurich (adopting

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[6]The project, sponsored by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, may have been faced with more than scientific bias.

Mishler's term) describes as 'naive realism' or else what he himself labels 'scientific realism'.[7] According to Scheurich, the former, as "an unself-conscious stepchild of positivism" (ibid.) assumes that there is a reasonable one-to-one correspondence between what is observed and the reality it represents, and that this correspondence can be unambiguously conveyed. The latter (divided between the different but related neo-realism, scientific realism, coherentist realism, and critical realism), "has tried to adjust the epistemology of science in terms of the criticisms that have been made of positivism so that the orthodox scientific method, albeit through a realist reconstruction, remains defensible as the preferred method of research" (pp. 30-31). Scheurich contrasts naive and scientific realism, and quotes House regarding this adjustment: "Their primitive understanding of causation sees social reality in an analogously simple way. In contrast, 'A realist conception of causation might see events as being produced by the interaction of a multitude of underlying causal entities operating at different levels'" (p.31). Although the extremes of view are exaggerated to make the point, what it would seem reasonable to conclude from Scheurich's outline as a kind of middle ground is the need to restrict the domain of 'naive' realism to what it can comfortably accommodate in the physical sciences, and to expand the range of 'scientific' realism to most, if not all, research in the social sciences. The most important consequence of adopting a scientific realist stance would seem to be the abandonment of a single overarching finding or result. Scheurich, citing House on an evaluation of planned change, says that "while naive realists see evaluation as similar to a traditional experiment that tests the effects of a specific reform at different sites" scientific realists, in contrast "see a multisite evaluation as tracking and explaining differences that are not comparable in an experimental sense" (p.32). Such differences in approach are of relevance to any consideration of replication in enquiries of the present kind. But if choices must be made between conflicting views then perhaps a convenient line may be drawn (for practical, not conceptual or metaphysical, reasons) where scientific realism begins to shade into the "social or postmodern relativism" (p.33) that Scheurich believes has superseded scientific realism, a term which suffices for present purposes to label those aspects of the study which acknowledge attempts to be objective while recognising the extra-dimensional quality of subjectivity.[8]

Whatever label is chosen, eclectic research confronts overlapping terms and contradictory emphases, and perhaps the enquiry is best identified, by selecting and combining Yin's (1993) definitions, as a 'multiple systematic replication' case study which is, at one and the same time, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (p.5). The same authority says: "The case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context" (p.3), and the tag is aptly applied to the present enquiry, where the phenomenon in question is student response to the contrived context. The distinctions drawn by Yin (1993), which he notes other authors obscure, between case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and quasi-experiment, would place this enquiry closest to his notion of case study which, apart from considering context as an essential part of the phenomenon being investigated, is virtually indistinguishable from his description of quasi-experiment (p.64). As already mentioned, the enquiry is an 'instrumental case

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[7]H. Gardner (1996): "The naive realist believes that we know what we see; the constructivist believes that we see what we know" (p.180).

[8]The topics of relativism and subjectivity, although outside the scope of the present enquiry, are central to postmodernist thinking (of which Brumfit, 1997b, offers a succinct outline and critique).

study' (Berg, 1989/1998, p.216), to the extent that its setting is a background for an issue, but in the present instance the research interests lie in exploring the issue against that specific background. Yin says:

> Traditionally, case studies have not always been considered to be a method in the logical positivist tradition. Instead, some believe that case studies also can be done where an investigator's intuitions and ideas – not reinforced by the objective collection of empirical data – have prevailed.... However the present book ... does not subscribe to such an approach. The approach here has been to base case study research within the framework of the scientific method – to develop hypotheses, collect empirical data, and develop conclusions based on the analysis of such data. (Yin, 1993, p.47)

Yin is not, of course, arguing against intuition and ideas, but against relying on them without 'objective' supporting evidence. Meanwhile, the present enquiry is humanistically identified as a quasi-experimental case study, although, just as 'qualitative' is not a precise term, so what is meant by 'case study' may vary in detail. Rudduck offers a broadly useful generalisation:

> As I understand the term, a 'case study' is an interpretative presentation and discussion of the case, resting upon evidence gathered during fieldwork. It is constructed at the culmination of a period of fieldwork and is a public statement by the fieldworker about the case and a public presentation of the case. It is a subjective statement which the author is prepared to justify and defend. (Rudduck, 1984/1993, p.202)

But, notwithstanding the suitability of case study and qualitative enquiry, the contrived classroom is both different from and the same as every other, and difference and sameness may not be susceptible to similar techniques of investigation. Although questions arise where qualitative overlaps with quantitative, and not all researchers will combine them in the same way or for the same purposes (e.g. the contributors noted by Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p.223), the scientific method remains a model of exactness which Yin firmly advocates. But he also warns that "because emulation has been espoused as a desirable goal" does not mean that "doing case studies is ... necessarily the same as doing science " (p.xvi). Nonetheless, and whatever the need for research to be "firmly contextualized within previous academic work" (Burgess, 1993, p. 257), new knowledge may be gained by turning over new stones, whatever label is applied to the endeavour. There are many precedents for the eclectic approach adopted by Rudduck:

> An experiment is shaped to sharpen the bearing of observations on certain questions and if possible to enable observation to be expressed as measurement. Naturalistic observation responds to the natural shape of events and attempts to portray them in a way that makes them open to people who did not have first-hand experience of them. We tackled our problem from both ends, using both experiments and descriptive case studies. (Rudduck, 1984/1993, p.189)

This is very much in line with the present enquiry, and the provision of documentation and a corpus of learner-English is also supported (p.208) in a citation she gives from Stenhouse, who recommends the production of case records 'as edited primary sources accessible to other scholars' and who sees field study as 'concerned with the creation of sources'. Yin notes a study report in which it was not clear whether the narrative portion was the evidence or the investigator's interpretation of the evidence, and makes specific recommendations which are of such central relevance to the present enquiry as to warrant quotation in full:

> The data collection process should culminate in the creation of a formal, case study database – whether including organized field notes, archival documents and records in retrievable form,

> tabular materials, or even the investigator's own narrative responses to the case study protocol. The ultimate case study report needs to be completely separate from this database. In theory, an external observer should be able to inspect the database whether or not a report exists.
>
> Second, the report should contain formal presentations of the relevant evidence and data from the database – so that the reader can observe, question, and re-interpret (if necessary) the data independent of any reading of the report's narrative portion. The presentation of the data may take the form of numeric tables, word tables, vignettes, reproduced documents, or other materials that also may appear in a separate appendix. Whatever the form, the narrative of the case study report should relate specific interpretations and conclusions to specific data presentations in the report.
>
> The achievement of these two steps is minimally necessary to produce a high-quality case study evaluation report. (Yin, 1993, p.71)

In the present enquiry, throughout the narrative report of Appendices A and B, and in the questionnaire remarks included in Appendix C, the interpretations are related to extracts which make it quite clear what is evidence and what is interpretation, and the course documentation and appended diary and questionnaire extracts conform exactly to Yin's recommendations. Like the narrative reports of this study, Rudduck says of her materials: "The case record ... was a cautiously edited selection of the full data available, the selection depending on the fieldworker's judgement as to what was likely to be of interest and value as evidence" (p.202). One problematical aspect of databasing selected materials is noted by Bryman and Burgess (1994): "Coding is invariably associated with the cutting and pasting of transcripts or notes ... with other items that fit under a certain heading.... disconcerting because the text ... is then taken out of its natural context" (p.218). For this enquiry, although it was thought better to present the bulk of appended diary extracts by content-analysis category, the submissions of Stage I of Course A, and both stages of Course C were put into chronological sequence, and throughout the diaries database a proportion of the co-text of relevant extracts was retained.

If there can be anything like a bottom line to the design issue for this enquiry it is perhaps where Max Weber might have drawn it. Bailey, after noting the free will perspective of Wilhelm Dilthey and the positivist position of Emile Durkheim, says:

> According to Weber, the use of the scientific methods followed in the physical and natural sciences is legitimate but inadequate for the study of all social phenomena. They should be used when they seem valuable. Beyond that point they can be supplanted with direct understanding. (Bailey, 1978/1987, p.8)

He goes on to remark that in Weber's view this *Verstehen* results from the fact that social investigators can empathise with their data. Enough has been said to indicate that the design of the present study is supported by substantial precedent but that, attempting to unite qualitative and quantitative techniques, it remains vulnerable to the pressures on both.

Design Effects

There are limits to the viable size of a language class (as ELT practitioners are particularly aware in Japan, where classes may contain over 100 students) and relatively small numbers will always have implications for sensitivity, which, in the present case, means the chance of detecting a statistically significant difference between the ratings for ODL and SDL. In addition, statistical tests for the categorical data of the enquiry are

less capable of detecting differences than are tests for true interval level data.[9] Sensitivity was, however, enhanced to some extent by the within-groups design, and any differential transfer effects, where responses might be influenced by the order of presentation (ODL before SDL or SDL before ODL) were made negligible by natural ABBA counterbalancing over the prolonged experimental period. Despite regular time-tabling, the ODL and SDL modes alternated to no regular pattern. The extent to which the teacher-researcher affected the outcomes could not be assessed, but was assumed to be equally distributed across both ODL and SDL. Normally it is required that attrition, or selective subject loss, should not be attributable to the research variables. However, where participants were free to leave the programme for any reason, that requirement had to be set aside. In the event, attrition was less problematical than non-committal diary data from participants who attended throughout. In regard to the risk that volunteers may differ systematically from non-volunteers, a distinction appeared to be possible between voluntary self-selection and voluntary assent to selection. What might be called 'volunteer participation' (where a sample is recruited from volunteers) seemed to be distinguishable from the 'voluntary participation' (with informed consent) of the present enquiry.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical conditions were those for attendance at courses at an adult further education institution. Participants gave informed consent and were entirely free at all times to opt out of the experimental programmes. Open and frank interaction between researcher and participants (what J. Smith, 1977, called an existential model of teaching and learning) was a sine qua non of the undertaking and, whatever the risks of participant reactivity, of their responding as they thought they should, there was no deception by the researcher and the only coercion (apart from 'compulsory' class diaries) was in regard to the work. The courses made a clear, even abrupt, distinction between fostering independent learning and promoting a casual attitude to it. The discipline required for SDL was to be matched by an equal commitment in ODL, in complete identification with principles already espoused by a renowned author: "Gramsci always insisted upon the need for didactic, authoritative teaching, and the disciplined application by the learner to academic work" (Sarup, 1983, p.131). The popular (Freirean) notion of 'passive' learners, however accurate in some contexts, was completely alien to the co-ordinator, for whom the interactive mutuality of teacher and student was mirrored by the inseparability of ends and means:

> Indeed, 'the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is also a pupil and every pupil a teacher.'... Gramsci emphasized learning not only as a 'process' but also as a 'product'. ... Schooling was work – there could be no learning without effort, drill, even drudgery. (Sarup, 1983, pp.131-132)

Sarup makes a remark, in regard to Gramsci's (revolutionary marxist) opposition to the liberal reforms of Gentile, Mussolini's (fascist) Minister of Public Instruction, which goes to the heart of much that is wrong with looking at formal learning simply in ideological terms: "The problem is that it is hard to break our way of thinking which habitually associates liberal or progressive pedagogy with a social democratic society and

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[9]Although attitudinal ratings are sometimes treated as though they were of interval level status, the reasons why this is not considered appropriate in the present study are outlined later.

links teacher-directed schooling, the structured transmission of academic knowledge, with authoritarian régimes" (p.133). Both the diaries and the autonomy ethos encouraged critical evaluation by the learners not only of their surroundings, but also of themselves. The experimental programmes were expected to benefit the learners, to enhance learning beyond what could be accomplished in the same time by either ODL or SDL in isolation. Provision was made for immediate reversion to traditional teaching if necessary. Over-all it was considered that the risk/benefit ratio was satisfactory.

POPULATION AND SAMPLES

It has to be mentioned at the outset that Yin argues persuasively for an 'either-or' approach to sampling which this enquiry, in keeping with its preferred syncretic ethos, prefers to follow as a 'both-and':

> Multiple case studies should follow a replication, not sampling logic. This means that two or more case studies should be included within the same study precisely because the investigator predicts that similar results (replications) will be found.... The development of consistent findings, over multiple cases and even multiple studies, can then be considered a very robust finding.
>
> Sampling logics are entirely different. They assume that an investigation is mainly interested in "representing" a larger universe.... If the sampling logic is important to an enquiry, the survey or experimental methods are more likely to satisfy an investigation's needs than is the case study method. (Yin, 1993, p.34)

In exploring multiple cases the present hope was to provide 'very robust findings' together with representation of that 'larger universe' which was the population of interest. This population was defined as heterogeneous groups of nominal intermediate-level adult students who present for intensive courses in English language at private-sector institutions in the target-language environment. Willingness to participate in proffered institutional learning programmes is implicit in the term 'student' and no subset of the population is of necessity created if that voluntary participation is in programmes which integrate classroom ODL and SDL. Although the defined student population specifically excludes homogeneous groups (for example, those whose members are all from the same L1 and cultural background) it can include intact groups (perhaps the only participants that researchers might obtain access to) and groups with, for example, a large majority of same-nationality males or females.

The co-ordinator controlled all aspects of the research except entry and exit of participants: all students were allocated to classes by the Director after tests and interview, according to criteria which included maximum group size and nominal level in English. Within the constraints of the enquiry random sampling was not an option: if the sampling units were taken to be individual students then the sampling frame of all such possible students was conceptually infinitely self-renewing, and even a sampling frame of institutions would be out of date as soon as it was made. And there is only a hypothetical population of ratings for mediated ODL and SDL 'out there'; however: "It is common in experiments to seek information about a 'What if?' population that cannot be randomly sampled because its units do not all exist in actual fact" (D.S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.266).

Sampling units comprising groups were composed of members whose shared characteristics included motivations, access to funding, and time to study, and it was possible to argue that any group presenting on a

non-systematic basis to any institution was likely to be representative of the population of interest. This perception follows from remarks by Ehrenberg:

> We either know that the material is more or less homogeneous, so that it does not matter greatly which sample item one selects, or we know how different parts of the system are related.
>
> Statistical sampling is required when there is *substantial and unpredictable variability.* (Ehrenberg, 1975/1978, p.286)

Ehrenberg goes on to make the point that convenience and 'plausibility' sampling can give consistently wrong results and "are not acceptable as possible forms of *statistical* sampling, i.e. selection procedures which on their own provide representative results" (p.268). It is not a claim of this study that the sampling is itself capable of representative results so much as that the representativeness arises from the nature of the classrooms studied as well as from systematic replication of the experimental courses. But such arguments for representativeness acknowledge that for unquestionable statistical generalisability (design and other errors apart) the ideals are either a finite population and simple random sampling which allows each unit an equal probability of selection, or random sampling from a hypothetically infinite population, notwithstanding the perspective offered by Spiegel, which also helps to keep the purpose of randomisation procedures in focus:

> In order that the conclusions of sampling theory and statistical inference be valid, samples must be chosen so as to be *representative* of a population.... One way in which a representative sample may be obtained is by ... *random sampling.* (Spiegel, 1961/1988, p.175)

And note is taken of the remark by Folks (1981): "As appealing as the idea of a representative sample is, it has not proven to be a viable concept. There seems to be no way to give an objective definition of representative" (p.29). Definitions apart, a general profile of a representative sample group of the defined population would probably have the following characteristics:

- age range 18 to 40, with a median around 23 - 24
- anywhere from a third to half of the class from the same L1 environment
- most still students but also a range of occupations[10]
- proficiency at nominal 'intermediate' levels from very low to very high
- majority of females.

In the event, the experimental groups were not as internationally diverse as the researcher would have liked (**Table 5:3**) but the national majorities in each were considered to be adequately varied in other respects, particularly that of disparate capability levels. It was considered that all three experimental groups constituted sufficiently unbiased and representative samples of the defined population for all findings to be cautiously generalisable, particularly in the light of remarks by D.S. Moore and McCabe:

> Tests of significance and confidence intervals are based on the laws of probability. Randomization in sampling or experimentation ensures that these laws apply. But we must often analyse data that do not arise from randomized samples or experiments. To apply

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[10]Students of the present author have included shop assistants and apprentices, as well as the chief executive of a multinational, the European controller of a motor manufacturer, and the Father-General of a major religious order. One class was composed solely, and coincidentally, of five university lecturers and professors, and one of the present classes unusually comprised only non-graduates.

Table 5:3. *Groups A, B, and C: Participant Profiles*

		Sex	Age	Country	First Language	Education Level
Group A	A1	f	18	Germany	German	2
	A2	m	20	Switzerland	Swiss German	2
	A3	f	21	Switzerland	Swiss German	2
	A4	f	21	Switzerland	Swiss German	2
	A5	f	19	France/Spain	French/Spanish	2
	A6	f	-25	Switzerland	Swiss German	2
	A7	f	18	Spain	Catalan/Spanish	2
	A8	f	18	Spain	Spanish	2
	A9	f	23	Spain	Spanish	2
	A10	m	23	Switzerland	Swiss German	2
	A11	f	18	Switzerland	Swiss Italian	2
	A12	m	22	Spain	Catalan/Spanish	2
Group B	B1	m	25-30*	Italy	Italian	2
	B2	m	-25	Spain	Spanish	2
	B3	f	25-30	Spain	Spanish	3
	B4	f	-25	Spain	Spanish	2
	B5	f	41-50	Germany	German	2
	B6	m	25-30	Colombia	Spanish	3
	B7	f	-25*	Switzerland	Swiss German*	?
	B8	f	-25	Spain	Spanish	2
	B9	f	-25	Germany	German	2
	B10	f	-25	Spain	Spanish*	3
	B11	f	-25	Japan	Japanese	2
	B12	f	-25	Switzerland	Swiss French*	2
	B13	f	-25	Spain	Spanish	3
Group C	C1	m	31-35*	Italy	Italian	3
	C2	f	-25*	Japan	Japanese	?
	C3	f	-25*	Japan	Japanese	?
	C4	f	-25*	Canaries	Spanish	?
	C5	f	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C6	m	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C7	m	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C8	m	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C9	m	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C10	f	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C11	f	-25*	Spain	Spanish*	?
	C12	f	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C13	m	-25*	Spain*	Spanish*	?
	C14	f	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?
	C15	m	-25*	France	French	?
	C16	m	-25*	Spain	Spanish	?

Note. By an oversight, personal details were not sought for Courses B and C.
An asterisk indicates probability, and some first language uncertainty exists where participants' names suggested a different regional or language affiliation.

> statistical inference to such data, we must have confidence in a probability model for the data. (D.S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.475)

In the circumstances of the present study the binomial distribution appears to offer such a probability model, as indicated by the statistical tests of Chapter 7.

Personalities are revealed in the diary extracts of the narrative reports of Appendices A and B, where the affective data indicate that the participants fell within an 'average' range of temperament and personality types. Personal details were, regrettably, not sought from participants in Groups B and C and those given in the profiles from the co-ordinator's recollection are marked with an asterisk. The profiles show that each experimental group was composed for the most part of young adults of both sexes, from differing national, cultural, and first-language backgrounds. No group was homogeneous and the predominance of Swiss in the first Group and of Spanish in the third offered a generalisable contrast to the more heterogeneous second group. Education ranged from secondary to post-graduate. As exemplified in diary extracts the English-language achievement levels of participants in each group ranged from nominal 'elementary' to nominal 'advanced'.

The first group maximised at twelve participants, the second at thirteen, the third at sixteen. The term 'maximised' reflects the fact that, as in most institutions catering to the defined population, students arrived and departed at their own discretion.[11] Since open-enrolment is a widespread norm in ELT, the research took it into account, with differences between open-membership and closed-membership groups considered beyond the present scope. At no one time was there a pool of potential participants from which to make random allocation to the experimental courses. The setting permitted only restricted accidental (nonprobability or convenience) samples, about which Keppel has said:

> Almost invariably, our subjects are selected out of *convenience*, rather than at random. The failure to sample randomly from a known population means that we are not justified statistically in extending our results beyond the bounds of the experiment itself. (Keppel, 1973/1991, p.17)

Perhaps fortunately for experiments in education, he goes on to state that while "this 'myopic' view" is accepted by most researchers, in practice much depends on other factors:

> For most experimenters, however, the extension of a set of findings to a broader class of subjects (or conditions, for that matter) is dictated primarily by subject-matter considerations, that is, what is known in a particular field about the appropriateness of certain generalizations. (Keppel, 1973/1991, p.18)

The point about 'subject-matter considerations is further underscored by D. S. Moore and McCabe:

> A purist might argue that ANOVA is inappropriate .... there was no random sampling ... [but] ... we can think of these three groups of students as samples from three populations of students in similar circumstances. They may be representative of students in the next few years at the same university or other universities with similar programmes. *Judgments such as this are very*

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[11] Attendance records were normally photocopied before being handed in to the administration office of the institution. Coded ID versions were to have been included in an appendix, but it was discovered too late to remedy it that some registers (and other documents) were missing.

important and must be made not by statisticians but by people who are knowledgeable about the subject of the study [italics added]. (D. S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.720)

The researcher was confident enough about the similarity of classrooms across ELT to feel that if the groups were at all representative then any statistical findings could reasonably be generalised. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991/1993) note a particularly relevant insight: "Bogdan and Bicklen (1982) suggest that generalizability can also be considered in terms of application to related *situations* rather than populations" (p.96), a view that helps to legitimise many non-random and some cohort studies that fall outside the strict bounds of statistical generalisability (e.g. much medical research) but which have sufficient internal coherence and import to warrant an alternative to laws of probability as the sole criterion of wider applicability.

And, despite a postpositivist paradigm, the qualitative reporting carried an in-built dynamic: "The researcher assumes that readers will be able, as Robert Stake argues, to generalize subjectively from the case in question to their own personal experiences" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.202). In keeping with that assumption, the affinity of the study with grounded theory justifies taking on board what Strauss and Corbin (1994) say: "The theorist can claim predictability … in the limited sense that *if* elsewhere approximately similar conditions obtain, *then* approximately similar consequences should occur" (p.278). The provision of detailed MIDL course descriptions in Appendices A and B enables such approximations.

Along with these concerns went questions of generalisability, not merely in statistical terms but also in respect to practitioners and applied linguists who might expect to see, alongside the degree of control of the variables expected for internal validity, a recognisable classroom reality. Eisenhart and Howe (1992) offer a quotation from Goetz and LeCompte (who, in turn, were following Campbell & Stanley, and Hansen, and Pelto & Pelto), which outlines the requirements for validity: determining the fit between conclusions and empirical reality, and between constructs and the experience they represent or measure. The quotation from Goetz and LeCompte goes on: "*Internal validity* refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality; *external validity* refers to the degree to which such representations can be compared legitimately across groups" (in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p.647). The conclusions of Chapter 7 are entirely founded on the empirical reality explored in the narrative findings of the study, which reality is the foundation for the diary ratings derived from it. Those ratings, in turn, are derived from categories which relate to construct validity, "the extent to which abstract ideas ('constructs') used in research studies (e.g. self-esteem, culture) match the empirical evidence used to indicate or measure the abstraction" (Eisenhart & Howe, p.648). Credible findings would be derived from an environment that reflected a wide range of situations that were currently conservative, ill-equipped, or client cautious. If a balance was achieved between the level of abstraction and the needs of translation into classroom terms (O'Driscoll, 1993), findings from ELT could be of considerable value to its estimated four million practitioners, and perhaps to other language teachers as well.

In addition to three different groups, sufficiently diverse to represent the population of interest, a contribution to external validity was made, in accordance with the anticipated real-world context of generalisation, by varying other factors. It was considered that direct replication, in which "the experimenter tries to make the conditions exactly the same" (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1990, p.27) was neither practicable in the given context nor (since classrooms are inherently unstable 'laboratories') particularly worthwhile in real-world terms. The preferred option was therefore that of systematic replication,

in which "the experimenter *varies* some quality of the original situation ... to add new information about the variables controlling the subjects' behavior" (ibid.). The major information sought was whether or not the responses would differ if the introduction of the SDL components was dissimilar and if the proportions of ODL to SDL were consequently varied. Both the manner of introducing SDL and the time allocated to it were thus allowed to reflect a range of probable real-world situations. The first overtly experimental course, with a tentative lead-in, was followed by a full-scale MIDL programme in which ODL and SDL components were allocated similar proportions of time, while the third course attempted to 'normalise' the methodology by playing down its experimental features and relaxing the requirement that class diaries should be submitted daily. Variation also occurred in respect to some course textbooks, diary formats, and some SDL events: different course-books would have some effect on the teaching as well as on over-all satisfaction and hence perceptions of the ODL, but it was considered that such differences fell within the remit of authentic MIDL courses; diary formats would be expected to have effects on the quantity and quality of data input, but equally distributed between ODL and SDL on any given course; varying the SDL events within the normal limits of classroom self-direction was considered to balance changing the course textbooks in terms of their contribution to generalisability.

The three presentations were intended to provide findings from a representative range of situations and, where SDL was being introduced for the first time, it was hoped to offer three plausible prototypes for follow-up partial replications in 'real world' contexts where ethical and practical constraints would operate to change the conditions yet again.

VARIABLES

The study is concerned only in broad terms with intricate and ineluctable relationships between classroom variables, and only with simple indicators of cause and effect. The variables of interest were:

1. Independent: learning mode at the two levels ODL and SDL.
2. Concomitant: affective dimension factors (ADF).
3. Dependent: attitudinal responses.

The temperaments and personalities of the participants were revealed as they expressed attitudes to affective dimension factors (ADF) such as the weather, health, relationships, entertainment, and so on (see Dunlop, 1986; O Ciaráin, 1984). The categorisation and tally of these factors provided a general indicator of over-all morale to set alongside the ratings for ODL and SDL. It was recognised, as Dobbert and Kurth-Schai (1992) emphasise, that "to a significant extent, emotions 'make the classroom-go-round.' If we omit this aspect of classroom life ... we will not be able to discover how and why classrooms really work, especially from the perspectives of their resident populations" (p.103). But no significant correlations between ADF and ODL and between ADF and SDL emerged and affective dimension factors were considered randomly and unsystematically distributed in all three groups.

Subject Variables

Subject variables were those associated with young adult students of both sexes and, for internal validity, like the nuisance variables, were considered representatively distributed across all participants and all three groups, with none varying systematically enough to become confounding.

Extraneous Variables

Throughout the period of the experiment no extraneous variable seemed to have any systematic influence on the outcomes. Weather apart, the out-class environmental conditions were similar for all three groups. The following potential in-class confounds were constant across the three courses:

- the same researcher-teacher as co-ordinator;
- the same classroom, and the same class-library materials;
- the same language laboratory and materials;
- the similarity of most ODL and SDL events;
- the same examination preparation course.

Over the period of the three courses no major intervening events that could account for the findings (history effects), threatened the validity of the study and no minor effects were ascertained.

The following chapter outlines the data-gathering and reduction procedures in sufficient detail for evaluation and replication.

CHAPTER 6

DATA REDUCTION

This chapter outlines how the data were gathered and evaluated and explains the source of the response ratings derived from them.

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Brewer (1985) remarks that "statistical data alone are insufficient to assess the value of an innovation in teaching; it is essential also to know what attitude the students themselves take towards the innovation" (p.9), and Hyde (1993, p.344) comments on the logic, in a learner-centred approach, of discovering what the recipients themselves think of classroom methodologies. In line with both views, end-of-course rating questionnaires were administered on the first two courses, with 'course evaluations' as complementary triangulation on the bulk of the qualitative data, elicited by the primary data-gathering instrument, the self-report student (daily) diary.[1] One central distinction between questionnaire and diary data is highlighted by Dobbert and Kurth-Schai (1992) who, in a discussion of Dewey's 'experiential' perspectives on scientific enquiry, remark that: "traditional 'one-shot' survey or interview techniques ... restrict opportunities for reflection and refinement of ideas and commitments" (p.112). The present enquiry offers evidence in support of their observation that "in noniterative processes, human learning is artificially frozen in time, and impulsive, superficial, or highly tentative responses may be misconstrued as representative of culminating perceptions" (ibid.) and the questionnaire and the diary are considered in relation to differences in the data each produces and to statistical tests which may help to reconcile them.

Class Diaries

The major criteria for iterative data-gathering methods were initially that they should, if possible:

- provide ethical monitoring of the experimental programme;
- be of value to participants as well as to the enquiry;
- not overly intrude upon normal classroom routines and times;
- keep reactivity, the influence of an observer on behaviour, to a minimum;
- provide data for both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

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[1]The recommendation of Professor D.G. Little that the student diaries be written on a nominal daily basis rather than entirely at discretion undoubtedly enriched the qualitative data and probably averted a major shortfall in the quantitative data derived from them.

While there were several ways to meet the criteria separately, diaries seemed to meet them all together. Delamont (1993/1984), speaking of two highly influential researchers of the late 1960s, says of one: "Lacey (1970) .... quotes at length from diaries kept by the boys, apparently at his request" (pp.22-23), and Breakwell and Wood (1995) suggest that diaries have the advantages of "familiarity; cost-effective sampling of information; sequencing data; intimacy; exploration; spontaneity; and historicity" (p.296), and the disadvantages of "control of content; dropout; poor recruitment; veracity and verification; and reactance" (p.297). They explain reactance as meaning: "The very fact that having to produce the diary may alter the behaviour, thoughts, feelings, and so on, which are recorded" (p.297). The same may be said of any instrument vulnerable to Hawthorne effects, and the extent may be assumed to be randomly distributed across participants and across elicitations. Diaries were no more likely than other instruments to encourage participants to conform to the researcher's expectations, and possible reactivity and demand characteristics were, in any case, expected to diminish as participants became integrated into the context.[2] At the minimum, should the enquiry have proceeded no further than the development of revised hypotheses, diaries could have provided research-stimulating heuristic data (Dane, 1990, p.31) to supplement the co-ordinator's own observations and records on the events, within a wide synthetic rather than narrow analytic approach. Cumulative diary data were more likely to remain stable, to take account of fatigue, changing circumstances, and so on, than data elicited at any given moment in time. For quantitative analysis, diaries might provide a representative data set, akin to that obtainable from situational and time sampling, remaining less intrusive than repeated rating questionnaires while sharing some of their features:

- responses are categorised (in advance for rating scale questionnaires);
- both allow grouping and summing of responses for quantitative analysis;
- they share, although perhaps to different extents, and for different reasons, the problems of nil, incomplete, insincere, and ambiguous responses.

It was therefore decided that the longitudinal qualitative research instrument should consist of class-diary submissions by participants, written in the target language, and comprising subjective self-reporting of their responses to the courses and to their out-class environment. The diaries were essential for monitoring and research data, and loosely imposing them as a 'free writing practice' feature of the courses was justified on several pedagogical grounds and was relatively easy to integrate into classroom norms at intermediate or higher levels. Learner diaries were also felt to allow criticism at one remove from face-to-face confrontation, and thus to encourage self-determination in a classroom context, a view which finds indirect support in McCarthy.[3] He notes:

> The need to encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop effective learning strategies leads to the inclusion of the following activities:
>
> - Talking and writing about your experience of the target language.

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[2]Levitan's experiment with university science courses demonstrated that, where an atmosphere of trust is in place, participants will be frank and forthright; one elicited extract began with a sound rationale for preferring an ODL mode and then went on: "The days you strictly lectured and answered questions were excellent and very enjoyable. The days we discussed how and what to do were, in one word, a drag" (in Rogers, 1969/1983, p.91).

[3]Outline of the 1994 Senior Cycle Syllabus in Irish Secondary schools by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

- What you find easy and difficult about it.
- What you like and dislike about the way you have been learning it.
- Describing and commenting on any way in which you have made your own personal contribution to the process of learning the target language.

> The inclusion in the syllabus therefore not only of specifications relating to outcomes but also activities designed to lead to such outcomes reflects the current consensus for a need to include both a product and a process dimension in the syllabus itself. (McCarthy, 1995, p.37)

Such a process-and-product consensus featured in the MIDL experiments, as did the items listed, in the recommended format of students' daily diaries (cf. Townsend's 1957 study of elderly people, and F.R. Jones's 1994 diary-keeping on his own 'self-study' learning of Hungarian, for which he offers both support and caution). Halbach has recently said she "had used questionnaires for quite a long time" but felt that "the information I was obtaining from them was insufficient, and did not faithfully reflect what students thought. In looking for a new instrument I came across the learner diary" (1999, p.183). However, in the present study the problems of different amounts of data from individuals were only partly foreseen, and the time it would take an unassisted researcher to code, transcribe, cross-reference, tally, and assess the submission data was not realistically estimated. In addition, the initial categorisation scheme attempted to distinguish levels of attitude expressed, although this was eventually abandoned as unrealisable in any consistent manner.

There were also questions of subjectivity, confidentiality, and honesty. Although rating questionnaires were intrinsically susceptible to slanting by purpose and preparation, their evaluation could be objective and respondents anonymous. In contrast, although objectivity was increased by deferring the content analysis of diaries until all three courses were concluded and the material was effectively archival, the evaluation of diary data involved a subjective appraisal of subjective remarks. And although coded participant IDs ensured that transcriptions of highly sensitive material could not be traced to any individual, if the diaries were to serve personal as well as learning aims then the co-ordinator had to know who the writers were. Participants knew that the co-ordinator's daily monitoring of individual preferences could have an effect on the course programme and it was therefore highly likely that comments reflected true feelings. While tact might affect the wording of dissent, the participants had no reason to distort their views and the evidence suggests that they did not in fact do so. In addition, therefore, to obvious questions of participant honesty, the lack of anonymity meant that special care had to be taken at the data evaluation stages to avoid errors usually associated with respondents completing rating scales. Because the researcher knew each participant, care had to be taken against the halo effects and errors of severity, leniency, and centrality noted by Kerlinger (1964/1986, p.495). Observer drift, or habituation, was obviated to some extent by (ultimately) assessing diary remarks simply as 'favourable' (F) or 'unfavourable' (U).

For the diaries and 'letter critique' sections of the questionnaires (see **Table 6:1** for guidelines), as in most survey data, as in a large proportion of content analysis, and as in much besides, the underlying assumption was that the remarks "I really liked X" or "I didn't like Y" were responses which could be taken as sufficient and valid indicators of an attitude to X or Y. The validity and reliability of diaries were functions of the common sense, content-analysis, and data-reduction procedures of a particular researcher, and as context-specific as other instruments which might only have typical coefficients of validity as low as .30 and of reliability of only .70 (Sproull, 1995/1988, p.76). It was questionable therefore if much was to be gained by pursuing alternative data-gathering instruments, and a great deal of time could be lost in the attempt.

Table 6:1. *Guidelines and Format for Participant Evaluations and Critiques*

A brief evaluation was written by Courses A and B, and a critical letter by Course A only. The evaluation was written to the following guidelines (which compress the space given to each item on the original):

Course Evaluation

In this section you are asked to note one negative aspect of the Course and one positive aspect (note that your responses should be specific to each item as far as possible). It is very important that you put something in EVERY section, as only those responses which include both a negative AND a positive aspect can be used for evaluation purposes. In general you should try to note the worst and the best aspects of each item.

EV1: Your stay in Ireland

Negative:

Positive:

EV2: The preparation for the examinations:

Negative:

Positive:

EV3: The Course in general:

Negative:

Positive:

It is essential to the research programme that each participant's responses can be evaluated against all the available data and it would therefore be most helpful if you put your first/Christian name here:

Your contribution to the research programme is very much valued and appreciated. THANK YOU!

***

The critical letter was written to the following guidelines:

You have been attending an experimental examination course on which there were several things you think could have been improved.

Write a letter (of about 150-250 words) to the Course Director explaining why you think the course could have been better planned and organised, and give your suggestions for improvement.

Your letter should include references to

(a) The Course Books (by name)
(b) The Language Laboratory
(c) The Daily Diary System
(d) Support Teams
(e) Anything else you think needs improving, and how.

Note: The length of the letter is not important; but the contents are.

Note. With acknowledgements to Professor D.G. Little, University of Dublin, for suggesting the negative/positive format.

The diary ratings derived from ratios of 'favourable' to 'unfavourable' responses were considered in the light of what Blau (1973) said of his major study of American universities: "Although some variables are merely rough indicators of the underlying concepts, they make it possible to analyse problems of substantive interest that would otherwise have to be ignored, owing to the lack of better indicators" (p.30).

Diary Data Tallying Procedures

Despite guidance to participants on the content and format of research-relevant diaries (**Table 6:2**) and reminders of their value as free-style writing-practice, submissions differed considerably in quantity and quality and no consistent over-all response was evident. Some provided a neutral log of in-class activities which could be compared with the co-ordinator's records, and others were personal but without comment on the course. Daily submission length could vary from a single sentence to several pages, with an over-all average of about half an A4 page. Course C moved from limited free-response diaries towards structured response in an attempt to elicit more relevant remarks but, except among the more conscientious students, this tended to routinise submissions and over-all it was felt that any gain was offset by even greater loss of spontaneity from the more reticent. Insofar as attitudes were expressed in diary submissions throughout the period of the experimental course, response sampling had something of the characteristics of both time sampling and event sampling.

Diary Data Reduction: Evaluation and Coding

To aid objectivity, an interval of several months was allowed to pass before tallies of responses were made from a selective semantic content analysis of participant diary submissions, conducted for connotative categorical equivalence in the domain of 'attitude'.[4] Berg follows Holsti in saying: "Broadly defined ... content analysis is 'any technique for making inferences by systematically and *objectively* identifying special characteristics of messages' (Holsti, 1968, p.608)" (1989/1998, pp.223-224). In broad terms also, Dane offers a useful rationale for the technique:

> Content analysis is a research method used to make objective and systematic inferences about theoretically relevant messages.... Content analysis is best used to test research hypotheses.... Like all research, content analysis should be used to make inferences about events related to theory.... Content analysis is best used as a comparative technique. (Dane, 1990, p.170)

Berg (p.224) notes the claim of some authors that content analysis is an entirely quantitative method, and of others that it should blend quantitative with qualitative analyses. He himself prefers to argue

> that content analysis can be used effectively in qualitative analyses – that "counts" of textual elements merely provide a means for identifying, organizing, indexing, and retrieving data.

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[4]A relevant and insightful guide to the content analysis procedures of this enquiry is provided by Chapter 22 of Fox (1969). Chapter 6 of Edwards and Talbot (1994) also outlines other content analysis methods which bear some resemblance to those of this study. Breakwell, Hammond, and Fife-Schaw (1995, Chapter 18) remark on qualitative, quantitative, and structural content analysis; Kerlinger (1964/1986, Chapter 25) offers a useful discussion of measurement in the social sciences and in Chapter 30 discusses content quantification; Weber (1990) details procedures and problems in content analysis. Dane (1990, pp.170-180) mentions specific alternative forms.

Table 6:2. *Daily Diary Recommended Format*

NAME: (Diary)DAY: (Diary)DATE:

DAILY DIARY

Note: This diary has a twofold purpose. It is intended to give you essential `free-style' writing practice, as well as to provide essential research data. Please therefore do your best to keep it up-to-date and make the entries as interesting and informative as possible: they should provide an ongoing record of your impressions of the course — whether you feel you are making sufficient progress or not, your feelings about the work done during the class-hours (was it useful or not and why, was it interesting or boring and why), a note of extra work or studies done outside the school (this could include reading, TV, cinema, etc.). In addition you should write about anything else which you feel will help the teacher to understand you as a person and to help you individually.

***

> Analysis of the data once organized according to certain content elements should involve consideration of the literal words in the text being analyzed, including the manner in which these words have been offered....
>
> From this perspective, content analysis is not a reductionistic, positivistic approach. Rather, it is a passport to listening to the words of the text, and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words. (Berg, 1989/1998, p.225)

As will be obvious from all that follows, as well as in particular from the accounts of Appendices A, B, and C, the present enquiry uses content analysis as the basis for descriptive qualitative findings and conclusions, and, as shown in Chapter 7, as the appropriate quantification technique to derive data to which statistical procedures can be applied. As a contribution to the debate, this position acknowledges content analysis as quantitative when it is concerned solely with tallies of some sort (as it may have to be in certain investigations and with very large corpora) but, notably in research resembling the present case, regards Berg's argument as equally valid and highly appropriate. Similarly, in regard to the problem of whether to consider only 'manifest content' (what is countably 'there' in the text) or to embrace 'latent' content (implication, symbolism, what may be inferred from the text), although heed was paid to the caveat of Fox (1969, p.648) about resting a project on latent analyses at too deep a level, the enquiry took a stance which accords with that of Berg: "Perhaps the best resolution of this dilemma about whether to use manifest or latent content is to use both whenever possible" (p.226).

Elicited responses were expected to be somewhat formulaic and repetitive, a problem for content analysis at the manifest level, as Dane notes: "If you want to measure the number of times an idea is presented, repetition becomes a problem that must be resolved. There is no single solution, for the decision rests on your hypotheses and other considerations" (p.179). Berg advises that "researchers must be cautious not to take or claim magnitudes as findings in themselves. The magnitude for certain observations is presented to demonstrate more fully the overall analysis" (pp.226-227).[5] Similarly, the juxtaposition of 'strong' with 'weak' responses was a problem at the latent, underlying semantic level. In fact, even at the more overt thematic level, the whole question of determining what constituted an attitudinal response (as opposed, for instance, to a neutral remark or narration) was to present particular problems.

In categorising components of the learning environment and tallying diary remarks the fundamental requirement was that any scheme should be replicable under other circumstances. In consequence, rather than the provision of a hard and fast set of categories or analysis rules, the intent was to arrive at a coding scheme which would produce comparable results when adopted by different researchers and different coders, in different contexts and with different materials. Replicability was therefore equated with reliability. While the categorisation and tally procedures and criteria required elaboration and refinement over a lengthy trial period, only hand coding was employed and an initially elaborate scheme was eventually condensed into a relatively short list of categories (**Table 6:3**).

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[5]The problems of repetition, of frequency or magnitude in general, were to a great extent obviated by using participants as their own controls: the frequency or magnitude of positive or negative responses to ODL and SDL could be compared to produce 'ratings'. But Berg's warning enters into consideration of whether such ratings can be statistically treated at ordinal level (where magnitude *among* participants is relevant) or more appropriately at nominal level only (where the issue of magnitude among participants does not arise).

However, as it could not be determined in advance of the tallies to what extent, if any, component analysis (Ehrenberg, 1975/1978, p.263) would prove possible, provision was initially made for responses to be tallied by sub-category as 'favourable', 'unfavourable', or 'neutral' and, in addition, to indicate where necessary whether the response referred to quantity or quality (see **Table 6:4** for an extract from the prototype tally sheets). For example, if a participant referred attitudinally to the sub-category 'counselling' it was expected to be possible in context to determine whether this was a 'quantity un/favourable' or a 'quality un/favourable' response. A similar estimation was initially considered feasible for any response to time, to activities, to workload, and so on, but it became evident from early on that such elaboration was unnecessary for the purposes of the study, and the scheme was modified in light of realistic time constraints.

The most important means to ensure replicability was eventually considered to be the evaluation of attitudinal diary remarks at two basic levels: category (with sub-category), and response (solely under the broad classifications of 'favourable' (F) or 'unfavourable' (U)), a sufficiently flexible division to apply to virtually any context and sufficiently well understood to need only context-sensitive elaboration. The range of possible responses would have required at least five digits in geometric coding (Fox, 1969, p.668) and was considered unnecessary for the present enquiry. When the original classification of 'neutral' was dropped from the analysis, scaling the responses or further refining into, for example, a three-point limited category variable (F-, F0, F+) was considered, in light of the room for bias and error, inadvisable and unnecessarily complicated. While the simple F and U count met the fundamental criterion of replicability, the inevitable loss of information meant that 'satisfactory' was tallied the same as 'wonderful' and the caveat of Weber (1990) is worth noting: "Further research should examine the consequences of equal counting on validity and reliability in general" (p.73). And, even allowing a simplified main categorisation scheme, it remained possible to argue for alternatives to the sub-categories selected, with a consequent effect not only upon the tally and eventual ratings but upon the level of precision such data provided for statistical analysis. However, it was considered that while every decision was debatable, the needs of the present enquiry were most usefully served by the means chosen to meet them, without precluding other methods for other purposes.

Resolving the difficulties outlined below required repeated inspection of the material which, coupled with informal pilot tallies, confirmed that participants had made sufficient attitudinal references to the independent variables ODL, SDL, and ADF, to assure these as appropriate *a priori* categories. Further coding elicited a tentative list of sub-categories (such things as 'Grammar Lessons', 'Entertainment', and so on) to which participants had responded in particular, and category-notes made on the original submissions were subsequently considered and amplified or amended throughout the piloting of tally procedures. The primary intent was to distinguish between attitudinal responses to the ODL, ADF, and SDL components of the courses in sufficient detail to enable subsequent analysis of discrete categorised items. Care was taken to ensure that the categories and sub-categories were adequately representative of the views expressed. Given the relatively small numbers of participants and the fact that only a proportion of submissions contained research-relevant extracts, and an even lower proportion contained talliable attitudinal responses, some categories and sub-categories drawn up in the early stages later proved to be redundant. Those that remained were considered to be homogeneous, inclusive and mutually exclusive and although some reservation was felt at placing 'Counselling/consultation' among the Affective Dimension Factor Components this alternative was preferred to omitting it altogether.

Table 6:4. *Sample from prototype tally sheets*

TALLY SHEET NO.																	
COURSE/STAGE																	
DAYS																	
DATES																	TOTS
PARTICIPANT																	
ID CODE																	
NO. OF DIARY 'PAGES'																	
OTHER-DIRECTED COMPONENTS																	
1 PROGRAMME			E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	
CONCEPT	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
FORMAT	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
Ss HLP PLAN	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
Ss HLP PLAN	QN	U/F	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		U/M															
		N															
		F/F	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		F/M															
Subtotals																	
sum U																	
sum N																	
sum F																	
2 MAT'LS/EQU																	
CRSE BOOKS	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
CRSE BOOKS	QN	U/F															
		U/M	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		N															
		F/F	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		F/M															
CLASS TAPES	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
CLASS TAPES	QN	U/F															
		U/M															
		N															
		F/F	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		F/M															
EL/MECH EQU	QL	U															
		N															
		F															
EL/MECH EQU	QN	U/F															
		U/M	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Note. QL = quality; QN = quantity. F = few; M = many. The full prototype was six pages long.

Criteria for the Tally of Diary Submission Extracts

Rather than get entangled in 'mixed' responses the unit of content was defined as the attitudinal response to a discrete item, so that if a paragraph contained both favourable and unfavourable comment on a point, theme, or topic it received a tally for each. No means existed for filtering the diary remarks in quantitative terms and a strictly impartial tally obviated editing. Neither the elimination of repeated remarks on the same theme or topic in subsequent submissions nor setting an arbitrary ceiling on scoring was thought feasible in any sufficiently principled way. And since the object was to discern markedly different preferences it was considered that repetition acted like intensity, and was equally likely to be a feature of favourable and unfavourable remarks. While a detailed record of how particular issues were resolved is beyond the present scope, an outline of some of the difficulties which any similar tally must overcome is considered relevant and specific difficulties are exemplified by otherwise untranscribed material and by extracts cross-referred to **Appendix D** (the codings A.I, A.II. etc. indicating the relevant section, e.g. D-A I, D-A II and so on).

One untranscribed extract from [A1] highlighted two problems: "It was quite boring for me yesterday but useful" (30 October) – in addition to the obvious difficulty of determining whether this should tally as 'favourable' or 'unfavourable' or both, it needed to be checked against the submission of the day before, for which it might have been a duplicate (not to be tallied again), an addition, or even an amendment. In fact, the day before (Appendix D-A II) she had said: "School was very boring but useful" [4.39/A1/29 Oct/A.II], and this was an instance of a duplicated remark that had to avoid being re-tallied. Repeated analyses of the same data provided the major precaution against tally-habituation (the tendency, particularly with some 'predictable' diaries, to make the *n*th tally accord with its predecessors) and could help to uncover latent attitudes: coming from a generally disaffected participant, the remark "Today we learned a lot about punctuation" [A6/7 Oct/A.I] qualified as a 'favourable' tally at the latent level. In one instance the repeated analyses revealed that a highly critical remark on the ODL [A6/10 Oct/A.I] had been initially tallied as 'favourable', notwithstanding the generally negative responses of this participant.

A feature of the analysis was that a unit of content could range from a few words to several paragraphs and, without some elaborate (and therefore probably inconsistent and unreliable) system, both a brief remark and a lengthy attitudinal declaration on a single theme had to receive a single count, despite the evident strength of feeling expressed by the latter. A single tally was counted both for an Appendix D-A III entry "I liked a lot the Test of this morning" [4.170/A8/9 Dec/A.III] and for an extract from Appendix D-A I:

> I like working in group. I think that working in that way you can learn things from the others and it is also more entertaint. You can have more comunication with the people in the class and you also can practice english. [A7/9 Oct/A.I]

These extracts, in turn, contrast most obviously with the single 'unfavourable' tally for the long submission [A9/9 Oct/A.I] which began "Today has been the worst day in my life, I think" and continued on the same theme for a full page (see Appendix A, Table A:2 for details of the event). As an aside, the confidence and relish with which she expressed her feelings were evidence both for her level of English in authentic communication and for the frank and democratic ethos of the class, the latter supported by an untranscribed entry of [A12] which received one 'favourable' in the category 'DODL elements', sub-category 'co-ordinator': "I think that the teacher is working a lot for us. I've never doubt it. He is a very good teacher in my opinion and that's because I can express my point of view otherwise will be impossible" (23 October).

Further examples include an untranscribed submission by [A8] which begins "I would like (~~my father~~) have a phone's called from my father. I want to speak with him. I need it because I'm feel depress" (28 October), and although all but two of the total of 23 lines expressed negative feelings, the entry rated only a single 'unfavourable' tally in the category 'Wellbeing'. A submission [12S.20/A12/23 Oct/A.II], of 30 lines in the original, tallied as one 'unfavourable' in the ODL component category 'Programme', sub-category 'organisation'. An untranscribed full-page submission by [B11] contains a ten-line paragraph which begins "So, I often think that I am going to mad for this plain life. When I was in Japan. I used to play teniss, or other sports, used to play synthesiser and also I have a part time job." (20 January). Although the entry was tallied as one 'unfavourable' in the category 'Out-class environment' when it might as readily have fallen under 'Wellbeing', this was an instance of ambivalent analysis which made no difference to the final quantification scores since both categories came under 'Affective Dimension Factor' components. However, although the broadly inclusive categories were an aid to quantification, the analysis was constrained to tally transitory attitude "I'm happy about the idea that we can study individual the next week" [A6/8 Oct/A.I] equally with wider indications of morale: "I think that I will be all right in this class" [A7/2 Oct/A.I].

The following extracts typify much manifest descriptive narrative which was rigorously and repeatedly scrutinised, along with the participant's submissions on surrounding dates, for possible latent attitude:

> ... exercises about adverbs ... the difference between 'as' and 'like', and did exercises with these words, and so on with 'like' and 'such as'. Moreover, we learnt a lot of verbs closed with 'as'. We also had a look to 'invitations', and converted direct speech sentences ... and vice versa (we worked in pairs, as usual).... using 'may' .... We went to the language lab., to listen frasel verbs and make sentences with (them). I wrote down some. This evening I've read few pages of the book I bought a week ago, I'm slow (I must look up many words in the dictionary), and saw a little T.V. [A5/26 Sep/A.I]

In the context of relationships which might be revealed elsewhere, apparently innocuous remarks could assume significance, as in an extract from [A8] concerning her Irish host family: "I was talking with my 'irish-sister' for a long time.... I'm studing a lot. I can't spend time in other things.... I was in the mountains and also in a very important park" [A8/26 Sep/A.I] and, in the light of her expressed under-confidence, 'studing a lot' had implications for possible tally under the **Table 6:3** sub-categories 'morale' and 'progress' in the category 'Wellbeing':

> I want to buy some good books in english! I must spend this week end studing english. Well, really is not an obligation because I want to do it. I think my level of English is horrible. I remember when I was in Madrid and I thought that my knowledge about english was high. I was really ingenuous! [A8/2 Oct/A.I]

Despite a relatively clear categorisation system, background knowledge was sometimes necessary: "we spent a lot of time with homework problems that's very useful"(4.40/A2/29 Oct/A.II). The remark in fact referred to an in-class ODL feedback session rather than to out-class setwork or to an in-class SDL occasion (contrast unfavourable references to the 'homework' workload at 12S.10/A3/22 Oct/A.II; 12S.17/A3/23 Oct/A.II; 12S.11/A4/22 Oct/A.II).

In extracts like the following, which confirms the integration of ODL and SDL modes, care had to be taken not to quantify as a favourable attitude what required only to be noted in the qualitative narrative reports:

> Afterwards we had a complicate text to read (not so complicate in the grammar, but there was such a great list of words that I didn't know, that I concentrated on that words and didn't understand the plot of the story).... but I will read it again. [A5/9 Oct/A.I]

Similarly, the following extract, concerning integration of library and laboratory SDL and a difficulty inherent in full autonomy, exemplifies narration without expressed or implied attitude:

> {Today I've continued doing exercises about Phrasal Verbs, and at last I have an idea about them, although I think it is necessary more practice, for learning them well. Afterwards I've started to study Gerunds and Infinites .... Sometimes, in this individual work I don't know well what is the minimum that there is to know about a theme and which is the best way to study it. In the language lab, I've understood it better than the other days.} [Also under heading Laboratory] [10.12/B3/25 Feb/B.II]

As does the following, where the learner simply confirms the integration of in-class with out-class SDL,

> {I also have problems with comprehension tests and I tried to practise it in the lab but the time was too short. I decided to try it at home with my walkman and the teacher promised to lend me a tape....} [Also under heading Freework] [9.7/B5/25 Feb/B.II]

Two untranscribed remarks from [A2] on the same topic exemplified the difference between simple narrative: "We got not a lot of experience because the battery [of the video camera] was gone" (17 October), and a talliable attitudinal remark on a similar episode a few days later: "a big disappointment" (20 October). In contrast, some submissions could contribute to both qualitative and quantitative data:

> {In the two hours of Class-library I deepen on gerunds ....} A good complement to the grammar study is the Class-lab, because of the possibility of listening to the same things already studied. [Also under heading Library] [9.10/B6/26 Feb/B.II]

> During the time at home I went on reading about my assignment. I did it a bit more quicker and of course I advanced in it and also enjoyed doing it. {As a conclusion I'm satisfy of the work I did and also of the way things were today.} [Also under heading Library] [11.3/B6/25 Feb/B.II]

And, for the quantitative tally, it had to be noted where conjoined remarks might fall into two different categories, as in the next extract, where discussion (as part of a DSDL event) would tally under the SDL component category 'In-class peer support' but the class atmosphere would come under the ODL component category 'DODL elements': "I've liked very much the discussion .... Moreover, there is an atmosphere of freedom between us that makes easy this kind of discussion" [4.6/B3/25 Feb/B.II]. And allocating even single tallies to the correct category remained a matter of fine judgement: "We also divided the class in supporter groups. I think this is a good idea to try it" [8.11/A6/30 Oct/A.II]; although the reference is to the SDL component category 'In-class peer support' the attitude expressed is favourable to the category 'Programme' (sub-category 'organisation') and hence appropriately tallies under ODL components.

Linguistic ambiguity was less of a problem than might have been expected where diarists were writing in the target language at nominal 'intermediate' level. An example was "I suppose" (4.4/B11/18 May/B.IV;

and an untranscribed entry on 21 May), interpreted to mean 'I think' on both occasions, but not a certain rendering. However, there were occasional instances of contextual ambiguity; although some extracts were assignable to in-class discussion rather than to out-class conversation (e.g. A9/2 Oct/A.I; 4.57/A8/13 Nov/A.III:), the untranscribed remark of [A8]: "I enjoyed with our conversation this morning" (24 November) could have referred to pairgroup SDL, to counselling, to casual conversation with the co-ordinator or classmates or both, to a group role-play, or to a plenary discussion. Although the diaries were used for monitoring (see, for example, the affective problems revealed in A8/1 Oct/A.I) it was not always possible to disambiguate remarks at the time. Where this could not subsequently be done from other submissions or class records, they were not tallied. Another kind of ambiguity was more subtly difficult to resolve. For example, "the class was funnier than other days" (A9/8 Oct/A.I) involved not only interpretation of 'funnier' (more comical? more fun? more strange?) but also consideration of the over-all tone of the remark together with judgement of its 'favourable' to 'unfavourable' proportions. Was satisfaction sufficient to warrant an 'F'; should it be balanced by a 'U'; were the 'other days' satisfactory and this day even 'funnier', or was 'funnier' relative to unsatisfactory other days? And so on. Another example highlighted a similar difficulty: "It is very interesting but also very difficult that it doesn't become boring" (11.3/A3/14 Oct/A.II). The tally of 'favourable' was straightforward for the first clause of this sentence, but the second expressed anxiety about a possible outcome and was not a response to experience of that outcome. Was the anxiety sufficiently strong to count against morale or mood or was it to be regarded as narrative, notwithstanding the lack of strict neutrality?

Tallying 'state of health' was seldom clear-cut, neither in regard to the unwellness nor to its effect upon general morale and attitude. A remark like 'I felt sick and went to bed early' might be treated as narrative, but tallied as 'unfavourable' on the following day if revealed as more than a slight upset. However, when the same event continued over several days care had to be taken not to tally it more than once: "I didn't feel all right, I've a cold and have had a headache during the day. I'm very tired as never and I don't [know] why" [A9/24 Sep/A.I]; "this morning I didn't feel well at all. I had a very bad cold and temperature" [A9/25 Sep/A.I]; "I didn't feel very well" [A9/26 Sep/A.I]. Because no satisfactory system of scaling or grading could be devised, a euphemistic "little illness" [12S.24/B13/4 May/B.III] of [B13] had to receive the same tally as a headcold. And no quantitative assessment could account for the extent to which the attitudes of this participant in particular, or of any participant in general, might be coloured by state of health: "I don't know if I've told about my tumours ... it might be I were operated again.... If during these days you realize I'm a little bit irritable, you'll understand what is the reason" [5.22/B13/29 May/B.IV].

No single discriminatory principle could be applied to remarks on self-directed work, and every instance necessitated a close backwards and forwards scrutiny of submissions not only to determine whether attitudes were implied or not, but also to get a sense of the seriousness of the endeavour. "At home, apart from the time dedicated to the homework, which was enough, I gave also time to watch an interesting programme on TV about Philiphines" [12F.13/B6/25 Mar/B.III]. Other grey areas included the difficulty of determining whether the reference was to in-class or to out-class SDL: "my private study" [C9/21 Jan/C.I] compared with "my private study at home" [C9/22 Jan/C.I]; "I studied .... my private study ... I studied .... Later on I studied" [C6/19 Feb/C.II], compared with the same participant's "I studied some vocabulary ... to spend my Free-time on ... " [C6/1 Mar/C.II], and "studing the subject 'Gerunds and Infinitives' I found very

difficult to find a rule.... I am reading another book .... In my Free study, I am working in doing summaries" [C6/4 Mar/C.II].

Some negative attitudes to self-direction might be expected when learners were constrained by place, time, and available materials: "During the labority time I was still working with the book called Fluency in English. I will finish it in two or three days. I hope so, than I'm really sick of this book" [9.115/A2/1 Dec/A.III]; "I did some Fluency drill in the LAB but I was thinking to change the book. I was bored and liked something else" [9.36/A3/12 Nov/A.III]. But the category 'Out-class study/work' presented additional conceptual and practical difficulties. For example, it was thought questionable whether 'falsifiability' could be applied to unconstrained freely-chosen self-directed learning conducted in the participant's own free time, until some extracts indicated that it was possible to elicit a negative response: "I had a quiet and peaceful weekend, too peaceful I think. I'm bored of spend all the time studying.... I think it's frustrated to spend all the time studying and don't learn too much" [5.6/A8/10 Nov/A.III]; "Back at home I listened to [a coursebook tape] but I really get bored" [12F.5/A3/21 Oct/A.II]. The tape had been borrowed from the language laboratory. Out-class SDL presented other difficulties that in-class quantification avoided, exemplified by: "This night, like every night, I'll read for about 3/4h [= 45 minutes] in English." [12F.10/A5/28 Oct/A.II]. Such remarks not only required the distinction between narration and attitude, but suggested the need for an additional divide between genuine out-class self-directed learning and what was simply leisure or pleasure: "I continued with the grammar exercises .... The next lesson I did wordstudies ... and spelling of doubled consonants.... In the afternoon I went to [the cinema] .... Now I am reading 'The Guardian'}" [10.22/B5/27 Feb/B.II]; "Tonight I have been watching a programme on the T.V. about AIDS very good. I think it's worth watching such kind of programmes" [12F.7/B13/4 Mar/B.II]; "By the way I enjoyed my holidays in Germany. I had to meet so many friends that I couldn't learn any English. I only read some Scottish ghost stories which were very good" [12F.11/B9/10 Mar/B.II]; "I have started to read a book about the Highlanders' tragic moorland battle 'Culloden' ...." [12F.16/B9/13 Mar/B.II]. The co-ordinator's annotation to this extract reads: "Note that consistent out-class reading in English is quantified as SDL".[6] Examples from Course C include: "[LIKED]: I like to watch CNN news programme on TV. ~~ I have to used to listen to American English and it'll be helpful to get a job in Japan." [C3/19 Jan/C.I], and one extract is both enlightening in qualitative attitudinal research terms and illustrative of several difficulties in quantification terms:

> I 'love' listenings, and that's why I watch so much telly. Honestly, I think that watching television is one of the best ways of training on this subject.... [OTHER]: I would like to explain briefly why I continue studying in the laboratory when I find it tedious. (I would prefer calling it 'a bit boring' instead of tedious, what seems too strong). I try to do my best wherever I am, and, in spite of my opinion, it is worth my while going to the laboratory (I wonder whether it is a case of conscience). In the evening [= afternoon] I went to the laboratory with [C6] (I've never been to the lab in the [afternoon]). The tapes I listened were just fabulous, much more interesting than the boring ones that I listen in the morning. These [stimulus-response drill] tapes contain different subjects, such as Gerund, Infinitive, Phrasal Verbs, etc. and the work they require is bigger. [C7/20 Jan/C.I]

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[6]Lee, from data gathered on her experimental programme in Hong Kong, listed as self-reported *language learning* activities, "reading newspapers or magazines, watching English TV programmes, films or videos, journal writing" as well as "doing grammar exercises" (1998, p.285).

The co-ordinator's annotation on this extract reads: "Note: the same student-free-choice tapes were available in morning class-lab sessions and afternoon booked-lab sessions. Note that he supplements class-lab with additional (extra fee) afternoon sessions".

A different kind of conceptual problem concerned the fact that no ready means existed for distinguishing between situationally and temperamentally prompted attitudinal responses, as, for example, in the case of [A12], whose submissions tended to give an impression of tact and optimism as much as satisfaction, and in the case of [A4] whose negative submissions could be misleading without knowledge of the person. The following extracts provide pertinent examples of where care was needed, where humorous grumbling had to be sifted for expressions of genuine complaint:

> Today was one of those days you'd better stay in bed the whole day.... I tryed to get a new bus ticket. But the woman in the tourist office told me that they didn't sell the tickets any more. I had to ask why .... And nobody ... mentioned only a word about that. Now I have to look for a student card ... travelsave stamps ... and a bus ticket .... I could kill them. I closed my door at home and – crash – my favourite mirror-picture fell down.... I wanted to phone parents – nobody at home.... I had some problems with my homework. This morning we analysed the text ... and got some explanations about punctuation. But I feel worse than before. Really embarrassing. [A4/7 Oct/A.I]

> Then we had to look for more information about buisiness and industry in Dublin. In [deleted] they knew nothing, in [deleted] they gave us lots of adresses but no information and they send us to [deleted]. The people there knew nothing once again.... In the afternoon I went to some bookshops but I didn't find anything. In the evening I asked [deleted] and he could give me a very few answers. So I have to try it tomorrow once again. But slowly I have enough of this topic. [11.25/A4/16 Oct/A.II]

By temperament she was a grumbler rather than a complainer, which is to say that she often had to overcome impatience, and often it was directed at herself. She was a hard-working and conscientious student, active and highly motivated, whose general demeanour and outlook were pleasant and cheerful. Her contribution to the class was excellent and she appeared to derive real benefit from the MIDL format. But she liked to grumble, especially when frustrated in achievement.[7] However, it was difficult to know where to draw a line between grumbling and complaining in the case of [B8], whose diary entries suggested that she derived little benefit from the course or from her stay in Ireland but whose questionnaire responses rated ODL very highly. While most students welcomed others of the same nationality, some preferred a more international flavour on what might be their first time away from home. On her first day, therefore, there was nothing unusual in [B8], who was Spanish, remarking that "The [institution] are full of people spanish. That's is bad, because at the break-time you have always the posibility to speak spanish. that is no way, becuase I have to learn English. I can't lose this year" [3.1/B8/19 Jan/B.I]. But in the untranscribed portion of the submission she also said she had not wanted to get up, that every day was going to be hard, that the weather had been terrible, that she would have to find somewhere to eat, she could not spend a lot of money, she would be tired, she had to go on. Yet her normal demeanour in class was cheerful and only diary submissions revealed that negativity was an ongoing state of mind in Ireland where, four months later, she said "The milk ... is the only thing that

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[7]The value of triangulation is apparent: ratings derived from her *diary* submissions are among the lowest for both ODL and SDL while her more focussed *questionnaire* ratings are among the highest for both.

Ireland has good" [7.5/B8/19 May/B.IV]. Although [B8] was perhaps at one extreme of the range of temperaments, such cases point up a shortcoming of diaries as quantitative data-gathering instruments when not supported by a qualitative narrative report and triangulation by direct interrogation.

However, even the best qualitative procedures cannot fully account for the degree to which external factors such as serious family worries may affect attitudes to classroom events: "I have some problems at home. My grandfather is worst ... I think that you can understand, so I'm very sad but please understand my situation. I'm always tired because I'm not sleeping well" [C10/1 Mar/C.II], or evaluate very personal expressions of regard (or the opposite) alongside less expressive but perhaps no less important indications of approval or disapproval, notwithstanding that going over the diary data very many times from different qualitative and quantitative perspectives helped to minimise processing errors.

Diary Data Tally Finalisation and Confirmation

The tally and categorisations (along with prototype rating formulae) were piloted through successive stages of refinement. The need for constant re-evaluation of the data against reconsidered criteria required note-taking on individuals and on the evolution of categorisation and tally procedures, and while this enabled some degree of cross-referenced continuity, it put entirely objective re-counts of responses out of the question. However, to allow for some degree of distancing, three pilot tallies were taken at intervals of several months. The original tally system had been devised to leave open the option of eventual micro-analysis of the data but even after elimination of 'neutral' response tallies, and abandonment of the 'quality/quantity' distinction, minor discrepancies at the fourth count a year later revealed the difficulty and time required to trace them through the notes and the six A4-pages of categories and sub-categories. The problem proved the impetus for a complete overhaul, which was helped by the fact that a model for a revised tally sheet for each participant had already been piloted as the 'final totals' sheet and needed only to include sub-categories for guidance rather than for individual count. The revised tally sheet then consisted of:

- ODL components: four categories – 16 sub-categories;
- ADF components: three categories –17 sub-categories;
- SDL components in-class: four categories – 11 sub-categories
  out-class: one category – three sub-categories.

The final (unconfirmed) tally was made on the original submission sheets rather than, as previously, on a large and unwieldy number of acetates which were liable to accidental erasure, were very time-consuming to re-check for accuracy, and were difficult to protect from fire. Separate paper sheets meant extra bulk and, as available fire-resistant storage was only just adequate for the diaries, the decision to use the originals meant that the tally and its notes could be protected at the same time. While this readily allowed verification of every tallied value and every categorisation decision, and was independently confirmable with minimum recourse to disambiguating notes, it meant that any independent scrutineer would have to screen off the original tallies during confirmation.[8]

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[8]In a better-resourced research project the difficulty could be resolved by original submissions being photocopied to each member of a panel of scrutineers. Categories would be determined prior to any count, and thoroughgoing and identical guidelines would be issued, each scrutineer thereafter maintaining an independent set of notes solely for personal guidance and for reconciliation sessions.

A very high degree of independence (Dane, 1990, p.253) is required when ratings or raters are to be statistically compared for divergence, an end very different from that of the present enquiry, where it was essential that the final tally should reflect the views and preferences of the participants as accurately as possible. Ideally each submission would have been scrutinised by a team and the final tally arrived at by consensus. However, the best that could be achieved in the present circumstances was the minimum requirement of one other person: "Analytic interpretations should be examined carefully by an independent reader (someone other than the actual researchers) to ensure that their claims and assertions are not derived from a misreading of the data and that they have been documented adequately" (Berg, 1989/1998, p.243). In marginal notes on the original diary texts Scrutineer 2 was given full instruction on the categorisation and tally criteria and methods, and on the interpretations. Although asked only to screen off the tally of Scrutineer 1 (the researcher), she later confirmed that she had also masked the marginal notes. Subsequently, therefore, she re-evaluated her tallies against the annotations. She then compared the tallies of both scrutineers and made notes on the submissions of where they differed. These were subsequently explored in an exchange of further notes with Scrutineer 1 and in discussion sessions. Some amendments were made which were simply corrections of counting errors and others required little more than a brief agreement. But some of the more difficult conceptual problems of categorisation may be illustrated by one extract from the scrutineers' notes. It refers to a diary entry in which a participant had made a suggestion, annotated by the co-ordinator at the time as a 'good idea!' and incorporated into the course programme:

> Scrutineer 2: "Implied criticism of homework organisation and implied positive attitude to democratic ethos and active participation in organisation?"
>
> Scrutineer 1: "A very difficult point here. To what extent can a suggestion be seen as implied criticism? And, does taking advantage of a democratic ethos necessarily imply a favourable attitude towards it? We could add 1U and 1F but I feel, on general balance, better not to set a precedent."

The precedent in question referred to including in the tally more latent meaning than the procedures had hitherto allowed, with implications for yet another complete and exhaustive review of some 1700 diary submission 'pages'. The return in what were only potentially, rather than certainly, more precise tallies was not considered worth the outlay in time and effort. On this occasion Scrutineer 2 accorded with Scrutineer 1, and no change was made, although this was not always so. Scrutineer 1 had knowledge and experience of the data gained as co-ordinator, but this was more than amply complemented by the fresh and critical approach of Scrutineer 2 and where issues could not immediately be settled by appeal to the criteria of categorisation they were thoroughly discussed to a consensual conclusion.

The suggested changes resulted in additions to the Scrutineer 1 tally, which could have reflected a tendency to under-count the responses of more expressive or repetitious participants. In Group A it was noted that Scrutineer 1 tended to under-count unfavourable ODL as well as under-count favourable SDL. This may have reflected an unconscious resistance to disfavour ODL, as well as hesitation about classifying some out-class activities as SDL. As no such trends were noted for Groups B and C the attribution of causes remained speculative. In contrast, in Group B it was noted that Scrutineer 1 tended to under-count favourable responses to ODL. This was attributed to unconscious resistance to increasing the tally of one particularly prolific 'favourable' responder, who alone accounted for almost half the additions to the final agreed tally. If the

attribution is correct it highlights the need for scrutiny to remain uninfluenced by quantity of response. In Group A it was noted that one participant accounted for four favourable and three unfavourable amendments (one third of the changes). Although no absolutely clear-cut reason emerged from a subsequent review of the tallied submissions, that participant tended to narrate the events of the day rather than to make unambiguously attitudinal remarks. It seemed likely therefore that the difference between the initial tallies of Scrutineer 1 and the finally agreed tallies, at least for this participant, reflected the difficulty of discerning attitude in some submissions. If that is so, it confirms the need to take account of scrutineer expectations in content analysis.

The tally differences are quantified in **Appendix J** and the amendments in **Appendix K**, and summarised in **Table 6:5**. Scrutineer tally agreements were equal to or greater than 97 percent, which was regarded as acceptable, and it was considered that notwithstanding reservations about the subjective evaluation of subjective attitudinal remarks, and the difficulties outlined above, the final tally procedures validly measured what they claimed to measure and did so in a reliably consistent manner. But it was appreciated that what they claimed to measure was still only an approximation to reality, the product both of the categorisation scheme adopted and of the temperament of the responder.

Diary Ratings Procedures

Each participant's preference for ODL or SDL, the two levels of the manipulated independent variable, was operationalised by the following process:

1. Attitudes to learning modes were operationalised as responses.
2. Responses were measured by content analysis of class diary submissions which provided a tally of remarks (zero tally equalled true absence of response) falsely dichotomised as 'favourable' or 'unfavourable', without scaling from low to high, to provide ratings for ODL and SDL.
3. Ratings were measured as the ratio of favourable to unfavourable responses to each learning mode, and ratings for SDL were deducted from ratings for ODL to indicate simple preferences.
4. Comparative preferences were measured by the absolute unit size of the difference between ratings for ODL and SDL to determine their substantive significance.
5. Substantively different ratings, as defined, for ODL and SDL, were classified as discordant pairs ('failures'), and substantively similar ratings for ODL and SDL were classified as concordant pairs ('successes').
6. Binomial tests were performed on the proportions of discordant to concordant pairs to establish whether the true underlying 'success' rate accorded with a null hypothesis of no significant difference between ratings for ODL and ratings for SDL.[9]

While using diary material to elicit opinions, attitudes, preferences, and so on is a standard qualitative procedure, quantifying the ratio of favourable to unfavourable tallied remarks requires explanation. This begins with recognition of the quantification methods as supplementary to the qualitative, that the derived preferences are one vector in triangulation which also includes averages from rating questionnaires. If the appropriateness of the categorisation scheme and the accuracy of the tallies is supported by the meticulous manner in which both were arrived at and re-checked, the remaining problems are conceptual:

1. If, for example, no diary tally at all had been taken of 'unfavourable' remarks, and the tally of 'favourable' remarks for ODL were to be directly compared with its counterpart for SDL, it would be absurd to claim that the higher tally represented a preference:

[9]The questionnaire data provided simple scaled ratings which were handled according to the procedures of 4, 5, and 6.

Table 6:5. *Diary Data Summary of Interim Tallies, Agreed Changes and Final Tally, and Percentage Agreements between Scrutineer 1 (S1) and Scrutineer 2 (S2)*

Group	S1 initial tally	S2 initial tally	S1 and S2 agreed changes	S1 and S2 agreed final tally		S1 and S2 initial tally agreement %	S1 initial and final tally agreement %	S2 initial and final tally agreement %
A	1066	+ 21	+ 19	1085		98.1	98.2	99.8
B	1442	+ 44	+ 36	1478		97.0	97.6	99.5
C	613	+ 7	+ 7	620		98.9	98.9	100
Totals	3121	+ 72	+ 62	3183	average %	98.0	98.2	99.8

ODL: 12F; *SDL: 10F* *(rating is not possible)*

'Higher' in this case would simply reflect a greater number of favourable remarks, and nothing else.

2. If 'unfavourable' remarks were tallied and then deducted from the 'favourable' remarks before comparison, the result could advantage the learning mode which happened to receive more comment:

   ODL: 12F - 3U = difference rating 9; *SDL: 10F - 2U = difference rating 8*

   And weighting formulae (themselves needing to be validated) are required either to eliminate altogether the difference in volume of response or to incorporate it as a 'density' factor in assessing preference.

3. Ignoring 'density' altogether is not ideal, and simple proportions of favourable responses to total responses can produce the same rating for clearly different tallies:

   ODL: 12F, zeroU = proportion rating 1.00; SDL: 10F, zeroU = proportion rating 1.00

4. But it can reasonably be claimed that even if the total volume of response to either learning mode is disregarded, the ratio of favourable to unfavourable remarks is a valid approximate over-all indicator of the participant's attitude towards it:

   ODL: 12F/3U = ratio rating 4.00; *SDL: 10F/2U = ratio rating 5.00*

It is true that ratio ratings must equate 1:1 with 100:100, must tackle the problem of null tallies and division by zero, and are vulnerable to a dramatic drop in values as the divisor increases (e.g. 10/2 represents a markedly higher rating than 10/3), and adjustment (e.g. F/sqrtU) may simply allow some over-all negative responses to rate higher than positive. But since these problems are equally randomly distributed between the learning modes the method offers a viable means of assessing preference, with excellent face validity for the purpose of determining above average and at-or-below average favourable responses.

The decision on ratings was not taken lightly. Initially, many trials culminated in a formula which seemed to overcome all the problems and allowed for appropriate weight to be given to 'density' of response as well as to adjust (if required) for the time allotted to ODL and SDL on each course. The devised formula converted discrete tally units to continuous and, by inclusion or omission of terms, allowed for alternative perspectives on the data. The exploratory options of unweighted, weighted, time-adjusted and time-unadjusted data were reduced to twelve 'realisations' for statistical analysis at putative interval, ordinal and nominal measurement levels. The resulting complex appendices, tables of data, tests for normality, symmetry, homogeneity and so on, together with explanatory notes for within-groups, between-groups, and combined-groups, effectively divided the study into two closely related but separable parts, the enquiry into learner preferences *per se* and an enquiry into putative instrumentation and analysis. Partly to answer possible criticism that the ratings had been wrongfully manipulated, but also with regard to what were seen as intrinsically interesting approaches to the quantification of content-analysed data, it was originally planned to show and discuss all the alternatives en route to presenting the 'optimal' measure. But it was eventually

decided that the topic of classroom data-gathering and its quantification merited a separate enquiry and the whole mass of data-sets, together with the bulk of the questionnaire material, was set aside.[10]

The decision was partly justified by the fact that, even with a weighting formula, a non-directional alpha of 0.05, and *t*-test analyses at putative interval levels, only two of the exploratory 'realisations' of the diary data had proved significant (P_2 = .0461), and these would have been among those discarded in discussion of the most appropriate data-type (categorical) and optimum measurement level (nominal or ordinal) of the present study.[11] With the needs of practitioners in mind a computationally difficult rating system was, in any case, counter-indicated, and ratios were not only simple to calculate and immediately verifiable but, with a suitable correction factor (it was found in adding 0.9 to all zero tallies), offered perhaps the best compromise. Ratios clearly showed up extreme values and displayed fewer apparent ties for ratings rounded to two decimal places. **Table 6:6** gives response tallies and (F:U ratio) ratings for all three courses.

The questionnaires presented an entirely different set of problems. They had very early on been discarded for quantification, after *post hoc* interviews with Group B had suggested that some participants would have rated 'misunderstood' questions differently. Because this was, of course, exactly the sort of problem envisaged, it threw immediate doubt on the validity of the questionnaires for quantitative purposes. Only much later, when the qualitative elements (letter critiques and so on) were examined, did the accompanying notes make it clear that the 'misunderstandings' amounted to no more than one or two higher marks for the 'co-ordinator' section of the questionnaire, which it was difficult to dissociate from the fact that the co-ordinator himself conducted the interviews on questionnaire components of his own choice. The key questions themselves appeared to be transparent enough for quantitative triangulation purposes and *prima facie* valid enough for the intended analyses. No interviews had taken place with Group A and it was concluded that unilateral amendments to the ratings of Group B were not justified.[12] The sign test applied to the diary data alone had indicated no significant preference for learning mode and it was felt that reinstating the questionnaire quantification data could have only beneficial effects on the findings, whether in confirming or questioning the diary results.

Course Questionnaires

Although simple questionnaires were devised (**Appendix L** for Course A, and **Appendix M** for the slightly amended version for Course B), it was beyond the present scope to take them to the stage of comparison with

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[10]The fact that Dr Alan Kelly and Dr Myra O'Regan (Department of Statistics) questioned the intention to present alternative 'realisations' of the data, together with their elaborated statistics (personal communications), brought home the extent to which the enquiry had sidetracked into pursuing interesting quantitative measurement issues which, as advised by Professor D.G. Little (personal communication), could be legitimately considered beyond the scope of the present enquiry.

[11]This is reported simply to indicate that any quantification approach to the data is likely to produce substantively similar results to those of the present enquiry.

[12]The decision related only to the present enquiry, where no such amendments were elicited from Group A. In principle, unless there is some fundamental research rationale for keeping data compartmentalised, there seems no reason why, in a repeated measures design employing a variety of instruments, questionnaire responses should not be amended at subsequent interview where it is possible to do so across all respondents equally and without risk of the researcher bias and participant reactivity that appeared likely in the present case.

existing valid measures; concurrent validity (e.g. Dane, 1990, p.258) was not considered an issue. They were hoped, nonetheless, to provide triangulation on the diary data, an important consideration in this type of enquiry, as Pitman and Maxwell point out in a review of major theorists in qualitative research:

> Structural corroboration is similar to what is often known as triangulation: the use of multiple sources and types of data to support or contradict an interpretation. Acknowledging that qualitative research allows more scope for researchers to see what they choose and, thus, greater chance for the intentional neglect of evidence contrary to one's values or interests, Eisner argues that, "*it is especially important not only to use multiple types of data, but also to consider disconfirming evidence and contradictory interpretations or appraisals* when one presents one's own conclusions [italics in original]" (Eisner, 1991:111) – a statement that might easily have come from Miles and Huberman. (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992, p.748)

Similarly, construct validity, "the extent to which a measure represents concepts it should represent and does not represent concepts it should not represent" (p.259) was considered a *prima facie* issue. Although great care was taken in regard to summated rating (the average score for the selected ODL components, for example), it was accepted that without wide verification such questionnaires could not provide unequivocal data, notwithstanding that individuals' ratings for concrete specifics (e.g. language laboratory) could be regarded as reasonably valid and probably reliable indicators of general attitude.

One advantage of questionnaire ratings was the anticipated quantity and quality of research-relevant response and, even allowing for spoilage and incompletion, it seemed likely that diaries could not compete. However, it was assumed that no existing rating scale would answer the specific questions of this enquiry, an assumption partly encouraged by lack of time to review instruments, but also by the suitability of diaries for the other purposes of the enquiry. In addition, diaries could help to balance one weakness of questionnaires administered towards the end of a course: Fiks (1966), in a study of 50 U.S. military personnel attending Russian language courses, had found that teachers reported a decline in attitudes as time went on; Fiks and Brown (1969), in a study of 326 personnel learning nine different languages in eight military establishments, were able to provide data in support of a similar perception by the teachers of a decline in motivation. It seemed likely, therefore, that end-course ratings (equally for both ODL and SDL) would reflect a lowering of morale. It was considered whether frequent (weekly or fortnightly) rating questionnaires would be a better alternative. But if the same questions were asked each time, there was the risk of habituation or of answers for their own sake and if the questions were different each time it was uncertain how to correlate similar but not identical longitudinal responses. It was also unclear how such data should be handled as supplements to diaries. Less frequent questionnaires were likely to leave questions which had any relationship to earlier attitudes highly vulnerable to false memory and to retrospective rationalisation.[13]

But the whole question of supplementing the diaries by researcher-designed questionnaires was, to say the least, naïve. At these preliminary stages it was not appreciated to what extent establishing unquestionable reliability and validity was beyond its scope and resources. Kole's (1987) initial survey for an instrument to assess attitudes towards independent learning was given to 167 students, and Spector (1992) remarks that the initial development of a scale "requires only 100 to 200 subjects." (p.2). Far fewer numbers were ever available in the institution at any one time at any given level. For the present purposes it was sufficient that

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[13]See, however, the discussion in Chapter 8 for *post hoc* perceptions on these alternatives.

the questionnaire data were not blatantly distorting the reality they represented. In the event they were adequately to meet the criteria of 'common sense' advocated by Low, who talks of age data representing learners' actual ages rather than desired ages or collar size, and the consideration of ways in which such data might be problematic, from poor question wording, or poor administration to 'warped personalities':

> I thus approach 'general validity' from a whole series of different angles.... Each 'problem' or 'angle of attack' that I identify represents *one aspect of validity*, and my conclusion about that aspect contributes to my overall conclusion about the extent of general validity.... The fact that a tradition has grown up with respect to certain types of psychological test, whereby testers conventionally look at what they call *content*, *construct* and on occasion *concurrent* validity, is neither here nor there .... Each researcher needs to create an appropriate set of angles/aspects. The teacher is in just as good a position to do this as the measurement expert. (Low, 1997, p.87)

It is perhaps worth briefly presenting his 15 validation questions, with an indication (in italics) of how well the questionnaires are considered to have answered them:

1. How many questionnaires were excluded from analysis? *None.*
2. Did the administration go wrong? *No.*
3. Did the subjects take the tasks seriously? *Yes.*
4. Is there evidence of fatigue? *None is apparent.*
5. How do you know all the responses have been coded/transcribed correctly? *By rigorous and repeated checking of originals and by row and column summing.*
6. Were any missing answers recoverable? *Post-hoc interviews enabled some recoveries as well as amendments, but all were discarded for fear of co-ordinator influence and/or bias. The effective answer is therefore: no.*
7. Is there evidence of self-selection bias? *Not applicable.*
8. Is there evidence of unfamiliarity with the format/task? *No.*
9. Is there evidence of hostility to the format or the content. *No.*
10. Did the subjects have problems answering? *No.*
11. Is there evidence of confusion/misinterpretation? *Yes. At interview the most frequently advanced reason for a wish to change the given rating was that the responder had not understood the import of the question. The simple fact of 'misunderstanding' was initially considered grounds for discarding the questionnaires altogether. However, when all the interview data were again collated and re-examined after a considerable 'distancing' interval the misunderstandings proved to apply only to speculative (and largely irrelevant) questions of the 'do you think' type which would not have been included in the analysis in any case. The questionnaires were then re-instated.*
12. Is there evidence of face-saving strategies. *No. There are sufficient examples of bluntness to indicate that the class ethos of frankness was maintained.*
13. Did Item 4 affect Item 5? *No, except where participants were deliberately asked the same question, to be answered from an objective and a subjective perspective. This prompted some useful margin comments and allowed a truer 'average' rating to be taken for some components of the courses.*
14. Is there evidence of acquiescence? *No. This might have been very difficult to establish had the respondents not known the co-ordinator over a relatively long period, had frankness not been begged for, had there been no 'daily diary' to break down inhibitions, and if there had been any rewards or penalties attached to honesty (as there might be where the same person is the subject of the questionnaire, inspects the responses, and also sets and marks examination papers!).*
15. Were the subjects inconsistent? *On the whole, no. But there were one or two instances of a mismatch between remarks and ratings, as indicated in the qualitative sections of Appendix C.*

The research question, concerning preferences for ODL or SDL, was asked in the context of experimental MIDL courses whose components contributed to an over-all experience of living and learning in Ireland which in turn coloured participants' responses. The end-of-course questionnaires administered to Groups A and B therefore included items on SDL components, on the individual's stay in Ireland, and on the MIDL courses as a whole. Among the questionnaire items not rated were the 'course evaluations', for which

students were asked to remark in a 'negative' and 'positive' format, and 'critical letters' available for Group A only.[14]

The lack of 'critical letters' from Course B is regarded as a serious deficit in the total database. In addition, the effectiveness of the 'course evaluation' instrument was reduced by poor design: the original spacing encouraged only brief (two or three line) remarks which contrasted markedly with the fullness of the letter critiques; the 'preparation for the examinations' section was ambiguous (some students thought it referred only to preparation for the Pitman examinations) and perhaps redundant; and specific triangulation on the self-directed aspects of the course should have been sought rather than subsumed under 'the course in general'. In retrospect, the covert approach to eliciting responses to the ODL/SDL contrast was considered neither necessary nor successful. If Course B had received a revised format of 'course evaluation', spelling out precisely what was wanted, with ample space for replies, this might have gone a long way towards compensating for the lack of 'critical letters'.

Nonetheless, despite shortcomings in the triangulation procedures, the over-all questionnaire and diary data combined to provide a well-substantiated picture of events and attitudes.

Questionnaire Ratings Procedures

Questionnaire scaling was set in the ascending order 1 to 5, ranging from 'very bad' or equivalent to 'very good' or equivalent. Notwithstanding their apparent validity and assumed reliability, the questionnaires still had to be treated as piloted rather than confirmed instruments and a great deal of care was therefore necessary in selecting the most appropriate components for summation, with distracters and irrelevant ratings of the co-ordinator omitted. Once the components had been decided on, the procedures for comparison of ODL and SDL ratings were the same as those outlined above for the diary data.

DIARY AND QUESTIONNAIRE DATA: STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

It had previously been determined, from the 'realisations' of the diary data produced by applying variations of a formula, that inferential tests at interval level were not optimally appropriate, despite appearances. Intra-participant intervals could be regarded as an indication of 'preference' but inter-participant intervals were not seen as constant. No claim could be made, for example, that one participant's rating of 12.00 for ODL indicated double the preference of another participant's rating of 6.00 for the same variable. All that might be reasonably assumed was that a rating of 12.00 for ODL by one participant was higher than a rating of 6.00 for SDL by the same participant. For estimation of simple preference for learning mode the data-gathering concepts and methods would support an ordinal level of measurement, but no more.

However, reinstatement of the questionnaire quantification data and consequent additional triangulation meant that it became meaningfully possible to go beyond simple assessment of preference and to compare similar and dissimilar pairs of ratings for ODL and SDL. The details are more appropriately given

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[14]For Group B neither letters nor corresponding blank forms could subsequently be found and they may have been among registers and other course documentation known to have been mislaid. Records for the last Friday of the MIDL course refer to the intent to administer the letters the following Monday but preparation for the students' first written examination paper the same afternoon may have taken precedence.

in Appendix C, closer to the data sets they refer to, and here it need only be briefly stated that for classifying rating outcomes, each pair (ODL and SDL) was dichotomised as 'similar' or 'dissimilar' by the following procedure: for both the diary data categories and questionnaire data components the ratings for SDL were deducted from the ratings for ODL; the sign was disregarded and the cut-off points were set as explained below. Whilst the result was an arbitrary division it had the virtue of consistency across all tables of ratings (and hence replicability) and, as demonstrated in the next chapter, excellent face-validity.

This procedure enabled a suitable model to be found in the binomial distribution, whose assumptions appeared to be satisfied. The following outline of the assumptions is from Daniel but, as statistical symbols vary from author to author, those of Daniel have been changed to conform to those adopted for this enquiry:

A. The data consist of a sample of the outcomes of n repetitions of some process. Each outcome consists of either a "success" or a "failure." These designations are purely arbitrary. The number of successes X is the number of outcomes having a given characteristic. The number of successes in the sample divided by n, the number of trials, yields p_0 the sample proportion having the characteristic of interest.

B. The n trials are independent.

C. The probability of a success p remains constant from trial to trial. We use p to designate the proportion of the population having the characteristic of interest.

(adapted from Daniel, 1978/1990, p.58)

Treating diary and questionnaire data separately, for assumption *A* above, the outcome of each process was a pair of ratings from the same individual (one for ODL and one for SDL) which was classified as 'similar' (success) or 'dissimilar' (failure). Daniel's assumption *B* is often the most difficult to justify and some explanation may be in order. Although each pair of ratings was related there were no grounds for supposing that the ratings of one participant had any bearing on the ratings of another. While members of the same class may obviously influence one another, the data-gathering and data-reduction methods employed in the study ensured that no outcome could be predicted from any other. For assumption *C*, the dichotomisation procedure was identical and constant across all rating sets.

Chapter 7 briefly justifies the statistical procedures adopted and it may be repeated in passing that the researcher was unwilling to allow that the data met the fundamental criterion of measurement at interval level, which in turn precluded use of the more familiar paired *t*-tests or between-groups analysis of variance (for whose assumptions see, for example, R.R. Pagano, 1981/1994, p.389). The discarded 'realisations' of the data, derived from application of a variable-term weighting formula, were putatively tested both within and between groups at nominal, ordinal, and interval levels for comparison purposes, to illustrate that level of measurement was not a critical factor in the over-all results. Where these data sets were tested at interval level, preliminary tests for gross departures from normality of distribution and from homogeneity of variance were carried out, but such tests are inappropriate for the statistical analyses detailed in the following chapter.[15]

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[15]These remarks are inserted on the advice of Margaret McAliskey (statistician at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown and University of Dublin) who reviewed and confirmed the appropriacy and accuracy of the statistical procedures. She thought it helpful to note briefly why more ubiquitous tests were not conducted.

While quantification offers a major contribution to triangulation, sight should not be lost of the value placed on the qualitative narratives and findings of the study: "Narrative analysis is a significant research tool" (Cortazzi, 1994, p.163). Pitman and Maxwell, in a review of major contributors to qualitative theory, say:

> Patton distinguishes two tasks of qualitative analysis: description and interpretation. The first task, description, includes description of the beliefs and values of the participants as well as of their behavior and the physical setting. Interpretation, which Patton defines as explaining the descriptive findings, drawing inferences from them, and attaching significance to them, is secondary to detailed description (1990:374-375, 422-423). For Patton, the discipline and rigor of qualitative analysis depend on solid description. (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992, pp.375-376)

Although the quantitative findings that follow in Chapter 7 are central to the enquiry, that 'detailed' and 'solid' description is found in Appendices A, B, and C which present qualitative findings in accordance with the guidelines suggested by Borg (1997) and with acknowledgements to the format of Little (1986). This narrative format incorporates precedents remarked on by Berg, who says that, for example,

> in qualitative research reports, the analysis section often follows the methods section. Sometimes ... researchers ... explain that data will be presented throughout their analysis.... There may be occasions when weaving the ethnographic observations throughout the analysis seems an effective presentation.... Reporting observations from a content analysis ... may similarly be accomplished either by separately presenting or by interweaving findings and analysis. (Berg, 1989/1998, p.260)

It is hoped that the narratives reveal the participants, aid in replication, complement and support the quantitative findings and conclusions presented in Chapter 7, and achieve something of the ideal presented by Stake: "Qualitative research tries to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader, through description, sometimes *thick description*, conveying to the reader what experience itself would convey" (1995, p.39).

CHAPTER 7

QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The narrative reports of Appendices A and B, and the tabulated report of Appendix C, constitute qualitative findings in their own right, and this chapter presents the quantitative summary findings and conclusions as background to the recommendations for further research and the concluding discussion that follows.

Although the questionnaire components were determined well before the diary categorisations were established, and although each addressed a different range of topics, they enabled triangulation on the same fundamental issues from more than one perspective. Triangulation in the present instance comprises 'multiple methodologies' and 'multiple data-gathering techniques' (Berg, 1989/1998, p.5) and in one sense 'investigator triangulation' can be said to apply, as the data consist of participant reflections on the topic of interest – each participant being a contributing 'observer', albeit not a researcher. One-for-one comparison is not claimed: the diaries offer a broad holistic view of context-sensitive and changing opinions; the questionnaires offer focused responses, without regard to immediately preceding influences, temporary mood, or change of mind. The aim is to put diachronic and synchronic views together, with no preconceptions about the result.

The questions of interest concern absolute and relative preference: which learning mode is preferred in absolute terms and whether relatively close ratings can be considered equivalent or not. The results are briefly considered in relation to the qualitative evidence to arrive at substantive conclusions about meaningful real-world preferences for ODL or SDL.

Whereas the qualitative findings of the appendices are concerned with the specifics of each course, what follows in the statistical procedures section is concerned with extrapolating from the enquiry to the wider world of classroom learner autonomy. While testing cause-effect hypotheses requires true experimental conditions, quasi-experimentation permits regarding the independent variable 'learning mode' as an indicator of cause or predictor of responses, and enables suitably cautious, albeit speculative, conclusions to be drawn about the population of interest. The fact of convenience sampling obliges the label 'quasi-experimental', no matter that the three courses entirely met the 'demographic' requirement of Dane (1990) for generalisation: "the extent to which the experience of the participants is similar to the experiences of everyday life" (p.79). Since each group was judged to be sufficiently representative of the population, and each participant acted as his or her own control, it is possible to follow the common practice of treating the statistical findings as though they emanated from truly random samples, and to generalise from them to the wider population. In any case, even in laboratory conditions, the small sample sizes would allow the results to be regarded only as tentative preliminary indicators of attitudes to be more rigorously assessed by further research.

Summaries for Courses A, B, and C of Diary data individual tallies by category are at **Appendix N**. Some Questionnaire responses were elicited as 'distracters', and summaries of those selected as relevant for ratings analysis of ODL and SDL components on Courses A and B are tabled at **Appendix O**.

Despite advice being taken not to present alternative 'realisations' of the data sets with their range of statistical tests, and despite the consequent abandonment of the intended Part II of the enquiry, statistical hypothesis tests enable chance factors to be assessed, and this section attempts to explain and justify the procedures to practitioners and applied linguists rather than simply report the bare *P* values.[1] Altman and associates offer a useful working reminder:

> The P value is the probability that the observed data, or a more extreme outcome, would have occurred by chance – that is, just due to sampling variation – when the null hypothesis is true. If P is small one doubts the null hypothesis. If P is large the data are plausibly consistent with the null hypothesis, which thus cannot be rejected. (D.G. Altman, Gore, M.J. Gardner, & Pocock, 1989/1995, p.97)

What is considered 'small' or 'large' is a matter of judgement, and in the present circumstances a significance level of 90% was considered adequate, with any *P* value equal to or less than $\alpha = 0.10$ considered small enough to reject the null hypothesis. However, as these (and other) authors note, at 0.05 level a *P* value of 0.04 is not different enough from 0.06 to warrant a radically different interpretation, one reason why quoting actual *P* values is recommended (p.98). In accordance therefore with sound practice, enough information is provided to enable alternative judgements. Similarly, *P* values are given to four decimal places, not to suggest spurious precision for the data but to ensure that truly borderline significance is detectable.

It is perhaps worth restating that the ratings and frequencies shown in **Table 7:1** were categorical data, with nominal scaling ('yes' or 'no') of the characteristics of interest: 'liked the individual learning mode in question?', 'preferred this learning mode over the other?', and 'the ratings for both learning modes were close enough to be regarded as equivalent?'. The three dichotomies were derived by the following means:

Diary Categories

1. *Satisfaction*: Remarks on ODL and SDL were tallied and, for each learning mode separately, the ratio of favourable to unfavourable remarks was taken as a 'satisfaction rating', with scores ≥ 1.00 indicating a positive response (the participant liked that learning mode), and scores < 1.00 indicating a negative response (the participant disliked that learning mode) – columns 'dODL' and 'dSDL' in the table.
2. *Absolute preference*: The 'satisfaction ratings' for SDL were subtracted from those for ODL to provide 'absolute preference ratings' for learning mode (independently of 'satisfaction', the participant preferred ODL or preferred SDL) – diary column 'ODL-SDL' in the table.
3. *Relative preference*: The positive or negative signs were discarded from the 'absolute preference ratings', and the scores dichotomised: if they differed by 5.0 or more they were classified as 'nonequivalent';

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[1]Statisticians may not need to distinguish probability from proportion, and vary in their use of Prob, Pr, P, *P*, or *p*, and of P value, P-value, *P*-value, or *p*-value. However, unless quoting an author whose usage differs, the thesis adopts the convention of referring to '*P* values' and, except for binomial probability, conventionally *p*, distinguishing 'probability *P*' from 'proportion *p*' for ease of reading.

Table 7:1. *Groups A, B, and C: Diary Category (d) and Questionnaire Component (q) Ratings and Relative Preference Frequencies for ODL and SDL*

	Diary Data					Questionnaire Data				
	satisfaction ratings		absolute preference ratings	relative preference frequencies		satisfaction ratings		absolute preference ratings	relative preference frequencies	
ID	dODL	dSDL	dODL-dSDL	noneq	equiv	qODL	qSDL	qODL-qSDL	noneq	equiv
A1	2.83	5.67	-2.83		1	4.1	3.8	0.3		1
A2	3.27	6.67	-3.39		1	4.4	3.1	1.3	0	
A3	4.33	8.00	-3.67		1	4.7	3.9	0.8		1
A4	1.23	0.94	0.30		1	4.8	4.4	0.4		1
A5	5.29	2.80	2.49		1	4.5	3.7	0.8		1
A6	0.91	2.50	-1.59		1	4.0	3.4	0.6		1
A7	3.00	2.50	0.50		1	4.5	3.9	0.6		1
A8	13.00	2.33	10.67	0		4.8	3.9	0.9		1
A9	1.50	12.00	-10.50	0		3.9	4.5	-0.6		1
A10	2.60	5.00	-2.40		1	4.2	3.2	1.0	0	
A11	1.22	3.80	-2.58		1	4.1	3.3	0.8		1
A12	4.40	12.22	-7.82	0		4.3	2.8	1.5	0	
			4:8	3	9			11:1	3	9
B1	2.67	1.00	1.67		1	4.6	4.2	0.4		1
B2	2.38	2.22	0.15		1	4.9	4.6	0.3		1
B3	4.27	15.67	-11.40	0		4.6	4.4	0.2		1
B4	1.36	1.00	0.36		1	4.6	3.0	1.6	0	
B5	1.50	7.50	-6.00	0		4.0	3.8	0.2		1
B6	7.45	10.17	-2.72		1	4.6	4.5	0.1		1
B7	1.89	14.00	-12.11	0		3.7	3.9	-0.2		1
B8	1.86	0.63	1.23		1	4.7	3.2	1.5	0	
B9	2.50	1.67	0.83		1	4.0	3.9	0.1		1
B10	8.89	1.11	7.78	0		4.6	3.7	0.9		1
B11	2.30	1.33	0.97		1	4.9	3.9	1.0	0	
B12	11.11	1.11	10.00	0		4.6	4.3	0.3		1
B13	1.38	5.50	-4.12		1	4.4	4.2	0.2		1
			8:5	5	8			12:1	3	10
C1	4.50	13.00	-8.50	0						
C2	3.22	9.00	-5.78	0						
C3	0.60	6.67	-6.07	0						
C4	4.50	4.44	0.06		1					
C5	0.67	0.50	0.17		1					
C6	1.65	8.89	-7.24	0						
C7	5.00	4.50	0.50		1					
C8	2.38	4.44	-2.07		1					
C9	1.67	2.22	-0.56		1					
C10	5.50	7.78	-2.28		1					
C11	0.83	1.11	-0.28		1					
C12	6.00	10.00	-4.00		1					
C13	0.90	1.11	-0.21		1					
C14	1.11	2.00	-0.89		1					
C15	4.00	2.00	2.00		1					
C16	3.33	1.00	2.33		1					
			5:11	4	12					

Note.
dODL = diary 'satisfaction' ratings for other-directed learning (Table 6:6);

dODL-dSDL & qODL-qSDL = difference between ratings; negative sign indicates a lower preference score for ODL;

qSDL = questionnaire 'satisfaction' ratings for selected self-directed learning components (Appendix O).

The ratios (e.g. 4:8, 11:1, etc.) are those of absolute preference for ODL: SDL

otherwise, they were classified as 'equivalent' (independently of 'absolute preference' the gap between the ratings for ODL and SDL was either sufficient to constitute a marked preference or it was not) – diary columns 'noneq' and 'equiv' in the table.

It will be apparent that decimal place scores help to avoid 'ties' in the binary classification of categorical data.

Questionnaire Components

1. *Satisfaction*: Participants ticked boxes to indicate whether they found specific components of ODL and SDL 'very bad', 'bad', 'so-so', 'good', or 'very good' (or tags amounting to the same thing), scaled 1.0 for 'very bad' to 5.0 for 'very good'. Each component had either two or four questions allotted to it and the mean of scaled points was taken as the average rating for the component. For each participant the mean of all such ratings for ODL and for SDL amounted to an over-all 'satisfaction' somewhere in the range between 'very bad' (1.0) and 'very good' (5.0) – columns 'qODL' and 'qSDL' in the table.
2. *Absolute preference*: The 'satisfaction ratings' for SDL were subtracted from those for ODL to provide 'absolute preference ratings' for learning mode (the participant preferred ODL or preferred SDL) – questionnaire column 'ODL-SDL' in the table.
3. *Relative preference*: The positive or negative signs were discarded from the 'absolute preference ratings', and the scores dichotomised: if they differed by 1.0 or more they were classified as 'nonequivalent'; otherwise, they were classified as 'equivalent' (the absolute preference was marked or not) – questionnaire columns 'noneq' and 'equiv' in the table.

Again, ratings to one decimal place help in the classification process of categorical data (e.g. if 4.0 is labelled 'good', 4.1 can be labelled the same or otherwise).

The cut-off points (≥ 5.0 for the diary ratings and ≥ 1.0 for the questionnaire ratings) were selected on the following bases. As there was no *a priori* reason or previous study to suggest appropriate points, originally these were selected constants. Subsequently it was thought possible to regulate the procedure by using the means of the absolute difference scores (ODL minus SDL ratings), each data set having its own unique pivotal values. But advice was taken that no cut-off point should be vulnerable to distortion by extreme rating scores, and that it would be better to work with constants.[2] The diary ratings cut-off then reverted to the original value of 5.0 and the questionnaire ratings reverted to 1.0. Given the coarseness of the rating measurement schemes, no prior insight can be claimed for the value 5.0, since a cut-off point could only be decided after inspection of the data, but the questionnaires allowed reversion to a different approach. While the diary ratings might theoretically take widely divergent values (although with ratio scores this was unlikely in practice) the questionnaire ratings were confined to the range 1 to 5, in discreet whole number steps. In consequence, when the average scores for an individual provided a rating to one decimal place, a pair of ratings (for ODL and SDL) could be determined in a principled and justifiable way as close enough to be 'equivalent' if they were within one whole digit of one another and as 'nonequivalent' otherwise.

In **Table 7:1** the columns headed 'noneq' and 'equiv' indicate 'nonequivalent' and 'equivalent' ratings respectively, with 'noneq' corresponding to 'failure' (0) and 'equiv' to 'success' (1) in a binomial

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[2]Dr. Myra O'Regan (personal communication).

setting.[3] For example, in the case of participant A1, an absolute difference diary rating of 2.83 is indicated by the digit '1' in the 'equiv' column; similarly the nonequivalent diary rating of A8 is indicated by '0' in the 'noneq' column. The cut-off points are constant across their respective data sets and, although arbitrary, can be seen to accord with an intuitive fit to the data (**Figures 7:1 and 7:2**).[4] For example, the Group A diary ratings for A8, A9, and A12 in **Figure 7:1** justify the description 'nonequivalent' as defined.

The charts serve both to indicate the relative equivalence of many paired ratings and also to highlight discrepancies between diary and questionnaire ratings, in one or two places sufficient to contradict one another. It was therefore thought prudent to determine whether or not the differences were statistically significant, and the appropriate tests are outlined below.

Statistical Procedures, Findings, and Conclusions

The statistical tests were applied to primary questions regarding absolute and relative preferences for learning mode and secondary questions regarding differences between the data sets sufficient to put in question whether they were sampled from the same populations, and hence whether the results could be considered data from replicated studies of the same phenomena. In what follows, it is convenient at times to treat the summarised data as a whole, particularly when this allows comparison within single tables.

Chi-squared Test of Homogeneity

The chi-squared test of homogeneity (e.g. Daniel, 1978/1990, p.192ff.) is appropriate for use with categorical level data to ascertain whether absolute ratings and relative ratings were sampled from the same respective populations. The contingency tables of **Table 7:2** display the count of ratings for absolute and relative preferences. The usual caveat about small observed frequencies does not apply when exact rather than asymptotic P values are calculated, and the contingency tables conform to the following requirements:

1. *Absolute preference*: Each participant belongs to only one group and each is classified as having one absolute preference – his or her rating is either higher for ODL or higher for SDL.
2. *Relative preference*: Each participant belongs to only one group, and each is classified as having one relative preference – his or her paired ratings for ODL and SDL are categorised either as equivalent or as nonequivalent.

The null hypothesis H_0 for all the χ^2 tests is that the sampled populations are homogeneous, effectively that the groups are sampled from the same population or from identical populations:

> H_0: The populations represented by the groups in the study are homogeneous with respect to the ratings specified in each table.

The alternative hypothesis H_1 for all the χ^2 tests is:

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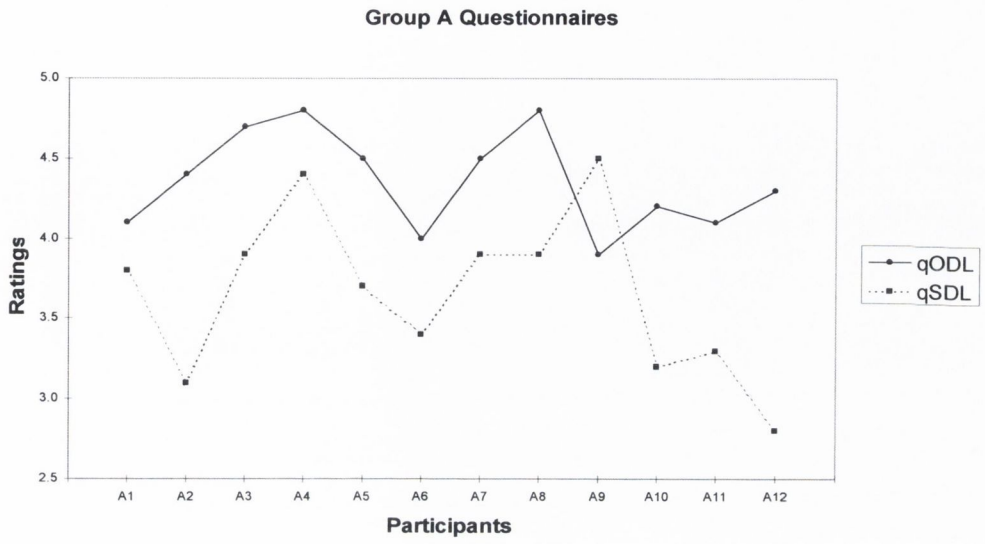
[3]Strictly speaking, since sampling is without replacement, the setting is made virtually binomial by the infinite hypothetical population of response ratings.

[4]The connecting lines in each figure are purely to aid the eye.



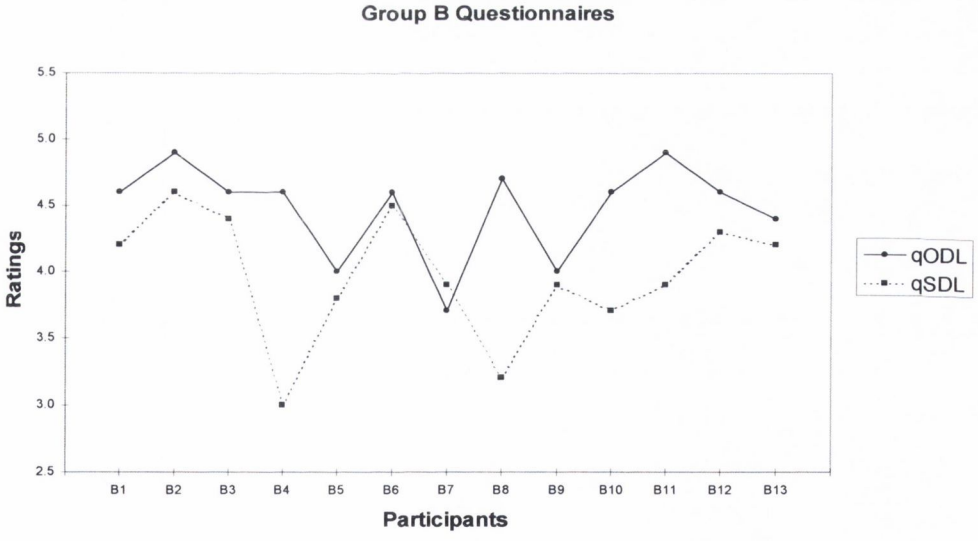


Figure 7:2. Groups A, B: questionnaire data satisfaction ratings for ODL and SDL.

Table 7:2. *Groups A, B, and C, Contingency Tables for Population Homogeneity Tests*

Diary Ratings

Absolute Preferences

	Groups			
	A	B	C	total
prefer ODL	4	8	5	17
prefer SDL	8	5	11	24
total	12	13	16	41

Relative Preferences

	Groups			
	A	B	C	total
equivalent	9	8	12	29
nonequivalent	3	5	4	12
total	12	13	16	41

Questionnaire Ratings

	Groups		
	A	B	total
prefer ODL	11	12	23
prefer SDL	1	1	2
total	12	13	25

	Groups		
	A	B	total
equivalent	9	10	19
nonequivalent	3	3	6
total	12	13	25

H_1: The populations are not homogeneous with respect to the tabled ratings.

The alternative hypothesis implies that, for example, the diary absolute ratings for the three groups shown in the table do not represent samples from the same population or identical populations. A finding in support of that hypothesis would cast doubt on whether the experimental courses could be regarded as replications, and raise questions in regard to interpretation and generalisation of the major findings.

In what follows the X^2 values and degrees of freedom (df) enable checking against statistical tables of asymptotic P values but may otherwise be disregarded.

Absolute preference (Chi-squared)

1. Diary ratings: homogeneity of Groups A, B, C

$X^2 = 3.173$, df = 2, exact $P = .2332$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in at least 23 out of 100 such samples. Put another way, the probability P that the observed result could have occurred by chance is at least 23%. It is concluded that diary absolute ratings for all groups are sampled from the same population or identical populations and that the data may be considered as arising from replicated experimental courses.

2. Questionnaire ratings: homogeneity of Groups A, B

$X^2 = 0.003484$, df = 1, exact $P = 1.0000$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in all such samples. It is concluded that questionnaire absolute ratings for both groups are sampled from the same population or identical populations and that the data may be considered as arising from replicated experimental courses.

Relative preference (Chi-squared)

1. Diary ratings: homogeneity of Groups A, B, C

$X^2 = 0.7771$, df = 2, exact $P = .7532$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in at least 75 out of 100 such samples. It is concluded that relative ratings for all groups are sampled from the same population or identical populations and that the data may be considered as arising from replicated experimental courses.

2. Questionnaire ratings: homogeneity of Groups A, B

$X^2 = 0.01265$, df = 1, exact $P = 1.0000$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in all such samples. It is concluded that relative ratings for both groups are sampled from the same population or identical populations and that the data may be considered as arising from replicated experimental courses.

McNemar Test for Related Samples

Diaries and questionnaires, addressing preference for learning mode from different perspectives, provided different ratings. One question of interest was whether the instruments revealed reconcilably similar absolute

preferences or relative preferences.[5] Since the samples were related, the McNemar test was appropriate to test the null hypothesis that the proportion of ratings with the characteristic of interest is the same in diary and questionnaire data.[6]

In **Table 7:3** the characteristics of interest are shown in the row and column labels that correspond to '1' and '2' in the following illustrative 2x2 contingency table.

	Questionnaire Ratings		
Diary Ratings	1	2	
1	A	B	A+B
2	C	D	C+D
	A+C	B+D	n

In illustration, if, for example, '1' in the contingency table above corresponds to the characteristic 'prefer ODL', and '2' corresponds to 'prefer SDL', the cell counts are derived as follows:

A: prefer ODL in both diary and questionnaire data

B: prefer ODL in diary data but prefer SDL in questionnaire data

C: prefer SDL in diary data but prefer ODL in questionnaire data

D: prefer SDL in both diary and questionnaire data.

For absolute preferences, if p_d represents the proportion of diary ratings which indicate 'prefer ODL', and p_q represents the proportion of questionnaire ratings which indicate 'prefer ODL', then the null and alternative hypotheses can be stated as:

H_0: $p_d = p_q$

H_1: $p_d \neq p_q$

If the sample proportions of 'prefer ODL' are represented by $\hat{p}$ then $\hat{p}_d = (A+B)/n$ and $\hat{p}_q = (A+C)/n$. Under the null hypothesis the expectation of the difference between the sample proportions is (A+B)/n minus (A+C)/n = (B-C)/n = 0. Equally, of course, for 'prefer SDL', (C+D)/n minus (B+D)/n = (C-B)/n = 0. In **Table 7:3** it is thus the cell counts on the diagonal BC which suggest the results of the McNemar test, likely to favour the alternative hypothesis when they differ by a relatively large amount, and likely to favour the null hypothesis otherwise. Calculating exact rather than asymptotic probabilities obviates the need to be careful about minimum expected cell frequencies.

Absolute preference (McNemar)

1. Test of diary and questionnaire proportions: Group A exact $P = .0156$

The null hypothesis is rejected, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in fewer than two out of 100 such samples. For Group A the proportions of absolutely higher ratings for ODL differ significantly between diary and questionnaire data, as do the proportions of absolutely higher ratings for

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[5] "Correlation is inappropriate for comparing alternative methods of measurement of the same variable because it assesses association, not agreement" (D.G. Altman, Gore, M.J. Gardner, & Pocock, 1989/1995, p.91).

[6] "When the McNemar test is used with nominal measures, the concept of power-efficiency is not meaningful since there is no alternative with which to compare the test" (Siegel & Castellan, 1956/1988, p.79).

Table 7:3. *Groups A and B, Contingency Tables for Related Diary and Questionnaire Ratings for Absolute and Relative Preferences*

Absolute Preferences

Group A

	Questionnaire Ratings		
Diary Ratings	prefer ODL	prefer SDL	
prefer ODL	4	0	4
prefer SDL	7	1	8
	11	1	12

Group B

	Questionnaire Ratings		
Diary Ratings	prefer ODL	prefer SDL	
prefer ODL	8	0	8
prefer SDL	4	1	5
	12	1	13

Relative Preferences

	Questionnaire Ratings		
Diary Ratings	equiv	nonequiv	
equiv	7	2	9
nonequiv	2	1	3
	9	3	12

	Questionnaire Ratings		
Diary Ratings	equiv	nonequiv	
equiv	5	3	8
nonequiv	5	0	5
	10	3	13

SDL. It is concluded that these data provide insufficient evidence that the two instruments are likely to reveal reconcilable absolute preferences for learning mode in the population.

2. Test of diary and questionnaire proportions: Group B exact $P = .1250$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in at least 12 out of 100 such samples. For Group B the evidence is insufficient that proportions of absolutely higher ratings for ODL differ significantly between diary and questionnaire data, and the same is so for the proportions of absolutely higher ratings for SDL. It is concluded that these data provide sufficient evidence that the two instruments are likely to reveal reconcilable absolute preferences for learning mode in the population.

Relative preference (McNemar)

1. Test of diary and questionnaire proportions: Group A exact $P = 1.0000$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong for all such samples. For Group A the proportions of equivalent ratings do not differ significantly between diary and questionnaire data, nor do the proportions of nonequivalent ratings. It is concluded that these data provide sufficient evidence that the two instruments are likely to reveal reconcilable relative preferences for learning mode in the population.

2. Test of diary and questionnaire proportions: Group B exact $P = .7266$

The null hypothesis is retained, as accepting the alternative hypothesis is likely to be wrong in at least 72 out of 100 such samples. For Group B the proportions of equivalent ratings do not differ significantly between diary and questionnaire data, nor do the proportions of nonequivalent ratings. It is concluded that these data provide sufficient evidence that the two instruments are likely to reveal reconcilable absolute preferences for learning mode in the population.

The findings demonstrate that diary and questionnaire data are unreliable reciprocal predictors of absolute preference ratings, but that at the coarser level of relative preference they are capable of being very well reconciled for group responses.

The questions having been addressed of sampling from the same populations, and of the comparability of diary and questionnaire ratings, the remaining tests concern absolute preference and relative preference for learning mode, the central issues of the enquiry. Although the absolute preference data might meet the criteria for the sign test (attitudinal variables have an underlying continuous distribution, the participants acted as their own controls, and 'higher' ratings could notionally be distinguished from 'lower' (Siegel & Castellan, 1956/1988, p.80), the sign test is a special case of the binomial test when the specified value $p_0 = 0.5$ (Daniel, 1978/1990, p.60). The binomial test is therefore selected both as offering the same results and as being applicable to the categorical data of the relative preference ratings.

Binomial Tests of Proportions

"A binomial random variable X is the count of successes in n independent observations that each have the same probability p of success" (D.S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.379). For each data set the sample proportion of 'successes' $\hat{p}$ is the maximum likelihood estimate of the population proportion p of successes.

It is derived from the count X of equivalent ratings divided by the sample size n. For example, in Group A, where $n = 12$ and 'successes' $X = 9$, the sample proportion $\hat{p}$ is 0.7500. If this value is selected as the putative population proportion p_0, then in accordance with the binomial distribution, completely defined by its parameters n and p, it is possible to convert p to its equivalent discrete count: if the random variable X (denoting the outcome of the experiment) is binomially distributed, with parameters n and p ($X \sim B\{n, p\}$), then the probability that $p = \hat{p}$ (e.g. that $p = .7500$) is equivalent to the probability that $X = x$ ($P\{X = x\}$, in this example that $X = 9$), and the probability that $p \geq \hat{p}$ is the probability that $X \geq x$ ($P\{X \geq x\}$, in this example that $X \geq 9$).

As each of the five data sets consists of a sample of independent outcomes which may be counted as 'failure' or 'success', the binomial test is appropriate to address the final question of interest concerning what each set reveals about absolute and relative preferences for learning mode. While the diary sets were expected to differ from the questionnaire sets, it was hoped that the differences would be consistent within each medium. To some extent this hope was justified, and the over-all conclusions to be drawn from where it was or was not realised make up the concluding part of the 'absolute preference' and 'relative preference' sub-sections below.

Absolute preference (Binomial 1)

In absolute rating terms the choice is between preference for ODL and preference for SDL. In what follows, the sample sizes n and the counts of 'successes' X are those already given in **Table 7:2**, and the layout in general follows the recommendation of M.J. Gardner and D.G. Altman (1989/1995) that "full statistical information should be given" (p.14). The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the probability p of higher ratings for ODL and the probability, $1 - p = q = ½$, of higher ratings for SDL, against the alternative two-sided hypothesis that there is a difference. The hypotheses may be formally stated as:

$$H_0: p = .5 \qquad\qquad H_1: p \neq .5$$

For the data-types in question a reasonable significance level was set at $\alpha = .10$, and a 90% confidence interval (*CI*) for the true population proportion of 'successes' is given with each finding. In keeping with the increasing practice of the *British Medical Journal*, M.J. Gardner and D.G. Altman maintain that "essentially confidence intervals become relevant whenever an inference is to be made from the study results to the wider world" (p.4), and add that "a single study usually gives an imprecise sample estimate of the overall population value in which we are interested. This imprecision is indicated by the width of the confidence interval: the wider the interval the less precision" (p.4).[7] They suggest that both the confidence interval and the P value should be presented (p.12) and offer a reminder that while values beyond the range of the interval are not ruled out, they are less likely, and in fact the middle half of the interval (a 67% confidence interval of its own) is most likely to contain the population value (p.4). However, "regardless of the width of the

[7]A confidence interval can be understood in several ways: "In *repeated experiments*, a proportion $100(1 - \alpha)\%$ of confidence intervals obtained may be expected to contain the (usually) unknown value of the parameter" (F. Daly, Hand, M.C. Jones, Lunn, & McConway, 1995/1997, p.616). Adapting D.S. Moore and McCabe, 1993/1996, p.581: we are 90% confident that the probability of X is in the given interval; and: "It indicates the range of values of p that are consistent with the observed results. This is the range of p_0's [i.e. hypothetical population proportions] that would not be rejected by a test of level [$\alpha = 0.10$]" (p.582; material in brackets not in the original).

confidence interval, the sample estimate is the best indicator of the population value" (p.4). This sample estimate is X or, its equivalent, $\hat{p}$. Although in a binomial setting the confidence intervals depend on the test statistic X, the P value will be the same whichever preference is labelled 'success'. In the following subsection, 'success' X is arbitrarily selected as 'preference for SDL'.

1. Diary Ratings Group A: $n = 12$, $X = 8$, $CI = (.3909, .8771)$, exact $P = .3877$

The null hypothesis is retained. It is concluded that these diary data have provided insufficient evidence of an absolute preference for either learning mode in the population.

2. Diary Ratings Group B: $n = 13$, $X = 5$, $CI = (.1657, .6452)$, exact $P = .5811$

The null hypothesis is retained. It is concluded that these diary data have provided insufficient evidence of an absolute preference for either learning mode in the population.

3. Diary Ratings Group C: $n = 16$, $X = 11$, $CI = (.4517, .8679)$, exact $P = .2101$

The null hypothesis is retained. It is concluded that these diary data have provided insufficient evidence of an absolute preference for either learning mode in the population.

4. Questionnaire Ratings Group A: $n = 12$, $X = 1$, $CI = (.0043, .3387)$, exact $P = .0063$

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these questionnaire data have provided sufficient evidence of an absolute preference for learning mode in the population and that this preference is for ODL.

5. Questionnaire Ratings Group B: $n = 13$, $X = 1$, $CI = (.0039, .3163)$, exact $P = .0034$

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these questionnaire data have provided sufficient evidence of an absolute preference for learning mode in the population and that this preference is for ODL.

The evident divergence in the results required further consideration of the relative strengths and weaknesses of diaries and questionnaires as instruments. Although questionnaires provide more focused responses than content-analysed diaries, the fact remains that each covered different, if related, ground. The issues are briefly discussed in Chapter 8, and here it is simply concluded that the questionnaire absolute preferences for ODL accord with intuition, expectation, and experience, and are hence accepted as having real-world validity; it accords with the nature of the medium that the diaries reveal no certain absolute preference, which must put a question mark over sole reliance on them for quantified data.

Relative preference (Binomial 1)

While the measurement schemes are decidedly coarse, as perhaps befits attitudinal data, an individual participant's average rating of 3.9 for one learning mode and 4.1 for the other would seem to indicate a relatively similar degree of preference when compared with paired ratings of, say, 2.8 and 4.1. The interesting and relevant question of whether, over-all, the differences in paired ratings are marked enough to be meaningful in real-world terms is answerable by looking at the findings from tests of the relative closeness

or otherwise of the ratings for ODL and SDL. In relative rating terms the choice is between equivalent and nonequivalent preference for ODL and SDL.

In all five data sets the equivalent ratings outnumber the nonequivalent ratings, but if the respective proportions are within the limits expected by the operation of chance factors then no significance can be attached to this finding. The two questions of interest are therefore: can it be concluded that in the population the proportion of equivalent ratings would be greater than half and, estimating from the sample proportions, what is the likely proportion of equivalent ratings in the population. Both questions can be addressed by the binomial test which, for dichotomous or dichotomised data "may have no more powerful and practicable alternative" (Siegel & Castellan, 1956/1988, p.44).

The null hypothesis is that the population proportion p of successes does not exceed 0.5, against the alternative one-sided hypothesis that it does.[8] In what follows, the values are those already given for the chi-squared tests in **Table 7:2**, the test statistic X (success) is 'equivalent ratings' and the hypotheses may be formally stated as:

$$H_0: p \leq .5 \qquad\qquad H_1: p > .5$$

For the data in question a reasonable significance level was set at $\alpha = .10$, and a 90% confidence interval for the true population proportion of 'successes' is given with each finding.

1. Diary Ratings Group A: $n = 12, X = 9, CI = (.4727, .9281)$, exact $P = .0730$

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these diary data provide sufficient evidence that the population proportion of equivalent ratings for learning modes is likely to be higher than 50%.

2. Diary Ratings Group B: $n = 13, X = 8, CI = (.3548, .8343)$, exact $P = .2905$

The null hypothesis is retained. It is concluded that these diary data provide insufficient evidence that the population proportion of equivalent ratings for learning modes is likely to be higher than 50%.

3. Diary Ratings Group C: $n = 16, X = 12, CI = (.5156, .9097)$, exact $P = .0384$

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these diary data provide sufficient evidence that the population proportion of equivalent ratings for learning modes is likely to be higher than 50%.

4. Questionnaire Ratings Group A: $n = 12, X = 9, CI = (.4727, .9281)$, exact $P = .0730$

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these questionnaire data provide sufficient evidence that the population proportion of equivalent ratings for learning modes is likely to be higher than 50%.

5. Questionnaire Ratings Group B: $n = 13, X = 10, CI = (.5054, .9339)$, exact $P = .0461$

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[8] A two-sided alternative hypothesis would have been appropriate if the population proportion was already known and if, without looking at the data, there was no reason to believe that the sample proportion would be higher (cf. in this respect, Daniel, 1978/1990, p.61, 2.14, and D.S. Moore & McCabe, 1993/1996, p.625 and p.839, 8.49).

The alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that these questionnaire data provide sufficient evidence that the population proportion of equivalent ratings for learning modes is likely to be higher than 50%.

The relative ratings results do not encourage an unequivocal interpretation:

Group A: diaries and questionnaires: the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.0730 level.

Group B: diaries: the null hypothesis is retained;
questionnaires: the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.0461 level

Group C: diaries: the null hypothesis is rejected at the 0.0384 level.

Four out of five data sets suggest that the population proportion p of equivalent ratings is likely to exceed 0.50 and although not all the confidence intervals for these sample sizes are entirely above that point, all p are more likely to be nearer the centre of the interval than at those extremes, and the over-all impression remains. Given that the diary ratings of all three courses are from the same population or from identical populations (as established above) those of Group B seem likely to be anomalous. It seems reasonable to accept the over-all likelihood that equivalent ratings are in the majority in the hypothetical population. In real-world terms this translates into concluding that most participants would be unlikely to differentially rate ODL and SDL in any meaningful way.

Estimating the Probabilities of the Population Proportions

Although the 90% confidence intervals can locate the population parameter p with reasonable accuracy, it is also possible to gauge the probability that p is at least as large as its unbiased estimator, the sample proportion $\hat{p}$ (equal to the mean). As D.S. Moore and McCabe put it: "In the binomial setting we often wish to estimate the proportion p of successes in the population. Our estimator is the sample proportion of successes, $\hat{p}$" (p.380).

Absolute preference (Binomial 2)

Because no absolute preferences were found to be statistically significant for diary data, and the absolute preferences indicated by questionnaire data were unequivocal, for these ratings no meaningful question can be answered by further estimates of the population proportions of 'success'.

Relative preference (Binomial 2)

In the diary data of Group A, for example, where the count of successes X equals 9, the probability that $X \geq x$, that is $P(X \geq 9)$, $= P(X = 9) + P(X = 10) + P(X = 11) + P(X = 12)$. The probabilities differ for every population proportion p, and if the sample proportions $\hat{p}$ are taken as unbiased estimators of their respective p, then the probabilities are as follows:

1. Group A Diary Ratings: $n = 12, X = 9,$ $\hat{p} = p_0 = .7500,$ $P(X \geq 9) = .6488$
2. Group A Questionnaire Ratings: $n = 12, X = 9,$ $\hat{p} = p_0 = .7500,$ $P(X \geq 9) = .6488$

3. Group B Diary Ratings: $n = 13, X = 8,$ $\hat{p} = p_0 = .6154,$ $P(X \geq 8) = .6195$

4. Group B Questionnaire Ratings: $n = 13, X = 10,$ $\hat{p} = p_0 = .7692,$ $P(X \geq 10) = .6484$

5. Group C Diary Ratings: $n = 16, X = 12,$ $\hat{p} = p_0 = .7500,$ $P(X \geq 12) = .6302$

The results indicate that in some 62 to 65 percent of all samples the proportion of equivalent ratings will be between 0.61 and 0.77. This offers support for the previous conclusion that, over-all, the majority of relative ratings in the population are likely to be equivalent rather than non-equivalent.

Summary of Conclusions

Responses to categories and components of ODL and SDL have been explicit and remarked upon enough to need no further comment, and what little remains to be said is in regard to the over-all rather than the specific. While generalisability is supported by the finding that all ratings were from the same population, it is borne in mind in what follows that participants on all three courses were convenience samples rather than simple random samples. In that regard, Conover (1971/1980) mentions the real-world situation in which a psychologist is obliged either to abandon an experiment or use paid volunteers, and remarks that "all experimenters must necessarily work with the sampled population, and the validity of their experiment rests on the assumption that the sampled population is similar to the target population, at least with respect to the properties under investigation" (p.61).

Notwithstanding the lack of diary evidence in absolute favour of either learning mode, the questionnaire data have provided a clear-cut response. Virtually all participants in Groups A and B rated ODL course components higher on average than SDL components. This result must be seen in the context of student habituation to teaching as well as in the light of the co-ordinator's relative experience in the two learning modes. That said, it is concluded that, while the experiences of SDL expressed in the diaries did not reveal any absolute preference, the questionnaire evidence that ODL was rated higher than SDL is too strong to dismiss. It seems reasonable to accept that this accurately reflects a population disposition to favour ODL in a mediated ODL/SDL context.

In relative terms, on the other hand, the evidence suggests that the majority of participants rated ODL and SDL equivalently, which is to say that while ratings for ODL were higher, for the majority they were not markedly higher. On the whole, while favouring ODL, most participants rated ODL and SDL closely enough to enable the conclusion that, for practical purposes, they will co-exist viably and acceptably in the population.

Quantified attitudinal ratings are abstracted from the surrounding 'noise', from background temperament and ephemeral mood, and sheer human contrariness. So the 'real-world' finding that no course had to be terminated, and that virtually every participant stayed with the experimental programmes, contributes much to the over-all finding that MIDL courses provided a suitable vehicle for the successful integration of ODL and SDL. That this was so in a 'worst case scenario', of unprepared students in a highly conservative classroom, with only 'to hand' facilities for self-direction, makes it all the more reasonable to conclude that the three courses adequately represent putative responses to classroom learner autonomy in the wider population. It seems to be the case that even students who prefer ODL, who have invested heavily in

traditional teaching, will, on average, accept quite high proportions of SDL in the classroom. Perhaps a more unexpected finding, with interesting practical implications, is that despite only minimal facilities for SDL, a minority prefer it.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

As the present enquiry tends to confirm rather than refute the relatively few empirical studies with some relationship to it, in this concluding chapter any conventional comparison with the literature is minimal. Instead, more usefully, the over-all results are briefly reviewed, proposals are made for practical classroom aids to further research, and some implications of the study are suggested in the light of possible future developments in learner autonomy.

The enquiry has conjoined the following themes in addressing three related questions: first, in what ways may ODL and SDL be realistically combined in a traditional language-teaching classroom; second, what are appropriate research procedures for determining learner attitudes to classroom practices, and; third, how in fact do average EFL learners respond to mediated other-directed and self-directed learning. It has done so by devising and conducting experimental MIDL courses, by taking an exploratory approach to the data-gathering, data reduction, and data analysis procedures, and by presenting substantial and detailed qualitative narratives and quantitative findings on the participants' responses to the independent variable. In doing so it has suggested alternative perspectives on key terminological issues, has collated a corpus of learner free-style writing in English, has proffered means by which teachers and researchers may fruitfully record and analyse self-directed classroom events, and has shown that 'autonomous learning' is viable even in an entirely unpropitious setting. Over-all, it is hoped that the undertaking is justified in offering encouragement to further research into, as well as substantive support for, the ongoing development of classroom learner autonomy.

Review of Results

The question must be asked whether the instruments and statistical analyses were sensitive enough to detect real differences in attitudes, and the answer must be that they were ample for qualitative purposes but that all such quasi-experiments in real-world settings are more practical than ideal. But if the over-all view is taken that 'attitude' is a sufficiently broad generalisation for broad measurement of it to suffice, then it may be enough to claim that for the stated purposes the quantitative instruments and analyses were appropriate. None of which precludes further research employing randomisation, sample sizes calculated with reference to effect sizes, refinement and development of instruments to provide at least interval level data, or the many other contributions to precision that were not available. With many more participants it might have been statistically preferable to allocate them at random to the six conditions of a 3 x 2 factorial experiment. However, this would not only have presented time-tabling difficulties – the same teacher would have had to

double the number of contact hours, and a further teacher would have had to be employed – but it would have meant sacrificing direct comparison of the same participant's responses to the two levels.

While randomisation conditions were not met in the present study they might be achievable in future work along similar lines, although here a caveat is in order. Of relevance to random allocation is an issue which (as the narrative reports of Appendices A and B record) negatively affected participant attitudes – the problem of disparate levels in the same class. At least in the private sector of ELT, making up even one viable group at approximately the same proficiency level is a constant problem, and finding enough to make random allocation viable would require many more students than most institutions receive, would need control of their arrivals and departures and, if examination classes were chosen because they tend to exist longer, would demand a policy of absolutely excluding from the examinations those would-be candidates whose *potential* for the examination (three months, six months, a year hence?) was judged on their pre-course proficiency levels in the four-skills-plus, either assessed prior to leaving their home-countries or on arrival. There would need to be universal agreement on at least the following: the examining bodies to exclude candidates at the request of the institutions, co-operation between close-by institutions (perhaps for an equable 'exchange' of students), staffing and associated administration in each home-country for pre-assessment or its equivalent in the TL country, and, above all, acceptance by students that their entry to examinations would be governed by such factors as the above. And were all this done, experience shows that very promising candidates fail or do badly while some initial 'no-hopers' emerge as dedicated and hard-working people who succeed by determination and effort. Which adds prior psychological profiling of would-be candidates to the requirements. Again, none of this is impossible, but ELT as a whole is a long way from beginning to put such measures into effect, and the probability is that market forces would deter anyone from making a start in that direction. Which means that smaller scale quasi-experiments of the present kind may be the only realistic option available to classroom researchers without access to very large numbers of students at homogeneous proficiency levels. That said, for all practical purposes the answers provided by this study are enough to enable a confident prediction that, where due care is taken, classroom SDL may ethically and viably be introduced in partnership with traditional ODL in intensive language courses.

The procedures of Chapter 7 offered tentative indications of statistical significance but a brief review of the questionnaire ratings may throw some everyday light on elements of the courses. These ratings were: scaled: 1 = 'very bad/ a waste of time'; 2 = 'bad/ not very useful'; 3 = 'so-so'; 4 = 'good/ useful'; 5 = 'very good/ very useful' (or their equivalents). Appendix C contains the detailed results and here it is useful merely to remark on one or two notable summary findings.

First, although there were distinct differences in particular ratings, for the 12 items selected as representing an over-all response to the courses, Group A averaged 4.0, and Group B averaged 3.9, highly comparable results. However, there were notable disparities in the ratings for individual components, in part a reflection of the inevitable differences in the conduct of the courses, as the following listing for self-directed components illustrates:

In-Class SDL Component	Group A	Group B
Support/Work Teams	3.0	4.3
Laboratory	3.5	4.1
Library	4.1	3.7
I-C SDL over-all mean rating	3.7	4.0

While the 'so-so' rating of Group A for teamwork is largely a response to the co-ordinator's early mishandling of a team leaders issue, its resolution for Group B is indicated by a rating in the range 'good' to 'very good', a result which lends cautious support to the notion of guided interdependent self-direction in classroom contexts.

As an aside with some relevance to the theme of interdependent self-directed learning it is considered that, although individual and group assignments were always peripheral to the other concerns of curriculum and timetable and although on the courses as well as on the preliminary project they failed to achieve anything worthwhile, it is possible that, handled differently, they could have made a significant contribution to the ethos of self-direction. As indicated previously, Leni Dam and others have found project work viable in their contexts and there seems to be no reason why they should not have a significant role in non-examination or continuous assessment courses.

It is also noteworthy that laboratory work receives a lower rating from Group A, for whom it was partly conducted in IODL and DSDL modes, than with Group B, for whom it was an entirely ISDL facility, and in the later stages of the course an optional alternative to ISDL class library. But drawing firm DSDL versus ISDL conclusions is counter-indicated by the fact that, contrarily, the library was entirely ISDL for both groups, yet rated higher from Group A. It may be noted in passing that Group B, which began independent work from the start of the course, rated in-class SDL over-all higher (4.0) than did Group A (3.7), to whom it was introduced more gradually. Although keeping the diaries was not the favourite activity of either group (rating 3.4 and 3.7) the over-all ratings of 4.0 and 4.6 for out-class setwork (homework) raised the average for out-class SDL to 3.7 for Group A and 4.2 for Group B, both results comparable with the in-class SDL ratings. It is noteworthy that homework schedules which rate 'good' to 'very good' were particularly heavy and demanding DSDL components of both courses, an indication perhaps of the advisability of retaining this feature within semi-autonomy programmes. As evidence that the participants were not rating good SDL against poor other-direction it may be mentioned that the average for ODL components was 4.4 for Group A and 4.5 for Group B.

As indicated in Chapter 7, although the diary data from all three courses displayed no significant favouring of one learning mode over the other, the questionnaires for Courses A and B revealed a clear preference for the other-directed components of the experimental courses and there is no reason to believe that if questionnaires had been administered to Course C the result would have been any different. However, this preference may be set alongside the perceptive comment from the 'letter critique' of participant A10 on Course A: "A lot of things are completely up to every student himself and if I look at the age of the afaridge [= average] of the students in thise class I'm not sure if independency is the best way to get the maximum success." Although the enquiry was concerned with 'adults' the comment highlights the fact that maturity (in the sense of general experience of living an independent life) is also a factor to be taken into account. A

further 'letter critique' remark by participant A11 on the same course, to the effect that the course was too short for examination preparation, highlights one of the less obvious influences on almost every aspect of a course and hence on the students' perceptions of it. No simple equation of the 'longer equals better' type meets the case, and although addressing the additional issue of the effect on student perceptions is well beyond the scope of the present enquiry it would seem to be an area worthy of research. Note should also be taken of an insightful comment written by Scrutineer 2 at the time of the tally confirmations:

> Anything the teacher does for them tends to get high points; anything that involves them in effort tends to score lower. The consequence of this observation is the probability that in no circumstances will self-directed learning be able to achieve as high a rating as ODL unless it consists of the kind of helpful feedback which the teacher provides.... & this would seem to provide a very fruitful source for further research.[1]

The remark not only helps to justify paying heed to relative as well as absolute response ratings but prompts a useful area for enquiry into, for example, ratings for carefully matched tasks which differ solely in the degree of effort involved. It was also established that the relative differences in questionnaire ratings for ODL and SDL tended to agree with the diary findings of insufficient evidence of an over-all substantive difference in response to the learning modes. The real-world conclusion reached was that the population of classroom language learners represented by the groups was unlikely to reject SDL on semi-autonomy programmes of the kind exemplified by the MIDL experimental courses.

One finding of practical consequence to the enquiry, and enabled solely by quantification of the data, was that the absolute preference ratings and the relative preference ratings could respectively be regarded as elicited from the same nominal populations of students. Whilst it would have been possible to make sense of the data had this not been so, that it is so makes for greater comparability of like with like and effectively justifies and confirms describing the enquiry as a replication case study.

Even if the findings are only indications rather than definitive results, it is possible to conclude that preference for ODL can co-exist with acceptance of SDL, and that the devised model for combining them is able to offer a majority of unprepared students ethical (that is, effective and acceptable) opportunities for classroom self-direction. With due caution in respect to non-random sampling, small sample sizes, and data reduction procedures, it is also tentatively concluded that the quantitative results offer viable support to qualitative findings which are considered substantively generalisable, in keeping with the remark of Tudor that "the language classroom is probably the richest school of self-direction that we have. Recognising and exploiting this potential is possibly the greatest long-term contribution we can make to the development of autonomy" (1997, p.19). In sum, the study offers backing for an 'autonomous learning' component in the many similar ELT classrooms with comparable student intakes and virtually identical international examination programmes, and provides replicated empirical support for fostering greater learner responsibility within other conservative teacher-controlled settings.

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[1]Dr Susana Bayó Belenguer, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Trinity College, Dublin University (personal communication).

Gremmo and Riley (1995) have made the point that it is no longer possible to claim that self-direction is impossible "in institutions whose courses are examination-led" (pp.154-155), and this study goes some way to bearing out that claim. Institutional self-direction implies a heightened awareness of the interdependent nature of learning and helps to overcome the possible inability of solitary learners to gauge their own learning needs (deficiencies) in relation to standard norms, and the consequent possibility of achieving less than they might within a given time. In a semi-autonomy MIDL methodology (as opposed, perhaps, to an entire ISDL milieu with counselling) a significant contribution can be made to the student's own progress by the (sometimes demanding) encouragement and prompting by the co-ordinator in regard to both in-class and out-class work, as a diary extract from Course B suggests:

> The fact that I have been pushed in my weak point, writing, has been very helpful for me to improve my ability of speaking as well. I know myself, I have not a very logical mind in my language either, so this work has been enormous important .... thanks to the sometimes 'terrible pressure' of the teacher I feel the desire of expressing myself by writing in a language which I have already started to appreciate and discover. [1.3/B6/19 May/B.IV]

Many teachers will be able to claim the same effects, vital evidence that we are achieving on behalf of our learners the aim that Little has put squarely on the table for all language educators, at every level of practice, and of all persuasions: "Communicative autonomy in the real world must be our overriding goal" (1996b, p.9). But without formal research settings which encourage the recording and publishing of such observations these effects are likely to remain in the realm of the anecdotal.

As noted previously, Sheerin (1991), referring to Moulden's finding that his students valued the taught component as a complement to their self-direction, spoke of "a symbiotic and mutually enriching relationship" (p.154) between teacher and students, and the preliminary project of the present enquiry brought home to both the co-ordinator and associate just how important it was to maintain the special rapport that is possible in the close-community environment of intensive language classes. That said, if classrooms are to help learners become better capable of independent learning in a range of out-class circumstances then they must provide opportunities for self-direction. If such provision includes full-scale self-access facilities with state-of-the-art interactive multimedia facilities, then teachers may legitimately consider the option of counselling as a worthwhile adjunct to full-scale self-direction. If provision consists of little more than was available in the present context the point has been demonstrated that even a minimal 'class library' and language laboratory may be incorporated successfully within a semi-autonomy ethos. In this respect the role of the language laboratory, or its equivalent, ought perhaps to be re-emphasised: in addition to the advantages noted by Mueller and associates (1987), and Conrick (1994), the laboratory had a vital role in the whole course of the MIDL experiments, providing an extra dimension of student freedom to choose the work done. Whether the laboratory functions purely as a tape utility or, as on the present Courses B and C, is optionally useable as a 'quiet room' annexe to the class library, it offers a major resource to teachers wishing to inaugurate semi-autonomy in traditional settings.

Starting from the basic premise that the intensive language classroom offers an appropriate interface between ODL and SDL the present study offers encouragement to the attempt by providing evidence from a wide range of learner responses that attitudes to semi-autonomy may be as positive as any that might be

expected from a traditional milieu. Further, it offers detailed accounts and ample documentation on a successful experimental methodology which might be adopted, adapted, or improved. The many references in the narrative reports of Appendices A, B, and C to enjoyment of the self-directed opportunities is evidence that it is possible, by adapting the everyday practices and facilities of the most traditional classroom environment, to introduce adult learners to self-directed learning in a way which is viable, and thereby ethical. Where mass defections from the programmes might have been expected, there was only one permanent transfer (possibly for reasons unconnected with self-direction) despite minimal SDL facilities. The fact that DSDL pairgroup events were largely adapted from communicative approach practices serves to make the point that semi-autonomy is rooted in existing conventions. All that is needed to make the transition to conscious learner independence is the willingness to let it happen, if only on the reasonable supposition that closely integrating ODL and SDL offers the learner more choice than either mode alone.

Suggestions for Further Research

Although the evidence offers some grounds for anticipating that learners at a nominally 'higher' achievement level would respond in much the same way as the present participants, this remains to be tested. The actual extent of disparity in proficiency levels on each course meant that the findings may be generalisable with some confidence to at least the full range of nominal 'intermediate' levels and it may be hypothesised that they would be found to apply also to nominal 'advanced' levels. However, at lower achievement levels, not only would different data-gathering instruments be indicated but, exceptional individuals aside, it may be assumed in advance of trial that the proportions of ODL to SDL in a MIDL environment would not only require very careful monitoring but would be likely to favour ODL. In consequence it is probably the nominal 'beginner' and 'elementary' levels which offer the greatest challenge to the findings of this study and the greatest scope for further investigation.

It is worth observing that where SDL is integrated with classroom ODL less time is available to the co-ordinator to balance the needs of disparate proficiency levels in the same group. In a fully ODL class the programme may meet the needs, at different times, of the middle 80%, with perhaps 10% at the top and bottom not catered for. With an integrated ODL/SDL class the time for ODL may allow the needs only of the middle 50% to be met. At the present stage of research it is simply not known whether the SDL components make up the difference fully, partly, or not at all. The issue might perhaps be addressed within a wider survey of learner attitudes.

Where a longitudinal treatment is adjusted to take account of the subject's response (as, in this study, the MIDL methodology was sensitive to comments in participants' diaries), and where measurements are ongoing rather than 'before and after', what might be called evolutionary reciprocal effects occur between the independent and dependent variables (IV and DV). Such effects are beyond the scope of the present enquiry but may prove worthy of examination in any further work along the same or similar lines. While in the present study the cumulative responses are precisely matched to the cumulative treatments (and hence evolutionary reciprocal effects may be considered as cancelled out), the domain of DV-IV reciprocity may be potentially fruitful for research.

While caution about using intact groups is necessary (e.g. Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1994, pp. 203-204) it has to be accepted that in ELT almost any group of mixed nationality students is typical of the population of interest. In other words, an experimental finding from a neatly balanced heterogeneous group must be generalisable to a nearly homogeneous group, and vice-versa. This puts a strain both on sampling techniques and on the credibility of findings. The solution, it would seem, is to accept the need for sufficient experimentation and partial replication to establish external validity. What is sufficient is necessarily hard to determine, but it would not seem unreasonable to expect it to be tens of experiments in a field as diverse as ELT, with whatever corresponding numbers might be required for other allied fields. On the other hand, preliminary indications of the kind obtained in this study would appear to offer sufficient justification, in and of themselves, for the tentative introduction of semi-autonomy programmes wherever feasible, reducing if not altogether obviating the need for an act of faith.

Clearly, the results must be considered indications only, and it seems hardly necessary to stress the need not only for further empirical research in classroom learner autonomy but also of larger-scale undertakings, preferably by teams. While acknowledging the need for sensitivity to intrusion on the learners' own purposes, where larger-scale studies are feasible the opportunity for true experimentation arises, and with the construction of sampling frames (for example, all the institutions which teach X for Y purposes) goes the real possibility, if not of random sampling, at least of random allocation of intact groups to experimental and control conditions.

But, as suggested above, the constraints of educational research make it likely that most enquiries will continue to be small-scale studies by teachers in their own classrooms, with, at best, co-operation among in-house staff. When Baird and White (1984) undertook a six month intervention programme with 64 students in two ninth grade science classes and an eleventh grade biology class, with a view to increasing the students' awareness and control of their own learning, their data came from direct observations, audio and video recordings of classroom activities, and interviews, tests, and self-evaluations. Although this was reported as classroom action research, usually associated with the promotion of changes in local conditions, what is of wider interest is the authors' confession that they had not solved the difficulties of presenting the extensive results. This is, of course, exactly the kind of situation that inhibits classroom enquiry, which risks at one extreme the possibly superficial quantitative data that can be managed by one or two people, and at the other extreme the really informative qualitative data that are so rich as to be virtually unpresentable in the time-scales available to action research. Compromise is necessary, and the following suggestions for further research are made with that in mind.

While the study tends to support the option of providing self-direction as an integral part of classroom pedagogy, given the exploratory approach as well as the tentative nature of the findings it goes without saying that the ethos of learner autonomy demands substantially greater awareness of the attitudes of learners themselves to semi-autonomy. At present it is possible for educators to advocate learner autonomy for the reasons put forward in the early chapters, and these are no doubt acceptable and persuasive grounds. If it is seen principally as an inherent aspect of all learning then the current literature amply makes practitioners aware of this. Equally, where it is put in place in answer to specific staffing or budgetary constraints, then it assumes the same status as any other educational provision and is subject to the same evaluations. But if it is regarded as a mode in its own right, as something putatively capable of enhancing

learning in ways which go above and beyond those of instruction, then a great deal more is needed by way of empirical verification on at least two parallel fronts: first, and essentially, there is urgent need for more attitudinal enquiry to establish not only whether learners want it but what exactly they want from it; second, but simultaneously, it is an ethical imperative that studies should be undertaken to measure the effectiveness of self-direction in learning terms (rate, retention, etc.). The present study has only touched on the first concern and not addressed the second at all, and it scarcely need be said that it will be of limited value if it remains as an isolated instance of enquiry.

However problematical large-scale research may be, Little has put his finger on a key issue. In arguing for giving trainee teachers an encouraging experience of being autonomous learners he says: "A capacity to argue the importance of learner autonomy is not the same thing as a capacity to promote learner autonomy in the classroom" (1995, p.180). It is a hope of the present enquiry that, despite (or perhaps because of) its hesitancies and flaws, it may provide something of an encouraging model of semi-autonomy to practitioners, particularly those in conservative traditional environments with no special provision for learner independence. Whatever the theoretical arguments for learner autonomy, its practice comes down to individual teachers trying it out for themselves, in their own contexts, where their own learners are. Little puts much the same point this way:

> It may be that at some time in the remote future pedagogies oriented to the development of learner autonomy will be a majority rather than a minority pursuit. But if this happens, it will be as a result of bottom-up rather than top-down processes: via a gradually expanding network of small-scale action research projects and not because of general aspirations expressed at national level. (Little, 1997, p.15)

Any worthwhile implementation of learner autonomy requires a widespread consensus, and the dangers of indifference from teachers, the second most important party to the agreement, or of resistance from the major stakeholders, the learners, can best be minimised by the ongoing provision of empirical and impartial enquiry. W.J.K. Davies, whose paper on learner autonomy is resonant with down-to-earth common-sense on the pedagogical issues, has this to say:

> There are bound ... to be a great mass of uncommitted practitioners who are not anti-autonomous learning as such but who are competent professionals who need to be convinced they should change approaches which they perceive already work well. (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.54)

> If the teaching force at large does not perceive advantages in learner centred approaches then it will, at best, use them only half-heartedly; and if the community is not willing to support the trend both intellectually and physically, then processing the learner rather than improving the learning process will continue to be the norm. If most people can be convinced of the advantages, however, then conditions will be right for change to occur. (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.64)

The present enquiry has provided evidence both for and against self-directed learning in its context, for whatever persuasion that entails. Much more needs to be done to determine learner responses to in-class SDL across a wide range of institutional types and classrooms, and this can only happen if administrators and teachers are willing to invest in the process. Making that investment may be worthwhile for academics and others with something personal to gain from research, but if 'autonomous learning' is to achieve

evaluation on its own merits then the means to that evaluation must be provided. Such means must be intuitively user-friendly, capable of almost immediate application in a variety of classroom contexts. If larger-scale research is to be encouraged, not least as the forerunner of things to come, then the provision of better instruments is an obvious priority. To that end, devising and testing a range of optional elicitation instruments is seen as a worthwhile undertaking.

Quantification of diary data not only runs the risk of sparse relevant responses but involves the considerable difficulty and labour of content analysis. For purely qualitative research, the present work has shown that open-ended diaries offer a rich source of data. For quantification purposes, however, not only is data reduction extremely time-consuming and labour intensive, but even the most rigorous cross-checking cannot completely guarantee to eliminate subjective bias. Questionnaires are an obvious alternative but, if administered at the end of a project may be influenced by the more recent learning events, and if administered at appropriate intervals throughout the project it must be considered whether, and if so how, to change the questions while retaining comparability of response. The synchronicity problem of questionnaires is illustrated by a diary extract from Course B:

> I have to recognise that my actual point of view is completely different to my point of view when I did the last interview (I don't know how I've changed it because normally when I say something I keep it until the end). I think that my statements in the questionnaire were too strong (I suppose that I had my reasons but they were influenced by a depression). [14.19/B4/12 Jun/B.IV]

Administering several questionnaires would enable a qualitative assessment of the evolution of individual and group attitudes and taking the average of responses from the same individual would allow more representative quantitative evaluations.

Notwithstanding that the bulk of participants, with one or two very positive exceptions, found keeping diaries tedious, they proved to be valuable *daily monitoring devices* which served the ethical purposes of the research. A spin-off could be that the corpus of learner-English they provided may be of use in language acquisition studies and the description of late 20th century language-classroom practices in ELT may be of historical interest. However, as *data-gathering instruments* the diaries depended entirely, and therefore vulnerably, on the goodwill and common-sense of the participants for both quantity and quality of content, and were open to routinisation as well as sparseness. Although they provided both qualitative and quantitative data-sets, large parts of them consisted of neutral description rather than attitudinal remarks, and from the students' perspectives they did not, with a few noteworthy exceptions, offer incentives to and practice in freestyle writing. From a research perspective the cost of analysis in time and effort was beyond the reasonable capacity of most busy practitioners and high enough to put their value for this purpose in question. It is generally considered that more informative and more readily analysable qualitative attitudinal data could have been obtained from less frequent content-guided 'critiques' of the kind elicited from Group A. Ideally, for quantitative data, these might have been combined with regular administration of a proven questionnaire at three or four weekly intervals (long enough for participants to come relatively fresh to the same set of questions and short enough to allow several questionnaires during the course). Although the creation and use of better attitudinal questionnaires was well beyond the present scope the design and testing of such instruments is an obvious preliminary to any future research along the recommended lines..

As an interim measure, the more manageable suggestion is made of tools to record and evaluate self-directed learning opportunities in classroom contexts and to keep track of the progress of individuals as they become more aware of personal learner autonomy. To that end, a scale and grid are proposed for beta-testing under real-world conditions. During the course of the present enquiry it became evident that, although learners were given opportunities for self-direction, and means were in place to gauge their responses, there existed no principled way to measure such opportunities or to preserve them in quantitative format for analysis. Although labels served to some extent to order the items (independent SDL being classified as 'more autonomous' than dependent SDL), this still left room for a way in which the co-ordinator could record daily learning events in a consistent manner. Any such instrument could not be too exotic or time-consuming, given the pressures that introducing SDL already imposed on an ODL environment, and had to meet the acid-test of teacher approval. It is hoped that the suggested scale and grid that follows will provide such a tool for recording and evaluating classroom learner autonomy, initially in language learning environments but with the potential for amendment for use in other contexts.

Proposals For Comparative Assessment of Autonomy Content and Opportunity

For the two measurement devices proposed for further research **Table 8:1** and **Figure 8:1** are intended to be self-explanatory and self-contained, with only abstract considerations omitted. **Table 8:1** introduces the *Independent and Self-Directed Learning (IASDL) Scale*, illustrates typical learning modes, events, and elements of a MIDL format course in a CLA environment, and suggests how autonomy content may be assessed. The scale can be used alone or as input to the *IASDL Grid* (**Figure 8:1**), which offers a means to assess the autonomy opportunity level of learning events for individuals, groups, or course programmes, per occasion or over time.

The IASDL Scale for Assessing Autonomy Content

The Independent and Self-Directed Learning (IASDL) Scale (**Table 8:1**) indicates how a rating can be calculated for selected aspects of a learning event and, given that different contexts will determine how crudely or subjectively, offers a way to assess the autonomy content of typical learning events. The numerical assessment enables a classification of IASDL events as low, medium, or high content, which may be of use with the IASDL Grid.

The IASDL Grid for Assessing Autonomy Opportunity

In classroom learner autonomy environments the grid (**Figure 8:1**) is suggested as a means by which teachers and researchers may assess the autonomy opportunity offered by learning events in relation to the notional *independent and self-directed learning* (IASDL) competence of the learners. At an abstract level it is based on the assumption that:

- a student's IASDL capability can be assessed by appropriate means;
- IASDL capability can be validly and sufficiently represented as low, medium, or high;
- IASDL opportunities can be validly and sufficiently represented as low, medium, or high;

Table 8:1. *IASDL Scale for Assessing the Autonomy Content of Learning Events by Decision-Making and Action-Taking Criteria*

Learning mode	Learning event	Decision-making: Independent/dependent elements					Action-taking: Self-directed/other-directed elements			IASDL opportunity scale	IASDL opportunity level[1]
		Initiation	Materials	Format	Task	Deadline	Conduct	Guidance	Evaluation		
DODL dependent other-directed learning	group instruction	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	low
	teacher-led activities	.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.	2	low
	closely supervised activities	.	.	.	.	.	4	.	.	4	low
DSDL dependent self-directed learning	set projects/assignments	.	2	.	.	.	4	2	.	8	medium
	out-class setwork	.	1	.	.	1	4	2	.	8	medium
	laboratory setwork	.	.	.	.	.	4	2	2	8	mediium
	pairgroup work	.	.	.	1	.	4	4	2	11	medium
	class diary	.	.	.	2	2	4	4	2	14	medium
IODL independent other-directed learning	monitored laboratory freework	2	2	2	2	.	4	2	2	16	high
	monitored class library freework	2	2	2	2	.	4	2	2	16	high
ISDL independent self-directed learning	laboratory freework	2	2	2	2	.	4	4	4	20	high
	class library freework	2	2	2	2	.	4	4	4	20	high
	freework projects	1	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	21	high
	out-class freework	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	22	high

Note. Non-negotiable institutional constraints such as hour and place are omitted. IASDL Scales may be used with the IASDL Ratings Grid (Figure 8:1). The headings above are representative, e.g., 'Initiation' refers to the decision to undertake a particular learning event, activity, study, etc.; 'Materials' involves the selection of books, tapes, etc.; 'Format' means those decisions involved in determining the manner in which the learning will be conducted; 'Task' refers to decisions regarding what is to be undertaken; 'Deadline' means determining the point at or by which an event will be ended; 'Conduct' relates to the actual activity procedures; 'Guidance', guidelines, etc. refers to the extent to which the learner is free to act without intrusive help or overt supervision; 'Evaluation' means assessment of the outcome of the learning event, task, activity, of its success or otherwise.
Scoring: dependent decision(s) = 0; independent decision(s) = 2; other-directed act(s) = 0; self-directed act(s) = 4; where decisions or acts fall between dependence/independence or other-direction/self-direction these scores are halved. [1]Low = 1-7; medium = 8-14; high = 15-22.

IASDL Capability Estimate				
	High	3	6	9
	Medium	2	5	8
	Low	1	4	7
		Low	Medium	High

IASDL Opportunity Estimate

Example: A record is being kept of the classroom learner autonomy ratings for a particular course or research project.

Making use of the IASDL Scale (Table 8:1) the co-ordinator/researcher has determined that a particular learning event (activity, period, etc.) constitutes a medium IASDL opportunity (i.e. the centre column of the above grid applies).

A student's current IASDL capability is judged to be			
	high	score 6	(centre column, top row)
	medium	score 5	(centre column, centre row)
	low	score 4	(centre column, bottom row)

In a class of 10 students where the co-ordinator assesses 2 students to be currently of high IASDL capability, 5 to be of medium capability, and 3 to be of low capability, the IASDL rating for the occasion would be calculated as follows:

IASDL capability	Individual scores		No. of students		Actual opportunity group score	(Out of)	Highest opportunity group score
High	6	x	2	=	12	(9 x 2)	18
Medium	5	x	5	=	25	(8 x 5)	40
Low	4	x	3	=	12	(7 x 3)	21
			10		49		79

Group IASDL Rating (49/79) = .620 or 62%

For use by teachers, observers, and researchers to estimate IASDL ratings for individuals or groups: to track the overall classroom learner autonomy content of a course in relation to its participants (many low opportunity occasions will keep overall ratings low) as well as to assess the independent and self-directed learning progress of individuals. In the example above, a student assessed as currently of low IASDL capability would score 4 out of a possible 7: (1 x 4) / 7 = .571 or 57%; were he or she to rise to high capability the score for a similar 'medium' opportunity would be (1 x 6) / 9 = .667 or 67%. If records are kept over time the individual scores or group ratings can be averaged or graphed, and similarly-obtained ratings can be compared across projects as well as between classes and institutions.

Figure 8:1. IASDL Grid for estimating autonomy opportunity levels of individuals, groups, and courses (IASDL Grid Version 1).

- IASDL opportunity ratings can be assessed by estimating the relationships between their component parts;
- the grid of numbers 1-9, as hierarchically displayed, validly operationalises a reality;
- the relationship between IASDL and learning events suffices to represent the reality sought;
- the opportunity rating can validly represent the degree of group/individual IASDL of any given learning event.

If finer shading of IASDL opportunities is required than can be provided by considering the event (occasion, activity, etc.) as a whole, rather than adding 'medium-high' and so on to the grid it might be preferable to divide the event into discrete elements.

It should be a measure of the effectiveness of a given course in promoting classroom learner autonomy that initially low estimates of student IASDL capability generally move higher, notwithstanding that this may not be so for every individual, and bearing in mind the influence of affective factors on capability. In the example given, which might have been for a frequently repeated *dependent self-directed learning* (DSDL) pairgroup learning event, the IASDL rating of 62% might appear only once on a graph of ratings for the same group of students. The grid can be used to compare and track recurring events, both individual and group progress towards autonomy, and the over-all autonomy opportunity level of whole courses, with obvious implications for the promotion of research.

Repertory Grids Based on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory

As suggested and illustrated by Candy (1990, p.291), the 'repertory grids' arising from Kelly's, 1955, personal construct theory might provide a means for exploring learning experiences. They might thus provide an interesting research option, particularly where class numbers are small enough to allow the one-to-one interviewing and individual analysis they entail. Although Candy does not exemplify their use in a classroom context, it is possible to conceive how the co-ordinator might encourage a participant to reflect upon learning events and, by a series of elicitations of the 'how do these differ from that' kind, arrive at a repertory grid for each student that throws a great deal of light on the individual's attitudes to learning modes and their components. The technique is thoroughly documented in the literature and its output is susceptible to several statistical analyses, among them principal component analysis, multidimensional scaling, and non-parametric factor analysis (p.282), making it particularly suitable for a qualitative research undertaking which incorporates quantitative elements.

Peters' Action-Reason-Thematic Technique

The ARTT outlined by Peters (1990) is another potentially fruitful tool for classroom learner autonomy research where participant numbers are not so large as to prohibit individual interviewing and analysis. Rooted in phenomenology, the technique aims to bring 'prereflective' experiences "to the level of reflective awareness through the description of relevant experiences (Valle and King, 1978)" (Peters, 1990, p.316). The co-ordinator might question a respondent about self-directed learning events and by a series of questions (basically, variations on the theme of 'what did you do' and 'why did you do it'), elicit a whole profile of learner activities and strategies engaged in during various forms of self-direction. The technique would

appear to offer good prospects for determining the choices that contribute to an individual's autonomisation and, over time, for assembling a useful database for both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

The above recommendations have been discussed as separate means to enquiry but if resources allow there may be reason to combine several into a very worthwhile, if large-scale, research project. The techniques outlined by Candy and by Peters are already sufficiently well attested for any responsible study based on them to be able to generate considerable interest and further research again.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The enquiry has provided evidence that some measure of self-directed learning is viable in the most inhospitable setting, even without the overt guidance in 'learning-to-learn' which some experts advocate for self-direction programmes (see, for example, Dickinson 1995 on GOAL training, and Thavenius, 1993, on teaching learning-to-learn). Over-all, the undertaking offers encouragement to further research into, as well as substantive support for, semi-autonomy. This, in turn, may prove to be only a waystage en route to the full learner independence envisaged notably by the CRAPEL, which may itself be seen as linked to the ethos of 'willful self-education', opposed to the effects of subservient learning: "Instead of living our ideas and superseding ourselves, we become the prisoner of other people's ideas" (Callender, 1992, p.162). Although Callender claims that the notion differs from that of self-direction, it is probably more truly seen as an extension of it: "The aim is development of a broad, general, omnivorous learner. It's not enough to be a self-directing, motivated learner in some life domains. One must be open to learning in all domains" (Callender, 1992, p.157).

Even if such visions are not universally fulfilled in the immediate future, traditional teaching is merely one formalisation of the learning from other human beings that is hard-wired into maturation and it remains open to question whether and to what extent it will survive the combined effects of technology and financing. Although, in predicting trends into the 21st century, Trim said that "there is no call to replace teachers by self-instructional systems" (1992, p.14), the birth-rate decline in Europe is impacting on educational provision (Italy, which may have only two-thirds its present population in twenty years' time, is already closing schools), and hand in hand with the increasing cost of employing separate teachers for relatively small groups of learners goes the increasing ease of softwaring instruction and the promise of delivering an identical and hence more egalitarian curriculum to all learners. Even self-access centres may empty, along with the classrooms they supersede, as every home and office is linked to interactive multimedia. In the more affluent countries a personal teacher may in time become a status symbol and, paradoxically, teaching may also continue in those countries too poor to technologise education. But, essentially, educational institutions in the 21st century will probably cater to learners who have moved from dependence on teaching to expecting to take an ever-increasing responsibility for their own learning, to a position of demanding it. Many subject-specialists will no doubt adapt, others may flood the shrinking private market, and still others will convert to materials-providers, combining the skills and insights of instructors with the expertise of programmers able to optimise use of virtual reality (Schwienhorst, 1998) and the ubiquitous pocket computer.

Self-directed learning is no catholicon and if much of the support for the concept of learner autonomy seems muddy it is at least in part because so many of its underlying theories are themselves in continual evolution. Yet "the idea of self-directed learning continues to fascinate partly because it embraces so many credible inconsistencies" (Grow, 1991/1996, p.1). Many current issues in the sociopolitical philosophies of postmodernists, constructivists, criticalists, social transformationists, and proponents of emancipatory education are already shaping a different world, and it may be that many of today's concerns will seem quaint and parochial in the years ahead. But it is to be hoped that sight will not be lost of a key point made by W.J.K. Davies more than a decade ago:

> The learner whose work we are experimenting with is a person and it is his or her future we are influencing (or fouling up!). Indeed, in a sense, it is perhaps hardly important whether our ideas are directed towards learning how to learn or learning how to do. Perhaps we need to concentrate more on the validity of any proposed approach as a help to the learner rather than a prop for the provider. (W.J.K. Davies, 1987, p.63)

Semi-autonomy, insofar as it attempts to provide the learner with the best of several currently available worlds, would seem to offer a half-way house for the many classrooms with no recourse to self-access centres, or in which all-out self-direction is not recommendable but in which something of learner autonomy may be put into practice for the advantage of the learners. The MIDL courses of this enquiry have tried to offer a modest but practicable approach to developing learner independence in institutional contexts, and require little in the way of resources that are not already in place, and only a minor adaptation of the role of the teacher. They thus stand somewhere along the path towards the more ambitious 'learner-with-counsellor' model advanced by the CRAPEL and may help to hold the bridge until counsellor training, already under way, enables that model to be put into more widespread effect (for a recent outline and notes on research into its required counselling see Gremmo, 1998). From an educator's point of view semi-autonomy programmes of the kind exemplified in this enquiry may therefore be seen as having three principal aims: to offer an introduction to independent learning in its own right, to serve as a viable alternative when greater autonomisation is not an option, and to prepare the ground for a full counselling format. This study of the learner's point of view has provided evidence that, with sensitivity to individuals, these are realistic and ethical objectives.

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APPENDIX A

NARRATIVE REPORT FINDINGS: DIARY DATA COURSE A (8 SEPTEMBER - 15 DECEMBER)

This appendix presents the diary findings from Course A in the form of a narrative report which combines description of the experimental programme with attitudinal responses to it. Categorised diary quotations are coded as in this example, —[4.7/A9/13 Oct/A.II], which is made up as follows:

1. 4.7 identifies the Category Section (4) and the extract number (7) from Appendix D.
2. A9 is the participant's coded ID.
3. 13 Oct is the date of the Diary entry.
4. A.II identifies Course A Stage II.

Quotations from the chronological extracts of Course A Stage I omit the first part of the code, the category section and extract number, as in this example, [A2/24 Sep/A.I]. The co-ordinator's extracts are enclosed in <angle brackets>.

COURSE A STAGE I (8 SEPTEMBER - 10 OCTOBER)

Two students arrived on 8 September, were tested and had the experimental methodology outlined to them. On the following Monday three more students arrived on transfer from other classes and after testing were given a handout on the methodology. All now completed the introductory questionnaire (**Appendix H**). Dependent other-directed learning (DODL) classes continued throughout that week, with only some preliminary pairgroup dependent self-directed learning (DSDL). On Monday 22 September five new students arrived, were advised and tested. A further verbal briefing occurred on 24 September, and the experimental methodology was accepted by all levels [A1/24 Sep/A.I], [A5/24 Sep/A.I], [A2/24 Sep/A.I]. During the following week three more students arrived; one was transferred to a non-examination class, leaving a total of twelve, whose profiles (**Table 5:3**) were drawn up from short biographical essays and from the introductory questionnaires.[1] All being European they had a reasonably common heritage in models of other-directed learning. While the majority had studied languages at school, and one had also taken a correspondence course, most had never before attended a language school abroad (cf. Gremmo & Abé, 1985, p.235). Some half of the group were very recent school-leavers with limited experience of an autonomous lifestyle and no apparent experience of institutional self-directed learning, and half were native German-speakers. The absence of university graduates was atypical, but was partly explained by the age-range. The 9:3 female to male ratio was unremarkable, as was the fact that the males were very slightly older than the females. The 'career intentions' appeared to be representative for the ages. An entirely European group was

[1]The data were discarded for one student who, for health reasons, had to give up her studies after attending for twelve days out of twenty-two between 6 October and 4 November.

somewhat unusual, as was the preponderance of Swiss nationals, the mix including Italian-Swiss, German-Swiss, German, French/Spanish, Spanish, and Catalan-Spanish.

The next section begins with the other-directed learning component categorised as 'Programme' which, as indicated in **Table 6:3**, included the sub-categories: concept, format, organisation, democratic ethos, and students' input to the programme. The narrative is supported by quotations from diaries and by the co-ordinator's observations

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme A.I

An extract objecting to the hourly short-breaks provides evidence that the students were left to work unsupervised from early in the course [A4/12 Sep/A.I]. One student was highly critical of aspects of the early programme [A11/17 Sep/A.I], and disparities in proficiency levels [A2/19 Sep/A.I] made ineffective an attempt at student input to course planning.[2] One student found the early programme at too low a level [A9/24 Sep/A.I], [A9/30 Sep/A.I]. The next references to programme planning make no mention of student input [A2/24 Sep/A.I], [A5/24 Sep/A.I]. The programme was later seriously questioned again for the same disparate-levels reasons [CR/3 Oct/A.I].[3] When, towards the end of Stage I, the sessions tended to heavier than normal focus on grammar, one student requested a more balanced programme [A7/8 Oct/A.I], although there is evidence that the variety of task-formats provided some such balance [A10/8 Oct/A.I].[4]

Materials and Equipment A.I

There were no adverse remarks on the few occasions on which language laboratory equipment failed. One student commented favourably on coursebook materials [A4/12 Sep/A.I], [A4/19 Sep/A.I].

Composition of Class A.I

The issues outlined in this section – student numbers, relationships, disparate proficiency levels, temperamental unresponsiveness, and so on – throw light on the student responses to the larger questions of self-directed and other-directed learning. Diaries, unlike questionnaires, can put opinion into its immediate context and the extracts referring to this heading indicate that acceptance of the first experimental programme would be in spite of rather than because of the docility and homogeneity of the group.

Although there were few students in the early classes [A9/15 Sep/A.I], [A9/17 Sep/A.I], which should have contributed to good morale and solidarity, it was noted that this was a <lethargic group – no

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[2]Loughrin-Sacco's 1992 study identified having beginners and false beginners in the same class as one of the factors appearing to inhibit learning (in Johnstone, 1993, p.135). And, notwithstanding Rosenbaum's 1980 conflicting data on 'ability grouping' (in Gage & Berliner, 1992, p.450), all three MIDL courses were to provide convincing evidence of the effect on tone and morale of disparate levels in nominal 'intermediate' classes, as well as support for D.A. Mason and Burns: "We argue that multigrade classes lead to a negative instructional effect and that they increase teachers' stress" (1996, p.308).

[3]Most extracts for this date are relevant.

[4]Throughout the narrative a fuller treatment of the programme is given under appropriate other headings.

relationships yet> —[CR/16 Sep/A.I], and <Differences in levels becoming apparent.> —[CR/17 Sep/A.I]. Since differences were the norm, the note is evidence that they were more than usually problematical, and as early as 19 September, therefore, an attempt was made to involve the students in self-directed resolution of some of the programme difficulties caused by the composition of the class. The concept of study-partnership encouraged students to help plan the course, with direct input into the methodology, materials, pace, objectives, and so on. The issue had been mentioned on the preliminary project and, encouraged by authorities such as Breen (1984), it was assumed that young adults would respond positively to the opportunity.[5] It was therefore expected that a democratic agreement could be reached and the co-ordinator, after giving general advice on the major issues, left the room so that the students could conduct their own discussion in DSDL mode.[6]

Norman (1992), discussing Rousseau's attempt "to graft the ancient republican ideal onto modern societies which it did not fit" (p.41), remarks on the importance of each citizen's participation in popular sovereignty in republics of antiquity. But, quoting from Constant, 1988, in regard to the size of modern states, he claims that what citizens value more highly "is not 'active participation in collective power', but 'the peaceful enjoyment of individual independence'" (p.41). On this occasion, as on others during the MIDL experiments, where there was to be little evidence of freely-chosen co-operative learning, the students demonstrated that even in face-to-face encounters, where each individual's contribution is vital, egalitarian discussion may not provide classroom solutions.[7] While the avoidance of "rigid elimination of effective discussion, and imposition of social conformity" did not entail "a babble of voices descending from discussion through controversy to denunciation and violence" (Skorupski, 1992, p.138), the group found no answer to the disparate-levels problem: "The 'know-how' in our class is too different. Some students they have heard a lot of this grammar bevor in the school at home. For these students it's very boring to hear the same again. But for me is more or less every 'Unit' in this book important." —[A2/19 Sep/A.I]; [A4/19 Sep/A.I]; [A5/19 Sep/A.I].[8] Nonetheless, it was felt that in attempting to reach a consensus on decisions usually made by the institution they took an important step in the direction of independence. Clarke (1991) makes an apt remark: "Learners in many cultures would never dream that any such thing might be possible or desirable, while learners from any culture working within examination-driven syllabuses will not wish for or tolerate any substantial digression from the predetermined framework" (p.19).

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[5]In 1983, Littlejohn, describing an experiment at the University College of Bahrain, in greater student involvement, suggested "the devising of open-ended tasks that stimulate learners to think more deeply about how their language course is being conducted and gradually to take a more meaningful role in directing its scope and method" (in Clarke, 1991, p.23).

[6]Had the discussion been a student initiative the mode would have been ISDL. As remarked in the discussion of constraints on definitions, it is considered entirely appropriate to separate authority from responsibility in a formal learning context.

[7]The Round River Experiment at the University of Montana offered an anti-authoritarian programme without examinations, or papers, or regular classes, or teacher authority figures to define expectations and educational attainment. After two years the programme failed (Chapman, 1975).

[8]Given the nature of language, bringing together students of matched ability in each of the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is an ongoing and complex problem, particularly in institutions with an open enrolment policy.

Another emerging difficulty concerned the temperaments of the students, who, whether because of the age-range, or nationality factors, or both, were unusually quiet and unresponsive. The co-ordinator noted that the students seemed to lack imagination or initiative and the class was depressing [CR/19 Sep/A.I]. Increased numbers created further concern about responsiveness, about nationality, about different arrival-times on the course, and about the inevitably slower pace: <5 'new' students – majority Swiss. Not very lively.> —[CR/22 Sep/A.I]; "This morning we got five (!) new students. Now we are seven (!!!) Swiss people. I was a bit disappointed because everybody I asked in Switzerland told me that we would only have two or three Swiss. Well, I have to accept it. I think ten students are quite enough for our class. I would prefer to have only seven or eight people." —[A4/22 Sep/A.I]; "I don't find it very good if the half of a class is 'old' while the other is 'new'. I think it would be better if all students of a class could start together." —[A6/22 Sep/A.I]; "Today more students have come to the class, mostly swiss people. We are now about ten people. This means that the class, like today, will go more slowly and I hope the level will not low [= drop] because of the people." —[A9/22 Sep/A.I]. Only one comment was optimistic: "This morning five new people came into our class.... They are very nice." —[A11/22 Sep/A.I]. The following day again revealed levels-related disquiet [CR/23 Sep/A.I], [A9/23 Sep/A.I]. One extract of learner-language illustrates the difficulty of averaging for a group which included near-native speakers of English:

> My second day in de [institution] wasn't mutch better den my first. I understand the teacher better indeed but I think the level in this class it's a littelbitt tu high for my. I likeit to work with a partner and also conversation. The homework is very difficult for my, but I think I will by better in a few days. My [host] Famyl's talk very often whit my, and I think that is good vor my progress. I will do always my best. [A10/23 Sep/A.I][9]

The blend of disparate levels, unresponsive temperaments, and perhaps simple tiredness, had consequences for the class atmosphere at this time: <Group as lethargic as ever. [A11] said the class were inactive and unresponsive. Didn't like.> —[CR/24 Sep/A.I]; [A11/24 Sep/A.I]; [A2/24 Sep/A.I]; "Today the class has been really boring for me. In addition, I've found it more slowly than others. For me it's not the [= a] waste of time but I would like more difficult things because this is not new for me and I don't like the different levels in the class. These levels are very pronounce and very different." —[A9/24 Sep/A.I]. There was little of the cheerful rapport expected in such classes. Inadequate DODL might have accounted for the boredom and lassitude, but not for poor student relationships; on 25 September a vocabulary-building session and DSDL activities on the theme of character and personality confirmed that the problem was not antipathy towards the co-ordinator, nor towards the methods.[10] Nor did the grammar sessions, which might be expected to reduce the liveliness of a class, appear to be causing the problem. Various activities were tried, with overt intent: <Told them I wanted us all to get to know one another better.> —[CR/25 Sep/A.I]; <... got impression yesterday that Swiss are not moved, as Spaniards e.g. would be, by 'emotional' themes and 'provocation' – far too sober and reflective!... On the self-analysis 'conversation' they mostly confessed to being reserved

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[9]This was a conscientious student whose hard work enabled him to pass the First Certificate Examination less than three months later.

[10]Vocabulary tended to be 'taught' by repeated cyclical and contextual exposure (see Oxford & Scarcella, 1994, p.234, Coe, 1997, and Singleton, 1997, for justifications), and specific vocabulary sessions would be thematic (Oxford & Scarcella, 1994, p.237).

and introverted types and this may be all it is.> —[CR/26 Sep/A.I]. Three weeks from the start of the course, on 26 September, at the prompting of [A1], the group elected to spend the final class-hour in a pub, a recognised means of practising the target-language in a social environment. In the context of a 'communicative' approach (whose shortcomings were subordinated to its spirit) two German-Swiss, [A3] and [A6], spoke to no-one, despite excellent command of English, and apparently without any unsociable intent: "I enjoyed it as we were sitting in 'Macs' for a drink. This is the best way to know each other." —[A3/26 Sep/A.I]. The co-ordinator noted that the rest were very quiet and reserved, although two others said they liked it: "I enjoyed myself." —[A11/26 Sep/A.I]. "In the pub, we were very different. I found the people different from the class. I enjoyed very much." —[A9/26 Sep/A.I]. This accorded with what they had revealed about themselves during the 'self-analysis' session. Although the occasion was pleasant and helped relationships, there was still insufficient evidence of the degree of group-rapport which was considered, on the evidence of the preliminary project, indispensable to the introduction of independent self-directed learning (ISDL). On 29 September the co-ordinator remarked <... without some more positive/negative response one cannot tell whether quietness signals harmony or merely lack of interest (in one another, in the lesson).> —[CR/29 Sep/A.I]. A DSDL pairgroup activity being considered was the writing and presentation of a humorous playlet. The co-ordinator commented: <Be interesting to see how Swiss define 'humour'> —[CR/29 Sep/A.I]. It is clear that the dourness of the group was attributed, at least in part, to the high proportion of northern Europeans, and another entry indicated a lack of the humorous and lively rapport which the co-ordinator normally had with Mediterranean students [CR/26 Sep/A.I]. However, unexpectedly, the whole environment, unpropitious in both pedagogical and experimental terms, was about to change for the better.

The following day the co-ordinator decided to abandon the prepared programme and launched an impromptu DSDL role-play. This, together with its follow-up activity, a discussion in which the students took the roles of 'marriage guidance counsellors', animated the German-speakers (for example [A3/30 Sep/A.I]) and, where other pairgroup activities had failed, brought the rapport-crisis to an end [CR/30 Sep/A.I]. But it had taken an unprecedented time to achieve this level of group harmony. Despite a remark about numbers [A4/30 Sep/A.I] there was confirmation of general improvement in class rapport [A9/1 Oct/A.I], and the co-ordinator was able to note: <Relationships are getting very good. New man [A12] integrated immediately – talkative Spaniard – should be good for the class.> —[CR/1 Oct/A.I]. Notwithstanding better rapport, the students still seemed somewhat subdued: a teacher who had four of the group for additional afternoon classes twice a week confirmed that they were unusually quiet and unresponsive [CR/2 Oct/A.I]. Only two of the four afternoon students were Swiss, making nationality a less likely factor than tiredness, given that six and a half hours of same-language classes in any day constitute a very heavy learning load.

Despite better understanding among members of the class, the disparate levels issue was still very much alive, notwithstanding an apparent diminution in 'very boring' and 'very interesting' responses for the same activities, and that Diary references to numbers were quite low-key [A1/1 Oct/A.I], [A5/1 Oct/A.I]. Matters came to a head on 3 October. Classroom activities for the day had included DODL grammar exercises, a plenary discussion, a DSDL pairgroup discussion (and out-class setwork report) on women's issues, DSDL pairgroup work inventing a story and writing the dialogue for it, plenary feedback on setwork, DODL vocabulary building through reading, and other tasks appropriate to the nominal level and purpose of

the class. The activities had involved the usual degree of interaction between the higher and the lower levels in the class, and this may have provoked the most capable speaker, a German woman, into acting as spokesperson for the Swiss women in a determined general protest. The occasion provided an ideal opportunity for class-democracy and 'information-gap' communication on real issues, and the programme was immediately abandoned to allow an open-forum discussion.

The complaints focused on the numbers in the class (some felt that 12 was too many), on the difference in the levels, and on the workload, which was not seen as challenging enough. The Swiss men were at the lower level and, while supporting the complaints in principle, were with the half of the class that was, as noted in the co-ordinator's Diary for 3 October, <very happy with system, pace, materials, workload, etc.> —[CR/3 Oct/A.I]. The relevant extracts outline the topics covered, and indicate that, while recognising that class-numbers were within the norm, and that all were candidates for the same examination, the protesters wished to eliminate the disparate levels problem by forming two classes from the twelve students. One participant outlined the topics covered: "We talk a lot of time about the class, the teaching-system, the time, and our different levels (between students)" —[A5/3 Oct/A.I]. Others focused on the major issue of levels, numbers, and even nationalities [A2/3 Oct/A.I], [A3/3 Oct/A.I], [A4/3 Oct/A.I], and on the question of dividing the class [A6/3 Oct/A.I], [A10/3 Oct/A.I]. Other extracts reveal acceptance or resignation [A11/3 Oct/A.I]; "We spend talking and complaining for almost two hours and finaly the problem was the same." —[A12/3 Oct/A.I]. It is noteworthy that this student, at least, did not tune in to the democracy, fluency, and relational aspects of the occasion. Although for him it was, regrettably, not a positive learning event, this discussion may have helped to avert an even greater souring of attitudes. As the situation remained unresolved, the co-ordinator suggested that Stage II of the programme might help to alleviate some of the problems, and the final consensus was to wait and see how the following week worked out.

It was against this background that the remainder of Course A was to be set, with rapport, relationships, nationalities, levels, and numbers underlying the expressed responses to the programme: "We got a new student again. We're really too many now. She can't work properly with only a chair." —[A4/6 Oct/A.I]; <Relationships [students-students] now very good.> —[CR/8 Oct/A.I].

DODL Elements A.I

The DODL of Stage I helped to establish the norms for the remaining experimentation. Poor ODL could not be compared with good SDL and the MIDL ethos required as close a match as possible between them. DODL provided a non-threatening background and support to the SDL elements. In A.I there was evidence that responses to DODL were influenced by an individual's relative proficiency-level in the group. However, the most consistent criterion of satisfaction was a sense of making progress, a notoriously difficult feeling to sustain at the 'intermediate plateau' level of these classes.

In A.I, although the skills were reasonably well balanced, some students tended to call for a preferred activity, which might be grammar lessons or conversation; one student in particular tended to complain that insufficient time was spent on particular items [A11/16 Sep/A.I], [A11/23 Sep/A.I]. The most general trend, however, favoured variety and novelty, the majority wanting constant exposure to new material, new

vocabulary and so on.[11] Given the composition of the class, and the nature of the programme, a cyclic approach was essential, but could lead to complaints of boredom. From a pedagogical point of view, in a class where a public examination determined the content, if not the entire syllabus, the most obvious difficulty lay in 'averaging' across a too-wide range of abilities, a major problem when, as was the norm in the research environment, students with very different proficiency levels may enrol for the same examination, and must achieve a pre-determined range of skills within a fixed period of time.[12]

Early impressions of the DODL (and of the co-ordinator) were mixed, with favourable comment [A4/12 Sep/A.I], [A9/15 Sep/A.I], [A9/18 Sep/A.I], and unfavourable [A11/16 Sep/A.I], [A11/17 Sep/A.I]. Given the mixture of levels, the early programme was necessarily tentative: "At the moment they are very easy. But it's not bad to repeat all these things. We also repeated the different tenses in perfect. I know nearly everything about it, but I'm never sure when I use it." —[A4/16 Sep/A.I]; "We did lots of exercises: present perfect and past tenses, using ever, never, for, since and ago; nouns derived from verbs; root words give rise to a number of different words; present simple and present continuous tenses; future and continuous forms. I don't say it's useless, but it was very, very easy." —[A4/17 Sep/A.I]. A student who had previously remarked on the level was more satisfied, and liked the size of the class: "We've done a lot of grammar and the class has been funny. I like the class very much and because we're so few." —[A9/17 Sep/A.I]. One student, who had commented unfavourably on the teacher's rate and indistinctness of speech [A11/16 Sep/A.I], had serious misgivings about the entire DODL methodology: "I found the exercises (at page 19-57-58-59) were very usefully, but I think that I need to do more, so that I can remember them when I'm talking. I don't think we spend enough time to listen to the tapes. I would like that my exercises have give back to me so that I could see where I'm making my mistakes. I would prefer to speak in a group and listen to the other people talking and practise my conversation." —[A11/17 Sep/A.I]. Another extract was more favourable to the co-ordinator [A9/18 Sep/A.I].There is evidence that plenary feedback on setwork was in operation at an early stage, and was appreciated by some students [A2/18 Sep/A.I], [A4/18 Sep/A.I]. Such feedback included what Riley calls 'sensitization', which he defined as

> the pedagogical technique whereby examples drawn from a learner's L1 are used to help the understanding of certain characteristics of the L2.... it lies between the two extremes of translation and fully-fledged meta-language. It is a form of meta-commentary, yet one which avoids many of the problems posed by linguistic terminology, since it reduces the number and technicality of terms which need to be used, relying on demonstration and intuition....
> ... sensitization is most valuable as a way of encouraging learning-readiness, or of creating the conditions for learning. This seems to be confirmed by recent work on bilingualism ... which

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[11]It is conjectural what proportion of this tendency was attributable to the disparate levels, and what to the intensive contiguous four-hour daily contact.

[12]Within each of the nominal 'four skills' (listening, speaking, reading, writing) each learner will be at a different level of development, notwithstanding that the interoperability of language functions (in both linguistic and physiological senses) ensures that the learning of one skill involves the concomitant learning of at least one other: 'reading' and 'listening' involve interiorised speech, and 'speaking' involves at least interior listening, and at some stages of learning (or indeed of ordinary recall in the native speaker) may include interiorised reading.

> shows that a category acquired in the L1 will be 'sought for' and rapidly acquired in the L2. (Riley, 1985, pp. 165-166, 169)[13]

'Averaging', necessary when students are not initially at comparable levels, creates nearly as many problems as it solves. Favouring the lower and slower with easier work may induce boredom and frustration in the higher levels, while more difficult work is not, in any case, always an option. Favouring both equally may be difficult in a lock-step environment, which examination-classes tend to be, not only because the objective is the same for all levels.[14] There was early evidence of attempts to balance the DODL work by introducing supplementary materials at higher levels [A2/19 Sep/A.I]; [A4/19 Sep/A.I]. Two extracts mention classroom listening comprehension, an alternative to the DSDL language laboratory sessions of A.I [A2/22 Sep/A.I], [A5/22 Sep/A.I]. As the class numbers increased the DODL became more difficult to average, as reflected in the considerable dissatisfaction with the mix of nationalities, with the disparate levels, and with the numbers in the class [A4/22 Sep/A.I], [A9/22 Sep/A.I], [CR/23 Sep/A.I], [A9/23 Sep/A.I]. Despite attempts to maintain a lively and varied atmosphere [A5/24 Sep/A.I], one student compared the class very unfavourably with another of his experience [A2/24 Sep/A.I], and there were complaints about the easy material and the disparate levels [A9/24 Sep/A.I], [A11/24 Sep/A.I]. Sometimes the averaging was successful, especially when DSDL pairgroup work and socialising offered a balance to the DODL: "Today school was really great fun. It was very relaxed and peaceful. We talked about characters. Then everybody had to describe a person's character." —[A1/25 Sep/A.I]; [A2/25 Sep/A.I]; [A4/25 Sep/A.I]; [A8/25 Sep/A.I]; [A5/25 Sep/A.I]; "We had a very fanny discussion with [CR] about the 'stereotypes'. I enjoyed myself." —[A11/25 Sep/A.I]. But such variety could also be met with complaint, with a call for more DODL grammar sessions: "Today I didn't find it very well at school, because the things we have done weren't very interesting and I didn't learn much. One very good exercise we have done was to write our impressions about another person. I would prefer, if we can do more grammatic in the morning class, because I'm not very good in grammatic." —[A6/25 Sep/A.I]. The call for more grammar was supported by another student: "I would like to do some more grammar and have exactly rules why this is wrong and that right. I suppose at the moment we just make a quick repetition for seeing where we still have problems." —[A3/26 Sep/A.I]. One extract provided evidence that grammar, in both DODL and DSDL mode, was reasonably well featured in the programme: "... exercises about adverbs ... the difference between 'as' and 'like', and did exercises with these words, and so on with 'like' and 'such as'. Moreover, we learnt a lot of verbs closed with 'as'. We also had a look to 'invitations', and converted direct speech sentences ... and vice versa (we worked in pairs, as usual).... using 'may' ...." —[A5/26 Sep/A.I]. For some, the level might be seen as low: "... we had a very light morning. We had some grammar. We listened to the tapes." —[A11/26 Sep/A.I]. But sometimes the needs of the higher-level students were adequately met: "This morning we've done a lot of grammar exercises. That's very helpfully for me, because I'm not good in grammar." —[A6/29 Sep/A.I]; [A4/29 Sep/A.I]; [A5/29 Sep/A.I]. An

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[13]McCarthy notes: "Pointing out systematic regularities between cognate languages is, for example, considered to help L2 vocabulary development (e.g. Granger, 1993)" (1995, p.35), and although obviously this is inhibited in multinational classrooms, some cognate exemplification from Latin, French, Spanish, and German was possible for the European students.

[14]A common curriculum, materials, objectives, and classroom interaction are usually more financially viable than individually-paced mixed-ability/mixed-levels alternatives to the lock-step tradition; MIDL attempts to bring them together without extra cost.

'authentic' reading text was well received [A4/30 Sep/A.I], [A10/30 Sep/A.I], [A11/30 Sep/A.I]. Grammar continued [A5/1 Oct/A.I], [A6/1 Oct/A.I], and although one newcomer was content [A7/1 Oct/A.I], another had reservations [A12/1 Oct/A.I]. But, over-all, there were indications that the averaging was beginning to succeed: "The class is getting better ... a lot of conversation.... It's good to open each other and become more friends.... I found it [the class] better today but still low." —[A9/1 Oct/A.I]; "I like it too, writing about themes of general interest." —[A10/1 Oct/A.I]. But one student still complained that insufficient time was devoted to practice exercises [A11/1 Oct/A.I]. There is further evidence in this Stage of plenary setwork correction feedback: [A1/2 Oct/A.I], [A2/2 Oct/A.I], [A3/2 Oct/A.I], [A4/2 Oct/A.I]. Reading is also touched on [A6/2 Oct/A.I], [A5/2 Oct/A.I]. The newcomers seemed satisfied: "I think that each time I'm getting better and better." —[A12/2 Oct/A.I]; "I think that I will be all right in this class." —[A7/2 Oct/A.I].

However, whatever indications there were to the contrary, the disparate levels were still a major area of unrest, and it was at this time that the dissatisfaction already outlined under Composition of Class became evident. The matter was very serious for all concerned, and could have led to the cancellation of the entire experimental programme. Despite the fact that the principal coursebook was designed specifically to prepare students for the Cambridge First Certificate examination and that considerable effort was made to adapt the materials and content to a wide range of abilities, as well as to supplement them with much higher-level materials, there was some justice in the complaint that the 'averaging' tended to favour the lower and slower levels ("— every things ok – !" —[A10/2 Oct/A.I]) and held back the higher and faster levels in the class..[15]

A 'skill' area which might help to bridge the gulf between the levels was writing, for which, as the general standard of literacy in third level institutions today testifies, it was not sufficient to be a fluent speaker, nor even a capable writer in the L1 – English punctuation and style required exposure and practice. Only one of the five Papers of the FCE was entirely aural/oral, and while reading could be adequately catered for, it was essential that the students, whose written proficiency in their L1 might be suspect, had a sound grasp of the basic conventions of writing in English. The primary purpose of the course from most students' point of view was to help them pass examinations, whatever the fluency (and experimental) value of pairgroup and other interaction, of learning to communicate by communicating.[16] Good writing skills were central to that purpose, and experience suggested that these could not be achieved without the application of considerable time and effort by higher and lower levels alike. The necessary work was made as palatable as possible by sometimes being set within the pairgroup DSDL ethos, thus achieving several objectives at once.[17]

The greater focus on writing skills appeared to be a successful initiative [CR/7 Oct/A.I]. A reliable outline of the DODL approach was provided by one student: "Today we spend all the morning learning punctuation, reading .... I learnt many words and expressions, and also where to put commas, and so on. We also had a look at the verb's tenses and on adverbs like 'afterwards'. We went over 'w[h]ich' and the comma,

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[15]Further references to the occasion appear in extracts [CR/3 Oct/A.I], [A1/3 Oct/A.I], [A2/3 Oct/A.I], [A4/3 Oct/A.I], [A5/3 Oct/A.I].

[16]Which is not the same as trying to learn a language simply by communicating in it. The time-scales of first language development, or 'natural' acquisition of a TL, are entirely different from those applying to most institutions preparing examination candidates.

[17]Typical accounts are under the heading Peer Support.

so now everybody must understand it. Beside the grammar, the story ... was very interesting.... Then, we were given a text, to punctuate it." —[A5/7 Oct/A.I]. The session appears to have been quite intensive, the detail becoming confusing, but for the most part seen as useful [A1/7 Oct/A.I], [A2/7 Oct/A.I], [A3/7 Oct/A.I]. Raising the topic to consciousness appeared either not to help one student, or to make her appreciate that she had more to learn [A4/7 Oct/A.I]. Even a higher-level student found the topic challenging [A6/7 Oct/A.I]. The entry confirms that consolidation of the in-class work was a feature of the out-class setwork. Another student also benefited [A12/7 Oct/A.I]. But the one student to request more time on a given topic found such focused concentration boring, if useful [A11/7 Oct/A.I]. At risk, therefore, of lack of variety, the topic continued with consolidation: "We have to write a dialogue in pairs. We had some main words, like a daily diary. Some of us read the dialogue and the teacher corrected the mistakes. He explained us on the black board each mistake. That's a good way to learn. We have spoken about commas, fuel stops, and so on." —[A2/8 Oct/A.I].[18] The need for variety was raised by one student, who added a point of relevance in intensive contiguous four-hour sessions [A7/8 Oct/A.I]. And it was made evident by one higher-level student, discontented with most activities, that even the focus on writing had not overcome all the DODL problems: "I'm happy about the idea that we can study individual the next week, because at the moment I feel me sometimes a little bit bored. I hope I can learn the next week the thing that I really need." —[A6/8 Oct/A.I]. It was unfortunate that the averaged level of the course was too low for her needs, and that she would thus be subsequently contrasting the ISDL with what she saw as unsatisfactory DODL.[19] For valid satisfaction ratings on the SDL components, the ODL components had to offer a suitable comparison. Holec (1985a) remarks appropriately: "If the choice between self-directed learning and other sorts of learning is to be a real one for the learner, it is also necessary to ensure that all these types of learning are on an equal footing" (p.190). Paradoxically, therefore, the better the DODL the more problematical was the introduction of ISDL likely to be, and there was little other evidence that ISDL was positively sought after. One possible unintended side-effect of the methodology of Stage I was not in evidence: the students never became so habituated to the initial blend of DODL and DSDL as to find ISDL unpalatable.

To consider what the disaffected student would be contrasting it is perhaps worthwhile to outline a typical day at this pre-ISDL time. Along with writing, reading of 'authentic' texts was high on the agenda,[20] and an outline was provided by a student whose diaries offered consistently accurate accounts of the in-class events:

> Today we started [by] correcting our punctuation homework: commas, inverted commas, colon, etc. That took us a long time. Afterwards we had a complicate text to read (not so complicate in the grammar, but there was such a great list of words that I didn't know, that I concentrated on that words and didn't understand the plot of the story).... but I will read it

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[18]Other references are at [A1/8 Oct/A.I], [A3/8 Oct/A.I], [A4/8 Oct/A.I], [A5/8 Oct/A.I], [A11/8 Oct/A.I], [A9/8 Oct/A.I], [A10/8 Oct/A.I].

[19]Although she never requested transfer to another class, it is possible that a traditional DODL Course – at a higher level – might have proved as satisfactory to her as opportunities for ISDL.

[20]The co-ordinator maintained a filing cabinet of quizzes, grammar handouts, past examination papers, 'authentic' materials, and so on in the classroom, for incorporation into the DODL or DSDL tasks or for flexible, unprogrammed, responses to perceived student needs. Topical material was provided by photocopied newspaper and magazine articles.

> again. After read and understand the text, we talked a bit about the problem that the writer stated, but finally we finished talking about [a topic area]. Then, and the end of the class, we played the game of 'yes' or 'no'. [A5/9 Oct/A.I]

While classroom language games were not a feature of any course, 'hangman', 'animal, vegetable, or mineral', and so on, were sometimes used to round-out the final few minutes of the morning if the programme had been met, or simply to unwind the students. Responses to the day were briefly neutral [A1/9 Oct/A.I], or briefly favourable [A8/9 Oct/A.I], or humorously enlightening on the methodology, noting that the order of events in the reading had been deliberately changed [A12/9 Oct/A.I]. The 'authentic' reading text was demotivating for one, who would also have preferred more follow-up discussion on the topic [A2/9 Oct/A.I]. The difficulty appealed to a higher-level student: "I like it in a way to get difficult work.... Now I really feel that I'm studying English. The discussion in class ... was quite funny. It was also very interesting because of the different opinions from the students." —[A3/9 Oct/A.I]. Even [A6] responded favourably: "Today we read an interesting article. Then we had a discussion about [a topic].... I'm very interesting in this topic ...." —[A6/9 Oct/A.I]. There was acknowledgement of the place of grammar in the syllabus [A7/9 Oct/A.I], and more support for grammar, against interesting discussion, came from a lower-level student: "The review about the Article in the [newspaper] was quite long and I could not understand the sense (of the article). The discussion, subsequently was very intressting. It is a great pity that I'm not be able to explain my own opinions very well. But I think, for me, more important than discussions, is grammer theori." —[A10/9 Oct/A.I]. He had already remarked on how important grammar was for him [A10/24 Sep/A.I].

There had been several requests for information and worries expressed about the examination, and the final day of Stage I was given over to review of the examination format. Only one student did not pass the examination, a surprising failure from one whose English was well up to standard (although she had many problems with the logical sequencing of ideas in writing) and, since she frequently appealed for more time to be spent on an exercise, she may have approached everything at a slower pace than average: <[A11] ... couldn't see how it would be possible to do [one of the First Certificate Examination papers] within the time limits. After analysis of required timings everyone agreed that it was difficult but quite manageable.> —[CR/10 Oct/A.I]. With one exception the others found the experience useful [A1/10 Oct/A.I], [A4/10 Oct/A.I]. As usual, the most complete account was provided by [A5]:

> The whole morning we talked about the First Certificate Examination, and to know things to do or not in the exam. We examined photocopies of this exam, and did some exercises, to time how many minutes or seconds we spend on each. We realised that we are too slow, we must learn how to save time. I think all of us felt a bit depressed with the results of the experience. For example, it take us too much time to read and understand a passage, and I opine we should train on this kind of exercise.... Then, we had a look on the 'Practice Test' book .... That didn't cheer us up! After that, during the last half an hour, we had fun playing a game of mime." [A5/10 Oct/A.I]

There was some satisfaction: "I'm very cheerful [= glad?] to know the examination now. My work will be more purposeful now." —[A10/10 Oct/A.I]. However, the regularly disaffected student was still doing the wrong work with the wrong teacher for her needs: "... we spoke about the First Certificate exams. I found it very boring and I think, fifteen minutes or half an hour had been enough time to speak about this and to explain our task. For me it was really a waste of time!" —[A6/10 Oct/A.I]. Dissatisfied students help to keep

educationists from complacency, and the research benefited from having her, among others, as proof that the 'autonomous' spirit was very much alive even in the mostly traditional environment of Course A Stage I.

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing A.I

This section helps to account for opinions which are never free from affective influence, from "motivation, emotion, goals, needs, self-image" (F.R. Jones, 1994, p.442), perhaps from factors only remotely connected with the topic of the opinion expressed. Health, energy levels, and general morale are such factors, sufficiently closely related to be brought together under a combined common heading.[21] While temperamentally the students tended to conform to national stereotypes, with the northern Europeans more reserved than the southern, it was unclear at this early stage to what extent affective make-up would influence responses to the more overt ISDL. But something could be learned of the general dispositions.

The extracts of the co-ordinator also indicate something of the reciprocal student-teacher interaction, the degree of frankness which existed permitting the co-ordinator to tell the students that the class depressed him [CR/19 Sep/A.I].[22] Another extract reveals ill-humour [CR/24 Sep/A.I], and the co-ordinator was evidently no more immune to the effects of out-class events than the students: <Hardly any sleep – worrying about [a professional situation].... Hard to cope with class today .... Still very depressed – can't shake it off.> —[CR/7 Oct/A.I]. A later entry indicates a more optimistic mood, but also contains the first of many references to the co-ordinator's experimental period workload [CR/8 Oct/A.I].

In general, this section tends to be dominated by a few students. Two in particular, both Spanish, stood out for affect-laden diary submissions which confided personal circumstances and feelings. [A9] maintained a consistent approach to her studies, providing evidence of how out-class interests can substantially reduce in-class learning-energy. She was among the higher-proficiency students and, at least until the group levels rose, the 'averaging' tended to leave her unmotivated (see **Table A:1** for consultation interview notes). Since she was studying the target-language in its own environment, a full social life may have contributed to fluency, although there is no record of how much time was spent in the company of Spanish-speakers. Her constant lateness, absence, and lassitude were accompanied by repeated late nights [A9/15 Sep/A.I]; [A9/16 Sep/A.I].[23] She put effort into being plausible:

> It was very hard for me to get up this morning so I decided not to go to school and have a rest because when I feel tired I can't work as much as I can work always. I can't concentrate in what I'm doing, so I prefer to be all right and don't disturb the class, so I got up very late for lunch.... I went to ... Stillorgan, at 8.30 and stayed there until late. I had to get a taxi to come back home. [A9/3 Oct/A.I]

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[21] Where morale is the direct product of an in-class situation it may also be treated under the appropriate other heading.

[22] A remark which could easily give offence is evidence of the democratic ethos and rapport.

[23] Similar reports are at [A9/17 Sep/A.I], [A9/18 Sep/A.I], [A9/22 Sep/A.I], [A9/24 Sep/A.I], [A9/25 Sep/A.I], [A9/29 Sep/A.I], [A9/30 Sep/A.I], [A9/2 Oct/A.I], [A9/6 Oct/A.I], [A9/7 Oct/A.I].

Table A:1. *Consultation Interview [A9] 1 October (Course A Stage I) re Possible Transfer to Another Class*

The following notes were made immediately after the interview.

At her request. Worried about the level being too low for her. She had thought the class boring, depressing etc. because of the teacher. Discussed [i.e. she had discussed] it with [A11]: concluded it was entirely because of the other students (majority German-Swiss). She said she could accept the boredom either of too-easy grammar or lack of relationships but that both together had prompted her to consider asking for a transfer. Today, she felt, was much better (Discussion: whole-class, groups of 4 on 'A woman's place is in the home') and she didn't want to move to a new environment. She said she did nothing else but grammar in her classes in Spain.

I advised her to consider her position every day and that a transfer would be made (if possible) at any time. She wants to stay if things improve as they seem to be doing and understands the difficulty of 'averaging' the quite disparate levels in the class. I told her that the original hope of having a 'high-stream' class and a different 'low-stream' class had had to be abandoned. Told her also of my own despairs mirroring hers but that I saw signs of good relationships and therefore better work. When 'assignments' and 'autonomy' start I would put her (and some others) onto Proficiency level work and ask her to act as a 'teacher' to one of the lower-stream. She liked the idea.

The morale of [CR] was low at this time [CR/8 Oct/A.I] and while there is no evidence from student Diaries that it was affecting the class as a whole, it may have had a bearing on a traumatic episode which he triggered for [A9] by rebuking her in a setwork-correction note for her general lack of effort (the remarks are given verbatim and in full at **Table A:2**, together with relevant diary extracts from her own and the co-ordinator's diaries). She broke down in tears in class, was counselled, but remained unconsoled: "Today has been the worst day in my life, I think." —[A9/9 Oct/A.I]; [A9/10 Oct/A.I]. The episode highlights the care that has to be taken to avoid fuelling a demonstrative temperament, even if the results seem here to have been as much cathartic as traumatic, and notwithstanding that this thoroughly nice person, without a trace of malice or ill-intent, passed on none of her disaffection to the other students. Without Diary records the full effects of the experience would have remained unknown to the co-ordinator.[24]

Another student had continuing difficulties in adjusting to the out-home environment, and gave evidence of negative self-criticism:

> Today ... is my first complete day in Dublin.... and then I started the classes. I felt wishes (a lot of its!) to cry. I didn't understand anything. All the time I wanted to return at my irish-home because I needed to talk by phone with my father. It was a very special moment and I felt that I hadn't be alone. My irish-family is very good with me but children (except the daughter) don't talk with me.... I hope to be better days because now I'm very sad. I see myself stupid, and a complete unfit because I don't know nor understand english. When I was in Spain I thought that I knew english, but here – I think I don't know english. [A8/22 Sep/A.I]

Other entries tend to focus on her need to communicate with her father, on her progress in the target language, and on frequent mood-swings [A8/24 Sep/A.I], [A8/29 Sep/A.I], [A8/1 Oct/A.I], [A8/7 Oct/A.I]. In one extract she makes a remark with implications for SDL: "When I was eating at Trinity College somebody stole my wallet.... I want to return to my house in Madrid! I want to stay with my parents.... I need a protecting person with me. I'm a totally subordinate person. I don't know what I must to do ...." —[A8/30 Sep/A.I].

Other students come across as better able to adjust to a new environment and hence potentially more likely to take to the introduction of unfamiliar ISDL [A3/22 Sep/A.I], [A6/23 Sep/A.I], [A6/25 Sep/A.I].[25] State of health affects responses, but while there are many references to unwellness, none are related to a particular expression of opinion on the course [A11/26 Sep/A.I], [A11/29 Sep/A.I], [A4/1 Oct/A.I], [A7/1 Oct/A.I]. Humour comes through occasionally, as in the extract [A4/7 Oct/A.I] from a personality-type which, while complaining, is often doing so wryly.[26]

A major factor in any student's morale is concern about progress: "I'm happy because I'm learning a lot of vocabulary." —[A8/24 Sep/A.I]; "Certainly I like to learn English. I think is a beauty but difficult language. Also I think I'm progressing little by little." —[A8/29 Sep/A.I]; " – every things ok – !" —[A10/2

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[24]The role of a co-ordinator assumes the legitimacy of well-intentioned criticism, even allowing for its occasional traumatic effect. It is open to question whether the quite different role of 'helper' assumes any degree of permissible criticism, or whether the latter role can be assumed to be, or would be perceived by the student as being, non-judgemental.

[25]The initially positive feelings of [A6] towards the course were to deteriorate.

[26]As already remarked, in the quantification of diary data it may be difficult to interpret the responses of cheerful complainers.

Table A:2. *Verbatim Transcript of Comments Made on Returned Homeworks of [A9] Oct (Course A Stage I)*

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1. Note on original homework (1 Oct):
"[Name] Your written work does not reflect your ability in English. You must be careful not to neglect the work because it's 'too easy' or 'not stimulating'. Many 'good' candidates fail because they over-estimate their level and don't bother to work."
"FCE Grade C- " [a fail grade]
"Resubmit" [instruction to rewrite and resubmit the work]
2. Note on resubmitted homework (9 Oct):
"RESUB 1? RESUB 2? Isn't there another 'rewrite' of this. I am sure I corrected some of the following on another occasion. Note these, anyway, for a resubmission: [there follows specific corrections]".
"[Name] I am not happy with your progress. I believe you when you say you have done a lot of grammar in Spain: I hope you will believe me when I say that I have had a lot of experience of students who never achieve their potential. I want to see evidence that you are a serious student. Specific areas which bother me:
a) Your casual attitude to
   (i) absence from class for trivial reasons or on matters that could be arranged for any time after 1 o'clock
   (ii) lateness
   (iii) written work (although your Daily Diaries are well done)
You are potentially capable of an 'A' pass in the FCE BUT not without HARD WORK.

I will require from you all the essays that you have missed through absence. Additionally I will expect you to comply with the administration instructions for the course. These include:
Keeping ALL papers together, i.e. ORIGINAL plus RESUB 1 plus RESUB 2 etc.
We can discuss all this at the interview on Friday. I want the best from you and for you.

Extracts from the Diary of [A9]:
A9/9 Oct/A.I: "Today has been the worst day in my life, I think. I went to class and saw my homework corrected. [CR] wasn't there but after a while he came. He asked where I was and whether I read his notes or not. He said to me I was very lazy and was wasting the time. I was, of course, very upset. And after the break I broke into tears. I couldn't participate in class at all and then he said to me he was trying to help me to get an 'A' in the FCE. I don't think this is the best way to help a person because what he has tried is that I'm wreck now. I've been crying all the day trying to forget it but I couldn't. I was in a pub and was still crying so a friend of mine told me to go to her house to sleep and she could help me. So I went there but I was still very bad and I couldn't sleep because I was still weeping. I think tomorrow will be another day but for me the class has changed completely. I think I am not able to be the same as I've been up to now. I will work hard but the class will change. I'm not going to participate. I'm the worst so I can [= can't?] speak to other people. I can't put up with it. It has been very hard for me and at this moment I would like to return to Spain."
A9/10 Oct/A.I: "After crying for a long time at night, I didn't get up for the school.... I was in my friend's house where I have slept and I went home for lunch and told the landlady everything. She at least understood me but I was still crying all the time. I wanted to go back to Spain with my family and with my friends.... I went out to a pub until late.... At the end of the night I was better because my friends told me they would help me with my English. At least I have good Irish friends!"

Extract from the co-ordinator's diary for the same event:
CR/9 Oct/A.I: <Major problem with [A9] (and a few others) not putting enough effort into the class. Spelled it out for [A9] on her HW sheets. She seemed devastated. Not sure whether because of this, or external reasons. Called her for a private chat during the break. Asked her to understand that my criticisms were designed to help her to pass the FCE and that I had high hopes for her IF she put in the required effort. She was still upset and said that she knew I was right because 'everybody said the same thing' — I took this to mean that her teachers had always found it so. Afterwards she continued unresponsive. Have to wait and see. Difficult to know what is better, carrot or stick. With temperamental/emotional Latins the stick can be soul-destroying, with Nordics it acts as a spur. Also told class that HW marking can take me up to 4 hours a night and that if they showed lack of interest or effort they could not expect me to make up the deficiency. Otherwise class seemed OK.>

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Oct/A.I]; "I think that each time I'm getting better and better." —[A12/2 Oct/A.I]; "I'm quite satisfied with the lessons and also with my progress. The level for me is quite high bat not to high. – things can go on like this!" —[A10/6 Oct/A.I].[27]

Counselling Consultation A.I

In Stage I there were few such counselling sessions as those described by Little and Grant (1986), and 'consultation', 'counselling' and 'paracounselling' are considered together, in part because the role of the co-ordinator in a close-community classroom environment involves constant daily interaction, feedback, advice, and so on, and partly because the Diaries acted as channels for student self-expression.

An example of paracounselling occurred on 19 September, when the co-ordinator initiated a frank exchange of views in a plenary session: <... they all seem to lack imagination or initiative.... Told them so and went round individually .... Told them I expected same frankness from them towards me. Said the class depressed me.> —[CR/19 Sep/A.I]. Such openness is risky and, notwithstanding the co-ordinator's negative feelings, is evidence that there was substantial rapport between him and the students. The only comment is favourable: "[CR] said he found the last [= class] a bit depressing and he said to every one what he thought of us at that moment.... Saying these things was a very good idea to have confidence in class." —[A9/19 Sep/A.I]. A week later another favourable comment appears to arise from paracounselling: "I think it is very good, that the teatcher is try to understand the students very well." —[A10/26 Sep/A.I]. Another student referred to ongoing doubts about the level of the class for her [A9/1 Oct/A.I]; [A9/2 Oct/A.I] (notes of the consultation interview are at **Table A:1**). The co-ordinator was able to monitor Diaries for signs of unease or distress that warranted intervention [CR/2 Oct/A.I], and the outcome of a counselling session was noted by both the co-ordinator [CR/3 Oct/A.I] and by the student: "Really I think is good that the teachers deal with their pupils as human beings and not as numbers or objects." —[A8/3 Oct/A.I]. Another occasion of counselling occurred when, as recorded above, [A9] reacted unexpectedly to censure [CR/9 Oct/A.I]. A final example of paracounselling in this Stage occurred on 10 September [CR/10 Oct/A.I].

Out-Class Environment A.I

As the target language was being studied in one of its own environments, the research was obliged to take account not merely of the experimental programme, but also of the wider implications of the whole experience for the student: out-class situations could have a marked effect on general morale, and hence on responses to in-class events. Among the most important out-class factors, mention is made of visits to places of interest [A4/19 Sep/A.I], [A4/22 Sep/A.I], and excursions [A3/29 Sep/A.I], and attendance at other classes [A5/15 Sep/A.I]. Boyfriends and girlfriends feature in the Diaries [A9/18 Sep/A.I], but, with one exception, [A2/8 Oct/A.I], there is no record of their disturbing the work. There were several favourable references to talking with the host-family: "Today evening I had a very long conversation at hom whit the dougter of my [host] Famili an whit two other students. I think I benefeided a lot of this conversation for my vocabulary." —[A10/24 Sep/A.I]. Leisure pursuits consisted principally of being with friends, shopping, watching

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[27]While it is arguable under which category references to progress belong, they are retained throughout the experiments under the heading of Wellbeing.

television, going to the cinema, or – by far the most remarked activity – going to a pub.[28] A student whose in-class energies were invariably low explained her rationale for seeking a part-time job [A9/15 Sep/A.I], and the following day wrote of using her English in out-class situations [A9/16 Sep/A.I]. There was evidence of keeping fit [A11/16 Sep/A.I]. Other students made good use of their leisure: "For improving my English I'll join the Judo Club at Trinity College. I'll meet some Irish students and also learn some more in my favourit sport." —[A3/22 Sep/A.I]; [A4/23 Sep/A.I].

Irish people, and the Dublin environment, particularly when the weather was good, received favourable comments [A2/25 Sep/A.I], [A3/25 Sep/A.I], [A2/26 Sep/A.I], [A8/26 Sep/A.I], [A4/29 Sep/A.I]. One student found ample opportunities to avoid attending classes, one of the more plausible occasions occurring on 29 September [A9/29 Sep/A.I]. A full social programme was not possible for everyone [A6/30 Sep/A.I] nor always desired [A4/2 Oct/A.I]. Although it is to be doubted whether any L1 group consistently spoke English together, there is only one report of reversion to L1 on out-class occasions [A11/1 Oct/A.I]. Some such occasions were no doubt more memorable than others: "This afternoon I've meet some Irish-friends I knew when I stayed here five years ago. It has been very exciting and amousing at the same time we have been talking about those marvellous time we had when we were just fifteen or sixteen years old. And the best thing was that we realice that everyone was as we were before." —[A12/2 Oct/A.I]; [A11/2 Oct/A.I].

The remaining extracts in this section exemplify the remarks already made.[29] There were no unfavourable comments on the environment during A.I and it must be concluded that it had only a positive effect on student responses. The over-all ambience is well illustrated by the following extract:

> I was in a bad mood, but in the evening I cheered up because I went out with some people of my class. We spent a little while in Mac's bub [= pub] afterwards we enjoyed ourselves in Trinity College's Buttery. Some people played nice music. During the week-end I didn't do any studies because I was invaited by [a friend's] family in Dalkey. I had great time. [A11/10 Oct/A.I]

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support A.I

Stage I incorporated many pairgroup activities, which included, for example, asking people in the street for answers to language-punning riddles, planning a holiday-trip together, finding suitable shared accommodation from newspaper advertisements, and so on. **Table A:3** illustrates the kind of light-hearted communicative activities devised for the early stages of a course, when learners can be quite inhibited, and intended to encourage use of the target-language, to foster self-direction, and to improve solidarity and good-will. For the most part, pairgroup work added variety to the class activities: "First we had to make a quiz. We

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[28]Appropriate references: host family [A11/18 Sep/A.I], [A8/24 Sep/A.I], [A11/24 Sep/A.I], [A9/30 Sep/A.I], [A3/1 Oct/A.I], [A9/1 Oct/A.I]; friends [A9/23 Sep/A.I]; shopping [A11/19 Sep/A.I], [A1/30 Sep/A.I], [A1/2 Oct/A.I]; televison [A4/18 Sep/A.I], [A9/18 Sep/A.I], [A9/1 Oct/A.I], [A1/2 Oct/A.I]; cinema [A5/15 Sep/A.I], [A11/26 Sep/A.I], [A4/29 Sep/A.I]; pub [A4/19 Sep/A.I], [A9/19 Sep/A.I], [A4/22 Sep/A.I], [A3/24 Sep/A.I], [A4/25 Sep/A.I], [A1/26 Sep/A.I], [A3/26 Sep/A.I], [A1/29 Sep/A.I], [A9/30 Sep/A.I].

[29]Further references to the out-class environment are at [A1/3/6/7/10 Oct/A.I], [A2/8/10 Oct/A.I], [A3/3/6/8/9 Oct/A.I], [A4/30 Sep, 3 Oct/A.I], [A5/23 Sep/A.I], [A6/22/24 Sep, 9 Oct/A.I], [A8/23/25 Sep, 3/9/10 Oct/A.I], [A9/7/10 Oct/A.I], [A10/30 Sep/A.I], [A11/23 Sep, 3/8 Oct/A.I], [A12/3/7/9 Oct/A.I].

Table A:3: *Sample of Ice-Breaking Communicative Activities for Pairgroup DSDL Mode*

PUNTIME

With your partner(s) locate in the school (one point each):

1. a catch	6. a pipe	11. a rule
2. a capital	7. a stone	12. a tip
3. a jumper	8. a lead	13. a fly
4. a drawer	9. a wave	14. a tear
5. a cardinal	10. a bow	15. a leaf

WOTIZIT QUIZ

One point for identifying the object(s) - one point for saying where it is/they are in the school - one point for being the only team to get the right answer, or a unique answer!

1	a glass you can't see through	[mirror]
2	a plate you wouldn't eat off	[silver-plated pen]
3	a scale that isn't on a fish	[music, measure]
4	something that can never be a heavier thing	[a lighter]
5	a coat that is always wet when you put it on	[paint]
6	a drawer that may hold only a pencil	[artist]
7	a nail you wouldn't hit with a hammer	[finger, toe]
8	a band that never plays music	[elastic, hair, copper]
9	a ring that isn't round	[boxing]
10	teeth you can't chew with	[comb, saw]
11	a roof that everybody eats under	[mouth]
12	a note you can't spend	[music, to milkman]
13	something that gets bigger as you take parts of it away	[hole]
14	a thread you can't sew with	[screw]
*15	a backward yob	[boy]
16	keys that never lock anything	[music]
17	a record that you don't want other people to listen to	[private diary]
18	something that is very bright only when it's very dark	[moon]
19	an egg-timer that isn't new	[second hand]
20	the bottom of a girl	[foot]

Wotizit' = what is it? * A 'yob' (slang) is a rude, vulgar, ill-mannered person.

Please do not pester the staff with questions ....!

Note. The pairgroup activities were followed by plenary sessions in which participants explained and justified their 'finds'; everybody joined in the point-awarding as part of the fun.

were allowed to ask people on the road for help. [A5] and I went into a cafe-bar .... Then we had to plan our holidays.... We had to fill into a text the right pronouns etc." —[A1/23 Sep/A.I]; "... some exercises about holiday. I enjoyed it very much." —[A4/23 Sep/A.I]. "The pair-work about an advertisement was funny because I worked with a group, they are very similar to mine." —[A2/24 Sep/A.I].[30] It was popular for several reasons: "The 'transformations' we have done in groubs [= groups]. I like to work in groups. For me it's a change to work in groups." —[A2/17 Sep/A.I]; "I like to work in pairs with different peoples, so it's possible to get know the new students." —[A2/22 Sep/A.I]; "Today was quite funny at school. We had to correct a quiz .... [CR] ... sent us out of the class and always two students together had to ask people on the street.... The time flew quickly ...." —[A3/23 Sep/A.I]; "Then, we completed textes with words, and so, learnt new words. It's good for us to read dialogues, because of the expressions. We did those exercises in groups, as usual." —[A5/29 Sep/A.I]; "I like working in group. I think that working in that way you can learn things from the others and it is also more entertaint. You can have more comunication with the people in the class and you also can practice english." —[A7/9 Oct/A.I]. Discussions were frequently in pairgroups, sometimes as a preliminary to open-forum sessions [A4/25 Sep/A.I]. There is evidence of the integration of pairgroup work with setwork: "So we went over to [a controversial topic] or something like that. We built groups of four and discussed this 'Statement'. Our homework is to write down the result." —[A1/1 Oct/A.I]. One student enjoyed hearing the various opinions [A2/1 Oct/A.I], and another found the event profitable: "I like discussions like today .... I get good practice in hearing so many different accents. It makes me listen very carefully, and the discussions in class make me think quickly." —[A10/1 Oct/A.I]. A normally reticent student was animated: "This morning was very interesting at school.... Later on we had a discussion about [a controversial topic]. I'm going mad when I hear this kind of sentences! I could go up the walls when I hear that! Normally I'm a quiet person but then I can discuss hours and hours about that." —[A3/1 Oct/A.I].[31] Another use of pairgroups was for simulation and role-play work: "Then we had to discuss about the problems of a family written on the blackboard.... We also had to act as spoilt child and strict parents. it was funny." —[A4/30 Sep/A.I]; "Then [CR] gave us a story to read ... in pairs.... and after that we gathered in groups of three (one was a father, other a mother, and the third was the daughter).... With this conversation we learnt a lot of adjectives.... After that we learnt more vocabulary with a family problem ...." —[A5/30 Sep/A.I].[32]

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[30]This extract illustrates the rationale for the term 'pairgroup', embracing both 'pair' and 'group' and their comingling or alternation.

[31]Provocative topics can stimulate enjoyable fluency-practice if presented in a 'tongue-in-cheek' manner, but care is necessary. With mixed-level multinational groups the topics cannot offend against religious, sexual, racial, or other feelings, but must be sufficiently topical, non-specialised, and controversial to stimulate real communication.

[32]Role-play activities were invariably of the kind that Little refers to: "Task-based ... that require learners to cope with unforeseen problems. For example, Di Pietro (1987) proposes the preparation of scenarios into which new information is suddenly introduced to create a potential strategic problem" (1996c, p.95). For this 'family' activity, for example, the groups would be required to take the roles of father, mother, teenage daughter/son, aunt and so on, with the initial problem being the teenager's request for his or her own key, and a boyfriend/girlfriend (or group of friends) the parents did not approve of. One parent was initially supportive, the other against: as the role-play progressed the co-ordinator would write up additional information on the board – her teacher reports that her schoolwork is not up to standard; the son/daughter begins to talk of leaving home; etc.

But pairgroup work was not universally popular or always stimulating for everyone: "... there were two more students. The class was mostly conversation in teams (groups) but I found it very boring. I'm very depressed today and I don't know why. I find the class very low for me. I didn't want to speak in English in class." —[A9/30 Sep/A.I]. The extract offers a clear, and rare, statement of other factors affecting response. Although care was taken to try and match likely 'opponents' in a discussion, sometimes the topic was not sufficiently arguable to the participants in a pairgroup: "We had a discussion .... I like discussion, but with three people having the same opinion, of course, you can't discuss." —[A4/1 Oct/A.I].[33] Pairgroups could be used for in-class writing sessions (individual writing being seldom undertaken because of the time factor) [A1/2 Oct/A.I], [A3/2 Oct/A.I], [A2/2 Oct/A.I], [A4/2 Oct/A.I]. But co-operative writing was not to everyone's taste "I didn't like very much the other task that we had to do. At the moment I have no imagination and no good ideas at all. Therefor it's hard for me to write a play." —[A6/2 Oct/A.I]; [A5/2 Oct/A.I].

Very frequently the pairgroup work was closely integrated with plenary sessions, as the following extracts illustrate. Where this happened, teaching points might alternate with DSDL pairgroup sessions on the same theme, in true mediating fashion. A typical example occurred on 6 October, when the co-ordinator felt that something was accomplished [CR/6 Oct/A.I]. Several neutral accounts describe the method: "Today we talked about different ways to tell or write a story. An essay [= an article] was given to us and we had to find out in which order every thing happened. Then we tried it the other way round. A story was written down in only the main events. So we had to write a real story out of the information." —[A1/6 Oct/A.I]; "After this we dealed in pairs with a text. We made a list of all the actions in the story. The actions have to be in chronological order. After the coffeebreak we made it together on the black board." —[A2/6 Oct/A.I]. Another account confirmed the usefulness of the session [A3/6 Oct/A.I] while, inevitably, one student also found it boring: "We got some important explanation about the essay in the examination.... we had to make a list of all the actions in the story in chronological order. It was a bit boring but also useful to construct a narrative." —[A4/6 Oct/A.I]. A different student offered her usual detailed outline of the learning events, adding an uncharacteristic personal-response comment:

> Today we started learning ... how to write a description, discussion, etc. That was really interesting, overmore [= particularly?] if there are these kind of questions in the 1st certificate examination. Anyway, I learnt a lot with that. We also completed passages (in pairs), and as results of that, we finally understood the difference between 'w[h]ich' and 'what', and when to use each. We completed another passage about a story .... We also read a story and made a chronological list of the events in that story. Then, we did the same but inside out. [A5/6 Oct/A.I]

One student was enthusiastic about the day as a whole [A12/6 Oct/A.I]; another, doubtless an essay-marker *manqué*, or headed for a career in academe, effused with a 'quite interesting' [A11/6 Oct/A.I]; a third applied her own criteria to the occasion: "Today the morning classes were very nice because we told about diferent sorts of writing.... I'm glad because I'm learning more vocabulary." —[A8/6 Oct/A.I]. The same day, another student appeared to see her own energy-level reflected in the others: "I'd rather prefer to have something not as hard as today's work on Mondays because all the people were asleep." —[A9/6 Oct/A.I]. And for another

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[33]Hyde (1993, 344) noted the reverse difficulty with 'pair work', when one partner monopolised the activity.

student the morning had been unproductive: "This morning I felt me really a bit bored. I didn't find it very interesting to speak all the morning about the diffrent styles of writing. I had learned this already in Switzerland. And I think the theory is in English the same as in German. There is – unless [= apart from?] the languages themselves – not a great difference. The roles [= rules?] are the same." —[A6/6 Oct/A.I]. On the whole, however, the indications were that writing techniques were not universally known. Nonetheless, the latter two extracts again offer a reminder that response studies need to take account of several opinions on the same event. One student appreciated the rapport-building effect of pairgroup work [A9/2 Oct/A.I], and another, remarking favourably on the class as a whole, referred to individual and pairgroup work [A11/2 Oct/A.I]. Integrated activities pleased at least one student: "This is exactly the kind of lesson that I like. Pairwork and talk about the work afterwards. I'm very satisfied." —[A10/8 Oct/A.I].

Over-all, the responses to the experimental model of DSDL pairgroup work appeared to justify its retention in the remaining MIDL programmes.[34]

Laboratory A.I

The language laboratory played little part in A.I, occasional sessions being taken to familiarise the students with its optimum use and with the range of available materials (inventory at **Appendix F**). In contrast to the ISDL laboratory sessions of later Stages and Experiments, the tasks in A.I were, like those of pairgroup work, prompted by the co-ordinator, who normally remained to give general advice and guidance where requested. The usual procedure was for the students to listen and respond individually for about five minutes while taped materials were transferred from the console onto their machines. Thereafter they were free to repeat the recorded material or select from a recommended range of cassettes, handling the chosen task at their own pace and in their own way, with some preferring to focus on pronunciation, others on vocabulary, and others taking frequent notes for later consolidation.[35] Among the higher levels there was some dissatisfaction [A1/29 Sep/A.I], [A4/30 Sep/A.I]; "It's not right, but I didn't miss very much the language laboratory, because I prefer to work in class or in groups." —[A6/1 Oct/A.I].

Over-all, the laboratory in this Stage seems to have been accepted as a useful if not very exciting ancillary to the classroom [A4/12 Sep/A.I], [A2/18 Sep/A.I], [A5/19 Sep/A.I], [A11/24 Sep/A.I].[36] Unlike later Experiments, A.I had to proceed carefully from a base of familiarity, and while cautious (perhaps over-cautious) limitations on choice of tasks and materials restricted its ethos to DSDL, the laboratory in this first Stage provided a useful introduction to the full ISDL that was to follow.

Library A.I

The class library was not in operation until after A.I.

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[34]Further references to Peer Support are at [A2/23 Sep A.I], [A2/8 Oct/A.I], [A5/1 Oct/A.I], [A5/8 Oct/A.I].

[35]The booths were private enough to enable individual work, and at later experimental stages the students were free to mix laboratory and non-laboratory tasks.

[36]Further references to the Laboratory are at [A2/26 Sep/A.I], [A4/17 Sep/A.I], [A4/18 Sep/A.I], [A4/26 Sep/A.I], [A4/1 Oct/A.I], [A5/26 Sep/A.I], [A5/29 Sep/A.I], [A5/3 Oct/A.I], [A6/26 Sep/A.I], [A11/1 Oct/A.I].

Projects A.I

No projects were undertaken in A.I.

Out-Class Study and Work A.I

Class Diary A.I

The only two comments regarding the Diary were unfavourable [A1/24 Sep/A.I], [A10/26 Sep/A.I] (cf. Simmons, 1996, p.68). For the recommended format of the Diaries see **Table 6:2**.

Out-Class Setwork A.I

There was evidence that criteria for good out-class setwork were not always met: <[Some students said] homework not challenging enough etc.> —[CR/3 Oct/A.I].[37] This is related to the general complaint from the higher levels regarding the 'averaging' necessary to bring the lower levels along. However, it is clear that at least some setwork was pitched at the level of the highest [A3/9 Oct/A.I], [A4/9 Oct/A.I], and the over-all evidence suggests that during A.I, setwork seemed in general to be of the right quality and quantity for those who remarked on it. Even easy setwork combined with freework could leave one student 'exostic' [A11/16 Sep/A.I], but another found music a helpful accompaniment [A4/23 Sep/A.I]. Creative setworks generally evoked comment or at least received a mention [A3/30 Sep/A.I]; "We built groups of four and discussed this 'Statement'. Our homework is to write down the result." —[A1/1 Oct/A.I]; [A5/1 Oct/A.I]; [A4/2 Oct/A.I]; [A1/6 Oct/A.I].

There are entries which suggest that setwork correction was appreciated [CR/3 Oct/A.I], [A6/8 Oct/A.I], and **Table A:4** gives a sample of the additional feedback provided for each participant. Preparation also featured as part of the setwork programme [A11/6 Oct/A.I], [A5/8 Oct/A.I]. It is clear from explanations and apologies that, notwithstanding the strictness of the setwork regime, out-class commitments could sometimes take priority [A6/9 Oct/A.I], [A2/8 Oct/A.I], [A11/8 Oct/A.I]. And one extract in particular offers a reminder that study is not undertaken in isolation from the human condition [A11/9 Oct/A.I].

Out-Class Freework A.I

Out-class freework was of considerable importance because of its relationship to the other SDL. The following remarks, although obviously intended to embrace all television watching by this student, could legitimately be recorded as only one single count in the quantitative data tally for freework:

> I had to write some letters and wanted to watch TV. Watching TV is a very good idea to learn English. You hear a lot of different accents. There is all what you want: from 'perfect' English till to the American slang. If I don't understand it I can ask one of my [host] family. They are really nice and have always time to explain me the words. [A3/1 Oct/A.I]

There is evidence of consistent reading in the TL [A5/19 Sep/A.I], [A5/26 Sep/A.I], [A6/26 Sep/A.I]; "I ... read more in my book 'Children's Hospital'. It is quite difficult because there are a few medicine terms I don't understand. But it helps me very much thinking in English when I read in English." —[A3/2 Oct/A.I];

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[37]Ideally out-class setwork should complement in-class work, be varied enough to maintain interest, and not intrude detrimentally on the student's domestic and leisure life.

Table A:4. *Course A Stage I: Sample Out-Class Setwork (Homework) Feedback Report for an Individual*

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH SYLLABUS (Stage I) AUTUMN				STAGE I														FCE CANDIDATE: [A4]
~~PROGRESS REPORT NO. 1~~ HW FEEDBACK DATED: 15 OCT				COPIES TO: FILE and CANDIDATE (started 8/9)														
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: HOME (H); CLASS (C)				STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES														AREAS FOR REVISION,
TITLE	TYPE	DATE	GRADE	A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V		X	FOCUS, STUDY, ETC.
Reply to Advertisement	(H) Guided formal letter	16-Sep	n/a	+	+	+	-	o	+	o	+	+	+	-	o	o		o	G S
Impression of f-students	(C) Para. free-style	25-Sep	n/a	o	o	+	o	o	o	-	o	+	+	-	o	o		o	N S
House or Flat?	(H) Discuss	25-Sep	C -	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	o	o		+	G I O R S
Letter to a friend	(H) Informal letter	29-Sep	A	+	o	+	+	o	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+		+	P
The 'X' Family	(H) Report role-play	30-Sep	C	+	o	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+		+	G
A Woman's Place	(H) Report discussion	01-Oct	C +	+	o	+	-	-	-	+	o	+	o	+	+	-		o	G I L V
Car Thief	(H) Guided Composition	06-Oct	B +	+	+	+	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o		+	T
Rescue	(H) Guided Composition	06-Oct	B	+	+	+	-	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	-	o		o	G T
Nagasaki	(H) Discuss aft.cl.study	09-Oct	C	+	+	+	-	-	+	o	-	-	-	-	+	-		o	G I O P R S V
Punctuation Exercises	(H) Practice exercises	07-Oct	n/a																Attendance days: 28/28; late 0/28
				+	+	+	-	o	+	+	o	+	o	o	o	o		o	IMPROVEMENT
COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, ETC.				A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V		X	
The spread of problems indicates a reasonably sound over-all ability. This is dangerous! It is precisely at this point that many able students begin to rest on their laurels. Weaknesses, for future focus, still lie in the areas of grammar, imagination, and insufficiently wide vocabulary. Over to you ...				Appropriateness of tone, style	Care and attention to detail	First language transfer	Grammar (specific points)	Imagination, creativity, etc.	Length	Neatness, layout, handwriting	Organisation of ideas, logic, etc.	Punctuation	Repetitious, padded	Spelling	Tenses	Vocabulary (incorrect, inadequate)		Following instructions	OVERALL PROGRESS Satisfactory but not yet up to potential + Favourable o Acceptable - Unfavourable

[A4/10 Oct/A.I]. In the following extract the reading could not be classified as freework, although writing in the TL could: "I'll probably read something and watch television. I also have to write a letter in English." —[A4/17 Sep/A.I]. In-class ODL was expected to stimulate out-class freework, and there were reports of revision [A10/29 Sep/A.I], [A5/30 Sep/A.I] and of the contribution of out-class conversation to language-learning: "I started an english book. I'm living with a family with whom I always talk a lot, and I think that could be good for me." —[A7/1 Oct/A.I]. One extract illustrates a range of freework activities and confirms that unrealistic expectation-levels may contribute to a feeling of lack of progress (often acute at the intermediate 'plateau' level) regardless of effort or the amount of in-class and out-class work done: "I read a lot of different magazines and newspapers, watch TV, listen to the radio, talk with my [host] family and so on. But sometimes I think I didn't make any progress at all. Perhaps I want too much in only four weeks." —[A4/3 Oct/A.I].[38] Although less conscientious and achievement-oriented students than A4 tend to have fewer self-doubts, she was exhibiting something of what Wenden (1988) rightly observes, that "many students have no realistic awareness of the *time* it takes to learn English" (p.646), and they "hope for instant solutions to their language needs" (p.648).

A.I Overview

The cautious blend of traditional DODL and innovative DSDL appeared to have been acceptable to the students, and A.I thus provided reasonable grounds for the further introduction of SDL components within a heavily ODL-expectations environment. The 'controlled explosion' of the disparate-levels issue, which alone could have forced abandonment of the research programme, made it less likely to compound with other, specifically SDL, issues in later Stages. A.I also confirmed that Diaries offered a suitable monitoring and data-gathering instrument.

COURSE A STAGE II (13 OCTOBER - 31 OCTOBER)

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme A.II

Although A.II began in DODL mode, the first week was principally taken up with work on a video project.[39] Student disquiet eventually led to a reformulation of the programme in the direction of a more balanced MIDL formula for the second week (20 to 24 October) and an outline programme allowing some 25:75 SDL:ODL was drawn up for the final (four-day) week of Stage II, 28 to 31 October (**Table A:5**). One grey area of programme planning had been out-class setwork: it was uncertain whether the advantages of detailing it in advance outweighed loss of flexibility in responding to the needs of the day. At the request of one student it was decided to formalise the advance-notice schedules [1.2/A6/22 Oct/A.II]. The proposed

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[38]Other, minor, references to Freework are at [A1/9 Oct/A.I], [A3/30 Sep/A.I], [A6/22 Sep/A.I], [A11/10 Oct/A.I].

[39]Detailed under the heading Projects below.

Table A:5. *Course A Stage II, Outline Programmes 20 October - 31 October*

Draft Outline Programme		Mon 20 - Fri 24 October
Mon 20	09.00 - 10.50	Video project
	11.10 - 12.00	Class Library intro; select books
	12.05 - 01.00	Grammar review in relation to HW
Tue 21	09.00 - 10.50	Video project
	11.10 - 12.00	Coursebook pairgroup work
	12.05 - 01.00	Lesson arising out of HW etc.
Wed 22	09.00 - 10.50	Video project OR pairgroup, lab. etc.
	11.10 - 12.00	Vocabulary fields (politics, sport, etc.)
	12.05 - 01.00	Exam practice listening comprehension
Thu 23	09.00 - 10.50	Video project OR pairgroup, lab. etc.
	11.10 - 12.00	Lesson arising out of HW etc.
	12.05 - 01.00	Exam practice listening comprehension
Fri 24	Flexible day	Finish off video; class discussion on what we have been/shall be doing

Outline Programme		Tue 28 - Fri 31 October
Daily	09.00 - 09.55	Grammar preview
	10.00 - 10.50	Lib/Lab (individual work)
	11.10 - 12.00	Grammar preview
	12.05 - 01.00	(Flexible)

Note. For both programmes, out-class setwork schedules for each day were also detailed in advance.

amendments, incorporating both out-class setwork preparation and advance timetabling, were put to the class in a plenary discussion of all aspects of the programme. Although there were some higher-level student reservations about the setwork grammar preparation, due note had to be taken of the needs of the lower levels: <Finalised by drawing up a new schedule of grammar pre-teaching (told them this was reverting to a Stage I schedule) in prep. for HW. Only [A9] was strongly against this on grounds that it would be exactly as it was: 'boring & unnecessary grammar classes'. [A6] and [A4] not too keen on it either, but [A6] admitted she 'needed the grammar'. She suggested letting the 'not needed' people 'do their own thing' – I agreed, subject to class cohesion being maintained.> —[12S.21/CR/24 Oct/A.II]. One student continued to complain about the uneven quantity of out-class setwork [12S.23/A5/24 Oct/A.II]. Other reactions to the new programme were in general favourable: "We disscused about the class and we had to heard that we are not working enough hard. We changed the time table, in my opinion not to bath [= not too bad]." —[1.3/A2/24 Oct/A.II]; "We also made a new timetable for the class. We had [a] few discussions about topics we wanted. That was very interesting and the morning was quickly gone." —[1.4/A3/24 Oct/A.II]; "Afterwards we had a big discussion about our homework and the teaching methods in general.... I only don't like too many grammar lessons, because I sometimes make so silly mistakes in my homework .... Next week we have two grammar lessons per day. That may be boring." —[1.5/A4/24 Oct/A.II]; "Then we discussed about a new system for our homework and made a new division of the morning in four section. I'm glad that we try a new homework-system and I hope it will work." —[1.6/A6/24 Oct/A.II].

There were favourable indications that the new programme was meeting the needs of the learners: "It was a good idea to divide up the day in fix parts. Refrain [= apart] from the Language Laboratory wich didn't work proper, it was a bit annoying, is the new rithem of the day in every respects quite plesent." —[1.7/A10/28 Oct/A.II]; [4.34/A2/28 Oct/A.II]; [4.36/A5/28 Oct/A.II]; [4.37/A10/28 Oct/A.II]; [4.38/A11/28 Oct/A.II].

Materials and Equipment A.II

No comments were transcribed on materials and equipment during A.II.

Composition of Class A.II

No comments were transcribed on the composition of the class during A.II.

DODL Elements A.II

Stage II began in DODL mode, eliciting predictably different responses from the higher and lower levels: "a waste of time" —[4.2/A1/13 Oct/A.II]; "quite interesting" —[4.3/A3/13 Oct/A.II]; "I learnt a lot" —[4.6/A8/13 Oct/A.II]; "the grammar was easy for me" —[4.7/A9/13 Oct/A.II]; "This kind of lessons are very good for me!... Thorough explanations – that's the way to teach me!" —[4.8/A10/13 Oct/A.II]. And despite the fact that these students, part of an open-enrolment group, had very different needs, learning rates, capabilities, motivation and so on, they still saw lock-step tuition as more fruitful than opportunities for fluency practice in contrived authentic contexts. DODL became firmly reinstated on the fade-out of the DSDL video project (adapted from a similar activity in the preliminary phase): "I was glad that we didn't

continue with our video project. The grammar exercise we did were more helpfully for me." —[11.46/A6/21 Oct/A.II]; "We were very busy all morning, but I think I learned a lot. I didn't waste my time at all." —[4.16/A2/21 Oct/A.II]; "I prefer mornings like that. In the evening I really felt that we've done something useful." —[4.17/A3/21 Oct/A.II]; "This morning was very interesting.... It was very useful for me to get the information why my answers were wrong." —[4.18/A4/21 Oct/A.II]; "We had a profitable morning and learnt a lot of things ...." —[4.19/A5/21 Oct/A.II]; "I think the work that we now do helps me really to make progress. I hope it at least ...." —[4.20/A6/21 Oct/A.II]; "I liked the class very much today. It was very changeable with many different things." —[4.22/A9/21 Oct/A.II]; "I learnd a lot from todays' review of the test and I would like to repeat this kind of exercise." —[4.23/A10/21 Oct/A.II]; "Today the class lecturer [= lesson?] has been very useful." —[4.25/A12/21 Oct/A.II]. While the satisfaction was general, one entry points up the fact that perceptions are individual: "Sorry if I came late ... I don't know what you did before I came, but this morning we didn't work hard. We just had a look at the red book worked in team for 15 minutes and spent too much time on the explanation of the first certificate (fotocopies) and new library." —[4.24/A11/21 Oct/A.II]. This is at odds with the impressions of the others and with what the co-ordinator thought of as <close to ... the norm for the 'fluency' stage .... a successful day.> —[4.15/CR/21 Oct/A.II]. Although the students' responses were not diaried until that evening (and hence not known to the co-ordinator until the following day) the normal sensitivity to student-satisfaction during the day may have played a part in the decision to abandon the video project. Given a straight choice, the students' preferences were unquestionably for traditionally structured lessons over the project, but one student affirmed the continuing MIDL ethos: "It's better to combine video-project with other things during the morning, otherwise, spending the whole morning with the video-project, we don't learn much." —[11.47/A5/22 Oct/A.II]. The transition back to a more institutional environment was uneventful [4.29/A2/23 Oct/A.II], [4.30/A4/23 Oct/A.II], [4.32/A11/23 Oct/A.II], with evidence that ODL was combining successfully with SDL [4.31/A5/23 Oct/A.II]; "I enjoyed myself." —[4.33/A11/24 Oct/A.II]; "The class ... was really good. I like to work on myself and so I found it good that I could go to the laboratory [i.e. for 'library' work] to do some individual exercises." —[10.10/A6/23 Oct/A.II].

With the programme changes for the final week of A.II, notwithstanding some complaints of boredom [4.35/A4/28 Oct/A.II], [4.44/A9/29 Oct/A.II], [4.39/A1/29 Oct/A.II], on the whole the learners recorded liking and profit from the traditional DODL: "We spent a lot of time with homework problems that's very useful." —[4.40/A2/29 Oct/A.II]; "This week is very short but productive." —[4.42/A5/29 Oct/A.II]; "I learnt a lot of grammar." —[4.43/A8/29 Oct/A.II]; "... I'm very satisfied and grateful about this detailed grammar lessons." —[4.45/A10/29 Oct/A.II].

But an aspect of the work bothered one student, who commented: "... had too much grammar. If we discuss the exercises before, they are too easy to do for homework." —[4.41/A4/29 Oct/A.II]. The question was, like many, bound up with the issue of disparate levels, where 'unseen' setwork may be too difficult for the lower stream, and 'seen' setwork may be too easy for those who want challenge rather than reinforcement or opportunity for self-evaluation. Whether as setwork or not, when remedial work or practice is not perceived as needed it can be demotivating; the problem is particularly acute in language learning, where structures and vocabulary need constant reinforcement, repetition, and practice, and where exposure to the language must be supported by the use of it. In an institutional setting, instruction must be backed up by

training, and there are always students who cannot abide either. Nonetheless, apart from the aspect of over-preparation, the setwork issue seemed to have been resolved [12S.26/A6/29 Oct/A.II], [12S.27/A10/29 Oct/A.II], and the preparation lesson was welcomed by at least one student: "We had a lesson about the homework exercises. That's very useful because I had not as much trouble with my homework and could finish it at all." —[4.47/A2/30 Oct/A.II].

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing A.II

There was a short-lived continuation of one student's traumatic disaffection: <[A9] not participating at all ... she said she was 'sick of the class'.> —[5.1/CR/13 Oct/A.II]. Counselling resolved the difficulty [5.2/A9/14 Oct/A.II]. Another student continued happy with her classmates [5.3/A8/15 Oct/A.II], and the country and people [5.4/A8/16 Oct/A.II], but was less happy about the learning and her progress [5.9/A8/23 Oct/A.II]. One higher-level student had been very unhappy about her progress, about wasting time with the video project, and about the delay in the revised programme [5.5/A6/17 Oct/A.II]. The co-ordinator noted: <[A6] has not been pleasable since the start.> —[5.6/CR/21 Oct/A.II]. The last remark must be put alongside the extracts placed under more precise headings, as for example, that of [A6] herself, on the same day, although the response is not unqualified: "I think the work that we now do helps me really to make progress. I hope it at least ...." —[4.20/A6/21 Oct/A.II].

The combined roles of co-ordinator/researcher involved very much increased workloads, though apparently without detriment to the rapport: <... got the impression that 'the hard life of the teacher' was beginning to strike them as a bit of a theme of mine – they were all laughing away, and the atmosphere was happy and relaxed. – Ended on a very happy 'conversation' basis ....> —[5.10/CR/24 Oct/A.II].

Counselling Consultation A.II

Counselling enabled [A9] to come to terms with criticism of her work-effort and to get on more happily with the video project: "Today I've talked to [CR] about my problem and I am a bit better because I told him what I felt and what I thought." —[5.2/A9/14 Oct/A.II]. Another student had an ongoing battle with her own feelings of inadequacy (general and linguistic) and was given some further reassurance [6.2/CR/24 Oct/A.II].

Out-Class Environment A.II

The students continued to enjoy themselves at concerts, the theatre, the cinema, at parties, on trips to the West, and in the pubs and restaurants.

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support A.II

While the DSDL policy left the students free in the conduct of pairgroup activities, part of the 'dependent' element consisted in the constraint of working co-operatively with others (see West, 1983, for an evaluation

at secondary level), which the 'independent' element of, for example, ISDL class library did not. Peer support must assume a measure of goodwill and fellow-feeling among those involved, but relationships may not always be favourable: "Then we had to write a synopsis of a synopsis. This was a pair work, I worked with [deleted] though I can't bear her." —[8.2/A2/21 Oct/A.II]. Personality clashes aside, not everyone was convinced of the benefits of working with others, even if the 'fluency' aspect of pairgroup work seemed to be understood: "It is very difficult to work in groups, when you are alone you make your own decisions and don't have to discuss three hours for every single sentence in the text. I suppose this way of working is suggested knowingly, to make us speak in English." —[8.3/A5/21 Oct/A.II].

It was planned to extend the pairgroup principle by forming more stable Support Teams. It was felt that these could provide psychological benefits of solidarity, particularly to the less confident and/or dependent, and offer a leadership (peer-tutoring) role to the higher levels (Dean, 1990, for example, reports favourably on peer-tutoring in French language programmes). Given the disparity in levels, it was expected that, if the latter would take on the task of actively assisting the others, any initial unease would be quickly overcome. The most fluent student had been sounded out on the idea of taking on a more peripatetic role, acting as 'teaching assistant' to the support team leaders [8.5/CR/28 Oct/A.II] and responded positively: "I think the idea of this teaching-assistant isn't bad but very embarrissing. But I think it could help everybody." —[8.7/A1/29 Oct/A.II]. Whether or not peer-tutoring would prove viable, it was thought beneficial that, in addition to normal pairgroup activities, learners might be encouraged to work co-operatively on joint projects extending over more than one day. The students were left free to adopt or reject the proposal [8.6/CR/29 Oct/A.II]. The general reaction seemed to be non-committal or cautious but not opposed [8.9/A2/30 Oct/A.II], [8.10/A4/30 Oct/A.II], [8.11/A6/30 Oct/A.II]. But one extract proved prophetic: "I was elected as a group leader. I'm afraid [= worried] that I won't be able to do it." —[8.12/A11/30 Oct/A.II].[40] The question of support teams melded with that of class harmony and rapport: <... the shortness of this course, coupled with the experiment, has reduced the 'communicative fun' element ... find a way to introduce it in Stage III.> —[14.6/CR/31 Oct/A.II]; <... discussed Support Teams again and 'introduced' it by getting them together to play cards. Seemed to enjoy it (and learnt vocab). Good way to introduce people in each team to idea of being together in unpressurised context.> —[8.13/CR/31 Oct/A.II]. It proved a popular activity to close the 56 contact-hours of A.II [4.53/A1/31 Oct/A.II], [4.58/A10/31 Oct/A.II], [4.55/A4/31 Oct/A.II], [4.56/A6/31 Oct/A.II], [4.57/A9/31 Oct/A.II], [4.59/A11/31 Oct/A.II], [4.60/A12/31 Oct/A.II].

Laboratory A.II

To maintain the pace and cover the ground of a normal examination course meant inevitable timetable compromises, with the revised programme not, of itself, proof against the tendency for SDL components to be annexed by ODL. It was therefore essential to maximise use of the resources for self-direction. The ISDL 'class library' concept had been well received, and the language laboratory sessions, whose materials had hitherto been restricted to a narrow 'intermediate' range of choices, were accordingly made entirely ISDL towards the end of A.II, with no restrictions on the materials chosen or the use made of them [9.2/CR/28 Oct/A.II]. Riley and Zoppis (1985) remark: "In our view, students who have reached a certain level in

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[40]Each team endorsed the leader recommended by the co-ordinator on the basis of fluency and personality.

English can improve their listening comprehension by regularly working in semi-autonomy with adequately prepared teaching material or in complete autonomy using 'raw' *authentic material*" (p.287). The change attracted both neutral response [9.7/A5/28 Oct/A.II], and favourable [9.11/A9/29 Oct/A.II], and the ISDL mode continued to receive positive, if low-key, responses [9.14/A1/31 Oct/A.II], [9.15/A2/31 Oct/A.II], [9.17/A10/31 Oct/A.II], [9.18/A11/31 Oct/A.II].

Library A.II

Approval was granted and materials provided by the institution for installation of the 'class library' and this came into operation on 20 October, shortly before the abandonment of the video project. Resources were limited to old materials that could be salvaged from cupboards and drawers, but were adequate for the purpose (inventory at **Appendix G**), and it was felt that students were more likely to be selective from among a narrow specialised core of materials than to require a large range of options. As cited by Merriam (1989), Spear and Mocker had found that "self-directed learners, in most cases, did not select resources from a variety of alternatives, rather, they were more likely to use a single resource that was fortuitously available within their environment" and Merriam goes on to say: "This concept they termed the *organizing circumstance*, which is the directing force behind much, perhaps most, self-directed learning" (p. 164). And, as Holec says:

> It is not so much a matter of having to have a vast stock available before the system starts operating as of the progressive accumulation of resources, and this applies not only to the technological hardware but also to the written and recorded documents, to types of activities, etc. (Holec, 1985b, p.187)

Students were free to select any of the available materials, and to work on them either in class or at home, or both. The concept was central to the MIDL programme but, although the DSDL pairgroups were founded on existing practice, the notion of ISDL 'class library' sessions was without precedent in this context. It was anticipated that notwithstanding dispute over global versus local criteria of autonomous acts (see, for example, A. Mason, 1992, p.172) the experience would contribute significantly to the students' perceptions of independence. Their first responses were therefore considered crucial: "... after the break we could choose a book for homework. My book looks nice. I haven't done any exercises yet, but I'd like to do the first lesson." —[10.2/A4/20 Oct/A.II]; "We also had a look of [= at] many books and each person chose one to do his homework. I think it is a good idea to choose yourself which is good for you." —[10.3/A5/20 Oct/A.II]; "I liked the idea of choosing different books." —[10.5/A9/20 Oct/A.II]; "The book that I picked up ... was not very useful for me but I expected nothing more after such a short time for selecting. I hope we have next enough time to select a right book." —[10.6/A10/20 Oct/A.II]; "... the new program about the 'Class library' which I think it's being very good in order to practice at home." —[10.7/A12/20 Oct/A.II]. At the suggestion of one of the students, cassettes were added to the library for home use and this proved popular with at least two of the class [10.8/A9/21 Oct/A.II], [10.9/A12/21 Oct/A.II], (cf. Salin's recommendation for such home practice, 1983, p.144). It was a major step in the direction of student independence, but initially favourable responses were no guarantee that the novelty-value would be sustained.

Projects A.II

On the second day of A.II, to further encourage self-directed co-operative working, and to foster even greater freedom than was possible in normal pairgroup activities, a DSDL video project was suggested and discussed. While this was intended to be along much the same lines as the video project of the preliminary phase, the differences would include a division into smaller groups, each to work to a different objective, each to organise its own way of operating, and the whole project to be under the general supervision of one of the students. An underlying assumption of any model of self-direction must be that students are putatively willing (if not necessarily yet fully able) to take charge of some part of their own learning programmes, and, whilst making a video film is very different from devising a syllabus, evaluating materials, and so on, the task was thought to be fully in accord with the principles of dependent SDL, to call for group and individual skills of organisation, co-operation, and target language use in 'real-world' contexts out in the city. The overt pedagogical objective was fluency practice, and the short-term research objective was to elicit initial responses to almost total freedom of choice, without supervision or intervention. With the experience of the preliminary project in mind, only minor personality clashes were anticipated, given that the participants were by now well integrated and comfortable with one another, and it was thought that producing a video would prove to be an enjoyable and worthwhile learning event. It was not foreseen that the students would come to regard the activity as taking time away from formal classes.

One student commented: "We had to find out or better to decide what kind of film we would like to shoot.... I like this kind of school, then we sometimes work outside the class and it's more interesting insteat of always sitting in the classroom and listen and listen – " —[11.2/A2/14 Oct/A.II]. Another, however, already had reservations: "... It is very interesting but also very difficult that it doesn't become boring." —[11.3/A3/14 Oct/A.II]; and a third was concerned that too much time should not be spent on it [11.4/A4/14 Oct/A.II], with the implication that she saw the experience as less valuable than taught classes. One was "not so happy about this idea" —[11.6/A6/14 Oct/A.II] and made a similar remark about time. On the other side there was the student who spoke of "another new experience in my life" —[11.7/A8/14 Oct/A.II], one who was "very pleased" —[11.8/A10/14 Oct/A.II], and another who thought it "a nice idea" —[11.9/A11/14 Oct/A.II]. The elected producer was conscious of his role: "What a responsability!!" —[11.10/A12/14 Oct/A.II].

When, on 15 October, it became clear that the students were unable to proceed without guidance, the co-ordinator (adopting a DSDL mode) proposed various 'research-tasks' to be undertaken. The teams started working effectively, although [A9] needed some persuasion to co-operate [11.11/CR/15 Oct/A.II]. The tasks were not easy for some [11.13/A3/15 Oct/A.II], [11.14/A4/15 Oct/A.II]. Nonetheless there was enthusiasm: "I think that the video film could be very interesting. We can learn new things of the country and we can compare them with our own country.... I find my obtion a bit difficult, but I hope we are going to find a lot of information." —[11.16/A7/15 Oct/A.II]; [11.17/A8/15 Oct/A.II]; [11.18/A9/15 Oct/A.II]; [11.23/A1/16 Oct/A.II]. One student perceived that the mid-morning direction offered by the co-ordinator [11.11/CR/15 Oct/A.II] had detracted from the learners' entirely independent self-direction and commented: "I'm not completely agree .... The project today is suddenly very different. This project is not now our choice, it is [CR's] 'intervention' but – it is acceptable – go ahead!" —[11.19/A10/15 Oct/A.II]. The remark highlights what is perhaps the core problem in the promotion of institutional SDL, the question of where to draw the

line between complete non-intervention and guidance amounting to control. The solution may be contained in the response of [A10] – when the learner is aware that his freedom is being limited, and when he freely agrees to that limitation, he acts within an acceptable definition of auto-responsible learning. As Little has often pointed out, educators have a responsibility to provide the means by which student awareness is heightened. The process should reconcile the learner's individual self-determinations and the requirements of the enabling institutions. If we interpret Holec (1979) in this light then his list of 'autonomous language learner' responsibilities (criticised by Sheerin, 1991, p.153, as "specialised operations which are not easy even for trained teachers") can be seen as a guide to reasonable and attainable objectives for self-directed learning.

While the 'averaging' of plenary teaching cannot always meet the needs of the individual student, without such accounts as that of [11.25/A4/16 Oct/A.II] it would be all too easy to make the assumption that therefore self-directed learning must do so. Her experience on the student-determined 'field trips' illustrates an aspect of SDL which is not over-emphasised in the literature. This student, hard-working and conscientious, did not achieve her own personal objectives: "Then we had to look for more information about buisiness and industry in Dublin. In [deleted] they knew nothing, in [deleted] they gave us lots of adresses but no information and they send us to [deleted]. The people there knew nothing once again.... In the afternoon I went to some bookshops but I didn't find anything. In the evening I asked [deleted] and he could give me a very few answers. So I have to try it tomorrow once again. But slowly I have enough of this topic." —[11.25/A4/16 Oct/A.II]. As Gage and Berliner noted (1992, p.450), Herbert Spencer wrote in 1873 that "self-development should be encouraged to the fullest extent. Children should be led to make their own investigations and to draw their own inferences. They should be *told* as little as possible and induced to *discover* as much as possible...." Nonetheless the entry highlights the possibility that dedicated adult learners may be demotivated if answers are not readily available. In this case the effect of negligible reward for a great deal of effort was disenchantment with the topic, an effect which would traditionally be mitigated by a teacher providing both information and encouragement. While the integration and mediation of ODL and SDL helps to overcome what Trim (e.g. 1976, p.5) and other authorities have long cautioned against – launching unprepared learners into self-direction – here a committed and capable person, well able to determine her own courses of action, was not frustrated by inadequate self-directed learning techniques, but by lack of achievement. Clearly there was language-learning benefit to her – she had used the target language in authentic information-gap communication activies – and this must be seen positively in professional educator terms. But several entries indicate that this student was a fact-gatherer: [4.13/A4/17 Oct/A.II], [4.18/A4/21 Oct/A.II], [4.30/A4/23 Oct/A.II], and this SDL experience had left her unfulfilled. In contrast, the Video Project appeared to improve the morale of another student: "Today we have started doing practical English in the sense that we have filmed with the video in class. It has been very funny because no one wanted to be interviewed ...." —[11.28/A9/16 Oct/A.II]. A student had reason to be tired [11.30/A11/16 Oct/A.II], and the co-ordinator recorded the strain of his attending to the students [14.1/CR/16 Oct/A.II], an indication that they were not left entirely without support. Stress need not have a physical basis, much of it arising through the conflict of contrary needs (dissonance/assonance) and although the over-all view (e.g [11.26/A5/16 Oct/A.II], [11.29/A10/16 Oct/A.II], [11.31/A12/16 Oct/A.II]) seemed at this stage to be favourable to the Project, the pressures of other needs soon became evident.

Resistance, whether prompted more by the Project itself than by aversion to self-direction, was to become more overt and obvious. One student, whose first reaction had been very favourable [11.2/A2/14 Oct/A.II], commented: "I am a little bit afraid about the lesson in school, because I should or I must learn grammar then a big part in the examination would be grammar and I am not very good. It doesn't mean I don't like what we are doing now, but I can imagine it's not enough for me to pass the examination." —[11.24/A2/16 Oct/A.II]. The call for a return to a 'normal' environment was becoming more insistent: "I hope we'll have to study next week more than the previous one. I'm not satisfait to read newspapers and books, watch TV and talk to the people, I also have to study why you write something this way and why anything else is wrong, for example." —[4.13/A4/17 Oct/A.II]. Apart from its relevance to the distinction between 'acquisition' and 'study' the remark was made in the context of freely available grammar books and other self-direction study materials. This student was nearing her limit of tolerance: "Today we had to work on our video again. [A7] and I went to the [deleted], [deleted] and at least [= finally] to [deleted] where we got a lot of lecture for the first time since we had been working on that project. I don't say it's a waste of time. but I'd prefer to study grammar and that disliked language laboratory." —[11.33/A4/17 Oct/A.II]. Another student was even more outspoken: "I know I'm very bad in grammar and tense, but how can I manage to get better, if we do so few exercises and if we waste our time doing a video-project !?!?" —[11.35/A6/17 Oct/A.II]; "Now I'm here since for weeks, but I don't feel me very happy at school, because I don't make any progress.... we waste our time doing a video-project!?!? I'm really disappointed, because [CR] promised us to talk about our individual programm. But nothing happened yet – !" —[5.5/A6/17 Oct/A.II]. One student seemed resigned to failure: "In the morning nothing it worked. The batteries for the camera were gone, we couldn't shooting. We hadn't enough information about the education and the businness part of the Dublin city." —[11.37/A11/17 Oct/A.II].

The over-all perception at the time was that a measure of DODL should be re-introduced the following week, and the 50/50 draft outline programme for 20-24 October was therefore published (**Table A:5**). On 20 October there was at least one approval for the short DODL grammar session: "for about half an hour (that was good) ...." —[4.14/A5/20 Oct/A.II]. The co-ordinator summed up the situation: <Checked with class – [A6] said video project 'a complete waste of time'. Others seemed (unresponsive) neutral. Except (surprise!) [A9] who said she now felt very positive towards it! Evident that some think they get enough 'survival' practice outside [the institution] and want classes to be more structured.> —[11.38/CR/20 Oct/A.II]. A student summed up the general feeling: "I think that video is a very good idea but it takes too long now. We probably won't be finished by the end of this week. So I would find it better we don't waste our short time and continue with the 'normal' school programme." —[11.39/A3/20 Oct/A.II]. Although seeming totally disaffected, another student continued to co-operate with the spirit of the group project: "Today we did our first interview, but unfortunately there was no sound. This is really a pity because the woman in the National Museum spoke very well and she explained us a lot of interesting things." —[11.40/A6/20 Oct/A.II]. While two students merely remarked on the activity, [11.41/A9/20 Oct/A.II], [11.44/A12/20 Oct/A.II] and [A10] felt frustrated by a technical problem [11.42/A10/20 Oct/A.II], it was evident that one student was even more resigned: "I'm beginning to believe that our video masterpiece is starting to flop. I supposed that it was much more interesting until now. I think it is a little bit difficult to organise the work for our team." —[11.43/A11/20 Oct/A.II].

By 21 October the co-ordinator concluded that it had been a mistake to introduce the project in Stage II, and the decision was made to put it to one side, at least for the time being: <... rethink on the advisability of introducing the video in Stage II rather than, as originally conceived, in Stage III; the affective dimensions of the students; maintaining morale etc.; accomplishing, in addition, the 'language' tasks necessary, in a short three-month course, to ensure that an FCE syllabus has been covered. Decision therefore: put video in abeyance.> —[11.45/CR/21 Oct/A.II]. The preliminary project had noted the difficulty, and the importance, of ensuring that every participant had a worthwhile and fulfilling role. The same problem was noted again: <... others, despite being given quite specific 'research' tasks – and having been told that only a certain number of students could be actively involved in the mechanics of filming interviews etc. – said they 'didn't know what to do' or 'didn't have anything to do' while the others were out filming.> —[11.45/CR/21 Oct/A.II]; "... a waste of time because we had to often nothing to do." —[11.48/A10/22 Oct/A.II]; "I'm not happy with the video. I'd prefer to leave it because there is no organisation!" —[11.49/A11/22 Oct/A.II]. Whether or not similar problems would have occurred in a different realisation of the project it was clear that after some five working days it had come to the end of its useful life. On Thursday 23 October the classroom option of the draft outline programme was adopted and the video project abandoned. Perhaps the lesson that should have been learnt was to reduce the time-scale for such projects, but the effect was that no more were undertaken on any MIDL course.[41]

Out-Class Study and Work A.II

Class Diary A.II

The students completed their Diaries each day with varying degrees of fluency and appropriacy, the only written comment on the task in this Stage being very negative: "I know that thise Diaries are important for [CR] and I understand the sense as well as the reason but you should know, that this is the most disagreeable work for me." —[12D.1/A10/30 Oct/A.II].[42]

Out-Class Setwork A.II

A very brief attempt was made to explore the use of class library materials for student-selected out-class work[43] (for marking by the co-ordinator), the freedom appearing to be a welcome spur to effort: "I enjoyed doing my homework. Never mind, I didn't know what I had to do with my exercises, but I probably find it out next time." —[12S.2/A3/20 Oct/A.II]; "I've been doing – I hope the tense is right – homework for nearly four hours and I haven't finished yet. When I switch off the light, I can say, today, I really did something!!" —[12S.3/A4/20 Oct/A.II].[44] Even [A6] seemed satisfied: "The idea with the books is not bad and this

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[41]Similarly, on Course B, a week of ISDL should, on reflection, have lasted no more than two days.

[42]The Class Diary was a DSDL event, a (dependent) choice of the co-ordinator but a self-directed activity.

[43]The case for recording the entries under DSDL 'setwork' was matched by another for ISDL 'freework'; the issue was marginal as both DSDL and ISDL tallies were summed under the one frequency heading of 'Out-Class Study and Work'.

[44]This enthusiasm stands in contrast to later complaints about the volume of out-class setwork. The whole area is fertile for research.

evening – after I had done my homework – I felt the first time that I had done something to improve my English." —[10.4/A6/20 Oct/A.II]. [A1] also felt encouraged: "Yesterday's homework was very difficult, but it's very good for my English. I think it's a good idea to chose a book for homework." —[12S.5/A1/21 Oct/A.II]. Clearly, some impetus to personal endeavour had been provided by the class library materials, and it was clear also that these students had no quarrel with taking class-time to prepare for out-class work. The general notion was supported by [A5]: "It's a good idea to have the book you've selected, which fits you better. It isn't good that everybody in class had the same homework, because there is always someone whom it is too easy or too difficult." —[12S.7/A5/21 Oct/A.II]. The potential was obvious. However, individual out-class work requires feedback to the student, and where it is undertaken daily, or even frequently, any systematic (i.e. non-impressionistic) correcting and marking has to be put into the perspective of other demands on time: <... 7 hours virtually non-stop to mark 13 separate 'individualised' Homeworks. [plus] 4 hours teaching = 11 hours.> —[14.3/CR/22 Oct/A.II]. Individual out-class work may not be totally out of the question where the only teaching/co-ordinating commitment is four contact-hours a day or less, or at beginner level, or where, for example, the out-class selection is restricted to cloze-tests, multiple-choice responses, true/false, and so on.[45]

When, almost immediately, normal out-class schedules were re-introduced, the co-ordinator miscalculated the volume of setwork, with demoralising effects for some [12S.6/A2/21 Oct/A.II], [12S.9/A2/22 Oct/A.II]. Not only the lower stream were affected [12S.10/A3/22 Oct/A.II], [12S.11/A4/22 Oct/A.II], [12S.13/A8/22 Oct/A.II], [12S.14/A10/22 Oct/A.II]. One report underlines that setwork, while a dependent task, was under the self-directed control of the student: "Too much homework! I couldn't finish them.... I went to the theater ...." —[12S.15/A11/22 Oct/A.II]. The quantity and difficulty of the setwork had been under-estimated, and remedial action was to allow omission of any exercise felt to be unnecessary [12S.16/CR/23 Oct/A.II]. This measure proved insufficient [12S.17/A3/23 Oct/A.II]; "... I did homework for nearly four hours again. I didn't know that I would be able to do such a lot, but I'm getting nervous [= upset, agitated?] and that's very bad for me." —[12S.18/A4/23 Oct/A.II]; [12S.19/A6/23 Oct/A.II].

There was a plea from [A11] for the re-introduction of homework preparation in class [12S.16/CR/23 Oct/A.II], and the following day this request was expressed at length by another student [12S.20/A12/23 Oct/A.II]. The call for a return to Stage I schedules was taken seriously. On 24 October the problem was confronted head-on [12S.21/CR/24 Oct/A.II].

The high volume of out-class setwork prompted a student to propose having the schedules in advance. [1.2/A6/22 Oct/A.II]. This had previously been decided against in the interests of greater flexibility in responding to, and supplementing the in-class daily programme – reference has already been made to the integration of, for example, role-play with a consolidating out-class task.. Nonetheless, on a trial basis, advance-notice schedules were incorporated into the revised programme, to be presented to the students for their approval. There was no doubt that advance schedules might help to reduce fluctuations in the volume of setwork: "I can't understand why we always have so little homework or not homework at all (as last week),

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[45]The co-ordinator in this case had other full-day administrative duties and evening study commitments in addition to the research programme. While impressionistic essay-marking in the L1 (term-papers of, say, 2000 - 3000 words) is not strictly comparable with close-attention annotated correction of TL free-style writing, especially at intermediate level, some idea of the time-scales can be obtained by imagining ten or fifteen such essays for marking every day.

and suddenly we have loads of it to do, and then, when the weekend (with an extra holiday day) arrives, we don't have homework at all." —[12S.23/A5/24 Oct/A.II].

The out-class setwork issue, arising from misjudgement by the co-ordinator, proved ultimately beneficial. It had revealed weaknesses in the experimental schedules, and had presented opportunities for student input into their own programme. The result was therefore entirely in keeping with the ethos of MIDL, and the revised schedules were to provide the framework for later adaptations of the programme.

Out-Class Freework A.II

Notwithstanding the continuing importance and quantity of setwork, and the failure of the student-selected attempt, there was ongoing evidence of out-class freework (some prompted by the video project).[46]

A.II Overview

Stage II proved to be less stressful than Stage I, despite the difficulties raised by the video and homework issues. Relationships settled down, as did the question of levels and class numbers. The video project failed as a group enterprise but perhaps served to sensitise the students to greater self-direction. Although introduced late in the Stage, both the ISDL language laboratory and the class library seemed to integrate well with the DSDL and DODL components, which themselves were generally well received, perhaps because more overtly related to 'accuracy' than the 'fluency-oriented' video project. So far, the type of viable self-direction had been reasonably well established, and it now remained to assess the appropriate proportions of SDL to ODL, in the light of student responses.

COURSE A STAGE III (3 NOVEMBER - 15 DECEMBER)

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme A.III

The initial programme for Stage III attempted a 75:25 SDL:ODL ratio, notwithstanding that the approach of the public examinations meant that any changes to routine, especially to the security of structured taught classes, were bound to be alarming. However, the students had all along tacitly accepted the experimental nature of the course and the proposed programme was accordingly introduced on the first day of A.III (3 November) which, according to most Diaries, was particularly traumatic. Even reticent students were vehement in their objections to the programme (the 'Initial Programme' section of **Table A:6**), in principle and practice.[47] From the research perspective the most notable feature of the day, apart from the resurgence of complaints about levels, was the rejection of discussion as a means to democratic student input to the programme. While the first attempt to involve the students in planning their own course had proved

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[46]References are at: [12F.1/A11/13 Oct/A.II], [12F.2/A3/15 Oct/A.II], [12F.3/A11/15 Oct/A.II], [12F.5/A3/21 Oct/A.II], [12F.6/A5/21 Oct/A.II], [12F.7/A11/21 Oct/A.II], [12F.8/A9/22 Oct/A.II], [12F.9/A8/24 Oct/A.II], [12F.10/A5/28 Oct/A.II].

[47]For a full treatment of student responses see the heading Peer Support below.

Table A:6. *Course A Stage III: Initial and Interim Programmes, 3 and 4 November*

A.III		Initial Programme (3 November)	
In-class	09.00 - 09.55	Support teams (group-selected work)	[DSDL}
	10.00 - 10.50	Library/Laboratory (individual work)	[ISDL]
	11.10 -12.00	Support teams (individual work)	[ISDL]
	12.05 - 13.00	Class-request work	[DODL]
Out-class		Diary	
		Two exercises, coursebook current unit (for correction)	
		Class library material of choice (not for correction)	

A.III		Interim Programme (4 November)	
In-class	09.00 - 09.55	Review out-class work on coursebook unit	[DODL]
	10.00 - 10.50	Support team work on problems	[DSDL]
	11.10 -12.00	Language laboratory	[ISDL]
	12.05 - 13.00	Review of Pitman (optional exam) papers	[DODL]
Out-class		(no change)	

Note. The learning mode references (DSDL, DODL, etc.) have been added as a guide to ODL:SDL proportions in the two programmes.

unproductive, a later discussion had seemed beneficial. The preliminary stage had noted the putative value of student-input, for which there is ample support in the literature and in the daily 'refer and defer' of teachers of adults. However, student input to a group programme implies consensus, and it had been clearly demonstrated in A.I that where differing levels, if not capabilities, have different needs, such consensus may be lacking. The problems surfaced again: "In my opinion it was a mistake not to divide the class at least one month ago. We are too many people in our class with too different personalities." —[1.4/A4/3 Nov/A.III]. Over-all, the responses confirmed other (non-experimental) occasions on which the co-ordinator had found, particularly with some national groupings, that not all students in conventional classes welcome the opportunity of input into their own programme. Some are unsettled, interpreting 'democracy' as a lack of organisation, of will, of ability, or as an attempt to evade what they regard as 'the teacher's responsibilities', rather than as a genuine attempt to share what many see as the teacher's 'power'. In Stage III a lower-level student, evidently disaffected by the tentative nature of the programme, put a good case for traditional direction:

> We have still the same problems like in the beginning. That's the differences among the best and the worst students. You canot find a solution which is for all of us brillant. There is no need to discuss every week the same problems. Everybody has the same aim – pass the examination. We need a teacher who brings us surely to this aim. It doesn't matter on which way or if it's sometimes boring for some of us. But this way must follow on a scheme. It seems to be sometimes a big disorganisation. I am afraid about this, then in six weeks we will be arrived on the death line. [1.3/A2/3 Nov/A.III]

However much the remarks simply represent frustration at programme changes, they point up several factors for consideration within an institutional student-independence ethic:

- the problem of levels in relation to a group programme
- the co-ordinator's role in terms of 'leadership' rather than co-equality
- the value placed by students upon clear-cut programmes/schedules
- the acceptance of occasional boredom (i.e. a willingness to compromise)
- democratic discussion and student-input associated with 'disorganisation'
- the fear of time-loss in examination-preparation.

Student input in the form of open-forum discussion was not seen as a substitute for purposeful institutional control of the learning.[48] While another student appeared to support the concept of student-democracy, in her context she came down in favour of teacher-control:

> I think it would be better if the teacher said that we are going to do what he wants and everybody does what he says otherwise it will happen what is happening now. Truely I feel now indiferent and I think I'm not going to make an opinion. We are thirteen people in the class and it's very difficult to agreed everyone.... It's a good idea to ask students their opinions but in this class is completely impossible. [1.7/A9/3 Nov/A.III]

Far from seeing other-direction as an imposition, this student was unsettled by an apparent breakdown in good order. Several others were also disturbed and demoralised by the frequent changes to the programme

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[48] In learner-centred programmes at least as much account must be taken of what students *want* as of what they *need*.

[1.5/A5/3 Nov/A.III], [1.6/A6/3 Nov/A.III], [1.7/A9/3 Nov/A.III], [1.9/A11/3 Nov/A.III], [1.10/A12/3 Nov/A.III]. For one student, however, it was the SDL ethos itself which came into question:

> In my opinion this method would be a good way for me to improve and better my weak points. I'm well accustomed to working independently and therefor I think I wouldn't have any problems, but I have some hesitations. The problem is that the majority of my schoolmates just left school and therefor they may be not accustomed to working in this way, but now I need the help of some other students for this way of work. If the majority is not able or not willing to handel wiht independence we have to find an other way – quickly! I'm in favour in carring on, on the one hand because it's a good way for me to improve, (I'm a bit selfish!) and on the other hand because it's very 'unpleasand' to waste the little and expensive time we have with hunting for 'better' methods. [1.8/A10/3 Nov/A.III]

On almost all grounds, the objections to the new programme were compelling, with only one student in addition to [A10] expressing part-support for the self-directed elements: "What I like about it is: if it's a little problem and individual, the new phase is quite good for not wasting time. And one doesn't have to listen to grammar-classes one has heard already a few times. So one can concentrate on things which are more necessary and useful. What I don't like ...." —[1.2/A1/3 Nov/A.III].

Notwithstanding unfavourable reaction to programme changes, the Diaries as well as the plenary discussion made it clear that further adjustments had to be made. The interim programme for 4 November (the 'Interim Programme' section of **Table A:6**) therefore approximated to the MIDL balance of the final programme which was to be adopted on 5 November. Whatever contribution was made to the SDL of 4 November by the support teams and the language laboratory, the co-ordinator noted that the examination-needs dominated, with advice and testing requiring a plenary format [14.4/CR/4 Nov/A.III]. The only responses to the interim arrangements were favourable: "The new programme seemed to be quite reasonable." —[1.12/A1/4 Nov/A.III]; "We continued with groub [= group] works. I am beginning to like this new system." —[1.13/A2/4 Nov/A.III]; "I feel quite well in this way of class." —[1.14/A10/4 Nov/A.III].

Above all, the beginning of Stage III confirmed the limits of SDL within a viable MIDL programme in this environment. The essential components were confirmed as: clear-cut directives; a student-acceptable balance between plenary DODL, DSDL pairgroup and ISDL work; a manageable out-class regime. At this time the co-ordinator was in some distress and doubt about the future of the programme, but proceeded with the changes:

> No way to reconcile the competing 'needs' .... Decision yesterday: prepare class-programme based on analysis of total work-load over time available against variable constraints of 'exam-dates etc.' Objective: reassure the [nationality] who like timetables, give directives to the 'I don't know what to do [nationality], let the socialites plan their outside activities, let it be seen that 'the teacher's role' is still very much part of the plan, include 'chalk-talk' element, reduce HW to manageable proportions whilst accomplishing the 'grammar' needs of the course, incorporate a 'listening' element which cannot be handled on an 'all-together' basis, as well as a listening element which must be so handled, allow for 'class-admin' which otherwise interrupts a planned programme, incorporate a class-as-a-whole 'teacher-as-resource' element, and somehow centre round the essential 'autonomy' [= SDL] core of Stage III whilst ensuring that it improves rather than diminishes the morale of every student, and every student's chances in the exams – including now the ... Pitman [voluntary public examination], which calls for a

different set of skills from the FCE [voluntary public examination]. Up to midnight yesterday drawing up the programme. [14.5/CR/5 Nov/A.III]

The rationalised new Programme, time-tabled and segmented, was presented to the class on the morning of 5 November, the third day of A.III (**Table A:7**). In light of the recent experiences of plenary student-democracy, the presentation was made in a highly 'directive' manner, and the responses were supportive: "The new programme seems to be quite good, the only thing I'm missing is [CR] marking the free style exercises." —[1.15/A1/5 Nov/A.III]; "We received a new programme for the last 6 weeks. It seems to be very good – well done [CR]." —[1.16/A2/5 Nov/A.III]; "I feel me happier now, because we have now a system that seems to be quite good." —[1.18/A6/5 Nov/A.III]; "... I like the program and at the same time gives confidence for all that people that were not sure what would happen the following week." —[1.21/A12/5 Nov/A.III]. Even [A3] was somewhat mollified: "I feel better now because I know what we will do the next weeks." —[1.17/A3/5 Nov/A.III]. The five comments on the following two days were all favourable: [1.22 Fr 6 Nov/A.III], [1.23/A7/6 Nov/A.III], [1.24/A10/6 Nov/A.III], [1.25/A4/7 Nov/A.III], [1.26/A12/7 Nov/A.III]. By 10 November [A3] had overcome her reservations "I enjoy this stage III and think I learn a lot." —[1.27/A3/10 Nov/A.III]. [A7] said she was happy with the new method, which gave those who wanted to work the chance to do so, while covering most of the individual problems; however, she had reservations about the language laboratory [1.28/A7/10 Nov/A.III]. It had been <a crucial 'make-or-break' day.> —[14.5/CR/5 Nov/A.III]

The programme continued to be satisfactory in general [1.31/A9/18 Nov/A.III], [4.87/A4/20 Nov/A.III]. On 19 November one student commented: "I think the new program is actually quite good, especially the 12.00 to 1.00 lesson." —[1.32/A1/19 Nov/A.III]. The session referred to is DODL (the topic sometimes being at students' discretion) and the extract points up the fact that teaching need not be seen by competent self-directed learners as conflicting with their auto-responsibility. Comments were also favourable on the following day: "I think that the programme we are following now suits us quite well." —[1.33/A7/20 Nov/A.III]; "I'm enjoying the new programme very much." —[1.34/A12/20 Nov/A.III]. Into December the responses to the MIDL programme continued to be mainly favourable: "In general I'm happy with the, in my opinion, well working class system." —[1.37/A10/2 Dec/A.III]; "I enjoy myself during the class." —[1.38/A11/4 Dec/A.III].

The final five days of the course, together with the following Monday, were largely devoted to examination preparation and practices in DODL mode, which elicited a few neutral and favourable responses [4.178/A8/11 Dec/A.III], [4.174/A8/10 Dec/A.III], [4.164/A5/8 Dec/A.III], [4.177/A5/11 Dec/A.III].

Materials and Equipment A.III

In this Stage the references to materials and equipment were closely allied to their use, and have therefore been subsumed under appropriate other headings.

Composition of Class A.III

No comments were transcribed on the composition of the class during A.III.

Table A:7. *Course A Stage III, Programme 5 November - 12 December*

PROGRAMME STAGE III						
Day	Date	9.00-9.50	10.00-10.50	11.10-12.00	12.10-1.00	HOMEWORK
		HW Reviews Supp. Teams	Lab Free Study	Class Library	Teaching Resource Sessions	
[M]	[3/11]	[Formation etc. of Support Teams + explanation + discuss concept]				any two: 16/48/49/78
[T]	[4/11]	[16/48/49/78]	[support tms]	[lab]	[H.Inter reviews/selectns.]	17-50A
W	5/11	17/50A			Summary writing	50B-50C
TH	6/11	50B/50C			Dictation	79-92
F	7/11	79/92			Listening summary	110A-B-PT1
M	10/11	110A/110B			Grammar requests	51-80
T	11/11	51/80			Texts	103-52
W	12/11	103/52			Listening summary	81A/B-53A
TH	13/11	81A/B/53A			Dictation	53B-54
F	14/11	53B/54			Assignments	82-93-PT2
M	17/11	82/93			Grammar requests	18-83
T	18/11	18/83			Texts	112 A-B
W	19/11	112A/112B			Listening summary	19A/B/C/D
TH	20/11	19A/B/C/D			Dictation	55A-56
F	21/11	55A/56			Assignments	84-57-PT3
M	24/11	84/57			Grammar requests	58-85
T	25/11	58/85			Texts	104-20A/B
W	26/11	104/20A/20B			Listening summary	59-108 study
TH	27/11	59/108 vocab.			Dictation	108 write
F	28/11	108 writing			Assignments	60A-60B-PT4
M	1/12	60A/60B			Grammar requests	61-62
T	2/12	61/ 62			Texts	86-94
W	3/12	86/ 94			Listening summary	98 A/B
TH	4/12	98A/98B			Dictation	105-63
F	5/12	105/63			Video Show (?)	113A-PT5
M	8/12	113A		Pr. Test 6 →		113B
T	9/12	113B		Pr. Test 7 →		64-87
W	10/12	64/ 87	FCE PTs →			Revision
TH	11/12	Questionnaires	FCE PTs →			Revision
F	12/12	Questionnaires	FCE PTs →			Revision
M	15/12					
T	16/12					
W	17/12					
TH	18/12					
F	19/12					

N.B.
1. Circumstances - in particular exam. dates/times when known - may oblige some amendments.
2. HW must be done on the due day and must be handed in at 9.00 a.m.
3. After HW has been handed in it will be reviewed by me in plenary.
4. The answers/explanations review is to be followed by Support Team sessions at which each team will discuss any problems remaining (team leaders will be supported by [AA01] and me).
5. 'Lab. Work' and 'Class Library Work' Sheets are to be completed daily.
6. 'Class Library Work' will be done on an individual basis and, wherever practicable, questions will be answered and work marked on the spot.

DODL Elements A.III

On the first day of Stage III (3 November) there had been several direct calls for DODL: "I desagree with the new programm. I prefer the [CR's] explanation for the grammar.... I know that it is difficult to organise the class because there are a lot of levels within it. But I would prefer to continue working as we did last week [i.e. with taught and/or directed classes]." —[1.9/A11/3 Nov/A.III]; "... wasting time. For me, the best way to learn would be to learn grammar. It probably would make me full-filled." —[8.3/A8/3 Nov/A.III]; "I prefer you teaching grammar on the blackboard, and the days we did that I learnt much more." —[10.1/A5/3 Nov/A.III].

The programme adjustments on the second and third days incorporated an increased DODL element, and the MIDL programme was thereafter well-received. On 10 November [A2] commented that he could not get enough of the grammar-request lessons [4.29/A2/10 Nov/A.III]. In general, DODL examination preparation was found useful and/or interesting with occasional boredom.[49] On 13 November there were eight favourable comments on the other-directed talk and discussion on Irish history, and for the next few days the comments on DODL elements were either neutral or favourable.

The close run-up to the Cambridge examinations required DODL-mode plenary examination practices, advice, commentary, and so on, and comments on these final days were generally descriptive-neutral, with two students remarking favourably: "I like a lot the class now. It's very active. We work a lot and, in fact, it's very interesting." —[4.178/A8/11 Dec/A.III]; [4.174/A8/10 Dec/A.III]; [4.164/A5/8 Dec/A.III].

For mock-examination practices the desks were changed from a horseshoe arrangement to a traditional examination layout. One comment, although isolated, was relevant not only to the MIDL research but also to the much-discussed question of teacher-centredness or teacher-focus, and had research-worthy implications for class-atmosphere, efficiency, and student-satisfaction:

> I find this week extremely useful. We're doing a lot of practice for the exam and learning more than in other systems we've tested. Because of the position of the desks, now we're more concentrated on the teacher and don't look so much to the others. When we put the desks like this (at the first moment) I thought that that was going to create an not-so-friendly ambiance but we would work better, but the fact is that the ambiance is the same (and we're working better as well!). [4.177/A5/11 Dec/A.III]

If nothing else, the extract challenges assumptions about classroom layout and suggests that entrenched DODL assumptions remain open to research.

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing A.III

Institutions, as well as subjective-response data, benefit from responsibly forthright students, and one who gave most evidence of antipathy to the course was particularly outspoken when dissatisfied. Taken on its

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[49]Favourable references are at: [4.30/A3/10 Nov/A.III], [4.31/A4/10 Nov/A.III], [4.32/A5/10 Nov/A.III], [4.34/A9/10 Nov/A.III], [4.39/A4/11 Nov/A.III], [4.40/A5/11 Nov/A.III], [4.48/A9/12 Nov/A.III]; unfavourable references are at: [4.33/A6/10 Nov/A.III], [4.35/A11/10 Nov/A.III], [4.43/A11/11 Nov/A.III].

own, an extract from the first day of Stage III (3 November) suggests a complete breakdown of morale: "I feel me really bad, because after this morning I think that my sojourn here is a waste of money and time." [5.1/A6/3 Nov/A.III]. But, two days later, after introduction of the finalised programme, she was in a better frame of mind: "I feel me happier now, because we have now a system that seems to be quite good." [1.18/A6/5 Nov/A.III]. Taken over-all, and even allowing for overlapping, the bulk of her responses are favourable.[50] Another student who, notwithstanding many favourable responses to the course, was also not uncritical, appeared to have enjoyed her host-family and out-class life, and her morale was generally high (e.g. [5.11/A11/12 Nov/A.III], [5.33/A11/4 Dec/A.III]). But she was not sorry to leave: "This is my last week in the [institution]. I'm quite happy to finish the course. I had had enough." [5.36/A11/8 Dec/A.III]. Despite her high level of 'communicative' English, unaccountably she was the only member of the class who did not pass the First Certificate Examination. But as her favourable and unfavourable comments straddle the same categories of ODL and SDL components it can not be established from the data which aspects of the experimental programme disadvantaged her.[51] All that can be said is that for this student, [A11], who had put in so much effort and time and money, failure in the examination must have come as a terrible blow, notwithstanding prior indications on her out-class setwork records. The sample record at **Table A:8** shows that two other students, who nonetheless passed the examination, ([A2] and [A12]), warranted comparably alarming feedback remarks. There were sufficient indications that she was not entirely comfortable with the methodology, and perhaps she would have passed in a conventional class. The problem was knowing the extent to which democratically inspired complaint warranted wholesale, and possibly equally disruptive, remedial action. But, in whatever way the course failed her, it clearly did, and for that the co-ordinator felt personally responsible.[52]

One student was more apt to express herself on health, energy, or morale [5.4/A4/7 Nov/A.III]; [5.8/A4/11 Nov/A.III]; [5.10/A4/12 Nov/A.III], [5.13/A4/14 Nov/A.III], [5.26/A4/2 Dec/A.III]. The Diaries of [A8] are perhaps the most personally revealing: "I enjoy if I can write about what I do outside class." [5.5/A8/7 Nov/A.III]. She had her handbag stolen but the majority of references are to telephone contact with her father, and to her family, with whom she continued throughout the course to have close and urgent communication.[53] Without such explicit diary extracts it is certain that the extent to which this student was affected by her out-home experiences would have remained unknown; but regrettably, their effect on her responses to the learning modes can only be conjectured.

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[50]The references in **Appendix D-A III** are (with duplicate entries in brace brackets): eight unfavourable ({1.1}, {1.6}, 1.35, 4.7, 4.26, 4.109, {5.1}, 9.129, 8.2, 8.24), one mixed ({4.28}, {4.33}), and fourteen favourable (1.18, 1.22, 4.56, 4.89, 4.103, 4.145, 9.53, 10.48, 10.56, 10.112, 10.122, 12F.8, 12F.10, 12F.22). There is some overlap of themes in the 'favourable'.

[51]There are six unfavourable references in **Appendix D-A III** ({1.9}, {4.2}, 4.35, 4.43, 10.11, 10.29, 8.4) and twenty favourable (1.38, 1.39, 4.16, 4.21, 4.58, 4.75, 4.92, 4.98, 4.112, 4.120, 4.125, 4.146, 9.14, 9.41, 9.62, 9.93, 9.102, 10.42, 8.27, 8.34).

[52]Despite every rationalisation, teachers continue to feel responsible. And until the public examination system emulates the universities in taking account of the candidate as well as fallible marking schemes, they will feel sorrow for students who do not deserve to fail.

[53]The references are (5.5, 5.6, 5.9, 5.14, 5.15, 5.17, 5.20, 5.27, 5.30, 5.34, 5.37, 5.38, 5.39, 5.41).

Table A:8. *Course A Stage III, Sample Out-Class Setwork Group Status Record 14 November - 19 November*

HOMEWORK EXERCISES - STATUS RECORD

	Fri 14/11			Mon 17/11		Tue 18/11	Examination	Wed 19/11		
	ex 82	ex 93 (letter)	Prog. Test 2	ex 18	ex 83	ex 112	Indicator	ex 19 A/B	ex 19 C/D	Listen. summary
	roots vocab	blank dialog.	p. 18 cloze	order of adjs.	roots vocab	para writing	(a word to the wise)	reflexives	omitted refl's	(from classwork)
[A1]	+ + cs	+	+ +	+	#	not done	not done	+ +	+ +	not done
[A2]	+ cs!	# logic!	# cs	-	- cs!	- - basics !!	FAIL 'E' or 'F'	- - cs	+ + cs	+
[A3]	#	+ mismatches	- - !	+ commas cs	#	+	Probable Pass 'C'	#	+ +	-
[A4]	#	+ +	-	+ +	+ cs	+	Probable Pass 'C'	+ +	+ +	+
[A5]	- - nfi cs unfin.	+ basics!	+ + (nfi)	#	+ cs	+	Pass 'C'	+ + n	+ + n	+ n
[A6]	+	+ +	-	+ +	+	#	Possible Pass 'C'	+ +	+ +	not done
[A7]	+ + cs	not done	not done	+	- -	#	Possible Pass 'C'	-	+ basic error!	- - basics !! cs
[A8]	-	-	- - basics!	- - !	- logic	- - basics!!	FAIL 'F'	- - ! nu!	- - basics!	+ basics
[A9]	+ + cs	+ +	+ (nfi)	+ +	+ +	wrong HW	wrong HW	+ +	+ +	+
[A10]	+	- - basics	-	- basics	+	+	Probable Pass 'C'	- - ! nu plurals	- - ! nu basics	not done
[A11]	- - logic cs	- - logic!	#	- - !	- logic	-	Probable FAIL 'D'	- -	+ + nfi	-
[A12]	- cs	- basics!	- - ! nfi!	- -	- -	- - basics !!	FAIL 'F'	+ + *	+ + *	# **

People who still have 'basic' problems at this stage should seriously consider not sitting the exam.
'Not done' = practice and correction opportunity lost -- the difference between Pass and Fail is just one mark!

* CONGRATULATIONS on all three!
** final 2 points reduced assessment

nu = structure not understood; nfi = not following instructions; mp = more practice needed; cs = copying/spelling errors; n = neatness; cw = careless work
+ + = no problem; + = good acceptable; # = acceptable; - = partly acceptable, but problems; - - = not acceptable; ! = extremely unacceptable

Note. On Course B the grading explanations/remarks were to be amended slightly to cater for 'resubmissions' of unacceptable work.

By Stage III another student, who had been very dissatisfied with the early part of the course, had settled down, and was expressing regret when she could not attend class [5.2/A9/5 Nov/A.III], [5.12/A9/13 Nov/A.III]. But not long afterwards she was the victim of another traumatic incident, and again there is no way to estimate the effect on her studies or her responses to the course. £200 was stolen from her handbag in a pub:

> I didn't feel like going to class. I was crying every five minutes. It's terrible. I went to the police .... I haven't gone out. I've been watching TV all the day without really caring. This is another bad experience in Ireland and has affected me a lot. I feel very depressed and I think I'll always have problems. [5.19/A9/21 Nov/A.III]

The students were not alone in feeling stress; administration diary extracts for the co-ordinator reveal something of his morale at the start of A.III. On 4 November he wrote:

> ... the sheer 'necessities' of the class dominate: no way that Pitman [voluntary public examination] can be avoided and no other way of advising/testing etc. except 'en masse'.... No way ... of achieving so many conflicting objectives.... the whole research endeavour is at great risk.... Finished after midnight yesterday .... very physically/psychologically distressed at end – went on too long without a break – and must nip stress-symptoms in the bud now. [14.4/CR/4 Nov/A.III]

And something of the strain is revealed in an extract from 5 November, the day the final programme was presented to the class;

> No way to reconcile the competing 'needs' .... Sleepless ... nights and ... stress-filled 16 hour days ... no time to think or plan, no precedents .... Totally alone.... Decision yesterday: prepare class-programme .... Up to midnight yesterday drawing up the programme.... Today has been a crucial 'make-or-break' day. [14.5/CR/5 Nov/A.III]

There was an improvement in his morale with the success of the revised programme: <... the 'admin' side is shaping up very well.> [14.6/CR/6 Nov/A.III].

Close to the end of the course a student who was normally reticent in personal matters said how much he had enjoyed his time in Ireland [5.23/A2/1 Dec/A.III]. Another, similarly, talked of having few days left in Ireland to enjoy herself [5.29/A3/3 Dec/A.III], and said that while she was sad at leaving the class she was happy to be going home [5.40/A3/12 Dec/A.III].[54]

Counselling Consultation A.III

In Stage III there was again minimal need for counselling. It helped to overcome anxieties about Support Teams [6.1/CR/3 Nov/A.III], [6.2/A12/3 Nov/A.III], [6.3/A8/4 Nov/A.III], and to cope with homesickness [6.6/CR/20 Nov/A.III] (notes from a counselling interview with [A8], and her corresponding diary extract, are at **Table A:9**). Another occasion offered reassurance to a student needing the security of organisation, and finding it difficult to adjust to a co-ordinator/student relationship based on rapport rather than authority [6.4/CR/5 Nov/A.III]. One student, whose constant lateness was the result of a slow metabolism, appreciated some understanding of her problem [6.4/CR/5 Nov/A.III], [6.5/A7/10 Nov/A.III].

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[54]The same extract also indicates a lighter side to the strict regime.

Table A:9. *Counselling Interview [A8] 4 Nov (Course A Stage III) - re Working in a Support Team*

The notes were made immediately after the interview and convey the sense rather than the precise words of each adjacency pair.

[CR] Why do you feel bad?

[A8] Other people were able to help me but I couldn't help anyone else.

[CR] Would you prefer it if there were no support teams?

[A8] No — the idea is good, but I feel ashamed at being the worst in the group. I know my English is very bad but I don't want to constantly be reminded of it.

[CR] Is your feeling a reality?

[A8] No — I know it's subjective, but I don't like being the worst at anything. In school I was at the top of my class — here I'm at the bottom.

[CR] Would you like to go to a beginner's class, where you would always be 'the best'?

[A8] No — I don't want any 'look at me, look at me' — in school I always felt embarrassed at being held up as a model.

[CR] We can change your class or keep you here — which?

[A8] I'm very happy here, even if the workload is too heavy. I don't want something easy, because I won't work or study. The higher level makes me work.

(Then follows a long private conversation)

FINALLY: She is happy to stay (was worried she might be asked to leave the class); will take Intermediate Pitman and will accept it if I tell her not to attempt FCE when the time comes. She said she feels much better when she can talk over her problems like this. VERY nice girl.

Extract from student's diary regarding the interview:

6.3/A8/4 Nov/A.III: "For me it is very helpful to speak with [CR]. I think [CR is] the best teacher I have had. It's completely true. Any other teacher I have had has [not?] been worried about me and never has tried to help me, because I was only one among a lot of pupils. [Here expresses thanks] It is really pleasant that someone be worried and try to help to another people in their problems and more if that 'someone' is the teacher."

Out-Class Environment A.III

Extracts follow closely those already given for other Stages, with most students continuing to enjoy the cinema, television, pop concerts, and the pubs. One Spanish student was delighted and amazed to witness Trinity College (Dublin University) Commencements – she had seen graduates wearing academic dress only in films [7.16/A9/14 Nov/A.III]. This was the same student who had had another experience of reality, when £200 was stolen from her bag in a pub [7.27/A9/20 Nov/A.III]. One student, commenting on his whole stay, had found the environment congenial: "If I think about my time here in Ireland I can only say: 'It was very nice'. Especially the Irisch people who I met they were really brilliant.... I'm sure that I will miss the nice pubs and the tasty Guinness. Something I won't miss is the bus. That is the worst I've ever seen. But the buses are only a tiny part in my experience here in Ireland." —[7.37/A2/1 Dec/A.III]. Another student commented: "I remember that it was hard too, to get used to the new Irish culture. For exemple the food always very simple cooked and the well-known vegetables patatoes. In the second place the weather: cold and miserable. But apart from that I must say that Irish people are very very friendly and kind." —[7.50/A11/8 Dec/A.III]. Adjustment to host-family life was difficult for one [7.51/A8/9 Dec/A.III]. There was some end-of-course celebration: "In the evening there was a student party in the [institution] and it was very nice. [A6], [A4] and I decided to go away and have dinner together. We celebrated the end of the course and that we had a funny, crazy time together." [7.54/A3/12 Dec/A.III].

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support A.III

In the ongoing attempts to share responsibility between the co-ordinator and the students, on the first day of Stage III (3 November) the evolution of pairgroups into Support Teams was formalised by the appointment of team leaders, agreed by the members of each team on the recommendation of the co-ordinator. The role of the leaders had been agreed in principle but their guidance and/or peer-tutoring role proved impracticable. While the non-interventional presence of the co-ordinator during most 'free-study' time, had made it possible to transform traditional 'pair' and 'group' work into the experimental self-directed pairgroup concept, the idea of working under the direction of a fellow-student was rejected outright.[55] The record indicates how the support teams were initiated and the attempts made to promote a student-led realisation of the notion, which, had it succeeded, would have been the first step in converting support teams from DSDL to ISDL mode:

> Class hassle re Support Teams. [A11] ... 'I can't do it.' ... Left them alone to cope (after thorough intro and explanation) while I made out a good copy of the Status Reports .... [A11] comes 'Can you come back to class – big problem'.... Reassure, cajole, encourage, explain, motivate, rationalise etc. etc. Still, [A6] wants to revert to grammar – supported by all bar [A4], [A7] and [A10]. [8.1/CR/3 Nov/A.III]

The team leaders felt inadequate to the task of giving advice or instruction to their nominal peers in a topic they were themselves learning: "What I don't like about it is the fact that I have a big responsibility. I'm

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[55]The co-ordinator's permanent availability to the learners contrasted with, for example, the rationed 'helper' times of the early CRAPEL programmes (Henner-Stanchina & Riley, 1978)

really afraid of making a mistake. And the other thing is I feel heavy if I'm not able to explain something clearly. But I think it's rather difficult to find a compromis." —[1.2/A1/3 Nov/A.III]; "I'm very unhappy with this new system. First I thought that these supporter groups are a good idea. But after this morning I don't think so at all. I don't think that this method is helpful to anyone. really I don't know the grammar so good that I can explain it to other persons. And also I'm really afraid of the fact that I could explain something wrong. Another point is that we have too less time. I think this system needs some time until it works, but we have only a few weeks left!" —[8.2/A6/3 Nov/A.III]; "I had to help [A10] and [A7] for the grammar. I tried to but I couldn't give them help: first because I don't know very well the grammar, second I'm afraid to be responsible, third we pay this school for the teacher not for the students.... And if this team is one of the reason to impruve our English, I defenitely don't accept it!" —[8.4/A11/3 Nov/A.III]. The remark about paying for a teacher is of major significance in this context. The general response was disaffection: "We started the class in groups of three people with a 'leader' team [= team leader] in each group. But, as usual, some people were not in agreeament with the idea of the 'Suport Teams'. The main reason for that was that the leaders didn't want to be responsables for the all group. They didn't feel well at the time to give an explanation for the problems and the rest of the group didn't respond very well about the 'Support Teams'." —[8.5/A12/3 Nov/A.III].[56]

There were other reasons for rejection: "... not in groups because is too confusing ...." —[1.5/A5/3 Nov/A.III]; "I think the support teams are not the best way to learn english. I think it's a waste of time. In fact, the idea is good but – it would be good if we would have more time.... The Support Team makes me feel stupid, ignorant and the most important, wasting time.... I know we must comunicate each other but I can not comunicate with another person if I haven't knowledge or bases on english." —[8.3/A8/3 Nov/A.III]. The only student to comment favourably on Support Teams did so as a result of an out-class paracounselling consultation [8.5/A12/3 Nov/A.III], [6.1/CR/3 Nov/A.III], [6.2/A12/3 Nov/A.III].

It was possible that a more thorough pre-briefing of the team-leaders on the extent of their role, and the teacher-support available, might have avoided at least some of the problems. The very negative attitude of [A11], perhaps the reflection of a general (rather than context-specific) unwillingness to take a leadership role, may have unduly influenced the others, and in retrospect [A12], who would have liked to be selected, might have made a better team leader [6.1/CR/3 Nov/A.III]. Whether or not the co-ordinator's 'recommendation' of team leaders, as opposed to no leaders or team-appointed leaders may have created an unacceptable situation of responsibility without peer-sanctioned authority, it was, in any case, necessary to reformulate the Support Teams and rethink the leader function.

The hitherto unproblematical issue of in-class self-direction surfaced, as other extracts indicate: "We organised our class in different groups. I think the idea to study independently is good. It's only the feeling of waste of time and money to stay in school, that means I also could stay at home and do my homework. I like to study that way and I can do that but other people hate it." —[1.4/A4/3 Nov/A.III]. The same *prima facie* objection had been made by a student during the preliminary phase, and perhaps the most effective response to it is provision of an enriched institutional environment offering self-directed facilities unavailable at home. In other MIDL contexts the students might have access to language assistants, tutors, and lecturers, and to

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[56]It is worth contrasting responses to this 'compulsory' leadership role with those relating to voluntary help in Class Library/Support Team contexts.

fully stocked and staffed cross-referenced resource libraries of books, journals, magazines, and digests, with laboratory, video, and computer backup. However, this enquiry was concerned with student responses to MIDL in less-than-ideal circumstances, in an environment with no precedents for self-direction, with students expecting nothing but DODL. One level-headed student, otherwise not given to self-expression, put a very clear case:

> Today we started out with the 'Support Teams' programme, working alone. I didn't like that. I know students are supposed to be able to work by themselves, doing individual work and have learnt to cope with things without the teacher, but I can't do that, I feel I'm not really studying or learning. I suppose some of the others feel like me, in part because we aren't mature enough, and in part due of the bad education-system. In Spain, until this year, I was teached like a child, and without any freedom. I felt stupid. Now, I think your ideas are quite different from that, but I'm not prepared, that is, and I'm not the [only?] one. I prefer you teaching grammar on the blackboard, and the days we did that I learnt much more. [10.1/A5/3 Nov/A.III]

It is unsure whether or not she would have had the same feelings if overt and explicit 'learning-to-learn' guidance had replaced, or supplemented, the ODL/SDL mediation, or whether, in any case, she would have felt that she learnt more when taught than when not. Another student (referring to 3 November, although the Diary is dated 4 November), summed up the general feeling:

> This morning we spent a lot of time to work individual in our support group and discussed about our 3rd stage in the experimental programme. I don't feel happy about our system. I could also stay at home, sleep till ten o'clock and do the same work in less time in a peaceful atmosphere. To do HW in class is really a waste of time and a waste of money. Our time till the FCE is too short to do this. There are not months left, there are just weeks left! I feel terrible when I think at the exam. I came to this school to improve my writing and learn a lot of grammar. Actually I wanted to do a good exam, but forget about that!!!
>
> Our English is not good enough to do individual work. We all still need a lot of feed back from a teacher. This experiment might be good for students with a higher level. But we all have lots of problems to have sorted out. I know it is difficult to teach so many students with different levels. But I prefer the ordinary kind of teaching: grammar on the blackboard, reading, discussions and exercises for HW. I don't mind to hear a grammar point several times. Everybody discovers something he didn't know before or he wasn't 100% sure. It is still better than to go home with the feeling to have done nothing in class. [1.11/A3/4 Nov/A.III]

This contrasts with her later entries [4.17/A3/6 Nov/A.III] and [1.27/A3/10 Nov/A.III]. She obtained a 'B' Pass in the FCE. Even where the call for DODL was less explicit, there was still an expressed need for feedback. Notwithstanding that self-evaluation is seen by some educators as a *sine qua non* of autonomous learning, in a MIDL environment external evaluation must be taken for granted: "I'd like individual work, but if I work all the morning myself and at the end the most of my work won't be corrected then I have really to ask me why I don't stay in Switzerland and study a grammar book. Really, I don't mind to work alone all the morning but then I wish that you at least correct my work." —[1.6/A6/3 Nov/A.III]. Notwithstanding any justification for student-requested evaluation as within the DSDL pairgroup ethos or its putative value as a prop to the SDL elements, there were serious time-constraints:

> Now 11.20 pm – just finished marking.... No time.... [A1] objected seriously/strongly to not being able to get her HW 'free-study' materials marked.... Today's was a typical example of time-problems – 3 exercises each (plus a little backlog) took over 3½ hours ... on top of a full

> day's work plus lectures.... No study-time, library time, 'recreation' time, no free reading, no television ... nothing except work ... and ... after a full day's class-work [= marking and administration] on both Saturday and Sunday – again no study etc. [14.3/CR/3 Nov/A.III]

In addition to the normal classroom paracounselling, feedback mechanisms were provided by individual setwork marking and correction and regular plenary trouble-shooting sessions, as well as by student Status Reports, and personal interviews. Although peer-correction continued to be a feature of pairgroup work the failure of the peer-tutoring attempt meant that it was never incorporated into the programmes. However, there was no evidence that the rejection of formal peer-tutoring had any effects on other manifestations of peer support, and a later extract indicates that DSDL pairgroup activities continued to be popular: "... I really enjoyed myself doing the exercice about the 'Stenlay family' ...." —[8.25/A10/20 Nov/A.III].

Laboratory A.III

Most extracts on the language laboratory in Stage III are neutral descriptive, an indication that the ISDL laboratory work was accepted as an integral part of the students' schedules. There are very favourable comments from one student [9.6/A9/4 Nov/A.III], [9.28/A9/10 Nov/A.III], [9.40/A9/12 Nov/A.III]. One convert to the laboratory [9.16/A3/7 Nov/A.III] could still prefer a good taught session [9.44/A3/13 Nov/A.III] and, despite being a very competent learner who profited from the laboratory [9.58/A3/18 Nov/A.III] she could have difficulties with materials [9.50/A3/17 Nov/A.III], which another higher level student appeared to have no problems with [9.53/A6/17 Nov/A.III]. One student said that learning pronunciation was useful [9.41/A11/12 Nov/A.III], and another thought of extending his listening comprehension in the laboratory [9.49/A2/17 Nov/A.III]. Two students, despite acknowledging the value of the laboratory, never did grow to like it.[57] One student, who wrote very few Diaries, had expressed uncertainty about what materials to use in the class library, and also had pertinent reservations about the efficacy of the laboratory:

> The only dubt I have is about the language laboratory. I had started with drills in book D, which ones I already finished, and sometimes I had the impression that it didn't work for me. I didn't notice any progress in my work. Maybe I'm wrong or maybe I don't know how to use the language laboratory. Perhaps, the thing I don't understand or I can't see is how do you improve your english with it and what do you obtain at the end. (If I do something else different of the drills, maybe I would not have that dubt I DON'T KNOW.). [9.26/A7/10 Nov/A.III]

Although it is unlikely that she was left to her own uncertainties, there is no record that she was given any reassurance or paracounselling. She apparently did not share the benefits of the student who found the laboratory advantageous in introducing new vocabulary [9.78/A5/21 Nov/A.III], or the one who found grammar drills helpful with conversation [9.81/A11/21 Nov/A.III], and she continued to find it difficult to see progress when using drills [9.74/A7/20 Nov/A.III]. While listening comprehension was quite popular (e.g. [9.63/A12/18 Nov/A.III], [9.135/A5/4 Dec/A.III]), the over-all tendency was for stimulus-response drills to

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[57]The references are [9.10/A4/6 Nov/A.III], [9.67/A4/19 Nov/A.III], [9.77/A4/21 Nov/A.III], [9.117/A4/1 Dec/A.III], [9.140/A4/5 Dec/A.III], [9.12/A8/6 Nov/A.III], [9.27/A8/10 Nov/A.III], [9.47/A8/14 Nov/A.III], [9.54/A8/17 Nov/A.III].

be favoured (e.g. [9.62/A11/18 Nov/A.III]), notwithstanding their evident artificiality.[58] **Table A:10** gives a sample of a laboratory work record for the group.

Library A.III

In Stage III, in accordance with the spirit of student co-operation, there was some overlap of Support Teams and class library periods [10.30/A12/12 Nov/A.III], [10.36/A11/13 Nov/A.III], making discrete narrative comment both more difficult and less appropriate than otherwise. As stated above, the first day of this Stage, in which SDL featured prominently, proved to be very traumatic, with one student in particular offering very pertinent reasons why [10.1/A5/3 Nov/A.III]. However, after adjustments to achieve a better balance between ODL and SDL elements, by 5 November the class library sessions had again become, for most students, fully accepted and integrated into their own study regimes [10.2/A6/4 Nov/A.III], [10.3/A2/5 Nov/A.III], [10.4/A4/5 Nov/A.III], [10.5/A10/5 Nov/A.III]. There is evidence that during these sessions the co-ordinator spent time on feed-back marking of work done, and that he felt the task should not be allowed to intrude on a more active personal support role [10.6/CR/6 Nov/A.III]; there is also evidence that at least some materials allowed students to correct their own work [10.13/A3/7 Nov/A.III]. One student noted an important aspect of the support she needed: "It's difficult for us to find the book in the classlibrary that suits us better, because sometimes you think that you are weak in one thing and what you need is more practice in another point that you didn't realise you are weak. For that reason I have to ask [CR] if what I had chose, it suits me." [10.10/A7/6 Nov/A.III]. In contrast, another student appeared to have no such difficulty [10.13/A3/7 Nov/A.III]. An example of student-reported class library work for the group is at **Table A:11**.

Not every student was in agreement with the class library in practice: "I'm not satisfied with the new programm because I don't find the two free hours (from 9 till 10 and from 11 till 12) a good idea. Unfortunnally I can't study during this free time. I need to be in a separate room in my own." [10.11/A11/6 Nov/A.III]; and she also, it appeared, was still unhappy about the concept: "I still think that the 'class library work' is a waste of time. Instead of working for ourselves (for me impossible because I cannot concentrate with 13 people around me), we could spend the time doing some exercises." [10.29/A11/12 Nov/A.III]. She responded well when allowed to use a small room on her own [10.42/A11/14 Nov/A.III], and her further entries are routinely descriptive.

More positive was the response of a student who took advantage of an opportunity for feedback: "I finished my individual work on a 'Test Paper'. [CR] corrected it for me, the result was not to bad. I like to work on my own. I choose really this work which I need that makes sure that I never waste my time." [10.12/A2/7 Nov/A.III]. Another student used the occasions to catch up with work from the beginning of the course [10.5/A10/5 Nov/A.III], and yet another found materials to complement the coursebook [10.8/A4/6 Nov/A.III], while a third found help with her writing [10.17/A1/10 Nov/A.III], [10.43/A1/17 Nov/A.III]. There is evidence ([10.21/A10/10 Nov/A.III], [10.22/A1/11 Nov/A.III], [10.115/A3/3 Dec/A.III]) that what

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[58]Unless 'authentic' materials are 'unauthenticised' they cannot offer consistent repetition drills with identical intonation and stress.

Table A:10. *Course A Stage III: Sample Language Laboratory Work Record 24 November - 28 November*

LANGUAGE LABORATORY WORK RECORD					
	Mon 24/11	Tue 25/11	Wed 26/11	Thu 27/11	Fri 28/11
[A1]	LL/2 7-11	LL/2 12-15	PV 1-4	PV A8-C1	?
[A2]	PV 2	F 33-37	F 40 - 45	F 46-49	F 50-54
[A3]	LL/1 5-9	LL/1 10-13	VP U6	VP U7	VP U9
[A4]	LL/1 1-10	LL/1 11-14	LL/2 1-10	GI B4 ...	GI A1-A6
[A5]	F 44-49	F51-55	F 55-59	F 60 // PV A1-A5	PV D5-D6
[A6]	VP U5	F56-59	F 40-45	PV C2 ...	PV D1-D4
[A7]	E/2 Dicta. Pract.	E/5 Dicta. Pract.	E/6 Dicta. Pract	E/7 Dicta. Pract.	E/9 Dicta. Pract.
[A8]	P 83-89	P 90-94	P 95-96 // D 1-5	D 6-11	D 12-17
[A9]	LL/1 7-11	absent	LL/1 11-15	LL/2 1-8	absent
[A10]	D 33-38	absent	D 43-46	D 44-47	D 48-52
[A11]	absent	F56-60	LL/1 1-10	LL/1 6-14	PV A1-A7
[A12]	PV 1 (repeat)	PV2	PV2	GI cass. 3	absent from lab

Table A:11. *Course A Stage III, Sample Class Library Work Record 1 December - 5 December*

CLASS LIBRARY WORK RECORD					
	Mon 1/12	Tue 2/12	Wed 3/12	Thu 4/12	Fri 5/12[a]
[A1]	MW, 1-2-5-7-etc.	absent	IOW, 1	IOW, 19	R 'wish' + conversation
[A2]	NF F3; ex 101/102	NF	absent	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A3]	Wrote practice essay	NF F1; checklist 21-24	NF F3; ex 73	NF F3; EX76&102	R 'wish' + conversation
[A4]	UI Pract. Test 1	UI Pract. Test 2	UI Pract. Test 3	handout on 'wish'	NF F1 u24 + conversation
[A5]	M. Dictionary	MW 20, 23	VOI 1-3	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A6]	Phrasal Vs C. Dictionary	(my) Camb. Pr. Test 1	(my) Camb. Pr. Test 3	Review Pr. Test Corrections	R 'wish' + conversation
[A7]	HW exs. review	NF F1; Revision.	NF F1; revision	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A8]	Pitman Inter Paper	BEG (Gerunds + Infinitives)	Pitman Inter Paper	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A9]	absent	NF F1; Revision	NF F3; word-building	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A10]	(HW) Progress Test 4	Vocab. list (Politics)	SE	handout on 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation
[A11]	Vocab. lists + NF F3	absent	NF F3; revision exs.	NF F3 + 'wish' h/o	R 'wish' + conversation
[A12]	OF Bk 2 F reading compr.	UUEG Passives	UUEG 'wish'	UUEG 'wish'	R 'wish' + conversation

Note. The abbreviations MW, NF, etc. refer to textbooks selected and used. [a]The records are annotated: "Class in light-hearted mood ([A11] brought a cake - most of the time was 'conversation' and very little 'wish practice' actually done. Gave handout on 'Connectors and Modifiers' for prep over w/e of next week's 'practice exams'."

should strictly have been out-class work was being brought into the class library sessions.[59] As already remarked, the SDL sessions encouraged student co-operation, and at least one who began working alone [10.50/A10/17 Nov/A.III] appreciated help found in the Support Team [8.18/A10/18 Nov/A.III]. There is evidence, too, that, notwithstanding the protests when it was initially proposed, peer-tutoring did in fact take place on a voluntary basis, with at least one higher-level student willing to try and help a lower-level student on more than one occasion [10.82/A6/24 Nov/A.III], [10.93/A2/27 Nov/A.III], [10.96/A6/27 Nov/A.III]. One extract confirms that students were permitted to supplement the class library materials with their own, and that such materials could be usefully shared [10.33/A3/13 Nov/A.III]. **Table A:12** indicates student-reported use of the class library periods for Stage III. It is interesting to note that only one student ([A1]) reports using the time to do out-class setwork, and then on only one occasion, but the reporting may have been influenced by the fact that the practice was strongly discouraged. It is also interesting that self-reporting of work on grammar (48 remarks) considerably exceeds the next most frequent remark (16), on vocabulary, suggesting an area for fruitful research in a range of examination and naturalistic settings.

Projects A.III

No Projects were undertaken in A.III.

Out-Class Study and Work A.III

Class Diary A.III

The Diary received little mention. One student found it repetitious [12D.1/A5/19 Nov/A.III], two more hated doing it [12D.6/A2/5 Dec/A.III], [12D.7/A4/8 Dec/A.III], and the one who mentioned it most in fact wrote minimal diaries, saying that because it was not corrected work he would not use it for writing practice [12D.3/A10/2 Dec/A.III], although in his last diary mentioning that diary-writing was better than no practice [12D.5/A10/4 Dec/A.III].

Out-Class Setwork A.III

Out-class setwork was evidently a well-integrated low-profile activity in this Stage, with several positive responses: "It's only a pity that we can't do more homework, but I understand why." —[12S.1/A4/7 Nov/A.III]; [12S.3/A3/18 Nov/A.III]; [12S.4/A8/18 Nov/A.III]; [12S.11/A12/4 Dec/A.III]. **Table A:4**, already mentioned in regard to [A11], provides a sample of out-class setwork feedback for the group.

Out-Class Freework A.III

There were continuing signs in this Stage of a commitment to out-class freework on the part of most students. The recreational value of the television and radio made them a useful supplement to more rigorous out-class work [12F.6/A9/12 Nov/A.III], and not merely with the less dedicated [12F.7/A1/17 Nov/A.III], [12F.15/A4/26 Nov/A.III]. One remark suggests that pre-scheduling the setwork may have served to integrate it better with the student's own freework [12F.1/A3/6 Nov/A.III]. Reading was a popular form of freework

[59]Intermingling out-class DSDL setwork with in-class DSDL and ISDL work presents obvious difficulties for discrete sub-categorising of learning modes as either DSDL or ISDL.

Table A:12. *Course A Stage III, Categories of Class Library Work Reported in Diaries*

	Course Books	Revision	Exam Practice	Reading with MCI[1]	Vocab.	Writing	Grammar	HW	Assignments	
[A1]	1				3	3	5	1		13
[A2]	6	1	2			2	3			14
[A3]	1	3	1	2	1		11			19
[A4]				4	3		2			9
[A5]		1	2	1	5		6			15
[A6]			4		1	1	11			17
[A7]						1				1
[A8]							1			1
[A9]										0
[A10]							2		1	3
[A11]	2			1	3	3	3			12
[A12]		1	1				2			4
TOTALS	10	6	10	8	16	10	46	1	1	108

Note. MCI = [1]Multiple Choice Items.

with another student: "The new one is of Oscar Wilde.... I like to read.... Really it makes me feel learning." —[12F.2/A8/7 Nov/A.III]; "I'm reading a book and I would like to finish it this weekend. It's not a good book but, anyway, I'm reading in english which is the most important thing. For me it's such a wonderful feeling when I read in english and I can understand what I'm reading." —[12F.23/A8/4 Dec/A.III]; [12F.5/A8/12 Nov/A.III]; [12F.12/A8/25 Nov/A.III]. In addition to reading there are reports of less diverting out-class work [12F.4/A9/10 Nov/A.III]; [12F.8/A6/18 Nov/A.III]; [12F.9/A1/19 Nov/A.III]. One higher-level student reported freework: "In the afternoon I was really in a mood to study. I went home early, did my homework first, wrote all the dictations again and learnt some grammar." —[12F.14/A3/26 Nov/A.III]. A lower-level student gave similar evidence of commitment: "I was also studying at home about the same difficulties [with present and past perfect]. Now it's getting better, slowly but surely." —[12F.11/A2/21 Nov/A.III]. Another, higher-level, student similarly reported: "In the evening I wrote an English letter and afterwards I felt like studying. I studied all the verbs with prepositions in book three, because that's my big problem – phrasal verbs and prepositions." —[12F.25/A4/9 Dec/A.III]. There was evidence of the use of class library books and other in-class materials for out-class freework [12F.9/A1/19 Nov/A.III]; [12F.19/A3/1 Dec/A.III]. One student complained about not having out-class access to an examination practice book [12F.18/A11/27 Nov/A.III], and the co-ordinator distributed an out-of-print set of practice examination papers to meet the need [12F.22/A6/3 Dec/A.III]. On the whole, the extracts provided evidence that A.III did not unduly inhibit the out-class freework element of the self-directed learning.

A.III Overview

Stage III began with a preponderantly SDL programme which was immediately condemned by the students. Prompt amendments and adaptations produced an acceptable MIDL blend of ODL and SDL components. This programme continued successfully until displaced by a reversion to ODL mode for examination final preparations. Over-all, responses to SDL and ODL appeared to the co-ordinator to be reasonably balanced.

Course A Co-ordinator's General Summary

Stage I began in traditional DODL mode, which allowed for the slow build up of class numbers, and enabled the later innovative course components to be located within a reassuring traditional milieu. There were early problems of student unresponsiveness, of disparate levels, of apparent poor relationships. The students were introduced to DSDL by pairgroup work, some of which took them out into the city, and there was evidence of out-class freework being undertaken in addition to setwork. Introductory use was made of the language laboratory, which remained in DSDL mode throughout Stage I. While the lower levels were often enthusiastic about the lessons in Stage I, the higher levels were often bored by covering ground they felt they already knew. Matters came to a head with a major protest and demands that the class be divided into an upper and a lower stream. While the issue of levels remained unresolved, the students agreed to wait and see if it would be eased by the ISDL components of Stage II.

Stage II began in DODL mode but almost immediately shifted into the DSDL of a video project, along the lines of that undertaken in the preliminary study. While some appeared to enjoy the project there were also outright rejections and it was abandoned in favour of a more balanced MIDL programme when the

general student consensus evolved that it was less valuable in learning terms than classroom work. It is possible that in this institution in the target language country there was more pressure for structured classes as an 'accuracy' balance to the out-class 'fluency' environment, and, even in retrospect, it is not certain that a more obviously examination-oriented DSDL activity would have endured longer or better than the video project.

A Class Library was established, but individually chosen homework from it proved unworkable because of the time required for correction and marking. The language laboratory moved to full ISDL mode just before the end of Stage II. At one time too much out-class work was being set and the matter was resolved by introducing setwork schedules on an advance-notice basis, with students able to complete the tasks at any time up to the deadline. Support Teams, a formal extension of the pairgroup principle, were cautiously maintained in face of a traumatic introduction in which both peer-tutoring and the attempt to restructure the programmes to a 75:25 SDL/ODL balance were totally rejected by the students. The revised MIDL programme, on more evenly balanced lines, proved entirely successful. The last six days of Stage III reverted to ODL mode for examination preparation.

The final version of MIDL, as it evolved towards the latter part of Course A, appeared to overcome the major viability problems [5.3/CR/6 Nov/A.III], and to meet the needs of the majority of students. It was also shown by results in the public examinations to have satisfied institutional requirements in administrative and pedagogical terms. Early, and serious, dissatisfaction from the higher levels gradually faded away as the increasing competence of the lower levels enabled the pace to be speeded up and more difficult work to be undertaken, and as ODL and SDL components of the programme became better integrated. Apart from misguided attempts to improve 'class democracy' by encouraging student input to the programme, and with some adjustment of the 'support team' ethos, the course appeared to offer ethical grounds for a replication with new students in the same institutional environment.

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE REPORT FINDINGS: DIARY DATA COURSE B (19 JANUARY - 12 JUNE)

This appendix presents the diary findings from Course B in the form of a narrative report which combines description of the experimental programme with attitudinal responses to it. Categorised diary quotations are coded as in this example, —[1.2/B9/19 Jan/B.I] which is made up as follows:

1. 1.2 identifies the Category Section (1) and the extract number (2) from Appendix D.
2. B9 is the participant's coded ID.
3. 19 Jan is the date of the diary entry.
4. B.I identifies Course B Stage I.

The co-ordinator's extracts are enclosed in <angle brackets>.

COURSE B STAGE I (19 JANUARY - 20 FEBRUARY)

In the pre-experimental settling-in period from 5 January to 16 January all classes were conducted in 'communicative approach' DODL mode. During the first week of the term there were just three students. Others joined in the second week, and four examination non-candidates transferred to other classes that Friday. The official experimental course got under way on 19 January with six students. Course A had sufficiently indicated the viability of the MIDL format, and the outline Programme (**Table B:1**) was presented to the students that day, with the introduction to ISDL Class Library and Language Laboratory the following day. Course A provided the model for this programme, although details specific to Course B, such as out-class setwork schedules, were not yet established.

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme B.I

The concept of the experimental MIDL programme was favourably received by some students: "Today ... there was the explanation of the course program. The first impressions I've got are really positive.... I find in a such project something that I was also looking for in the past months at the begining of my learning: The possibility of building a kind of self-program of study of English language." —[1.1/B6/19 Jan/B.I]; "I think it is a very good idea to make the students more responsible for their own progress." —[1.2/B9/19 Jan/B.I]; "I like the metodology very much and I think it is the best in order to get the biggest personal progress." —[1.4/B3/20 Jan/B.I]; "The class is very interesting. I can do different things for learning English.... the morning has be short. That's is ok. I know why. The answer is that I have something to do." —[1.6/B8/20 Jan/B.I]. This last student was to have little more than good intentions throughout the course, victim of a

Table B:1. *Course B Stages I-II: Outline Programme for 'Teaching Resource Sessions' (First Coursebook) 19 January - 6 March*

PROGRAMME 19 JAN - 6 MAR						
Day	Date	9.00-9.50	10.00-10.50	11.10-12.00	12.10-1.00	HOMEWORK
		HW Reviews	Lab	Class	Teaching Resource	N.B. New coursebook
		Work Teams	Free Study	Library	Sessions	commences 9/3
M	19/1	Formation etc. of Work Teams + explanation + discuss concept				
T	20/1				pp. 14 - 19	
W	21/1				20 - 25	
TH	22/1				26 - 31	
F	23/1				32 - 37	
M	26/1				38 - 43	
T	27/1				44 - 49	
W	28/1				50 - 55	
TH	29/1				56 - 61	
F	30/1				62 - 67	
M	2/2				68 - 73	
T	3/2				74 - 79	
W	4/2				80 - 85	
TH	5/2				86 - 91	
F	6/2				92 - 97	
M	9/2				98 - 103	
T	10/2				104 - 109	
W	11/2				110 - 115	
TH	12/2				116 - 121	
F	13/2				122 - 127	
M	16/2				128 - 133	
T	17/2				134 - 139	
W	18/2				140 - 145	
TH	19/2				146 - 151	
F	20/2				152 - 157	
M	23/2				158 - 163	
T	24/2				164 - 169	
W	25/2				170 - 175	
TH	26/2				176 - 181	
F	27/2				182 - 187	
M	2/3				188 - 193	
T	3/3				194 - 199	
W	4/3				200 -205	
TH	5/3				206 - end	
F	6/3					

N.B.
1. Circumstances - in particular exam. dates/times when known - may oblige some amendments.
2. HW must be done on the due day and must be handed in at 9.00 a.m.
3. After HW has been handed in it will be reviewed by me in plenary.
4. The answers/explanations review is to be followed by Work Team sessions at which each team will discuss any problems remaining (team leaders will be supported by [A1] and me).
5. 'Lab. Work' and 'Class Library Work' Sheets are to be completed daily.
6. 'Class Library Work' will be done on an individual basis and, wherever practicable, questions will be answered and work marked on the spot.

complex range of temperamental difficulties, among them perhaps what Wenden noted: "Many may believe that they cannot learn autonomously – and, an even more debilitating belief, that they cannot really learn a language at all" (1988, p.648).

There were also contrary early impressions which were, by and large, to be maintained throughout Course B: "Today was the day that I was really recognized how much I would have to do hard work. So I feel little tired, but also little excitting.... my personality is quite lazy .... It's sound nice purpose, but for my awful personality, it was too abstract to study hard." —[1.3/B11/19 Jan/B.I]; "In my opinion we waste some time in the class library and maybe in the language laboratory.... At this moment I prefer the other way of teaching but I have just to wait and look." —[1.7/B4/21 Jan/B.I]; "Today the class has been much more interesting than the other days, maybe because we have been in the Language Laboratory for half an hour and we have made use of the Library Class in a better way [= not for Class Library]." —[1.12/B4/22 Jan/B.I]; [1.5/B4/20 Jan/B.I].

Allowing for the antipathy of [B4] to ISDL, the students on Course B responded more favourably to the early MIDL programme than had those on Course A: "I'm feeling more comfortable and suitable the Course. The atmosphere seems to be a serious one ...." –-[1.8/B6/21 Jan/B.I]; "The class is interesting ...." —[1.9/B8/21 Jan/B.I]; "... the class was very good. Every body was very tired after hard work of the first week .... I think this methodology is very good and I'm learning very much." —[1.13/B3/23 Jan/B.I]; "I think that the Course is becaming more interesting each day." —[1.14/B4/23 Jan/B.I]; "Arriving at the end of the week I felt the tireness because of the work we have done.... However ... I feel happy and cheerful. The morning ... was very rich and plenty of interesting topics." —[1.15/B6/23 Jan/B.I]. In contrast to the other remarks, one stands out, and is a precursor of almost all her responses to the whole experience of her stay in Ireland: "The class has been so boring ...." —[1.16/B8/23 Jan/B.I]. Despite an initially cautious approach by one student: "I am not used to this tipe of course yet." —[1.10/B11/21 Jan/B.I], she seemed to have settled down by the end of the week: "I thought I've had work very hard this week, and I've been very busy too.... Anyway, I think this course is very good for me." —[1.17/B11/23 Jan/B.I]; [1.19/B11/26 Jan/B.I].

Two opposing views of the necessarily rapid pace were not to vary by much throughout the course: "I think too little time is our biggest problem in the course. We are always in a hurry." —[1.20/B9/28 Jan/B.I]: "The peace [= pace] of the class is good. I feel that we are building our course by working in different sides (The guide-book [= coursebook], the class lib., the lab., the teacher's explanations) ...." —[1.21/B6/29 Jan/B.I]. Another student initially found the pace and the workload too much for her: "For me, the rhythm of the class is very fast: I know that this is the program, but I need more time for learning everything that we see in the class." —[1.23/B3/2 Feb/B.I]; "Today I have got discouraged a lot. All the firs part about Asignments I have felt myself weighed down. I think it is too much work for me .... I like the book, the methodology and I work with pleasure, but maybe it is very hard or maybe, I'm very tired and for this today, I see it worse." —[1.24/B3/3 Feb/B.I]. Nonetheless she was clearly in favour of the experimental programme. Another student, who was later to transfer out of the class for several weeks, had favourable first impressions: "The class was very interesting .... I'm learning quite new things ...." —[1.22/B13/30 Jan/B.I].

Into early February the only feedback on the programme was positive [1.25/B11/3 Feb/B.I] and the general ambience was good enough for the co-ordinator to comment: <Good lessons, good atmosphere.... In pedagogical terms the programme is working exceeedingly well; no negative feedback at all at the moment;

seems even more successful than 'normal' classes.> —[1.26/CR/4 Feb/B.I]. Of course, this was prelude to serious disaffection: "I'm wondering if I'm not wasting the time in this class. By the moment all the things that we have seen I've seen them before – OK! I know that it's good to settle the bases but it's becoming bored [= boring]." —[1.27/B4/5 Feb/B.I]. With [B3] finding the pace too fast, the familiar problem of disparate levels appeared to be emerging again.[1] A timetable amendment which placed the ISDL elements at the beginning of the class was not to everyone's liking [1.28/B3/10 Feb/B.I], notwithstanding that the change received some approval [1.29/B13/10 Feb/B.I], [1.30/B13/11 Feb/B.I].

The DSDL pairgroup elements of the programme contributed substantially to the over-all environment, and also had an important role in lightening the intake burden: <Very happy atmosphere in class.> —[1.31/CR/12 Feb/B.I]; [1.33/CR/16 Feb/B.I]. In 1992 Shortall and Garrett tentatively found that with Brazilian adult learners of EFL the more advanced students tended to prefer pairgroup (learner-centred) to whole-class (teacher-centred) activities (in Johnstone, 1993, p.138).

An example of the integration of the components of the programme, and an illustration of the progression of study is provided by [B9]:

> Today we had a discussion in work teams .... I talked about the text but I hadn't understood the leaflet. I had the feeling that I was not the only one. At the moment we should explain our opinion nobody knew what to say except [B6]. After school I read the leaflet again and understood it. I discussed it with [the host-family mother]. Then I wrote the esay about [the topic]. [13.3/B9/5 Feb/B.I][2]

An indication of general willingness and of support for the MIDL ethos was provided by an opportunity for four students to devote most of a week to complete ISDL periods: the responses to the proposal were cautiously favourable [1.36/B3/19 Feb/B.I], [1.37/B6/19 Feb/B.I], [1.38/B8/19 Feb/B.I], [1.39/B11/19 Feb/B.I], [1.40/B6/20 Feb/B.I].[3]

Materials and Equipment B.I

One student commented favourably on the coursebook [2.1/B3/29 Jan/B.I]. Another, whether in surprise or indignation, asked why there was no central library in the institution.[4]

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[1]Any 'close-community' classroom will have some lock-step problems to solve, but a public examination class with an open enrolment policy attracts both lower-level hopefuls and candidates whose level would warrant attempting a more advanced examination. Unless *simultaneous* enrolment numbers justify the formation of streamed classes, such disparate levels must co-exist. Strasheim (1979) recommended independent study as one option to resolve the economic crisis in American language teaching and the threat that disparate levels posed to teacher morale, but aptly remarked: "administrators do not schedule multi-level classes carelessly, casually, or arbitrarily" (p.423). A possible alternative (akin to the American system), a roving population of students attending 'modules', loses much of the rapport-value (personal attention, feedback, and simple caring) of the close-community unless located within a 'form master/mistress' ethos. The topic would benefit from research.

[2]One of the consequences of breaking Diary extracts into categories is the loss of a sense of such progression; parts of extract [13.3/B9/5 Feb/B.I] appear elsewhere but it has been here preserved in its original intact form for this illustration.

[3]The following week was the start of Stage II, in which the responses to the reality of the ISDL are detailed.

[4]At this time all available space was fully committed to other purposes, with much seasonal use being made of annexe buildings for additional classrooms.

Composition of Class B.I

Student profiles are at **Table 5:3**. There was only one, indirect, extract taken on class composition, an unfavourable reference to the high proportion of Spanish students in the institution [3.1/B8/19 Jan/B.I]. The problems of different levels were to be exacerbated by the arrival of new students onto the course [14.1/CR/4 Feb/B.I]. There was need to consider the disruption of group harmony, and the integration of disparate capabilities, and to ensure that the newcomers absorbed the entire FCE syllabus without boring the earlier arrivals; some student concern was evident. [14.3/B4/9 Feb/B.I], [14.4/B13/9 Feb/B.I].

DODL Elements B.I

A remark by one student on the value of teaching is particularly apt in the context of MIDL: "I think that it is interesting to go deeply in some aspects which the book does not do. This is the most precious contribute of the teacher." —[4.1/B6/20 Jan/B.I]. The benefits of interweaving other-direction with self-direction could hardly be better expressed. Notwithstanding the acceptance of SDL, there was considerable support for traditional DODL modes, including the plenary setwork reviews which were now an established feature of the programme, and which the same student valued for their personal content: "The first thing ... was the homework review. It is very satisfactory for the students to learn, from the corrections made by the teacher, that they are followed personally – and that there is a progressive interaction between 'student-teacher' in which both intend to reach the same goal." —[4.8/B6/26 Jan/B.I]; "The homework's revision and, by the way, the instruction class were the best moments of all the morning." —[4.3/B6/21 Jan/B.I]; "The correction of the homework every day is excellent ...." —[4.4/B3/22 Jan/B.I]; "12.05 - 1.00 [a taught grammar session] perfect!" —[4.6/B11/23 Jan/B.I]. Vocabulary-building sessions were well-received by some [4.5/B8/22 Jan/B.I], [4.7/B4/26 Jan/B.I], [4.10/B6/28 Jan/B.I], as was reading [4.9/B9/27 Jan/B.I], [4.19/B3/5 Feb/B.I], discussing a text [4.13/B9/29 Jan/B.I], writing techniques [4.15/B6/2 Feb/B.I], and grammar tuition.[5] One extract indicates the possible value of alternative and/or additional teaching on a particular topic: "Our theme was the reported speech which I had never understood. But now I have the feeling (I might be wrong) that I started to understand it. I don't know why I couldn't understand it in Germany because it is very easy." —[4.40/B9/16 Feb/B.I]. There was evidence of the natural relationship (easily overlooked in debating 'autonomy') between ODL and SDL: "The class of today about idioms and extended meanings with the words up and down hasn't been very clear for me. I think I need to review again and to study it carefully." —[4.49/B3/19 Feb/B.I]. The difficult task of summary-writing engaged the interest of several: "A helpful topic not only for the exam but also for other areas .... It was our 'focus' in the class-instruction and homework.... The methodological approach to it, following step by step with the students, made the class very amusing." —[4.29/B6/10 Feb/B.I]; [4.27/B3/10 Feb/B.I]; [4.28/B4/10 Feb/B.I].

Inevitably, DODL was not without criticism [4.16/B4/3 Feb/B.I], [4.17/B6/3 Feb/B.I], nor invariably seen in the same light by all, as several contrasting comments indicate. For example, on 6 February: "The class of today has been boring because almost all has been grammar about conditional clauses.... I think for Fridays this kind of class isn't good, because everybody are tired and we need the other activities." —

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[5]References at [4.16/B4/3 Feb/B.I], [4.18/B3/4 Feb/B.I], [4.22/B4/6 Feb/B.I], [4.24/B9/6 Feb/B.I], [4.33/B3/12 Feb/B.I], [4.34/B13/12 Feb/B.I], [4.39/B11/13 Feb/B.I].

[4.21/B3/6 Feb/B.I]; "... we spent a long time with the conditional sentences.... I think that it's a good idea to spend more time in a thing that must be understood." —[4.22/B4/6 Feb/B.I]. And again, on 9 February: "... we gave time specially to go deeply in very much complicated forms of conditional sentences and of compound conditional sentences.... I better begun to understand how to distinguish indicative sentences from subjunctive sentences by means the examples we did ...." —[4.23/B6/6 Feb/B.I]; "I think that today we have learnt a lot. How to form the Passive sentences, a clearer view of the use of 'in/out' and a very important thing: a little introduction to the phrasal verbs. Thing that I consider VERY important." —[4.25/B4/9 Feb/B.I]; "In my opinion, today hasn't been a very good day, perhaps because of the weather, I don't know. I think we are getting better with the relationships between each of us. The classes some days are a little boring: It could be because we have to learn or try to learn many vocabulary, grammar and so on in a short time." —[4.26/B13/9 Feb/B.I]. The days could be very concentrated: <Intensive ... sessions (no lib/lab): student progression from individual work to workteams to plenary on blackboard. Very productive but exhausting.> —[4.35/CR/13 Feb/B.I]. Two students found the load too tiring [4.36/B3/13 Feb/B.I], [4.38/B6/13 Feb/B.I]. Another commented: "I think we are going through the book quickier than in the begining and I haven't now time enough to ~~ek~~ queck [= check] most of the vocabulary and so on." —[4.41/B13/16 Feb/B.I].[6] However meticulous the programme planning, allowance had to be made for unforeseen events: <Entirely other-directed tests, including experimental prototypes being researched by a colleague over from Edinburgh University> —[4.42/CR/17 Feb/B.I]. The DODL sessions were, for the most part, balanced by DSDL and ISDL, and there is evidence also for conversation and discussion and a variety of activities to lighten the intake load.[7]

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing B.I

In the 'close-community classroom' of the research environment the health, energy, and morale of one person could have dramatic effects on all the others. At this season the weather was depressing and cold [5.20/B8/12 Feb/B.I], [5.15/B9/9 Feb/B.I], [5.16/B11/9 Feb/B.I]. The co-ordinator had a recurrence of severe back trouble [5.30/CR/18 Feb/B.I]. One student could not wake up properly [5.4] and another remarked on the need for sleep [5.1], [5.3], [5.5], and on tiredness [5.6], [5.7], [5.22], [5.25], [5.26], [5.27], attributed to insomnia [5.8], or to the workload [5.2], [5.12]. The co-ordinator noted his own exhaustion and irritability [5.18], and complained of lack of time for other academic interests [5.23]. Walford comments aptly that

> the nature of academic work is such that it is never really 'done'. It is always possible to do more work, and the tendency, with those who wish to succeed, is to increase work output norms way beyond what could reasonably be expected. (Walford, 1986, p.101)

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[6]The ISDL elements of a MIDL programme absorb a substantial amount of time otherwise allocated, in traditional classes, to meeting examination deadlines; in MIDL there is consequent need not only for more precise programme divisions, but also for careful monitoring of instruction input rates.

[7]References at [4.31/B3/11 Feb/B.I], [4.32/B13/11 Feb/B.I], [4.43/B3/17 Feb/B.I], [4.44/B6/17 Feb/B.I], [4.45/B3/18 Feb/B.I], [4.46/B4/18 Feb/B.I], [4.47/B6/18 Feb/B.I], [4.48/B9/18 Feb/B.I], [4.50/B3/20 Feb/B.I].

Whether or not from workload, one student was consistently tired by Friday [5.24].[8]

In this first Stage only one student emerged as having serious morale problems. [B8] began the course with good intentions [5.1/B8/20 Jan/B.I], quickly admitted that study was not her favourite occupation [5.3/B8/21 Jan/B.I], but hoped to improve her poor English by application [5.5/B8/22 Jan/B.I]. By the end of the first week the ingredients for her perception of the rest of her stay were already assembled: "The class has been so boring maybe it was I was tired.... When I left the gym I had too free time ... but I couldn't find anything interesting.... Ireland is boring or I'm boring, because I can find nothing. I feel alone. The only thing that I want now, it's arrive June." —[5.6/B8/23 Jan/B.I]. Almost a week later she was just as depressed:

> I have been thinking about my life is so boring. I don't feel any satisfaction.... I'm trying to learn English, but I don't know if this could be use in my life or in my work. In Dublin I'm feeling alone.... I don't want to have friends becouse this is no way to learn, and the most of them are estupic, becouse they only thing to enjoy themself .... I'm realise that I'm not improveing on English, and I'm losing one year. At the moment the only thing that I want it's to find myself and this is very difficult for me. [5.9/B8/29 Jan/B.I]

Whether or not she was subject to seven-day mood swings, again a week later she confessed to not working and resolved to get down to it at last [5.13/B8/5 Feb/B.I]. There was an indication that she lived with a friend rather than with a host-family, and that she was left alone at the weekends [5.14/B8/9 Feb/B.I]. Nearly a week later she reflected: "I'll never get to learn English. I realise that I'm the worst in the class." —[5.19/B8/11 Feb/B.I], and on the following (seventh) day expanded on her state of mind:

> All people look happy. I am not happy. My life is so boring fo[r] be feeling happy. All days are the same. The only exception is the weekend but it is so terrible.... It's to cold again. The only thing that I wished when I was arriving at home was to be at home. I don't like to see people, to speak to them I'm become very shy and boring. I know it. The only thing that's OK is the class. It's the time that I give up thinking about stupic things. [5.20/B8/12 Feb/B.I]

The following day was no better [5.25/B8/13 Feb/B.I]. Three days later her mood was improved by going out with her friend to a Spanish evening [5.28/B8/16 Feb/B.I], and the good mood continued [5.31/B8/18 Feb/B.I]. A month after her arrival she appeared to have found a new resolve, and to have seen Ireland in a better light: "Now I'm glad and I feel best, maybe it's because I'm use studing.... Step by step my ideas are light, perhaps at the end of the year, or at the begining of the summer I can find what I want to be in my life. I think than I'm more sure. It's a good experience to come to Ireland, especially for myself." [5.32/B8/19 Feb/B.I]. But there were many seven-days until June.

Counselling Consultation B.I

While the Diary entries for [B8] revealed a very distressed person, her general demeanour was cheerful and humorous, which may in part explain why in Stage I she received only paracounselling (in regard to her writing) on 5 February, although she was interviewed on personal and class matters in Stage II. There were formal interviews with each participant in Stage I, which one student expressed the value of: "I've liked very

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[8]Full references are: [5.4/B11/21 Jan/B.I], [5.1/B8/20 Jan/B.I], [5.3/B8/21 Jan/B.I], [5.5/B8/22 Jan/B.I], [5.6/B8/23 Jan/B.I], [5.7/B9/26 Jan/B.I], [5.22/B13/12 Feb/B.I], [5.25/B8/13 Feb/B.I], [5.26/B9/13 Feb/B.I], [5.27/B11/13 Feb/B.I], [5.8/B4/29 Jan/B.I], [5.2/B4/21 Jan/B.I], [5.12/B3/3 Feb/B.I], [5.18/CR/11 Feb/B.I], [5.23/CR/13 Feb/B.I], [5.24/B3/13 Feb/B.I].

much the interview with the teacher. This is a good method to know how everybody feels in the class and what she/he thinks about it." [6.1/B3/28 Jan/B.I], and the same student was successfully counselled in regard to over-anxiety about the work [6.5/B3/4 Feb/B.I].[9]

Out-Class Environment B.I

Only two extracts were taken on the environment in Stage I.

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support B.I

Naming, a part of human awareness which often shapes the identity it labels, meant that the well-intentioned 'support' tag attached to pairgroup teams could imply a role in regard to classmates that some students might neither wish to be given nor feel capable of undertaking. The DSDL 'support' teams of Course A were therefore renamed Workteams on Course B, and introduced on 26 January. One student noted favourably their role in mutual help [8.1/B3/26 Jan/B.I], another thought they enlivened the class [8.2/B4/26 Jan/B.I], and a third remarked that they promoted solidarity and co-operation [8.3/B6/26 Jan/B.I]. But one student preferred discussions to exercises [8.4/B9/26 Jan/B.I] and, remarking that time-limits for workteam activities encouraged the faster members to work independently of the slower, looked forward to longer sessions [8.5/B9/27 Jan/B.I]. The following day, although happier that all the team members had had the opportunity to express themselves, she still found the DSDL time too short [8.10/B9/28 Jan/B.I]. Her complaints were about the management rather than the concept of workteams, which she clearly accepted, as did others who commented on the 'variety and movement' [8.12/B6/30 Jan/B.I], or simply said: "I like working with the other classmates." —[8.13/B13/30 Jan/B.I], "I felt really integrated with all my classmates." —[8.15/B13/2 Feb/B.I], or "The team-work has been very good ...." —[8.14/B3/2 Feb/B.I]. DSDL events appeared to be promoting both learning and class rapport: <Workteams having a great time, enjoying themselves enormously: a most important part of the course in terms of relationship building, class solidarity and, in general, relaxing with the language, because they do quite a lot of fairly heavy work in grammar, vocabulary, and so on.> —[1.31/CR/12 Feb/B.I]; "Today I've liked very much the class: the activity about [a topic] has been very good for learning vocabulary and for knowing more the other people of the class.... It has been a lovely experience." —[8.25/B3/12 Feb/B.I]; [8.24/CR/12 Feb/B.I], [8.26/B4/12 Feb/B.I]; [8.29/B11/12 Feb/B.I]; [8.30/B13/12 Feb/B.I]. There is evidence of the co-operative workteam ethos in students collaborating during class library sessions [8.16/B6/4 Feb/B.I]; [8.28/B9/12 Feb/B.I]. Authentic materials received a favourable mention in a workteam context [8.17/B13/4 Feb/B.I]. One student liked the fact that the team composition was changed from time to time [8.18/B3/5 Feb/B.I].[10] However, the success of

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[9]The corpus of taped counselling and paracounselling interview material is in many ways more revealing than any other data but, essentially the nucleus of a substantial further work on student attitudes, is regrettably beyond the present scope.

[10]The changes were systematised for Stage III.

workteams depended on every member, and there is a suggestion that the necessary out-class preparation for the in-class tasks was not always adequate or thorough [8.19/B6/5 Feb/B.I], [8.20/B9/5 Feb/B.I].

Laboratory B.I

Where the supervised DSDL laboratory in A.I had not been fully accepted [A1/29 Sep/A.I], [A4/30 Sep/A.I], [A6/1 Oct/A.I], in Course B it began and continued in ISDL mode. One student, who did not like laboratory work [9.8/B11/5 Feb/B.I], questioned daily sessions [9.5/B11/23 Jan/B.I]; it proved popular with [B3] and [B6][11] and useful for pronunciation [9.6/B6/27 Jan/B.I], as well as for listening comprehension [9.13/B9/11 Feb/B.I], which this student preferred to the drills chosen by another [9.12/B3/11 Feb/B.I]. There is also evidence that guidance was accepted [9.17/B6/20 Feb/B.I], and references to the integration by students of their ISDL and DODL work: "... some of [the materials] are related either with the teacher's explanation or with my personal study in the Class-library. In this way, the Class-Lab. helps to better consolidate things before studied." —[9.7/B6/4 Feb/B.I]; [9.16/B6/16 Feb/B.I]; "I'm very glad with the types [= tapes] because all the days I find something in the types about the things that we are studying just the same day." —[9.9/B4/9 Feb/B.I]. Such integration is at the heart of any MIDL programme. **Table B:2** gives a sample of students' laboratory and library work records for 9 to 13 February.

Library B.I

The principle of ISDL class library was generally accepted from the start of B.I, but the limitations on materials, as well as the lack of cross-referencing, created some difficulties [10.1/B9/20 Jan/B.I]; "A suggestion ... when there is an important grammar topic ... the teacher should suggest to us a wider range of exercises which the student can do for his own .... The problem is that not always is easy to find out such exercises in the books we have." —[10.9/B6/30 Jan/B.I].[12] Most of the available materials had no answer-key, and this tended to put a greater call on those which did: <Grammar and other books which lack a key/answers are not being used in Class Library. Problem must be addressed.> —[10.15/CR/11 Feb/B.I]; "I prefer to study 'Grammar' [during Class Library] time. But there are not enough grammar books. If somebody took the book I have to use another one." —[10.4/B11/23 Jan/B.I]; "In the Class library I've continued with the same book of Grammar. I like this book because it has exercices and its correction, and oneself can put them right." —[10.12/B3/5 Feb/B.I].[13] Notwithstanding the deficiency most materials seemed appropriate [10.6/B11/26 Jan/B.I], [10.7/B4/27 Jan/B.I], [10.8/B3/30 Jan/B.I], and the selections by

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[11]References are at: [9.1/B3/20 Jan/B.I], [9.10/B3/10 Feb/B.I], [9.12/B3/11 Feb/B.I], [9.15/B3/16 Feb/B.I], [9.6/B6/27 Jan/B.I], [9.7/B6/4 Feb/B.I].

[12]The inventory of Class Library materials is at **Appendix G**. Cross-referencing by sub-topic, which may be essential at lower levels, was beyond the time resources of the experimental periods; students at intermediate and higher levels were thought capable of working from contents pages and section headings.

[13]While motivation in ISDL must remain an interior matter, fully worked examples and complete answer keys may be the single most important incentive which institutions can offer. It was very much regretted that time-scales did not allow their preparation for the experimental courses, and there was no budget for buying them in. Geddes aptly remarks on: "the delight that students can experience when they find a grammar book with an answer key, or listening materials that have answers and transcripts 'hidden' in the teacher's book" (1996-97, p.5).

Table B:2. *Course B Stage I, Samples of Language Laboratory and Class Library Work Records Compared for the Same Period (9 February - 12 February)*

LANGUAGE LABORATORY WORK RECORD					
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
	9/2	10/2	11/2	12/2	13/2
[B3]	E130-136	E138-144	E1-7	no lab	no lab
[B4]	P40-43	P44-50	P51-55	WORK TEAMS ('horoscopes', characteristics, personality, etc.)	plenary session (wish/if only)
[B6]	P25-28	P29-35	P36-39		
[B8]	P50-53	P50-54	P54-59		
[B9]	VP U1-1	VP U1-2/3	VP U1-4		
[B11]	P40-44	P45-49	P58-63		
[B13]	P32-35	P36-39 P50-51	P40-46		

CLASS LIBRARY WORK RECORD					
DAY:	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
DATE:	9/2	10/2	11/2	12/2	13/2
[B3]	BEG prepositions	BEG prepositions	Assignment: Ireland's...Arts	Assignment: Ireland's...Arts	no lib
[B4]	EStP too/enough (1)	EStP so/such (1)	Assignment: Elections(1)	Assignment: Elections (1)	plenary session (wish/if only)
[B6]	BEG conjunctions, linking	BEG conjunctions, linking	helping [BH20] [BK23] (2)	Assignment: Ireland N&S(2)	
[B8]	GPW writing practice	GPW started U2	helped by [BF18], summ. (2)	GPW finished U2	
[B9]	E&LW/ conjunctions	BEG conjunction exs.	BEG passives exs.	Assignment: Ireland N&S (2)	
[B11]	BEG articles, exs.	BEG articles	helped by [BF18], summ. (2)	BEG articles	
[B13]	EStP too/enough (1)	EStP so/such (1)	Assignment: Elections (1)	Assignment: Elections (1)	

Note. Numbers in brackets, (1) and (2), indicate students working together in voluntary pairgroups.

other students could have an influence on individual choice of materials [10.10/B6/3 Feb/B.I]. As with the language laboratory, there was evidence of the integration of DODL with ISDL: "For the next days [in class-library time] I am going to revise what we study in class ...." —[10.2/B3/21 Jan/B.I]; "I've understood very well conditional clauses [the taught-session topic], because I had worked about them before in the class library." —[10.12/B3/5 Feb/B.I].

A notable feature of the class library was the willingness with which some students co-operated on joint assignments [10.18/B9/12 Feb/B.I] and, when requested by the co-ordinator, on what was effectively peer-tutoring: "During the Class-Library I worked with [B11] and [B8] building their Summary-resub. They accepted very well the help.... it was very positive experience and I'm grateful to the teacher for the trust given to me." —[10.17/B6/11 Feb/B.I]; "In the Class-library I worked together with [B13]. On one hand the peace [= pace] of the work seemed to be slower, but on the other hand the comprehension was major because we shared and helped each other." —[10.11/B6/4 Feb/B.I]. The experience may be contrasted with situations remarked on (in the CRAPEL) by Gremmo and Abé:

> An individual learner's motivation may be either stimulated or inhibited by the other members of the group. Some learners refuse to join the autonomous learning scheme because they like the company of other people. Some like to study without having to follow along with others or to talk with them. (Gremmo & Abé, 1985, p.245)

Their scheme involved learners in working alone, and had something in common with the general ethos of ISDL in MIDL.

The occasional annexation of the class library time for DODL purposes was inevitable [10.3/B6/22 Jan/B.I], as was use of the same time for DSDL assignments: "In the Class library I've been doing my work about Assignments ...." —[10.16/B3/11 Feb/B.I].[14] One remark points to the self-discipline required if the day is begun in ISDL mode: "I realise that still now is not easy for the students to start to work straight-way they arrived at [the institution]. Any way it depends a lot if among us takes the initiative and begins to work for his own." [10.20/B6/20 Feb/B.I]. The extract highlights the fact that ISDL sessions were truly independent of the co-ordinator's direction, and also points up the benefit of company in social SDL.

Projects B.I

As a supplement to the other DSDL and ISDL activities it was a constant hope that students might be willing to undertake individual and co-operative projects or assignments and a wide range of topics was suggested (**Table 4:2**). Something of the rationale was expressed to [B3] during a counselling interview and although only this student completed an assignment, serious efforts were made by others, and the concept generated out-class endeavour "During the afternoon at home, I finally begun to read the book about Ireland I bought for my assignement." —[12F.13/B6/10 Feb/B.I]; "In the afternoon I have been in a library to take notes for Assignments about painting, sculture, from Ireland ...." —[12F.14/B3/12 Feb/B.I]; "Now I'm spending many of my times writing about the elections and it's a good practice." —[12F.15/B13/12 Feb/B.I]; [12F.16/B9/13 Feb/B.I]; "This afternoon I've been working for two hours in the Assignment." —[12F.17/B3/16 Feb/B.I]. As

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[14]The extent to which DSDL tasks performed in ISDL time may convert the mode to DSDL remains a matter for consideration and resolution, but does not affect the over-all calculation of ODL to SDL ratios.

assignments carried neither sanctions nor overt rewards they were unlikely to appeal to the less committed students and likely to be the first item jettisoned by the others when time constraints made choices imperative. In-class ISDL work on assignments took place [11.1/B6/3 Feb/B.I], [11.2/B13/3 Feb/B.I], [11.6/B9/12 Feb/B.I], as did out-class co-operation [11.4/B6/10 Feb/B.I]; but co-ordination could be difficult to achieve: "I'm afraid I can't finish the work with [B13] on time. when I can do it in an afternoon she can't and vice versa." —[11.8/B4/16 Feb/B.I]; [11.3/B13/9 Feb/B.I]. Other indications, including requests for extensions of time, [11.5/B6/12 Feb/B.I], [11.7/CR/13 Feb/B.I], confirmed that complex pairgroup assignments, whatever their putative value in learner-autonomy terms, presented special difficulties in the relatively short examination-preparation courses of the experiment.

Out-Class Study and Work B.I

Class Diary B.I

Despite the co-ordinator's view of daily free-style writing practice which also encouraged authentic communication of genuine feelings, the Diary was no more popular than in Course A. While the style of Diaries was entirely free (self-directed), the content was guided (dependent) in order to provide daily monitoring of the course as well as research data (for the recommended format see **Table 6:2**). The co-ordinator requested two students to follow the guidelines: the copious diaries of [B11], on shopping, and on her state of mind, revealed little of her attitudes to the course but were at least excellent writing practice, whereas the diaries of [B9] were clearly perfunctory and data-free, and had little or no value as FCE-level writing practice:

> I got up at 6 o'clock to finish my homeworks. I took the bus at 8 o'clock and arrived at 9 o'clock in Dublin. I finished school at 10 o'clock. I went straight home. I had my lunch at 2.3:0. I went to the German embassy in Booterstown to certify my evidence. I came back at 5 o'clock, than I had to do my homeworks. I had a break to have my dinner. I finished my homework at 11.30 p.m. Than I went to bed. [13.1/B9/22 Jan/B.I]

Thereafter, while continuing to dislike writing the diaries, she made an effort to make them more research-informative (e.g. 4.9; 8.5; 12F.2/B9/27 Jan/B.I).

Out-Class Setwork B.I

Out-class setwork appeared to present few problems in Stage I, except to a Japanese student who had general difficulty in maintaining the pace of the course [12.S.13/B11/6 Feb/B.I], [12S.16/B11/10 Feb/B.I], and to another who tended to leave it until late in the evening [12S.2/B8/21 Jan/B.I], [12S.22/B8/17 Feb/B.I]. One complained about preparation (preview as opposed to review) [12S.6/B13/27 Jan/B.I] and admitted that writing was hard work [12S.12/B13/5 Feb/B.I]; she had to persuade herself that the work was for her own benefit [12S.7/B13/28 Jan/B.I], and acknowledged the value of getting setwork correction feedback the following day. Another student was concerned that too much setwork could leave very little time for freework [12S.1/B6/20 Jan/B.I], [12S.8/B6/29 Jan/B.I], but also valued the feedback corrections as pointing to needs which could be addressed during class library and language laboratory sessions [12S.19/B6/16 Feb/B.I], and was ready to use them for constructive self-criticism [12S.15/B6/9 Feb/B.I]. One student seemed to enjoy the setwork [12S.3/B3/26 Jan/B.I], [12S.4/B3/27 Jan/B.I], and valued the opportunity

presented by resubmissions [12S.14/B3/9 Feb/B.I]. One observation offers a reminder that not all the setwork was reinforcement nor all the work spiral [12S.21/B3/17 Feb/B.I]. An extract (quoted in full under the heading Programme) illustrates the way a good student integrated the in-class and out-class environments [12S.11/B9/5 Feb/B.I]. **Table B:3** gives a sample of a group feedback report on out-class setwork.

Out-Class Freework B.I

In B.I one student in particular took a highly responsible attitude to his own learning schedules [12F.1/B6/20 Jan/B.I]; although there is no direct reference here to out-class freework, it may reasonably be inferred from the character of the student, as indicated by other extracts [12F.9/B6/3 Feb/B.I], [12F.12/B6/9 Feb/B.I]. There is evidence for freework reading [12F.2/B9/27 Jan/B.I], [12F.5/B13/30 Jan/B.I], [12F.11/B3/6 Feb/B.I]. Two students frequented a well-equipped public library, but there is no evidence that they made use of the 'self-access' facilities [12F.3/B9/29 Jan/B.I], [12F.10/B11/5 Feb/B.I]; one complained that it was too quiet there for her to study [12F.4/B11/29 Jan/B.I]. Another student recognised the value of conversation with native speakers: "... my chat with my Irish friends ... is a very good complement for my classes ...." — [12F.5/B13/30 Jan/B.I]. A fourth provided a good account of her general approach to out-class freework: "Every evening I watch the news on T.V. and sometimes a film .... Every day I read the most important headings of the Newspaper .... I would want to start to read a little book and a TIME magazine, but I don't have almost any time to do it." —[12F.6/B3/2 Feb/B.I]. In addition to revision and reading for his assignment [12F.13/B6/10 Feb/B.I], a dedicated student watched the news on television and found time to become involved in out-class activities which enlarged his professional-field vocabulary (for addressing public gatherings in English) [12F.7/B6/2 Feb/B.I]. The assignments also prompted other out-class work [12F.14/B3/12 Feb/B.I], [12F.15/B13/12 Feb/B.I], [12F.16/B9/13 Feb/B.I], [12F.17/B3/16 Feb/B.I].

B.I Overview

Despite the traditional non-MIDL mode of the pre-experimental settling-in period the introduction of ISDL Library and Laboratory at the formal start of B.I presented no major problems, notwithstanding some hesitancy and caution from a few. Projects consisted solely of Assignments, but even this more flexible approach to out-class pairgroup work proved unsustainable in the face of time and other constraints. Stage I ended with those students who would be present at the start of Stage II cautiously looking forward to an 'autonomy' week, which it was hoped the self-directed components of Stage I had provided a sufficient foundation for.

COURSE B STAGE II (23 FEBRUARY - 13 MARCH)

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme B.II

The 'autonomy' week format, an extension of ISDL, was prompted in part by the thought that two students would be away and on their return would find it very difficult to catch up: <[B9] and [B4] away ... Revert to

Table B:3. *Course B Stage I, Sample Out-Class Setwork (Homework) Feedback Report for a Group*

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH SYLLABUS				STAGE I														FCE CANDIDATE: WHOLE CLASS
~~PROGRESS REPORT NO 1~~ HW FEEDBACK		DATED: 2 FEB		COPIES TO: FILE and CANDIDATEs														
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: HOME (H); CLASS (C)				STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES														AREAS FOR REVISION,
TITLE	TYPE	~~DATE~~	GRADE	A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V		X	FOCUS, STUDY, ETC.
	'SHORT ESSAY'	LENGTH																	
[B3]	Travel	too long	D	+	0	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	0	0		-	Resubmit in correct length
[B4]	Travel	correct	D -	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	-	0	-		+	Resub. (try not to repeat yourself)
[B6]	Smoking	too long!	D	+	+	-	0	0	-	0	0	+	-	+	0	+		-	Resubmit in correct length
[B8]	Smoking	too long!	F -	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-		-	Resub. for first stage correction
[B9]	Travel	correct	E +	+	-	-	-	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	0	+		+	Resub. correctly spelt
[B11]	Smoking	correct	E -	+	-	-	-	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	0	0		+	Resub. with correct gram./spelling
[B13]	Smoking	too long	D	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	-	0	0		-	Resub. corrected & right length
N.B. ALL freestyle written work (including resubmissions) must show the ACTUAL (not estimated!) no. of words																			
COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, ETC.				A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V		X	IMPROVEMENT
[B3]: Well-written, but too many language errors [B4]: A bit unimaginative, with quite a few language errors [B6]: Well-written but a bit 'padded'; MUCH too long (NFI!) [B8]: SPEAK TO ME PRIVATELY [B9]: Acceptable, if a little 'pedestrian'; too many language errors and spelling problems [B11]: Good imagination, well-written, but far too many errors [B13]: Well-written, but spelling and a few vocab./grammar problems				Appropriateness of tone, style	Care and attention to detail	First language transfer	Grammar (specific points)	Imagination, creativity, etc.	Length	Neatness, layout, handwriting	Organisation of ideas, logic, etc.	Punctuation	Repetitious, padded	Spelling	Tenses	Vocabulary (incorrect, inadequate)		Following instructions	For a first attempt, acceptable (except 'F') + Favourable 0 Acceptable - Unfavourable

full SDL mode ... for four [= five] remaining students: all volunteered. They know they can access library, laboratory, work in pairgroups, use video, leave the building, use the teacher [= co-ordinator] as learning resource. No teaching at all. Coursebooks will not be used so [B9] and [B4] will not miss out at all. Can revert from SDL at any time if they wish.> —[1.35/CR/19 Feb/B.I]. Two students were keen: "I think it can be very good; after five weeks with this methodology, to have time for studying personally will be wonderful. I've liked very much the proposal of work ...." —[1.36/B3/19 Feb/B.I]; "I hope to get really benefit ... especially for the language-lab and secondly for going on with my assignment. I also desire to do revision of the program we have done so far otherwise it can not be assimilated properly." —[1.37/B6/19 Feb/B.I]; [1.40/B6/20 Feb/B.I].[15] How this student approached allocation of his ISDL time is worthy of note. One student felt that the time could be profitably spent but that no more than a week should be given over to independent work [1.38/B8/19 Feb/B.I], and another was prepared to wait and see what the week would entail [1.39/B11/19 Feb/B.I].

The students' verbal responses to the first day of the mainly ISDL week were reported as very favourable [1.1/CR/23 Feb/B.II] although there were some counter-indications when the week was over (e.g. [1.9/B5/4 Mar/B.II], [1.10/CR/5 Mar/B.II]). Two new students arrived on the second day, bringing the numbers taking part in the ISDL period up to seven. One Diary extract offers a reasonably complete evaluation from the perspective of a higher-level student, who, while appreciating the 'autonomy' experience, endorsed the MIDL methodology:

> I can firstly say that the experiment we did was positive .... Secondly this week also gave to us a kind of breath[er] in order to do revision and to choose what we needed according to our own level and peace [= pace] of work. Thirdly, although these positive aspects I think that it couldn't be carry on for very long time unless certain instruments for continuous revision and dialogs teacher-students were provided in order to set up in agreement a program according to the student's needs and the teacher's point of view. Finally, as a personal preference for a complete course, I'd choose the mixed formula, which we have been carrying on since the course began, because there's more interaction among the students themselves and with the teacher. As an extra point I'd like to add that an other thing that this experiment gave to us was the opportunity to touch with our hands how to use our time without any kind of pressure made by the teacher so that we can really become more responsible for our own learning process.
> [1.2/B6/27 Feb/B.II]

Little need be added, except that the University of Nancy's CRAPEL 'autonomy' programmes accord closely with this student's suggestions for longer-term ISDL, and to note the reasons for his support for the MIDL programme. There is a close relationship between those reasons and the feelings of a lower-stream student, who, notwithstanding frequent claims of boredom about her life in general, offers a point of view which encourages MIDL:

> Today has been a boring one. I wished that the idepent class were finished. I like more the others ones because they are more interesting. I know that it's a good idea but one week is

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[15]It is not clear whether the responses were prompted by workload considerations as much as by genuine enthusiasm for entire ISDL. Either way, regular 'autonomous learning' periods may be useful ways to relieve the workload pressure on traditional courses, particularly in close-community settings (compare Froebel, Montessori, and primary schools in general). At the Eisenhower College, New York, a January Independent Study Term every year (semi-tutorial and laboratory) served to encourage study in depth (JIST, 1971).

> enough. By the end you always need the teacher's help. I'm sorry about the Language Laboratory but the problem it's I feel very boring with it.... I would like that [[CR] should] tell to me what is more necesary to study for myself. [1.3/B8/27 Feb/B.II]

It is significant that, where ISDL was extended over a sufficient period of time, both students expressed the need for help with planning a programme of studies. It points up the fact that even where 'autonomous learning' is defined as 'the capability to conduct one's own learning' such capability is not necessarily a steady-state, sufficient unto itself. For 'team' reports on the week see **Table B:4**.

The following week, with the return of one student and the arrival of a second new student, the class reverted to a MIDL format: "Today it was the first day .... I think the structure of the lesson [= the methodology] is very good. So we begin at nine o'clock with the laboratory till ten o'clock. Then we have an hour to work with the books from the library by ourselves. From ten to eleven till ten past eleven we have a break to drink a cup of coffee if we want. The rest of the time we work with the teacher .... I hope to make a lot of progress in the next times." —[1.4/B7/2 Mar/B.II]. It should be noted that 'work with the teacher' includes DSDL activities. There is a favourable reference to the slower pace of the programme, to facilitate new students [1.5/B3/3 Mar/B.II], an unfavourable reference from a consistent critic of the experimental programme [1.6/B4/3 Mar/B.II], and a broad outline of the typical programme in practice from a third, a 47-year old, who also remarked "We had a lot of fun." —[1.7/B5/3 Mar/B.II]. But she found the following day distressing and complained about interruptions during the class library periods [1.9/B5/4 Mar/B.II].[16]The outline of the programme for the day after that is mixed with complaint: "These morning lessons were much better than yesterday. During the first hour we repeated the exercises we had done for homework. During second lesson we worked independently with the class library.... The third hour was Language Lab time.... it's too much for all of us who do the morning and the afternoon lessons. From 11^{00} [= 12.00] to 1^{00} we worked with [the coursebook].... For homework we had a mixed exercise ... extracting information about advantages and disadvantages of art galleries. No fun today, not at all." —[1.12/B5/5 Mar/B.II]. In passing, the extract offers a reminder of the attitude to the work-load of students attending both morning and afternoon classes. There was some approval from another student: "Now, I feel very happy, I'm seeing my progress, and I think I'm learning more, I understand more and I go talking much more." —[1.8/B3/4 Mar/B.II]. This endorsement of the MIDL programme is being made at intermediate 'plateau' level where progress can be difficult for the student to discern.[17] One advanced student, absent for two days that week, wanted the programme to emphasise speaking over reading and writing, to be more varied, and to contain less self-direction [1.13/B13/5 Mar/B.II].[18] An out-class setwork moratorium left another highly motivated student feeling the lack of an integrated programme of work for himself [1.14/B6/10 Mar/B.II]. His

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[16]Distraction from both support and administration could not be avoided in a single-classroom context.

[17]This plateau seems to be a common experience among students at intermediate level, albeit that true fossilisation may be more person-specific. Among several research findings on fossilisation, Pica includes the interesting hypothesis of Washburn, 1991, that some learners may lack a Vygotskyan 'zone of proximal development' and thus "be unable to modify their interlanguage toward accuracy even when supplied with models" (Pica, 1994, p.73).

[18]An economist with a personal need for oral fluency, she left the class to attend the more traditional 'communicative' programme of an experienced, highly popular, and very successful teacher, but was to return three weeks later.

Table B:4. *Course B Stage II Student Reports on the 'Autonomy Week' 23 - 27 February*

The 'G' team report prepared by [B3]

In the group, there were three people only two were in the autonomy week.
After a month and half with this kind of programme, we think this experience has been good to review and repeat the things that you needed to study more. Also, the [dependent other-directed] work about the Pitman Examination was very useful because it broke our independence, and this was neccessary for everyone.
On the other hand, sometimes it was very boring and we didn't know what were the best activities for us.
This work is slowlier than the normal class, because you need to spend more time for learning, but after that you will never forget what you have learnt.

The 'B' team report prepared by [B13]

Last week we were working by ourselves during the class time. We think it was interesting to review everything we had learnt before. Besides, we could work on our weak points in grammar, spelling and so on. On the other hand, you waste your time around the same subject because you don't know when you should stop.
Although it was a little bit boring week because for some of the new students weren't able to work independently, they didn't really know what to do in the whole day.
We think that teacher could have been teaching the new students to join them to the rest of the students. Moreover it should be a short time to work with autonomy, for exemple two or three days every month.
In conclusion, it wasn't too bad but it could be better that it was.

The 'U' team report prepared by [B6]

There are two different opinions about autonomy class in our group. Such as opinions are according to either the last week's experience or personal's viewpoints about the methods of learning a language. It is important, by the way, to take into account that two students in our group did the complete experience last week.
The first opinion, supported by two of us, regards the autonomy class not to be a good way for learning English. The supporters think that a programme of autonomy class must be carry on at home as a personal study, but not at school, where it is better if the student is guided during the whole process of learning by the teacher, so that a wider range of topics are covered.
The second opinion, instead, is favourable to autonomy class but as a short period introduced, from time to time, during the normal mixed-course that we are following. The two of us who support it, regard the experience they had, working on their own, as a very positive one. They think that in that way the students have the opportunity to study what they want according to their weak points and needs. Moreover, they consider as a very useful the possibility of having a much longer period of time for carrying on with points of free study of their choice and revision. What they suggest is not to have a lot of interruptions during those periods so that they may concentrate much better and, as a result, of course, get more benefit from that experience.

comments offer support for the close integration in MIDL of in-class and out-class activities, best realised with a homogeneous group whose members all start and finish the course at the same time.

Materials and Equipment B.II

One student commented favourably on a class library book with an answer-key [2.1/B3/26 Feb/B.II] and another complained that she could find no interesting book to work with in the class library [2.2/B4/3 Mar/B.II]. While the inventory consisted of material which was not current (changing fashions in hair-styles and clothing could date a perfectly good illustrated textbook almost as quickly as fashions in language-learning) it contained a sufficient range of task-types, registers, specialisations, and levels (from beginner to native fluency) to satisfy any student who was seriously looking. Its major deficiencies were not so much in materials as in lack of cross-referencing and answer-keys.

Composition of Class B.II

There was one comment that ten students were enough in a class [3.1/B11/2 Mar/B.II]. The co-ordinator was concerned about integrating an older student into the group, and mentioned [B10], who left after only two days [3.2/CR/5 Mar/B.II].[19] One student expressed unease at the changing membership of the class and the adverse effect this had on the programme [3.3/B3/9 Mar/B.II].

DODL Elements B.II

After some six weeks of the course, during which other-directed and self-directed elements had mingled, and with the experience of a week of almost entire ISDL, at least one student retained the traditional outlook: "... I prefer to be guided by a teacher in my studies. The teacher know exactly what you need that's why." — [4.1/B8/23 Feb/B.II]. Such viewpoints encourage contentions like that of Illich (1971/1976) that "schools themselves pervert the natural inclination to grow and learn into the demand for instruction" (p.65), or Freire's (1972) conviction that 'banking education' inculcates an attitude of "The teacher knows everything" (p.46). While some dependent attitudes to learning may be a by-product of maternal care, the causes therefore as much as the effects of educational practice, they are, in any case, inseparable from a norm-referenced examination system whose syllabuses must be as much determined by the teachable and the testable as by regard for what the learner needs to know. The nominally ISDL week could not avoid a minimum of DODL time for plenary sessions in preparation for the Pitman examinations, which intruded on the Cambridge examination preparation schedules, within which they had to be accommodated, and with which they were to some extent in conflict. Most students wished to obtain certification from both bodies. During the ISDL week one student complained of 'continuous interruptions' to his own study programme [4.4/B6/24 Feb/B.II], although only three out of the twenty academic hours of that week were taken for DODL sessions (indicated on line B.II, 23/2-27/2 in **Appendix E**), one being a popular whole-class discussion [4.5/B1/25 Feb/B.II], [4.7/B5/25 Feb/B.II], [4.8/B6/25 Feb/B.II], [4.9/B8/25 Feb/B.II], [4.10/B13/25 Feb/B.II]. One comment on the discussion confirms the democratic atmosphere: "I've liked

[19]She had apparently found the MIDL course too difficult but was to transfer back to the class some seven weeks later, after making a bad name for herself with other teachers.

very much the discussion .... Moreover, there is an atmosphere of freedom between us that makes easy this kind of discussion." —[4.6/B3/25 Feb/B.II].

After the 'autonomy week' the transition back to a MIDL format was unproblematical, illustrated by one comment from a highly motivated self-directed learner: "The two best periods of the morning were dedicated to follow the program in [the coursebook]. It was interesting and useful for me ...." —[4.15/B6/2 Mar/B.II]. The pace and activities were geared to the integration of the newer students: "I feel very well the rhythm is slow because the new students need to catch the program and too, it's good for us, because we can revue. I've liked the games and I think they are very good to foment the relationships between us, and it's very important in order to the new students feel well in the class." —[4.16/B3/3 Mar/B.II]; [4.18/B5/3 Mar/B.II], [4.19/B8/3 Mar/B.II]. Not everyone appreciated the more relaxed pace "... we're going very slowly, which makes me very lazy." —[4.21/B4/4 Mar/B.II].

One student commented favourably on a pronunciation session [4.23/B6/4 Mar/B.II].[20] Another offered a reason why – apart from some minimal-pairs work of the 'bin-pin' and 'sheep-ship' type where necessary – teaching pronunciation, as opposed to learning it, may have little effect: "We learned some pronunciation. It was good because usually we don't have time to study that. But But But – When I talking with somebody with English I complately forget what is colect pronaunciation. Well, I'm very bat student." —[4.24/B11/4 Mar/B.II]. The 'errors' appear to be jocular. In contrast, the in-class review of DSDL out-class setwork assumed an ever more important role in the DODL sessions. It supplemented individual marking and correction, and disseminated the results as widely as possible, and the sessions could also be enhanced by taking part of them in DSDL pairgroup mode. One student commented: "The homework revision is, in my opinion, one of the most helpful activities of our class and is one which I more enjoy." —[4.27/B6/5 Mar/B.II].

One outline of the DODL activities for a particular day conflicts with others:

> A repetition of the homework.... read some letters .... a comprehension test about this text. After that we filled in the blanks of a word study. Then we learned something about kitchen equipmemt and so on. We rushed like an express train through a vocabulary extension and two exercises .... we saw a video about last year's cooking session for UNICEF. [4.29/B5/6 Mar/B.II]

Nothing of variety or pace emerges from other responses: "There wasn't anything interesting." —[4.28/B4/6 Mar/B.II]; "Today ___ nothing special." —[4.30/B11/6 Mar/B.II]. How perceptions differ is exemplified by a

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[20]The students were constantly exposed to the co-ordinator's Non-Regional Anglo-English accent (a more meaningful description than RP, or 'received pronunciation') and to the various Hiberno-English accents of the target-language community and the French, Spanish, and other accents of the classroom. This 'international English' blend enabled discrete pronunciation sessions to be given a relatively low remedial priority, along the lines of J. Jenkins' (1997a, p.78) suggestion for teaching 'chunking' and her (1997b) conclusion that "while matters of pitch are best left for acquisition through natural exposure to English, nuclear stress can be both taught and learned in the classroom, and is essential for international intelligibility" (p.117). While "some researchers and pedagogues believe that pronunciation cannot be taught" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1994, p.223) it is probably truer to say that some aspects cannot be taught and others need not be, given that English pronunciation has nowhere near the range of 'difficult' sounds that learners of some other languages must tackle (see Nott, 1994, for examples in French). Interestingly, Harlow and Muyskens (1994) found that 1,373 intermediate-level American students of French and Spanish ranked pronunciation 5th out of 14 priorities; their instructors ranked it 10th. For serious and pertinent reasons why pronunciation can and should be taught, see Pennington, 1998.

normally critical student: "It was quite interesting everything we have done today.... The class was more alive than other days." —[4.31/B13/6 Mar/B.II]. The same student remarked, in the context of her leaving the experimental course: "As well I'm happy because I have resolved my problem [by transfer to another class].... It's a pity that this class hasn't more conversation because I like my classmates and my teacher but first it's to learn English and second to enjoy." —[4.31/B13/6 Mar/B.II]. She appeared to have resolved this apparent dichotomy by the time of her return to MIDL after three weeks. The students talked all the time throughout every day, in English, and by 'conversation' she may have meant debates and formal discussions, which had a low priority on the course. Another serious student was concerned about a perceived decline: "... the impression I've got today is that our class doesn't still get the pace we were used to have the weeks before the autonomy week. There's still movement of people: new students coming in, one of us who has prefered to change the class, and another who has missed the wayback. All these factors have their influence. I hope the atmosphere of study and commitment may improve during the following days. I realise that I've also lowered my personal commitment." —[4.34/B6/9 Mar/B.II]. Yet another very good student recognised the need to allow for the new students, but, in the context of a moratorium on out-class setwork, remarked: "Sometimes, when you don't have any obligations to do something you work less and I wouldn't like this to happen, because for me the only way to learn is to study and work every day." —[4.35/B3/10 Mar/B.II]. The observation offers a clear justification for the 'dependent' aspects of MIDL. A lower level student evidently found matters to her liking: "The class has been right." —[4.36/B8/10 Mar/B.II]. There was some evidence that the co-ordinator attempted to return to a better balance during the following DODL 'catch-up' day: "Today was quite intense." —[4.38/B1/11 Mar/B.II], while maintaining an agreeable atmosphere: "First we have a very funny morning class with [CR] .... He is really a very good teacher and also an excellent 'show-man', well I mean he is really funny and friendly. He knows how to made people work hard without getting bore." —[4.39/B2/11 Mar/B.II]. Allowing for initial enthusiasm, the remarks are important as coming from a student who had afternoon classes for comparison, and as evidence – beyond the bulk of extracts dealing with the content of the course – that the conduct of the DODL elements could adequately stand for comparison with the self-directed elements. His impressions were more soberly confirmed by another student [4.42/B6/11 Mar/B.II]. These extracts provide evidence that there was little risk of the SDL elements being accepted by default rather than on their own merits. One student was left tired but contented by a day's work [4.40/B3/11 Mar/B.II], but a newer student found the pace made out-class revision necessary – an altogether beneficial effect: "I don't think I'll remember very well what we did this morning because it was a little bit too fast. So I have to repeat it for myself. And there are many pages in [the coursebook] I have to do because me and some other students joined the course rather late." —[4.41/B5/11 Mar/B.II]. Another day prompted the co-ordinator to comment: <Very good lesson; happy atmosphere. Diaries will probably say 'boring', 'nothing happened', etc.> —[4.43/CR/12 Mar/B.II]. In fact it elicited some favourable responses: "It was very helpful .... The activities on the class explanation sessions were very amusement and colourful." —[4.46/B6/12 Mar/B.II]; "The lessons were really interesting today." —[4.47/B7/12 Mar/B.II]. Again, the following day, there was some confirmation of acceptable DODL: "First we had a very interesting class with [CR] ... about Reported Speech and ... how to summer [= summarise]." —[4.48/B2/13 Mar/B.II]; "... a complete table of the most important modal verbs which don't change or have very little change when put into reported speech. That study was deepened by two full-class explanations of careful analysis about conditional sentences in

direct and reported speech. Although this work was hard ... I found it really well done, interesting and, even, necessary for recognising different structures of the language, which, of course, I'm not able to use properly at this stage, but at least I can understand and catch their meaning." —[4.51/B6/13 Mar/B.II]. The remarks highlight a distinction between learning for comprehension and learning for production. Another student was very pleased with activities on summary-writing and also said: "I've liked very much the class of today, although we have spent two hours with grammar because I think they have been very profitable as we have been able to see with last exercise." —[4.49/B3/13 Mar/B.II]. But the same student went on with a criticism of the teaching: "I think sometimes the explanation isn't very clear. Maybe, it's better to present more clearly the most common uses and then the least usual, because if you present all the possibilities together, at the end you don't know what are the most important." —[4.49/B3/13 Mar/B.II]. The confusion was not L1-specific. The feeling of this Spanish-speaker was shared by a German-speaker: "I was very confused with all these examples. I think that the examples were very specific. they were like exceptions for me and so I have to learn them by heart. But for the 'normal' if-sentences I will continue to use my knowledge as till now, if not, I will confound with everything." —[4.52/B7/13 Mar/B.II]. The remark shows a good student compensating for inadequate instruction. Yet another German-speaker found the session a waste of time: "Today we could have stayed at home because I didn't understand anything. I got very frustrated in the end. Our teacher said that we could use this tense but it would be secure to use that tense. Now I don't know what tense I should use." —[4.53/B9/13 Mar/B.II]. This instance of poor teaching confirms that the conduct of DODL was as receptive to favourable/unfavourable responses as the content.[21]

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing B.II

From early in B.II the co-ordinator was under strain, affected by back trouble which made walking extremely difficult and painful [5.1/CR/24 Feb/B.II], [5.7/CR/2 Mar/B.II], [5.21/CR/10 Mar/B.II], by a recurring problem of dazedness [5.6/CR/27 Feb/B.II], and by fatigue: <Working a 68-hour week.> —[14.1/CR/23 Feb/B.II; [5.15/CR/5 Mar/B.II]; <Dreadful tiredness all the time; thyroid trouble again?> —[5.31/CR/13 Mar/B.II].[22] One student complained that he was not making progress [5.4/B1/26 Feb/B.II], [5.26/B1/11 Mar/B.II]. He had morning classes, was living in the TL environment, and had the advantage of a different teacher in afternoon classes which, although generally more relaxed and conversation-oriented, took time and energy, and could create a problem when coupled with the workload of a morning examination class [5.2/B1/24 Feb/B.II], [5.10/B1/4 Mar/B.II]. His expectations tended to exceed the effort put into realising them but another student attending afternoon classes also reported "I felt miserable all the time and was beginning to make mistakes .... Sometimes it seemed to me that I heard the lessons from far away. This

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[21]The issue is not trivial where responses may be inhibited by politeness or tact. Any topic putatively incapable of receiving both favourable and unfavourable responses could not be included in the quantitative data taxonomy. The extremely important question of 'favourable/unfavourable' response receptivity was acute only in respect to out-class freework, where the likelihood of students reporting adversely on their own chosen work had to be carefully considered and determined.

[22]For some years the co-ordinator had been subject to contractions resembling convulsions and stupor resembling *petit mal*. The students were briefed and there is no record that any were embarrassed or inconvenienced.

couldn't go on. So I tried to get the permission of the Director to cancel the afternoon class, together with some other students who had a similar problem." —[5.24/B5/10 Mar/B.II]. Permission was not granted [5.20/B7/9 Mar/B.II].[23]

This student, considerably older than the others involved in the incident, handled problems with very good humour: "And I must say [CR] is a very critical teacher. He likes to criticize everything! The other day I spilled some drops of pure, innocent Irish Springwater on my exercises and I didn't write them again .... And [CR] made such a big fuss of it. Gr —!" —[5.27/B5/11 Mar/B.II]. Earlier tiredness had made her come across as somewhat cold and humourless, an impression belied by her diaries.[24] The extract is noteworthy in the comfortable ease with which she comments negatively on the co-ordinator, evidence of the existence of good rapport, and a healthy sign of an auto-responsible learner. Another student, whose morale was low throughout the course, found the independent self-directed elements of the programme boring, and preferred dependent classes where the time passed more quickly [5.5/B8/26 Feb/B.II]. Not living with a host-family, she was lonely: "... my boring and alone weekend.... I was rude with [a close friend]. Now I sorry very much, because she has her indepent life. Saturday morning ... I felt bad, and I wondered what I'm doing here, in general, in my life. I couldn't eat nothing.... I needed some help so I phoned my fathers [= parents] ...." —[5.17/B8/6 Mar/B.II]. In a close-community environment such temperaments can destroy class morale but, while obviously ill-adjusted to her out-home situation, she was very pleasant and appeared to get on well with the others; there is no evidence at this time that she interacted badly with [B4], another person with temperamental difficulties. The only student to finish an Assignment noted with relief that she had done so [5.9/B3/2 Mar/B.II]; the extract suggests that whatever its learning-value the task was burdensome. Later she rejoiced at the progress she was making in several areas [5.11/B3/4 Mar/B.II], [5.22/B3/10 Mar/B.II]. Extracts from two students, not in the same workteams and hence not mutually reinforcing [5.14/B7/4 Mar/B.II], [5.13/B6/4 Mar/B.II], together with extract [5.16/B4/5 Mar/B.II], point up the fact that class atmosphere is both fragile and by no means entirely the construct of the teacher. On returning from Germany after a long break one student observed: "I think the atmosphere is getting colder among the students. I was very disappointed because everybody seemed to be happy before I left and I do hope it will get better again." —[5.25/B9/10 Mar/B.II]. The following day she found relations with the new students were better [5.29/B9/11 Mar/B.II], and the feeling was confirmed the following day by another student [5.30/B4/12 Mar/B.II]. A Japanese student regretted that, despite wanting to spend another year at the institution, she had run out of funds [5.18/B11/6 Mar/B.II]. She also referred to a great improvement in her speaking ability, a remark perhaps at odds with the criticisms of [B13] about lack of 'conversation' in the class, although what part the out-class environment played in the progress of [B11] is impossible to establish; she now found grammar more difficult and the reason for this may have been contact with more advanced structures rather than faulty teaching (cf. Risk, 1994). With the imminent departure from the class of one disaffected student, a

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[23]The co-ordinator had had private reservations: <[Director] advising new students to take afternoon classes. A recommendable practice? (in view of intensity of a.m. course) Can st[udent]s handle it?> —[14.1/CR/23 Feb/B.II]. When he became aware of their request and the anger and frustration at its outcome he assumed that the Director considered binding enrolments fundamental to the necessary advance arrangements of class numbers, accommodation, employment contracts, and so on.

[24]Her total Diary output, of which the extracts represent only a small portion, was copious, fluent, and very enjoyable to read. The full corpus may be of further research value.

similar morale problem was expressed by another who had found neither the level nor the MIDL format to her liking from the start [5.19/B4/9 Mar/B.II]. Alongside the pressure of natural parental concern, and the example of another student, she recognised the fact of her own temperament: "I don't know how I do it but I always have to be worried about something.... Maybe it will be better to change [to another class] ... but ...." —[5.23/B4/10 Mar/B.II]. She was at the 'intermediate plateau' stage of imperceptible progress and it was unfortunate that she could not be reassured by comparing some informal 'level at entry' with her present standard.[25] Her case is particularly relevant to the whole enquiry, in that she complained about the SDL elements throughout the course, and like [B8], who also had difficulties adjusting to SDL, she was permanently indecisive, and again like [B8], expressed the need for directives:

> I think that I should have talked to [the Director, about transferring to another class] before I did.... I'm still thinking on what to do. I'm waiting for a telephone-call from my father in order to finally decide.... 10.10 My parents have already phoned me. They haven't help me. They have just told me that I have to decide by my own. 'What do you think? Do you think that you went to Ireland only to improve your English? You went also to take/make your own decisions and you have to start now.' (They know very well the huge problem that I have when I have to make a decision). I started to cry and I told them that they help me in nothing. I told them that I [can't] stand this. I think that I'm doing the stupid. I'm still thinking why I'm here. [5.32/B4/13 Mar/B.II]

Despite the fact that her English was below that of others in the class at that time it remains unsure whether, aside altogether from the question of the MIDL programme, she would have integrated with or benefited from a higher-level class. It may be speculated whether she was unconsciously sabotaging an opportunity which, at some level, she interpreted as rejection by her parents. It is also possible that the SDL elements of MIDL were seen as a similar 'parent-substitute' rejection.

Counselling Consultation B.II

The only extract refers to interviews.

Out-Class Environment B.II

One extract confirms the bonds that could exist between students, particularly when young, and host-families, particularly with younger students: "I went to visit the family where I lived the summers I went to Ireland. I haven't seen them since ... ten years ago. It ~~was~~ have been I [= a] lovely experience for me." —[7.3/B2/11 Mar/B.II].

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support B.II

Peer support helped to integrate the newer students, at a disadvantage in relation to the work already done by the others: "The work team of today ... has been very good .... Also, it has been good for the new students,

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[25] A series of prototype progress tests for such courses was begun but could not be completed within the time-scales of the empirical programme.

because they have known how we are working and advantages and desadvantages of this. I think new students feel lost, because they have to catch the programme and this is very hard after two months of work." —[8.3/B3/4 Mar/B.II]. One new student would have preferred to work co-operatively on a class library task [8.1/B5/25 Feb/B.II], and the following day partnered another new student [8.2/B5/26 Feb/B.II]. Another said: "My humour was a little bit better when we could work together about the 'Autonomy week'. I wasn't yet here but I like doing teamworks." —[8.6/B7/4 Mar/B.II].

But there was evidence that not every motivated and competent self-directed learner is necessarily a good team-worker, when one of the most capable ISDL students resisted the 'report' pairgroup task and performed it badly, perhaps an instance of the dependent feature of a DSDL task (its initiation by someone other than the student) adversely affecting its self-directed performance. He found it difficult to relate to those whose opinions and attitudes he disagreed with [8.5/B6/4 Mar/B.II]. Despite a change of team membership he twice again criticised pairgroup activity, [8.8/B6/9 Mar/B.II], [8.10/B6/10 Mar/B.II]. He had approved the support teams of Stage I (e.g. [8.3/B6/26 Jan/B.I], [8.12/B6/30 Jan/B.I], [8.27/B6/12 Feb/B.I]) and the problem may simply have been personality clashes, as, although temperamentally a dedicated lone-worker he had co-operated with another student [8.16/B6/4 Feb/B.I], and was willing to help as a 'peer-tutor' when requested [8.22/B6/11 Feb/B.I]. However, he had been critical of the lack of DSDL preparation by other team-members [8.19/B6/5 Feb/B.I], and was impatient of interruptions to his planned ISDL [4.4/B6/24 Feb/B.II], evidence that both may be vulnerable to factors outside the control of dedicated self-directed learners.

One extract records the integration of DODL with DSDL activities, indicates the range of speaking opportunities (found inadequate by [B13] and [B1]), mentions the light-hearted team names, and provides evidence that pairgroup partners changed during the morning [8.7/B5/9 Mar/B.II]. One problem for the co-ordinator of DSDL in workteams was pointed out by a level-headed student: "I think we have lost time in the work-team, because we have finished the work very early and we haven't started to do another things." —[8.9/B3/10 Mar/B.II]. The delay while other pairgroups finished the task may have been the prelude to an inter-team or plenary session. In any case, there is evidence here that during dependent SDL participants expect to be told what next to do, not from any particular inability but from the mind-set engendered by dependent learning, a reminder that DSDL is only a waystage to autonomy.

Laboratory B.II

In Stage II the laboratory seemed well received by all but the two students who had most problems with self-direction: "It's a good idea to reduce the time of the lenguage laboratory class ...." —[9.19/B4/3 Mar/B.II]; "I'm sorry about the Language Laboratory but the problem it's I feel very boring with it." —[9.14/B8/27 Feb/B.II].[26] It is clear from most extracts that the students had readily taken to laboratory in ISDL mode, and the similarity of their personal programmes is noteworthy, with most adhering closely to DSDL laboratory format, studying phrasal verbs [9.2/B3/24 Feb/B.II], [9.5/B11/24 Feb/B.II], [9.12/CR/27 Feb/B.II], gerunds and infinitives [9.8/B3/26 Feb/B.II], and determiners and articles [9.18/B11/2 Mar/B.II]. The scripts for these

[26]It is necessary to be careful in attributing causes: the laboratory was merely a tool of ISDL, and some students simply have a low tolerance to learning without human stimulus. Responses to the social/asocial dimension of learning are nonetheless responses to the learning mode itself.

'stimulus-response' drills had long been out of print, but some scripts existed for another popular series in freely-chosen use: "I like this kind of tapes [stimulus-response drills] and I think they are very good for me." —[9.15/B3/2 Mar/B.II]; [9.24/B3/12 Mar/B.II].

One student, whose expressed major need was for spoken English, was glad of a chance to spend more time in the laboratory and for the opportunities it presented for practice [9.1/B13/23 Feb/B.II]. Another student found much to do in the laboratory [9.6/B3/25 Feb/B.II], and regretted it when sessions were curtailed [9.24/B3/12 Mar/B.II]. A new student referred to having too little time and confirmed that laboratory work (in this case listening comprehension) could be continued as out-class freework on what Mueller, McCavana, Ramsden, and Shelly (1987) call 'ambulatory equipment' [9.7/B5/25 Feb/B.II]. Even the new students were happy in the laboratory [9.23/B2/12 Mar/B.II], [9.21/B7/3 Mar/B.II], [9.22/B7/5 Mar/B.II]. Two extracts confirm the complementary value of class library and language laboratory to students who wished to integrate their in-class ISDL work: "In the two hours of Class-library I deepen on gerunds .... A good complement to the grammar study is the Class-lab, because of the possibility of listening to the same things already studied." —[9.10/B6/26 Feb/B.II]; [10.7/B3/24 Feb/B.II].

Library B.II

Early responses to the ISDL week were generally positive (e.g. [10.1/B3/23 Feb/B.II]), notwithstanding the distractions and interruptions of the environment [10.2/B6/23 Feb/B.II].[27] While initially enthusiastic, the reaction of one student prefigures her later responses:

> I thought that the class could be boring if it were idepent. But not at all. It has been intersting because you can do that you want. I thought that my mind could go to the moon because I would have to work for myself. But I have been concentrated in my work. I have just done a mistake. I can leave the work on the Basic Gramaty for home. At class, I prefer to study to preper the Pitman Exam.... Tomorrow I'm going to .... I am happy with the new experience but it's enough with one week because I prefer to be guided by a teacher in my studies. The teacher know exactly what you need that's why. [10.3/B8/23 Feb/B.II]

By the fourth day she had had enough: "Idepent class is becoming to be boring. I prefer the normal class because the hours pass very quickly.... I don't feel very well. I'm depress again." —[10.19/B8/26 Feb/B.II]; "Today has been a boring one. I wished that the idepent class were finished. I like more the others ones because they are more interesting. I know that it's a good idea but one week is enough. By the end you always need the teacher's help.... I would like that [[CR] should] tell to me what is more necesary to study for myself." —[10.24/B8/27 Feb/B.II].[28] Another student welcomed the time for revision, but also thought one week would be enough [10.4/B11/23 Feb/B.II]; she was still happy the following day [10.10/B11/24 Feb/B.II]. The one who would leave the class and return after three weeks welcomed the opportunity for independence: "I liked it. It's a good idea .... I could review many things that I wasn't able to do before. On the other hand, I can organice my time better and spend more time in the laboratory.... In conclusion, it's

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[27]On the grounds that the ISDL week was virtually an extension of the Library principle, most responses have been so evaluated, with identifiable Laboratory references taken out to that heading.

[28]There is no evidence that she gained any greater benefit from the dependent learning components of the course.

really very interesting and worth having this experience.... Sometimes you feel that you haven't enough time to do every you want, but you can study better everything you want to." —[10.5/B13/23 Feb/B.II].

Newly-arrived students seemed to adapt without trauma: "... the first impact with the new classroom has been positive.... the teacher use a particular methodologie sistem ...." —[10.6/B1/24 Feb/B.II]; "During my first lesson a fellow student explained to me how the class works at the moment and that the students work independent. I was quite pleased to hear that." —[10.8/B5/24 Feb/B.II]. Integration of library and laboratory was evident [10.7/B3/24 Feb/B.II], [10.18/B6/26 Feb/B.II]. A good outline of a particular day is provided by a highly-motivated student, with references to several pertinent matters:

> I spent the first [h]our in the morning to introduce two new classmates to our course. That task was asked to me by the teacher and although it ment to change my personal program I did it willingly. Afterwards I went to the laboratory .... we talk about the pitman exams and the right level we have to choose in agreement with the teacher. It was necessary.... during the last hour we worked together with the teacher in a pitman exam.... it's important to stablish at what time it will be take place, otherwise there is the risk of introduce many things that are different to what the student intends to do in his personal program. Personally I find hard to concentrate my attention when there are continuous interruptions. [10.9/B6/24 Feb/B.II]

It is not clear whether the interruptions came from the co-ordinator and/or other students or simply from the unavoidable conflict between class administration (the Pitman selection was an institutional requirement) and this student's own study plans.[29] The following day he remarked: "Today's personal work was better than yesterday's.... continuity is one of the most important conditions in order to get benefit from the personal study. But to guarantee continuity is necessary to give time enough to each theme .... As a conclusion I'm satisfy of the work I did and also of the way things were today." —[10.14/B6/25 Feb/B.II]. Perhaps a major advantage of ISDL is that, subject to time and place constraints, continuity rests with the student rather than with the teacher. One student established a comfortable ISDL routine for herself but by the fourth day was looking ahead: "9=00 - 10=00 I did same things as yesterday. I thi[n]k it is very good for me and I want to continue this kind of exercise.... Also, language lab, I did same things as yesterday. Tomorrow is a last day of this tipe of course. Now, I am looking fored to next week (normal course)." —[10.20/B11/26 Feb/B.II]. It is worth noting that the experimental MIDL programme had become her 'normal course'. She also made an insightful remark: "I think the way of this study [= the ISDL week] is very good.... So, I think, every end of month, if we study like this week, I am happy." —[10.25/B11/27 Feb/B.II].[30] One student, a good self-directed learner both in-class and out-class, summed up the ISDL experience for her: "The work of this week has been a good experience for me and I hope it is profitable." —[10.21/B3/27 Feb/B.II]. Another, very independent, student, while appreciating the benefits of the week, also gave sound reasons for endorsing the MIDL programme [10.23/B6/27 Feb/B.II]. A new student proved perfectly capable of adjusting to the regime, and offered an example of the amount of grammar freely studied by the students in ISDL mode [10.22/B5/27 Feb/B.II]. At the end of the week the participants discussed the occasion in teams, and their spokesperson reports on it are at **Table B:4** above.

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[29]Another student complained of interruptions to the post-ISDL week class library time [10.31/B5/4 Mar/B.II].

[30]Intermittent ISDL 'autonomy days' were not included in any of the three experimental courses, and remain an item for investigation.

After the ISDL week the class library periods were conjoined with laboratory for the first half of the morning [10.28/B5/3 Mar/B.II]. The time was not uniformly used. An anti-SDL student said she could find no interesting materials to work with and wanted library time reduced [10.27/B4/3 Mar/B.II]. A second, who had problems with basic spelling and structures, was advised to put some time into verbatim copying of simple English [10.30/B11/3 Mar/B.II]. One student records being asked to introduce a newcomer to the course [10.26/B6/2 Mar/B.II],[31] and two days later expressed concern about "... the difficulty of the new students, especially of the last two ones, to get into the pace of the class, and of course the influence of it to the rest of the class.... I think that if something is not done they will not be properly integrated in the course and also the work of the others could be affected." —[10.32/B6/4 Mar/B.II]. He proposed that they should use class library time "for studying some of the most difficult topics of [the coursebook] we have already seen."[32] One new student said she was not sure if she was doing the right things during library time [10.34/B7/5 Mar/B.II], but there is no record of paracounselling. Some days later she was confidently working in and planning her class library sessions [10.35/B7/10 Mar/B.II].

Projects B.II

The extracts under this heading refer to assignments, with one comment on enjoying the work [11.3/B6/25 Feb/B.II] and another, on completion of the project, hoping that the time and effort contributed to learning [11.4/B3/27 Feb/B.II].

Out-Class Study and Work B.II

Class Diary B.II

No extracts were taken under this heading.

Out-Class Setwork B.II

One student clearly saw DSDL out-class setwork and ISDL revision as entirely separate things and sometimes felt that he could not manage to do both [12S.1/B6/23 Feb/B.II]. No outwork was set during the ISDL week, and it was reduced the following week; one student welcomed the chance to take up recreational freework [12S.2/B13/25 Feb/B.II] during the ISDL week. However, others seemed to need the spur of setwork: "So, to tell the truth, I was little rezy [= lazy] in a evening." —[12S.3/B11/27 Feb/B.II]; "I don't really like to be as free as we are now, without homeworks." —[12S.4/B4/3 Mar/B.II]; "I missed the homework, because with them I study more seriusly. If I haven't anything for doing, I don't do anything. I'm very lazy ...." —[12S.7/B8/4 Mar/B.II]. The extracts offer one argument in favour of setwork. One student found justification for absence from voluntary afternoon classes: "This morning [CR] has hardly [= severely] reproached me because I haven't done my homework. Today I haven't gone to the afternoon course,

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[31]The extract refers to being 'told' rather than 'asked', which may be a genuine error or, as this was the second such occasion, express resentment at his study time again being intruded upon. While the task was certainly not one of ISDL, it was at least DSDL, involving appropriate self-directed 'information-gap' practice of his English.

[32]The newcomers were of a higher starting level than some of the original members, and there is no evidence that the fears were justified or that the suggestion was followed up.

otherwise I couldn't have had the opportunity to do all my homework.... to study all afternoon is very good." —[12S.8/B1/5 Mar/B.II]; [12S.5/B1/4 Mar/B.II]. Another found it possible to integrate all his studies [12S.6/B6/4 Mar/B.II]. The student who had been advised to do simple copying exercises during the ISDL week, to improve all aspects of her written work, continued them thereafter as additional personal out-class setwork, with positive effects: "I think [written copying work] is very good for Japanise students. I could learn a lot of vocabularys, and many types of sentence." —[12S.10/B11/9 Mar/B.II]; [12S.15/B11/11 Mar/B.II].[33]

In consideration of the problems of the new students, and because [B9] would be absent for two weeks, it was felt appropriate to allow some breathing space: <... a lot of catching-up needed; suggested moratorium on homework for next two weeks: accepted unanimously, with some reservations from [B6].> — [12S.11/CR/10 Mar/B.II]. Perhaps perversely, the hesitation came not from those who confessed to needing setwork but rather from the only student who had previously found it to conflict with his own freework; it is not clear whether his remarks amount to a plea or a plan: "My perplexity at first impressions was more related to my personal pace of work than to the idea in itself. What I need, in order to profit from the time, is a proper programme to be carried out both at the class and at home." —[12S.14/B6/10 Mar/B.II]. One new student felt relaxed with the regime [12S.16/B7/12 Mar/B.II] and another welcomed the opportunity to catch up [12S.12/B2/10 Mar/B.II], as did an old hand, pleased with her setwork marks, but cautious about working less hard:

> Today, when I have seen the marked exercises, I've felt very encouraged. Maybe, now I am seeing the fruit of my work in these two months and I note that I'm learning;... Sometimes, when you don't have any obligations to do something you work less and I wouldn't like this to happen, because for me the only way to learn is to study and work every day. I think ... it's good to change a little and it's another manner of working. [12S.13/B3/10 Mar/B.II]

It is worth noting the value of marked setwork for confirmation of progress.

Out-Class Freework B.II

By the start of the ISDL week one student had planned his own integrated study schedules: "Yesterday night I set up a provisional programme ... class library ... laboratory ... assignement. During the afternoon at home, according to my program, I did revision of the course .... Then, I begin to study the two pages about infinitives that the teacher gave us.... Watching at the news and at 'Panorama'." —[12F.1/B6/23 Feb/B.II]. Another, finding the in-class time for laboratory work too short, made arrangements with the co-ordinator to continue it at home. [12F.2/B5/25 Feb/B.II], and also spent a lot of time reading in English [12F.5/B5/2 Mar/B.II], [12F.6/B5/3 Mar/B.II], even while in the car on the way to the institution [12F.14/B5/12 Mar/B.II]. A third found time, in the absence of out-class setwork, to read for recreation and study [12F.3/B13/25 Feb/B.II], and another did the same while on holiday [12F.11/B9/10 Mar/B.II]. Even a lower-level student noted reading [12F.8/B1/6 Mar/B.II], and another reported studying while away on a trip, but without any details [12F.15/B8/13 Mar/B.II]. In addition to watching television [12F.7/B13/4 Mar/B.II], [12F.9/B1/9

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[33]Porte's (1995) study of 15 EFL students at Granada University indicated the difficulties of copying texts from a computer screen under time-pressure constraints; there was evidence of interference from oral rehearsal. Copying, as an aid to learning, and more generally, seems worthy of further experimental study.

Mar/B.II] there were reports of more rigorous study: "During the afternoon at home I did revision ... and I followed a summary suggested by [the coursebook] and I found it very useful for my understanding." — [12F.10/B6/10 Mar/B.II]; [12F.12/B5/11 Mar/B.II]; [12F.13/B1/12 Mar/B.II]. It was clear that in-class learning events were prompting out-class ISDL freework.

B.II Overview

The opportunity for the ISDL week which began B.II indicated that while entire ISDL was viable in this environment (albeit with provision for fewer distractions), responses from both confident and dependent students were generally more favourable to the balanced MIDL programme, partly on the grounds that it offered better teacher-student interaction and feedback.[34] One student typified a dependent attitude: early enthusiasm for ISDL soon led to a desire for more guidance, although it can only be speculated whether, and for how long, she might have benefited from a supervised DSDL, rather than a supported ISDL environment.

New students arrived at the beginning of B.II and appeared to accept the independent ethos. After a settling-in period, and despite concern from one or two students that the newcomers might not fit in with the level of the others, they quickly integrated, due in part to the initially high standard of English of at least two of them.

During B.II one student remarked that she felt she was making progress; another complained, despite afternoon classes, that he did not. There was evidence of stress and tiredness from both co-ordinator and students, and some who also attended supplementary afternoon classes began to feel the strain. A student whose perceived needs were not being met by the experimental course, transferred out of the class. Another, with less definable and fewer needs but a similar attitude, remained, although in a permanent state of indecision.[35]

A moratorium on out-class setwork, prompted partly by a need to allow the newer students to catch up, left some students hoping they would not over-relax in the absence of pressure, and one student remarking on the benefit of an integrated in-class and out-class programme. The Assignments, intended to aid such integration, failed to achieve any worthwhile status and were allowed to be abandoned. There was evidence that, at least among the more dedicated students, in-class work spurred out-class freework, the more so when the pressure of setwork was abated.

Pairgroup work, the overt face of DSDL, continued to be successful, although one hitherto supportive student gave evidence of difficulty, perhaps because of personality clashes.

All but two students valued the language laboratory, with work generally allied to the DODL sessions and their own class library programmes. Most responses to the class library resulted from the ISDL week, the generally favourable responses being coupled with a recognition of the benefits of a more balanced SDL/ODL programme. Otherwise the lack of comment on the Library suggests acceptance.

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[34]As foretold by the preliminary project, the negative responses to the 'full autonomy' week again lent support to the notion that mediated ODL and SDL was a better option in this environment, although the same might not be true in other contexts better equipped for ISDL.

[35]The former was to return after some 120 contact-hours in another class, and the latter eventually saw the experience in a more positive light.

B.II, a short Stage, provided evidence that neither the arrival of new students at some 100 contact-hours into the experimental programme, nor the interpolation of an almost entire ISDL week, had any significantly adverse effects upon the MIDL ethos.

COURSE B STAGE III (16 MARCH - 15 MAY)

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme B.III

A new programme (**Table B:5**) introduced at the start of B.III, was welcomed by one student for establishing schedules in advance [1.1/B3/16 Mar/B.III], and by another for allocating more time to workteams [1.2/B4/16 Mar/B.III]. A third provided an outline of the first day:

> We started the lessons to correct our homeworks in the book 3 today. The first two exercises I had done at home but not the followed. But there were other students they haven't done it neither, so we could work together for about a half an hour. Then we could go to the language laboratory or stay in the class and continue to study in the exercise book.... After the coffee break we had class library.... In the last lesson we read in book 1 about different advertisements in newspapers and how you have to answer if you are interest~~ing~~ed in. [1.4/B7/18 Mar/B.III]

This is evidence for the balance at this time of the DODL, DSDL, and ISDL elements within the MIDL programme, which proved acceptable to at least one student [4.5/B6/18 Mar/B.III], and a day later there is evidence, too, that the ODL prompted SDL [1.5/B3/19 Mar/B.III]. This latter student, in the context of a remark about making progress, later approved elements of the programme as well as the general methodology; her anxiety about the fast pace of the classes had abated with experience of the cyclical nature of the programme [1.7/B3/24 Mar/B.III]. On this day one extract indicates that regardless of how students chose to use their ISDL time, the sessions were still nominated as Laboratory and Library respectively [1.8/B7/24 Mar/B.III], and another extract shows a student performing an English-use task outside the institution during one session [1.9/B9/24 Mar/B.III].[36]

Not everyone welcomed complete freedom, and one student commented that the two hours daily spent on ISDL could be used for DODL, for reducing the out-class setwork, and so on [1.6/B4/19 Mar/B.III].[37] While she expressed some dislike of other-directed sessions her attitude was consistently more hostile to self-direction. Whether or not in response to her views, some adjustment of the programme balance is evident on at least one day, when DSDL pairgroup work for the first hour was followed by combined library/laboratory ISDL for the second hour and plenary DODL sessions for the remaining two hours [1.12/B7/30 Mar/B.III]. Some of the DODL time was devoted to a plenary discussion, prompted by one student who wished to change the timetabling. While the DODL elements continued to be controlled by the co-ordinator, the

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[36]Attendance was monitored not only for tuition reasons: the fact that most students were young people abroad made some 'in loco parentis' care adviseable.

[37]It remains an open question whether she would have done better in an entirely DODL environment or in one where ISDL proportions were closer to those of Course C.

Table B:5. *Course B Stages III & IV, Outline Course Programme*

CAMBRIDGE FCE EXPERIMENTAL COURSE OUTLINE PROGRAMME						
		9.00-9.50	10.00-10.50	11.10-12.00	12.10-1.00	
		Grammar	Lab Free Study	Class Library	Class activities	Grammar: Bk 3, pairgroups, plenary Class activities: Bk 1, plenary
Mar	16 - 20	23 exs			U1-3	HW (composition related to pages in Bk 1) 6 12 18 ix + * (deferred -- see Note 1)
	23 - 27	18 exs			U4 -6	24 26 27 30 36
	30 - 3	20 exs			U7-9	42 48 54 + +
Apr	6 - 10	Pitman exam preparation: past papers (dictation, listening summaries) Revision of work to date * Plus HWs Bk1 U1-U3 (see Note 1)				
	11 - 17	EASTER HOLIDAY				
	18 - 26					
	27 - 1	13 exs			U10-12	57 60 62 65 66
May	4 - 8	13 exs			U13-15	74 78 84 88 89
	11 - 15	10 exs			U16-18	96 100 104 106 +
	18 - 22	12 exs			U19-21	109 110 112 115 117
	25 - 29	13 exs			U22-24	130 136 + + +
Jun	1 - 5	Listening tests, practice tests, past exam papers, research interviews, reports, questionnaires, etc.				
	8 - 12					

Reminders:

1. HW for week '16-20 Mar' will be deferred until '6-10 Apr'; this will enable extra concentration on the grammar element, which is particularly heavy at the start of the Course, and will ensure that U1 - U3 are covered (in Composition terms) despite the need to devote a week to Pitman Exams preparation, and FCE revision.
STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE USE OF THIS HW MORATORIUM TO ENSURE THAT WEAK SPOTS IN THEIR 'GRAMMAR' ARE REVISED AT HOME.
2. HW compositions will consist of a balanced mixture of letters, descriptions, discussions, explanations, etc. and will include an average of two summaries per week. The Book 1 page numbers given above indicate the areas from which compositions/summaries have been selected and wise students will do more than just note them! DAILY DIARIES ARE COMPULSORY FREE-STYLE PRACTICE HOMEWORKS.
3. Students who are in doubt about the commitment necessary are advised to reread the 'Introduction to the Course' and to note in particular that the programme outlined above is THE MINIMUM requirement for successful completion of the Course -- this minimum envisages 3 - 4 hours' WORK OUTSIDE CLASS EVERY WEEKDAY, with weekends for relaxation, socialising, reading in English for pleasure, etc.
4. Book 3 Grammar Exercises will be scanned and corrected but NOT NOW GRADED. All composition homeworks will be marked according to the multi-point schedules (+ 0 - for grammar, spelling, logic, etc.) and given a putative FCE Grade. HOMEWORKS 'MISSED' MUST STILL BE DONE.

occasion indicates that there was opportunity for student evaluation and input, as indicated in the co-ordinator's diary:

> Discussion prompted by [B3], who wanted to deal with Book 1 in the first session. Said I wanted to see them working at home on the grammar, to internalise it, and this process would require, say, four stages: (a) preview the exercises at home, ready for the next day (b) work together in workteams to consolidate, discuss, exchange ideas (c) plenary session where exercises are corrected, commented on, questions asked, etc. (d) revision, that same evening, of the same work. Each evening's work would thereby include revision, preview, diary, the set free-style written work (summary, letter, etc.). Most seemed happy with the proposal, and with suggested implementation plan, contingency arrangements, task-based workteam exercises, etc. [1.10/CR/30 Mar/B.III]

A student remark that the arrangements were to be reviewed a week later seems to confirm student evaluation and choice, and to indicate that student input was not merely token [1.11/B3/30 Mar/B.III], but the co-ordinator's recommendation that the arrangements be left in place after the review prompted one student to remark: "I don't like the way our teacher handles our ideas. I have the feeling that he only discusses our ideas very generous just to say that his methode is better." —[1.13/B9/30 Mar/B.III].[38] It is central to a MIDL ethos that co-ordinator responses to student input should be overtly democratic and flexible, and the extract attracted an 'unfavourable' rating under the quantitative data heading of 'Co-ordinator's Egalitarianism'.[39] In addition, the heading 'Co-ordinator's Course Organisation' attracted further unfavourable ratings by reason of responses such as that, two days later, of the student who had raised the issue of timetabling [1.15/B3/1 Apr/B.III]. A minor programme change is noted two days later again [1.16/B11/3 Apr/B.III]. The following week the programme was diverted principally to ODL mode to cater for essential Pitman examination preparation [1.17/CR/6 Apr/B.III], with only some two-and-a-half hours given to DSDL and one hour to ISDL (indicated on line B.III, 6/4-10/4 in **Appendix E**).

The programme continued to innovate during Stage III, with the issue to the students of the first Progress Reports (see **Table B:6** for a sample of a group report), and the introduction of a more rigorous system of 'resubs', under which fail-grade out-class setwork essays were resubmitted by the students until a satisfactory standard was achieved [1.18/CR/7 Apr/B.III].[40] McCarthy (1995), cites Swain's 1985 claim that when learners experience communication failure they are pushed into making their output more coherent, and "pushing learners to reformulate their utterances ... may ... lead to greater grammatical accuracy in the long term" (p.35). Chandrasegaran (1986) suggests that a student may not identify errors when writing in the L2 because: "he reads with the benefit of the background information ... which enables him to supply missing

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[38]Her classroom manner belied these and other unfavourable personal remarks (e.g. [13.3/B9/5 May/B.III]) and it is not therefore clear whether they represent merely impatience or general antipathy towards the co-ordinator.

[39]In experimental MIDL the co-ordinator is likely to be learning about classroom democracy along with the students.

[40]At the time of the tally confirmations Scrutineer 2, in a written note, observed: "One of the things missing from intensive courses is sufficient 'repetition' (student's remarks). The resub system enabled such repetition in a very positive constructive way. Part of the appeal of library and laboratory must be that it compensates to some extent for lack of repetition and while it may be claimed that students are always free to repeat outside class the simple fact of intensive classes is that the pressure on them is to[o] high to allow much time and energy for adequate repetition" (Dr Susana Bayó Belenguer, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Trinity College, Dublin University – personal communication).

Table B:6. *Course B Stage III, Sample Interim Group Progress Report 29 April*

29 APRIL -- INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT ON WRITTEN WORK — EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY FCE COURSE

	- 0 + Commitment	General impression of style	0-10 Progress Rating	100^0 = FCE PASS GRADE 'A' cool 0^0	warm	hot 100^0	Speaking	Remarks on general progress
[B3]	+	English	9	●	▬		0	Congratulations!
[B4]	0	English	6		● ▬		+	Hoping to see you in HOT very soon! Very good work!
[B6]	+	Spanglish	7	●	▬		++	Enormous improvement in speaking but still needs discipline in writing.
[B8]	\	\	\	●				(not returned after Easter)
[B9]	+	English	8		● ▬		+	Very well done; written work taking on a professional gloss.
[B11]	+	Japlish	3	● ▬			0	A very very good effort, with lots of hard work. Definite improvement.
[B1]	-	Italish	4	●	▬		0	Coming along, but effort does not yet match ability. Very good potential.
[B5]	\	\	\		●			(returning 18 May)
[B7]	+	Franglish	8	●	▬		+	Very well done! A serious professional approach. Very impressive progress.
[B2]	-	Spanglish	2		● ▬		++	Undoubted ability could take you to HOT very quickly with more effort.
[B10]	\	\	\	●				(joined class on 29 April)

Assessment based on written homework and free-style daily diaries

● = estimated starting level ▬ = estimated present level

N.B.

1. There is a very close correspondence between your written English and your chances of success in the FCE.

2. 'Commitment' is reflected in meticulousness of 'resub' work, timekeeping, written work in on time, contribution to class activities, choral work, question-and-answer sessions in class, seriousness of purpose, hard work, and single-mindedness.

3. 'Style': does it read like English (with due allowances for error) or does it come across as 'translation'?

4. 'Progress' is a reflection of aptitude and effort together. Of the two the more important is EFFORT.

links that have not been explicitly expressed" (p.28). Her remedy is for the writer to review the work several days later (cf. the 1992 suggestions of Bisaillon, cited by Johnstone, 1993, p.135). The MIDL 'resub' system combined 'reader' feedback with an obligatory review by the writer – Chandrasegaran's findings prompted her to remark that "teacher evaluation sharpens considerably a student writer's ability to self-correct error and text defect." (p.36). The fact of other-involvement appears to be salutary, and while her 'evaluation' consisted of a rather lengthy face to face session, in which errors were indicated but not corrected by the teacher, the practice is akin to the 'resub' system.[41]

This Stage was unusual in being divided by the Easter break, but without apparent disorientation. [B10] returned to the class and, despite having established a reputation with other teachers for being 'difficult', appeared to fit in and adapt readily to the experimental course programme [1.25/B10/4 May/B.III]. But higher student numbers increased the co-ordinator's workload and remedies were sought:

> Explained the time-constraints for correcting homeworks, and discussed students' suggestions: revert to word-by-word essay correcting and drop the resubs, have an assistant teacher, drop the Diaries. I proposed that they be given the homework schedules a week in advance, and the homework should be reduced to two (meticulous) written works and two reading comprehension MCIs [multiple choice items] per week. If they scheduled the work carefully they could have Fridays free of homework. [B6] said he was exhausted by the weekends; the others preferred to spread the homework over Friday evening and the weekend. They seemed happy with the new arrangement. Warned them that once the teacher takes the pressure off the natural tendency is for students to do the same – they could not afford to do this. Relieved that they are all very happy. [14.15/CR/5 May/B.III]

The students agreed a reduction in out-class setwork [1.27/B2/5 May/B.III], some seeing this as allowing more time for other activities [1.26/B1/5 May/B.III], [1.28/B3/5 May/B.III], [1.30/B6/5 May/B.III].[42] One student thought that coming close to the examination was no time to be relaxing the rigours of the course, but hoped to use the time to write better Diaries [1.29/B4/5 May/B.III].[43] The student who had remarked sceptically on 'class democracy' now dismissed the co-ordinator's explanation of the difficulties as 'moaning' [13.3/B9/5 May/B.III]. Another, transferring back to the experimental course after an absence of several weeks in a traditional class, accepted the reduction in out-class setwork and remarked on changes in the methodology, notably the co-mingling of laboratory and library sessions [1.31/B13/5 May/B.III]. This student had wanted to concentrate on speaking English. An earlier extract [1.14/B4/31 Mar/B.III] suggests that formal discussions were not a feature of the course in B.III – the normal medium of communication both in-class and out-class was the target language – some students took supplementary (often conversation-bias)

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[41]For counter-arguments to explicit correction of written texts see Truscott's (1996) Review Article against "the widespread, deeply entrenched belief that grammar correction should, even must, be part of writing courses" (p.327). For a qualitative/quantitative study of learner responses to written correction (favourable to formal accuracy), see Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1996.

[42]The students' expectations reflected the co-ordinator's tendency to maximise out-class setwork, not always realistically from a correction point of view.

[43]While she often objected to aspects of the experimental programme, the appendix extracts are evidence of how she developed her English free-style writing through the Diaries, the full corpus of which is both substantial in bulk and significant in content; as the frequent references to B4 throughout this report indicate, she made a most valuable contribution to the research at many levels (as an aside, a 2-digit ID rather than, for example, 'B04' or a humanising 3-digit 'name', enabled some tabulated data to fit the page, despite the 3 digits of B10, B11, etc.).

afternoon classes, and it was considered better to use the limited time for ISDL sessions and examination-preparation.

Later in the course a programme change to reduce the ISDL sessions in favour of the more conversationally-enriched DSDL workteams was generally approved [1.33/CR/12 May/B.III].[44] Students perceived the change differently: for one the major benefit was conversation [1.38/B10/12 May/B.III], for another the increased time for DSDL workteams was appreciated [1.35/B3/12 May/B.III], and a third clearly favoured the traditional teacher-student relationship over ISDL, making the evergreen point that students had the whole out-class day to work independently [1.39/B13/12 May/B.III]. The remark overlooks the institutional resources of materials, teacher, and other learners. One student outlined with approval the major reasons for the change [1.37/B6/12 May/B.III].

Extracts outline a day and suggest acceptance of the general MIDL programme [1.32/B2/11 May/B.III], [1.40/B7/14 May/B.III], and show student awareness of the experiment [1.41/B13/14 May/B.III]. One extract confirms that the co-ordinator marked essays in class [1.34/B2/12 May/B.III], despite having found this difficult to do on Course A because the students needed considerable attention during SDL sessions (14.1/CR/16 Oct/A.II), and because he was always available for consultation (e.g. [10.15/B6/25 Mar/ B.III]). While he was conscious that it could reduce 'circulating' (10.6/CR/6 Nov/A.III), the practice helped slightly to ease the co-ordinator's workload, enabled covert note of individual oral difficulties when students worked together, gave them prompter feedback on their written work, and could allow doubtful points to be discussed with the writer on the spot.

Materials and Equipment B.III

There were few extracts under this heading, all minor and all favourable.

Composition of Class B.III

Mention was made of the arrival of two new students after the Easter break [3.1/B1/30 Apr/B.III], [3.2/B2/30 Apr/B.III], and a remark made that class numbers were getting too high [3.3/B4/4 May/B.III]. One of the more capable students would be absent in Germany for six weeks of the course [14.5/CR/30 Mar/B.III], but a student who had been in the class for just two days in March, returned again:

> [B10] back again – has very bad reputation, passed through the hands of 5 teachers, none of whom want to see her again, and one of whom ('Z') refused to take her. Apparently she is constantly bored, makes no effort, and transmits bad vibrations to the other students, destroying the class atmosphere. Necessary to keep careful eye on her progress and on relationships with other students. She is not taking the FCE exam so can stay on a temporary basis. [14.12/CR/29 Apr/B.III]

In the event she settled in very well, proving to be no problem, and seeming to enjoy and profit from the MIDL methodology [12S.19/B10/30 Apr/B.III], [14.17/CR/11 May/B.III]. The other student who had left the class in dissatisfaction [B13] returned after several weeks [14.17/CR/11 May/B.III].

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[44]Other references are at [1.34/B2/12 May/B.III], [1.35/B3/12 May/B.III], [1.36/B4/12 May/B.III], [1.37/B6/12 May/B.III], [1.38/B10/12 May/B.III], [1.39/B13/12 May/B.III].

While on one occasion a student was able to benefit from consolidation practice of the language [4.2/B6/16 Mar/B.III], a remark, placed under this heading although some of the day was given to DSDL pairgroup work, indicates that without the 'novelty' value of instruction on usage another student felt she had done nothing [4.3/B4/18 Mar/B.III]. One of the newer students, having missed much of the foundation grammar, found the rapid pace of DODL exercises left her unsure, especially since "the more you know the more you get confused." —[4.4/B5/18 Mar/B.III]. The remarks are supported by those made by another student during B.II [4.52/B7/13 Mar/B.II], as well as in B.III [4.14/B7/20 Mar/B.III]. Another day, when time was needed to show a video brought in unexpectedly by one of the students [4.15/B9/20 Mar/B.III], there was a complaint about the pace [4.14/B7/20 Mar/B.III] but appreciation of the video [4.12/B3/20 Mar/B.III], [4.11/B2/20 Mar/B.III]. One extract helps to clarify the rationale: "In today's first lesson we did a fast revision for correcting the whole range of exercises we were supposed to cover during this week.... During the second lesson we tried to catch up with the programme on book 1." —[4.13/B6/20 Mar/B.III]. A newer student, not appreciating that the work was revision, complained that the pace was too fast for proper explanation or student understanding [4.14/B7/20 Mar/B.III].

Two juxtaposed extracts stand in opposition to each other. One provides favourable evidence for DODL, for the DSDL pairgroup activities, mentions ISDL work relating to DODL, and prompts the salient point that DODL (as well as DSDL) may challenge students with more difficult exposure than they would freely choose for themselves if left entirely to ISDL [4.9/B6/19 Mar/B.III]. The other extract states that there was nothing special in the class that day [4.10/B11/19 Mar/B.III]. Either response alone would give an unbalanced view of the day, and the latter is a reminder that even a MIDL course, which, over a period of time may cater better than traditional courses for a range of student temperaments, may not always meet their needs or contribute to motivation. While for this student a slower pace again provided "nothing special" —[4.20/B11/23 Mar/B.III], it offered another a more acceptable day [4.17/B3/23 Mar/B.III], in which ISDL gave way to DODL and DSDL:

> This morning we heard first the dialogue from Unit 4.1 on the tape. After we had to write down in groups what we could remember of the story. This kind of lesson I like because you have to listen carefully and to understand on the same time. That is a good training for us. In the second and third lesson we worked together in book three. In the last lesson we corrected the exercises which we have done in the lesson before. [4.19/B7/23 Mar/B.III]

This outline of interactive sessions highlights the fact that while SDL may dispense altogether with 'instruction', and a learner with adequate access to an environment in which the TL can be used may not require 'training', the MIDL methodology can bring together the best elements of both. One extract makes it clear that whatever the putative value of training, for at least one student it provided no alternative to instruction: "We don't do any explanation grammar at all. I have to insist on it. I know that in this Course we have to work as distance from the teacher as possible, but I think that you don't participate in class very much." —[4.18/B4/23 Mar/B.III]. While the auto-responsible tone is clear evidence of the ethos of the MIDL course it is less certain whether this extract is so much pro-instruction (or at least in favour of the active involvement of a teacher) as it is anti-SDL, but a contiguous extract [8.11/B4/23 Mar/B.III], being favourable to workteam changes, suggests that her objection was not simply complaint for its own sake. She had, in any

case, taken a similar stance in regard to lack of grammar-instruction some days before [4.3/B4/18 Mar/B.III]. The differing perceptions of students of different ages and temperaments to four consecutive hours daily were again exemplified on another occasion: "Today, like every day, it has been a little boring. I suppose that any subject even English is boring to study if you want to improve it. In addition I think that I need a little [more?] sleep so I will be able to enjoy more my classes." —[4.37/B2/2 Apr/B.III]; "Today the class has been interesting, despite we have only worked with the book 1. The explanation about some mistakes in the compositions has been very interesting and I think it has been very profitable for everybody. I like very much the way in that the teacher treats everyone according to his/her needs. I think this is a very good methodology and of course it pushes us to work harder and as result to learn more." —[4.38/B3/2 Apr/B.III]; "In Today's Classes we got very important explanations such as the different alternatives to 'if' ... and their uses; the difference between While and Meanwhile, which was very useful for me because I have been using them without any distinction. Finally, we learnt some very precised vocabulary .... It was very essential to have all those explanations taken from the real problems that the students have according to their compositions." —[4.40/B6/2 Apr/B.III]. Another extract confirms that, notwithstanding the range of activities, the MIDL programme was being adhered to: "So we spent the first hour with speaking about black or white bow ties, morning suits, dinner-jackets, cocktail dresses and evening gowns and when you have to wear which one of these clothes. It was very funny but also very useful to know all these expressions .... Otherwise the lessons were as usual. That's language laboratory, class library and grammar study in book one." —[4.41/B7/2 Apr/B.III]. The rationale for plenary correction of the out-class setwork, a DODL feature of the course which became increasingly more important and integral, receives a mention [4.21/B6/24 Mar/B.III]. One extract notes in-class DODL work requiring out-class ISDL freework revision [4.22/B5/25 Mar/B.III], and another puts DODL together with in-class ISDL revision, instances of the natural links between other-directed and self-directed learning which MIDL both formalises and fosters.

One complaint indicates that preparation for the entirely different-format Pitman examination was not integrated at this time into the tight FCE schedules [4.39/B4/2 Apr/B.III], but it is not known whether this extract prompted appropriate preparation the following day, or whether the programme timetable was simply being adhered to. Whatever the case, the student who had wished for Pitman preparation was already bored by it, and waiting for return to the normal class [4.43/B4/3 Apr/B.III]. However, she acknowledged the need for preparation, as did others [4.42/B3/3 Apr/B.III], [4.45/B7/3 Apr/B.III], [4.44/B6/3 Apr/B.III], and the extract of [B6] offers a reminder that ODL may be superior to SDL for preparation under examination conditions. Another extract from [B6] favourably outlines a basic lesson given on examination essay-writing techniques [4.55/B6/7 Apr/B.III]. Whatever the putative benefits of entire ISDL, and the availability of self-access materials on the subject, the fact that a student of his maturity and education found such a rudimentary lesson useful suggests there are areas which students may prefer to approach in DODL mode, especially when books prove inadequate [4.78/B6/28 Apr/B.III]. Another student, apparently overlooking the effect of pre-examination practice or rehearsal, felt she would not have time to apply the precepts under real conditions [4.58/B9/7 Apr/B.III]. However, the value of the lesson and the general appreciation was summed up best by the student who seldom found anything of interest to remark on: "Today, in the class we had the practice that how to write a composition. It was very very very useful lesson especially for me.... Thank you very much for help the composition." —[4.59/B11/7 Apr/B.III]. Much of the necessary preparation was

eventually found boring by one student [4.70/B8/9 Apr/B.III], and all of it from beginning to end by another two [4.47/B2/6 Apr/B.III], [4.52/B2/7 Apr/B.III], [4.66/B2/9 Apr/B.III], [4.49/B4/6 Apr/B.III], [4.68/B4/9 Apr/B.III]; although bored by the DODL the latter student still managed to plan ahead for her own ISDL [4.63/B4/8 Apr/B.III]. Another student remarked that to compensate for the reduction in speaking he was thinking of attending a two-week Easter 'speaking class' [4.61/B1/8 Apr/B.III]. There was a comment on another aspect of the examination preparation: "... students are getting more confidence in themselves based on objective proofs and not on superficial impressions!... Thanks teacher!" —[4.64/B6/8 Apr/B.III]. His remarks offer support for the belief that external evaluation may beneficially complement the learner's self-assessments. In contrast to the more varied programme, the Pitman examination preparation days were necessarily repetitious: "... today we started again with the Pitman's examinations: Boring! The whole sections [= sessions?] doing dictations, compositions, Listening comprehension and grammar questions. All the time the same. Well I hope and wish that tomorrow will finish these boring but useful exams." —[4.66/B2/9 Apr/B.III]. This student, still in his teens, often expressed boredom with all but the out-class entertainment: "Today it has been a boring day. Maybe it was because I was only thinking about the night I'm going to spend in a few hours. We might go to a disco .... Today I didn't go to my afternoon because I was really tired and sleepy. In addition, I could say that the afternoon classes are really boring, and in my point of view there aren't very useful.}" —[5.1/B2/16 Mar/B.III]. While his afternoon classes may have been conversation-biased and thus not meet the criterion of novelty, there is evidence that the MIDL course was of some benefit to him: "I realise that I'm learning a lot of new things and also consolidating the thing I knew before." —[5.5/B2/19 Mar/B.III]; "... haven't been to my afternoon classes. Why? The main reason is because in the two weeks I've been going to them I haven't learned nothing new at all. During the morning lessons I learn a lot but not the afternoon ones although the teacher isn't a bad teacher (maybe [the teacher] is a little bit boring)." —[5.8/B2/23 Mar/B.III]. In general, the afternoon teachers had an uphill task with students who had already completed four hours in the morning.

An area of general difficulty was 'listening comprehension'. Some examination material might be 'authenticised' with extraneous noise, regional accents, and native-speaker rate of delivery, and some might require memorisation as well as comprehension.[45] In the absence of a bank of past examination tapes, whatever SDL recommendations could be made in this area needed supplementation in plenary sessions, not always to the liking of every student [4.80/B9/28 Apr/B.III], but acknowledged as necessary by some [4.78/B6/28 Apr/B.III], [4.83/B6/29 Apr/B.III], [4.84/B7/29 Apr/B.III].

The institution catered for special needs by running conversation-bias general classes, as well as specialised examination and non-examination ESP courses. The Cambridge Examination courses were non-specialised, with a need to embrace listening, speaking, reading, and writing for everyday communication.[46]

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[45]Overtly 'task-based' examinations pose special problems for examiners. Ability to perform a task might require two unrelated skills: comprehension of the requirement and capability in the task set within the time allowed. While successful performance implies comprehension, the reverse is not necessarily true. This author has participated in informal sessions where native-speaker ELT practitioners were unable to complete tasks set for foreign students. Whatever was being tested, it was evidently not knowledge of the English language.

[46]ESP (English for Specific/Special Purposes) focuses on various specialisations, e.g. medicine, aeronautics, etc. and insofar as such course participants have a common professional background their needs are likely to be similar. Language for general purposes (Allen, 1984), on the other hand, has to cope with a wide range of needs.

Among the most problematical factors which confront such general-purpose classes, in particular those with examination timetabling and content constraints, is the student who has a perceived need to concentrate on one skill, with practice and consolidation of the others seen as intrusive and boring. One student remarked on return after several weeks from a conversation-oriented class:

> I still have the feeling that in this class really we don't speak enough. I know that it's not a class to speak but it's to do an examination, nevertheless it's a pity not to have all the thing I'd like together. I think I'm starting catch up the rest of the students but I'll have to work harder because I want to do my best. I must say that the new method it's better than the one we had before. [4.102/B13/6 May/B.III]

However, and notwithstanding the demands of the examination syllabus there was evidence of the interactive communicative ethos of the course, as well as of the appropriate MIDL balances of self-directed and other-directed elements.[47] More could not be done to meet her special need, and as all the students were by now fluent speakers at their level, and the examination requirements were assured in this respect, time-resources continued to be allocated to other equally important aspects of the course. She seemed happier when, about a week later, the ISDL sessions were reduced in favour of DSDL pairgroup work [4.123/B13/12 May/B.III]. The extract suggests the possibility that her previous transfer to another class had reflected a concealed anti-ISDL attitude as much as a desire for more conversation, a possibility supported by her influence on [B4], another anti-ISDL student, during Stage II [5.19/B4/9 Mar/B.II].

One student continued to appear unmoved by the variety of activities [4.106/B11/7 May/B.III], while another expresssed satisfaction with the content and pace of the classes at this time [4.104/B3/7 May/B.III], and also made a remark of relevance to the consideration of social versus asocial learning: "I need more practice in the language-lab and in the class, because when we do these exercises together I realise how the other people do it and this is an incentive to work more in it." —[4.112/B3/11 May/B.III]. The extract supports the social dimensions of MIDL, in which ODL may help to focus and release incentives to SDL. Partly in recognition of the value of this aspect, on 12 May the DSDL sessions were increased at the expense of ISDL. The day received favourable responses from some: "The last section of the class was really funny but useful. We had to discuss about the 'zodiac signs' ...." —[4.119/B2/12 May/B.III]; [4.120/B6/12 May/B.III]. Even a consistently downbeat student managed a favourable comment on a coursebook [4.121/B11/12 May/B.III], although her usual stance was taken by another: "Nothing of interesting today." —[4.118/B1/12 May/B.III]. The newest arrival was settling-in well, as indicated by extracts both from the day before and from this day: "The first lesson we had grammar as usual but after that we were discussing [in workteams] and continued our discussion [in open-forum] even in the third lesson. I liked these lessons very much. I[t] was really very interesting.}" —[4.117/B12/11 May/B.III]; "The morning in school was very interesting and the hours seemed to run. I think I'm getting used now to the different style of teaching and

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[47]Examples from 4, 5, and 6 May (the date of her observation) indicate the balances of speaking with other activities: "the exercise of reading" —[4.93]; "Gerund and Infinitive ... the essay [= article] about 'Keeping fit'" —[4.95]; "The conversation of today about the writen homework ... we have been talking for a long time ... vocabulary." —[4.97]; "revised the activity of completing the recipe, which we worked yesterday in pairs" —[4.98]; "working in a dialogue, constructing it again after we had read it three times .... practices for listening comprehension" —[4.99]; "Grammar exercises .... continuous corrections of those mistakes we usually make in our written works." —[4.00].

realize also the advantage of intensive grammar. Anyway I'm more or less lazy and I need pressure to study." —[4.122/B12/12 May/B.III]. The latter extract supports the view that DODL may offer positive incentives to learning, and both extracts contrast markedly with [4.118/B1/12 May/B.III], a further reminder that caution is required when taking account of student attitudes.

One extract notes the value of immediate and ongoing feedback, reaffirmed by the continuing popularity of plenary correction sessions:

> Today, we have been working in modal verbs almost the two hours that we work together every day.... During the class library I have been doing an exercise about Conjunctions; only I have done one, because we had made so many mistakes in the daily diary that the teacher has been commenting on for everybody. This kind of comments are very good because we can learn not only with our own mistakes but with the mistakes of the other people as well. In the last hour we have been seeing the use of the different modals in a dialogue. [4.131/B3/14 May/B.III]

Approval for plenary correction also appears at [4.132/B4/14 May/B.III] and [4.133/B6/14 May/B.III].[48]

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing B.III

The weather continued to be influential in B.III: "I don't know how the Irish can live with such an unsettled weather .... my mood changes according to it (the weather), so the continual weather changes make me nervous [= upset/unsettled?]." —[5.3/B1/18 Mar/B.III]; [5.6/B5/19 Mar/B.III]; [5.7/B11/20 Mar/B.III]; [5.33/B11/28 Apr/B.III]; [5.57/B4/14 May/B.III]. The weather undoubtedly contributed indirectly to more than the 'affective' data, notwithstanding the impossibility of determining its real effects on mood and hence, however indirectly, on learning, and on the whole experience. From two students there were indications of morale improved by the feeling of making progress [5.8/B2/23 Mar/B.III], [5.9/B3/24 Mar/B.III], as well as from successful learning [5.11/B3/25 Mar/B.III], [5.18/B3/1 Apr/B.III]. Although it may be speculated whether examination-preparation influenced the request of a student who returned to the class, she said that the temperamental rapport of the co-ordinator suited her [5.12/CR/27 Mar/B.III]. By early April there were indications of other attitude-affecting factors, such as tiredness [5.17/B1/1 Apr/B.III], [5.19/B4/1 Apr/B.III], and unwellness [5.22/B9/2 Apr/B.III], [5.27/CR/8 Apr/B.III], and underconfidence [5.23/B1/6 Apr/B.III], [5.26/B4/7 Apr/B.III]. One co-ordinator's extract at this time suggests that such factors did not necessarily affect the atmosphere: <Happy class.> —[5.25/CR/7 Apr/B.III].

The Easter holidays offered no respite to the co-ordinator, but were at least very worthwhile in terms of morale [5.36/CR/30 Apr/B.III]. The same extract notes that the MIDL course also appeared to be going well, in spite of the effect of noisy roadworks on the studies and students [5.30/B11/27 Apr/B.III], [5.31/B4/28 Apr/B.III], [5.32/B9/28 Apr/B.III], [5.35/B11/29 Apr/B.III]. The distribution of interim Progress Reports had good effects on student morale [5.38/B3/30 Apr/B.III], and also bad [5.36/CR/30 Apr/B.III]. One student showed how intended encouragement can be counter-productive: on being advised of how well

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[48]Initiatives in technology include the Autotutor project directed by Professor D.G. Little in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at Trinity College, Dublin University (Conway-Mouret, 1991; Little, 1996b).

she was doing, as a non-European learning English in the company of Europeans, she remarked: "Today, [CR] explained 'Inter[i]m Progress Report on Writting'. I understood how terrible my writing is. Well, but it is better than before. But, I don't like to hear to much that it is very difficult to study English for Japanise. I know that, but —" —[5.40/B11/30 Apr/B.III]. As already indicated, this student was also easily affected by the weather, and seemed to enjoy somewhat delicate health-moods [5.42/B11/1 May/B.III]. The most unsettled student had occasional difficulties with fellow students [5.13/B4/27 Mar/B.III], [5.39/B4/30 Apr/B.III], but was thoughtful of others [5.26/B4/7 Apr/B.III]. She needed counselling, being in tears when a favourable Progress Report did not match her own negative perceptions [5.36/CR/30 Apr/B.III]. Her state of mind, inseparable from responses to the course components, is well illustrated by the following extract, part of a longer Diary entry:

> The Easter holiday was a complete disastre for me because I spoke a lot of Spanish. This fact has been reflected not only in my work in class, but also in my homeworks. I have to say that I'm ashamed. In addition, this change of weather has made me feel asleep and I have problems with my eyes because of allergy. I can observe how my work is getting worst and I feel that I can do nothing for it. What a pity! Instead of going up, I'm going down. I have to wake up! I have to do something to change this situation!... I'm afraid because I don't know I'll pass the exam or not; and believe me, I'm not joking. About the work report I have to say that although it's a good idea, I don't agree with it at all, (at least in my case). Maybe because the remarks on general progress are from the work before the Easter holiday. Moreover, I'm not getting very well on with the rest of the class. I don't know why, but I'm distancing from the rest (of the class) and I don't even talk to some of them. I'm really stunned. [5.39/B4/30 Apr/B.III]

She obtained a Pass in the Pitman Advanced (a standard beyond her nominal higher-intermediate level) and a Grade B Pass in the FCE. That she felt unsure of objective evidence was a symptom of her general condition: "... you know I'm not the kind of person who is 100% sure of anything. Have you ever wondered what are you doing in this world, why do you think, and so on (and on and on). Metaphorically speaking I'd say that I'm the personified doubt." —[5.43/B4/4 May/B.III]. One student, perhaps intolerant by nature, grew impatient with [B4] and with other relationships [5.41/B9/1 May/B.III].

By 5 May the co-ordinator, who had worked during the Easter break, was showing signs of serious stress, and one extract provides an indication of the workload that prompted a revision of the programme schedules:

> While the class is conditioned to expect an exceptionally high level of homework setting and marking, the increased student numbers have put a strain on the schedules. I cannot realistically prepare [myself] for an examination, keep up with studies, maintain the research records, and fulfill other administration and lecturing responsibilities, while 'co-ordinating' (teaching, supervising, counselling, correcting work, etc.) for four hours a day and correcting for another three. Getting into a very bad psychological state: depressed, exhausted, mind foggy, not at all well. [5.44/CR/5 May/B.III]

Notwithstanding the disregard expressed by one student: "The poor man is totally overworked, but I think that's his own fault..... I wish our teacher would stop moaning about his work." —[13.3/B9/5 May/B.III],[49] the following day the co-ordinator reported feeling less depressed, but [B4] was again in tears from

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[49]The remark is further evidence for the democratic frankness of the MIDL environment, and offers support for the medium of Class Diaries, without which such feelings might not be known.

loneliness and insecurity [5.46/CR/6 May/B.III], [5.47/B4/6 May/B.III]. She had problems with her eyes [5.48/B4/7 May/B.III], and the following day there was evidence for the co-ordinator's continuing unwellness, as she hoped he would soon get better; another student had bad 'paintooth' [5.51/B8/8 May/B.III]. There is a suggestion on 11 May that [B4] was recovering better spirits [5.53/B4/11 May/B.III], although two days later she was back to her normal state [5.56/B4/13 May/B.III], and was soon in bad humour again [5.57/B4/14 May/B.III]. Meanwhile another student was in sufficient distress to require counselling [5.54/CR/12 May/B.III], [5.55/B13/12 May/B.III]. This extract also perhaps hints at disagreements with the co-ordinator, whom she nonetheless thanks for his concern.

Perhaps the weather was having an effect, as another, normally uncomplaining, student was unwell, depressed, and homesick. One affective factor which can only be noted in passing and whose effect on learning is not ascertainable, is that of prolonged absence from home, especially when in an alien cultural environment. A Japanese student who had not seen her parents for a year [5.58/B11/14 May/B.III], commented on their visit to Ireland: "It's nice to stay with parents for three or four days. However, no more. I am tired, tired, and tired." —[5.60/B11/15 May/B.III].

Counselling Consultation B.III

In B.III there is just one extract under this heading from the student whose Diaries reveal the most serious temperament and morale difficulties [6.1/B8/19 Mar/B.III]. A co-ordinator's extract indicates the advice given to another, the most overtly dependent and consistently anti-MIDL student:

> Long counselling session with [B4]: (a) she needs to develop less dependence on the teacher so that she can carry on her studies outside class (b) her own exploration of the language – together with the other students – is a very valuable part of the learning process, perhaps the most valuable part (c) her constant seeking after 'novelty' is counter-productive if it leads to a fossilised 'interlanguage' without any solid foundation (d) this experience should help her in her desire to become less psychologically dependent on her parents (e) she should continue to complain so that the teacher is aware of the problems, even if not able to solve them. She wants to stay in the class and pass the FCE examination, but is worried: 'Is there any more grammar in English?' [6.2/CR/23 Mar/B.III]

Another extract the following day, referring to the co-ordinator's saying that she should consider transfer to another institution, seems out of keeping with this approach: whether the remark reflected exasperation or humour, it did not improve her morale, and warranted an 'unfavourable' rating under the quantitative data tally [6.3/B4/24 Mar/B.III]. When more counselling was necessary about a week later, the extract both supports the possibility of exasperation and indicates that the co-ordinator believed at this time that she should transfer:

> Counselling necessary for [B4], in tears because her Interim Progress Report said she was making progress when she felt she was not. Regret there is no other suitable class to which she can be sent. [6.6/CR/30 Apr/B.III]

An instance of paracounselling occurred with one student whose attendance and work record needed to be discussed [6.4/CR/1 Apr/B.III], [6.5/B2/3 Apr/B.III]. An extract from another student confirms that ISDL sessions were used for paracounselling on the students' work, and that recommendations might be for SDL:

> During the Class-library I talked to the teacher about the corrections of my last composition and I got a good fe[e]d-back from that conversation. First of all, the necessity for me to learn by heart complete English idiomatic expressions .... Secondly, the need for me to avoid using Spanish words just put into English forms. As means for doing so, the teacher suggested the study of phrasal verbs in the language laboratory and the reading of popular press. I fully agreed with that. [6.9/B6/11 May/B.III]

The occasion may have been initiated by the student, and hence an instance of 'consultation' as herein defined, as may another interview when students burdened a somewhat older classmate with their personal problems [6.10/CR/12 May/B.III]. She was in very poor health, and worried about possibly malignant tumours.

There is a brief reference to the co-ordinator's intent to conduct formal counselling interviews [6.7/CR/5 May/B.III].

Out-Class Environment B.III

The first two hours of one class-day were given over to ISDL, and the remaining two cancelled in favour of preparation for the Food Fair, an annual event organised by the institution, in which students prepared national dishes for sale in portions to the public:

> Today ... only we have been studying individually [for two hours]. After that we went to prepare the FOOD FAIR [organised by the institution on behalf of UNICEF]. I think this has been a very good experience because we have had to coordinate ourselves and to do many things together and this is very good for the relationship between us and for a good ambient in the [institution]. I have enjoyed very much. [7.6/B3/27 Mar/B.III]

The activity was conducted largely in monolingual L1 groups (French with French, Germans with Germans, and so on) and thus does not qualify as freework or project work within the categorisations of the experiment. While the observation of just one student is no more than an indication, the relationship aspect does, however, offer a contrast with the deterioration on the longer multinational Video Project of the preliminary scheme, and the interest-level compares favourably with the decline in the Video Project of Course A. It is possible that confining all such larger-scale pairgroup activities to the span of a single day or two would enhance their chances of being universally acceptable and successful.

One student seemed to enjoy his out-class time and relationships, some of which may have contributed to his TL studies: "After the classes we went to [a snackbar] to have our lunch and to have great fun.} After I will finish my homework I will meet with the Spanish and Mexican people." —[7.7/B2/2 Apr/B.III], [7.9/B2/6 Apr/B.III], [7.10/B2/7 Apr/B.III]. The extracts provide a warning not to assume that study in the TL environment must imply good out-class contact with the TL. This is particularly true when, like the student whose out-class leisure included keeping fit [7.20/B8/14 May/B.III], the learner chooses not to live with a host-family: "I rend [= rented] a bed-sit .... I'm so happy to live alone ...." —[7.5/B1/27 Mar/B.III]. Even in a host-family context there may be inhibiting circumstances: "Today ... my [host] family asked me to clean the bath room .... After the guest had left, mounts of washing up was waiting me. OH – ! I want to live in a flat alone!! Now, I think it is very difficult to live with a family long time (it is not only because washing up.)" —[7.8/B11/2 Apr/B.III]. The extracts highlight the preference some young independence-seeking students might have for leading their own lives, with out-class social contact thereby

perhaps restricted largely to classmates and their own L1 friends. Out-class TL communication may in any case be restricted: "I have a only few chance to talk with Irish people." —[7.11/B11/8 Apr/B.III]. Nonetheless, it can be taken that access to TL radio and television, as well as the necessities of daily life in a foreign community, must to some extent supplement in-class TL communication opportunities, as may chance encounters: "... we spent our lunchtime in Trinity [= Dublin University]. There we met two Irish students and had the possibility to prove our listening comprehension." —[7.18/B12/5 May/B.III]. One extract confirms the need for their own L1 in the TL environment, and indirectly suggests the stress of constant communication in the TL [7.23/B9/15 May/B.III].

Television received a nod from one student who found Ireland lacking in leisure opportunities: "This evening I felt like doing something exciting or diferent but – in Ireland there are very few things to do, even to go for a walk isn't a pleasure because the weather is so bad, so maybe to watch T.V. is one of best things to do." —[7.21/B10/14 May/B.III]. Trips remained on the agenda, despite the weather: "... to the Giant's Causeway Coast in Northern Ireland ...." —[7.14/B7/1 May/B.III], [7.15/B9/1 May/B.III], and pubs received a mention: "For once we spent the evening in a disco-pub although we normally go to a pub with Irish music." —[7.16/B12/1 May/B.III]. An annual event prompted one student to make contact with Irish people: "I went to the Trinity Ball.... It was very interesting because I could see the behaviour of the Irish in such a circumstance. It's very difficult for me understand why here the people try to be drunk at all costs. To drink a lot is essential to socialise with them ...." —[7.22/B1/15 May/B.III].

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support B.III

Peer support could occur during ISDL sessions [8.35/B9/6 May/B.III], with mutual benefit [8.7/B6/19 Mar/B.III], [8.57/B9/14 May/B.III], or with reservations about competence to help [8.28/B7/1 May/B.III], and could be requested by the co-ordinator to help new students [8.25/B7/29 Apr/B.III], [8.26/B9/29 Apr/B.III]. Its primary exemplification, however, was found in pairgroup activities; as the principal exponent of DSDL, the workteams of Course B filled several roles:

> Speaking, of course, is one of our most important interests in our learning but, I think it has to be integrated in the whole process of communication .... Therefore, I agreed with the teacher's opinion that speaking is what we have at hand everywhere if we're really interested in it and that the work teams would have to be a special opportunity for practising a true communication, in which we could use what we're learning, correct our mistakes and so on, helping each other. [8.5/B6/18 Mar/B.III]

The extract endorses this feature of the MIDL programme, and presents a rare example to date of the actual guidance given to the students.[50]. The extract appears to locate workteams within a larger debate about the place on the course of specific 'conversation' sessions, or organised 'discussions'. Whether that is so or not, the key to workteams is contained in the remarks on using the TL for genuine (information-gap) communication, and on students correcting their own mistakes in peer support fashion, key ingredients of social DSDL. The success of the concept was evident from another extract: "Today, in the class I have

[50]Diary extracts for Course C contain many examples of paracounselling guidance.

worked very well. The work in team is very good because you become more lively when you see how the other people work. Besides sometimes we learn more when other student explains us something." —[8.16/B3/30 Mar/B.III. The extract provides both a rationale for and an endorsement of the workteams methodology. However, where team members fail to do the out-class spadework which supports the in-class teamwork, another facet of co-operation is revealed: "Today the class has been very bored [= boring?]. Someone from the group-team hasn't done any homework and we have had to do all so slowly that I was really annoying [= annoyed]." —[8.17/B4/30 Mar/B.III]. The evolutionary nature of student co-operation received mention from another student: "In the first lesson we worked in workteams. At the beginning of the course everybody worked for its own but now we work together." —[8.8/B9/19 Mar/B.III]. Changes in the membership of workteams could be viewed positively: "I like that the teams change every week because I think it's very good to work with everybody for helping each other and for knowing more everybody." —[8.10/B3/23 Mar/B.III]; [8.11/B4/23 Mar/B.III]. Nonetheless, temperamental and other differences are bound to arise, and personal preferences surface, whether or not workteam membership rotates (a workteams rota is at **Table B:7**); this may be especially so where, as on this course, pairgroups are not self-selecting entitities, and notwithstanding any approval of the peer-support ethos [8.9/B5/20 Mar/B.III]. The same extract indicates that this student had been none too happy when a favourite partner, [B6], had seemed to ally himself with another member of the team. The human dimension is evident here, even with a student as well-adjusted and adaptable as [B5]. She may have been given a covert 'helper' role in compensation; whether this is so, she clearly felt disadvantaged by her new team membership, in part because, as she noted, the other two students seemed to prefer working alone – a possibility that must be taken into account in social DSDL [8.14/B5/24 Mar/B.III].[51] On the other hand, freely-chosen workteam membership may carry with it unacceptable unease for the less personable or capable students, as well as potential organisational difficulties. With required membership, however, the possibility of intimidation or inhibition cannot be ruled out: in the latter team [B5] was both considerably older and at a substantially higher level than either of the others. At least one of the two, [B11], later associated very successfully with other students, as the following extract indicates, but the obverse of changing membership is the disruption of good workteam relationships: "I'm very happy in my workteam, [B11] is so friendly and [B1] is so funny, that they have cheered me up. It's a pity that we'll not be all together again." —[8.37/B4/7 May/B.III]. However, the same student remarked in more general terms, in the context of allocating less time to ISDL and more to DSDL: "I think that it's really a good idea to change the timetable of the class, but I don't agree with the people who think that work teams are the best thing in the class. It's only good if you get on well with the people of/from your same work team." —[8.48/B4/12 May/B.III]. The popularity of workteams is supported by most extracts.

The learning events which promoted DSDL were of varied kinds: peer support could follow on from individual DODL [8.50/B7/12 May/B.III], and workteams could give way to pairwork when appropriate [8.55/B7/13 May/B.III], [8.59/B3/15 May/B.III]. Workteams might occasionally be used for an enjoyable general discussion: "... I've liked the workteam very much. We have been discussing many things. It has been very interesting because we have talked about the different situations of every country in these themes ...." —

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[51] Of the two, [B8], who hardly ever commented on her studies, made no mention of workteams throughout B.III; the only two remarks of the other, equally class-reticent student, were favourable [8.23/B11/9 Apr/B.III], [8.52/B11/12 May/B.III].

Table B:7. *Course B Stages III & IV: Work Teams Membership Rota*

			WORK TEAMS EXPERIMENTAL SYLLABUS FCE											
Revised 4/5 to include new students			MAR 16-20	MAR 23-27	MAR 30-3	APR 6-10	APR 27-1	MAY 4-8	MAY 11-15	MAY 18-22	MAY 25-29	JUN 1-5	JUN 8-9	JUN 12-16
		The Goodies	1	10	9	2	9	(1)	13	12	11	3	4	11
			2	1	10	5	2	2	(1)	13	12	7	8	4
			3	2	1	8	5	3	2	1	13	11	10	3
1	[B5]							4	3	2	1	8	12	8
2	[B8]													
3	[B6]	The Baddies	4	3	2	10	8	5	4	3	2	12	1	6
4	[B3]		5	4	3	3	10	6	5	4	3	4	5	10
5	[B7]		6	5	4	6	3	7	6	5	4	9	11	13
6	[B9]		7	6	5									
7	[B2]													
8	[B1]	The Uglies	8	7	6	4	6	8	7	6	5	13	3	12
9	[B4]		9	8	7	7	4	9	8	7	7	2	6	2
10	[B11]		10	9	8	9	7	10	9	8	9	5	9	1
11	[B13]													
12	[B10]													
13	[B12]	The Yuppies						11	10	9	6	1	2	7
								12	11	10	8	6	7	5
								13	12	11	10	10	13	9

[8.41/B3/11 May/B.III]; [8.42/B6/11 May/B.III]; [8.43/B7/11 May/B.III]. That they were seldom used for this purpose is clear from another extract [8.44/B10/11 May/B.III]. More usual would be a workteam discussion on issues arising from a role-play situation (in which, for example, one student might be a rebellious teenager, and the others the concerned parents): "I enjoyed a lot ... we had to discuss in groups.... a good practice and very funny.}" —[8.20/B4/9 Apr/B.III]; [8.21/B6/9 Apr/B.III]; [8.22/B7/9 Apr/B.III]; [8.23/B11/9 Apr/B.III]. Pairgroup work might be extended into whole-class activity: "The first lesson we had grammar as usual but after that we were discussing [in workteams] and continued our discussion [in open-forum] even in the third lesson. I liked these lessons very much. I[t] was really very interesting.}" —[8.45/B12/11 May/B.III]. On one occasion peer-support was used to enable some students to catch up with essential out-class setwork they had not done [8.6/B7/18 Mar/B.III]. There is evidence of integrated listening-speaking-writing: "This morning we heard first the dialogue from Unit 4.1 on the tape. After we had to write down in groups what we could remember of the story. This kind of lesson I like because you have to listen carefully and to understand on the same time. That is a good training for us." —[8.13/B7/23 Mar/B.III]. On another occasion the set task was writing a synopsis [8.29/B12/1 May/B.III]; the next day it was task-based conversation [8.30/B6/4 May/B.III], and again it was to reconstruct a dialogue from memory. Given that all workteam tasks were co-operative, the range of activities suggests that, notwithstanding occasional remarks to the contrary, in-class conversational opportunities were not lacking:

> The activity of the speech has been very interesting. It is a very good exercise for speaking and writting, because we have to work together and discuss in order to do something in team not individually. I am working very well in this team and this kind of works are very useful. Moreover, when you see the mistakes of the other teams, you realise that you have the same or similar mistakes and you learn more than when you only know your own mistakes. [8.36/B3/7 May/B.III]

In general there were few problems with workteams, this DSDL concept receiving consistently favourable responses: "I'm very happy in my workteam ..." —[8.37/B4/7 May/B.III]; "We had a lot of fun in our group and you can get to know better the students in the class." —[8.39/B7/7 May/B.III]; "I think it's interesting because each one can help and give new ideas to each others. The last hour we had a dialogue and my group ..." —[8.40/B10/7 May/B.III]; "Looking at a horoscope, doing quiz of psychological question, and so on. It was good. I enjoyed them." —[8.52/B11/12 May/B.III].

Workteams might be used for discussion on genuine classroom issues, an example in B.III being the problem of the co-ordinator's workload: "... to discuss that new situation in groups .... I think we found a good solution for both of us, and finally, I will have more time to read." —[8.31/B7/5 May/B.III]; "In agreement we decided to reduce the written work and to force the reading comprehension. I liked this lesson because we had a real discussion and we had the opportunity to express our opinion." —[8.32/B12/5 May/B.III].[52]

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[52]In contrast, another student found that this and a previous occasion of 'class democracy' provided reasons to criticise the co-ordinator [1.13/B9/30 Mar/B.III], [13.3/B9/5 May/B.III].

Laboratory B.III

The new programme, combining class library and language laboratory, made it possible for students to apportion their ISDL time more effectively [9.2/B3/16 Mar/B.III], [9.3/B4/16 Mar/B.III], [9.7/B7/18 Mar/B.III].[53] Each student completed a personal work record (blank sample at **Table B:8**) which enabled summary group records to be maintained (sample at **Table B:9**). The amendment made little difference to one student who liked neither SDL opportunity [9.9/B4/19 Mar/B.III], but for another it meant a considerable reduction in laboratory work [9.24/B11/6 May/B.III]. One student both justified his liking for laboratory and gave reasons for tape-selections: "In regard to my personal programme at school I'd like to intensify the Class-Lab, which I've found very useful for improving my listening comprehension and pronunciation. However, I feel much more comfortable following a 'step by step' study, like those followed by the drills, than jumping on many different things each time. That's why I've again got [stimulus-response drills] taking into account some suggestions given to me by the teacher last week." —[9.5/B6/16 Mar/B.III]. Another student also valued the drills as providing many examples (of the same structures) [9.14/B3/25 Mar/B.III]. The closely integrated relationship between the ODL and SDL continued to be noted: "I've found more relations between our work in class ... and the personal work I'm carrying on: Class-lab-and-Class-library. For instance, the drills of the lab are helping me to do oral revision of what I've already studied and in the class-library ...." —[9.6/B6/18 Mar/B.III]; [9.10/B6/19 Mar/B.III]. Occasionally a laboratory session might prompt a request for paracounselling on the same topic [9.15/B6/25 Mar/B.III], or be diverted to another learning activity [9.17/B6/28 Apr/B.III]. One extract confirms how readily students with no previous experience of MIDL could adapt to in-class ISDL: "In school ... I had to realise that I have a quiet big lack in my grammar knowledge specially in relative clauses. After that I spent one hour in the laboratory to build up my phrasal verbs." —[9.25/B12/6 May/B.III]. Two extracts mention the value of taking written notes during laboratory sessions: "During my authonomy [= language laboratory] periods, I firstly went on with phrasal verbs. Although this study is going on slowly, I think it's helping me a great deal, especially because I have to write down sentences and pieces of dialogues ...." —[9.30/B6/13 May/B.III]; "In the language-lab I have been listening to a tape of dialogues and I have been trying to write them. I think this is a very good exercise for listening comprehension and for learning vocabulary and expressions because when you write you notice more things than when you only listen or read." —[9.34/B3/14 May/B.III]. Another student adapted a DSDL activity technique to her ISDL laboratory work: "During the language labaratory time I listened to a dialogue and tried to rewrite it." —[9.38/B9/15 May/B.III].

Library B.III

Three extracts mention the change from discrete library and laboratory sessions to the combined student-choice alternative sessions [10.1/B2/16 Mar/B.III], [10.2/B4/16 Mar/B.III], [10.6/B7/18 Mar/B.III]. Two entries confirm that there was no change in the daily ISDL time-allocation: "The two hours of personal work, both in the lab and in the library were positives and I did not find relevant difficulties." —[10.16/B6/26

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[53]The language laboratory was usually available only at the booked time and hence continued to be designated 'laboratory', notwithstanding that students were free to use it or not; sometimes booths were preferred to the classroom for quiet non-lab ISDL work.

Table B:8. *Course B Stages III & IV: Blank 'Personal Work Record'*

CAMBRIDGE FCE COURSE		PERSONAL WORK RECORD			Name:				
		LAB/ STUDY	CLASS LIBRARY	HOME WORK			LAB/ STUDY	CLASS LIBRARY	HOME WORK
Mon	16/3				Mon	11/5			
Tue	17/3	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\	Tue	12/5			
Wed	18/3				Wed	13/5			
Thu	19/3				Thu	14/5			
Fri	20/3				Fri	15/5			
Mon	23/3				Mon	18/5			
Tue	24/3				Tue	19/5			
Wed	25/3				Wed	20/5			
Thu	26/3				Thu	21/5			
Fri	27/3				Fri	22/5			
Mon	30/3				Mon	25/5			
Tue	31/3				Tue	26/5			
Wed	1/4				Wed	27/5			
Thu	2/4				Thu	28/5			
Fri	3/4				Fri	29/5			
		6 - 10 APRIL		PITMAN EXAM PRACTICES					
		11 - 26 APRIL		EASTER BREAK					
Mon	27/4				Mon	1/6			
Tue	28/4				Tue	2/6			
Wed	29/4				Wed	3/6			
Thu	30/4				Thu	4/6			
Fri	1/5				Fri	5/6			
Mon	4/5				Mon	8/6			
Tue	5/5				Tue	9/6			
Wed	6/5				Wed	10/6			
Thu	7/5				Thu	11/6			
Fri	8/5				Fri	12/6			

Table B:9. *Course B Stages III & IV, Sample Work Record for a Group (16 March - 20 March)*

WORK RECORD LANGUAGE LABORATORY/STUDY: CLASS LIBRARY MAR - JUN										
	MON 16/3		TUE 17/3		WED 18/3		THU 19/3		FRI 20/3	
	lab	lib	lab	lib	lab	lib	lab	lib	lab	lib
[B1]	P40 - 47 @	BEG modal verbs			F3 Exs 65/66/ 75/96/97	EStP condit. sentences	P48 - 49 @ P62 - 64 @	BEG infinitives	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B2]	P9 - 17 @	F3 ex 27 XR revision			P18 - 25 @	F1 exs 95/96/97	P18 -25 @	F3 exs 1/29/ 30/31/67/88/4	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B3]	P32 - 39 @	F3 Ex 27	P	H	P40 - 46 @	F3 Ex 97 NIG preps	P47 - 54 @	F3 Exs 1/2 29/30/31/67	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B4]	(Counselling Interview)	BEG modals	U	O	F3 Exs 96/97	F3 Exs F2 Read C. 1	P79 - 85 @	BEG infinitives	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B5]	VP U8/1 @	BEG prepositions	B	L	VP U9/1 @	BEG prepositions	VP U9/2 @	BEG prepositions	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B6]	P42 - 46 @	F3 Ex 27	L	I	P47 - 51 @	BEG Word Building	P52 - 58 @	BEG Word Building	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B7]	P24 - 31 @	'If' sentences	I	D	P32 - 39 @	F3 exs 95/96	(sick)	(sick)	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B8]	(late)	(late)	C	A	F3 Exs 27/28/65	F3 Exs 95/96/97	P90 - 95 @	F3 Exs 29/88	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B9]	F3 Ex 27	F3 Ex27		Y	F3 Ex 37	F3 (??)	VP U4 @ P 1 - 3 @	F3 Ex 42 UOE (??)	Work Teams	Work Teams
[B11]	BEG conjunctions	BEG conjunctions			F3 Exs 95/96/98	ICP No. 9	(??)	(??)	Work Teams	Work Teams

Note. The symbol @ indicates actual lab work. As evidence that the language laboratory remained popular, despite students' complete freedom to choose any type of SDL, 19 out of 26 nominal 'laboratory' sessions were reported as work with taped materials.

Mar/B.III]; [10.52/B6/15 May/B.III]; another suggests that they were not always adjacent periods [10.27/B7/28 Apr/B.III]. Library sessions found the study of grammar as popular as ever [10.3/B5/16 Mar/B.III], [10.34/B6/4 May/B.III], [10.39/B3/8 May/B.III], and DODL or DSDL work prompting the topics for ISDL [10.4/B6/16 Mar/B.III], [10.5/B6/18 Mar/B.III] – a fundamental rationale for MIDL. Three extracts indicate that the students worked on building up vocabulary, one individually [10.38/B2/7 May/B.III], and two co-operatively [10.49/B7/14 May/B.III], [10.50/B9/14 May/B.III].

The lack of an answer-key was a serious deficiency in some library materials: "Today I worked in [an FCE examination practice book] during the class library time. I think the exercises are very useful, but unfortunately it has no key. (as usual). I did the exercises but I don't know if they are correct or wrong." —[10.36/B9/4 May/B.III]. When popular materials were already in use one student continued with alternative work [10.6/B7/18 Mar/B.III], and also used library time to overcome deficiencies highlighted by her written setwork: "During the class library hour I studied the different tenses, because I saw that I have done a lot of mistakes in my summaries or compositions." —[10.22/B7/1 Apr/B.III]. Individual work during ISDL sessions could be combined with peer-support [10.8/B6/19 Mar/B.III], [10.32/B7/1 May/B.III], or help students to arrive at a sense of progress through self-evaluation [10.9/B9/19 Mar/B.III]. Occasionally the library session might be diverted to DSDL workteams, although the statement by one student [10.12/B6/24 Mar/B.III] regarding a particular day is not supported by other students: "After having a little break some of our class went to the language laboratory, the other once [= ones] stayed in the class room and studied for themselves. We had class library in the third lesson." —[10.13/B7/24 Mar/B.III]; "During the class libery time I went to the German embassy to ask for gifts for the food fair [= the Food Fair organised by the institution on behalf of UNICEF]." —[1.9/B9/24 Mar/B.III]. The latter entry indicates that ISDL sessions might be flexibly used at students' own initiative. One extract refers to paracounselling: "During the Class-library I got an explanation about May + Infinitive or perfect Infinitive as substitute of Perhaps. It was helpful to use the teacher for this kind of revisions. Afterwards I worked on quantifiers trying to precise their use." —[10.15/B6/25 Mar/B.III]. Another notes the student's intention to ask for guidance on his ISDL time [10.31/B6/1 May/B.III]. On another occasion a member of the class introduced a new student to the programme: "... arrived a new student, a girl called [B10]. During the 'class library' [B7] was helping her to get up to date in Grammar, exercises, and anything we have done up to now in the class." —[10.28/B2/29 Apr/B.III].

There was further evidence during Stage B.III that out-class setwork, preparation, or revision, might occasionally be brought into the in-class ISDL sessions: "Then, in the two other [SDL] hours I have been doing the other exercises for tomorrow ...." —[10.25/B3/28 Apr/B.III]; "In the class library I used my time doing revisions ...." —[10.26/B6/28 Apr/B.III]; "... in the therid [= third] one I have been working in the resub of two compositions." —[10.29/B3/29 Apr/B.III].[54] Some justification is provided for the use of ISDL times for this work by the fact of the social dimension otherwise perhaps lacking: "In the class library I have been correcting my compositions and doing some resubs that I had to do. I think that this work is very good because we have to ask someone in the class or outside the class or check the dictionary or other books in order to correct our mistakes and I think that this exercise is very useful to remember it." —[10.30/B3/1

[54] While some setwork benefited from class library materials and/or peer support, care was necessary that in-class ISDL sessions did not become merely opportunities for completing out-class setwork.

May/B.III]. A further encouragement to the practice lay in the intentionally close integration of all aspects of the programme: "Then, in the class-librery I decided to do Grammar revisions on the summaries of Grammar offered on [a coursebook]. I have found them very related with the work we are carrying on at the moment and with the needs and problems I have in the written work." —[10.44/B6/13 May/B.III].

Projects B.III

No projects were undertaken during B.III.

Out-Class Study and Work B.III

Class Diary B.III

Responses to the Class Diary in B.III were in line with those for previous Stages. One student confessed: "To be honest, I'm not every evening in the mood to write a daily diary." —[12D.1/B5/24 Mar/B.III]. Some found it a strain on top of other commitments, especially one who filled diaries with details of his leisure pursuits: "I've no enough time because my homework and my Daily Dairy let me exsaust [= leave me exhausted]." —[12D.6/B1/1 Apr/B.III], [12D.4/B1/26 Mar/B.III]; or a tedious chore: "What's always boring are you, my dear Daily Diary. I've nothing against you, but you can't know how boring is to try to write something new every evening. Dear D.D., you are our cross!" —[12D.8/B1/28 Apr/B.III]; "I don't know what I can write [in the diary].... I don't like writing them, and I'm sure you don't like reading them too." —[12D.7/B11/1 Apr/B.III]. Another extract confirms that at least one student took trouble in preparing to write the Diary: "Yesterday I was amazing [= amazed] when I saw a person who was thinking and writing down notes in order to prepare the daily dairy for today. I think that it's not so important." —[12D.3/B4/25 Mar/B.III]. But this student came to write the most personal diaries and to reveal very much of herself: "Well, you will not believe me but I'm crying although I don't know why, I'm very weak. I shouldn't have written this dairy. It's too personal and it's not the kind of dairy that you asked for. Sorry about that. I hope not to write any dairy like this any more." —[12D.5/B4/27 Mar/B.III]. Despite often-expressed general dissatisfaction with the class, it was clear from the confiding nature of her diaries that she trusted the co-ordinator to respect her feelings. It is evident that, in the right circumstances, such diaries may have therapeutic and rapport value beyond their overtly pedagogic and research functions, enabling a much warmer understanding of the personal as well as the study needs of the individual.

Students were encouraged to write diaries partly because they provided an opportunity for self-expression, and freestyle writing-practice otherwise available only in the form of essential essay-writing for the examination. While no individual correction of diaries took place on Courses A and B (unlike Course C) there was occasional feedback in the form of plenary DODL sessions in which language-errors were highlighted and corrected without reference to the writers individually.[55] Such sessions proved generally popular, as did any extract-correction and feedback from written work: "... in the Class-library I spent the

[55]A two-way element was introduced on Course C, with co-ordinator remarks (and language corrections) added to diaries.

time following carefully the corrections of our diaries made by the teacher on the board. I have found this work very helpful ...." —[12D.11/B6/8 May/B.III].[56]

Out-Class Setwork B.III

The out-class setwork schedules for Stages III and IV are at **Table B:10**. Out-class setwork might be done in less than ideal conditions: "I've lots of homework to do .... My hands are frozen stiff. This room is as cold as a freezer. Grrr —!" —[12S.1/B5/19 Mar/B.III]; "After school I went to a library, but there were so many people there, I couldn't find a table. So, I just sat a chair and I tryed to do my home work. But, I couldn't finish." —[12S.6/B11/30 Mar/B.III]. It could act as a spur to effort [12S.3/B2/23 Mar/B.III], be specific to the individual student [12S.4/B11/24 Mar/B.III], or deter already hard-working students [12S.5/B6/26 Mar/B.III].

The introduction of 'resubmissions' of annotated and part-corrected written work, notwithstanding the considerable extra burden involved, proved generally popular with the more conscientious students: "I think the sistem of doing RESUB of our homeworks is very useful to learn what we have done wrong and to be able to do right next time." —[12S.11/B3/9 Apr/B.III]; "The new system of correcting our homeworks is a very positive one even though it demands more time and commitment not only for the teacher, but also for us. It pushes us to do a proper revision of our mistakes and communicate with the [Irish] people we live with." —[12S.12/B6/9 Apr/B.III]; [12S.16/B6/29 Apr/B.III]. It is less certain that they were as popular with the lower stream: "But, always, 'Resub' 'Resub' 'Resub'." —[12S.14/B11/28 Apr/B.III]. And there was a potential problem of backlog: "As you must have realised I have big problems with the resubs. I'm really fed up with them but I can't get rid of them. Imagine [= would you believe] that I still have resubs from one month ago." —[12S.37/B4/12 May/B.III]; [12S.39/B4/14 May/B.III]. Nonetheless, there was benefit from asking fellow-students, checking with native-speakers, and so on: "After school I went straight home in order to do my second written homework. Although I read all the articles about [the topic] I couldn't form an opinion about it. So I am going to ask the others about their opinions tomorrow. I hope after that I'll have enough informations to write a composition." —[12S.34/B9/6 May/B.III].

One extract helps to confirm the value of feedback corrections as a spur to the personal improvement of a good student: "I received a strong warning because I had been ... using a very ornate, padded style.... At home, with more calm, I revised all the corrections made on my previous compositions, I saw the reason for them and now I understand and accept the challenge for the following ones." —[12S.9/B6/1 Apr/B.III]. In addition to individual marking, students received feedback reports (a sample, for [B8], is at **Table B:11**). The diaries of [B6] were plainly written, following English conventions, but his essays were too florid for the short pieces of the examination. One area of difficulty, especially for Spanish speakers, whose language allows more flexible word-order and context-assumptions, is that of the English-language sequencing of words, tenses, and ideas. The 'resub' system was found beneficial: "I had to do resub of all the homeworks.... it's very useful for me. Certainly I accept that I need more discipline as I was told by the teacher. What I realise, doing a bit of composition with my classmates, is that I'm more complicated and that I spent a lot of time on creating problems for me, when it is possible to be simpler ...." —[12S.21/B6/1 May/B.III]. Two aids

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[56] In the absence of individual correction, and where the programme permits, plenary feedback correction sessions may provide a useful incentive to the writing of class diaries.

Table B:10. *Course B Stages III & IV, Out-Class Setwork Schedules (23 March - 12 June)*

CAMBRIDGE FCE EXPERIMENTAL COURSE			HOMEWORK SCHEDULES				
Mon	23/3	24	Letter 3 (accept invitation)	Mon	4/5	74	Summary
Tue	24/3	26	Summary	Tue	5/5	78	One of four descriptions
Wed	25/3	27	Retell story 3	Wed	6/5	84	Composition 2 (advertisements)
Thu	26/3	30	Finish the story	Thu	7/5	88	Exams (agree or not with letter?)
Fri	27/3	36	'Summary' comp.	Fri	8/5	89	Universal lang. (agree/disagree?)
Mon	30/3	42	Summary (in reported speech)	Mon	11/5	96	One of three compositions
Tue	31/3	42	One of 3 descriptions of town	Tue	12/5	100	Composition 2 or 3
Wed	1/4	48	One of the letters	Wed	13/5	104	Summary
Thu	2/4	54	Letter of complaint to papers	Thu	14/5	106	Summary
Fri	3/4	+	[Pitman Higher Inter. Essay]	Fri	15/5	+	Descr. own or s/o else's pers'lity
Mon	6/4	ix	Summary	Mon	18/5	109	Summary
Tue	7/4	6	Application for job	Tue	19/5	110	Summary
Wed	8/4	6	Summary	Wed	20/5	112	Comp 3
Thu	9/4	12	Letter to friends	Thu	21/5	115	Letter 2
Fri	10/4	18	House or flat?	Fri	22/5	117	Activity 3
EASTER BREAK							
Mon	27/4	57	Which career?	Mon	25/5	130	Comp. 2
Tue	28/4	60	Press release	Tue	26/5	136	Re-arrange paragraphs/ comp 1
Wed	29/4	62	Story, own words (from Ian's pov)	Wed	27/5	+	Write report on the Course
Thu	30/4	65	Write one of the stories	Thu	28/5	81	Test 1
Fri	1/5	66	Describe a coincidence	Fri	29/5	84	Test 2
Mon	1/6			Mon	8/6		
Tue	2/6			Tue	9/6		
Wed	3/6			Wed	10/6		
Thu	4/6			Thu	11/6		
Fri	5/6			Fri	12/6		

NB. June programme to be completed when exam dates etc. known -- in light of revision/practice requirements etc.

Table B:11. *Course B Stage III, Sample Out-Class Setwork (Homework) Feedback Report for an Individual, 23 March - 3 April*

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH SYLLABUS				STAGE III															FCE CANDIDATE: [B8]
~~PROGRESS REPORT NO.~~ HW FEEDBACK		DATED:		COPIES TO: FILE and CANDIDATE															
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: HOME (H); CLASS (C)				STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES															AREAS FOR REVISION,
TITLE	TYPE	DATE	GRADE	A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V	w	X	FOCUS, STUDY, ETC.
Letter	Formal acceptance	23/3	E	+	-	-	-	+	o	+	+	o	o	-	+	-		-	Grammar spelling GERUNDS
Summary	Story 'Fire'	24/3	D -				-					-		-	-				Gram. spell. punct. TENSES
Story	Rescue	25/3	C -	+		-	-	+	o			-		-	-				IMPROVING! Keep it up!
Finish the Story (late)	'Escape'	26/3	C -	+			-	+	+				+	--	-	-	-		Nicely told; SPELL. & baby errors
	Int. Food Fair Day																		
Summary (rep. speech)	'Memories'	30/3	D			-			+	+	-	-		-	-			+	Tenses spelling LOGIC
Description	Town/Place	31/3	E	+		-	-		+	o	+	-		--		--			SP. PUNCT. LEXIS (GRAMMAR)
Letter	to a friend	1/4	D	++			-		+	+	+	-		-		-	-	+	Nicely written but struct. mistakes
Discussion	letter to paper	2/4	C -	+		-	-		+	-	+	-		--		-		-	NFI! SPELLING vocab. grammar
Pitman Paper	Describe a film	3/4	D -	+			-	+	+			-		--	-	--			SPELLING!!! BASICS
						-	-					-		-	-	-	-		
COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, ETC.				A	C	F	G	I	L	N	O	P	R	S	T	V	w	X	IMPROVEMENT
A steady (if almost imperceptible ...) improvement. Keep trying -- in particular look out for the tiny details of spelling, punctuation, and grammar.				Appropriateness of tone, style	Care and attention to detail	First language transfer	Grammar (specific points)	Imagination, creativity, etc.	Length	Neatness, layout, handwriting	Organisation of ideas, logic, etc.	Punctuation	Repetitious, padded	Spelling	Tenses	Vocabulary (incorrect, inadequate)	Word-order	Following instructions	OVERALL PROGRESS Getting better, but a long way to go yet! + Favourable o Acceptable - Unfavourable

to overcoming the problem are summary-writing, which demands just the right kind of close-focus attention to the text, and transforming direct speech to indirect, and vice-versa. Combining the tasks for setwork could prove useful: "The homework took me a lot of time, but it was worth my effort on it because that practice of summarising conversations, with the use of reported speech involves many topics and, in especial way, it demens [= demands] great attention to the logic and the order of the events." —[12S.17/B6/30 Apr/B.III]. Out-class setwork could be dual-purpose, as, for example, where the task was to write a synopsis of (and hence thoroughly understand) study guides given in a coursebook [12S.10/B9/6 Apr/B.III].

The policy of integration of in-class with out-class work was beneficial: "The last activity involving Role-plays was very amusing and interesting because of the spontaneous way we did it. That activity helped a lot ... when I was doing my homework because the situation I had to write about was not any more abstract or strange." —[12S.12/B6/9 Apr/B.III]. Out-class setwork grades were published for the group (sample at **Table B:12**) and when Progress Reports were issued they proved an incentive to at least one student: "These kind of [Progress] reports are psychological very good because you can finally see the result of all your efforts you have made the last two months and you are more motivated to do your homework for the next two months." —[12S.18/B7/30 Apr/B.III]. The requirement that setwork should include preparation [1.10/CR/30 Mar/B.III] also helped to motivate at least one student: "I think it's a good thing to have to study [by] myself the unit that next day it will be explained in class. It makes you to do an effort harder than if the first time that you listen that." —[12S.19/B10/30 Apr/B.III].

One student who complained about diaries also said that the amount of setwork conflicted with his desire to do freework: "It always takes too much time to write my daily composition. At the end of the week I'm very exhausted. At present I need to read newspaper or books to improve and extend my English vocabulary, but usually in the evening I'm very tired and I've no wish to read something else in English." —[12S.20/B1/1 May/B.III]; [12S.5/B6/26 Mar/B.III]; [12S.29/B6/5 May/B.III]. It is no part of the ethos of MIDL that DSDL setwork should displace ISDL freework, but both must be set against the requirements of a programme tied to a fixed examination syllabus, with time-constrained commitments. Worthwhile freework cannot be assumed simply because setwork is lacking, and where there was evidence of a casual attitude to setwork an appropriate degree of pressure was applied.[57]

Time for freework was not the only factor for consideration – time for marking and correction had to be found. While individual students might occasionally evade setwork, the co-ordinator had no such option, and when the workload exceeded the time available for it he called for a review of the situation:

> While the class is conditioned to expect an exceptionally high level of homework setting and marking, the increased student numbers have put a strain on the schedules.... Explained the time-constraints for correcting homeworks, and discussed students' suggestions: revert to word-by-word essay correcting and drop the resubs, have an assistant teacher, drop the Diaries. I proposed that they be given the homework schedules a week in advance, and the homework should be reduced to two (meticulous) written works and two reading comprehension MCIs [multiple choice items] per week. If they scheduled the work carefully they could have Fridays

[57] A co-ordinator's note to [B8], [B11], [B1], and [B2] reads: "The following are required to be submitted by 6 April .... Students are reminded that continuing to fail to submit HW on time will be taken as a lack of commitment and teaching services for the FCE Course will be withdrawn from such students." All were younger students who needed constant carrot and stick; sadly, two were not to achieve the required FCE standard. The note pointedly underlined the time at which it was written: 9.45 p.m.

Table B:12. *Course B Stage III, Sample Homework Grades Summary Sheet (23 March - 8 April)*

FCE EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY COURSE

HOMEWORK GRADES SUMMARY SHEET 23/3- 8/4	Formal letter	Summary 'Fire'	Story 'Rescue'	Finish 'Escape'	International Food Fair Day	Summary (rep. sp.) 'Memories'	Description Town/Place	Informal Letter	'Discussion' Letter	Pitman Essay	Summary Coursebook Intro.	Letter of Application	Summary 'Jane Fonda'
	23/3	24/3	25/3	26/3	27/3	30/3	31/3	1/4	2/4	3/4	6/4	7/4	8/4
[B1]	E	C	E	C-	\	○	F	D	F	F	C	D	C-
[B2]	F	D	C	D-	\	C-	F-	D-	E-	C-	D-	D	D
[B3]	D	C-	C-	C-	\	B	B-	C	C-	F	C-	C-	D
[B4]	B	D	C	C-	\	C-	B-	C+	C-	D	C	B-	C-
[B5]	C-	C-	B-	C-	\	\\	\\	\\	\\	\\	\\	\\	\\
[B6]	D	E	C-	E-	\	C-	F+ *	B-	C-	C	C-	C-	D
[B7]	D	D	C-	D-	\	C-	C-	F	D	D-	D	C-	D
[B8]	E	D-	C-	C-	\	D	E	D	C-	D-			
[B9]	A-	E	C+	**	\	C	C	C-	C	D-	A	D	D
[B11]	E+	F-	E	○	\	E+	D-	D+	D-	F	C-		D-
Class Average	D	D-	C	D	\	C-	D-	C-	D+	E	C-	C-	D+

* rewrite
** not graded

○ This work is to be handed to me by 9 April at the latest if you wish to continue the course

Pass Grades = A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C Borderline = C-

free of homework. [B6] said he was exhausted by the weekends; the others preferred to spread the homework over Friday evening and the weekend. They seemed happy with the new arrangement. [12S.25/CR/5 May/B.III]

The student who had wanted more freework time was cautiously favourable to the new arrangement: "In my opinion it's good; now we can dedicate more time to read newspapers or books and to socialize with the natives.... In my opinion a good written English is strictly correlated with a critical reading in English. Anyway, concerning the new homework sistem my opinion is positive, but of course we can have a clear idea (right opinion) only after a period of practical [e]valuation." —[12S.26/B1/5 May/B.III]. Some other hard-working students welcomed the considerable easing-off in the work-load: "The conversation of today about the writen homework has been useful because we have been talking for a long time .... I have liked the solution very much because I need more practice in reading and speaking and if I have to do a composition every day I don't have time for that." —[12S.27/B3/5 May/B.III]; "... I feel happy with that decision because the written work has been taking most of my time and energies, leaving no free, enough room for reading and doing revision on the programm, which are very important at this stage of the course. So I agree completely with the new schedule of homework ...." —[12S.29/B6/5 May/B.III]; "{Now that the written work [= written homework] has been more balanced, I have the opportunity to devote more time to do properly the previous attempt for all the grammar exercises we are asked each day. So, when we do the correction of them with the teacher I can get more benefit from all the explanations the teacher does." —[12S.33/B6/6 May/B.III]; [12S.31/B10/5 May/B.III].

But, perversely, one who had been struggling continuously and unsuccessfully to catch up with her 'resubs' was opposed to reducing the setwork: "If you want my opinion I don't like it. It's not the right time for relaxing. We should work harder when there is nearly a month for the exam. I have more time to think and I know it's not good for me." —[12S.28/B4/5 May/B.III]. Another student, unsympathetic to the problems of the co-ordinator [13.3/B9/5 May/B.III], also had reservations about examination-preparation: "I think it's very good for some students who spend an awful long time at their studies. I myself would prefer to do more [= more homework? more work?] for my examination." —[12S.30/B9/5 May/B.III]. Yet another felt the need for the previous schedules: "I understood that situation, and I accept the new system of our homework. However my composition is still awful as you know. To tell the truth I still want to write a composition every day." —[12S.32/B11/5 May/B.III]. Notwithstanding the necessity for revised schedules, and the democratic nature of the decision, the extracts confirm the need for sensitivity to the wishes of each individual, particularly when those wishes cannot be met. The new regime, in which setwork was scheduled in advance, gave students an opportunity to timetable their two essays a week, a minor contribution to the SDL ethos of the MIDL programme.

Out-Class Freework B.III

Reference has already been made to crowding in public study facilities [12S.6/B11/30 Mar/B.III], and there could be further constraints: "In the afternoon I tried to study in a library in Henry Street but I had to wait half an hour for a box for my bag because it's not allowed to take the bag with you into the library." —[12F.1/B5/16 Mar/B.III]. On the other hand, at least one student found the environment stimulating: "I went to the Library to study. I prefer to go because if I am at home I don't do anything." —[12F.5/B8/18

Mar/B.III]. The extract both argues for the motivational aspect of special study facilities, and hints at the possibility of an emerging SDL mentality in this student. Another consistently took advantage of the DODL to further his own programme of in-class ISDL and out-class freework [12F.2/B6/16 Mar/B.III], 12F.15/B6/30 Mar/B.III]. Revision was a normal form of freework: "This evening I'm not going out because I must study and revise all the grammar structures ...." —[12F.3/B2/18 Mar/B.III]. Another student, who also mentions revision [12F.12/B5/25 Mar/B.III], was very interested in literature and the theatre [4.61/B5/3 Jun/B.IV] and required little stimulus to her own range of target-language out-class interests and pursuits: "This morning I bought a new magazine ... which I didn't know until now. It's about all sorts of things, politics, nightlife, books and of course the arts. There are some interesting reviews in it about two plays I have seen recently ...." —[12F.6/B5/19 Mar/B.III]. She was an exceptionally self-motivated learner, one for whom entire ISDL might have been appropriate. For most students, however, some version of MIDL is considered more beneficial in sustaining interest and motivation over a period of time, particularly where the topic-area is not intrinsically stimulating.

Two extracts report asking native-speakers for help with dictation, a requirement for some examinations, and an activity many students enjoy: "I should study every day for three hours but I'm to lazy at the moment.... Then I went home and asked [name] to dictate me a text. I made some mistakes but I hope I'll do no mistakes after a while." —[12F.10/B9/23 Mar/B.III]; "During the afternoon I did some practise of reading aloud and dictation, helped by an Irishman at home. The week we finished was really full and I increased my peace [= pace] of personal work." —[12F.14/B6/27 Mar/B.III]. Jafarpur and Yamini (1993, p.360) remark that Lado's 1961 objection to dictation as a *testing* device seemed to be due to a view of language based on the structural linguistics and behavioural psychology of the time, at odds with the more recent consideration of language as "a *whole* phenomenon". They claim that "a dictation enables the subject to produce utterances that are both syntactically well-formed and semantically acceptable. No other procedure would allow a subject with limited language ability to do so." Another diary extract refers to the value of unforced communication and relaxation in the TL: "These holidays I spent a long time with my Irish friends and I tried to speak English with my Italian friends too. I had time to read something and also to listen to the radio, usually I've no time or I am too tired to spend time in this way. But it is very important to improve English." —[12F.18/B1/27 Apr/B.III]. The same student makes another valid point, one difficult to impress upon some students: "I spent the whole afternoon reading 'News week'; it's very interesting to read newspapers or magazines because there are a lot of very common words and particular frases that you have to know. You can't learn all that at school." —[12F.27/B1/11 May/B.III]. Other extracts mention the theatre [12F.11/B5/24 Mar/B.III], watching informative television [12F.13/B6/25 Mar/B.III], and ongoing reading for pleasure [12F.19/B9/29 Apr/B.III], as well as the recommendation of a classmate for reading matter: "I started to read the book 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' written by James Joyce. [B5] recommended that I should read this book because she thought it was very good." —[12F.24/B9/6 May/B.III]. Some reading was purposeful: "... I have spent most of the time reading the newspaper and pages of the book in order to write tomorrow the essay about [the topic]." —[12F.25/B13/6 May/B.III]. This student displayed a conscientious approach to her own out-class studies: "Since I would like to pass this examination I'm doing my best: reading, writing, and so on.... I have done my own plan to study at home, dividing the days in a

different way according to my necessities of every stage of the skills, because I think everyone has different needs, so I couldn't study with the same method like other people." —[12F.28/B13/11 May/B.III].[58]

B.III Overview

B.III may be regarded as exemplifying a 'standard' MIDL methodology in several respects. Schedules were set in advance, with ISDL periods established at an optimal 50% of available time, with significant allocation to DSDL workteams, a popular and successful feature of this Stage. The two major ISDL facilities in this environment, the language laboratory and the class library, while continuing to be timetabled under these nominal headings, were now 'either-or-both' at each student's individual discretion. The ISDL intent was therefore that much better realised.

The Stage was divided by the Easter Holidays, a break of two weeks.

Two students had difficulty in accepting the ISDL ethos: one left the class and then requested to be allowed to return several weeks later, while the other (whose complaints conformed to a pattern in her personality) remained in the class and made a significant contribution both to the class environment and to the research data. Programme changes included a temporary reduction in ISDL time to accommodate Pitman examination preparation, a reduction of ISDL time in favour of DSDL workteams, and a reduction in the out-class setwork to more realistically markable levels. Complaints of boredom increased during the intensive DODL Pitman practice period, and abated when the classes returned to the standard MIDL format. Plenary corrections, normally of out-class setwork, but occasionally arising from Class Diary observations, remained a popular DODL feature of this Stage. Counselling and consultation were minimal, being required principally as supportive measures, with paracounselling not notable in the extracts. The first Progress Reports were issued, to the satisfaction of most students. A system of resubmitting unsatisfactory essays was instituted, the volume of work thereby created, as well as the numbers of students now in the class, prompting the reduction in setwork. Apart from bad weather at the start of this Stage, the out-class environment appeared acceptable, although few extracts mention leisure pursuits. Both setwork and freework continued to be undertaken to the requisite degree.

Course B, Stage III was regarded as satisfactory in both pedagogical and research terms.

COURSE B STAGE IV (18 MAY - 12 JUNE)

Other-Directed Learning Components

Programme B.IV

Many factors influenced a transition from the successful format of Stage III, among them the need for final examination preparation:

> Feeling a lack of 'contact-hours' with the students – the important 'magic' of rapport is somehow missing. Will lose almost a week with them while I'm taking [an examination]. In

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[58]She obtained Grade A in the FCE.

> addition to the vital issue of rapport, the students will need more direct plenary guidance coming up to exams. Will propose for their consideration therefore that we reduce full SDL [= ISDL] component to one hour per day: to increase teacher-student interaction, to enable more variety in the ODL component, to introduce other materials to supplement the coursebooks, to enable more practices in listening comprehension and other things they are in need of, to increase workteam [DSDL] sessions, to give time for mock exam practices. 'End-of-course' questionnaires must be administered and interviews conducted while the half-and-half MIDL programme is still uppermost in their minds. Important: students must approve changes. [14.17/CR/11 May/B.III]

The similarity between this call for more teacher-student rapport and that of the preliminary project raises the question of the extent to which student-need was complemented by the co-ordinator's teaching-mode preferences. Some ambivalence may be expected in any transition from traditional teaching to co-ordinating ODL and SDL.

Principally in order to ensure that the 'standard' MIDL course was fresh in the students' minds, with due consideration given to the balance between DODL, DSDL and ISDL components, the end-of-course questionnaire was administered on the first day of Stage IV [14.1/B2/18 May/B.IV]. The decision was also influenced by the co-ordinator's planned absence (to take an examination) during the last full week of the course [14.15/B4/4 Jun/B.IV], the wish not to intrude on the students' own examination preparation time, and the risk of not obtaining completion at all if the questionnaire were left to the week of the students' examination, during which, for timetabling and revision reasons, class attendance tended to be sporadic. Two students commented favourably: "In the third hour we have answered a questionary about the course.... I like this feedback between the teacher and the students. I think it is the only way to improve the methodology." —[14.2/B3/18 May/B.IV]; "The questionnaire is good practice not only for the students but also for the teacher. It's good for the students because they settle their ideas about the Course ...." —[14.3/B4/18 May/B.IV]. Similarly, interviews were begun the following day [14.4/CR/19 May/B.IV], and, taking longer than anticipated, were to continue until early in June [14.13/B5/2 Jun/B.IV]. One co-ordinator extract remarks on the reasons: <Very slow interviews, taking too much time. Teacher as researcher in extremely difficult situation because all the necessary research tasks have to be done alongside the teaching/co-ordinating, with unknown effects on student morale, perceptions of the Course, etc.> —[14.8/CR/21 May/B.IV]. The interviews revealed a weakness in the questionnaires: <Emerging that some quaire questions not properly understood (particularly in regard to organisation and administration of the Course) and it must be considered whether amended answers from interview clarifications are permissible, given that no such interview clarification occurred for Experiment I.> —[14.8/CR/21 May/B.IV].

Apart from the needs of an examination class, there was research administration to take into account, and the absence of the co-ordinator for a significant period prior to their FCE examination made an increase in DODL inevitable [4.46/B6/28 May/B.IV]. The reduction in ISDL was, naturally, welcomed by [B4]: "Today we have started with the new distribution of the hours of the class. The reduction of the free study period has been very good for me, because I think that I was beginning to waste the time." —[1.2/B4/19 May/B.IV]. It is unclear whether she thought ISDL a waste of time or was herself wasting ISDL time. Others commented: "The lessons in school have changed since Monday and I think that it's more interesting now. We are reading and talking more than before. But I feel well now in that class and I'm no longer comparing all time." —[1.4/B12/19 May/B.IV]; "The class is getting more interesting ...." —[1.5/B13/19 May/B.IV];.

"The introduction of new activities during the class hours gives more variety to our course...." —[1.6/B6/20 May/B.IV].[59]

Two aspects of the revised programme, explorations of higher language functions, and an easing-off in co-ordinator pressure, gave some concern: "We did very unusual exercises such as explaining the meaning of expressions, standard comparisons and so on; which I think it's very good, but maybe this is not the time of the Course to do it. In my opinion we are starting to relax too much and I don't like it. I suppose that you know what you are doing, though." —[1.8/B4/2 Jun/B.IV]; [1.9/B4/5 Jun/B.IV]. The explanation given of the need for maximum pre-examination personal revision time [14.10/CR/22 May/B.IV], and the advantages of approaching an examination in a relaxed and unstressed manner had clearly not been accepted: "... the closer we get to the examination the easier we take it in school and that worries me a lot." —[1.10/B7/5 Jun/B.IV]. The pedagogical organisation again received an 'unfavourable' point in the quantitative data tally. However, at least one student was in accord [12S.8/B3/2 Jun/B.IV]. The relaxation of pressure was enabled by the fact that the timetabling had been accurate, the examination objectives had been attained, and the course programme had been fulfilled.

Materials and Equipment B.IV

There was some expression of regret at having finished the coursebooks [2.8/B4/27 May/B.IV], [2.9/B6/27 May/B.IV], but general satisfaction with the new materials – for examination practice and at advanced level – selected for the run-up to the examination.[60] A picture-dictionary was of interest during ISDL library periods [2.6/B7/21 May/B.IV] and studied on the way to and from the institution [12F.9/B4/4 Jun/B.IV].

Composition of Class B.IV

The only remark under this heading was one of surprise at receiving a new student at this late date in the course [3.1/B9/25 May/B.IV]. The newcomer had already passed the FCE and, for administrative reasons connected with teachers' professional examinations, was accommodated for two days until a place could be found for him at a higher level.

DODL Elements B.IV

One student (a teacher of mathematics) enjoyed the study of grammar on the first day of Stage IV: "Today we have been doing a grammatical analysis of a text of the book. I like this kind of activities very much because they are similar to mathematical activities and they are very logical, as well I think that it is very useful for our writing works." —[4.1/B3/18 May/B.IV]. Others also benefited [4.2/B5/18 May/B.IV], [4.3/B6/18 May/B.IV], although the latter remarked: "The only thing that was not so helpful was the time. We started that study at the first hour of Monday, when the students hardly realise where they are." The observation offers a reminder that studying and teaching may induce very different alertness levels. One student found the

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[59]The remarks lent some support to the reduction of ISDL on Course C.

[60]References are at [2.1/B4/19 May/B.IV], [2.2/B5/19 May/B.IV], [2.3/B9/19 May/B.IV], [2.4/B11/19 May/B.IV], [2.5/B13/20 May/B.IV], [2.10/B4/28 May/B.IV], [2.11/B9/28 May/B.IV], [2.12/B4/29 May/B.IV], [2.14/B7/2 Jun/B.IV], [2.15/B1/3 Jun/B.IV].

work this day useful, but boring [4.4/B11/18 May/B.IV]. In contrast to [B3], another found the whole exercise left her worse off than before: "In school we learnt the use of the right tenses and that's the reason why I'm now a little bit confused in using the tenses. I noticed already at other occasions that I'm not very good in learning grammar rules. First I'm always confused and often it seems that it's getting worse than better. Many times I'm doing something just because of my feeling but I'm not really able to explain why I did it like that." —[4.5/B12/18 May/B.IV]; [4.15/B12/20 May/B.IV]. The extract suggests she had reached the stage where input and output overlap. She was not the only student to find DODL instruction inadequate on occasion [4.39/B7/26 May/B.IV]. DODL and ISDL carried on alongside one another on the following day [4.6/B2/19 May/B.IV], but the plenary grammar 'question and answer' session was not to the taste of one student, who found others able to answer faster than herself and wished the work had been done in pairgroups first and only then corrected in a whole-class session [4.7/B3/19 May/B.IV]. This class may have been an exception to the general rule that plenary DODL sessions were usually given only when the material was relatively easy or being recycled, or revised, or corrected after DSDL pairgroup work or setwork. There is evidence for the use of higher-level materials [4.9/B7/19 May/B.IV]. The DODL sessions continued varied and popular: "Today, I have liked the class very much. We have continued doing the exercises of grammar and the activities of the red book. Now, with this book we are doing different analyses of the textes to learn what is the best style that we have to use in the compositions. I like this very much." —[4.12/B3/20 May/B.IV]; "We listened to the tape and tried to identify the speaker. Then we analysed the text and I think it was an interesting lesson.... The last ten minutes some of the students had to talk one minute about a definite topic in front of the class." —[4.13/B5/20 May/B.IV]; [4.14/B6/20 May/B.IV]. One student continued to benefit from grammar DODL: "... the analysis of an important grammatical formulae ... which has a different strutture from the other European languages. That explanation is very useful for me." —[4.19/B6/21 May/B.IV]. For some, however, even end-of-course interviews provided only partial relief: "Without this interview the day it would have been very normal and quite boring." —[4.16/B2/21 May/B.IV]; "The other three hours of class weren't very interesting. We spent two of them on the interviews and the other one in doing a listening comprehension like in the exam." —[4.17/B4/21 May/B.IV]. A more typical day followed, in which there was discussion of a topic previously suggested in a student's diary [4.20/B2/22 May/B.IV]. Two students provided complementary general outlines of the day:

> Today the class has been fine.... working in the exercises .... The first hour we have been correcting the exercises we did the last Thursday in the class.... Then we have continued doing the other ones easier all together. The activity of reading and writing has been good .... In the last hour we have been discussing [a topic]. I have liked it very much, because everybody could say something and at the end we have finished talking about more things that more people could give their opinions about them. [4.21/B3/22 May/B.IV]

> It was very helpful to get the corrections .... inversions were extremely important and rather new for me, especially for the careful analysis that is needed in order to do them properly. The building vocabulary exercise was very good .... We did another exercise .... Finally, we ended our morning with an interesting talk about [a topic]. The main topics were given by [B2] and after the other students and the teacher joined the discussion. [4.23/B6/22 May/B.IV]

But any group session is a compromise: "... in the class, It was nothing special." [4.25/B11/22 May/B.IV]; "We spent the last hour on a silly conversation if you realise that we are s[h]ort of time. The end was

interesting, though." —[4.22/B4/22 May/B.IV]. While speaking was an integral and ongoing fact of everyday life in the class, the oral part of the examination (one paper) required fluent speaking ability on a particular topic, and occasional discussion sessions let the co-ordinator gauge capabilities under approximate oral examination conditions. A student commented: "I was astounded looking at the way and spontaneity in which students can express feelings and opinions in English now, in comparison with the beginning when things were different." —[4.23/B6/22 May/B.IV]. The remark may be taken as evidence for the balance maintained between speaking and the other skills, this student having recently commented on the importance given to writing during the course [1.3/B6/19 May/B.IV].

The co-ordinator was absent for one day, during which substitute teachers took the class. The course questionnaires had already been completed so that the occasion had no effect upon the responses given there, and although obviously no remarks on other classes or teachers are incorporated into quantitative data, they help to put comments on the MIDL course into perspective. Reactions to the substitute teachers were inevitably mixed.[61] One student soberly remarked: "Today [CR] hasn't come to class. Instead we have had two different teachers.... I have to say that I didn't like the class with either of them. [Y] was very insecure .... [X] was more professional but still ... didn't carry the class very well. In spite of all, it has been a good experience. I have realised that your class is pretty good and more interesting than others." —[4.29/B4/25 May/B.IV].[62] More subjective comments dismissed the day: "Until ten o'clock [Y] was our teacher and the last two hours [X]. But I was very bored this morning and at one o'clock I felt that this morning was a waste of time. I really don't know what I learnt today. I suppose nothing." —[4.32/B12/25 May/B.IV]; "Today the class was really boring. I think that we were wasting our time because we didn't do any useful work or study. The first three hours we did nothing, only during the last [h]our we worked a little bit.... I realise that it's really difficult to work with a teacher who doesn't know how to carry on with an exam class. I hope you will come back soon and we carry on with our programme." —[4.33/B13/25 May/B.IV]; "I don't think I would support [= I could put up with] the other teacher more." —[4.34/B2/26 May/B.IV]. A student (herself a teacher) who had found the substitute teachers' work interesting, was nonetheless anxious to get back to normal, and indirectly endorsed the 'dependent' component within the MIDL methodology: "Today, our teacher has come back. I really wanted him to come, because yesterday the class was very different and at this stage we need to work hardly and he knows what we need and certainly the way of teaching is very important in order to learn more." —[4.35/B3/26 May/B.IV]. Another student (also a teacher) showed understanding of the very great difficulties of impromptu substitute teaching:

> We had our teacher again. He was ill yesterday and two teachers came to our class to substitute him. I appreciated the work they did with us, because it's not easy at all to fit in an unknown class and make people work properly. However, I realise that we're really used to our teacher and I think the teacher is used to us as well. Since he knows too [= also? very?] many things about us from the diaries, homeworks, classes and so on, he can speak to us with an authority which has been built day after day. That's why we can trust him. [4.38/B6/26 May/B.IV]

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[61] References are at [4.26/B1/25 May/B.IV], [4.27/B2/25 May/B.IV], [4.28/B3/25 May/B.IV], [4.30/B9/25 May/B.IV], [4.31/B11/25 May/B.IV].

[62] A very keen and critical student, she had a consistent interest in teaching methods (see, for example, extracts [4.54/B4/2 Jun/B.IV], [4.60/B4/3 Jun/B.IV], [4.67/B4/4 Jun/B.IV]).

The extract also provides an auto-responsible student's perspective on notional teacher power. It is clear that, for this student at least, authority is granted where there is awareness and trust. Nonetheless, whatever the co-ordinator's knowledge of the students, it is clear from other extracts that the DODL instruction could be inadequate to an individual's needs: "With each exercise we have done I got more and more insecure if it was correct what I have written. Now I am never 100% sure of my solution." —[4.52/B7/29 May/B.IV]; [4.39/B7/26 May/B.IV]. Repetition could help with the insecurities of greater choice [4.40/B9/26 May/B.IV]. Finishing the coursebooks allowed time for more DODL examination practice: "... Pitman exams: as dictation, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and grammar.... these kind of exercise are useful. At the end of the class we have seen a paper of the First Certificate [Examination] ...." —[4.42/B3/27 May/B.IV]; [4.43/B4/27 May/B.IV]; "... very useful and important ... the way to select the basic information needed to summarise a passage which we have listened to previously. I think all these techniques are like 'keys' from which good results in the exam can really be achieved." —[4.44/B6/27 May/B.IV]; [4.45/B3/28 May/B.IV]; [4.48/B3/29 May/B.IV].

One extract confirms that ISDL was not entirely neglected during this Stage [4.63/B7/3 Jun/B.IV], and another, in addition, provides evidence that overt instruction had – finally – helped a student to give up using the continental present perfect for the English past simple: "Today the class was quite varied. We continued doing exercises of the [advanced level] book. They were interesting, because we learnt some idiomatic expressions. {In the second hour we worked by ourselves. I reviewed the papers that we did last week.... Finally we did more exercises of the [advanced level] book and a practice of listening comprehension for the First Certificate [Examination]." —[4.53/B3/2 Jun/B.IV]. One hoped-for effect of the programme change, better rapport, appeared to have been realised: "I really enjoyed our classes this morning. The variety of activities and the good atmosphere of our relationship made our work together very amusing." —[4.55/B6/2 Jun/B.IV]. Equally, there seemed to be no diminution of the democratic ethos, one student questioning the timetable: "I think the [advanced level] book ... is very useful and I like to work with it. But why don't we have the dictation in preparation of the Pitman Examination during this hour, while we are waiting till all the students arrive? I know that some of the students don't like the dictation and so it would be more useful to have it in the beginning of the school so that the ones which won't write it can arrive a bit later. I wonder if the listen and comprehension part in the First Certificate Examination is always so easy ...." —[4.56/B7/2 Jun/B.IV]. The extract also confirms that the policy of making listening comprehension practices more difficult than necessary (faster, with noise and so on) had paid off, with this student then finding a genuine FCE recording to be easy. Another student noted following her own, rather than the recommended technique: "Afterwards we listened to the listening comprehension. I wrote down a lot during the first and second reading. I left away the unimportant things so that I couldn't answer all of [CR] questions. I know that we should write down every little detail we can remember, but I think that is too much, because I have difficulties to shorten it. So I think it's better for me to write down less." —[4.57/B9/2 Jun/B.IV]. This auto-responsible student, while co-operating with other students and the co-ordinator in furthering her studies, exercised her powers of judgement and discretion confidently and well.

Students could initiate DODL sessions, as one extract indicates: "Today the most interesting thing in the class was the explanation about the differences between 'hope/wish' and the different meanings of 'expect', as well. The last day I reminded you this explanation, so I gather you explained it because of me.

Now I can't say that you don't pay attention to people's needs (I mean students' needs like mine) as I did before.... By the way, I think it's a good idea to have planned the time for the different sections of the exam. I must thank you for that." —[4.60/B4/3 Jun/B.IV]. Such initiatives could benefit others: "I was very happy with the explanation about 'wish', 'hope' and 'expect' .... It's interesting to see that now it's possible to grasp and understand things that at the beginning weren't easy at all." —[4.62/B6/3 Jun/B.IV]. This student feels he has made progress. However, the gratitude of [B4] for the examination timings was offset by the observation of another student on the effects, in practice, of counting-down the final minutes of a dry-run exercise: "Then we tried to explain some newsapaper headlines, that wasn't easy.... We had five minutes to do the first five sentences of section A.... By the way I think [CR] enjoys it to put pressure on us because he told us every minute the time. The result of this is that you can't really concentrate because you listen all the time to the teacher." —[4.64/B9/3 Jun/B.IV].[63]

A DODL activity met with some approval from one student: "... read a passage all together and understand it perfectly trying to know what every word meant from the context. The text was very interesting and this activity was very good for us before the exam." —[4.66/B3/4 Jun/B.IV]; but a digression into discussion did not please another:: "I still think that we're wasting some of the time instead of working harder. I think that there was not need to spend such a long time on a discussion in which there were only two or three people talking (including you); the theme was interesting though, very interesting. There was nothing especial in class today ...." —[4.67/B4/4 Jun/B.IV]. Other extracts offer a reminder that perceptions of and hence responses to the same situation can vary widely:

> At school we spent the whole morning doing reading comprehension and other examination skills. At first we read a text aloud, one student after another.... Then we wandered from the subject of the text .... the dictation was too fast. [4.68/B5/4 Jun/B.IV]

> We spent nearly two class hours of our morning on an accurate practice of reading comprehension.... We were helped by the teacher to predict what might come next in the text; in addition we were taught how to guess the meaning of unknown words by relating them with the other words in the complete sentence or paragraph.... it gives us a good stimulus to keep on reading. [4.69/B6/4 Jun/B.IV]

The following extract illustrates how a learning event can be spoilt by inadequate explanation; the rationale for the exercise had obviously not been made clear to this student:

> The first hour, when we had to read aloud, I liked very much. The only thing that I didn't appreciate at all was that we spent too much time on reading through the story. How you said [CR], it isn't important to understand each word, but the meaning of the whole text should be understood. But today we did exactly that; we analysed almost each word of the whole story. I think it would be better if the student, who had to read a passage, finished first reading, and then students could ask questions about the words which they didn't understand in the context. Probabely there wouldn't be so many questions and we would be much faster in going through the story than we were this morning. If not, the school was quite interesting today, even the discussion we had before the coffee break was very informative. [4.70/B7/4 Jun/B.IV

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[63]The counting was done, innocently, because a buzzer had broken, and the co-ordinator's darkroom timer had gone missing when, trustingly, he left it on the desk (the room was open to anyone in the afternoons and evenings).

The following extracts are interesting as covering the same events from different perspectives:

> Today we practised reading comprehension.... I thought it was a very interesting text.... By the time we started with our preperation for the F.C.E. [Examination] I was nearly asleep because I was so tired. [4.71/B9/4 Jun/B.IV]

> Today ... we had some practices of pitman [examination], and a reading comprehension practice.... very important for me. So, it was very useful practice for me. [4.72/B11/4 Jun/B.IV]

> The morning in school was interesting and useful. I wasn't bored at all. [4.73/B12/4 Jun/B.IV]

The following day, the use of advanced level materials was well received: "Today, we started doing exercises of the [advanced level] book. The first one was about proverbs I liked this activity very much.... It was very good for learning vocabulary and different expressions. Then, we did another exercise about the articles." —[4.74/B1/5 Jun/B.IV]; "In today's class we learnt several proverbs and we tried to understand the context in which they are applied. It was a very good activity, which I enjoyed very much. We also did a good practice of listening comprehension in preparation for the FCE [Examination]. In general it's possible to see a good improvement among all students ...." —[4.75/B6/5 Jun/B.IV].

A final extract placed under the heading of DODL, on the grounds that the remarks apply to that area, reveals a change of understanding on the part of one student:

> Today [X] was our substitute teacher. Students don't realise how much they appreciate and get used to their teachers until they have another one. I don't know how I could complain about the class before. Although I suppose it's not the same teaching to your own class than teaching to another one only for one week. The class next door has the same problem; its teacher is on holiday and the students have another one whom they can't stand. It's funny to see their faces when they go out from the class. Anyway, [X] is not so bad. [4.76/B4/8 Jun/B.IV]

The remarks bring out the vital importance of the relationship between teacher and student.

Affective Dimension Factor Components

Wellbeing B.IV

Stage IV brought the students very close to the examinations, with some evidence of greater confidence [5.24/B7/2 Jun/B.IV], and normal trepidation [5.1/B1/18 May/B.IV], [5.11/B4/21 May/B.IV], [5.27/B3/3 Jun/B.IV]. The co-ordinator was again showing signs of stress:

> Strain and sinus trouble, very foggy-minded and under-par. Enough time for only two interviews. [B8] somewhat negative, [B4] very negative: says the course has depressed her and she hasn't learnt anything at all. It isn't necessary for this to be so, merely that she feels it to be so .... [B5] returned from her 'holiday' with some 27 essays and more grammar exercises – very high standard so possible to mark quickly, but instead of essential study for my own exam. I need a long break, and very close to end of reserves. Too many years of stress and overwork without a normal life for balance. [5.2/CR/19 May/B.IV]

The extract is a reminder that a classroom is part of a very much wider milieu, any aspect of which may have a bearing on responses to the learning experience, and in passing, it may be noted also that the co-ordinator

was a student in that milieu, just as some of his students were teachers by profession. There was evidence of stress in at least one student: "Just in this moment I have received a phone call from my mother. I have told her that I can't stand any more and she has said that it's only one month more ... and that the only thing I have to do is study for my exam. But I cannot study. She also asked me about the weather, because she knows that I don't like the bad weather." —[5.4/B4/19 May/B.IV]; "I'm sorry because you have had the bad luck of having me as one of your students. Actually I think that it's a good experience for you. I'm not so bad, am I? (I'm really a strange person, very exigent with myself and very pesimistic)." —[5.12/B4/22 May/B.IV]. This same student, whose whole attitude changed for the better towards the end of the course, at this point had a lot to say which evidences the stress students may feel in regard to their progress and their own part in it, and offers a reminder that alongside the benefits of group learning must be set the fact of comparison with others in the same class or group:

> You know the reason why I came here. After being in a foreign country for 8 months it's supposed that I will come back with an acceptable English. But I don't think I have got it.... With this Course, maybe I have improved a little, but because I have realised that the improvement of the rest of the class has been huge, and because I have seen their English growing up while mine it's the same, I don't feel I have improved. The worst thing is that this makes me depress.... If I don't feel that I've improved is because I haven't worked enough to improve .... You said that I would have other opportunities to study English, and of course I would have them if I wanted them, but I don't want to spend more time and the most important thing: my father's money. [5.12/B4/22 May/B.IV]

The mention of money is rare, but must be considered a factor in extrinsic motivation as well as in strain. In contrast, another student was expressing gratitude for the course [5.5/B6/19 May/B.IV]. One still had an on-off relationship with her flatmate: "Now I have a problem with [a close friend]. I can't bear her because all the time she is complaining to me about my behaveour. She seems my mother. I don't know what she wants to get now, but this isn't way to live together.... She said that I use to make a big problem of a simple one. Maybe she is right and I'm the person who have to change." —[5.7/B8/20 May/B.IV]. Her flatmate was evidently a Spanish-speaker [13.5/B8/13 May/B.III], with obvious implications for out-class practice of English. Another student complained of constant tiredness [5.8/B11/20 May/B.IV], and the co-ordinator had a recurrence of a chronic problem: <Very bad sinus infection, dopiness, etc.> —[5.9/CR/21 May/B.IV]. One remark suggests that the weather was not helping: "My cold is getting better but I still feel dazed. The weather is very changeble and cold." —[5.10/B1/21 May/B.IV]. There were absences for unwellness, the co-ordinator for one day [5.14/CR/25 May/B.IV], and a student for two [5.16/B5/26 May/B.IV], [5.21/B5/29 May/B.IV]. One student had a serious medical problem:

> I don't know if I've told about my tumours, I think so, anyway the doctor said to me that I must go to hospital next thursday for a checkup because it might be I were operated again, therefore I wouldn't be able to sit the exam. Nevertheless I've been studying as hard as I can.... If during these days you realize I'm a little bit irritable, you'll understand what is the reason, but I wish to be treated as the rest of my classmates, thank you! [5.22/B13/29 May/B.IV]

She coped with everything, and obtained Grade A in the examination. The student who found everything hard going, despite making good progress, was not at all happy with the study situation: "I'm worried, I'm tired of composition and school in general. And what's worst, I'm not going over the grammar." —

[5.15/B1/26 May/B.IV]; [5.17/B1/27 May/B.IV]; [5.23/B1/2 Jun/B.IV], [5.26/B1/3 Jun/B.IV]. An extract from another student reveals a problem that might have gone unknown without the diaries, or classroom reticence attributed to other causes:

> During the last hour we'd a discussion and afterwards [B9] asked 'Why didn't you say anything?' and I told her that a long time ago I began to stammer because there was a change in my family. I thought it was over but now, it's amazing, sometimes in conversation the stammer comes back. I find it funny myself, but it isn't easy for me to say something in a discussion because the blood rushes into my ears and I can't think. It's really a horrible thing. [5.13/B5/22 May/B.IV]

One student was simply contented with her stay in Ireland: "I've been happy here and I'm still very happy." —[5.29/B12/4 Jun/B.IV]. There is also evidence from another of satisfaction with the course:

> I think that it is the last 'daily diary' .... First of all I would like to thank [CR] for his methodology and work. It has been wonderful for me, because he has understood me very well and this has been helpful for me. I think I have learnt a lot, althought sometimes I thought that this wouldn't be possible. Secondly, the fact that I have been in the same class and with the same method has been very good and I have been able to study with a certain order and improve more than if I had had different teachers. Finally, I have to say that I have had a very good experience that I will remember always. The atmosphere among us has been very good, as well. I have felt very happy and I will really miss everybody. I don't know whether I will pass the exam, but certainly I've fulfiled my objective and for me it is enought. So that, [CR], thank you very much for everything. [5.31/B3/12 Jun/B.IV]

In relation to studies in general, the point about stability of the environment is worth remarking. Pitman Examination results were encouraging to two students [5.25/B12/2 Jun/B.IV], [5.18/B3/28 May/B.IV], and discouraging to another, who had passed at Higher Intermediate level and was to get an Advanced pass in June [5.19/B4/28 May/B.IV]. However, all was not black for this latter student: "I like student's life and why not say it, I like to work hard." —[5.20/B4/29 May/B.IV]. This student, who had given frequent evidence of dissatisfaction, found practical reasons for a change of heart:

> I remember that the last year I had the usual final exams and just at the same time the exams of the 'Bachillerato International' ... and finally 'Selectividad'. That was really a hell.... I've been thinking it over a long time and it wasn't such a bad idea to follow this Course after all. Actually it was quite good. The reason why I've decided this is because following this Course I have the possibility (maybe a remote possibility) to get the First Certificate. Getting a certificate is the most important thing after all, because it's the only proof that you have to show that you have been studying English (it's essential if you want to get a job, at least in Spain). Although I haven't learnt much more than I knew before, I suppose that at least I have perfected what I already knew. But after all I have had to learn something, it's impossible not to have learnt anything (true or not I have to believe it). Maybe in another class I wouldn't have learnt much more than in this one. I have to recognise that my actual point of view is completely different to my point of view when I did the last interview (I don't know how I've changed it because normally when I say something I keep it until the end). I think that my statements in the questionnaire were too strong (I suppose that I had my reasons but they were influenced by a depression). Anyway I'm glad to have been in this class. I think that you have helped me more than I had thought (thank you for it), and the classmates were quite nice (with some exceptions). [5.32/B4/12 Jun/B.IV]

The extract is revealing in several respects: her recent pre-course learning-load had been substantial; she valued certification as a means to an end; there is confirmation of the effect of mood and temperament on responses; her ultimate endorsement of the MIDL methodology she was exposed to, with all its attendant circumstances and personalities, notwithstanding that she might have benefited from a higher level, and had clearly favoured a traditional methodology from the start.

Counselling Consultation B.IV

The only references are to the formal, nominally end-of-course, interviews held on 21 May: "At last, today I could get my interview. It was really interesting. [CR] asked me about all my 'negatives' answers to the questions in the questionaire we made a few days. I really enjoyed talking with [CR] and discussing with him about me and my improvement or about administration problems." —[6.1/B2/21 May/B.IV]; [6.2/B3/21 May/B.IV]; [6.3/B11/21 May/B.IV].

Out-Class Environment B.IV

One entry confirms that, on the return of her friend to Spain, [B8] thought of finding a host-family: "I'll have to find other girl who wants to live with me, or find a bed-sitter. But I'm goin[g] to ask me ~~fat[hers]~~ parents if they let me go to a Irish house to spend my last month here. I think that this will be good for me." —[7.1/B8/18 May/B.IV]. It can only be speculated to what extent a family environment would have changed her general discontent in Ireland: "The milk tastes [like] milk, and it also fresh. I think that is the only thing that Ireland has good." —[7.5/B8/19 May/B.IV]. Her experience contrasts markedly with that of two other students [7.15/B12/4 Jun/B.IV], [7.16/B7/9 Jun/B.IV]. And living with a family could be problematical too: "My resubs must be very bad because I have done them alone. I don't want to ask to my Irish family [= host-family] for two reason: ... I don't get on well with them ... they make mistakes." —[7.3/B4/19 May/B.IV].[64] Another student, whose social life was very full, found host-family life a distraction from her studies: "I don't know why but I spend too much time talking with my [host] family instead of studying, and if I'm studying I often do it in the kitchen where the whole family is and unfortunately also the TV." —[7.11/B12/3 Jun/B.IV]. Nonetheless, she passed Pitman at Higher Intermediate and Advanced levels and gained a Grade A Pass in the Cambridge FCE. In the temporary absence of her host-family, one student, who lived outside a picturesque village, was fearful of prowlers [7.10/B11/3 Jun/B.IV], [7.14/B11/4 Jun/B.IV]. An outwardly sober student had had her bag stolen: "When I arrived home, my bag was finally bag [= back] but some items were missing. The two bottles of wine and the radio had disappeared, but my [coursebook] was still in the back [= bag] and nobody had finished the exercises." —[7.4/B5/19 May/B.IV].[65] The same student maintained her interest in the theatre [7.9/B5/3 Jun/B.IV]. There is note of pub-life, with comment, again, on drinking: "Of course I chose one where they played Irish music. My friend enjoyed the evening in the pub very much but she was quite astonished about the number of drunken people. What she could hardly believe was that also a lot of woman were drunk. I don't think that Swiss drink less than Irish but I'm sure that there

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[64]Few native-speakers need conscious grammatical awareness, and local variation (e.g. 'I am back in Ireland since last year') could conflict with the more 'international' examination standard.

[65]The voiced/unvoiced alternation of bag/back is notably not consistent in this German-speaking learner.

aren't as many drunken woman as in Ireland." —[7.7/B12/28 May/B.IV]. Some students gathered with friends from other classes: "After that everybody was ready for the long trip to the west coast.... Because everybody was nearly starving [B1] and [a student from another class] cooked deligeous spaghetti bolognese. After the beautiful meal we were sitting in the living room and discussed until about two o'clock." —[7.6/B12/22 May/B.IV]. There is evidence that the German-speakers spent some out-class time together [7.12/B5/4 Jun/B.IV], [7.13/B9/4 Jun/B.IV].

Self-Directed Learning Components

Peer Support B.IV

There were few references to peer support during B.IV. A 'standard' non-controversial theme for discussion in pairgroups elicited unfavourable responses when repeated too often [8.1/B2/19 May/B.IV], [8.4/B9/19 May/B.IV], [8.5/B11/19 May/B.IV], [8.6/B13/19 May/B.IV]. Other discussions were better received: "... the conversation that we have had in groups. I've enjoyed it very much, because in my group we have talked a lot and then we have been telling everybody our decisions." —[8.10/B3/27 May/B.IV].

While end-of-course interviews were being conducted the other students were given DSDL pairgroup activities [8.7/B6/21 May/B.IV], [8.8/B7/21 May/B.IV], but younger ones took advantage of the absence of the co-ordinator: "While you were doing interviews, we 'worked' in work teams. What a shame! [B2] and [B8] started to talk in Spanish and the poor [B9] was frustrated. In such a situation I decided to ask the other groups what the situation was like in their balloons." —[8.11/B4/27 May/B.IV]. The occasion offers a warning against assuming that there is any inevitability about transition from DSDL pairgroup work (where the co-ordinator's presence may have a moderating effect on less responsible students) to the same thing in unsupervised ISDL mode. Even where, as in this instance, clear-cut tasks are allocated rather than student-initiated (hence the DSDL categorisation) peer non-support can have an entirely negative effect on more motivated students: "Today we had to discuss who of our workteam had to jump out of a balloon. I was in the workteam with [B4], [B2] and [B8]. While the others were discussing the situation our workteam sat there without saying anything. I felt very stupid to ask all the time and the only reply was a short answer or nothing." —[8.13/B9/27 May/B.IV]. However, another report of the same activity confirms its value to those who worked effectively and co-operatively:

> In school we had a balloon debate while our teacher continued with his interviews. In groups of three or four people each we had to imagine that we are in a balloon, which lose constantely air and we can only be saved when one of us jumb out the balloon.... Naturally, each person had a good or very funny reason to stay and so it wasn't so easy to persuade the other people in your group why just you were so important for the whole world. We had a lot of fun and I enjoyed it very much. [8.12/B7/27 May/B.IV]

Laboratory B.IV

The only entry under this heading confirms that ISDL class library and language laboratory were interchangeable at student discretion, and also that (because of space-constraints) end-of-course interviews were conducted in the laboratory.

Library B.IV

The few references under this heading are mainly neutral, an indication of the total integration of this ISDL component within the MIDL programme, as well as of its continuation (if reduction) in Stage IV [10.8/B2/26 May/B.IV], [10.10/B3/2 Jun/B.IV]. One extract confirms that, during the end-of-course interviews, ISDL sessions accompanied DSDL pairgroup work. There is one favourable reference to library materials [10.4/B7/21 May/B.IV], and another complaining that they had no key [10.6/B4/22 May/B.IV], which was true of a number of materials. A student who had previously complained about too-intensive DODL sessions on Fridays [4.21/B3/6 Feb/B.I], now felt the same about ISDL: "We have had only an hour of individual work because the teacher decided not to do more interviews. I think that this decision has been very good because it's very hard to work individually for a long time on Fridays." —[10.5/B3/22 May/B.IV]. Complaints about the heavy work at both the start of the week and the end of the week came from conscientious students, perhaps a reflection of greater energy output [4.21/B3/6 Feb/B.I], [4.3/B6/18 May/B.IV].

Projects B.IV

No projects were undertaken during B.IV.

Out-Class Study and Work B.IV

Class Diary B.IV

Towards the end of the course, when the weather was particularly bad, the student who dreamt about lying on the beach in his own country began to complain about almost everything. The Diary was included: "My cold is getting better but I still feel dazed. The weather is very changeble and cold. Sorry, but today it's very difficult to write the D.D. [= Daily Diary], suddenly I felt a sense of repulsion and my mind was astonished and empty of ideas." —[12D.1/B1/21 May/B.IV]; "It's worrying, I can't go to school any longer. I'm fed up with my homework and the daily diary. I'm studying just not to go down." —[12D.3/B1/27 May/B.IV]. Another was resigned to the task: "OH how I love to write a daily diary. Anyway I can't change it so I have to write it." —[12D.2/B9/21 May/B.IV]. In contrast was the feeling of one student who had used the diaries for the fullest self-expression: "I'm so used to writing daily dairies that now I wouldn't be able to live without them. I have to confess that I like to write them very much." —[12D.4/B4/29 May/B.IV]; "I don't know if my daily dairies have been a bit strange, but this was the first time I've written a dairy. I think that I will continue writing them just to brush up my English. I've tried to do them in different way (I like to be different to the other people) and I hope that you have enjoyed them." —[12D.6/B4/12 Jun/B.IV].[66]

Out-Class Setwork B.IV

Feedback corrections were sometimes appreciated, but the only issue of consequence in Stage IV was the absence of setwork during the run-up to the FCE: <Explained the importance of giving time before the exams for students to do their own work/revision; all accorded but not sure whether [B4] and [B7] were completely

[66] While she continued to spell 'diary' with her Spanish ears rather than eyes, her total output provided substantial research data. More important, 'the student [B4]' was revealed as a warm human being.

convinced.> —[14.10/CR/22 May/B.IV]. They were not: "I got the correction of one of my compositions. I like how it's written because it goes to the exact points.... I wonder why we are not going to do any compositions for the next week. It might be part of the Course, but honestly, I would have liked to continue doing compositions because I like it." —[12S.6/B4/29 May/B.IV]. Another student felt that having no setwork was a mistake: "At the beginning of the course we were under such a pressure in writing a composition or summary and solving exercises every day and now suddenly two weeks before the exam we don't have any homework at all. I think it should rather be the opposite." —[12S.10/B7/5 Jun/B.IV]. Others accorded with the rationale: "We now have two weeks more ahead before the exam comes. We won't be asked any more essays in order to devote enough time to our personal study. I think it's a very good idea indeed." —[12S.7/B6/29 May/B.IV]; "I am glad that this week we don't have to do written homework, because I need to study and renew all the grammar for the exam." —[12S.8/B3/2 Jun/B.IV].

Out-Class Freework B.IV

Reading continued to be prominent in the freework of this Stage: "I'm trying to read more. I've bought a book, I've read newspapers, even I have done the crosswords! Over the weekend I have been studying; there is not much time left." —[12F.2/B4/22 May/B.IV]; [12F.1/B13/18 May/B.IV]. One student, who had evidently not enjoyed the course, felt guilty for not doing much more than reading: "I spend the whole afternoon reading Newsweek and The Economist, but it's not good because I didn't study at all, except for the exercises. I'm worried, I'm tired of composition and school in general. And what's worst, I'm not going over the grammar.}" —[12F.3/B1/26 May/B.IV]. It is noteworthy that he did not consider heavy reading in the TL to be 'study', notwithstanding its contribution to general knowledge as well as to language learning.

One student, adept at integrating his learning tasks, mentioned doing freework preparation for setwork [12F.4/B6/28 May/B.IV], and gave evidence of the 'independence' as well as of the 'self-direction' of ISDL freework: "In my personal study at home I've already started a progressive and continuous work of revision following [a coursebook] and all the notes of the explanations taken during the class instructions. I've found this study very helpful, in particular for learning vocabulary and deepening different grammar explanations." —[12F.6/B6/2 Jun/B.IV]; [12F.7/B6/3 Jun/B.IV]. He was not alone: "All the mornings and afternoons when I'm on the bus, I study vocabulary from [a picture dictionary]. During this week I've been doing a little bit of each thing (in the evenings). The first thing has been the phrasal verbs. I've been reviewing [a coursebook] with the notes that I had taken down; I've been looking at some grammar points, and finally I have had a look to the lay-out of letters. Of course that writing the daily dairies as well." —[12F.9/B4/4 Jun/B.IV]. The same student appeared to make a distinction between revision (of 'old' material) and 'study' (to 'learn' new material): "During the weekend I didn't study anything at all; just review. I'm not going to learn anything else, so it's not worth studying now." —[12F.10/B4/5 Jun/B.IV].[67]

[67]Both this extract (and that of an Italian student [B1] above) raise questions about student perceptions of the component elements of learning. As far as this author is aware, differences between English and Spanish (review/revise: *repasar*; study: *estudiar*; learn: *aprender*) do not account for the distinctions made by [B4].

B.IV Overview

The 60 contact hours of Stage IV saw an over-all reduction in the SDL component to an average of 24%, the change made necessary by the demands of plenary Pitman and Cambridge examination preparation and practices, and intended to make the classes more varied and to reinforce rapport. The objectives appeared to be achieved.

There were two complaints at the general easing of pressure and the cancellation of out-class setwork in favour of individual revision in the last two weeks. The DODL sessions remained generally well received, with occasional confusion at complex grammar. On the co-ordinator's absence (out sick) one day, the class was taken by substitute teachers, the occasion provoking in some students a greater awareness of the part played by teachers/co-ordinators in their studies. The weather was particularly bad for some time, with consequences for wellbeing and morale, but otherwise the out-class environment was good. Some students, and the co-ordinator, were feeling the effects of strain. Although reduced, the in-class SDL elements of the course (peer support, library, and laboratory) were maintained satisfactorily, as was out-class freework.

Over-all, Stage IV provided a successful conclusion to Course B. The maintenance of an SDL:ODL ratio of 24:76, in spite of the requirement to conduct examination preparation in DODL mode, provided evidence that the MIDL format could adapt to extreme conditions.

Course B Co-ordinator's General Summary

With a non-experimental lead-in from 5 January to 16 January, during which students arrived, the official MIDL programme of Course B Stage I began on 19 January. From the start the language laboratory was conducted in ISDL mode. Within days one student expressed misgivings about the self-directed elements, and another complained that she was bored by everything in her life. The 'support teams' of Course A were renamed 'workteams' and introduced on 26 January. Assignments were selected on 3 February. On 10 February the ISDL class library and language laboratory were moved to the beginning of the day. Because class numbers would be reduced by the absence of two members at the start of the following Stage, it was possible to obtain the approval of the remainder to spending a week in almost complete ISDL mode.

Stage II therefore began with virtually no DODL or DSDL elements and the occasion provided additional data on responses to ISDL, and confirmed the appropriateness of the MIDL balance of elements. New students, arriving some 100 hours into the programme, were integrated successfully. The laboratory continued to be used by most students, if not favoured by all. Assignments proved to require more time than even the hardest-working students could give them, and were abandoned. A moratorium on out-class setwork was generally accepted, but with some reservations about relaxing the pace too much. The more capable students gave evidence of planning out-class freework programmes. Pairgroup work was popular.

In Stage III, a new advance-schedules programme was introduced, with more time allocated to workteams. Laboratory and library sessions were co-mingled for the first time, allowing students an 'either or both' option. A major discussion on timetabling took place. Preparation began for the Pitman examinations, whose format and requirements were entirely different from those of the principal examination, the Cambridge FCE. Progress Reports were introduced, together with a system of resubmitting set free-style essays until an acceptable standard was achieved. Two new students arrived after the Easter break. One

student found the methodology unsuitable and transferred to another class, only to return several weeks later. A supposedly 'difficult' student returned after a long trial of other classes and fitted-in without demur. Another, who constantly complained about the ISDL elements, nonetheless remained in the class. Out-class setwork was reduced to more markable proportions. To improve class rapport the ISDL element was reduced in favour of DSDL workteams. Despite constant bad weather, morale was high, and Stage III was seen as a successful realisation of the MIDL methodology.

Stage IV moved into final plenary examination preparation; for this and rapport reasons there was a reduction in ISDL elements. The DODL became more varied and popular. Questionnaires, nominally 'end-of-course', were completed at the beginning of this stage, and interviews were conducted over two weeks. Bad weather continued, with some unwellness and signs of stress and strain. The programme being completed and the course objectives achieved, there was a certain relaxation of the in-class and out-class pressure in favour of reducing tension and increasing time for personal revision. The co-ordinator was absent for some 20 contact hours of Stage IV, the class being taken by substitute teachers. There were some subsequent changes of attitude in students who had previously been negatively critical of the MIDL course. The library and laboratory were low-key features of this stage.

Course B tested the viability of the MIDL methodology over some 354 contact hours, with new students, a range of personalities and nationalities, a holiday break, and preparation for two different-format examinations. Although the course in general was noted more for hard work than happy rapport, it was regarded as a reasonably successful realisation of the MIDL methodology, and felt to justify the incorporation of the ethos into the 'normalised' Course C some seven months later, a replication programme which would attempt to look at MIDL in an average classroom where neither the teacher nor the students might have time or inclination for intensive record-keeping and in which SDL was to be taken for granted as an integral part of the preparation for public examinations in this environment.

APPENDIX C

NARRATIVE REPORT FINDINGS: QUESTIONNAIRE DATA COURSES A AND B

Appendices A and B presented the diary data of Groups A and B in a narrative format which preserved something of the chronology and flavour of the courses while allowing the researcher's overview to be interwoven with the participants' remarks. In Section 1 of this appendix, in contrast, the learners speak directly on the questionnaire component issues without gloss or commentary, a recourse which has some support: "Postmodern psychological research workers do not force metanarratives on their research participants' texts" (Krippner & Winkler, 1996, p.163). The individual narrative remarks and comments from the 'course evaluations', and questionnaire annotations are supplemented, for Group A only, by 'letter critiques'. Where appropriate, the individual questionnaire ratings are shown in the tabulated narrative sections, and group ratings are given either as tables within the text or as appendices. In Section 1 the participants' comments on any particular item are brought together but apart from this re-ordering and very minor pruning and punctuation, the material is otherwise complete and verbatim, with interpolated matter indicated by square brackets. Participants were asked to rate questionnaire items from both an 'objective' perspective ('how useful in general terms') and a 'subjective' perspective ('how useful for you personally'), and the ratings given are the average for that individual, scaled: 1 = 'very bad/ a waste of time'; 2 = 'bad/ not very useful'; 3 = 'so-so'; 4 = 'good/ useful'; 5 = 'very good/ very useful'. Wherever appropriate, group mean ratings are also indicated. In Section 2 an attempt is made to qualitatively summarise Section 1 and draw practical, real-world, conclusions from it.

In contrast to the diary data sets, which are all of one type, the lack of 'letter critiques' for Group B makes a consistent format impossible. Aesthetic concerns have therefore been subordinated to presenting together the individual views on one topic, whatever their source. For Course A the components considered are: Out-Class Daily Diary, Peer Support Teams, Language Laboratory, Class Library, and the MIDL Course in general. In addition to the letter 'Q' for 'questionnaire' the following abbreviations are used throughout:

QA = questionnaire annotations made by the participants
CE = Course Evaluations
LC = Letter Critiques (Course A only)

In the following section a continuous tabular format has been adopted to make it easier to identify the respondents with their individual views and ratings. Questionnaire scaling was set in the ascending order 1 to 5, ranging from 'very bad' or equivalent to 'very good' or equivalent. It should be noted that where a participant indicates a 'margin' rating (in the text) this may differ from the rating the same individual gave on the questionnaire; sometimes a participant's verbal rating does not appear to match his or her numerical rating; and, the rating shown alongside a specific item may differ from the average rating for that item in the

tables.[1] Rating columns headed 'Appx O' (Appendix O) contain only questionnaire average scores; other columns contain average scores as well as 'unofficial' margin note ratings not recorded elsewhere.

SECTION 1: COURSE A PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS, ANNOTATIONS, AND RATINGS

Questionnaire Data, Class Diary

ID	Q DATA, CLASS DIARY	Appx O rating 1-5
A1	The Daily D~~ai~~iary was not very popular in the whole class. It might be a big help for the teacher but the students just wrote down what they did in school and used the same kind of sentence. The Daily Diary really annoyed me. [LC]	3.5
A2	(No remarks)	3.0
A3	Well, about the daily dairy [= diary] system. It supposed to be a very good practise for free style writing. After a few weeks I got fed up with it. I could have copied my diary for the following days and just changed the dates. It was probably more difficult because I never wrote daily diaries like that before. [LC]	3.5
A4	I didn't like to write the daily diary. After I had done all my homework, I usually discover~~e~~ded this white sheet. Of course, it is necessary for the research program, but it would be enough to write it once a week. [LC]	4.0
A5	I don't like a compulsory D.D. but it's a good mean[s] to communicate, so I would let the students the freedom of writing it whenever they want to say something special. [QA]	2.0
A6	The Daily Diary System is indeed not a bad idea. But I advise that you should organise it another way. First of all, I think it is too much to let write the students about every day. Most of the time you do more or less the same things and then it's really boring to write every day the same few sentences. It would be better to introduce a weekly diary. Because there is less danger that the students get fed up with it and probably they will take it more seriously.... And at last: think about the Daily Dairy [= diary] System. [LC]	2.0
A7	I didn't find any useless [= usefulness?] in the Daily ~~Da~~ Diary System and I can't still understand it. [LC]	3.0
A8	It makes ~~that~~ the teacher knows better to his pupils. [QA] I was really happy with the Daily Diary System. For me, it was the best thing that has been never [= ever] invented. Well, it could seem an exaggeration from myself but, in fact, I think so. I like it because it helps the teacher to know his pupils not only as students but as human beings. On the other hand, it helps the students to improve their written english. For me it was not disturbing at all because I love writing and in the Daily Diary I could do it. [LC]	5.0
A9	About the Daily Diary Sistem, as it is supposed to be, it's a very good practise for free compositions. [LC]	3.5

[1] Some apparent discrepancies which had caught the co-ordinator's attention were resolved at post-hoc interviews (most changes involved giving a higher rating to some item) but to avoid unconscious bias only the original ratings are tabulated.

ID	Q DATA, CLASS DIARY	Appx O rating 1-5
A10	The daily diary is the next point w[h]ich I think could be very useful, but w[h]ich also needs a great self-disciplin[e].... [LC]	3.0
A11	Personally I think that the daily Diary Sistem was an important exercise, to practise better my wraiting English. In fact this was the first time for me for composition. [LC]	4.5
A12	Diary: Very boring doing the same every day. I would preffer to change sometimes the topic. Better two or three daily diaries a week and free stile the rest of the days. [QA]	3.5
	About the Daily Dairy [= Diary] sistem, it has given me a good impression although sometimes [it] has become very boring doing the same day after day. The only problem I have found in the sistem is that I would have like[d] more to have two or three days of Daily Diary, and the rest of the week, doing a free essay in order to express what we like or just something special that could happen that day. [LC]	
Gp A	Over-all rating for Out-Class Diary	3.4

Questionnaire Data, Peer Support Teams

ID	Q DATA, SUPPORT TEAMS	Appx O rating 1-5
A1	I have actually quite a lot to say about the Support Teams but I would prefer a discussion in class for example. But what I certainly want to say about it is that it is a good idea, since it saved a lot of time, which was a main problem of ours. I am sure that you will be able to improve it if you have more experience. [LC]	3.5
A2	On the one hand the support teams help saving time but on the other hand it's awful difficult for the support team leader to answer questions about grammar or word order. I used to ask and I got an answer but I knew that the support team leader wasn't sure, either. The matter of the fact is that I could have learned a lot of other people's mistakes if we had discussed them with the whole class. [LC]	2.0
A3	The support teams were OK. It was just working on its own and ask the partner to answer questions. The best point probably was that it helped to build up friendship with the other students in class. Everybody asked everybody and not just his friend beside him. [LC]	3.5
A4	(No remarks)	3.5
A5	I didn't like the idea of Support teams from the beginning, as well, although I must say that I think it is a good idea. [LC]	2.5
A6	I didn't like the Support teams very much. I mean I like to help someone if I know the subject. But in English I'm really not confident enough to explain other students grammar points or whatever they ask. I really think that this support teams were a waste of time and I would them cut out of your plan for the next course. Then I would replaced the Support team through something else, for instance pronounciation lessons or as we sometimes did through individual work. [LC]	3.0
A7	The support teams can be a good idea if they are better planned. I don't think that they	3.0

ID	Q DATA, SUPPORT TEAMS	Appx O rating 1-5
	worked with our course, I think that for us some days were a waste of time. [LC]	
A8	The idea of the Support Teams was wonderful. The only problem was that I felt a little bit useless with it. Because if the students with more knowledge help to the students with lower level those can't help to anyone else and it could make them feel frustrated. [LC]	4.5
A9	The only think [= thing] I didn't like was the support teams, which made the lower students feel uncomfortable but the higher ones familiar with the exam. [LC]	2.5
A10	(No remarks)	3.0
A11	(No remarks)	2.5
A12	The idea of the Sup[p]ort Teams was at the begining a little bit ridiculous by [= but] little by little has become more useful. However, I think we have spent so [= too] much time with this. [LC]	3.0
Gp A	Over-all rating for Support Teams	3.0

Questionnaire Data, Laboratory

ID	Q DATA, LANGUAGE LABORATORY	Appx O rating 1-5
A1	I was not very fond of the Language Labority although I think it is necessary. The selection of the tapes was rather poor. I like "Phrasal Verbs" and "Gerunds and Infinitives" which were usefull. But I didn't like "Viewpoints" and the book [= laboratory drills] with different colours for each level as they get very boring. [LC]	3.3
A2	For one reason or another most of the students didn't like the language labority laboratory. The reason for this could be that those tapes are so boring, sometimes we had to repeat the same sentence about 20 times only with few changes. Some people believe that exactly the repetitions help to improve a language. Up to a point I agree with thiese people but if you don't like to do something you won't learn a lot. [LC]	3.0
A3	The language laboratory was OK. I personally never liked laboratories very much but we had a lot of tapes for to our choice. I prefered it to choose myself what I wanted to learn. In previous schools a teacher usually chose. [LC]	4.0
A4	I still can't stand it. [QA] The language laboratory was very useful although I never liked it. but the tapes sometimes were so easy, because usually you only had to repeat, more or less, what they said. [LC]	4.3
A5	I didn't enjoy, but accepted … the Language Laboratory which it was very useful for improving my listening comprehension. [LC]	3.5
A6	The idea of language laboratory is good and it is obviously that lab is necessary to learn to speak. But I must say that I didn't like the exercises. There was just one exception: 'The Viewpoints'. I found this a good exercise for listening comprehension. I'd like to adjust to this that I think it's important that the teacher pay more attention to the pronounciation of the student. This is a thing we hadn't look at at all. [LC]	2.8

ID	Q DATA, LANGUAGE LABORATORY	Appx O rating 1-5
A7	The Language laboratory I think it is a good idea. You can get a lot of listening practice there. The only problem I saw at the begining was that you don't know which tapes are the best for you and I think that for that we need more advice from the teacher. [LC]	4.0
A8	About the Language laboratory I only can say that I didn't like it at all. I started with the lower level and it was really slow and boring. When I finished it I started another one, less lower, but it was very fast. I didn't like the Language Laboratory because, in fact, I hate wearing headphones. It's so annoyed annoying! [LC]	3.0
A9	Everyday we had half an hour in the laboratory which I, personally, think it was very good because it was free study, that is to say, each one chose an available tape for their own level. It was the only chance to practise listening comprehension. [LC]	5.0
A10	In the Language Laboryty time I did mainly drills w[h]ich is a quite good possibility to improve the fluency in spoken English but from my point of view it would be a good idea to make it easier for the students to select a nomber of different kinds of excercises in the Language Lab. [LC]	3.5
A11	(No remarks)	4.3
A12	No teacher's help. [QA] There are always the same [lab cassettes]. Very boring. No teacher help. [QA] In my opinion, the Language Laboratory has not been very useful to me. Being frank, I have not been motivated at all in this activity because I think that we would [= should] have been controlled by the teacher. This is not an activity that can be regulated by ourselves. At least we would [= should] have had a teacher check-up. And I base my opinion with another course I had in the EEUU, where the Laboratory was controlled by the teacher. Apart from being useful, the laboratory was amusing and motivated [i.e. on that other course]. [LC]	1.8
Gp A	Over-all rating for Language Laboratory	3.5

Questionnaire Data, Library

ID	Q DATA, CLASS LIBRARY	Appx O rating 1-5
A1	The last thing I want to write about is the Class Library. It helped me most (apart from the grammar lessons). It is a very good idea and the school should do every effort to keep and improve it. Some books were rather old-fashioned and there should be more keys. But all in all I was very fond of it. [LC]	4.5
A2	(No remarks)	3.8
A3	(No remarks)	4.0
A4	I found the class library very useful. You could take the books you really needed, which was much better than to listen to something you had already understood. [LC]	5.0
A5	The idea of the library was brilliant as well, and the only thing I can think about to improve it is that each book should have a little comment about what is it like, if it's	4.5

ID	Q DATA, CLASS LIBRARY	Appx O rating 1-5
	useful for this or that, etc, in a separate piece of carton which could be kept in a box. [LC]	
A6	(No remarks)	4.3
A7	The books that I found also very interesting were the ones of the Class Library because you have the freedom to choose the one that really suits you. [LC]	4.3
A8	(No remarks)	4.5
A9	(No remarks)	5.0
A10	... it would be a good idea to make it easier for the students to select a nomber of different kinds of excercises in the Language Lab. The same can be said about the 'Class-library'. [LC]	3.0
A11	I sometimes noted that during the class library work I waste[d] my time. I am afraid I disagreed with [the co-ordinator] because instead of having a free hour we could have done much more practise in speaking. For example choose one topic and talk for up to an hour on the topic. [LC]	2.8
A12	Class library books used: [rating 3.0] Better with more time to review exercises done. [QA] Class Library: [rating 4.0] If more time to review. [QA]	3.8
Gp A	Over-all rating for Class Library	4.1

Questionnaire Data, Participant's Stay in Ireland

For the Course Evaluations participants were asked to comment negatively and positively (annotated 'Neg' and 'Pos' in the following extracts).

ID	Q DATA, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF PARTICIPANT'S STAY IN IRELAND	Not rated
A1	Neg: The head of my hostel is very careless about nearly every thing – Ireland is very expensive – I'm getting fatter and fatter. Pos: Away from hometown + parents – on my own – no connection to Germany – something new. [CE]	
A2	Neg: They don't heat a lot in houses: schools, at home ---- (everywhere) - I was always frozen. - The food isn't very good, always the same. Pos: Very friendly people - my family here was also very good - helpful - nice - the pubs are very, very nice. [CE]	
A3	Neg: The buses came when they wanted, no sense for time. Was already away from home for five months before the course started and was desperate go [= to] go home. Pos: Had a very nice family to stay with. Had funny afternoons and weekends with some of the students in our class. [CE]	
A4	Neg: The buses are hopelessly unpunctual and if you want something, for example a busticket, you have to go to, at least, two or three places – and the prizes [= prices] are similar to ours in Switzerland, that means rather expensive. Pos: The friendlyness of most of the people, especially my host-family – I feel like as a member of the family – and I like the whole country in general. [CE]	

ID	Q DATA, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF PARTICIPANT'S STAY IN IRELAND	Not rated
A5	Neg: Cost of living. Pos: Friends (very few but fantastic). [CE]	
A6	Neg: To be separated from my friends and family. Pos: To become a[c]quaintance with another way of life and to meet new people. [CE]	
A7	Neg: I always have to wait for buses for a long time every day. Pos: Irish people are friendly. I have known a lot of people. [CE]	
A8	Neg: I have lived here experiences and some of them a little bit disgusting (my wallet was stolen, a stair [= a ladder] fell on my head ----) Pos: In general, it was a wonderful and unforgettable experience in my life. [CE]	
A9	Neg: All the difficulties or depressions I have seem to be worse than when they happen in Spain. Pos: I'm learning a lot of experience because my life is much more independent than in my own country as well as meeting with people of completely different ideas in general. [CE]	
A10	Neg: Lived quite (too) far from the school and City! The worst public-transport sistem I ever saw! (I saw many). Pos: Very good Family to live in = part of my success! Good contacts with other students and from time to time with nativ[e]s. [CE]	
A11	Neg: The miserable weather – disorganisation everywhere: Bus-stop, banks, post, shops --- - the food: too simple cooked. Pos: Fri[e]ndly and kind people. [CE]	
A12	Neg: Weather, Residence. Pos: People. Learn Language. Costume [= customs?], traditions. [CE]	

Questionnaire Data, The MIDL Course

The over-all ratings on the MIDL Courses are presented in Chapter 7 (**Table 7:1**), and for the following general remarks the ratings refer exclusively to the specific questionnaire item shown alongside the rating, and not to the course as a whole.

ID	Q DATA, GENERAL REMARKS ON THE MIDL COURSE	rating 1-5
A1	Co-ordinator: Too tired and fed-up sometimes. [QA]	4.0
	Beginning – spent too much time on planning & changing plans;	2.0
	last month [= the past month has been very good]. [QA]	5.0
	Poor organisation = video project. [QA]	
	Spent too much time sometimes on some explanations. [QA]	3.0
	Too little free style but grammar e.g. very good (idioms). [QA]	3.0
	Level: You can always learn new grammar and the class library was quite good. [QA]	
	Grammar & idioms improved, not satisfied with my vocabulary. [QA]	4.0
	Exam prep: Neg: The beginning was a waste of time for me. Pos: Class library. [CE]	4.0
	Course: Neg: starts much to[o] early in the morning. Pos: not to[o] many in class, so there was a privat[e] atmosphere – everybody knew everybody (at least a bit). [CE].	
	Book1 [practice] bad; [would rate as] 1	
	book 3 [grammar] very good. [QA] [would rate as] 5	
	The end of the course is getting closer and closer and so are the exams. Although we prepared quite a lot, I am a bit nervous. The blue book, number three, for example,	3.00

ID	Q DATA, GENERAL REMARKS ON THE MIDL COURSE	rating 1-5
	was very good. It had exercises for all sorts of grammar, essay writing and vocabulary. What I did not like about it were some explanations which were not very clear. It was the same with the red book. The grammar explanations and the beginning of each unit were very general. Some textes were quite good as they gave examples. [LC]	
A2	Level of the course: In the beginning to[o] high. [QA] Exam prep: Neg: We started too late. Only one week in advance. Pos: The use of the [FCE exam practice] book.[CE] Course: Neg: In the beginning was the course (a bit) disorganised – we wasted a lot of time with unimportant things. – We had days with really too much homework (for everybody!) and other days just a little bit. You should distribute it better. Pos: Programme in advance. [CE] Those books we used were quite good. The homework system was a bit disorganised. Some days we had homework for five hours and other days just for twenty minutes. That was especially a big problem for students who have had taken afternoon class. I don't know how they managed to do all the homework because I had troubles without afternoon class, too. The homework should be divided into pieces of more or less two to three hours a day. So everybody will be able to do and to study the homework which he did. In my opinion there is no point to write exercises without thinking. [LC]	4.0
A3	The remarks, notes, comments etc given on free-style compositions: very, very useful! [QA] Exam prep: Neg: We didn't have time to practise essays. Pos: I think all the grammar points are covered. [CE] Course: Neg: I would have prefered a plan at the beginning as we got one in stage III. Didn't improve much in the first four weeks. Smaller classes because there are too many students with different levels in one class. Pos: In general I think I had a good time and improved a lot, especially in the last few weeks. [CE] Book number 1 was 'language and Composition'. … I'm not sure if it was very useful. The purple 'Use of English' was a very good school book. It covered a lot of appropriated grammar points and the examples for the exercises were not bad. If the examples were confusing the teacher explained it on the blackboard very carefully till every student was clear about it. Of course, there are always things to improve. I think a list to explain what the three experimental stages mean would sort out a lot of problems in advance. If possible something like we had in stage III. All together I'm happy to have been in this course and could recommend it to other students. [LC]	5.0
A4	In book 3 there was a complete mess with the exercises and pages. [QA} Level: It was much lower than I expected for a First Certificate class and also too low for me. [QA] Speaking progress: I hate my accent, people always hear that I'm a foreigner [QA] Exam prep: Neg: The beginning was a bit disorganised and I felt like losing important time. Pos: I think that I will be able to pass the exam after some revisions. [CE] Course: Neg: The level was too low and too many different levels in one class. Pos: It was quite interesting. [CE] I have been attending an experimental examination course …. In general I enjoyed it and it was quite interesting. I only had one big problem, because of the level which was much too low for me. Untill about half the course I felt like not having made any progress at all. There were too many different levels and too many people in the same class, so it was very difficult for the teacher to find the middle. In spite of all the things I didn't like, I learned a lot and we also had a good teacher, which is very important to pass an examination. [LC]	4.0 2.0 4.0
A5	I found FCE 3 [grammar] extremely useful, but FCE 1 [practice] (3 ✓). [QA]	5.0

If you say a 'FCE Course' I would note (5 ✓) but as a course of 'spoken English' I note (4 ✓). [QA] 4.0
Exam prep: Neg: We only speeded up working hard in class at the end of the course when the exam was coming. Pos: The FCE Book 3 and specific exercises that we'll find in the exam. [CE]
Course: Neg: I found very bad to mix students with different levels. There should be more FCE class, each with a special level. Pos: The teacher. [CE]
I found this course very satisfactory and enjoyed it very much. However, there were some things I didn't enjoy, but accepted because it was for our sake, to learn more English for instance the Language Laboratory .... I didn't like the idea of the Video Show. Well, I spent a good time recording that girl in the museum, but it was not interesting for learning English, even for English conversation, because when we went there we spoke in our own languages. The vocabulary lists is another thing that in theory it's a very good idea and when we carried it out and did the voc. quiz, it was excellent, but we should have done more of these v. lists, starting at the beginning of the course and doing one per week, not thousands of them in one or two weeks time, because there are many fields we haven't studyied. But these dislikes are purely subjectives and not worth to take into account. These were very few things compared to the quality of the teaching-method/teacher. [LC]

A6 Exam prep: Neg: I think the preparation for the oral examination was not so good. We should have done more describtion of pictures as preparation for the exam. Pos: The blue book is a good preparation for the written exams. [CE]
Course: Neg: I find it very bad to put students with so different levels in one class. Pos: I like the idea of individual work. [CE]
The practice book which includes the exercises is quite good and I think it is a good preparation for the First Certificate. However, the red book I find quite useless and to be honest I don't like it. I can't exactly tell you the reason. Maybe it's just a feeling or maybe these boring textes caused my disgust.
The most important thing from my point of view is that you should put students with more or less the same level of English together in the next class of this course. Even to make a compromise and try to teach in a middle level is not the best solution, because then some of the students have problems to follow while other are maybe bored. To concluse I'd like to say: it would be good if you went again over the books (just the red one) and the tapes you use. [LC]

A7 Exam prep: Neg: There is a lot of work to do and you don't know where to start. The nervous You never finish studying and learning. Pos: We hope we can review all the course. I think we had looked at all the main points. [CE]
Course: Neg: The project of the video I think was a little waste of time. The preparation for the course was a bit long and took part of the time of teaching the points we need for the exam. Pos: After that the course got on the way and I think that now it works good. [CE]
I'm writting this letter to you to explain from my point of view, as a student, which points of the course can be improved. Talking about the books, I think that they are very good books. I had used them in Spain before and every time I looked at them I had descovered something new to learn. It was a pity they didn't tell me which books were because I left them in Spain and I had to buy new ones here. Nevertheless I think that they are very good. I have been in this course for nearly three months and, really, I can't say I didn't like it. At the beginning there were a bit of disorganisation and the course was not still planned. That was a pity because I think we wasted some of the time that we need now to review. When the programme was planned the class started to feel better about the course. I liked how the course was planned and the variety of things to do. I think that like that is more entertained for us, because after four hours of only english class you usually get tired. The reports that the teacher used to give us about the homework I think that were one of the best things of the course. [LC]

ID	Q DATA, GENERAL REMARKS ON THE MIDL COURSE	rating 1-5
A8	[The co-ordinator] was more than a teacher, a good friend. [QA]	5.0
	I think [the co-ordinator] is a very intelligent person with a wide knowledge of a lot of things. I feel admiration for him. [QA]	5.0
	I told it once. [The co-ordinator] was the best teacher I have ever had. [QA]	5.0
	Level: But very high too. [QA]	5.0
	Exam prep: Neg: I felt very tired at the end and very nervous too. Pos: The examinations made me work hard. [CE]	
	Course: Neg: It was a bit higher [= too high], in level, for me. Pos: I have known wonderful people and I have learnt a lot of english. [CE]	
	I think the books we studied during the course were really goods and even interestings. Perhaps they were a little bit difficult, but that's normal because I had no idea of english grammar until September.	
	For me it was a good course. Apart from learn a lot, I have never before done so many and so interesting things as this year. But, anyway, I think this has been a good course. I have been surrounded by a lot of wonderful people during these three months. I think the most important thing in the course was the friendly atmosphere in the class among the teacher and the pupils. That's very important, and we could get it. I can't talk about anything more because I enjoyed and learned a lot during these months with all we did. [LC]	
A9	Giving feedback to the students: Although it is useful. [QA]	3.0
	Exam prep: Neg: Sometimes it was a bit disorganised above all at the beginning of the course, when we weren't settled down yet. Pos: Good, because we've done many different things which cover all the difficult points of the language. [CE]	
	Course: Neg: I didn't like the comparisons between the students of different levels in the class. Pos: My own opinion is very good because in spite of all the things I didn't like, the course was very useful and we are a joined group and we've learned not only English but experience in life. [CE]	
	I am writing to let you know what I think about this course and the ways of improving it. The books we have used are quite good. The first one, 'New First Certificate' (a red one) is good but we have not used it very much in class. The third one – a purple book – is a very good preparation for the exam because it tells what the exam is like. During the first two months the programme wasn't very well organised because the teacher thought it was better to ask us what we liked to do. But this would be succes[s]ful if we were a smaller group in which the levels are similar to one another. Since the programme was fixed by the teacher the time has been useful in general. I would like to tell you the things which were considered as useful in general. The programme was good as it was variable although we didn't like all of these things. I have liked everything because it covers all the difficult areas to learn a language. I thing [= think] it could improve but nothing is ever perfect. [LC]	
A10	Exam prep: Neg: not early enough – practice should be spread (not necessarily [according to a sketch drawn on the page]). Pos: Good [arrow pointing to negative remarks] practice the examen situation [= although the examination practice should have been evenly spread throughout the course, the fact of examination practice was a positive feature of the course?]. [CE]	
	Course: Neg: Felt bit confused in the beginning! Pos: Well dev[e]loped! [CE]	
	It is not easy for me to find some points which could be improved because all in all the course was nearly ideal for me.	
	The course books [names] were easy to use, after I got the idea how to use them. I think we could had used the red book a bit more than we did, the purple book [grammar exercises] is in my opinion brilliant. [Some things need] a great self-disciplin[e] and that is exactly what I would like to remarke about thise course. A lot of things are completely up to every student himself and if I look at the age of the afaridge [= average] of the students in thise class I'm not sure if independency is the best way to get the maximum success. I hope my suggestion will be a little help for	

you on your way to improve the cours[e]. [LC]

A11 Exam prep: Neg: We waste time at the beginning. Pos: Well organise[d] for explanations of grammar-points, homework and remarks + comments (Well done!) [CE]
Course: Neg: Too different level of knowledge's students. Pos: Progress in understanding, speaking, and writing. [CE]
I'm writing to let you know what I think about the course I attended in the [institution] in Dublin. First of all I must say that the level's students was too different among the people. Most of them they had already done much more grammar than I did, for example. Secondly, in my opinion you cannot work with 13 people in a small classroom. But apart from that I accepted the nice atmosphere with [the co-ordinator] and my friends. From my point of view the course book [name] number 1 for the language and composition was quite useful but at any rate we didn't work that much on it so that in the end I wasn't satisfy enough. The book no 3 use of English was a good practise in all the forms of cambridge First certificate, together with exercises for revisions of structures. I found it well done and in addition to that [the co-ordinator] explained to us very well the difficulties of grammar. The fact of the matter is that [the co-ordinator] did not organise the programme so well at the beginning. We waste[d] a lot of time doing the video show, nevertheless I enjoyed myself with the group. Finally I must say that three months as a preparation for an exam are too less [= not enough?] But anyway with [the co-ordinator] and my friends I spent a great time and if I can speak English that is why [= because] the co-ordinator taught me very well. I would like that you take notes what I wrote to you. [LC]

A12 Over-all progress: The first three months are always a little bit 'slow' (in general). [QA] 4.0
Progress hearing, reading, writing, speaking: Specially the last few weeks [QA] all 5.0
Homework programme: Better, if more time for more practice in each one. [QA] 4.0
Exam prep: Neg: I'm not sure but it gives the impression of having not much practice (exercises). Pos: Teaching in general. [CE]
Course: Neg: Language Laboratory. Pos: Except language lab. Learn a lot in the other programmes in general. Good fun. In general, no waste of time at all. [CE]
Coursebooks (for you personally): Not very much practice on them. [QA] 3.0
I'm an spanish student who have attended to the FCE course in your academy since the 1st of October. The nature of my letter is make some remarks about the course and give my subjective opinion in comparison with other courses.... The other extra activities of the course like Practice exam tests, summaries or class library I found them perfect to improve my english and I really enjoy doing it. In conclusion, and apart from the Language laboratory activity, I have found the course very useful and helpful. And I would like to remark the help of our teacher which has been essential in this course. I am sure my considerations will help you in future courses. [LC]

Gp A Selected over-all mean questionnaire ratings on the course 4.0

The questionnaire comments are reviewed, together with conclusions drawn from them, in a later section.

COURSE B PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS, ANNOTATIONS, AND RATINGS

In addition to the letter 'Q' for 'questionnaire' the following abbreviations are used throughout:

QA = questionnaire annotations made by the participants
CE = Course Evaluations
INT = post-questionnaire notes made by the co-ordinator at interview

A continuous tabular format has been adopted to make it easier to identify the respondents with their individual views and ratings. The over-all ratings on the MIDL Courses A and B are presented in Chapter 7.

Questionnaire Data, Annotations and Interview Notes

For the following general remarks the ratings refer exclusively to the specific questionnaire item shown alongside the rating, and not to the course as a whole.

ID	Q DATA, QUESTIONNAIRE ANNOTATIONS AND INTERVIEW NOTES	rating 1-5
B1	(none)	
B2	Understanding of and response to students' 'personal' problems: [rating blank] No experience. [QA]	
	Teacher's efficiency: Not seen FCE papers yet. [INT]	3.0
	Writing progress: Not improved writing. [INT]	3.0
B3	(none)	
B4	Willingness to listen to and take into account students' opinions and expressed learning needs: It depends on who the student is. [QA]	4.0
	Rate the teacher in comparison with others: Although in this Course you are not doing the work as a (normal) teacher. [QA]	4.0
B5	Grammar HW reviews in class: But sometimes too fast. [QA]	4.0
	Listening progress: Listening comprehension too fast. [INT]	3.0
	General progress: Grammar reviews sometimes too fast. [INT]	3.0
B6	(none)	
B7	(none)	
B8	Too much insistence on grammar and repetition of same things many times. The course is too long. [INT]	
B9	Class library books: Very often no key. [QA]	3.0
	Explanation of language points (grammar etc): Sometimes a bit confusing. [QA]	4.0
	Co-ordinator's manner in general: Depends on his mood. [QA]	4.0
	Organiser of class programmes etc: Sometimes a bit too much planning. [QA]	5.0
	Pitman exam preparation was too much. [INT]	
B10	(none)	
B11	(none)	
B12	Homework status reports [rating blank]: Not done. [QA]	
	Efficiency in general in running class programmes etc: Sometimes too fast from one subject to the other. [QA]	3.0
	How successful the course for you: I'm a too short time in the course to value the success properly. [QA]	3.0
	How satisfied with over-all progress: Again a decision is difficult because the time is too short. [QA]	3.0
	Rate course contribution to progress: Specially in the grammar. [QA]	4.0
B13	Diary: You must be really honest about you are writing. [QA]	3.0

ID	Q DATA, QUESTIONNAIRE ANNOTATIONS AND INTERVIEW NOTES	rating 1-5
	Diary: You should be really honest about what you are writing about but you can't be. [INT]	
	Willingness to listen to and take into account students' opinions and expressed learning needs: You listen to but normally don't take into account students' opinions. [QA]	3.0
	How successful was the course for you: Different levels in the class make the course not as good as it could be. [INT]	3.0

In the complete verbatim transcript of the Course Evaluations of Group B that follows, the redundant mark [CE] is omitted and the question identifiers (EV1, EV2, and EV3) in the original documents have been replaced by corresponding headings: 'Participant's Stay in Ireland', 'Examination Preparation', and 'Course Evaluation in General'. For the Course Evaluations participants were asked to comment negatively and positively (annotated 'Neg' and 'Pos' in the following extracts).

Questionnaire Data, Participant's Stay in Ireland

ID	Q DATA, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF PARTICIPANT'S STAY IN IRELAND
B1	Neg: Difficulties of socialising with Irish people, generally friendly but not willing to a full friendship. Pos: Very quiet country. People kind and not xenophobic.
B2	Neg: The weather was awful; the food wasn't very good. The Irish people when they drank too much. Pos: The Irish people; the family with who[m] I have been living; the people I met at the school.
B3	Neg: In the first two months I was very lonely. Pos: I have had the possibility of speaking English always, and after the first two months I talked a lot.
B4	Neg: This weather makes me feel angry. I would not be able to live here. Careless with other people. Pos: I am more independent (maybe too much). I have learnt more about life.
B5	Neg: Everything was very expensive. Sometimes I had the expression [= impression] that people smiled, but didn't really care about me, because they looked at me as a tourist. Pos: But most people were very friendly and helpful. Next to London Dublin is my favoured place, especially because of the theatres.
B6	Neg: My insufficient fitting in the Irish reality, particular[l]y in meeting more Irish people. Living with other foreigners did not allow it too much. Pos: The welcome I had from people and the help I received from teachers in the school.
B7	Neg: Bad weather - life is very expensive - terrible bus system. Pos: People are very friendly - good accommodation - meeting students from other countries.
B8	Neg: The weather, Differents characters and manes [=manners?]. At the beginning, I felt alone. Find boring people. Pos: I've learned to live by myself. To meet people from differents countries, and to know this country.
B9	Neg: The only negative experience I made in Ir[e]land was with USIT. In a leaflet of USIT it said that a flight to Germany costs 49£ but I had to pay 69£. Pos: The people are very friendly and I love the Irisch weather.

ID	Q DATA, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF PARTICIPANT'S STAY IN IRELAND
B10	Neg: The weather and there are very few things to do in Ireland. Pos: The English I learnt and the people I met.
B11	Neg: It is easy to get to know foreign students, But, It is difficult to get to know Irish people. I have no chance to com[m]unicate with them. Because I am only student of the [institution]. Pos: I speak only English, so, it is very good for studying.
B12	Neg: The weather – too many drunken people – the culture of cooking. Pos: I like the people, met a lot of interesting people → learnt a lot of new things – staying with an Irish family – to see another way of life.
B13	Neg: The cost of living in Ireland is quite high in relation with the cost in my country and the entertainment is very difficult to find sometimes. Pos: The quantity of new friends I've made and the people, in general (Irish people) are really friendly.

Questionnaire Data, Examination Preparation

ID	Q DATA COURSE B, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF EXAMINATION PREPARATION
B1	Neg: Nothing in particular. Pos: Very good preparation in grammar and in the all possible situations that can happen in the exam.
B2	Neg: We haven't seen any past paper about the FCE yet. Pos: The Pitman preparation was really good and useful.
B3	Neg: It was very hard because we worked in the same kind of exercises during that week. Pos: The listening comprehension was very useful for me.
B4	Neg: The preparation for Examinations such as Pitman is too fast. Pos: You always learn something.
B5	Neg: It's the first day I'm back from Germany, so I can't say anything useful. Pos: I think it's good. I hope the next 4 weeks will be useful for me.
B6	Neg: I cannot think about it in the time available. Pos: [blank]
B7	Neg: Too much pressure in the week before the exam - too short time before. Pos: Good dictation practice and listen and comprehension practice.
B8	Neg: For instanse the preparation for Pitman's exams was late. I think that it was very quickly. One whole week studyng Pitman's Exams is very hard. Pos: The preparation for the F.C. is very good. The books are useful but at this moment I don't know if it is going to worth [= be worth it?].
B9	Neg: I think the preparation for the Pitman Examination was too much. Pos: I think we are well prepared for the FCE mainly because of our written homework.
B10	Neg: To insist on the english grammar too much and repeat the same things many times. Pos: It's good in order to pass the exams.
B11	Neg: I can't find anything. Pos: The program for the class is very good. We have for 6 month program. It is just goot [= good] time for preparation.
B12	Neg: Trained only in grammar – preparation just for the special type of examination – to[o] much

ID	Q DATA COURSE B, COURSE EVALUATIONS OF EXAMINATION PREPARATION
	orientated only for the examination. Pos: Big progress in grammar – ability to write in real English – to get more confident in the own writing-ability.
B13	Neg: It spends [= takes? = wastes?] a few weeks to prepare an exam. Pos: You learn all the tricks you'll find in the exam, and the question you'll have to answer.

Questionnaire Data, The MIDL Course

In the following, similarities between the comments of B7 and B12 are not reproduced elsewhere and are thought to be co-incidental: students were briefed on the importance of their own views, the questionnaires were completed in silence and continuously monitored, and there was no evidence of collaboration.

ID	Q DATA COURSE B, COURSE EVALUATION IN GENERAL
B1	Neg: No[t] enough time for speaking. Pos: Homework sistem excellent! Very good the teaching in grammar and very good the success of written homework.
B2	Neg: My improvement in writing, and the we couldn't smoke in the classrooms. Pos: The work teams and class library were very useful and not boring. The teacher and my companions.
B3	Neg: Sometimes I didn't see my progress at the beginning and this was very discouraging. Pos: The planification of the whole course and the fact that it has been very demanding.
B4	Neg: The course makes me depress[ed]. I have learnt nothing at all. Pos: Maybe settle my English, although I cannot say anything until the end of it.
B5	Neg: Listening Comprehension is still too fast for me. Pos: I think the structure of the course is useful.
B6	Neg: Not enough time for personal revision on different issues and for reading! Pos: The strong link between teaching periods and autonomy work helped to build the course harmoniously. I find that 'link' in all the 'fe[e]dback' activities: Diary, remarks, reports of the teacher and so on.
B7	Neg: Every day the same topics (correction of grammar, class library – lang. Lab. – reading F1 [= the coursebook]). Pos: Good preparation for the FCE especially in writting practice.
B8	Neg: The class library. Pos: It is for me positive because I'm learning a little bit of English and knowing a very nice persons, that I'm not going to forget.
B9	Neg: I get a bit lazy. Pos: The variation of written homework.
B10	Neg: Too long. Pos: I've learnt english.
B11	Neg: Every student has different probrems (Every Country's student). So, sometime, I found difficulty. Pos: Always, We have to work quite hard.
B12	Neg: Too much grammar – just a little conversation – too much routine → no changes of the lessons, never something new. Pos: Good preparation for the examination – the grammar gives confidence to pass the exam – improve in writing.
B13	Neg: The different level of the people who are preparing the exam make the course not as good as it might be. Pos: You learn a little bit of all the skills, I mean you not only learn grammar, but also how to read, to write, and so on.

The questionnaire comments are reviewed, together with conclusions drawn from them, in the following section.

SECTION 2: QUESTIONNAIRE DATA, QUALITATIVE SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

For convenience, this section briefly reviews opinions on course components and adds conclusions arising from them where appropriate. Individual ratings are in parentheses wherever given to support the narrative.

Q Data Individual Perspectives

Q Data Out-Class Daily Diary

Summary Findings Course A

The diary was not generally popular. Seven participants remarked on the tedium of writing it on a daily basis, and several recommended doing it less frequently. With the exception of A8 (rating 4.5) and A4 (rating 4.0) the results were all below 4.0 (for 'good'), with an over-all mean rating of 3.4 indicating acceptance rather than favour (**Table C:1**).

Summary Findings Course B

The over-all mean rating of 3.7 fell below 'good', indicating acceptance rather than favour (**Table C:1**).

Conclusions

Although the diary was a valuable instrument for monitoring and data-gathering in the present study, and it helped some students with their writing, its potential for free-style practice was not sufficiently realised. Nonetheless, the remarks suggest that if allowed at less frequent intervals (perhaps weekly rather than daily) it could prove more acceptable to student-recognised purposes. Over-all it is considered that, if better implemented, the diary is a worthwhile means to several ends, and may usefully be combined with questionnaire triangulation.

Q Data Peer Support Teams

The term 'peer support teams' covers a specific variant of pairgroup work in which at least three students worked together without supervision. It does not embrace 'peer support' in the more general sense of working co-operatively in pairs, nor include other egalitarian teamwork. In consequence, the questionnaire data isolate this component of the larger diary data category.[2] On Course A the teams initially worked under

[2]Where, for example, the Course A questionnaire remarks may be negative on the issue of 'peer teaching', there is diary evidence not only of the building of student rapport, but also, as in the following extract, of very constructive peer-support arising from the team-leader concept: "... then we worked in our supporter team. I should explain the conditional sentences to [A2] but I wasn't able. So we studied together the Unit about this tenses in my grammar book." —[8.30/A6/24 Nov/A.III].

Table C:1. *Q Data Courses A and B, Summary Means of Selected Questionnaire Ratings (scaled 1 to 5) for Self-Directed Learning*

Course A Questionnaire Items	question	Course B Questionnaire Items	question	Course A means	Course B means
SDL COMPONENTS		SDL COMPONENTS			
Peer Support (Support Teams)		Peer Support (Work Teams)			
program (in principle)	Dd	program (in principle)	Dd	3.3	4.5
(personally)	dd	(personally)	dd	2.8	4.1
				3.0	4.3
In-Class Laboratory		In-Class Laboratory			
cassettes used (objective)	C	cassettes (objective)	C	3.9	4.3
(subjective)	c	(subjective)	c	3.3	3.9
program (in principle)	Db	program (in principle)	Db	3.7	4.2
(personally)	db	(personally)	db	3.3	4.0
				3.5	4.1
In-Class Library		In-Class Library			
books used (objective)	B	books (objective)	B	4.2	4.0
(subjective)	b	(subjective)	b	4.1	3.5
program (in principle)	Dc	program (in principle)	Dc	4.2	3.8
(personally)	dc	(personally)	dc	4.0	3.4
				4.1	3.7
SDL in-class summary means				3.7	4.0
Out-Class Setwork (Homework)		Out-Class Setwork (Homework)			
program (objectively)	E	program (objectively)	E	4.0	4.5
(personally)	e	(personally)	e	4.0	4.7
				4.0	4.6
Out-Class Diary		Out-Class Diary			
system (in principle)	H	system (in principle)	H	3.9	3.9
(personally)	h	(personally)	h	2.8	3.5
				3.4	3.7
SDL out-class summary means				3.7	4.2
SDL in-class summary means				3.7	4.0
SDL in-class plus out-class summary means				3.7	4.1

the nominal direction of a team leader; for Course B no leader was appointed, with perceptible positive effects on the ratings for this component.

Summary Findings Course A

The remarks of A3 confirm that 'support teams' were conducted in DSDL mode, with students referring problems to their fellows in the class (not just within their own teams) rather than to the co-ordinator. There were remarks on the 'waste of time', four explicit references to the difficulties and problems of helping and being helped by other students, and evidence that the deliberate 'peer teaching' orientation adversely coloured even otherwise favourable responses. Only one participant gave a rating in the range 'good' and three were in the range 'bad' to 'so-so'. Although there were indications from five participants that teams were a 'good idea', suggesting support in principle if not in practice, the over-all mean rating of 3.0 indicated the barest acceptance from the group as a whole (**Table C:1**).

Summary Findings Course B

As a direct result of Course A perceptions, the support teams were renamed 'work teams' for Course B, and overt 'peer teaching' was replaced by an egalitarian mutual-support ethos. The over-all mean rating of 4.3 ('good' to 'very good') indicated a generally favourable response (**Table C:1**).

Conclusions

The evidence from Course A that team-leaders felt unsure of themselves and that other students were reluctant to rely on them, suggests that 'peer teaching' is counter-indicated where all participants are members of a nominally equivalent-level class, even where proficiency levels appear very different. With this impediment removed on Course B (the new label 'work team' may have helped to displace the notion of dependency) the DSDL team-learning mode was found to be viable and generally well-received. Although some students may have indirectly benefited from the team-leader concept it proved unsettling and unpopular, and an overtly egalitarian ethos is therefore thought preferable where 'teacher-students' from a higher-level class are not available.

Q Data Laboratory

On Course A the laboratory was introduced in IODL mode, with the co-ordinator selecting the same materials for the whole class, regulating the pace of work, and monitoring each student's own independent efforts for some of the time. It very quickly moved on to DSDL mode, in which the work to be done was selected by the co-ordinator but then left to each student's own discretion, with supervision but no consistent monitoring. The introduction of ISDL mode, during which the co-ordinator might sometimes look into the laboratory, and in which the students worked completely independently, took place towards the end of October, near the close of Stage II.

On Course B the laboratory sessions were conducted entirely in ISDL mode from the start on 19 January, and 'class library' and 'laboratory' were made optional alternatives from the beginning of Stage III on 16 March.

Summary Findings Course A

Perhaps in keeping with its varied nature, responses to the laboratory were mixed, with five participants rating it between 'good' and 'very good' and two rating it 'very bad' to 'so-so'. One disliked listening comprehension tapes that another found the most useful material in the laboratory, and two liked repetition drills, though of different types. The majority, including some who considered it useful, found repetition boring and demotivating, and seven said they did not enjoy the laboratory sessions. Although there was reference to the difficulty of selecting the right materials it was possible to discern a liking for the freedom of laboratory in ISDL mode, although only two specifically stated so, and the exceptions included one adverse remark on the absence of teacher correction of pronunciation.[3] The most adverse comments came from A12 (personal mean rating 1.8) who found the materials insufficiently varied, the sessions boring, and the lack of teacher control and monitoring completely unacceptable. He contrasted this realisation of ISDL mode laboratory very unfavourably with other interactive teacher-led sessions of his experience in the United States.[4] The over-all mean rating of 3.5 for the group put the laboratory for Course A in the range 'so-so' to 'good' (**Table C:1**).

Summary Findings Course B

The over-all mean rating of 4.1 (**Table C:1**) indicates acceptance of the laboratory just within the 'good' to 'very good' range (a finding which, notwithstanding the absence of 'letter critiques' for Course B, is amply supported by diary data).

Conclusions

Despite obvious weaknesses, notable among which is the risk of boredom by repetition, the laboratory has strengths, as many authors have observed, which include allowing learners to deep-focus on specific pronunciation difficulties, enabling individually-paced listening comprehension work, and giving practice in colloquial language which could otherwise require unrealisable levels of exposure to authentic-input situations.

Over-all, use of the laboratory as an independent self-access facility was favoured by some, accepted by the majority, and rejected by only a few, which suggests that it remains valuable as a learning aid, particularly where IODL laboratory sessions are an optional alternative. The evidence also suggests that liking does not tend to increase with higher exposure, although much depends on how the laboratory is exploited. It is concluded that if better-stocked and cross-indexed it would have offered a more valuable self-access facility for ISDL sessions, particularly if other media had been available for integration with it. The present evidence supports the conclusion that even students who do not 'like' laboratory (it is, after all, hard work), but acknowledge its usefulness, may freely choose to use it even when independent-learning alternatives are available.

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[3]Unless meaning is involved, pronunciation has been even lower among the present writer's priorities since hearing an English elocutionist talk throughout a television interview about her qualifications and experience in teaching 'pronounciation'.

[4]A12 responded very favourably to the ISDL 'class library' sessions, an indication that his objection was not to full self-direction *per se*.

From the contradictory evidence it seems reasonable to conclude that no single option can meet the range of student views and needs on laboratory and that a viable alternative might be found by varying laboratory sessions between entirely ISDL mode and the virtually DODL mode favoured by A12 (successfully conducted by the co-ordinator on other non-MIDL courses, and even more successfully by other teachers of his acquaintance). Or, where resources permit, simultaneous IODL and ISDL laboratory sessions might be provided. But offering DODL taught sessions alongside ISDL laboratory sessions (as happened on one occasion during the present experimental period) would seem to be more appropriate to courses in which students are free to select from a range of simultaneously available modules than to intensive courses taught by one teacher in one location.

Q Data Class Library

In the hope of eliciting more spontaneous remarks on the class library, the co-ordinator did not request Group A to comment specifically on it. In probable consequence the questionnaire remarks were fewer than for items such as 'course books', which were mentioned by name in the 'letter critique' rubrics. However, the filed master-copies indicate that 'class library' was included in the rubrics for the intended letter critiques of Course B (either not administered or subsequently mislaid).

Summary Findings Course A

On the evidence of the ratings for the five participants who made no remarks on it (3.8, 4.0, 4.3, 4.5, and 5.0), absence of comment on the class library did not indicate dissatisfaction. Of the seven who commented, five were very favourable, one would have preferred longer sessions, and only A11 thought it wasted time which could have been devoted to speaking practice in discussions. The over-all rating of 4.1 was just within the range 'good' to 'very good' (**Table C:1**).

Summary Findings Course B

Although five participants rated the class library in the range 'good' to 'very good', only one gave it a rating of 5.0 for all four questions, and the highest rating among the other four was 4.3. These ratings were coupled with six in the range 'so-so' to 'good' and two in the range 'bad' to 'so-so'. Although B4 rated it 4.0 in principle, she gave it 2.0 for her personally, while B8 gave 'class library' as her sole negative on the 'course evaluation' and rated it 2.0 ('bad') both in principle and personally. The over-all rating of 3.7 indicated that class library for Group B was in general perceived as 'so-so' to 'good' (**Table C:1**).

Conclusions

The evidence supports the conclusion that on the whole the class library was seen as a positive feature of the courses, but with the shortcomings of a 'to hand' set-up. Adverse comments on the paucity of materials, on lack of adequate indexing and cross-referencing, and on materials without a key, support the conclusion that where an *ad hoc* arrangement is the only option it should as quickly as possible incorporate the features of a full-resource self-access facility. In addition, where self-direction and independent learning are in-class rather than out-class components of a course, and where another room can be used for ISDL sessions (perhaps a laboratory), some kind of simultaneous DSDL activity along the lines suggested by A11 might be offered to

those students who prefer it (not a DODL taught session that most students might not want to miss). With these provisos, 'class library' (by whatever name) is seen as an integral and essential component of any course which incorporates classroom independence.

Q Data The Participants' Stay in Ireland

The 'stay in Ireland' was not a rated item, and only participants' remarks are summarised below.

Summary Findings Course A

One student found 'disorganisation everywhere' in Dublin, two objected to the food, three remarked adversely on the weather (autumn to winter), and five were unhappy with the bus service (expensive, unpunctual, 'the worst public-transport sistem I ever saw! (I saw many)'). Four commented favourably on the host-family. Seven remarked positively on the Irish people, three commented on the good times they had with their friends, three welcomed the opportunity for life-style independence, and one found it, in general 'a wonderful and unforgettable experience in my life'.

Summary Findings: Course B

There was only one comment on public transport ('terrible bus system'), two remarked adversely on the food, three found life expensive, one said she loved the Irish weather but six disliked it (winter to summer),. Two remarked favourably on the host-family. There were seven positive references to Irish people, although some reservations were expressed ('not willing to a full friendship', '... when they drank too much', 'too many drunken people', 'sometimes I had the expression [= impression] that people smiled, but didn't really care about me'). Two remarked on their independent life-style and three were happy at the chance to improve their English. Perhaps B10 sums up the general impression that emerges from Course B: *Negative*: "The weather and there are very few things to do in Ireland." *Positive*: "The English I learnt and the people I met".

Conclusions

With the reservations that might apply to being anywhere away from home for several months, the evidence is that most found their stay interesting and worthwhile, with younger ones in particular enjoying the freedom and novelty of the experience, and nothing to suggest that the courses were differentially affected by the out-class environment. It is concluded that such affective dimension factors were randomly distributed across both courses A and B.

Q Data, The MIDL Courses in General

Course A did not benefit from post-questionnaire interviews and Course B lacked the 'critical letters' of Course A. For Course B the somewhat sparse comments are taken only from questionnaire annotations (double quotation marks) and subsequent interview notes (single quotation marks). While no remark is supported by any other from a different participant, and the range of topics is too wide to enable a summary, the comments are reproduced as covering some aspects of the course in general. These remarks were intended by the participants to complement some generally negative ratings on the questionnaires or were

elicited by the co-ordinator at interview for the same reason, and it is regretted that no positive equivalents exist.

Summary Findings Course A

Two things came in for particularly negative criticism from the majority of participants, the first being the early part of the course: "too much time on planning & changing plans" –[A1]; "wasted a lot of time with unimportant things" –[A2]; "losing important time" –[A4]; "only speeded up working hard ... at the end of the course" –[A5]; "video ... a little waste of time ... preparation for the course was a bit long and took part of the time of teaching the points we need for the exam" –[A7]; "a bit disorganised above all at the beginning ... when we weren't settled down yet" –[A9]; "We waste time at the beginning....[the co-ordinator] did not organise the programme so well at the beginning" –[A11]. Two remarks stand out as particularly relevant, the first representing those who included the video production in the 'time wasting' and the second demonstrating an above-average awareness:

> I didn't like the idea of the Video Show. Well, I spent a good time recording that girl in the museum, but it was not interesting for learning English, even for English conversation, because when we went there we spoke in our own languages. –[A5]

> During the first two months the programme wasn't very well organised because the teacher thought it was better to ask us what we liked to do. But this would be succes[s]ful if we were a smaller group in which the levels are similar to one another. –[A9]

The second thing that attracted a great deal of negative criticism was the evident disparity in the proficiency levels within the class and the concomitant need for 'averaging' the level of instruction: *Level of the course* "In the beginning to[o] high" –[A2]; "It was much lower than I expected for a First Certificate class and also too low for me.... too many different levels ... very difficult for the teacher to find the middle" –[A4]; "very bad to mix students with different levels" –[A5]; "very bad to put students with so different levels in one class" –[A6]; "It was a bit higher [= too high], in level, for me" –[A8]; "Too different level of knowledge's students.... Most of them they had already done much more grammar than I did, for example" –[A11]. One student summed up the general situation:

> The most important thing from my point of view is that you should put students with more or less the same level of English together in the next class of this course. Even to make a compromise and try to teach in a middle level is not the best solution, because then some of the students have problems to follow while others are maybe bored. [A6]

Another pertinent factor in regard to averaging is the length of the course: "Finally I must say that three months as a preparation for an exam are too less [= not enough?]" –[A11].[5] Other remarks on the specific components of the courses have already been noted above (under Diary, Laboratory, and so on) and, apart from mixed responses to the coursebooks and one student's criticism of the uneven homework load,

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[5]Very sadly, A11 was the only one of Group A not to pass the FCE, and would without doubt have benefited more from the length of Course B (nearly 5-months). In contrast, B8 found her course 'too long' and would probably have preferred Course A.

comments on the course were generally favourable: "remarks, notes, comments etc given on free-style compositions: very, very useful!... had a good time and improved a lot, especially in the last few weeks.... happy to have been in this course and could recommend it to other students" –[A3]; "I learned a lot and we also had a good teacher" –[A4]; *Positive*: "The teacher.... I found this course very satisfactory and enjoyed it very much" –[A5]; *Positive*: "I like the idea of individual work.-[A6]; "I liked how the course was planned and the variety of things to do.... The reports ... about the homework I think that were one of the best things of the course" –[A7]; "the course was very useful and we are a joined group" –[A9]; "the nice atmosphere with [the co-ordinator] and my friends" –[A11]; *Positive*: "Teaching in general.... Good fun. In general, no waste of time at all.... Practice exam tests, summaries or class library I found them perfect to improve my english and I really enjoy doing it" –[A12]. One student in particular summed up how a teacher always hopes it will be for everyone and always wishes that it had been for everyone:

> [The co-ordinator] was more than a teacher, a good friend.... the best teacher I have ever had.... *Positive*: The examinations made me work hard.... For me it was a good course. Apart from learn a lot, I have never before done so many and so interesting things as this year.... I have been surrounded by a lot of wonderful people during these three months.... the most important thing in the course was the friendly atmosphere in the class among the teacher and the pupils. That's very important .... I enjoyed and learned a lot during these months with all we did. –[A8]

The remarks provide evidence that an examination syllabus can be a motivating factor in study and, in addition, bear witness to the generally good rapport in the class.

For Course A as a whole, the selected over-all mean rating, derived from general satisfaction elements, ODL components (**Table C:2**), and SDL components (**Table C:1**), was 4.0, just within the range 'good' to 'very good' (**Table C:3**).

Summary Findings Course B

Grammar HW [homework] reviews in class: "sometimes too fast".... 'Listening comprehension too fast'.... 'Grammar reviews sometimes too fast' –[B5]; 'Too much insistence on grammar and repetition of same things many times. Course is too long' –[B8]; *Explanation of language points (grammar etc)*: "Sometimes a bit confusing". *Co-ordinator's manner in general*: "Depends on his mood". *Organiser of class programmes etc*: "Sometimes a bit too much planning".... 'Pitman exam preparation was too much' –[B9]; *Efficiency in general in running class programmes etc*: "Sometimes too fast from one subject to the other". –[B12]; *Willingness to listen to and take into account students' opinions and expressed learning needs*: "You listen to but normally don't take into account students' opinions". *How successful was the course for you*: 'Different levels in the class make the course not as good as it could be'. –[B 13].

The over-all rating for Course B was 3.9, within the range 'so-so' to 'good' (**Table C:3**).

Conclusions

The negative reactions to the video production on Course A, even from two who said they enjoyed it, and the remark of A5 on not using it to practise speaking English, reinforce the conclusion that unsupervised out-class DSDL events may be counter-indicated as language learning aids, although their potential as means to other ends (e.g. breaking routine, fostering learner independence, etc.) remains to be further explored. A9

Table C:2. *Q Data Courses A and B, Summary Means of Selected Questionnaire Ratings (scaled 1 to 5) for Other-Directed Learning*

Course A Questionnaire Items	question	Course B Questionnaire Items	question	Course A means	Course B means
ODL COMPONENTS		ODL COMPONENTS			
The course books[1]		The course books			
(objectively)	A	practice book (objectively)	Aa	4.0	4.3
(personally)	a	practice book (personally)	aa	3.8	4.2
		gramm. exs. book (objectively)	Ab		4.4
		gramm. exs. book (personally)	ab		4.4
Homework review sessions		Homework review sessions			
(in principle)	Da	(in principle)	Da	4.6	4.5
(personally)	da	(personally)	da	4.8	4.4
Final taught hour daily		Teacher guided periods			
(in principle)	De	(in principle)	De	4.3	4.6
(personally)	de	(personally)	de	4.7	4.7
Essay feedback		Written work feedback			
(in principle)	F	(in principle)	F	4.5	4.7
(personally)	f	(personally)	f	4.6	4.8
Homework status reports		Homework status reports			
(in principle)	G	(in principle)	G	4.3	4.5
(personally)	g	(personally)	g	4.1	4.5
		Written work resubmissions			
		(in principle)	I		4.6
		(personally)	i		4.3
ODL summary means				4.4	4.5

Note. Average means for ODL items are omitted as readily apparent and not of central interest.

Table C:3. *Q Data Courses A and B, Summary Means of Selected Questionnaire Ratings (scaled 1 to 5) for the MIDL Programmes*

Courses A and B Questionnaire Items	question no.	Course A mean ratings	Course B mean ratings
rate the course in comparison with other language courses	C1	3.8	4.2
how successful was the course for you personally	C3	4.1	3.6
how was the level of the course for you	C5	3.6	3.5
how satisfied are you with your over-all progress	C6	4.1	3.5
how satisfied with progress in understanding what you hear	C7	4.7	3.8
in understanding what you read	C8	4.1	3.8
in writing in English	C9	3.7	3.5
in speaking English	C10	3.8	3.5
rate the course contribution to your progress	C12	3.9	4.0
the teacher/co-ordinator mean rating (**Table C:4**)	T1-T13	4.4	4.3
ODL components summary mean rating (**Table C:2**)		4.4	4.5
SDL **in-class** components summary mean rating (**Table C:1**)		3.7	4.0
Over-all mean questionnaire ratings Courses A and B		4.0	3.9

Note. The ratings for questions C1 to C12 are the means from **Table C:5**.

Table C:4. *Q Data Courses A and B, Selected Questionnaire Ratings (scaled 1 to 5) on the Teacher/Co-ordinator*

Course A	Question Nos.												
ID	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	means
A1	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	3	4	5	5	5	4	4.4
A2	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	2	5	5	5	5	5	4.4
A3	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	4.5
A4	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4.4
A5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.6
A6	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	4	3	3.9
A7	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	4.2
A8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0
A9	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.3
A10	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4.4
A11	5	3	5	5	3	4	3	2	4	4	5	5	3	3.9
A12	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	4.5
means	4.6	4.2	4.5	4.8	4.1	4.7	3.7	3.4	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.4

Course B	Question Nos.												
ID	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	means
B1	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4.5
B2	5		5	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.7
B3	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	5	4.4
B4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3.8
B5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4.2
B6	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.6
B7	3	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	4	3.8
B8	4	5	5	5	3	4	2	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.3
B9	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	5	4.2
B10	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.6
B11	5	3	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.6
B12	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	4	4	4.2
B13	3	4	5	3	3		5	4	3	4	5	4	4	3.9
means	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.3

Table C:5. *Q Data Courses A and B, Selected Questionnaire Ratings (scaled 1 to 5) on the Courses in General*

Course A				Question Nos.						
ID	C1	C3	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C12	means
A1	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4.2
A2	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	2	4	3.9
A3	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	3.9
A4	4	4	2	5	5	4	4	4	4	4.0
A5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3.9
A6	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	3.1
A7	4	4	4	3	5	4	3	4	3	3.8
A8	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	4.7
A9	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	4	3.9
A10	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	4.0
A11	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3.7
A12	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4.6
means	3.8	4.1	3.6	4.1	4.7	4.1	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0

Course B				Question Nos.						
ID	C1	C3	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C12	means
B1	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	3.8
B2	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	5	4.3
B3	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4.7
B4	2	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	2.0
B5	4	4	4	3	3	5	3	3	4	3.7
B6	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4.4
B7	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	3.6
B8	5	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2.8
B9	4	3	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	3.9
B10	4	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3.8
B11	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3.9
B12	4	3	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	3.7
B13	4	3	3	4	5	5	4	3	5	4.0
means	4.2	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.7

appeared to be the only participant who correctly connected the early 'disorganisation' with the co-ordinator's well-intentioned if ill-informed attempts at 'classroom democracy'. That said, a disorganised course is one perceived by the students to be so, whatever the underlying rationale or care in planning, and the outcome highlights the need for ideology to run in tandem with student wishes. This, in turn, points up the importance of triangulated data-gathering. The diaries were intended to monitor participant reactions and did capture many attitudes correctly, but they failed to reflect general antipathy to the *organisation* of the early part of Course A. It is possible that this feeling emerged only subsequently as a retrospective effect of the later rigorous pre-programming but, in any case, the lesson to be drawn is that more than one data-gathering instrument is advisable.

It was hoped that the opportunity for learner input to the programme would heighten participants' awareness not only of institutional organisation but also of factors to consider in planning their own study. But the fact that in free discussion (without the presence and influence of the co-ordinator) they were unable to compromise on ways to help iron out the proficiency disparities of just 12 students, confirms the point made by A9 (about smaller and less disparate-level groups), which in turn supports the conclusion that student input is affected by the homogeneity of the group.[6]

Over-all, it is concluded that the experimental courses A and B appeared to be as effective as normal courses in meeting student and institutional needs and that the self-directed elements, while evidently not as popular on the whole as the other-directed elements, were not universally rejected outright as, given the expectations of the students for conservative traditional teaching, might well have been the case.

Q Data Group Perspectives

In what follows, the questionnaire group ratings are brought together for brief summary comparisons.

Q Data, Other-Directed Learning Components

Summary Findings Courses A and B

Table C:2 gives summary means for selected ODL component ratings. It is evident that, with the exception of the Course A ratings for the textbooks (at 4.00 and 3.8, between 'so-so' and 'good') all the remainder for both courses fall within the range 4.00 to 5.00 ('good' to 'very good'). The textbooks were the same for both courses, which makes the higher ratings from Course B directly comparable with the lower ratings from Course A. Summary means for ODL components of 4.4 for Course A, and 4.5 for Course B were extremely close, and in the range 'good' to 'very good'.

Conclusions Courses A and B

It is concluded that for both courses the ODL components were well received and constituted an adequate alternative to the SDL components.

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[6]The institutional side of the 'disparate levels' issue has already been touched on.

Q Data, Self-Directed Learning Components

Summary Findings: Courses A and B

Table C:1 gives summary means for selected SDL component ratings. Support Teams for Group A were rated only 3.0, reflecting a lack of over-all satisfaction but Work Teams for Group B were rated 4.3, in the range 'good' to 'very good'. Similarly, in-class laboratory was rated 3.5 by Course A, but 4.1 by Group B. However, the in-class library ratings reverse these findings, with a Group A rating of 4.1 not matched by a Group B rating of 3.7. Over-all, the in-class SDL components found greater favour with Group B (rating 4.0) than with Group A (rating 3.7) although the difference was not remarkably great. Out-class setwork and diary were similarly less well-received by Group A (rating 3.7) than by Group B (rating 4.2).

Although in-class and out-class components are kept apart, as they are in the diary data, the table indicates that the ratings for them are respectively similar between the two Groups (at 3.7 versus 4.0, and 3.7 versus 4.2). It makes little difference whether these ratings are considered together or separately, as the in-class SDL over-all ratings are 3.7 for group A and 4.0 for Group B, and the combined ratings are 3.7 for group A and 4.1 for group B.

Conclusions: Courses A and B

Notwithstanding that ratings for SDL components were lower than for ODL components it is concluded that the differences were not remarkable and that for both courses the SDL components were sufficiently well-received to constitute an adequate alternative to the ODL components.